

COURT SERVICES DIVISION

COURT SERVICES DIVISIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

This division is comprised of the Casework Unit, Psychological Clinic, and Youth Assistance. The staff are responsible for providing direct client services, case management, research and program development, community resource development through volunteer coordination, and education and public awareness programming. Services include individual and family assessment, prevention programming, status offender services, juvenile probation, group therapy for adjudicated youth, parent guidance, and adoption casework.

DIVISIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Family Division Activities

- ❑ Chaired the Education Committee for the Family Division, planning and coordinating over 35 hours of educational presentations for the judges of the Family Division.
- ❑ Participated on the Friend of the Court/Coordination of Services Committee Administration Committee, and Transition Team.
- ❑ Surveyed Court Services Division staff regarding ideas for new programs for the Family Division, input on case reception procedures, etc.

Stakeholder Relations

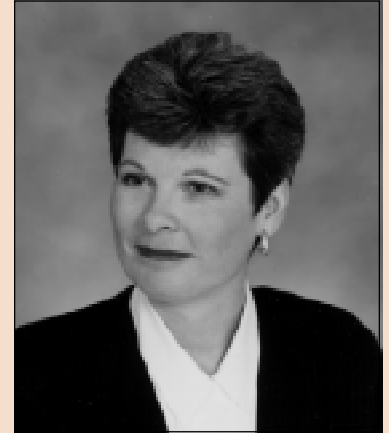
- ❑ Served on behalf of Judge Moore as the Court's staff representative to the Oakland County Human Services Coordinating Council.
- ❑ Chaired the Oakland County Wraparound Community Team.
- ❑ Presented at Oakland County Bar Association seminars regarding juvenile Guardian ad Litem and the new Family Division.

Program Development

- ❑ Coordinated the efforts of the workgroup which drafted and obtained judicial approval for a policy and procedures for the emergency hospitalization of minors.
- ❑ Coordinated discussions with Community Corrections and Sequoia group resulting in implementation of an intensive two-day weekend program for juveniles involved with substance or alcohol related driving offenses.
- ❑ Obtained budgetary approval for contractual services to home truants and established contract with Sanctuary.

Staff Safety Committee

- ❑ Conducted survey of Youth Assistance field offices regarding staff safety issues, and requested action from local Board sponsors to remedy any deficiencies.
- ❑ Provided justification and obtained six additional cellular phones for the use of field staff as a safety measure.
- ❑ Developed and implemented staff self-defense training and pepper spray training, in coordination with the Training Council.
- ❑ Completed a draft of a staff safety manual for administrative and judicial review.



*Pamela S. Howitt, Ph.D.
Deputy Court Administrator*

"CASE COMPLEXITY ON THE RISE MORE CHALLENGES FOR SERVICE STAFF"

As I review the year end statistics for the units within Court Services, I am struck by several trends. It is evident that we are dealing with children and families who have increasingly complex needs, and who may be at greater risk than ever before for poor community adjustment.

It is noteworthy, for example, that 27% of the delinquent youths screened for out-of-home placement had prior psychiatric hospitalizations. Reports of Youth Assistance referrals reflect a similar alarming volume. The Casework unit reported that nearly 3/4 of our probationers required regular urine drug screening, up 13% from the previous year. Almost 30% of these youngsters tested positive for drug use during their term of probation.

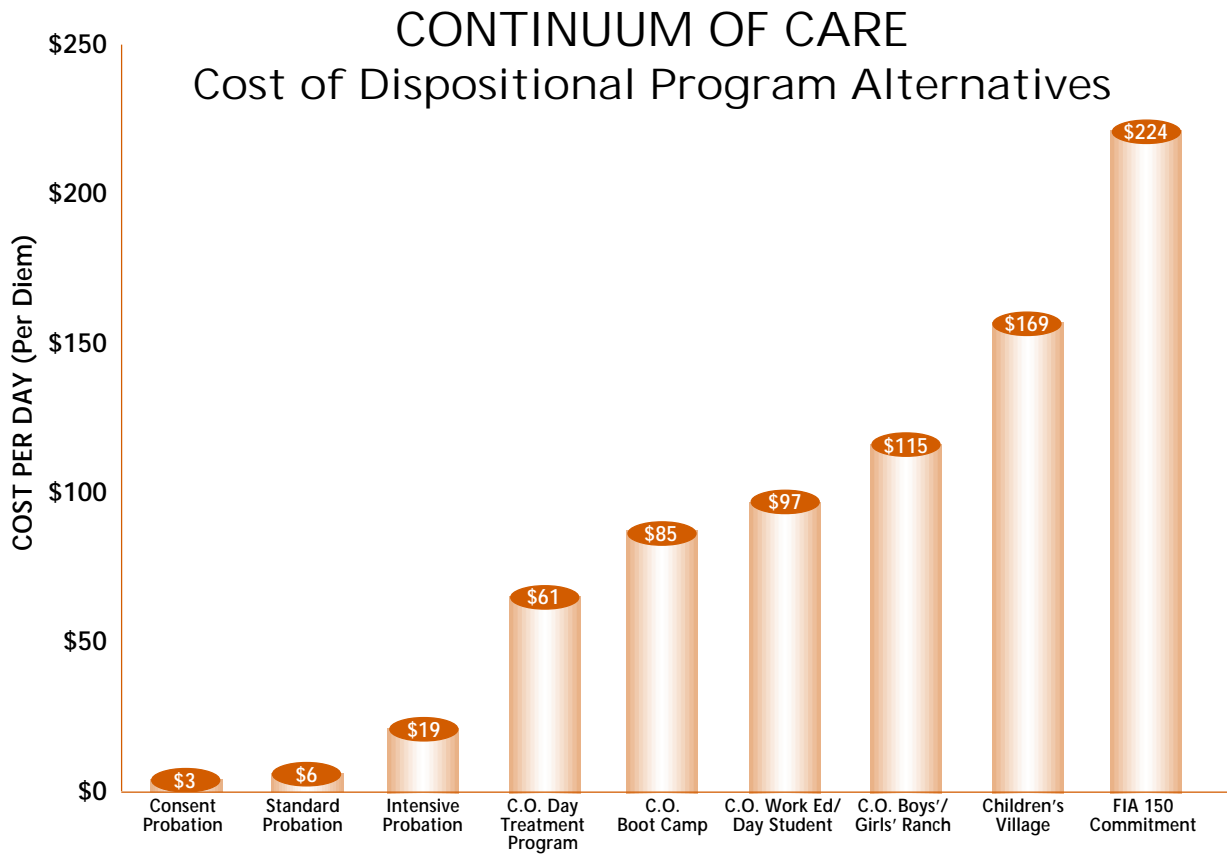
Case records reveal that almost half of the youngsters on our rosters are significantly behind in school achievement and have histories of conduct problems in school. Over 40% are certified to receive special education services. The numbers of these children stretch the limits of resources available through local school districts, CMH, and other community agencies, and their needs sometimes seem staggering.

Of course, the numbers alone do not tell the whole tale. Each statistic represents a real person to the staff assigned to the case. What is also apparent, is that no one system of service delivery can even hope to fully address the intensity and complexity of these special cases.

The day-to-day responsibilities of court service staff have changed in response to these realities. Included as a matter of routine are countless inter-agency meetings to develop coordinated plans for kids, hours of additional consultation, adaptation to new approaches such as "Wraparound" Services etc.

I am proud of the efforts made by all of our staff to treat each client with the special attention needed. Their dedication and hard work are commendable and they have proven themselves more than ready for the challenge!

COURT SERVICES DIVISION



Fiscal Impact of Dispositional Alternatives

DISPOSITIONAL ALTERNATIVE

Alternative	Disp. Type	Youth	Cost/Day	Avg. Days	Total Cost
1	Boot Camp	10	\$85	135	\$114,750
2	FIA 150	10	\$112	660	\$739,200

NOTE: C.O. indicates Camp Oakland Program.

NOTE: Court pays 1/2 FIA 150 Commitment, State pays 1/2.



Youth Community Service continued its successes in 1997 by directing 76 separate groups, consisting of 323 youths. Groups were organized and supervised by two full-time staff and Oakland University interns. Probate Court is very grateful for the cooperation our YCS Program has received from the following agencies in 1997: **Bald Mountain State Recreation Area** (left photo), **Habitat for Humanity**, **Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped**, **Lyon Oaks County Park-tree planting** (right photo), **New Horizons-Novi**, **Oakland County Food Bank**, **Oakland County Youth Assistance**, **Royal Oak Salvation Army**, and **the Village of Holly**.

CASEWORK SERVICES UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

This unit is responsible for all delinquency cases authorized for court by Intake. We assist the case, when necessary, through the adjudicating process. Once adjudicated, we are responsible for preparing a social history, including corroborative information that recommends to the court a disposition outlining both the client's needs for rehabilitation and the community's needs for protection.

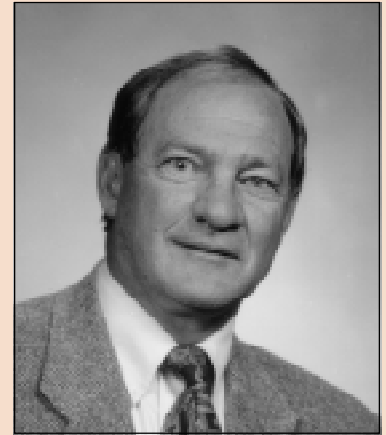
Post disposition, we assist in implementing the court orders, including restitution, community service, and counseling. We monitor compliance or non-compliance. We report to the court, making further recommendations as indicated.

Adoption Casework staff assist petitioners in adult, relative, and stepparent adoptions to conduct home studies and make recommendations to the court regarding the suitability of those petitioners. They respond in writing to request identifying and nonidentifying information which includes a Central Registry Clearance to see what information can be released.

A Confidential Intermediary provides searches and reunion service for petitioners who wish to locate birth parents, adult adoptee, and adult siblings. The Confidential Intermediary acts as a liaison to agency representatives who have been appointed by the Probate Court to conduct these searches.

UNIT HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ Held youth accountable to the victims and community. In 1997, probationers as primary goals of the Youth Community Service Program and Victim's Rights Program repaid victims \$120,210.32 in cash restitution. Communities received 21,295 hours of community service work by individual probation youth, which represents a cost savings of \$113,928.
- ❑ Monitored the use of illegal drugs of our probationers by requiring urine testing. A total of 329 tests were administered. Nearly 29% indicated continued use of illegal substance. The information received from urine testing allows us to confront and hold youths accountable to our expectations of successful treatment.
- ❑ Screened 471 cases brought before the Out-of-Home Screening Committee. The committee is composed of representatives from the Casework unit, Psychological Clinic, Camp Oakland, Oakland County Children's Village, and Community Mental Health when shared cases are discussed. The continuing rise in the number of youths screened reflects the commitment of all to develop the best rehabilitative plan available.
- ❑ Received 51 petitions for the appointment of a Confidential Intermediary to search for a member of an adoption trial. Received 30 requests for non-identifying information.
- ❑ The Adoption Casework Unit completed 167 adoptions (123 Stepparent, 32 relative, and 12 adult adoptions).
- ❑ Provided intensive probation services to over 170 youth. Intensive Probation continues as a primary rehabilitative service to successfully maintain youth in their community.
- ❑ Monitored 75 youth through electronic tethering providing assurance to the community that youth were supervised. Only nine youth failed to comply with the requirements and were, therefore, placed in detention.



Ronald E. Auten
Chief of Casework Services

"JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM"

An 11-year-old, charged with murder is being held in Children's Village detention pending court as a "designated" case. If convicted on the criminal docket, the Probate Judge may impose any of the traditional juvenile dispositions, sentence as an adult, or delay sentencing until rehabilitation has been attempted in the juvenile system.

The case described is the result of Juvenile Justice reform enacted by the legislature in response to the concerns of citizens over rising rates of violent crime. This legislation dramatically impacts how the courts and prosecutors deal with serious juvenile offenders.

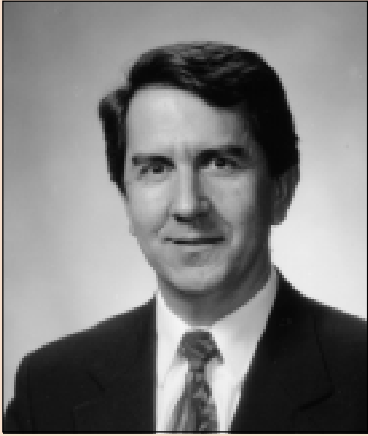
Highlighted below are a few of the key provisions of the 24 Public Acts which became effective 1/1/97:

A fourteen year old committing one of the specified offenses may now be prosecuted as a criminal in the adult courts. Previously, age fifteen was the youngest. A criminal docket was created within the Probate Court. A youth may now be designated for criminal court within the jurisdiction of the Probate Court. There is no age limitation. If convicted, a "designated" juvenile may be ordered to any of the traditional juvenile dispositions or may be sentenced as an adult.

The legislative mandate remains that, "each juvenile coming within the jurisdiction of the court receives the care, guidance, and control, preferably in their own home, conducive to the juvenile's welfare, and the interest of the state." Reform requires that greater weight be placed on the seriousness of the offense and the child's offense history in terms of community protection when making disposition decisions.

The casework unit has studied the issues and received training in criminal procedures to implement the reform measures. It is anticipated that few youth will be impacted by these changes. The impact on those who are convicted criminally will be significant. The Probate Court now has many more alternatives available in those cases where traditional juvenile services have not successfully rehabilitated the youth.

COURT SERVICES DIVISION



*Bernard Gaulier, Ph.D.
Chief of Clinical Services*

"THE EVOLUTION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CLINIC REFERRALS"

The computerization of referrals to the Psychological Clinic has resulted in better service to the public and court staff. The main advantage of this new system is that information about past and current cases is available instantly, allowing staff to respond efficiently to requests regarding the status of a particular referral. For example, we can now tell rapidly whether individuals have been evaluated, who will evaluate them, and whether a report has been completed. Additionally, hearing officers and caseworkers can now make referrals directly to the clinic using the county electronic mail system, thus reducing the time it takes to process a referral.

Although we now can more efficiently monitor cases referred to us, we are frequently reminded of the importance of collecting as much information as possible early on in the process. Having automated intakes is not a substitute for collecting relevant historical and clinical information at the time of the referral. This is due to the fact that an increasing number of individuals and families referred have complex problems and are involved simultaneously with several service providers. The clinician who conducts the evaluation needs to have access to that information in order to complete the assessment and develop thorough recommendations.

Thus, when a referral is made we will continue to emphasize the importance of forwarding complete information, especially regarding involvement with other agencies, so that the appropriate releases of information can be prepared at the earliest possible time.

CLINICAL SERVICES UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Clinical Services Unit is responsible for aiding the court in making informed dispositional decisions by providing clinical forensic evaluations of children and families who are involved with the court. In addition, the unit provides specialized treatment services to clients. Staff are available for case consultations with hearing officers, caseworkers, attorneys, Department of Social Services, school personnel, and others. The unit also conducts and coordinates training and research, including program evaluations and staff development programs for Probate Court employees.

UNIT HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ Completed computerization of cases referred to our unit. Data entry is ongoing, and information about the status of a particular referral is available instantly. Reports have been developed so that the compilation of monthly statistics, which reflect the unit's activities, is now also automated.
- ❑ Continued efforts to coordinate services between agencies in order to better serve youth and families who present with multiple and complex needs. Our staff attends the Oakland County Wraparound Gatekeeping Committee to review referrals and plans for families receiving a wraparound approach to services. We continue to provide consultation to other units of the Court handling such difficult cases, and as a liaison with other community agencies that provide services to these families.
- ❑ Participated in an interagency workgroup to develop procedures and services that will facilitate the coordination of comprehensive and effective interventions for youth and families involved with several agencies. A direct result of this group's work was the development of procedures to handle situations where psychiatric services are needed for a youth on an emergency basis. These "Emergency Psychiatric Evaluation for Minors" procedures will be implemented county-wide.
- ❑ Coordinated training for clerical, casework, clinical and supervisory staff. A seminar on "Personal Safety" was offered, focusing on basic self-defense techniques. Also, trainings were arranged with the Sheriff's Department at which court services staff were trained on the use of pepper spray and each staff member was equipped with a pepper spray canister. A seminar was also presented on "Practical Aspects of Working with Children with ADHD."
- ❑ Involved in arranging training events to prepare court personnel for the implementation of new laws. Seminars on "Juvenile Justice Reform" and on "Presentencing Investigation" were presented to staff regarding new juvenile laws. In preparation for the new Family Division, trainings were arranged jointly with Friend of the Court for a "Family Division Orientation." Our Clinic staff received training on how to conduct custody evaluations in domestic relations matters. Finally, all court staff attended a seminar on "Organizational Health," which taught methods to cope with change and to handle the stress associated with change.
- ❑ Participated in two committees that were organized to develop procedures for the new Family Division. The "Intaking Committee" focused on procedures to address the needs of families when they first come in contact with the Family Division. A "Family Assessment" tool was developed to identify which families present with significant difficulties early on in the process so that referrals can be made for appropriate services. The "External/Internal Resources Subcommittee" focused on services available to families in dispute regarding custody and parenting time. The group developed procedures for referring families to the Psychological Clinic for psychological evaluations in contested custody cases.

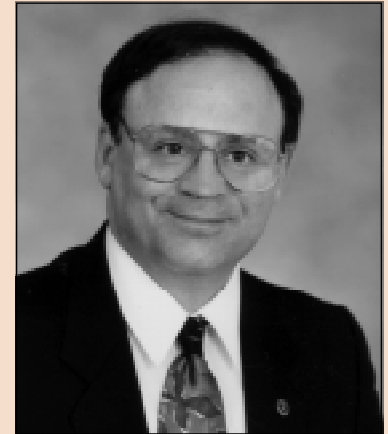
YOUTH ASSISTANCE UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

As the prevention segment of the Court's continuum of services, Youth Assistance's mission is to strengthen youth and families and prevent and reduce delinquency and neglect through volunteer involvement. Utilizing a decentralized approach, staff work in 26 locations with a cadre of volunteers to identify and address each community's needs. Major programs include parenting and family education, skill and self-esteem building, recreation, adult role modeling, youth involvement and recognition. Staff also provide direct casework services. Each local program is sponsored by the school district, the municipalities therein and Probate Court, with principal funding from the Board of Commissioners.

UNIT HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ Provided casework services to more than 6,500 families. Of these referrals, 54% came from the police, 33% from schools, 12% from parents, and 1% from others. These numbers are consistent with previous years.
- ❑ Reassigned staff in 19 of 26 field offices in August. This action was prompted in part by the receipt of three new positions from the Board of Commissioners, the departure or reassignments of four others, and the completion and implementation of a complete workload equalization study, (Equity II).
- ❑ Local sponsors contributed \$825,000 in cash and in-kind support for their local Youth Assistance programs and operations.
- ❑ YA Volunteers (930), provided 36,684 hours to support their local activities. They are involved in every aspect of the planning, implementation, and evaluation of their community's Youth Assistance programs. This represents more than \$500,000 in services, not counting their expertise, commitment and enthusiasm which cannot be purchased at any price.
- ❑ Retail fraud represents the largest single reason for referral to Youth Assistance. In an attempt to prevent future incidents, a task force that included five local YA areas, Waterford Police, 51st District Court, the Sheriff's Department, Children's Village, and Target Stores wrote and produced a video and an instructor's guide for use in schools. The video received a national award.
- ❑ Scholarships were provided for 1,160 youth to attend overnight or day camps and another 482 youth received scholarships for various Skill-Building programs (math or reading tutoring, musical instrument lessons, etc.).
- ❑ More than \$12,000 in donated tickets for 18 different events were made available to our matched youth and their adult mentors.

Independence Oaks County Park in Clarkston was the site of a picnic for volunteers with the Oakland County Probate Court Youth Assistance Program. Case aide volunteers and mentors brought the young people they worked with to the picnic that featured food, games, prizes and a magic show. Pictured here (back row, left to right) are Probate Court Administrator Robert Bingham; Amy Secora and Amber Butora; Shirley Robertson, director of member services with the Oakland County Bar Association; and John Erb, chairman of the OCBA's Young Lawyers Committee. (Front row) Sarah Jamieson and Samantha Lamphere.



Kal Engelberg
Chief of Youth Assistance

"SHARING GOOD NEWS"

When we communicate and cooperate with others, great things usually happen. There are advantages and disadvantages to living and working in a county with a wide range of human services. To help direct people to the right resource, Youth Assistance produced and distributed its 1997-98 Oakland County Directory of Human Resources. This 274 page book was made possible with the help of staff and students from 35 agencies who volunteered to gather the information. Data entry was supplied by the First Call for Help Office of the United Way. The directory contains information on over 400 agencies in Southeastern Michigan and 10 special sections with additional information on day care centers, employment, transportation, head start, senior citizens service, libraries, and much more.

With funding received from First of America Bank, Blue Cross\Blue Shield of Michigan, St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, the Williams & Myrtle Hess Trust, and the DeRoy Testamentary Foundation, over 6,000 copies of the directory were donated to schools, human service agencies, libraries, police, churches, and other non-profit organizations throughout Oakland and surrounding counties. This handy reference tool has become the "Bible for information" for many human service providers. It is our sincere desire that it will continue to foster communication, cooperation and collaboration among the human service providers.

Another example is our efforts to recognize and share the good things that young people do to enhance their community. This event is a highlight in every community it is held. With negativism abounding, particularly as it relates to youth, 23 local Youth Assistance Boards took time to honor 1092 young people for their efforts. This represents a 44% increase over the number of youth recognized in 1996. Service clubs, businesses, churches, schools, and local governments support these very important events.

PROBATE COURT EMPLOYEES

Of the Probate Court's 239 employees, all deserve recognition as they strive daily to fulfill the multiple and diverse mandates and service requirements of the Probate Court. The Court's talented and committed staff make every effort to provide services in a knowledgeable, efficient and caring manner. The outstanding reputation of the Oakland County Probate Court is a reflection of this philosophy and the Court's commitment to service. Throughout the year, unsolicited testimonials recognizing court employees for service excellence were received from citizens and users of the Court's services. What follows is a sampling of the recognitions received:

A letter from Deaf Can (Community Advocacy Network) for Ms. Debbie Bevan, Casework:

"We have been extremely fortunate these past several years to work with one of your staff, Debbie Bevan. She has truly become 'an expert' in the field of deafness and has taken the time to take Sign Language Classes. I have been very impressed with how she handles clients, her willingness and dedication to this population, and her efforts in obtaining services for this underserved population. I commend the Court for assigning the Deaf cases to her and I hope this practice will continue."

Bernard Gaulier, Court Clinic, recognizes Jennifer DeLisle of Word Processing:

"Thank you for sending Jennifer to do the data entry on our clinic computer. She did an excellent job. Thanks again."

Ms. Corene Munro, Casework, received a letter from one of her probationers:

"Your kindness and guidance during a difficult time in my life was deeply appreciated. A lot of people would have given up on me, but you stuck by me. Words cannot express the heartfelt thanks for your support, and belief and guidance."

The Food Bank of Oakland County sent a letter regarding Mr. John Chatley, Casework:

"In the case of John's teens and young people, the work is done with pride. Why? Because he instills that feeling into them, lifting them up...encouraging them and offering consistent praise. I wish more groups had the kind of leadership exemplified by John."

Elderly victims from Sanilac County expressed their thanks for Kay Galetto's help, Victim's Rights:

"We were very pleased with the help and courtesy that she possessed. She was understanding and pleasant throughout the whole process. Oakland County is very fortunate to have an employee like Kay."

Mr. Bingham received a letter from the Salvation Army of Royal Oak regarding Gary "Doc" Prud'Homme, Casework:

"Doc is firm but not unrealistic with the kids. It seems as though he's the adult that these kids need for uncompromising direction and at the same time compassion. It is wonderful to have access to a person of great experience, and a gentleman kind enough to share from his wealth of knowledge."

Ms. Julie Tillotson, Youth Assistance, received a Certificate of Resolution from the City of Hazel Park:

"Her ability as a leader to promote the welfare of our entire school community is well recognized. This school district has received many benefits as a result of Julie's concern and involvement in programs directly affecting the youth of our schools."

The Oakland County Medical Facility sent a letter to Mary Jo Best regarding Probate staff:

"You and your staff are to be commended for being so helpful and expeditious with your jobs. Each time I come to Probate Court, your staff here always greet me with a smile and courteousness. Thanks for all the assistance you have given me during my Court endeavors."

Article appeared in *The Citizen* newspaper regarding Margo Clarfelt, Youth Assistance:

"It is Margo's special gift of listening with her heart that makes her programs a success. Hearing a young person's hurt and anger, she has a special way to lift them above where they're at so that they can learn to take positive action to resolve their conflicts."

A letter from the Board of Commissioners thanking Linda Russell, Youth Assistance, for her efforts during an emergency:

“ There are no words with which we can express our gratitude for your valiant action in the emergency to save Commissioner Pernick’s life. We commend you for your voluntary response to assist with CPR, and we hope that you will always carry with you the knowledge that we consider you to be a true heroine. On behalf of the entire Board of Commissioners, I extend you our deepest and most heartfelt appreciation. ”

To Cindy Harper and her wonderful co-workers in the Court’s Business Office:

“Senior 919 items were delivered on Monday afternoon. The items were waiting for her when she got home from dialysis, a nice surprise, she added. She loves everything she received, especially the canned beets. She stated that all items were very helpful. As we talked she started to cry. She wanted to thank all of you, Lighthouse and God for being so nice and kind to her. She stated she does not know how much time she has left on this earth, but your kindness makes it easier.”

A client at the counter commented to supervision about Probate Estate staff:

“Just to let you know how helpful your staff was today, and last week when seeking information on my deceased husband’s estate, Donna Bevington and Kelli Schultz were very helpful and compassionate.”

A letter of appreciation from an attorney in Royal Oak, regarding Mary Jo Best, Probate Estates:

“I was surprised and pleased at such conscientiousness. Mary Jo Best deserves recognition for her treatment of me.”

An attorney from Kalamazoo sent a letter of thanks to Carol Dault, Probate Estates:

“ I want to personally thank you for your efforts in assisting us with this matter. I was beginning to believe that nothing I could do would ever bring this estate to a close and I want you to know that you have made me a happy, relieved person. ”

A letter regarding Karen Wonsowicz was sent from the Board of Directors of Clawson Youth Assistance when she was moved to Avondale Youth Assistance:

“Our community lobbied loudly and persistently to keep Karen in Clawson. Karen is a warm and caring person who possesses excellent casework skills. She works well with volunteers, offering suggestions and assistance in community projects without meddlesome interference. She encourages, inspires, and supports volunteers. Karen comes to you with our highest recommendation.”

Pat Peck received a note of thanks regarding Yvonne Zerba, Probate Estates, from a fellow co-worker:

“Yvonne took care of the messy files we took in. This is just a note of appreciation for cleaning up an awful mess.”

Robert Bingham recognizes Debbie Thompson, Juvenile Court, and Annette Himmelspach-Collins, Probate Estates:

“You have taken on a thankless task in becoming team captains for WalkAmerica. I, for one, very much appreciate your stepping forward to participate. Thank you for all of your time and preparation.”

Ms. Joan Connelly, Probate Estates, received a letter of thanks from a client in Seattle, Washington:

“Thank you so much for your kindness, patience and support over these past three and a half years. With deepest appreciation.”

An attorney with many years of experience in dealing with the court, commented on Anna Wendt of Probate Estates:

“ She was competent, kind and helpful. She went out of her way and I am very grateful. With the assistance of Anna, from an error that occurred a few years ago on a small estate, she saved me and my client time and money. ”

OAKLAND COUNTY PROBATE COURT



As a means of showing tangible appreciation for the thousands of hours of dedicated service contributed by over 1,100 Court-wide volunteers, the Court sponsored an April 17 Volunteer Recognition Event. The 1997 event featured entertainer Soupy Sales, an Elvis impersonator, and a superb dessert table contributed by Elias Brothers Restaurants. Over 400 volunteers attended the event. Sponsors of this year's event also included: Ford Motor Company, Consumers Energy, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Detroit Edison, the Hess Trust, and A. Alfred Taubman. Pictured (from left) Judge Eugene Arthur Moore, Judge Wendy Potts, Robert Bingham, Soupy Sales, and Judge Sandra G. Silver.

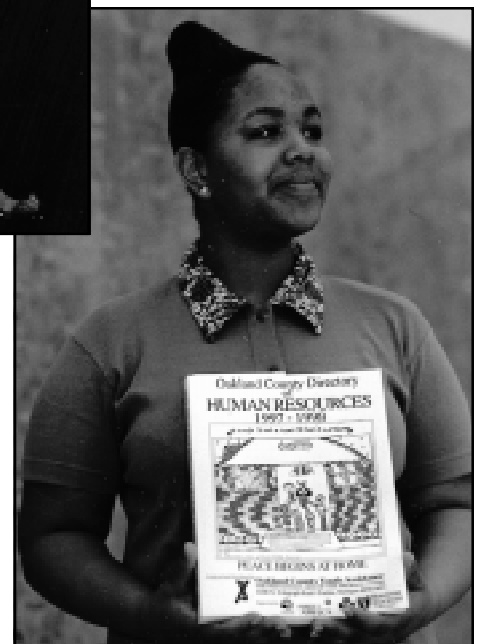
YCS ON THE MOVE! In December 1997, Oakland County Probate Court and Community Corrections purchased a 15-passenger van to be jointly shared. This van will assist the Youth Community Service Program in the transportation of youths to and from group sites through the county. Accepting the van are (from left to right), Adam Woudstra and Tracy Garza, interns; John Chatley and Gary Prud'Homme, caseworkers, and Palmer Sesti, supervisor.



Probate Court staff and friends coming together to enjoy the Judges Holiday reception. Pictured (from left) Terri Marks, Judge Warshawsky, Sue Friedl, Brian McCaffrey, Doc Prud'Homme, Larry Clarfelt, Jon Luke, J. C. Smith, Don Epperson, and Karlann Hudson.



Erica Malone an 11 year old student from Pontiac, was the artist who produced the cover artwork for the 3rd edition of our Human Resources Directory. She drew the picture as part of a County-wide student art contest and won first prize for her work. The theme of the contest was "Peace Begins At Home." The contest was sponsored jointly by the Child Abuse and Neglect Council of Oakland County and the North Oakland County Creative Arts Center, in observance of Child Abuse Prevention Months - 1995. The contest was also supported by the Children's Trust Fund.



A YEAR IN REVIEW

The Oakland County Board of Commissioners on April 10, 1997, approved a \$770,000 capital improvement and renovation project for Probate Court. Pictured is the newly-completed courtroom now occupied by Judge Linda S. Hallmark, which became operational in January 1998.



Probate Court staff formally come together only a few times each year. One such occasion is the annual Probate Judge's Holiday Reception. On this occasion the Judges express their appreciation to staff for all their hard work and support throughout the year.

This certificate was given in recognition of and appreciation to Mervyn's Stores for their outstanding example of community involvement by offering "Child's Spree" on Saturday, August 9, 1997. On that day, they opened their doors in Novi and Madison Heights early and allowed twenty needy youth (involved in Youth Assistance programs) to go on a back-to-school clothing shopping trip.



The 2nd Annual Probate Court Picnic was held on August 22nd. Although the weather (El Nino) brought the festivities indoors, a good time was had by all! This picnic is funded solely by Probate Court employees.

PROBATE COURT VOLUNTEERS



Citizen's Alliance for the Probate Court members: Pictured (front row) Hon. Linda Hallmark, Lillian Molitz, Suzanne Dreifus, Renee Mahler, Val Greenberg, Helen Andrews, Karen Schultz, Linda Freeland and Irving Rose, (middle row) Phil Roller, Ron Auten, Hugh Dean, Henry Knight, Earl Kuhlik, Carl Pardon and Dick Thibodeau, (back row) Hon. Eugene Arthur Moore, Boris Sellers, Bill Penner, Dr. James O'Neill, Dan Nover, Dave Wolf, Robert Bingham, and Roger Winkelman.

CITIZENS ALLIANCE FOR THE PROBATE COURT VOLUNTEERS: First established in 1991, the Citizens Alliance membership represents a cross-section of key community leaders and citizen representatives and continues to help the Probate Court carry out its mission. Outstanding accomplishments of the Citizens Alliance during 1997 included:

- ❑ Continued and expanded sponsorship of the popular "Removing the Mysteries of the Probate Court" seminars. The 1997 seminars were held in Pontiac, Farmington, Milford, Rochester, and Ferndale, and together were attended by over 1,000 citizens.
- ❑ The planning and carrying out of an innovative "Art in the Court" Project. Following through on the vision of Court Administrator, Robert Bingham, a task force of well-known and respected leaders from Oakland County's art community worked with the Alliance to implement a "Call for Works of Art," a jurored exhibit at the Oakland County Executive Office Building Galleria (featuring 44 works of art) and culminating in the selection of 16 final art pieces to be permanently displayed at the Courthouse to enhance the Court's environment. The art juror was Gerhardt Knodel of Cranbrook Academy of Art. Chairperson of the Art in the Court was Waterford artist, Bonnie Brede. Art Curator for the Project was Mary Denison. Citizens Alliance members and supporting corporations contributed over \$16,000 to the project.
- ❑ Citizens Alliance members also assisted in the Court-wide 1997 Volunteer Recognition Event held at West Bloomfield High School.
- ❑ Members of the Alliance continued their support of the New Directions Institute Alternative School Program (sponsored by Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency), which evolved from the Alliance's earlier support of the original Youth Build concept.



Art in the Court reception attendees pictured at the May 6th reception, which opened the month-long "Art in the Court" Exhibition are, from left to right: Bonnie Brede, Project Chairperson; Robert Bingham, Probate Court Administrator; Mary Dennison, Art Curator; Steve Weikal, Coordinator, Oakland County Office of Arts, Culture and Film; Renee Mahler, member of the Citizens Alliance for the Probate Court and Judge Eugene Arthur Moore, Chief Probate Judge.