

# What We Do

*by Lisa Langton  
Family Division Administrator -  
Probate/Juvenile Register*



For those of you who frequent our Probate counter, you have noticed over the past few months that we have changed the way in which we do business at the counter. We have established different stations for specific filings. These designated stations will reduce your waiting time and increase the expertise and efficiency of our staff. We have also moved our Mental Health staff to our Probate counter so that all filings within Probate Court may now be done at our main counter. The Mental Health office will be used for non-public staff functions.

Currently, our counter is set up as follows:

**Stations 1 and 2:** These stations are designated for filings for Mental Health matters, including guardianships of Developmentally Disabled Persons.

**Stations 3, 4 and 5:** These stations are designated for filings dealing with Guardianships and Conservatorships for adults and minors.

**Station 6:** This station is designated as an overflow station where you may be directed if we have the need for an additional station due to high volume at one station.

**Stations 7, 8, 9 and 10:** These stations are designated for filings dealing with Decedent Estates and Trusts.

Our cash register remains located in the same area and we also have a station that can accommodate those persons in wheelchairs.

If you have filings for different matters – for example, guardianship filings as well as decedent estate filings – you should stand in line at one of the designated stations. After completing your filing, you will be directed to the next person at the designated station for the other filing.

If you want to review a file and do not have anything new to file, you may go directly to our file room and the staff will assist you. If after review you need to make copies of a file, our staff can make up to 10 copies for you immediately. If you need more than 10 copies, you may have to wait for a period of time, depending upon our volume at the time. I highly recommend that you choose a date other than Wednesday mornings if you need copies from a file.

This is perhaps our highest volume time due to the majority of motion calls being held on that day.

Our Probate experts include a Chief of Probate Court, a secretary, two supervisors and a case management coordinator.

**Jill Koney Daly** is the Chief of Probate Court–Estates and Mental Health. She oversees the staff, two supervisors, the case management coordinator and a secretary. Jill is available to address your concerns regarding filing issues after you have dealt with these matters at the counter, through the staff person and /or supervisor. If you ever are not satisfied with the response you receive from the staff or supervisor, please feel free to contact Jill at 248-858-0282. If you have a legal matter to discuss, you may talk with Jill although by law she is prohibited from giving you legal advice. If you have compliments or concerns with respect to specific staff, please feel free to bring those matters to Jill as well.

Jill’s secretary, **Pat Hays**, handles secretarial duties for her as well as for the Chief of Juvenile, Adoptions and Intake, Lauran Howard. Pat is also responsible for forwarding telephone messages to our Children’s Advocates (formerly known as CASA) on our minor guardianship files, as their numbers are not available to the public or attorneys. If Jill is unavailable or out of the office, feel free to leave a message with Pat Hays or call me directly.

The Probate Court has a case management coordinator, **Carol Esher**, who is in charge of assigning and monitoring all of the mandated guardianship reviews. Carol is also our resource person for the Children’s Advocates assigned by our judges to our minor guardianship files to conduct home studies. Among Carol’s many tasks, she also recruits, trains and maintains our court volunteers who perform many of our guardianship reviews.

Most of you will recognize our two court supervisors, **Mary Jo Best** and **Mary Batchelor**. Mary Jo Best supervises the clerical and file room staff. She is also our unit leader for our guardianship and conservatorship unit. These staff are located at stations three through five as referenced

above. If you have any questions or concerns regarding guardianship or conservatorship files, you should bring these to her attention or contact her at 248-858-2585. If she is not at her desk, please feel free to leave a message and she will return your call.

Mary Batchelor supervises our Deputy Probate Registers and Probate Specialists. She is also the unit leader for our Estates and Trusts unit, which can be found at stations seven through ten. As with Mary Jo, any questions or concerns regarding decedent estates or trust files should be brought to Mary Batchelor's attention. Feel free to call her at 248-858-0277 and, of course, if she is not at her desk she will return your call as soon as practical.

One final note – the Probate Court recently converted to a new computer system. The conversion may cause some

minor inconveniences including some down time, staff training and perhaps a learning curve at the counter with some slower service time as we get “used to” our new system. We have been working hard at training and staff members are taking weekly trips to Lansing to get trained for the conversion. In future *Laches* articles I hope to provide you with some practical tips and changes that you may experience due to our new system.

The Oakland County Probate Court staff is committed to providing you with the best service in the State of Michigan. Our goal is always to be courteous, helpful, efficient and knowledgeable. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you have regarding our new counter set-up and the functions performed by our key staff. Stay tuned!

## THE OCBA NEEDS YOU...

### TO MENTOR NEW LAWYERS & LAW STUDENTS!



The Oakland County Bar Association needs you to volunteer to be a Mentor to a deserving lawyer or law student. Help a new lawyer or law student to network; introduce him/her to Lawyers, Judges, Friend of the Court Personnel, Clerks and Court Staff; and invite him or her to OCBA events.

**You can help to improve the practice of law!**

**Be a Mentor!**

**Please call (before she calls you...)**

Anne Cole Pierce 248.855.5200  
*Volunteer Mentor Program Coordinator  
for New Lawyers*

If you want to Mentor a law student,  
call Lisa Stadig Elliot at 248.334.3400