

www.oakgov.com/probate

by *Rebecca A. Schnelz*
Probate Court Administrator



At some point in this column, I usually mention the Oakland County Probate Court Web site and refer readers there for further information. If you haven't already explored the Web site, it will likely be well worth your while to do so the next time you have Probate Court-related questions. (Or you can do it just for fun.)

Forms

One of the most common reasons we refer people to the Web site is for forms. There are many form changes each year and in many cases we cannot accept older versions of the form for filing. Jill Koney Daly, the Probate Register, works very hard to ensure that the forms are kept as up-to-date as possible on our Web site. There is also a link to the SCAO forms Web page for those forms we don't have on our page. Please be sure to use this resource as it will help to prevent extra trips to the courthouse or receiving filings back in the mail due to outdated forms.

Judicial Schedule On-Line

One of the newer information sources available on our site is the *Judicial Schedule On-Line*. By following a link on our home page, users may access a tool that allows them to see a particular judge's docket for a particular day. This can be used to ensure that a case has been scheduled for the expected date, to verify the hearing time, etc.

The information provided contains most scheduled court dates (Circuit Court dates are available as well). Juvenile and non-public record dates are not visible. It does take a few business days for the scheduling information to get posted to the computer and be available on the Web site. If a date does not appear on the calendar after appropriate processing time, please contact the judge's chambers to determine if there are any issues. For Register hearings, please contact the Probate Register.

Users of this calendar need to understand that it is provided for convenience only. If someone has been subpoenaed or otherwise ordered to appear in court and that date does not appear online, they should contact the judge's chambers for clarification. They should not ignore a court order to appear.

Judge On-Line

On the Probate Court's home page is a link to information and forms regarding "Judge On-Line" (JOL). For those of you unfamiliar with this service, JOL is a communication option that allows parties and attorneys to appear for a hearing by phone. There is a \$30 fee for this service and there are specific requirements regarding notice and arranging for the use of JOL. Most importantly, this option is only available with the assigned judge's prior approval.

"Info & Publications"

From the Probate Court's main page, a user may select the "Info & Publications" link to gain access to a wide variety of useful information. A link to the court's policies regarding several subjects may be found here, as well as links to information regarding court fees, payment vouchers, and even past *LACHES* articles. The link to the brochures found here may be of particular assistance to clients, or to attorneys who need to refresh their memory regarding some probate basics. The brochures cover a wide range of topics including guardianships, conservatorships, mental health, and developmentally disabled guardianships. There are also brochures regarding inventories and accounts, administering a decedent's estate, depositing a will, and disposition of small estates.

Miscellaneous

There is a variety of general information throughout the site that may prove of assistance to you or your clients when working with a probate case. General hours information, contact numbers and the holiday schedule are available, as well as maps and driving directions. In particular, the "Frequently Asked Questions" link provides answers to common basic questions regarding estates, inventories, wills, and many other areas that can be confusing for non-practitioners.

The Oakland County Probate Court's Web site is an excellent resource. It has been recognized by the National College of Probate Judges as a Top 10 Court Web Site. It is also an area that we are continually working to keep up-to-date and to improve. Be sure and bookmark us at www.oakgov.com/probate.