

Thank You, Judge Grant

by Rebecca A. Schnelz
Probate Court Administrator



Writing the monthly LACHES column is sometimes difficult. I believe this column will be one of my most difficult to write because of the topic.

The issue causing me such conflict is the upcoming retirement of Judge Barry Grant. He will be leaving the bench at the end of this calendar year after serving more than 31 years as an Oakland County Probate Court judge. It's hard to imagine the court without his presence. As Chief Probate Judge Elizabeth Pezzetti points out, "He brings incredible energy and creativity to his work."

Judge Grant began the practice of law in 1961 and served as an assistant prosecutor from 1961-64. He was appointed to the Oakland County Probate Court by Gov. Milliken in September 1977, and has served continuously since that time. During his years on the bench, Judge Grant has touched many lives. Fellow Probate Court Judge Linda Hallmark noted, "Judge Grant's finest quality is compassion. He deeply cares for the litigants and the lawyers who appear in front of him."

Probate Court Judge Eugene Arthur Moore emphasized Judge Grant's tenacity in working to accomplish goals. "He has fought for countless improvements over the years to enhance the Probate Court and the parties it serves," Judge Moore explained. "If he thinks something needs improving, he makes sure it gets addressed. He believes the Probate Court is here to serve and help others."

Throughout his career, Judge Grant has dedicated himself not only to those appearing before him, but to improving our profession as well. He currently serves as the chairperson of the Michigan Judicial Tenure Commission. In fact, he has been re-elected to the JTC as Probate Court Representative since 1986, and is the longest-serving member in the history of the commission. In addition, he has dedicated time to the American Judicature Society, the American Bar Association, and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, to name just a few. He is a past president of both the National College of Probate Judges, and the Michigan Probate and Juvenile Judges Association.

Among many other recognitions, Judge Grant is the recipient of the Citation of Appreciation Award from the Michigan Society for the Mentally Disabled and the Eleanor Roosevelt Humanities Award.

Many readers may not be aware of the depth and variety of Judge Grant's experiences during the course of

his career. He has served on the Oakland Schools Board of Education, the Parent-Youth Guidance Commission for the City of Southfield, the Michigan Traffic Safety Commission and the Southfield Board of Education. He has been the chairman for the William Beaumont Hospital Research Institute and has served on the board of directors for the Oakland County Chapter of the Michigan Heart Foundation, the Oakland County Chapter YMCA, the Oakland County Chapter of the Boy Scouts of America, the Oakland County Mental Health Board, and the Michigan Cancer Foundation.

Judge Grant was also a newspaper columnist, authoring a weekly column for the *Detroit Free Press* for 10 years, and the *Detroit News* for eight.

His fellow judges are the first to note the personal qualities that have helped to make Judge Grant such an important part of this court. Judge Pezzetti notes, "Judge Grant has had a profound effect on thousands of lives through his dedication to the Oakland County Probate Court. As his colleague, I am grateful to him for that service and for his generous guidance and friendship."

Judge Hallmark stresses, "Barry is a great and caring friend. He's the first to call and offer help and advice in difficult times. His humor helps to relieve the everyday stresses of this difficult job. The greatest tribute to Barry is to try and emulate his kindness and compassion."

Judge Grant's impact on the Oakland County Probate Court is impossible to quantify. Clearly, his daily presence will be greatly missed. I personally will miss having him down the hall where I can stop in to get good advice, to tease him, or to remind him why maize and blue are generally the better colors. His sense of humor, his camaraderie with his colleagues, and his rapport with the Probate Court staff have made him a joy to work for and with.

I did ask Judge Grant's wonderful wife of almost 49 years (affectionately known as Saint Lisa) what will change when the judge retires and is home during the day. She wasn't sure, but thought that volunteer work that takes her out of the house was a definite possibility.

Please join the entire Oakland County Probate Court staff in recognizing Judge Grant's many contributions to our court **and** to the citizens of Oakland County as well as the State of Michigan. We wish him much happiness in the wonderful adventure of retirement.