The Judicial Branch News

Volume 4, Issue 6 June 2009

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The *Judicial Branch News* is an online newsletter published by the Media Relations and Community Outreach Department. The newsletter is also available on the Court's Intranet site at: http://courts.maricopa.gov/publicInfo/newsLetter/index.asp

If you wish to contribute to this newsletter, please send articles, news items, photos or other correspondence to: karra@superiorcourt.maricopa.gov.

"Committed to the Timely, Fair and Impartial Administration of Justice."

Presiding Judge Receives Honor

Resource Development Director Lara Slifko of The Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education presents Presiding Judge Barbara Rodriguez Mundell with the 2009 Mark Santana Law-Related Education Award.

The Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education named Presiding Judge Barbara Rodriguez Mundell as the 2009 recipient of its Mark Santana Law-Related Education Award.

Judge Mundell accepted the award on June 12th during the Arizona Civics Summit at the Mercado in Downtown Phoenix.

The award recognizes exceptional contributions of Arizona attorneys or law firms in furthering education and understanding of the role of the law in our democratic society. This award focuses on public awareness of the contributions that attorneys provide to the community.

The award is named in honor of Superior Court Judge Mark Santana. Judge Santana served on the Superior Court bench for five years before passing away in 2005. He is remembered as a legal scholar who was upbeat, friendly and soft-spoken.

Message From the Presiding Judge

Barbara Rodriguez Mundell
Presiding Judge

Criminal Court Consolidation Promotes Safety and Efficiency While Saving Tax Dollars

In our ongoing effort to improve safety and efficiency, Superior Court is moving five criminal trial judges from the Southeast Regional Court Center to downtown Phoenix. The first of the five criminal trial judges will move to the downtown court complex in July 2009. Plans are underway to relocate the four remaining Southeast criminal divisions this winter, most likely in December 2009.

Maricopa County's Master Space Plan includes a goal to centralize criminal trials near the county jail. Voters have twice endorsed downtown criminal court consolidation in 1998 and again in 2002. One of the authorized uses of the voter-approved Jail Excise Tax, as set out in the Arizona Statutes and the election publicity pamphlets, is consolidating criminal divisions of the superior court in the county to a common location."

The tough economic times have forced the court to take a hard look at ways to maximize our limited resources to continue to deliver jury trials in a timely manner. Our budget and staff continue to shrink, while caseloads continue to grow. Centralizing criminal trials will make more efficient use of staff to cover court duties without having to pay for outside contractor services.

This move will also benefit victims, police officers, witnesses and jurors. If numerous trials are ready to go on the same day, we will have more back-up criminal judges to handle overflow cases on the day scheduled for trial. Witnesses and potential jurors will no longer be inconvenienced by having to wait until another date for trial or make wasted trips to the courthouse. These measures are not only better ways of doing business, they will also save tax dollars.

Most of the criminal cases at Southeast will remain there. In FY2008, of the 10,690 new criminal filings at Southeast, only 144 cases (1.3%) went to trial. In other words, a very low percentage of the cases require police officers and witnesses to travel to court. That same year, 6,801 cases (64%) were resolved in the Southeast Regional Court Center or Early Disposition Court. These cases will stay at the Southeast complex.

The number of judges and courtrooms in use at the Southeast court will stay the same. We are planning to send five family and civil court judges to the Southeast complex. This will enhance the Southeast Court's ability to resolve more child support issues, divorces and orders of protection to better serve the residents of the East Valley.

Newsmakers

Deputy Court Administrator Completes Fellowship

Christopher G. Bleuenstein is pictured in the last row, second from the right. Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court John G. Roberts, Jr., is pictured sixth from left, second row.

Christopher G. Bleuenstein, deputy criminal court administrator, became a Fellow and Certified Court Executive of the Institute for Court Management by successfully completing the ICM's Court Executive Development Program. Bleuenstein and 21 other court professionals from around the United States took part in graduation ceremonies conducted at the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C.

Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court John G. Roberts Jr. welcomed and addressed the graduates.

The Court Executive Development Program is the only program of its kind in the United States. This professional certification program was established more than 30 years ago, in part, by Chief Justice Warren E. Burger in his call for improving the management of state court administration. The intensive four-phase educational program better prepares court professionals for management and leadership positions. Since the first class of CEDP graduates in 1970, more than 1,100 court professionals in 48 states, the District of Columbia, Guam and 12 foreign countries have become fellows.

A Special K-9 Visits Court

Brittney Shields, a Centennial High School student and dog trainer, (left) and Jamie Mayberry, (right) Victim Advocate Chief with the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, bring Sam the Service Dog to the East Court Building and, during another visit, to a recent criminal bench meeting.

Sam, an Irish Setter and Golden Retriever mix, is trained in psycho-therapy, and he assists victims of crime, primarily children, during court proceedings.

According to Mayberry, service dogs like Sam have been proven to help lower the anxiety levels of victims who are asked to testify in court.

Probation News

Garcia VIP Mentoring Program

Juvenile Probation staff have been providing motivation, leadership skills and guidance to Garcia Elementary students for the past eight years.

As part of this year's Garcia VIP Mentoring Program, Juvenile Probation Department employees volunteered to mentor nine 7th and 8th graders from the Garcia Elementary School who would best benefit from the companionship and guidance of a mentor.

The Garcia VIP Program is a mentoring program, which matches Juvenile Probation staff with at-risk students from Garcia Elementary School in the juvenile court community.

The mentors meet with their students on a voluntary basis every Thursday, during their lunch hour, throughout the school year to assist them with developing life skills. The students discuss the particular challenges they face, and the mentors help them to establish personal goals. These students are supported and encouraged by their mentors to succeed in their academics, relationships with peers and within their family environment.

This year's volunteers include: **Aurora Valenzuela**, **Melody Cabrera**, **Debra Olsen**, **Adelowo Adeniran**,**Mitzi Ruiz-Moreno**, **Melissa Ohman**, **Sarah Embury**, **Pamela Beasley**, **Elvia Davis**, **Larry Marquez** and **Joni LaCaria**.

Submitted by Joni LaCaria
Juvenlie Probation

Probation Program Receives Award

Maricopa County Adult Probation Department's Education Program was awarded the Administrative Office of the Court's 2009 Literacy Education and Resource Network (L.E.A.R.N.) Lab of the Year Award.

Throughout Arizona, MCAPD has been known to initiate some of the best innovative and creative educational programming. Because of this, many educational services and scholarships have been made available to MCAPD students that otherwise would not be accessible. Approximately 2,100 students are expected to receive classes and instruction by the end of the year.

MCAPD has developed tremendous support from the community, local judiciary, state, county and local jurisdictions as well as the State and Federal Departments of Education.

Letters from the Arizona Judicial Branch and Arizona Department of Education proclaim the exemplary educational accomplishments of MCAPD. According to an excerpt from a letter by the Department of Education's Deputy Associate Superintendent Karen Liersch , "The administration and staff at MCAPD have taken a leadership role in Project L.E.A.R.N. with Lindell Rhodes, Education Director serving as the former Chair of the Project L.E.A.R.N. State Advisory Council. MCAPD is recognized as a leader in the field in service to clients who need to improve their reading and writing or math skills, learn to communicate better in English or who want to prepare to take the GED exam."

This is the second time in the last three years MCAPD won the award.

Submitted by Lindell W. Rhodes
Adult Probation

New Judge Q and A: James Beene

Q. What has surprised you the most about making the transition from a deputy county attorney to judge? Please explain.

I'm still surprised (and humbled) that people stand up when I enter the courtroom.

Q. You spent your entire legal career in public service. What made you pursue a legal career in public service?

Public service has always been my motivation. I have several examples of career public servants in my family, including my father, John Beene, who served as a civil engineer for the United States Forest Service, and my great uncle, Art Celaya, who has been very active in public service, including serving as Superintendent of the Florence Unified School District from 1971-1988, and then for two terms in the Arizona House of Representatives from 1989-1992. Consequently, I have always had a love for the workings of government and a desire to be a contributing part of the public forum.

Q. Who has been the biggest inspiration in your legal career?

This may seem an odd choice since I've spent the bulk of my career as a prosecutor, but I have always admired Chief Justice Earl Warren. Many forget that Chief Justice Warren was also a longtime prosecutor—and a tough, effective one at that. However, he also proved sensitive to the rights of the accused. I admire that balance.

Q. Do you have a favorite movie or television show in the court or legal genre? Please explain.

One of my favorite legal movies (and books) is *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. Atticus Finch's closing argument in the trial of the falsely accused Tom Robinson makes the point that all are equal in a court of law. It inspired me as a child when I first read it, and it still inspires me today. On the lighter side, I like *My Cousin Vinny*. Perhaps that is mostly because Joe Pesci's character reminds me of my early days as an attorney. I have had the experience of being excoriated for my courtroom attire, though I have never been as stylish as Vinny.

Q. If you had a day to spend with anyone (living or dead, real or fictional), who would it be and what would you do?

I have always been an avid reader of nonfiction, particularly of American historical and presidential biographies, so it's hard to choose just one person. I am especially compelled by the quintessential American story of overcoming hardship and rising from humble circumstances to achieve a long held, ambitious goal. If I had to choose just one, I might spend a day at Johnson Ranch in Johnson City, Texas with President Lyndon B. Johnson. LBJ was a man of great contradictions in character, but he was a fascinating American with a keen political mind and who, despite an arguably racist past, was pivotal in the passing of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965. Only a Southern Democrat could have achieved their passage, and I'd love to hear his account of his journey from the impoverished Hill Country of Texas to the United States Capitol and the White House.

Q. Do you own an IPOD? If so, what songs are currently in your playlist?

In the Evening and *Going to California*, Led Zepplin; *Take the "A" Train* and *Black and Tan Fantasy*, Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra; *Bach Cello Suites*, Yo-Yo Ma; *The Drowning Man Knows His God* and *Scalp Salad*, The Mermen; *Children of the Sea* and *Mob Rules*, Black Sabbath; and *Tosca*, Giacomo Puccini.

Service Awards

At the beginning of the Board of Supervisors meeting on June 15, employees from Maricopa County were recognized for their years of dedicated service. Among those honored from the Judicial Branch included: **William P. Lawlor**, 35 years, Trial Courts, **Gary J. Tassi**, 30 years, Adult Probation, **Patrick C. Nedved**, 30 years, Adult Probation and **Janice J. Landmeier**, 30 years, Trial Courts.

Left to right - Adult Probation Deputy Chief **Zach Dal Pra**, Adult Probation Chief **Barbara Broderick**, **Patrick C. Nedved** (award recipient) and Supervisor **Donald Stapley**

Left to right - Adult Probation Supervisor **Eric Marmont**, Adult Probation Division Director **Margaret Callaway**, Adult Probation Deputy Chief **Mike Goss**, Adult Probation Chief **Barbara Broderick**, **Gary Tassi** (award recipient) and Supervisor **Donald Stapley**

Court Administrator **Marcus Reinkensmeyer**, Deputy Criminal Court Administrator **Paula Collins**, Human Resources/Admin. Services Director **Phillip Hanley**, Criminal Court Supervisor **Susan Thomas** and Judicial Assistant **Jan Landmeier** (award recipient)

CCB Remodel Completed

The newly remodeled Regional Court Center in the basement of the Central Court Building opened on June 15th. *(Pictured above - Lobby of RCC)*

Caseflow Management Training

A new Computer Based Training, "Caseflow Management Fundamentals" is available online. Matt Fertig, formally a distance learning specialist, developed the program in-house, using the National Center for State Courts "Caseflow Toolbox" for content.

The program provides an overview of case management and describes the different approaches to managing calendars. It's intended to provide court staff with a broad overview of case management concepts and philosophies. The training could be used as an orientation tool for supervisors/managers new to the court system. It would also be useful for staff seeking to understand a general overview of court operations.

I hope you find this new distance learning program to be helpful. Please follow the link below to access the program:

http://courts.maricopa.gov/training/cojet/programs.asp?OnlineCourseID=99

Submitted by Elizabeth Evans
Training and Education

News and Notes

Web Broadcasting Team Wins NACo

Employees from the Media Relations and Community Outreach Office, Court Technology Services and Electronic Records Services were awarded a NACo for their Web Broadcasting program.

The program was developed to help the Court relay important court case information to the news media and the public by posting high profile video clips to Superior Court's web site.

The project has been a cost effective venture because it allows reporters and members of the public the opportunity to view court events without coming to the courthouse. It also allows television, radio, print and web bloggers the ability to download and broadcast the clips free of charge and at no cost to the Court.

Members of the media have praised the Court about the accessibility to high profile videos. The current economic landscape has forced many media outlets to lay off numerous reporters and photographers. More and more, the media is reliant on media relations staff to help report their news stories.

Award recipients are: **Karen Arra**, **Vincent Funari**, **Bert Binder**, **Ken Crenshaw**, **Andy Cicchillo**, **Ric Napoli** and **Martin Dominguez.**

Watch The Court Tower Being Built

Employees can go to the county website and watch the Court Tower Project construction. The construction company has posted a webcam that updates every minute. To see the latest developments, go to: http://www.maricopa.gov/courttower and click on ***Live Construction Camera***.

President Obama Greets Juvenile Probation Employee

Juvenile Probation's Derek Platt shakes the hand of President of the of United States Barack Obama.

Derrick Platt, a supervisor with the Juvenile Probation Department, received a PhD in Psychology of Education and an interdisciplinary in juvenile justice from Arizona State University.

While Derrick was one of the many thousands that day who had the honor of experiencing the commencement speech delivered by President Obama, he was one of the few who were privileged to be personally congratulated by the President.

Submitted by Debra Olsen
Juvenile Probation

Courtside

Photo Highlights

*Left to right - **Louis Martinez**, **Mary Lou Strehle** and **Commissioner Robert Colosi** pose for a picture following their retirement celebration. All three employees retired within the last month.*

***Cynthia Puklin**, Judicial Assistant to Civil Presiding **Judge Mark Aceto**, retires after 18 years of service.*

*Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator **Terri Jackson** and her husband, **Judge Thomas Dunevant III** (center), with Court Administrator **Marcus Reinkensmeyer** (left) and Deputy Court Administrator **Hugh Gallagher** (right) at Jackson's retirement party. Jackson retired after 33 years of dedicated service.*

*Superior Court **Judge Pendleton Gaines** celebrates his 10-year anniversary on the bench with his staff.*

*(Left to right) - **Tina Brown**, Judicial Assistant, **Anita Beery**, Clerk, **Pendleton Gaines,** Judge, **Debbie Croci**, Court Reporter and **Jessica Morones**, Bailiff.*