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The *Judicial Branch News* is an online newsletter published by the Media Relations and Community Outreach Department.

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."



New Courthouses Move Forward With Funding and Planning

The Court is no longer just stretching to the east, west, north and south points of Maricopa County; it is also reaching skyward, Court Administrator Marcus Reinkensmeyer reports.

"Our county leaders have put into motion an exciting expansion effort in downtown Phoenix - planning for a Criminal Court Tower," Reinkensmeyer said. "The Board of Supervisors has also authorized construction of a Southwest Justice Center and the expansion of the Southeast Regional Court."

Planning efforts for the Criminal Court Tower are currently in an early phase. Stakeholders, including representatives of the public, Superior Court, Clerk of the Court, Public Defender, County Attorney, Adult Probation, Sheriff's Office and County Manager's Office, will be involved in planning sessions with architects and county management.

The tower has many challenges, including determining how to best address issues related to building a tower connecting to existing buildings and how the new facility will enhance downtown's changing environment. It is critical to get input about the individual needs of public and private lawyers, judges, court staff members, criminal justice agencies and the various court customers.



The Capital Improvement Plan should provide improved accessibility to court services throughout Maricopa County.

Reinkensmeyer extends an invitation to all stakeholders to make their concerns and needs be known now, while the project is still early in the planning and design stage.

"A key component of the court capital improvement plan is that each new facility provides improved accessibility to court services throughout Maricopa County, which is why input from stakeholders is so important at this stage of the planning process," said Reinkensmeyer.

Arguably, the most extensive regional plan is focused on creating a Southwest Justice Center. Finding land on which to build the facility was a huge effort.

In November, the Board of Supervisors authorized the purchase of a 40-acre site in Avondale for \$11.5 million.

New Courthouse Planning - continued on page 2

Message From the Presiding Judge



Barbara Rodriguez Mundell
Presiding Judge

Presently, our state senators and state representatives are preparing for the 2007 legislative session, during which they will decide issues about money, laws, rights and responsibilities that will impact every resident in the state.

The judicial branch, separate in purpose but equal in responsibility, must comply with decisions made by our legislators, just as

our state's tax-payers, electors and residents must do. It is necessary for the courts to inform and educate our lawmakers about resources – financial and administrative – that are necessary for judges to fulfill their mission to provide timely, fair and impartial justice in individual cases.

“View from the Bench,” is an outreach program in which Superior Court judges host state legislators in their courtrooms and chambers to provide our lawmakers with the opportunity to observe court proceedings and other judicial tasks performed everyday in Superior Court.

The program is overseen by Judge John Buttrick, with the assistance of Community Outreach Director Patricia Seguin.

Legislators have been making visits to Superior Court since November. The visits here will continue throughout the month of January. The judges will be visiting the legislature in February and March.

A crucial component of the program's success is to match legislators with judges who can best showcase areas of interest that the representative or senator has indicated is of particular importance to him or her.

When a Superior Court Judge visits the capitol, he or she has the opportunity to sit in on appropriate legislative proceedings and committee hearings. Our judges also are invited to join legislators in their offices while conducting business.

All of the participants of last year's program indicated it was a great success. I'm confident this year will be another success – for the judges, state legislators and the community.

Judge Mundell to Speak at Diversity Celebration Event

The Diversity Office and the Diversity Celebration Planning Team is planning to continue its monthly diversity celebrations with a “Unity Day Celebration” in Maricopa County on January 24, 2007, from 10:30am to 12:30pm in the Board of Supervisors Auditorium.

The Keynote speaker will be Superior Court Presiding Judge Barbara Rodriguez Mundell.

For more information, please contact the Diversity Office at 602-506-8094.

New Courthouse Planning - continued from page 1

The total cost of the project is \$91.5 million and will feature a 20-room courthouse in which four Justices of the Peace will be co-located, with provisions for an additional court in anticipation of a future Justice Court precinct (which would create a 24th Justice of the Peace precinct in the county). Also included at this location will be 12 Superior Court divisions and three Regional Court Center/Early Disposition felony courts.

Offices for Adult Probation are among the agencies located inside the courthouse also. Incorporating probation facilities inside the court building improves security for probation customers and employees, because everyone entering the building will be required to pass through screening equipment required of all visitors to county court buildings to assure weapons and other prohibited items are not brought into the facility.

For convenience, the site is on a primary bus route and near Interstate 10, improving access for customers and workers.

It is projected that an architect may be selected in February. Court officials say this project is on schedule to be completed by mid-2009.

“We're in a dynamic capital development mode,” said Reinkensmeyer. “Over the next decade, court services, access and convenience will be dramatically improved for the community we serve.”

Judicial Branch Newsmakers

Honored Judge Announces Retirement from Superior Court

Superior Court Judge Barry Schneider has announced he is retiring at the end of January, 2007, ending a 21-year judicial career during which he received several awards honoring his outstanding judicial qualities.



Judge Barry Schneider

"It has been an honor and privilege to serve the State of Arizona as a trial judge since February 1986," he said in his letter to the governor, advising that his last day will be January 31. He plans to return to the practice of law, specializing in mediation.

During his judicial career, he served as presiding judge of the Domestic Relations Department from 1995 to 1998 and Civil Department Presiding Judge from 1988 to 1991 and again from 1999 to 2001. He currently is assigned to a civil calendar.

In 2002, Judge Schneider received the State Bar of Arizona President's Award as the judge "who has contributed enormous effort towards the furtherance of the (state bar) president's goals and priorities. That same year he also was named "Judicial Officer of the Year," by the Phoenix chapter of the American board of Trial Advocates. The Maricopa County Bar Association honored him in 1997 with the Henry S. Stevens Award, as "Outstanding Judge."

Judge Schneider also is an educator. He has been a faculty member at the Arizona College of Trial Advocacy and has taught at New Judge Orientation of the

Arizona Judicial College. He has been an adjunct faculty member at the Phoenix College of Law and the Arizona State University College of Law. The Arizona Legislature appointed him to two councils it had created including the Child Support Coordinating Council and the Domestic Relations Reform Subcommittee.

Judge Schneider received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Harpur College (now Binghamton University) in 1964 and his law degree from St. John's University of Law in 1968 where he was an editor of the law review. He was admitted to practice in New York in 1968 and in Arizona in 1972. Before becoming a judge, he was an associate at Langerman, Begam, Lewis & Marks and then a partner with Rosen & Schneider.

Judge Honored by Victims Group

A poignant emblem of crime victims sits on a table top in the office of Superior Court **Judge Ron Reinstein**. It is the "Empty Shoes Award" given to him earlier this month by the "Parents of Murdered Children" victims' organization.

The artistic memento is an empty pair of child sized brass shoes encased in glass.

"These empty shoes represent our loved ones who were taken violently from us but also represent the shoes you have filled through your support of this organization," says the etched message on the black glass box containing the shoes.

Judge Reinstein has been on the Superior Court bench since 1985, during which he has earned the respect of many community, legal and governmental groups which

have honored him with countless awards. Many of the awards have been in recognition of his dedication to championing victims' rights issues.

He currently is chairman of the Arizona Supreme Court Commission on Victims in the Courts. He serves as a consultant to the national Office of Violence Against Women and the Office of Victims of Crime. Judge Reinstein also serves the National Center for State Courts' Judicial Education Project for Victims Rights and Victimization.

Commissioners Join the Bench

Superior Court Presiding Judge Barbara Rodriguez Mundell announced the appointment of **Gerald Grant** and **Peter Thompson** as the two newest commissioners to join the Superior Court bench. Grant is assigned to Juvenile Court and Thompson is with Family Court.

Grant served the past 14 years as chief of the Criminal Appeals Bureau of the Maricopa County Attorney's Office. Before joining the county attorney's office, he worked from 1977 to 1991 as senior assistant attorney general in the criminal appeals division. He received his Juris Doctor Degree with distinction from the University of Arizona College of Law.

Thompson developed an expertise over the past 15 years litigating personal injury and civil rights cases. Since 2000, he worked as staff attorney for the Mesa Police Department. He received his Juris Doctor Degree from J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University.

Court Briefs

News from around the Court

Court Extends Hours to Nights, Saturdays

Lights in Superior Court will burn into the evening as Family Court and Juvenile Court proceedings move to Night Court. There will also be Saturday Court under an innovative plan - scheduling court hearings at non-traditional times to better serve court customers.

Court will be called to order for the first night session on Tuesday, January 30. The first Saturday court sessions will begin four days later, on February 3.

The extended court hours will be available to all Family Court litigants, but cases will initially be heard only at the Northeast Regional Court Facility, 42nd Street and Union Hills Drive, in Phoenix. Juvenile Court cases will be heard at the Juvenile Court Center, Durango just east of 30th Avenue. Family Court hearings for Night/Saturday Court will be primarily scheduled at the request of litigants unless the court needs to schedule additional matters to better utilize court resources. Hours for the alternative schedules are Tuesday to Friday until 9 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Juvenile Court, which is setting hearings without a request from individuals who are parties in the case, will remain open Tuesday through Friday until 9 p.m. and on alternate Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. beginning Feb. 3.

"The purpose of moving proceedings into the evening and on weekends, is to provide people who work, attend school and have other demands during the day with a timely and more convenient

alternative to resolve their pending cases without adding undue financial and emotional stress to the parents and children from daytime conflicts," said Presiding Family Court Judge Norman Davis.

About a dozen programs will be available for Family Court litigants including: decree on demand; support modification; support enforcement; parenting time enforcement; hearings on orders of assignment; hearings on pending orders of protection (new and after-hour emergency orders of protection will continue to be issued as in the past); parenting conferences; mediation; early resolution conferences; Self-Service Center; and educational seminars.

Juvenile Court proceedings will be set for guardianship decisions, emancipation and private adoptions. There will be no delinquency, dependency or severance matters heard during the extended hour calendars. However, the court is reviewing the possibility of delinquency proceedings to begin in the evening and Saturdays sometime after July 1st. There will be no walk-in services provided during extended hours.

"In setting hearings in the Juvenile Court, judicial officers look for the first available date and time, to assure that pending adoptions, guardianships and similar matters are resolved in a timely fashion," explained Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Eileen Willett. "Children's best interests are our top priority always. We want children to have stable, safe, nurturing family settings without undue delay."

Judges who have volunteered for Saturday Family Court duty include Judge Eddward Ballinger, who is the Northeast Court Presiding Judge and Judges Brian Hauser, Cari Harrison and John Rea. Recently appointed Court Commissioner Gerald Grant will preside over Family Night Court proceedings. Newly appointed Commissioner Peter Thompson will preside over the Juvenile Night and Saturday Court.

CTS Supports Night Court

The modifications made by CTS to support the opening of Night and Saturday Court are up and running.

CTS has extended hours to 9 p.m. from Tuesday to Friday and alternating Saturdays from 8:00 am to 5:00 p.m.

Some of the support features include:

- Hearings can be requested in any region in Maricopa County regardless of where the case was filed
- Allow setting hearings on new Night Court and Saturday calendars
- Allow each party to specify if they are interested in a Night or Saturday hearing
- New icons to highlight Night or Saturday interest and hearings
- Updates to Northeast calendars to support new hearing slots
- Capability to search all of the Regional Centers for hearing availability
- Provide popup to warn if a hearing was already scheduled to eliminate double-booking.

Court Briefs

News from around the Court

CTS Technical Support—The Help Desk

Individuals continuously ask how to get help with various technology related issues including a broken keyboard, a new computer, system modification, installation of additional software, etc. CTS made it simple by creating a single point of contact for any technology request. The contact is the CTS Customer Support Center or Help Desk. The Help Desk can

be reached via e-mail by entering "CTS Technical Support" on the "To:" line of an e-mail message or by phone at 602-506-6311. For critical issues that require immediate assistance, CTS suggests calling the Help Desk. For less critical issues, CTS suggests sending the Help Desk an e-mail message.

When seeking technical assistance, it never hurts to copy

others on messages requesting service. However, it can hurt the person in need of service when they exclude the one single point of contact designed to solve or facilitate the solution to any technical issue. Please let CTS help you by first contacting our Help Desk for any technical issue.

Story Submitted by Kevin Westover

Criminal Administration

In December 2006, the Arcadia–Biltmore, Downtown, Encanto, South Mountain, and West McDowell Justice Courts moved out of the facility at One West Madison to their new home at 620 West Jackson. The Superior Court's DUI Center, the grand jury panels, and some elements of Court Security are now preparing to move into that facility once final touch-ups are made to the building.

There are three jury courtrooms and a small hearing room in One West Madison. Two courtrooms are on the ground floor (one adjacent to in-custody holding facilities), the third courtroom (with adjacent holding cells) and the hearing room are in the basement. In addition, the facility contains three general clerical office areas and numerous small offices.

Commissioners Steve Holding, Aimee Anderson and Rick Nothwehr will be moving to One West Madison

sometime in late January or early February. Communication lines are currently being installed as well as some minor renovations to the courtrooms. There will be four grand jury hearing rooms along with offices for the County Attorney, police officers, witnesses, and the Public Defender. The offices of **Judges John Ore** and **Quentin Tolby** along with Justice Court Administrator **Terry Stewart** will remain at the location.

The facility will be very active since last fiscal year the DUI Center held a combined total of 120 trials, took 523 changes of plea, and sentenced 1,330 defendants.

The move will free up three jury courtrooms in the Central Court Building, helping to relieve some pressure on the Court for available courtrooms.

Story Submitted by Peter Kiefer

Statistical Unit

On December 21, Senior Court Statistician **John Reynolds** was appointed by the Supreme Court of Arizona as a member of the new Data Standards Committee.

Reynolds, who will join **Judge Michael Jones** as representatives from Maricopa County Superior Court, will serve on the 16-member committee with representatives from 14 other counties in Arizona.

"The primary functions of the committee include monitoring the Supreme Court policies governing data standards for both general and limited jurisdiction courts, and reviewing and acting on requests for additions, modifications or deletions of existing codes," Reynolds said.

Findings from the committee will be presented to the Arizona Judicial Council's Commission on Technology. The COT is a committee that directs technology efforts and related funding to improve access, efficiency and the quality of justice of the Arizona Court System.

In Memoriam

Judge Fred J. Hyder Portrait Dedicated



The Honorable Fred J. Hyder

On December 18, 2006, Marilyn Hyder, the daughter of deceased Superior Court **Judge Fred J. Hyder**, unveiled the portrait of her father during a ceremony in the Old Courthouse in Phoenix. The painting will join the memorial judicial portrait gallery in the Central Court Building walkway.

In 1954, Judge Hyder was elected as one of Maricopa County's nine Superior Court Judges. He served as a Superior Court trial judge until 1979. During his tenure, Judge Hyder always maintained an active trial calendar, and served as its Presiding Judge from 1966 through 1968. In 1969,

he was the first Arizona Judge to be appointed to the Executive Committee of The National Conference of State Trial Judges.

As a trial judge for 25 years, Judge Hyder presided over multiple cases, some of which eventually had national implications. One case was the landmark case of *Application of Gault*, wherein our U. S. Supreme Court laid down the cornerstone of due process which should be afforded to juveniles in delinquency proceedings.

Judge Hyder passed away in 2000, and is survived by Marion, his wife of 62 years, and three children, Chuck, Bill, and Marilyn.

Adult Probation Employees Honored



Adult Probation Officer William J. Harkins III and Surveillance Officer Elijah Wong are immortalized outside of the Central Court Building in Downtown Phoenix.

The names of two Maricopa County Adult Probation employees were inscribed on the Pillars of Honor in front of the Central Court

Building in downtown Phoenix.

A ceremony was held on December 20, 2006 to honor Adult Probation Officer **William J. Harkins**

III and Surveillance Officer **Elijah Wong**.

Officer William J. Harkins III was named on the Salute Pillar, which recognizes exceptional achievement. Officer Harkins was selected by the United States Marshals Service as the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year 2005 based on the professionalism, courage and valor he demonstrated as a member of a multi-agency fugitive task force.

Officer Elijah Wong was named on the Sacrifice Pillar, which recognizes employees killed in the line of duty. Officer Wong was a sergeant in the National Guard who was deployed to Iraq and assigned to reduce the hazards of munitions and explosives. He died in action on February 9, 2004 while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom in Sinjar, Iraq.

Focus On Juvenile Court

Without an attorney, many people can get lost navigating their way through the court process. That's why Juvenile Court has assigned two court employees at Southeast and Durango to help *Pro Per* litigants find their way.

Regina Rodriguez, of Southeast, and **Lydia Uriel**, of Durango, are two Juvenile Court guides who help *Pro Per* litigants the moment they walk through the door. Without giving legal advice, Rodriguez and Uriel help *Pro Per* litigants complete the process to file guardianship or emancipation petitions and learn about the many resources and options available.

"The Court Guides bring an added value to the Juvenile Court. Families in crisis often find the court process to be complex and overwhelming. The services offered by these guides lend needed assistance to the *Pro Per* litigant as they navigate through the system," Juvenile Court Administrator Sheila Tickle said.

Since court guides were created in August of 2005, Juvenile Court has experienced a significant reduction in the number of guardianship petitions rejected.

"Prior to the establishment of court guides, many petitions from prospective guardians were being rejected because they were either filled out improperly or incomplete," Shawn Smith-Wheeler, juvenile operations coordinator, said. "This created delays in cases and more work for court staff. It



Court Guide Regina Rodriguez and Juvenile Operations Coordinator Shawn Smith-Wheeler meet in the lobby of Southeast Juvenile Court Center.

was frustrating for both the court and the *Pro Per* litigants."

Court Guides now meet with prospective guardians prior to filling out

"Families in crisis often find the court process to be complex and overwhelming. The services offered by these guides lend needed assistance to the *Pro Per* litigant as they navigate through the system."

their petitions and again to assure the paperwork is complete before it is filed with the office of the Clerk of the Court.

"Our goal is to prevent delays in cases and enhance access to the court," Rodriguez said. "We get many phone calls from petitioners thanking us for our help. I feel the public really appreciates the service."

In Fiscal Year 2006, 1,799 probate minor guardianships were filed, which represents a 97.5 percent increase from FY05; of that number 88 percent were *Pro Per* litigants.

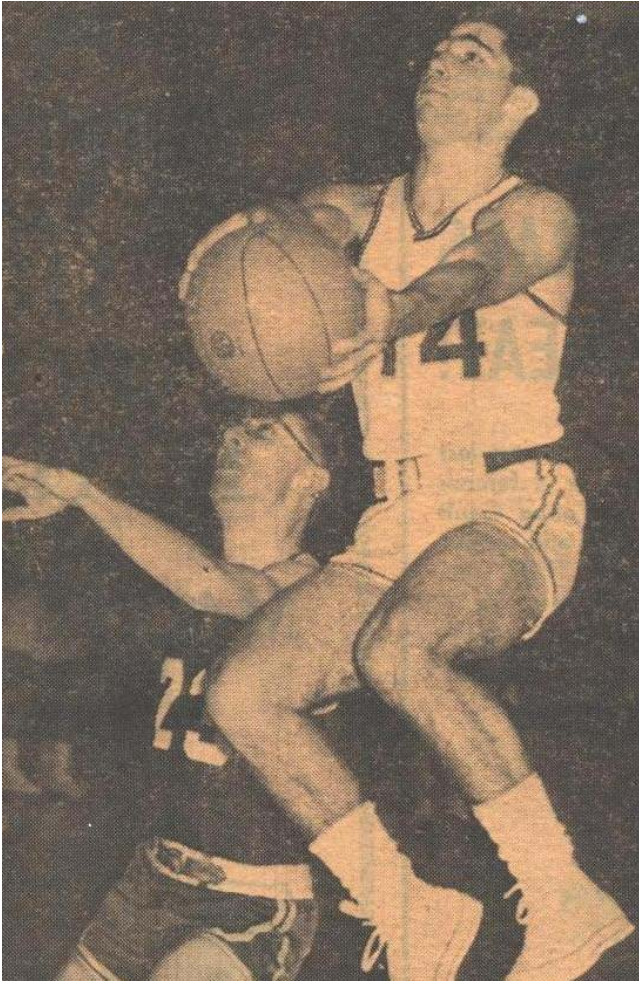
Juvenile Extends Hours

Juvenile Court is expanding with an Extended Hours Court and will be operating an evening and Saturday court calendar on Tuesday January 31st. Court hours will be Tuesday through Friday evenings from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. with hearings scheduled beginning at 5:30 p.m. and ending at 8:30 p.m. The Court will also have hours on alternate Saturdays beginning on February 3rd. Saturday Court will be open from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. with hearings scheduled beginning at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 4:00 p.m. Initially, the Court will only handle the following case types: Title 14 Guardianships, Private Adoptions, Emancipations and Juvenile Injunctions and Orders of Protection. The Court will also support Spanish language interpreter days.

Courtside

Photo Highlights

In the News



(Left) Former Harpur College (Now Binghamton University) basketball standout **Judge Barry Schneider** drives to the hoop during his college playing days. (Bottom left) Judge **James Keppel** and Court Administrators **Phil Knox** and **Marcus Reinkensmeyer** meet with a group of judges visiting from Korea. (Bottom right) The Superior Court's DUI Center and some elements of Court Security are now preparing to move into One West Madison. (Below) **Judge Colin Campbell** and Judicial Assistant **Robert Bassous** cut the Judge's retirement cake during his farewell party.

