



# The Judicial Branch News

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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](mailto:karra@superiorcourt.maricopa.gov).

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



## Presiding Judge Named to National Center's Board of Directors



Superior Court Presiding Judge Barbara Rodriguez Mundell has been elected to serve on the Board of Directors of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). She will serve a three-year term, beginning on June 28.

"It is an honor to be among the distinguished judges, attorneys and court administrators with whom I will serve," Judge Mundell said of her selection. "During my term, I will work with the other board members to help our courts improve justice through leadership and service."

Established by Chief Justice Warren Burger at the First National Conference of the Judiciary in 1971, the NCSC is the premier organization dedicated to quality justice services in state courts.

Since its inception, NCSC has helped develop innovative court programs and initiatives to insure access to justice for all.

A top priority is building and sustaining public trust and confidence in the courts by addressing problems such as the slow pace of justice and lack of public understanding of the courts.

The Center also has taken an active role in promoting a strong, impartial and fair judicial system. The Center provides courts with national educational programs, original research, solutions that enhance court operations with the latest technology and provides information on proven "best practices" for improving court operations.

"The National Center is a wonderful resource to courts and judges around the country," Judge Mundell said. "I look forward to doing my best to assist in developing new court programs and initiatives that assure the timely, fair and impartial administration of justice."

## Message From the Presiding Judge



**Barbara Rodriguez Mundell**  
Presiding Judge

Courts around the country have been reaching out into the community for the past few years, looking for innovative ways to build public trust and confidence in the judicial branch. Community outreach is one of my most important priorities and among the most fulfilling.

Our court enjoys a national reputation for its innovative spirit and high professional standards.

Interestingly, this reputation isn't as well known locally as it is nationally. This is why we need to pay particular attention to educating the public about the good things our court does for our community and the services we provide to our court customers. We have an excellent court of which they should be proud.

In order to reach as many different audiences as possible, we have adopted a variety of ways to educate students, civic and service organizations, business professionals, neighborhood groups, community groups, government leaders and members of the media.

This is not something that I do alone.

Many of our judges, commissioners, administrators and court employees routinely speak at schools to students of all ages and grade levels. We serve on panels at conferences to discuss legal issues, court procedures, new laws and other subjects of interest both to the bench and attorneys.

I have shared my experiences as a judge with students at career days at Bourgade High School, Xavier College Preparatory and Valley View Elementary School. And at the end of each visit, I am invigorated by the interest the students show in the judicial branch.

It is exciting to have conversations with members of the community. We are not only available to talk with them, but we are also there to listen to what they have to say about their courts.

Each time a judicial officer or court official participates in a community outreach event, they have created a link into the community and a positive memory – for a child, a budding lawyer, a news reporter, a public official, a community activist or an elderly constituent.

One of my favorite methods of engaging the community in conversation – about what our court does and how effectively the court is delivering services and justice – is through our community forums in the fall.

Last year, we partnered very successfully with community colleges throughout the Valley. This fall – the

third year of the community forums – we will continue to build on the successes of last year's events by reaching out to more regions of the Valley.

Another program, *View from the Bench* is a unique program designed to accomplish two important goals. First, we want to open lines of communication between judges and legislators. Second, we want legislators and judges to develop mutual understanding and respect for each others' responsibilities. We hope to educate judges about the legislative process and educate the legislature about the daily responsibility judges undertake to serve court customers with respect, dignity and fair resolution of their legal disputes.

Legislators are invited to spend a day or half day "shadowing" a judge. Legislators can select the judge or court facility they want to visit in November, December and January. During the months of January, February and March, our judges "shadow" state representatives and state senators during the legislative session. The program's success this year was invigorating, because more participants were involved from both the judicial and legislative branches than the previous year.

Using the mass media has proven to be very successful in my effort to reach out to the public. *Meet the Court* is a program broadcast regularly on local government channels (PHX11) providing the opportunity to introduce court topics to people in their homes. I am the moderator and talk with my guests on topics such as jury service, night court, specialty courts, court interpreters and other court services. Recently, we provided programs on the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer program, Teen Court, Community Advisory Board and Guardianship Review.

I have also taken my message to Hispanic/Spanish speaking radio and television outlets including Radio Unica, La Buena Onda, Telemundo and Univision. In addition, I have a monthly radio address on Radio Campesina.

These programs have given the Court access to the community and enabled me to share our message that the Judicial Branch is interested in assuring each person in Maricopa County that their courts are committed to the timely, fair and impartial administration of justice.

The public is entitled to know how taxpayer dollars are being spent and to feel reassured that the court is attempting to put programs in place to ensure public safety and equal access to justice.

I will continue to look for ways to help assure them that their court provides them with outstanding service and strives to continue to enjoy a national – and local – reputation of excellence.

## Judicial Branch Newsmakers

### Former Legislator Sworn-In at Investiture Ceremony

William L. Brotherton Jr. – former state representative, former state senator and former private practice lawyer – brings a new perspective to the bench.

“I served the public for almost nine years as a legislator and serving them as a judge has been a comfortable transition,” Judge Brotherton said of his newest career endeavor. “Also having appeared in court many times over the years and being a member of legislative committees has made the courtroom experience a comfortable fit too.”

But he also acknowledges that the transition wasn’t merely a matter of changing his focus.

“The challenging part has been getting up to speed in a very short time on an area of law with which I had little practical experience,” he said. “My legislative experience dealt with family law, especially my service in the Senate, but that experience was much more in the policy arena rather than the day-to-day courtroom experience I am now having.”

On Friday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, Judge Brotherton was ceremonially sworn-in to office by Arizona Supreme Court Justice Michael Ryan.

Judge Brotherton maintained a full-time law practice while serving as a state legislator, first in the Arizona House from 1998 to 2003 and then in the Arizona Senate from 2003 to 2007. He was the sponsor of a wide array of legislation touching all aspects of Arizona law, including statutes relating to victims’ rights, domestic relations, criminal law and civil law.

He currently serves on the Governor’s Juvenile Corrections Reform Task Force and the Governor’s Prison Re-Entry Task Force. In 2002, he received the Freedom of Information Award from the Arizona Newspaper Association.



Judge William Brotherton is robed by his wife and children at his investiture.

He earned his law degree from the University of Arizona College of Law.

Judge Brotherton is assigned to a Family Court calendar at the court’s Northwest Regional Court Center in Surprise, in the northwest Valley.

### Ceremony Held For Six Superior Court Commissioners

Six Superior Court Commissioners, recently appointed to the bench by Presiding Judge Barbara Rodriguez Mundell, were honored in swearing-in ceremonies on July 17 at the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors Auditorium in Phoenix.

Those honored at the ceremony were Commissioners Margaret Benny, Veronica Brame, Charles Donofrio III, Roger Hartsell, Thomas Kaipio and Peter Thompson. All six joined the bench over the past few months.

Commissioner Benny is assigned to the Family Night Court calendar; Commissioner Brame and Commissioner Hartsell serve on Family Court; Commissioner Donofrio is assigned to Initial Appearance Court; Commissioner Kaipio is assigned to Juvenile Court; and Commissioner Thompson is assigned to the Juvenile Court night and Saturday calendar.

Court commissioners preside over cases in all departments of Superior Court including criminal, civil, juvenile, family, probate and

mental health. They handle a variety of matters, ranging from uncontested legal disputes to criminal trials in low level felony cases.

Commissioners are licensed attorneys who are appointed by the presiding judge after candidates’ applications are reviewed and interviews are conducted by a screening panel. They serve at the pleasure of the Presiding Judge.

Superior Court in Maricopa County has 56 commissioners and 94 judges.

# Judge Thumma Appointed to ABA Advisory Committee

The American Bar Association appointed Superior Court Judge Samuel A. Thumma to serve as a member of its Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility Judges Advisory Committee.



Judge Samuel Thumma

Judge Thumma, who was appointed to the Committee by ABA president-elect William Neukom, will serve a one-year term.

"I look forward to working with the distinguished members of this Committee to address issues of great importance to our profession,

the ABA and the public," Judge Thumma said.

The Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility Judges Advisory is responsible for "expressing its opinion on proper professional or judicial conduct." The Judges Advisory Committee, in

existence since 1970, is an adjunct of the Standing Committee on Ethics.

Judge Thumma was appointed by Governor Janet Napolitano to the Superior Court Bench in March 2007. He is currently assigned to the

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*"I look forward to working with the distinguished members of this Committee to address issues of great importance to our profession, the ABA and the public."*

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~Judge Samuel A. Thumma ~

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Juvenile Court Department at the Durango Juvenile Court Center in Phoenix. Prior to his appointment to the bench, he served as a director at the law firm of Perkins Coie Brown & Bain in Phoenix.

## The Judicial Branch Honors Clerk



Supreme Court Chief Justice Ruth McGregor (left) and Vice Chief Justice Rebecca White Berch (right) present Clerk of the Court, The Honorable Michael Jeanes, the Administration of Justice Award.

The Administration of Justice Award is presented to the individual who has made substantial contributions to improving public trust and confidence in the Arizona Court System, and for outstanding achievement in the administration of justice by improving services to those who use the court system.

## Probation Chief to Run National Group

On July 10, 2007, Chief Probation Officer Barbara Broderick became president-elect of the American

Probation and Parole Association. She will assume the duties of president of the APPA in 2008.



Chief Broderick

The APPA is an international association composed of individuals from the United States and Canada actively involved with probation, parole and community-based corrections, in both adult and juvenile sectors. They have become the voice for thousands of probation and parole practitioners and represent a strong, unified voice for the field of community corrections.

# Court Briefs

## News from around the Court

### Training and Development

Superior Court is continually looking for ways to improve communication between the court and members of the public, including Limited English Proficiency customers.

The court already has a number of automated phone messages and literature that are in Spanish and English, and it posts a multitude of signs on courtroom doors that direct and inform the Spanish-speaking public. The court also has a Spanish language DUI court and offers interpretation and translation services for courtroom proceedings and documents.

But what happens when a Spanish-speaking court customer approaches a court employee and asks a simple question like - *How do I get to the Downtown Justice Center?*

Sometimes knowing a few words and catch phrases in Spanish can help answer a person's question and help prevent delays in the justice system.

"Language barriers can result in people not knowing their charges or being sent to the wrong court or building" Grayce Mayhew said. "We need to assure basic information requested either in person or by phone is consistent and accurate."

To answer the needs of Limited English Proficiency members of the public, Superior Court is launching a second language initiative with Spanish as its first focus. The initiative will teach court employees basic Spanish to help them communicate with Spanish-speakers who come to any Maricopa County court facility.

"Due to the overwhelming need for more Spanish speakers in the Maricopa Trial Courts, the Staff Development and Training Division is focusing its first efforts on developing Spanish language programming," Mayhew said.

To develop the curriculum, the Staff Development and Training Division is seeking input of court employees. Soon, the Training Division will be distributing a survey, which will take court employees approximately five minutes to complete.

### Law Library

The Law Library strives to offer educational outreach to both the Court and the public. In addition to our COJET classes on a variety of topics including Westlaw and Arizona legal research, we also offer tours and Westlaw classes to attorneys and other members of the public.

Our COJETs fill up fast. So, when you see an email come from Training and Staff Development announcing a new series of Law Library COJETs, sign up quickly! If you are interested in a class that is full, we recommend going on the wait list for the class. Our next COJET, which is already full, is a one hour Basic Arizona Legal Research on September 18 at 9 a.m. in the Law Library on the second floor in our Online Services Room.

The Law Library also offers Westlaw classes on a monthly basis. The Westlaw for Legal Professionals class is an hour and a half class held the second Tuesday of every month at 9 a.m. This class is designed for attorneys and paralegals. For other members of the public, we offer our Westlaw for Public Patrons class. This one hour class is held the first Tuesday of every month at 9 a.m. We teach both classes in our Online Services Room on the second floor of the Law Library in the East Court Building.

Upon request, the Law Library can also arrange tours. Our tours can be for any age range or skill level. So please don't hesitate to refer this service to any group that might benefit.

For more information on these COJETs, classes or tours, please contact the Law Library at X63461, or [services@scll.maricopa.gov](mailto:services@scll.maricopa.gov). Our mission is to provide the Court with timely, efficient, and reliable access to legal information! We welcome the opportunity to help you with your legal information needs.

Story submitted by Jennifer Murray  
Law Library Assistant Director

# Probation Department Honors its Employees

In recognition of National Probation Recognition Week, the Maricopa County Juvenile and Adult Probation Departments honored their staffs at a recognition event held on July 18 in the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors Auditorium in Phoenix.

The Juvenile Probation Department honored its "Garcia VIP Mentoring Project." For the past six years the team has matched Juvenile Probation staff with at-risk students from Garcia Elementary School, which is six blocks from the Juvenile Probation Department's offices in south Phoenix.

The Adult Probation Department recognized its Domestic Violence Round-Up program, which is a concentrated effort every October involving members of the Domestic Violence and Fugitive Apprehension Units who work with law enforcement agencies to identify, locate and arrest domestic violence offenders to hold them accountable for their criminal behavior. Awards were also given to staff members whose careers have spanned more than 30 years of dedicated service to the community and clients.



*Chief Barbara Broderick (Left) with Adult Probation employees with 30-plus years.*



*Deputy Chief Debra Hall (Right) with Juvenile Probation employees with 30-plus years.*



*Chief Broderick hands out awards to members of Adult Probation's Domestic Violence Round-up program.*



*Deputy Chief Hall (Right) with Juvenile Probation's Garcia VIP Mentoring Project.*

## Northwest Courthouse Celebrates 5-Year Anniversary

Judges and staff of the Northwest Regional Court Center in Surprise celebrated with local residents and businesses its five-year anniversary of providing judicial branch services to the area.

The event took place at the Northwest Regional Court Center.

During the ceremony, Superior Court judges spoke about the success of the second of four regional court centers built outside of downtown Phoenix. These court centers were designed to provide easily accessible court services in the neighborhoods where court customers work and live.

The facility opened in July 2002 with four Superior Court courtrooms. Judicial officers hear civil, family, and probate matters.



public, including a Self-Service Center that provides educational materials and court forms to assist self-represented litigants with court cases. Services also include passport and marriage license applications and filing counters for new court cases.

Since opening in 2002, the Northwest Regional Court has doubled in size.

In April 2006, four Justice of the Peace courts opened in a newly constructed wing that was added to the original court facility, creating an attractive v-shaped multi-use courthouse that welcomes over 900 customers each day.

The Northwest Regional Court Center offers many services to the

### Employee Reaches 30-Year Career Mark

As a key member of the Maricopa County Superior Court management team, Pete Anderson has guided the Courts through periods of abundance and shortfalls.

Anderson joined the Maricopa County Superior Court on June 13, 1977. He earned his Masters of Science in Judicial Administration from the University of Denver in 1977; and has served in numerous capacities since joining the Courts in 1977.

Having long been responsible for administrative and finance matters, many look to Anderson as the Court budget historian.

Currently, Anderson is the Deputy Director for Administrative Services. He has been recognized over the years with a variety of awards, all of which demonstrate his commitment to professional court management and excellence in the Courts.

**Story submitted by Beverly Dupree  
Management Analyst IV**

## Veteran Court Reporter Promoted to Manager

Denise Sanders Couvaras, a court reporter with 19 years of court reporting experience, has been promoted to the position of Court Reporter Manager.

Five years ago, Couvaras joined the staff of court reporters at Maricopa County Superior Court, serving as a division and pool reporter.

"It is my desire to bring to the Court Reporting Department not just a friendly face but also cutting-edge technological advancements," Couvaras said.

"We will not only focus on making Realtime reporting more available to you in the courtroom but on faster transcript production time as well. All this equates to an improved version of your Court Reporting Department."

Couvaras began court reporting in 1988 as a freelance reporter in Texas. In 1992, she moved to Arizona, operating a freelance reporting firm and assisting in the day-to-day operations of a private medical practice.

# Courtside

## Photo Highlights

### In the News



**Top** - (Left to Right) Marcus Reinkensmeyer, Court Administrator; visiting Judge Saki Kashihara from the Osaka District Court in Japan who will be taking classes at ASU this fall as well as learning about our court system in depth during her year-long stay; Presiding Judge Barbara Rodriguez Mundell; Judge Yoshinori Niwa, from the Nagoya District Court in Japan, his wife, Atsuko, and son, Rikuto. Judge Niwa and family have been living in Tempe for the past year attending classes at ASU and observing court proceedings. They have returned to Japan.

**Left** - Retired Judge Steven Sheldon and long-time judicial assistant Wanda Hill at Judge Sheldon's retirement party. Hill worked for Judge Sheldon for 18 years.

**Bottom Left** - Linda Jett receives her 30-year service award from Board Chairman Fulton Brock at a recent Maricopa County Board of Supervisors meeting in Phoenix.