



In this Issue

Community Forum
Photos.....2

Judging the Judges.....4

News from Around the
Court.....5

Focus On: Human
Resources.....7

Photo Highlights.....9

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."



Reaching Out to the Community

by Presiding Judge Barbara Rodriguez Mundell

A very successful fall season of our community forums concluded earlier this month, with work already underway for a new season to begin in the spring.

The fall forums have been lively with members of the community joining community college students to meet and chat with judges and court officials. Many topics of interest have been raised, including career opportunities, services that improve access to court programs, juror responsibility, merit selection.

The questions asked have been substantive and insightful. Observations by speakers have been valuable in evaluating perceptions that the community has of the court. It is gratifying that I have come to learn that we have a good reputation throughout the Valley.

These events have been tremendously enjoyable and serve as a bridge between the court and community to connect and talk about mutual concerns about the judicial branch and its service to the public, merit selection and the value of an independent judiciary. Nearly 350 residents and college students gave us a piece of their minds and a piece of the evening hours to talk with us and hear from us.

The court forums were hosted at Estrella Mountain Community College, Mesa Community College and Paradise Valley Community College, allowing us to meet with the public from all around Maricopa County. As we continue to build on

the success of this season's forums, we will reach out to more regions of the Valley to give everyone an opportunity to come to a forum in their neighborhood.

When the position of community outreach director was created last year, it was part of the court's reorganization plans to better meet the needs of the community through enhanced public information and improved access to court services.

The plan is proving to be an invaluable tool. The success of our forums has formed a solid

continued on page 2

Court Employee Satisfaction Survey

Superior Court employees are invited to participate in the 2006 Maricopa County Employee Satisfaction Survey. The surveys will be administered from November 6 to December 8 at the Southeast, Downtown and Durango court facilities. The survey only takes about 10-15 minutes to complete and your participation is greatly appreciated.

"It is very important that we, as an organization, continue to assess your satisfaction so we can focus our improvement; attention and resources appropriately," Court Administrator **Marcus Reinkensmeyer** said.

Continued...Reaching out to the Community

foundation on which we can continue to build a rapport with the public.

Patricia Seguin, our community outreach director, is using her energy and creativity to expand our outreach programs, improve diversity awareness and connect with diverse community organizations.

This year, our Courthouse Experience program has extended beyond downtown, providing 1,000 high school and junior high school students with the opportunity to watch court proceedings. The lawyers who serve as their guides answer their questions and judges often call recesses during proceedings to greet the students and explain the judicial branch to them.

Coupled with the forums and our other programs, I have also taken my message to Hispanic



A packed house listens to Judge Mundell at the final community forum of the season.

radio outlets broadcast in Spanish – including Radio Unica, La Buena Onda and Radio Campesina. This has given the court access to the community, where I have shared 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.

Community FORUMS

Judges, commissioners, administrators, educators, students and members of the community mingled and exchanged information and perceptions. There was even some show-and-tell with a Power Point presentation and display of a judicial black robe.



Judicial Branch Newsmakers

The American Board of Trial Advocates named **Judge Margaret H. Downie** of Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County as its 2006 Judge of the Year.



Judge Downie, who has served on the bench as a commissioner and a judge since 1997, joins retired Judge Robert Gottsfield and Judge Gary Donahoe as the third Superior Court Judge to receive the award.

"Our executive committee chose Judge Downie for her professionalism and her skills as an exceptional trial judge," Chris Bode, ABOTA's Phoenix chapter president.

The American Board of Trial Advocates is national organization, which fosters improvement in the ethical and technical standards of practice in the field of advocacy. They assist individual litigants in receiving more effective representation, and preserve the constitutional vision of equal justice for all Americans.

Gerald Grant and **Peter Thompson** were appointed to the Superior Court as commissioners on the Night Court pilot project. Commissioner Grant will start his assignment on January 15 and will be on a Family Court calendar at Northeast Regional Center, and Commissioner Thompson will start January 2 assigned to Juvenile Court at Durango.

Commissioner Lisa Vandenberg was promoted to Commissioner II.

Judge Pendleton Gaines, recognized for his expertise of jury initiatives that put Arizona in the forefront of improving jurors understanding and participation in trials, spoke at the National Symposium on the American Jury System in Dallas, Texas on Oct. 26 and 27.

"Arizona is in the forefront of jury reforms designed to help juries make informed decisions," Judge Gaines said.

Judge Gaines explained that in December, 1995, Maricopa County Superior Court initiated a number of changes in a pilot program, to allow jurors to take notes of evidence and testimony presented in trial; ask questions of witnesses; and in certain circumstances discuss the case with each other during the trial, instead of being barred from such discussion until starting deliberations



The Arizona State University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences selected Presiding **Judge Barbara Rodriguez Mundell** to share her experiences with students and alumni during Homecoming weekend in October.

Judge Mundell earned both her Bachelor of Science in Political Science and Juris Doctorate from ASU.

Every year, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences asks several successful alumni to return to campus during homecoming to discuss their professional experiences and what they believe are the most important aspects of leadership. Judge Mundell was one of four alumni chosen to participate this year.

Judge Mundell is featured on ASU's alumni website at: <http://clas.asu.edu/alumni/leaders>.



(Left to Right) Commissioners **James Morrow**, **Joan Huls**, **Mark Brain**, **Michael Barth** and **Jaime Holguin** following their investitures on November 7 in the Board of Supervisors Auditorium.

Judging the Judges

Performance measures are coming to the tradition-bound world of state courts

The following excerpts are from an article that appeared in the October 2006 edition of Governing Magazine. The article is re-printed with the permission of the publication and author Zach Patton.

Last summer, a litigant at a Maricopa County courthouse in Surprise, Arizona, had a complaint. She had driven around for hours before finding the court. “The directions on MapQuest are wrong,” she told court staff. It wasn’t just an idle gripe: The woman was responding to a survey being conducted by the county. On the same questionnaire, she answered several other queries, such as whether she had been treated respectfully and whether, upon leaving the courthouse, she was clear about what to do next with her case. As it turns out, she was right about MapQuest. County employees contacted the online map company, and 48 hours later the directions had been corrected.

The survey was part of a broad new effort by the county to gauge how well its court system is working. It’s not an entirely novel concept for Maricopa, which has historically emphasized good court management.

But the county is embracing a set of new performance measures that many believe could transform the way courts across the country are run. The issues involved range from things as mundane as driving directions to sweeping concepts of justice and fairness.

It’s taking place at an important moment in judicial administration.

Courts around the country are starting to realize the benefits of performance measurement. They’re learning to set formal standards for good court performance. And they’re beginning to collect and analyze data in an effort to achieve them. Putting judges under a measurement system is not easy—courts historically haven’t focused on performance standards—but jurisdictions are deciding that the investment is worthwhile for the accountability it provides.

The effort is gaining momentum. Three county courts in Arizona are using the system, and the state is considering adoption of some of the timeliness measures. North Carolina has implemented several of the measures as well. Two county courts in California—San Joaquin and San

But Maricopa County has gone furthest. Court managers there actually began working with the National Center for State Courts a year before CourTools was released. The county put together multi-agency workgroups, ranging in size from eight people to two dozen, for each of the 10 measures. The workgroups met regularly over several months to study the measures and figure out how to capture the right data. “We’ve been really aggressive about this,” says **Marcus Reinkensmeyer**, the county court administrator, “because it’s got such great potential.” The workgroups, he says, helped bring every court employee on board. “I don’t think we could have just thrust this on the staff. You’ve got to make it a collaboration from the very early stages.”

Part of the challenge is that, while the NCSC has strived to create simple, understandable measures, gathering the right data is still difficult. Take, for example, the measure known as “age of active pending caseload.” It seems straightforward enough. A court simply computes how long its active cases have been open. But what if a defendant has fled, delaying a case for a month or more? That’s not a reflection on the court’s performance.

“You have to ask yourself if your architecture is flexible enough to accurately measure things like timeliness,” says Richard Schauffler, NCSC’s research director. “The measures are simple but getting quality data is a lot of work. The data issue is the most mundane, but it’s also the most challenging.”

Maricopa is still rolling out its CourTools measures, and it’s too soon to gauge their effectiveness. The most useful data, of course, will be those dealing with the longer-term trends in performance: Is the court system improving or declining? That will come later. But useful information is already emerging from the “snapshot” data collected over the past year. For instance, Reinkensmeyer says he was “shocked” at the number of respondents who said they were satisfied by the court. Roughly half the people walking out of a courtroom have lost their case, but over 80 percent of the respondents in Maricopa said they were pleased with their court experience.

Court Briefs

News from around the Court

Fugitive Safe Surrender Project



Commissioner Jay Davis reads a warrant to a fugitive who turned himself in at Fugitive Safe Surrender.

More than 1,300 Arizona residents utilized Fugitive Safe Surrender. The four-day program, held at Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church in Phoenix, gave suspects a chance to deal with warrants at a neutral site, with less cost to the public and reduced danger to law officers.

Suspects met with public defenders and were adjudicated by Maricopa County Superior Court commissioners. The hearings took

place in makeshift courtrooms in the church's education building.

The Safe Surrender concept, which is being considered for nationwide use, was first tried 13 months ago in Cleveland.

In Phoenix, suspects who came forward were wanted for various state and federal drug charges, burglaries, assaults and auto thefts, as well as misdemeanors.

Family Court

Parenting Time Enforcement Court and the Support Enforcement Court will provide quick resolution of parenting time or support enforcement matters. The new courts will provide litigants with an opportunity to reach an agreement with a conference officer. If no agreement is reached, a hearing with a judicial officer will be held immediately following the conference.

The new courts are expected to: resolve the enforcement of support promptly; resolve the

enforcement of parenting time promptly; return matters that involve more than one pending action to the assigned judge and reduce the number of times parties must come to court.

The new courts were implemented on October 16 at the Downtown and Northwest Court locations. Northeast will implement the Enforcement Courts in late January 2007. Southeast enforcement matters can be heard downtown.

Civil Administration

Carol Ruelas has joined the Civil Department as a judicial clerk. Carol is returning to the workforce, and was previously employed by US West Communications, Mattel Toys and Bank of America.

Armida Hernandez, senior judicial clerk, has joined the Civil Department. Prior to joining Civil, she worked in the criminal department and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection in Texas.

Christopher Levine joined the Civil Department to serve predominantly as a judicial assistant. He is a retired U.S. Marine, and served as a nuclear biological and chemical defense training specialist.

Joelyn Benito, judicial clerk, has joined the Civil Department. Previously she worked for a number of years as a legal secretary for a law firm in California.

Mary Pineda has been promoted to the position of senior judicial clerk. She will continue to cover her current assignments and will also be instrumental in department training for judicial clerks.

Elia Gonzales, Lower Court Appeals (LCA), celebrated 30 years of employment with Maricopa County. Congratulations for your dedicated service to our court and for the important work that you do in the LCA Department.

Court Briefs

News from around the Court

Court Appointed Special Advocates

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) **Jackie Flowers** is retiring after serving 21 years as a volunteer.

"Jackie Flowers has been the heart and soul of the Maricopa County CASA Program. As a former

Advocate myself, I can say that her ongoing commitment to the foster children in our court system has been an inspiration to me. She has planted seeds that will forever flourish in the lives all she has touched,"

Laurie Laughlin, Maricopa County CASA Program Manager said.

She was in the first inaugural CASA orientation class in 1986 after retiring from nursing. During the last 21 years, Flowers has donated more than 5,000 hours to help abused, neglected and abandoned foster children in Maricopa County. She also founded Arizonans for Kids, a grass roots advocacy organization; served hundreds of hours on the Community Advisory Board; and led an effort to create a neighborhood park in Phoenix where there were previously no playgrounds for children. She is also the recipient of the 12 Who Care Hon Kachina Award for "Outstanding Volunteer." She was honored for her dedication and service by Superior Court during a luncheon on November 16."



Jackie Flowers



CASA Program Turns 21

On October 8, 2006, the Maricopa County Court Appointed Special Advocate program celebrated its 21st anniversary.

Since the program's inception, 1,293 community members have volunteered countless hours to advocate for the needs of 3,598 children in Maricopa County's child welfare system.

In 2006 alone, 326 volunteers: donated more than 17,625; served more than 450 children; wrote 478 reports and drove approximately 160,000 miles to visit children.

"Our CASA volunteers have positively changed the lives of the children and families we serve," **Juvenile Presiding Judge Eileen Willett** said. "They are true heroes."

CASA advocates for the best interests of abused and neglected children in court and the community. Maricopa County CASA promotes and supports community-based volunteers, who provide advocacy to help assure each child a safe, permanent, nurturing home.

Probation

Former Southeast Regional Court Administrator, **Debra Olsen** has been appointed to Juvenile Probation as Deputy Chief, Administrative Services.

"Debra brought fresh ideas and innovation during her tenure as Southeast Regional Court Administrator, and will no doubt bring those same strong qualities to Juvenile Probation," General Jurisdiction Court Administrator **Phil Knox** said.

Cheri Clark, Program Manager with the Family Court Conference Center, is serving as the interim Southeast Administrator.

Record Numbers Earn GEDs

With the encouragement of judges, commissioners and probation officers, approximately 300 hard-working probationers earned their General Equivalency Diplomas. The students were honored at a graduation ceremony held at the Phoenix Prep Academy. Many family members, court personnel and guests including former Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice **Frank X. Gordon**, and **Judges Carey Hyatt, Ray Lee, Brian Ishikawa, Jose Padilla, Commissioner Kirby Kongable** and **Justice of the Peace Lester Pearce** attended.

Twenty years ago only a couple of teachers and about 100 students were in Adult Probation's education program at the probation building in Mesa. Today, there are four education centers, 12 teachers and 2500 students.

Focus On

Human Resources Department

Q and A with the Human Resources Director

Am I eligible for FMLA and is it applicable to my current situation? I am having some difficulty in dealing with my supervisor/co-worker. Can you help me? I need some direction in dealing with my day-to-day stress both at work and at home. Any ideas? I want to find out what other jobs are available to me and what my employee benefits are. Is this the place?

These are some of the typical questions asked of the Judicial Branch Human Resource Department on a daily basis. Led by Phillip Hanley, Administrative Services/Human Resources Director, the staff's goal is to find solutions to situations presented to them by Superior Court employees and to finalize these opportunities in a timely and constructive manner. Whether it is helping a troubled employee to get in contact with an EAP representative, problems with their payroll check, researching job opportunities and their respective duties or handling a detailed investigative grievance, the department maintains a strict code of confidentiality, impartiality and objectivity. The department's open door policy allows all employees to come to the 3rd Floor, Law Library location at any time and to ask questions pertaining to their rights, benefits and career opportunities within the Court system.

The department realizes that an informed employee is a more positive and a more productive employee. By being more productive, the Court system becomes more efficient and our customers, the citizens of Maricopa County, are better served, with their tax dollars being utilized in the most cost effective manner. So if questions do arise and there is some confusion regarding your work responsibilities, pay issues or Judicial Merit Rules, don't hesitate to stop by and see us. Remember, we are here to serve you, the Judicial Branch employee, so that you may provide our citizens with the highest degree of accuracy, integrity and service.



Phillip Hanley, Human Resources Director

Probation Steps Up Recruitment Efforts with Commercials

Two recruitment commercials are generating an enormous amount of community interest for the positions of detention, probation and surveillance officers.

To attract potential employees, Adult and Juvenile Probation sponsored two commercials highlighting the careers of detention, probation and surveillance officers. The commercials were filmed by Cox Communications and are airing in various time slots throughout the day on a variety of stations. Some

of the stations include TNT, ESPN, ESPN2, Spike, MTV and Comedy Central.

"The commercials have greatly increased awareness of our positions throughout the community," Chief Probation Officer **Barbara Broderick** said. "The number of applicants appearing at the juvenile detention officer test has increased dramatically over the run of the commercial as have the number of applicants for the probation officer and surveillance officer positions."

To view the videos, go to: www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov

Staff members from the probation department were used as actors in the commercials. The commercials were filmed on-site at the Durango detention and Garfield facilities.

As an additional recruitment effort, Adult and Juvenile Probation set up a phone line and email address to help provide information to potential applicants as well as to track the success of the campaign.

Court Appointments, Promotions and New Hires

Sterbach Takes on New Duties in HR



Helen Sterbach

The Judicial Branch Human Resources Employee Relations team is pleased to announce the promotion of **Helen Sterbach** from a Compensation Analyst to Senior Employee Relations Specialist.

Along with **Peter Marturana**, Sterbach will be responsible for conducting investigations, interpretation of policy and procedures and delivering training that enhances human resources management within the organization.

Sterbach has more than 15 years experience with Superior Court and holds a Masters Degree in Education, Counseling and Human Relations from Northern Arizona University.



David Stevens, the newly appointed Chief Technology Officer for the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County, stands in front of the mainframe computers that run iCIS.

John Barrett Announces Retirement Stevens Appointed as Chief Technology Officer

John Barrett, Chief Technology Officer for the Judicial Branch in Maricopa County, is retiring after 25 years of dedicated service to the Court. During his tenure, Barrett has served as a highly effective manager while also developing a number of "mission critical" court automation systems. Prior to heading Court Technology Services (CTS), Barrett served as the Research, Planning and Technology Director and Information Systems Manager for the Maricopa County Juvenile Probation and Court Center.

Barrett was responsible for the successful consolidation of information technology services for the Superior Court, Justice Courts and Adult and Juvenile Probation into a system-wide department, Court Technology Services (CTS). He was also instrumental in the development and court-wide implementation of the Integrated Court Information System (iCIS) in the Superior and Justice Courts. Beyond these major projects, Barrett has provided strong

leadership in development of electronic courtrooms, video communication systems and the integrated criminal justice system. Those who have worked with John know him as a highly collaborative and innovative technologist, with a "can do" attitude in every facet of his tireless work with the Court. Fortunately for all of us, Barrett is staying in the Valley and he has promised to remain available as a resource to the Court.

David Stevens was appointed to the position of Chief Information Officer to replace Barrett. Stevens has served six years as Barrett's chief deputy administrator at CTS, managing the development of the Integrated Court Information System. Prior to joining the Court, David spent six years as a Sergeant in the U.S. Army Military Police Corps. After receiving an honorable discharge from the military, he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in software engineering from DeVry University.

Courtside

Photo Highlights

In the News

Superior Court **Southeast Presiding Judge Emmet Ronan** with the family of Michael and Julie Dietch of Queen Creek following the adoption of 18-month old Joel. Joel, held by his mother in the back row, is the newest addition to their family. Below: **Presiding Judge Barbara Rodriguez Mundell** joins in the ribbon cutting, commemorating the opening of the new Downtown Justice Center. Bottom Right: The family members of deceased **Judge Mark Santana** stand with his newly dedicated portrait, which is hung in the Central Court walkway.



Juvenile Presiding Judge Eileen Willett poses with a clown at National Adoption Day in Phoenix.