



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.

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



Employees Bringing About Change

Submitted by Phil Hanley, Human Resources Director

Sometimes changing the culture of a large organization, like the Superior Court, is more akin to the effort it takes to change the direction of a large ocean liner. Everything happens at a very slow and deliberate pace. It takes a lot of effort and room to alter the headings, and miles can be required to completely turn it around. Sometimes organizational change is like that...in that it may happen so slowly, that you wonder if it is happening at all.

When you consider the serious purpose of the Court, and the long history that has preceded our journey thus far, it is of little wonder that there is a natural hesitancy to make sudden or abrupt changes. When you consider the very success and respect we enjoy among the community that we serve has been built upon the foundations of what has worked well throughout the years, it is easy to understand why change comes slowly. This formula for success has served us well, especially on the courtroom side of the equation. But what about the other side...the employee side? The side that makes the internal gears turn, and works to meet the needs of the public in a professional and courteous way...whose responsibility is it to be concerned about the employees and their needs? Whose jobs is it to help them do their jobs better? Whose job is it to make sure that their work environments are conducive to helping them create better outcomes? Who is responsible for helping them create an environment where fresh ideas are welcomed and rewarded? The simple answer is that ***it is everybody's job (employees and management)...all of us working together!***

Using the results of last year's Employee Satisfaction Survey, and working through the newly formed Employee Focus Groups, we asked you to give us your thoughts and opinions about what we do well, *and what we can do better*. When given the opportunity to share your ideas and opinions with us, the feedback was amazing. You gave us your ideas...great ideas! You suggested many things that are simple and quick that are well within our means. By and large you told us it was the little things that would make a big difference...things like providing more feedback and recognition for your work efforts. Things like providing you with more information about the things that affect you and your work. You told us you wanted us to value your ideas and opinions about how the work should be done, and more importantly *what might make it better!* You told us that you wanted to be more involved in the identification of problems and potential solutions. In short, you told us that you wanted to be more involved in the things that affect you and the people that we serve!

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Message From the Presiding Judge



Barbara Rodriguez Mundell
Presiding Judge

The first duty of society is justice, a memorable phrase authored by one of our Nation's founding fathers, Alexander Hamilton, will greet visitors as they enter the new Downtown Criminal Court Tower.

Of the more than 25 quotes submitted to be etched into the façade of the new courthouse, I selected Hamilton's phrase because it epitomized the reason for constructing the tower. This building is not being built just to move more cases; it will be built to provide timely, fair and impartial administration of justice for all parties.

Etched phrases are traditional elements of courthouses. Many of the great courthouses throughout the country have famous quotes. Here in Arizona, our Supreme Court has the words ***Where law ends, tyranny begins*** chiseled into the front of its building, and the United States Supreme Court has the phrase ***Equal Justice Under Law*** carved into its pediment.

Sayings set a tone of dignity and respect. Our phrase lets people know they have the right to expect justice when they walk through the doors.

Hamilton's quote is just one of the artistic features planned for the courthouse. We have organized Art and Wayfinding Committees made up of judicial officers, court staff and designers to discuss the artwork and navigation of the building.

No matter how big or small, every decorative or artistic element that goes into the courthouse will be well thought out and serve a purpose. An important goal of our committees is to select signage and artwork that will assist court customers in arriving at their courtrooms on time without unnecessary frustration and in a frame of mind to participate in the justice system.

We will make sure the art selected will be memorable and have great sight lines. It will be symbolic of justice, and convey the values of the court to show respect for all court visitors. Also, through color and soothing themes, we will do our best to create a positive social environment.

Through our research, we've determined the art should also act as an identifier to help visitors find their way. During a planning meeting for the courthouse, a victim advocate shared with us that she tells victims to meet her at the bust of Abraham Lincoln in the Central Court Building. Lincoln's bust is an example of the type of art we are planning because it not only extols the virtue of Lincoln the lawyer, but it acts dually as a landmark.

Once completed, the aesthetics of the courthouse will be a point of civic pride for the community. It will also be user-friendly and very accessible for our court customers. While most of the artwork and signage decisions have not been finalized, I'm very encouraged with what has already been discussed.

This building is expected to serve Maricopa County for the next 100 years. Any art that accompanies it may have a lasting effect and someday become a historic landmark for our county, city and state.

News and Notes

Bringing About Change -

Continued From Page One

The initial focus groups have given us dozens of great ideas that we are excited about and think are very doable. As we move toward the implementation phase, we would again ask for your participation. We will be asking for additional volunteers shortly to join the focus groups and to provide us with your ideas on the best ways to implement the many suggestions given. We hope that you will consider volunteering for the next phase, as it should be a fun and exciting change of pace for us. With the focus groups already having presented their ideas for improvements to the Executive Team, the group spokespersons will next be presenting to the Judicial Administrators, Managers and Supervisors. Beyond that, we will move into implementation phase and we invite you to be a part of it.

Judges On the Move

On December 1st, the four remaining Southeast criminal divisions will begin their new calendar assignments in downtown Phoenix.

Presiding Judge Barbara Rodriguez Mundell said the moves are not only a better way of doing business but will also save tax dollars.

“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,” Judge Mundell said.

Most of the criminal cases will remain at Southeast. In fiscal 2008, of the 10,690 new criminal filings at Southeast, only 144 cases, or 1.3 percent, 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, or 64 percent, 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. Additional family and civil court judges will be assigned 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.

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Probation Officer Receives Honor

Maricopa County Adult Probation Officer Gloria Washington has been named the Arizona Black Law Enforcement Employee’s (ABLE) Officer of the Year.

Washington has been an Officer with Maricopa County Adult Probation for 30 years.

ABLE’s mission is to promote a positive image of law enforcement employees to the community; to invest in the youth of our community through partnerships and youth programs; to provide mentoring, training information and career guidance to our members in order to further their law enforcement careers; and to actively recruit qualified candidates from the African American community and the community at large to pursue careers in law enforcement.

New Online Library System

Recently, the Law Library purchased a new online library system. The new system will be operational in roughly six months.

The system will have new features and enhancements, including a new online catalog with better searching capabilities. However, the library will continue using the same library cards. Also, if you registered with the library, you won’t have to register again.

Over the next few months, library staff will be attending training sessions to learn how to best put the system to use for our court customers.

**By Valerie Lerma
Law Library**

Regional Court Center

RCC Works as a Team to Make Changes

As we move forward in the Downtown RCC, I just wanted to take a few minutes to remind everyone of the improvements and changes we have made to our case and court processing systems. These changes over the last year and a half have resulted in improved case processing, a more efficient court and a better work environment for all.

One of the first things we tackled was getting rid of those small yellow Post-Its that were used to number the files. As you may remember, each day a staff member would sit and write down a number on a small Post-It, which corresponded to a case number on the calendar. This Post-It would then be placed on the file as a way of identifying the file. At the end of the day, the Post-Its would be thrown away and the process would start over with the next day's calendar. We replaced these small Post-Its with multiple sets of "stabbers" which could be reused everyday and involved nothing more than sticking the stabber in the file. We figured it probably took 15 minutes a day by the staff member to write down all those numbers on the Post-Its. While this does not seem like much time, if you take this out over a year it comes close to 65 hours of doing nothing but writing numbers on Post-Its. Also, we have significantly cut down on our Post-It usage! When we first rolled this process out, you would have thought the sky was falling, but now no one would consider doing it any other way.

We have also made numerous changes to save time and paper in our case processing. RCC traditionally filled out a release order on every case that was heard. This meant that the court would process 50 to 150 of these orders a day! There was not a change in release conditions which required a new release order, this was just the way it was done. We eliminated this release order and saved the clerks and bailiffs a ton of time and effort. We also created small reminders slips to be utilized by the attorneys in case their clients needed a written reminder of the next court date. Remember when the attorneys made nine sets of copies of a defendant's plea agreement? When we looked at why this number was needed, we found significant overlap and we were able to get the number of copies down to five per plea. Yes, this took a lot of coordination and effort by multiple stakeholders, but we have significantly cut down on copying costs in this area.

Remember when the attorneys had to take all *motions to continue* back to the judicial assistants? The JAs would then check the dates, add other information to the form, and then have to get up and take the motion into the courtroom to the bailiff. This process took up a tremendous amount of time and effort. Now, the attorneys take the motions directly to the bailiff, who checks the dates and forwards the motion to the judge on the bench. No more running around; the motion goes directly where it needs to go. This process change was only possible by shifting some responsibilities among the players and simply getting people to do something different, but it has really paid off in saving our people time and work. These are only a few examples, but our efforts to take a look at the way we do business and to make improvements has very real and satisfying rewards.

Even simple things like actually memorializing our business practices so that everyone is on the same page, prioritizing interpreter cases to better utilize that limited resource, and cross-training all our employees so that coverage is seamless all make our court more efficient, provide better public service and a more positive work environment.

Our latest endeavor, to move toward a paperless RCC, has been a great success (remember the apprehension when we rolled this one out!). Our staff used to prepare a file for every case in RCC. This meant the staff person would research the case in ICIS, print out a copy of all minute entries to date, print out a copy of the direct complaint and any other filings from ICIS, and then put this paper into a manila folder for court the next day. We eliminated this whole process. Now, the attorneys provide their paperwork to the court and the bailiff prepares a temporary file for the court with only the information and documents needed to address that action. No work is done until it actually needs to be done. Although this has meant additional duties for some and shifting duties for others, we are better able to deal with our increasing workloads and much more efficient in how we operate. This program has also laid the groundwork for a move to a true paperless court.

We wanted to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their ideas, cooperation, and hard work in making these improvements. In these difficult financial times, it seems we are always being asked to do more with less and it has been through these improvements that we have been able to make positive strides forward.

Thanks again and keep those ideas coming!

Submitted by Commissioner David Cunanan

News and Notes

New Commissioners

Superior Court Presiding Judge Barbara Rodriguez Mundell appointed Alysson Abe and Julia Lopez, two attorneys with extensive juvenile law backgrounds, as commissioners.

Abe has worked for the past 12 years as a deputy public defender in Maricopa County's Public Defender's Office handling all types of juvenile cases. Prior to becoming a deputy public defender, she was a Tempe City Prosecutor and deputy county attorney. She also was a law clerk for former Superior Court Judge Maurice Portley.

Lopez has spent the last 11 years as a private attorney working on juvenile matters. She was an attorney for the Law Office of Julia Austin before becoming a partner at Lopez and Associates.

Abe and Lopez are graduates of Arizona State University's College of Law.



Alysson Abe



Julia Lopez

APD Lands Stimulus Grant

The U.S. Department of Justice awarded the Adult Probation Department a \$685,993 Recovery Act grant to participate in strategic efforts to stem the flow of illegal drugs along the Southwestern Border and the associated crime and violence. The grant will enable APD to retain five jobs. These positions will be in the Fugitive Apprehension Unit, where officers will locate and apprehend defaulting probationers on probation for drug-related offenses. APD was the first probation department in the country to receive a stimulus grant.

**Submitted by Cathy Wyse
Adult Probation**

Save the Date: National Adoption Day

*November 21, 2009
The Durango Facility in Phoenix*



Don't Forget Your COJET

Have you received COJET credit for outside classes, seminars, or conferences you've attended since January 1st of this year?

For any missing credit, please submit your paperwork.

For college courses, please send me a copy of your grade and number of college credits along with a credit request form for each class completed. You must complete your COJET hours by December 15. This year, staff must complete eight hours, including one hour of ethics training. Judicial Officers must complete 16 hours, including one hour of ethics training.

To check your transcript, please go to:

<http://pathlore.maricopa.gov/stc/courts>

Select *Log on*, and then *Return to Home Page*, and finally *View Transcript*.

**Submitted by Sandy Velasquez
Training and Development**

Judicial Appointments

Governor Jan Brewer Announces Appointment of Superior Court Judges in Maricopa County

Arizona Governor Jan Brewer today announced the appointment of David Palmer and Pamela Frasher Gates to the Maricopa County Superior Court.

David Palmer has served as a Maricopa County Court Commissioner since 2004. He graduated from the Brigham Young University Law School in 1986, and received his undergraduate degree from BYU in 1983. He worked at the Maricopa County Attorney's Office from 1991 to 2004, and served as an associate in the law firms Perry, Pierson & Kolsrud and Shimmel, Hill, Bishop & Gruender earlier in his practice. He clerked for Judge D.L. Greer on the Arizona Court of Appeals from 1986-87.

"David has had an impressive career as a prosecutor and court commissioner," stated Governor Brewer. "His extensive courtroom experience and proven judicial expertise make him well qualified to be a superior court judge." This appointment was made to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of the Honorable Silvia Arellano.

Pam Gates is a partner with the law firm Bryan Cave, where she has worked since 1997. She worked for the law firm O'Connor Cavanagh from 1996 to 1997. She graduated from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1996 with distinction, and received her undergraduate degree from Drake University in Iowa in 1993. She is active in many community organizations, including service on the board of UMOM New Day Centers, Arizona's largest homeless shelter for families.

"Pam is a tireless worker who has proven herself to be an outstanding attorney and advocate for her clients and causes," stated Governor Brewer. "Her sense of community and fairness make her well qualified to serve as a superior court judge." This appointment was made to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of the Honorable Thomas Dunevant III.

"It is truly an honor to appoint David Palmer and Pam Gates to the Maricopa County Superior Court," said Governor Brewer. "These are two outstanding attorneys who will serve the citizens of Maricopa County well as their newest judges."

Judges On the Move - continued from page 3

Rotations:

JUDGES

Judge Connie Contes will keep her southeast criminal calendar and transfer downtown.

Judge L. Grant will keep his downtown civil calendar and transfer to southeast.

Judge Dean Fink's former family court calendar (currently being covered by Commissioner Casey Newcomb) will be transferred to Mesa and assigned to Judge Helene Abrams.

Judge Hugh Hegyi's former family court calendar (currently being covered by Commissioner Colleen French) will be transferred to Mesa and assigned to Judge Teresa Sanders.

Newly appointed Judge Pam Gates will take Judge Susan Pineda's family court calendar and Judge Susanna Pineda will assume Judge Sander's southeast criminal calendar, which will transfer downtown.

Newly appointed Judge David Palmer will take Judge Daniel Martin's family court calendar and Judge Martin will assume Judge Helene Abrams southeast criminal calendar, which will transfer downtown.

Judge Richard Trujillo's downtown civil calendar will be transferred to Mesa and assigned to Judge Emmet Ronan. Judge Ronan's southeast criminal calendar will transfer downtown and be assigned to Judge Trujillo.

Judge John Ditsworth will rotate to southeast and assume Judge Joseph Kreamer's civil calendar and Judge Kreamer will come downtown and assume Judge Ditsworth's criminal calendar.

To equalize workloads in civil and family court, a new civil calendar will be created for Judge Linda Miles, who will remain at northeast and her family court calendar will be divided among the family court judges at northeast.

COMMISSIONERS

Newly appointed Commissioner Julia Lopez will assume an initial appearance calendar and Commissioner Jerry Bernstein will move to southeast and train on the RCC calendar that Judge Palmer currently handles.

Commissioners Patricia Arnold and Michael Hintze will swap calendars and courtrooms, on a date to be determined by Judge O'Connor.

Commissioners James Blomo and Steven Lynch will swap courtrooms, on a date to be determined by Judge Donahoe.

Commissioner Casey Newcomb is currently covering Judge Fink's former family court calendar. When this calendar gets transferred to Mesa, Commissioner Newcomb will take over former Commissioner David Anderson's family court calendar.

Commissioner Jeffrey Woodburn will transfer to Mesa in September and take over former Commissioner Wes Peterson's family court calendar.

Newly appointed Commissioner Alysson Abe will begin training in family court and assume Commissioner Jeffrey Woodburn's family court calendar downtown.

Court Technology Services

Major Milestones Implemented in Juvenile iCIS

CTS implemented many enhancements into the Juvenile module of iCIS over the last several months. The enhancements include: the Juvenile civil judgment process and the new 'Case Address' maintenance screen.

JUVENILE CIVIL JUDGMENTS

The process of generating civil judgments for juveniles that have outstanding obligations is another vehicle to increase revenue collections by the court. Previously, the Legacy System was labor intensive; our way of handling this process is fully automated within iCIS. CTS, the Clerk of the Superior Court, and Juvenile finance staff spent many hours developing and testing this process.

The JRO process functions similarly to the Parental Civil Judgment process by automatically collecting qualified obligations and associating them to a "proposed" civil judgment. That initial step initiates a workflow process that finalizes and issues the civil judgments.

The system generates worksheets containing information staff can verify through iCIS. The workflow transfers back and forth between Juvenile financial staff and those within the Clerk of Superior Court. In general, the process flows as follows:

- * *Generate worksheet*
- * *Forward worksheet to COC*
- * *Worksheet verified*
- * *Generate letter to payer*
- * *Verification of letter sent*
- * *Generate proposed Judgment*
- * *Judgment issued/denied*
- * *Judgment satisfaction*
- * *Generate satisfaction form*
- * *Generate lien packet*

NEW JUVENILE "CASE ADDRESS" SCREEN

The ability to maintain accurate address data on individuals can be a deceptively complex function. This data is even more critical in a system such as the juvenile module in iCIS as there are many parties related to a case.

To address the issue, a new "Case Address" screen is available in iCIS. Some of the features include:

- * *Lists address in descending order*
- * *Groups parties with associated addresses*
- * *Address entry mirrors US Post Office standards*
- * *Ability to add military addresses*
- * *Increased security functionality*
- * *Logical work progression*

The design and development of these new functions in iCIS is the result of input and testing from many indispensable subject matter experts across the juvenile community. Initial feedback on the new functionality is very positive.

Submitted by Ken Troxel
CTS Enterprise Applications Director

Courtside

Photo Highlights



(Above - Superior Court's Payroll Staff) In observance of National Payroll Week September 7-11, Human Resources celebrated the achievements of their payroll staff.

A mock-up of one of the Criminal Court Tower's large courtrooms. This courtroom features a double jury box for handling trials with two juries and a viewing room for the news media.



Construction workers begin erecting the steel for the new Downtown Criminal Court Tower. Steel erection will be completed in April 2010.