

FOCUS

A Look at the
Maricopa County
Juvenile Court



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Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County

Summer 2000 Edition

CASA cares, fights for kids

Court Appointed Special Advocate dedicated to dependent children

As a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate, Jean Peirce has worked with some of Maricopa County's most neglected youth.

Guiding children through foster care, the court system, happy and sometimes sad endings, Peirce has gone out of her way to give every child she works with a warm smile and unwavering support.

Although she says she is like any other CASA in the way she cares for children in dependency cases, she was selected for special recognition by CASA coordinators for her work involving the adoption of 10 neglected siblings.

"Jean Peirce is an excel-

lent CASA due to her willingness to be a team player, her patience, hope, consistency, determination and caring," said CASA Program Coordinator Nancy Molever during the awards ceremony.

"I think if people really knew about the CASA program, there would be a CASA for every child."

Peirce and two other CASA volunteers were named the Volunteers of the Year during the Fourth Annual CASA Volunteer Awards Ceremony.

Peirce spent four years working with the 10 siblings, now ages five through 18, who were all adopted last summer by Van and Shirley Hughes, of Mesa, in the glare of the local and national media spotlight. The Hughes family cred-



Court Appointed Special Advocate Program volunteer Jean Peirce was honored at the 4th Annual Volunteer Recognition Celebration for her work helping a Mesa family adopt 10 siblings.

its Peirce's dedication as a key ingredient in helping get all 10 children permanently placed in their home. Peirce drove hundreds of miles seeing the children had the services and care they needed.

"In the Hughes case, the

outcome was so perfect," Peirce said. "Just knowing these children ... How could I be so lucky to know great people who are friends for life."

The Hughes, Peirce and the children bonded for life.

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Juvenile Drug Court graduations now threefold

Founding Maricopa Juvenile Drug Court Judge John Foreman (left) congratulates 15-year-old Ismael for completing the Juvenile Drug Court Program. Seven juveniles recently graduated from the program.



Burdened by the weight of drug addiction, 15-year-old Ismael decided to make short work of his court-ordered drug treatment program.

Without faltering, he met the requirements of the Maricopa County Juvenile Drug Court Program.

His diligence in achieving sobriety led him to finish the program two months early, a first in the history of the

three-year program, and a feat he celebrated during a recent graduation ceremony.

"I just wanted to get it over with." Ismael said, adding he was motivated by his desire to conquer the grueling requirements of the program. "I'm glad I graduated the program. It was tough."

Ismael was among five

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CASA volunteers, founders rewarded

Under the glare of media attention, three children's advocates remained focused on their mission to do what was best for the abused, neglected or abandoned youngsters they vowed to protect.

The three — June Anderson, Kathleen Norton and Jean Peirce — withstood public pressure that may have distracted others. Their ability to remain committed to their responsibilities as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) garnered respect and admiration.

All three former educators were recently named the CASA Program's Volunteers of the Year during the 4th Annual Court Appointed Special Advocate Volunteer Recognition Awards.

"This year's Volunteers of the Year are no strangers to pressure," said Nancy Molever, coordinator for the CASA Program. "They worked hard, under close scrutiny of the media, to give the court information that would lead to the best decisions on behalf of their assigned children. They truly exemplify the phrase 'grace under fire.'"

Molever said although one volunteer is normally selected for the award, this year's three recipients were equally deserving.

Among those who joined the celebration were founders of the 15-year-old CASA Program in Maricopa County, other CASA volunteers, staff and Juvenile Court officials.

Anderson became a CASA in 1993 and has worked with six children on two cases in that time.

She was honored for her work over the past year with a young girl, whose case at times put Anderson at personal risk. The case is still

CASA Facts

- A typical CASA case involves a child or children in a dependency case.
- Children in dependency cases are typically neglected, abused or abandoned.

Duties of a CASA include:

- Helping the child understand the court system
- Making court appearances
- Working with all the agencies involved in the case.
- Initially, CASAs are required to work 15 hours a week on their case.

More volunteers needed:

- Out of about 4,000 children in the dependency process, only 479 have CASAs.
- The CASA program, which has 213 volunteers working with children, is always looking for more volunteers.

For more information on the CASA Program in Maricopa County, call 602.506.4083.

open and she cannot discuss her experience. A former school counselor, Anderson said she has been working with children all her life, which led her to the CASA program.

"I was very humbled by the award," Anderson said. "I don't think I did anything over and beyond what every other CASA has done. I see it as representative of what CASAs do every day."

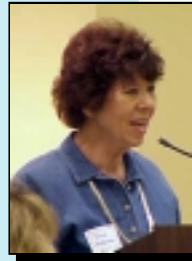
Kathleen Norton was honored for her work in a case involving abused infants. The case, which is still pending, is emotionally challenging because of the injuries the children suffered. Norton has been in the CASA program since 1998.

Molever said Norton's background in special education and pediatric training for

CASA Volunteers of the Year

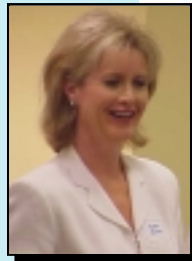
The Rewards of Being a CASA :

June Anderson



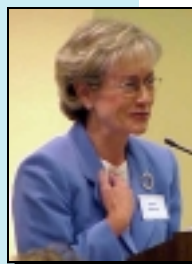
"Just being able to work with children ... I felt that I made a contribution to a child's life, and that's what is important to me."

Kathleen Norton



"A great reward is helping to interface with all the various parties in the case so as to expedite the outcome in a dependency case"

Jean Peirce



"Knowing that children have the help they need and knowing that when everything else changes, there's at least one constant person and that's the CASA"

doctors involved with handicapped children made her the ideal CASA for the infants. Norton was especially diligent about keeping all the parties informed in the case and was essential in keeping the publicized case focused on the children, Molever said.

Like the other award recipients, Norton said she became a CASA to continue

contact with children she had as a teacher.

"I think one of the main reasons I became a CASA was to be able to be a bridge between the various people in the case," Norton said.

Jean Peirce dedicated four years of work that resulted in a happy conclusion last

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Rotations bring Juvenile Court changes

Rotations in Juvenile Court judicial assignments took effect June 12 and are part of changes throughout Superior Court that coincide with the appointment of Judge Colin F. Campbell as the new Superior Court Presiding Judge.









"Each brought their unique talents to the Court and made a positive difference in the life of the Juvenile Court, as well as the children and families of our County," Judge Court Presiding Judge Maurice Portley said of the departing judicial officers. "We wish them well in their new assignments.

"The new judicial officers are looking forward to helping the children and families, the community and our future," Judge Portley said.

The rotations complete a year of change at Juvenile Court. Last summer, Juvenile Court was comprised of five judges and 10 commissioners. Since then, vacancies and the creation of new judgeships throughout Superior Court changed the bench to 11 judges and five commissioners. Most changes occurred as five former Juvenile Court commissioners became judges throughout Superior Court.

Changes in Mesa

Taking over for Judge Penny Willrich at the Southeast Juvenile Facility in Mesa is Judge Silvia Arellano, who was formerly on the Criminal Department bench, at the downtown facility. Judge Willrich was a recent addition to the bench in September of 1999, although she had previously served in Juvenile Court as a commissioner. Judge Willrich has been assigned to a Criminal Department calendar and remains in Mesa, at the Southeast Adult Court Facility.

Juvenile Court Rotations			
On to other assignments		New to Juvenile Court	
			
Judge Margaret Downie	Judge Penny Willrich	Judge Silvia Arellano	Judge Dennis Dairman
			
Commissioner Elizabeth Arriola	Commissioner Toby Gerst	Judge Thomas Dunevant	Commissioner Robert Colosi

Judge Arellano was appointed to the bench in 1990 and served in the Civil and Domestic Relations Departments prior to her assignment in the Criminal Department. Prior to becoming a judge, Judge Arellano worked as a commissioner for the Arizona Department of Real Estate and as an Administrative Law Judge for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Judge Dennis Dairman took over Commissioner Elizabeth Arriola's calendar at the Southeast Facility in Mesa. Prior to the rotations, Judge Dairman served in the Southeast Criminal Department. Commissioner Arriola will remain in Mesa and is assigned to the Southeast Criminal Department.

Judge Dairman was appointed to the bench in 1992, and has since served in the Civil and Domestic Relations Departments in addition to his most recent criminal assignment. Prior to his judicial appointment, Judge Dairman was a Deputy Public Defender for 17 years with the Maricopa

County Public Defender's Office.

Changes at Durango

Judge Thomas Dunevant III moved to the Durango Juvenile Facility from downtown to assume Judge Margaret Downie's calendar. Judge Downie had been at the Durango facility for nearly three years prior to the rotations. She was appointed to a judgeship in December, 1999 and had been a Juvenile Court commissioner for the previous two years. Judge Downie is assigned to the Family Court Department at the Downtown facility.

Judge Dunevant moved over from the Criminal Department and has been a judge since 1989. Prior to his Criminal Bench assignment, Judge Dunevant served in the Civil, Domestic Relations and Special Assignment Departments. From 1992 to 1995, Judge Dunevant was the Presiding Civil Department Judge. He served as a Superior Court Commissioner from 1985 until his appointment as a judge. Prior to becoming a judicial of-

ficer, he was an Assistant City Attorney for Phoenix and a Deputy County Attorney for the Maricopa County Attorney's Office.

Commissioner Robert Colosi made the move from the Civil Department downtown to the Juvenile Court Durango facility. Commissioner Colosi was appointed as a commissioner in 1989. In addition to his most recent Civil Department assignment, Commissioner Colosi has also been assigned to the Criminal, Family Court and Probate/Mental Health Departments. Before his appointment, Commissioner Colosi worked for the United States Attorney's Office.

Former Juvenile Court Commissioner Toby Gerst, who had a halftime calendar, rotated to the Civil Department and will assume Commissioner Colosi's calendar on a halftime basis.

Judge Campbell, succeeding Judge Robert D. Myers as presiding judge July 1, said Juvenile Court will continue to play a role in Judicial rotations.

CASA

Awards celebration

Juvenile Court Dependency Administrator Bill Callahan (left) presents Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Maurice Portley with the CASA Judge of the Year Award during the annual awards ceremony.



Ann Marks (left) and Judi Weintraub (right), both of the Jewish Women's Council, pose with the Hon. C. Kimball Rose during the 4th annual Court Appointed Special Advocate Volunteer Recognition Award ceremony. Both Judge Rose and the Jewish Women's Council were among the award recipients for their work implementing the CASA program 15 years ago.

Jean Peirce, From Page 1

Peirce says her effort in the Hughes case was not different from how she has approached the 13 cases she has had in her 10 years in the CASA program -- a program that provides volunteers to help abused, neglected or abandoned children in dependency cases.

A former educator, who worked with troubled youth in Los Angeles, Peirce is driven by a belief that every child deserves a chance to receive loving attention and the basics of life.

"Every kid needs that," Peirce said. "And every CASA feels the same way. That's what a CASA does."

A typical week for Peirce can involve as many as 12 hours driving, appearing in court to discuss the child's case with a judge and making phone calls. In the Hughes case, Peirce took advantage of her educational background to tutor one of the children in reading four times a week.

The outcomes of her cases have been both uplifting and disheartening, and the

children in her cases haven't always been accepting of her care. But she always gets a reward from ensuring children have the help they need. She said a challenge of being a CASA is not getting too close to the case emotionally, which blurs the objectivity needed in her role in the dependency process of reuniting a child with parents or finding a new caring family.

"If I get emotionally involved, I am less effective," Peirce said. "It doesn't mean I don't care for these kids. It doesn't mean I like them all. Some kids are really difficult. But so what? They're kids."

With her work with the Hughes completed, Peirce is on to a new case -- her first involving a dependent child who simultaneously is facing delinquency proceedings. She said as long as she's watching out for children, she's up for the challenge.

"It's a privilege to be a CASA and to watch out for the best interests of a child," Peirce said. "Who could ask for a better thing?"

CASA Awards, From Page 2

summer with the adoption of 10 siblings by a Mesa couple. At times driving an endless amount of miles a week, Peirce got all 10 kids to their counseling appointments, made sure they got needed services and helped them get to know their future adoptive parents, Van and Shirley Hughes.

A 10-year veteran of the CASA program and former teacher and principal, Peirce was thrust into the local and national spotlight with the Hughes case, appearing on Dateline and the Montel Williams show. Peirce said help-

ing kids is her driving force, no matter how difficult the case may be.

"I think if people really knew about the CASA program, there would be a CASA for every child," Peirce said. "It's a privilege to be a CASA and to watch out for the best interests of a child. Who could ask for a better thing?"

Former Superior Court Presiding Judge C. Kimball Rose, now retired, received

the first C. Kimball Rose Light of Hope Award for his efforts in getting the program started 15 years ago. Judge Rose was the Juvenile Court Presiding Judge when the program was implemented. The award will bear his name from now on. Community Support Awards were also given to following cofounders: the National Council of Jewish Women Valley Section, the Junior League and Kappa Al-



Retired Judge C. Kimball Rose

pha Theta.

Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Maurice Portley was named the Judge of the Year for his efforts with the Juvenile Court Dependency Department.

During the ceremony, Molever characterized the experiences of CASA volunteers as bittersweet.

"You share a lot of pain with your assigned child or children and their families," Molever said. "It is difficult to maintain good boundaries -- to get close enough to know your kids, but not so close that you lose your objectivity."

JUVENILE COURT NEWS BRIEFS

• CAB gets award •

The Maricopa County Juvenile Court Community Advisory Board (CAB) was received an Arizona Supreme Court Justice 2002 Award in the "Connecting with the Community" category.

The CAB program was selected for its contribution to improving public trust and confidence in the courts. The volunteer CAB advises Juvenile Court on how to improve its service to the community. Maricopa County Juvenile Court's first CAB was established in 1995.

Members of the board are appointed by the Juvenile Court Presiding Judge from recommendations.

CABs from Cochise, Coconino, Pinal and Yavapai Counties were also honored.

• Project team effort •

The Juvenile Court, Child Protective Services and Value Options have teamed to create Family Recovery Project — a family-centered program. The program targets children

involved in the Model Court Dependency program where substance abuse is a significant factor in the child's removal or a barrier to reuniting the family. The project — a one-year

pilot in the northwest Valley — is being funded by COMCARE Trust funds. Currently, 50 families are participating in the program. They are receiving services, such as counseling de-

signed to intervene and help recovery, as well as additional support services, like housing and job assistance, intended to encompass all the family's needs to recover.

Legislative update

The following new legislation directly impacts Juvenile Court:

Senate Bill 1024 changes or clarifies a number of things:

- Permits the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC) jurisdiction over a juvenile when the juvenile is convicted of a felony offense while in an ADJC secure care facility and is placed on adult probation.
- Juvenile Court must inform a Juvenile that failure to appear in court will result in the suspension of the Juvenile's driver's license. This only applies to limited jurisdiction courts who are juvenile hearing officers. Currently, the Court can order the Department of Transportation to suspend the Juvenile's license.
- The Juvenile Court may impose a term of probation of longer than one year for Juvenile sex offenders. Juvenile sex offenders must be on probation until their 18th birthday or at least one year, even if they turn 18 before the probation expires.

• Clarifies the Court's authority to require a delinquent juvenile or the juvenile's parents to pay restitution to the victim or victim's family regardless of the financial status of the Juvenile or the Juvenile's parent.

House Bill 2400 requires Juvenile Court to address the Foster Care Review Board recommendations on the record.

The board of five members, of which there are 44 in the county, reviews all dependency cases that involve children in foster care placements and makes recommendations regarding its findings. The bill also sets up a kinship program for dependent children in the hopes of placing a dependent child with relatives. It also allows dependent children, on their 18th birthday, to voluntarily remain in CPS care until 21 to finish school and receive services.

House Bill 2449 requires a parent or guardian of a child to appear with the child in court unless their absence is waived.

If an appearance is not waived, there will be hearing to determine the reason and whether the parent should be found in contempt of the law.

Drug Court, From Page 1

Juvenile Drug Court participants to graduate amid family, friends and Juvenile Court officials, who helped celebrate their success.

"All these graduates have looked inside themselves to become better people and a productive part of our community," said Juvenile Drug Court Judge John Foreman.

Vital facets of the program include intensive supervision, immediate consequences, judicial review, family participation and frequent random drug tests. During one phase of the program, juveniles must be drug tested three

times a week, participate in two group therapy sessions per week and come to Juvenile Court for a weekly court hearing.

The graduates come from all three Maricopa County Juvenile Drug Courts — a first in the history of the program.

The second and third juvenile drug courts were implemented in 1999, with grant funding based on the pilot program initiated in 1997 by Judge Foreman, then the Presiding Juvenile Court Judge.

The expansion includes a Juvenile Drug Court program in the Juvenile Court South-

east Facility in Mesa and another at the Durango facility. Juvenile Court Judge Rebecca Albrecht presides over the Southeast Juvenile Drug Court and Juvenile Court Judge Pamela J. Franks presides over juvenile cases from the northwest Valley.

Judge Foreman said the expansion means more juveniles in need of substance abuse treatment can participate in the program.

"We're just dealing with the tip of the iceberg here," Judge Foreman said. "We've been very selective in making sure we address the kids who

would benefit the most from this program. This in no way indicates that we're addressing the needs of all the kids across the valley."

Juvenile Drug Court Coordinator Ray Wells said the expansion has eased some difficulties for the juveniles.

"The Drug Court Program is intense and time intensive. Kids have to meet three times a week. If you're 30 miles from court, it makes it real difficult," Wells said. "With the added Drug Courts we've been able to have some success in getting kids to their meetings."

JUVENILE COURT JUDICIAL OFFICERS

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Durango Court Center
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Phoenix, AZ 85009

Presiding Judge Maurice Portley	602.506.2306	Associate Presiding Judge Pam Franks	602.506.3528
Judge Rebecca Albrecht	602.506.3727	Judge Thomas Dunevant III	602.506.2050
Judge Silvia Arellano	602.506.3649	Judge Brian Hauser	602.506.6086
Judge Dennis Dairman	602.506.1855	Judge William Sargeant III	602.506.3663
Judge Emmet Ronan	602.506.0438	Judge Eileen Willett	602.506.3343
Judge Linda Scott	602.506.2610	Commissioner Jane Bayham-Lesselyong	602.506.3445
Commissioner Thomas Jacobs	602.506.4203	Commissioner Robert Colosi	602.506.3366
Commissioner Elizabeth Yancey	602.506.2040	Commissioner George Foster Jr.	602.506.3892

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