

Judicial Branch News

Probate Wins Top Honor



July 2013



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Cover - Judge Rosa Mroz (left) and Probate Administrator Elizabeth Evans (right) accept the Justice Achievement Award at the 2013 NACM Conference in San Antonio, Texas.

Judicial Branch News

The Judicial Branch News is an online newsletter published by the Media Relations Department.

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Probate Wins Top Honor



Ray Billotte

Judicial Branch Administrator

In mid-July court administrators, Phil Knox, Richard Woods, Elizabeth Evans and the Honorable Judge Mroz travelled with me to San Antonio, Texas to receive the National Association for Court Management's (NACM) highest honor, the Justice Achievement Award. The Probate and Mental Health Department was named recipient of this esteemed award for their dedication to reinventing Probate Court and restoring public trust and confidence in the judiciary.

As you may remember, unflattering reports of several adult guardianship and conservatorship cases hit the front pages of valley newspapers. In each case, the wards' estates had paid hundreds of thousands in fiduciary and attorney fees, putting the public's trust and confidence in the judiciary in question. In response, the Court launched a critical self-assessment and initiated sweeping reforms designed to enhance protections of vulnerable adults.

Presiding Judge Davis and court administrators appointed a committee to conduct a thorough review of judicial processes and administrative procedures. Six commissioners now oversee high volume probate calendars, and move simple, uncontested cases along quickly; while setting aside one day a week for more complex, contested matters. Under the earlier system contested cases with multiple issues could remain unresolved due to lack of time on the court calendar. As a result, contested cases may go unresolved for an undesirable length of time.

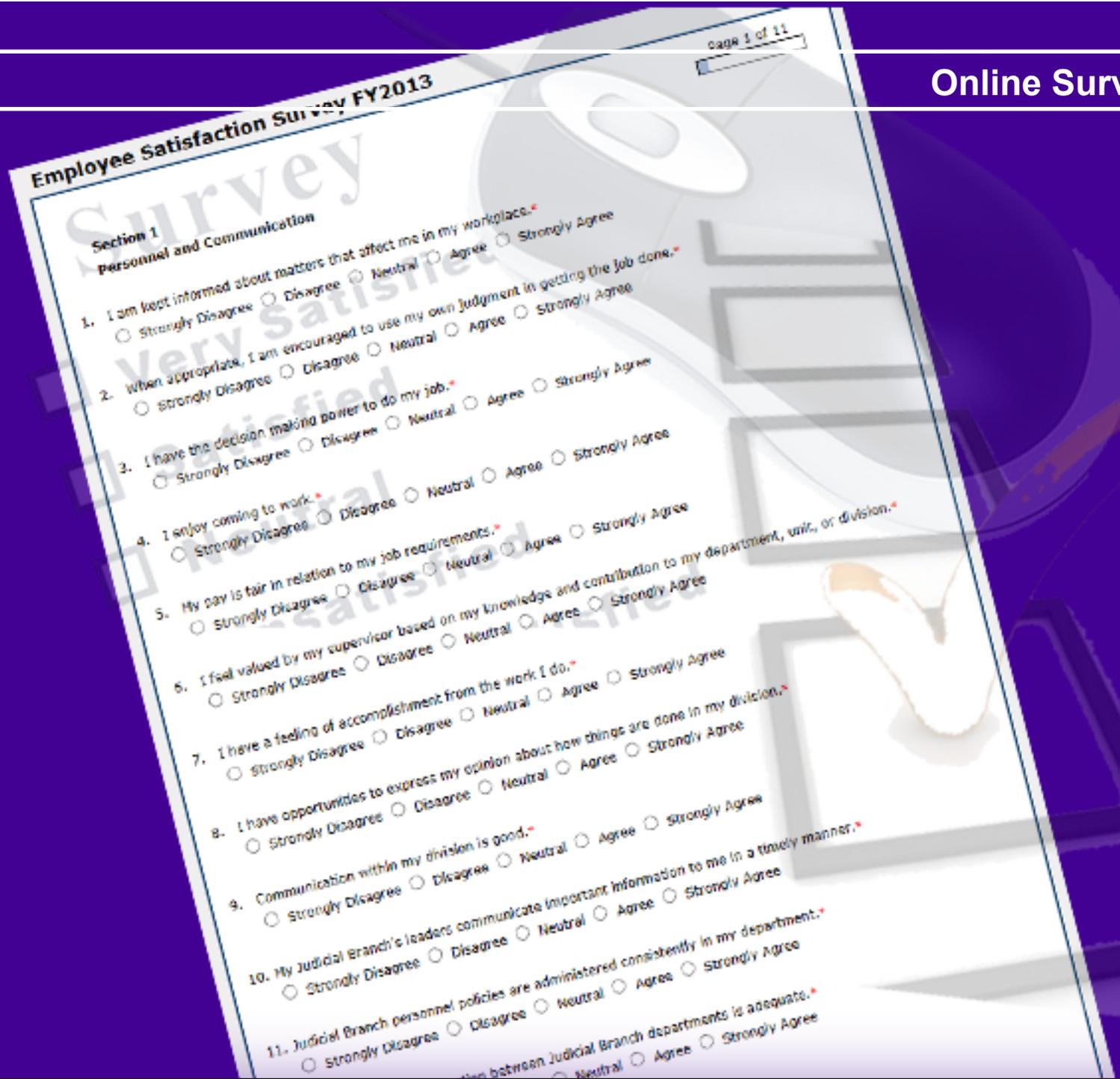
Additionally, overwhelming caseloads and insufficient judicial/staff resources presented enormous challenges. Over a three year period, the court designed and implemented a comprehensive reform plan creating the following case management protocol to effectively address the most critical needs:

- Expanded use of alternative dispute resolution.
- Instituted an accountability court.
- Created case differentiation metrics.
- Enhanced communication between accountants and judicial officers.
- Created education programs to assist self-represented litigants.
- Leadership directed additional judicial and staff resources to the Probate Department.

The Court also developed and implemented systemic changes, overhauled court processes, and enhanced protections to safeguard vulnerable adults. Judicial officers and court administrators streamlined case management techniques, created mechanisms to enforce accountability, and expanded community outreach programs.

Maricopa County Superior Court leaders were unwavering in their mission to overhaul Probate Court while protecting the assets of vulnerable adults, and by doing so, increased the public's trust and confidence in the judiciary. In less than three years, the department has turned adversity into opportunity and developed innovative programs that are recognized nationally. Congratulations to all those who played a part, big or small, in reinventing Probate—this award also belongs to you.

By Judicial Branch Administrator Ray Billotte



A Video Message from Ray Billotte



A Message from
Ray Billotte
Court Administrator

A video message from Judicial Branch Administrator Ray Billotte regarding the new online Employee Satisfaction Survey. To watch the video, please click the image to the left.

Employee Anniversaries

5 Years

Lance Kellar, Courier
 Camela Jones, Judicial Clerk Senior
 Diane Estrada-Rodriguez, Judicial Clerk Senior
 Jonelle Acosta, Adult Probation Officer
 Amy Ganz, Adult Probation Officer
 Laquacia McCormick, Adult Probation Officer
 Aaron Porzel, Adult Probation Officer
 Kenneth Walker, Adult Probation Officer
 Kevin Davis, Judicial Assistant
 Theodore Ross, Procurement Specialist
 Susan Whitaker, Judicial Assistant

10 Years

Danielle Chacon, Adult Probation Officer
 Jonathan Liming, Adult Probation Officer
 Cynthia Stevens, Adult Probation Division Manager
 George Felger, Security Manager
 Hugh Hegyi, Superior Court Judge
 Abraham Estrada, Court Interpreter
 Julicua Singleton, Judicial Assistant - Classified
 Alonzo Lee, Juvenile Detention Officer

15 Years

Scott Allen, Financial Supervisor
 Kristi Wimmer, Adult Education Instructor
 Miriam Torres, Judicial Clerk Senior

20 Years

Laurie Laughlin, Justice System Manager
 Carmen Borboa, Judicial Clerk Associate

25 Years

Sherry Johnston, Adult Probation Officer Supervisor
 Eileen Long, Adult Probation Officer
 Alan Dyal, Adult Probation Officer

30 Years

Kim Hannan, Court Reporter

34 Years

Minnie Uribe, Judicial Clerk Supervisor

Judge Glenn Davis Retires

Judge Glenn Davis retired from Superior Court on June 30.



Glenn Davis

During his tenure at the court, he presided over civil, criminal and family court calendars. Judge Davis' volunteer work was a tremendous asset to the legal community. Judge Davis worked with the Volunteer Lawyer's Program and numerous other Bar Committees, including his service as President of the Maricopa County Bar Association. He was also instrumental in the creation of the Maricopa County Justice Museum and Learning Center on the 6th Floor of the Old Court House.

"We congratulate Judge Davis on his years of exemplary service and wish him the very best in his retirement," Presiding Judge Norman Davis said.

Human Resources Welcomes New Team Member

The Human Resources Team is pleased to announce the addition of its newest member, Serena Iriondo.



Serena Iriondo

Iriondo, who previously served as Bailiff to Judge Susanna Pineda for three years, succeeds Dawn Crawford who moved to Juvenile Probation to become administrative assistant to Deputy Chief John Schow.

Iriondo will provide administrative support and serve as the receptionist for HR located on the third floor of the Law Library in the East Court Building.

By Mark Alver

Court Says Farewell to CTS Leaders



Former Chief Information Officer John Barrett (left) and Deputy Chief Information Officer Steve Ballance (right) receive awards from Judicial Branch Administrator Raymond Billotte for their dedicated service to the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County. The employees were recognized at a going away party on July 2 at the Downtown Justice Center in Phoenix.

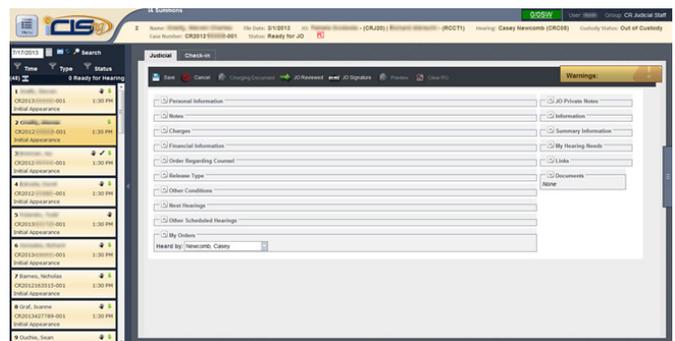
The Marshal's Office Graduates a New Class



Supervisors from the Marshal's Office (front row) pose with the its newest class of officers following their graduation ceremony.

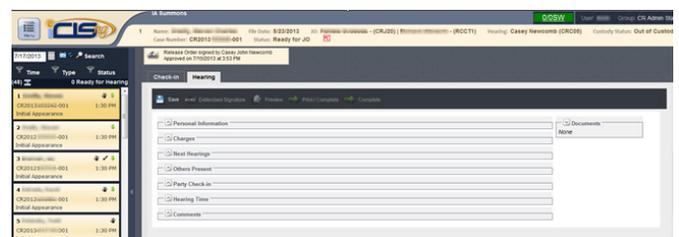
IA Summons: The Courtroom Goes Paperless

Commissioner Casey Newcomb and judicial staff will use the new judicial screen for IA Summons hearings beginning in July. With the development of the new judicial screen, IA Summons Court will become paperless. The court will now produce only electronic orders of release and orders regarding appointment of counsel.



This tab is used for case review both in preparation for the hearing and during the hearing to record judicial decisions.

After the hearings are complete, iCIS will update the information, including the next hearing date. All documents produced during court will automatically be e-filed.



A special thanks goes to Commissioner Brian Rees, Commissioner Casey Newcomb, Commissioner Steven Lynch, Commissioner Richard Nothwehr, Chris Kraus, Jill Siller, Angela Maddox, Chris Bleuenstein, Heather Eakin, Seth Harris, Catherine Camren, Tamara Ogden, Brenda Lara, Mariana Baxter and the entire iCISng development and business team! Thanks everyone!

Probation Officers Recognized by Mesa Police

Six employees with Maricopa County's Adult Probation Department were recognized by the Mesa Police Department for their efforts in a highly successful, community policing pilot program.

Wes Shipley, Tracee Frick, and Julie Christie were awarded Medals of Excellence and Brian Slater, Timberly Matson and Traci Aparicio received Letters of Commendation.

The Maricopa County Adult Probation Department (MCAPD) was one of several agencies that worked with Mesa Police on the project. The Intelligence-Led Community Policing, Community Prosecution, and Community Partnerships (IL3CP) was a year-long pilot program that focused on a new approach to community policing that incorporated partnerships between law enforcement, community service organizations and prosecutorial organizations.



The community policing project focused on improving an area near Stapley and Main Street in Mesa, AZ. The area includes two residential streets and is primarily comprised of multi-family housing units. In the year prior to the project, July 2010 to July 2011, this area experienced a high volume of calls related to property crimes.

After the project, September 2011 through September 2012, the community was safer and there were visible improvements. As a result of the project, more than 42 tons of trash was removed. In addition, neighborhood appreciation and community events were held, and residents were provided with free resources like health and dental care. The IL3CP Project Team also organized youth employment workshops, which provided training to more than 80 youth in the community. In addition, there were 372 arrests made, and 296 of them were adjudicated by the Mesa Prosecutor's Office or the Maricopa County Attorney's Office.

By Raquel Mead Gloden

Judicial Staff Retreat Recap

With more than 100 staff members in attendance, this year's Judicial Staff Retreat was an overwhelming success.

The program, designed to make Judicial Staff better at their jobs, allowed staff to get away from their everyday work and learn in a fun and relaxed environment.

The highlights of this year's program included presentations by Cindy Reid of the Court Training and Staff Development and Al Parisian, Earle Lloyd and Karl Goldsmith for the Office of the Court Marshal.

Those in attendance included judicial assistants, bailiffs and staff members from Court Administration.

The conference was put together by the four departmental Judicial Assistant trainers: Family Court – Ricky McKaig, Criminal – Sandra Mena, Civil – Kristi Dallmann and Juvenile - Ben Williams. The next Judicial Staff Retreat is scheduled for October.

By Kristi Dallman

The Judicial Branch Wins NACos

In 2013, the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County was selected as recipients of six awards from the National Association of Counties. To recognize the creativity and imagination of counties, NACo presents a number of awards each year to county officials, their employees and the counties themselves. Below are summaries of Judicial Branch programs that won awards:

The Adult Probation Department Assessment Center, Cynthia Stevens, Division Director, Presentence Investigations, Assessments & Assignments

The Assessment Center of Maricopa County Adult Probation is under the umbrella of the presentence division. The center employs screeners whose main task is to administer assessments to defendants before and after sentencing by the Court. These assessments are utilized by judges, probation officers and other stake holders for determining appropriate sentences, as well as setting levels of supervision in the community. Historically, screeners' job descriptions were based on whether they conducted presentence or post-sentence screenings. Pre-sentence screeners were supervised in six different units consisting of both probation officers and screeners, and post-sentence screeners were supervised in a separate unit by one supervisor. This separation resulted in inconsistency in supervision, how their work was reviewed and assessed, and how they were told to do their job. The separation created division in the screener staff pool, and a sense of "us and them." The reorganization of the assessment center has increased the efficiency of the presentence division, which deals with a large volume of reports on an annual basis.

Maricopa County Regional Homeless Court, Karen Westover, Deputy Court Administrator

Regional Homeless Court (RHC) was created by Phoenix, Tempe and Glendale Municipal Courts. With the support of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, Superior, Justice and Municipal Courts as well as prosecutors and defense attorneys RHC was expanded. Also, legislation passed by the Arizona State Legislature and Governor in 2012, at the request of the Courts, assisted in RHC's expansion. RHC now includes participation by all 26 Justice Courts and all 23 Municipal Courts in Maricopa County. Maricopa County is the 4th largest county in the nation. It is 9,224 square miles and is larger than seven states in the nation. MCRHC brings the homeless and the courts together in one location through partnerships with local homeless service agencies. The local homeless campus has been renovated to include a one-of-a-kind courtroom setting designed to make the homeless population feel welcome. It removes barriers typically experienced at other courts. In addition, the homeless are no longer required to drive from one end of the county to the other end to resolve outstanding offenses because there is now a centralized location. The goal is to resolve outstanding misdemeanor, victimless offenses, and warrants for homeless individuals who demonstrate a commitment to end their homelessness. MCRHC combines punishment and treatment through supervised rehabilitation programs provided by more than 20 community providers. Since its inception, the homeless court has assisted more than 400 people in putting their lives back together and regaining self-sufficiency. To date, individuals that have completed this program have not returned.

Reinventing Probate Court in Maricopa County: Restoring Public Trust, Elizabeth Evans, Probate Court Administrator

Probate Courts across the county have been subject to intense scrutiny. Unflattering media reports have eroded public trust and confidence in the Probate Court. Maricopa County Superior Court's Probate Department instituted dramatic reforms and re-engineered both judicial procedures and administrative processes. In the last two and a half years, the court developed and implemented systemic changes, overhauling court processes and enhancing protections for vulnerable adults. Judicial officers and court administration staff applied modern case management techniques, created mechanisms to enforce accountability, and developed community outreach programs.

The Judicial Branch Wins NACos (continued)

Settlement Conference on Demand, Paula Collins, Criminal Court Administration

The Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County is the fourth largest trial court in the country. The Court serves all of Maricopa County, which includes the metropolitan Phoenix area, and adjudicates more than 30,000 felony filings each year. The Court has a long history of developing innovative caseload management techniques to specifically address the early resolution of felony criminal cases. Our objective in creating this project was to increase the use of settlement conferences to resolve more felony criminal cases without going to trial. The new program focused on improving the accessibility to judicial calendars to promote the use of settlement conferences, and the centralization of scheduling services for lawyers and support staff. In July 2011, the Court launched Settlement Conference on Demand, which allows attorneys to call a central location in Criminal Court Administration to schedule a settlement conference with an available judicial officer. Judicial division staff has provided Criminal Court Administration with positive feedback on the reduction in the number of phone calls they receive requesting settlement conferences. Additionally, private counsel and indigent defense are appreciative of the centralized point of contact.

Stress Management Program for Employees Exposed to Vicarious Trauma, Adult Probation

Research has consistently demonstrated that professionals who work in human service occupations are impacted by the traumatic experiences of those they serve. Studies have repeatedly shown that secondary traumatic stress is a normal and inevitable consequence of work that involves human suffering. Recent research on probation employees suggests challenging caseload events, officer victimization, and longevity were associated with higher reports of traumatic stress and burnout. In 2011, Maricopa County was the first probation department to develop an employee stress management program that specifically targets the impact of vicarious trauma. The program measures the frequency of incidents and severity of symptoms in staff and uses the data outcome to guide program content. In addition, the training curriculum offers protective coping strategies to better prepare staff for the emotional challenges of probation work. To date, 368 employees have received stress management training, and program evaluations suggest that it is well received. Eighty-six percent of those employees reported that they had experienced three or more symptoms of vicarious trauma and 68% indicated that their current stress level was unsustainable without significant costs to their bodies. These results illustrate the prevalence of impact and the need to address traumatic stress in community corrections.

Veterans Court, Wes Shipley, Director, Eastern Field Division

In order to address the special needs of veterans in the criminal justice system, the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County in collaboration with the Maricopa County Adult Probation Department (MCAPD) established the Veterans Treatment Court. The Court and the Adult Probation Department have partnered with the Veterans Administration (VA), the Regional Behavioral Health Agency (Magellan) and other organizations to provide very specific, individualized treatment and services for the men and women who have served in the military and now find themselves under court supervision. Six specialized probation officers and one supervisor have been appointed to supervise up to 300 justice involved veterans by working closely with the Court and VA. One additional officer was assigned the task of locating and re-engaging veteran offenders who have absconded and are currently on warrant status. To date, the program has improved the success of veterans on probation, reduced prison sentences of that population, and was successful in reaching out and resolving warrant issues to more than half of veterans on warrant status. The real success of the program can be seen in the collaboration among the different organizations, with one common goal – giving the men and women who have served our country a second chance.