

Judicial Branch News

From the Presiding Judge



Hon. Janet Barton

My previous two articles talked about other people and their contributions to the Judicial Branch. This month I thought I'd talk about what my goals are as the Court's Presiding Judge. What my potential contributions to the Judicial Branch might be.

Presently, I have six primary goals. Each of those goals is discussed below. They are not listed in any particular order.

1. **Compensation Increases** - Although my goals are not listed in any particular order, I thought I'd start with one that will hopefully catch your eye and keep you reading. I do intend to pursue pay increases for Judicial Branch staff. Due to budget restrictions there have been too few pay increases for staff over the last 7 – 10 years (two in the last seven years). Obtaining pay increases for Judicial Branch staff is one of my top priorities and I intend to request funding from the county in the next budget for a Judicial Branch pay increase. No guarantees that I will be successful, but I will definitely be making the request.

2. **Law Library Resource Center** – As many of you know, the Court received a grant from AmeriCorps to institute a Navigator program in the Court's Self Service Center, which will be renamed the Law Library Resource Center in the near future. Navigators are college students who agree to provide assistance in the Court's Law Library Resource Center for a set number of hours per semester (300 hours per semester per student). The grant, which is for three years, should enable the Court to obtain 35 to 38 of these students per semester. The students, or Navigators, will be trained to provide assistance to litigants. We intend to start with Family Court litigants, as that department has the highest percentage of self-represented litigants. In addition, the largest user group in our Self Service Center is family court litigants.

The Navigators, once trained, should be able to answer basic questions for litigants (can I get my maiden name back, how long will it take me to get in front of the judge, what forms do I need to complete to file for a divorce, modify my child support, change my parenting plan, etc.). They will provide legal information only – not legal advice. For example information the Court provides on its website, which is legal information and not legal advice, can also be provided in person by a Navigator. The Navigators will also be able to assist litigants in completing forms.

The Superior Court for the County of Los Angeles was the first court in the nation to obtain an AmeriCorps grant to use college students to assist self-represented litigants. To the best of my knowledge the Superior Court for Maricopa County will be the second. Shawn Friend, Shawn Haught, Richard Woods, Judge Gates and I were in Los Angeles on September 11 and 12 to view that Court's training program and tour its self-service center. Judge Dean Fink was there previously to observe Los Angeles' program and is actually the person who suggested that our Court pursue such a program. Our goal is to have Navigators in the Court's self service center by January 15, 2016, just four months from now. By April 1, 2016, we hope to relocate the law library and self service center to its new location in the Central Court Building and collectively refer to that new facility as the Court's Law Library Resource Center.



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Judicial Branch News

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

If you wish to contribute to this newsletter, please send articles, news items, photos or other correspondence to: karra@superiorcourt.maricopa.gov.

Contributing Writers

Raymond Billotte
Debbie Gilliland
Judge Janet Barton
Cindy Reid
Jennifer Murray

Contributing Editors

Karen Arra
Vincent Funari
Kelly Vail
Mary Byrnes
Nicole Garcia



Produced by the Media Relations Department

Media Relations Department
Old Courthouse 4th Floor
125 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85003

The Maricopa County Superior Court was the first major court in the country to have a self service center and we will always be able to claim that distinction. Hopefully by the end of my term the Court will also have the distinction of being one of if not the best law library resource centers in the country.

3. East Court Tower – I hope to continue the build out of the East Court Tower and intend to ask the County for funds to do so. Construction is presently underway on the 8th floor. Hopefully that floor will be finished and ready for occupancy by July 15, 2016. Once the 8th floor is complete, four of the six courtroom floors in the East Court Building will have been refurbished and built out. I have already told the County that the Court intends to ask for a large courtroom on the next floor that is built out (probably the 9th floor) so that there will be a courtroom in the East Court Tower where civil judges can conduct larger civil trials involving multiple parties.

4. Grand Jury Space – The space where grand jury proceedings are presently conducted (One West Madison) is in desperate need of a makeover. One of my goals is to get the grand jurors in acceptable space.

The County is currently meeting with the various stake holders in the grand jury process to determine what can and should be done. Presently the Court does not know whether the County will ultimately decide to gut and rebuild the floors in One West Madison or relocate the grand jury operations to other space. What everyone does seem to agree upon is that the county and state grand jurors are serving in conditions that are far less than optimal and that needs to be rectified.

5. Jury Reform – Jury reform is another one of my goals. There are various ways in which our jury system could improve. For example the Court summons approximately 640,000 jurors annually. Yet on an annual basis, the Court only asks about 50,000 jurors to actually report to a jury assembly room. One of the reasons the Court sends out so many summons is because Arizona is a transient state and, as a result, many of the summons the Court sends out are ultimately undeliverable. Nevertheless, this discrepancy is an issue the Court needs to address as the cost associated with summoning 590,000 more jurors than are ultimately needed is substantial.

We are also considering the possibility of replacing the Agile Jury System software used by the Jury Commissioner's office. Doing so will expand the Court's ability to communicate with jurors which presently is restricted to phone calls and direct mail. Replacing the existing software may also address many of the jury reform issues on my radar and, through potential cost reductions, ultimately save the Court money in the long run. Suffice it to say that my goal is to have a stronger and more efficient jury system in place by the end of my term.

6. Juvenile Department – Right now the juvenile department is one of my top priorities. Because of the significant increase in juvenile dependency filings that have occurred each and every year over the last several years, the workload per judge in juvenile has increased dramatically. In addition, because juvenile is a hearing driven rotation, the increase in caseload has resulted in hearings occurring later than the Court would prefer. So, with juvenile I actually have two goals. First, to work with the juvenile judges to explore ways to free up hearing time on their calendars. Second to accomplish this goal within the next six to nine months. One temporary change we are currently exploring is to have civil judges hear severance trials so children can be adopted by their forever families as expeditiously as possible (presently July is the earliest some juvenile judges can place a severance trial on their calendar).

So, now you know what I will be focusing on over the next couple of years. Having been with the Judicial Branch for over 15 years, I fully recognize and understand that my priorities may change during my term and other, more immediate concerns, may arise and require considerable blocks of my time and the Court's resources. So if for some reason I don't accomplish each and every one of the goals referenced above, hopefully, at a minimum, by the end of my term I will have done no harm and the Judicial Branch will be in a better place than it was when my term started.

Employee Anniversaries

5 Years

Doug Gerlach, Superior Court Judge
 Gilbert Jacinto, Office Assistant Specialized
 Daniel Russomano, Surveillance Officer
 Karin Philips, Justice System Manager
 Marcela Abner, Court Interpreter
 Fabiola Cerezo, Court Interpreter
 Whitney Jennings, Human Resources Analyst
 Celina Normandin, Judicial Clerk Senior
 Terri Clarke, Court Commissioner
 Mary Mee, Judicial Clerk Supervisor
 Therese Wagner, Deputy Chief Adult Probation Officer
 Connie Dancil, Registered Nurse
 Rosemary Rivera, Judicial Clerk Associate
 Brandie Bornhoft, Complex Civil Lit Law Clerk
 Christopher Candelaria, Judicial Clerk Supervisor

10 Years

Timothy Ryan, Superior Court Judge
 Emmanuel Briseno, Surveillance Officer
 Melissa Froderman, Adult Probation Officer Supervisor
 Shane Glynn, Adult Probation Officer
 John Patterson, Surveillance Officer
 Anjela Crudup, Juvenile Detention Officer
 Kelly Horning, Court Security Deputy Marshal
 Barbara Spencer, Court Commissioner
 Della Capece, Bailiff
 Minerva Gutierrez, Judicial Clerk
 Jo Gentry-Lewis, Superior Court Judge
 Carol Fox, Judicial Clerk Lead
 Susan Hanscome, Judicial Clerk Associate

15 Years

Jennifer Origer-Spigelmire, Juvenile Probation Officer
 Diane Kent, Judicial Clerk
 Wilbur Brown, Juvenile Probation Officer Supervisor
 Karin Begay, Juvenile Detention Officer
 Brett Kitani, IT Services Supervisor
 Tomi Polvorosa, Judicial Specialist

20 Years

Kevin Grant, Juvenile Probation Officer Supervisor
 Stanley Carbett, Juvenile Probation Officer

25 Years

Yolanda Gonzales, Judicial Clerk
 Richard Bernal, Juvenile Probation Officer
 Eileen Clevenger, Judicial Assistant
 Frank Gutierrez, Juvenile Probation Officer
 Jill Lopez, Juvenile Probation Officer
 Sheri Love, Juvenile Probation Officer

31 Years

Ginger Hopper, Quality Assurance Analyst

** Information provided by Debbie Gilliland
 Human Resources Department.*

NAD Volunteers Needed



Maricopa National Adoption Day, a non-profit entity, is seeking volunteers for the 2015 National Adoption Day event. The event will be held on Saturday, November 21st at the Durango Juvenile Court building in Phoenix. Full-day volunteers are needed. A full day means 9 a.m. to approximately 2:30 p.m. with a break during that time. If you are interested in volunteering or have any questions, please email nadvolunteer@gmail.com.

Commissioner Swearing-In Ceremony Highlights

Recently, Commissioners Margaret LaBianca and Sigmund Popko were sworn-in at the Board of Supervisors Auditorium in Phoenix. The ceremonies included the oath of office, the robing of the new Commissioners, the presentation of the gavels and remarks by Presiding Judge Janet Barton, Presiding Probate Judge Andrew Klein and Presiding Criminal Court Judge Samuel Myers.

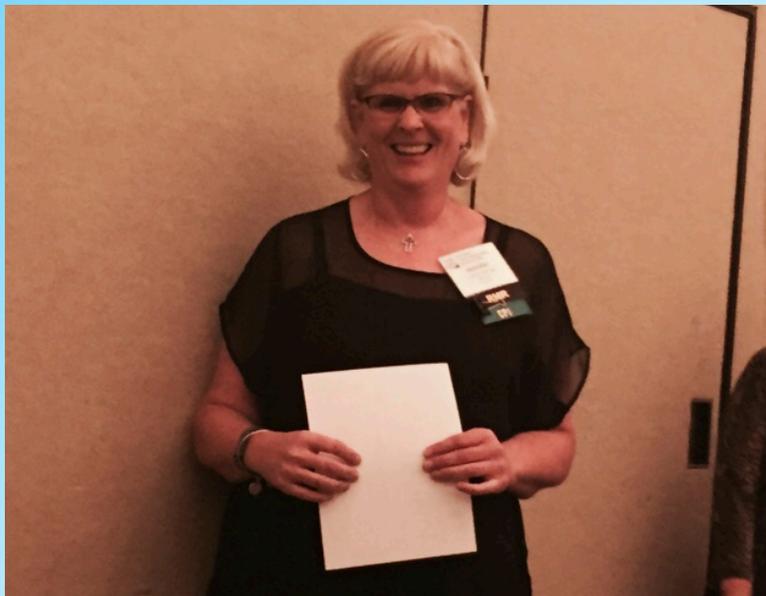


Commissioner Margaret LaBianca recites the oath of office.



Commissioner Sigmund Popko (left) receives his ceremonial gavel from the Maricopa County Bar Association.

Fast Fingers



Court Reporter Jennifer Pancratz was an outstanding performer at the Jim Bouley Memorial Speed Contest at the Arizona Court Reporters Association annual convention in Scottsdale. Pancratz took second place in the literary portion with 99.63% accuracy and third place in the testimony portion with 98.81% accuracy.

Attorney General Visit



Attorney General for the state of Guerrero, Miguel Angel Godinez Munoz (middle), and Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich (right) meet with Associate Criminal Presiding Judge Pamela Gates (left) during their visit of the South Court Tower.

2015 NACo Awards

Congratulations to the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County for earning 10 awards from the National Association of Counties. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public's understanding of county government, and exercise exemplary leadership in public service. Below are the award-winning programs:



Firearms Reality-Based Training



Healthcare Initiatives Expands Probationer Opportunities



CASA Best for Babies Collaborative Program



The Guardian Review Program: Extended



Early Education Collaborative

2015 NACo Awards



eRelease Order



Off to Work We Go



Dependency Treatment Court (DTC)



Re-engineering the Post Conviction Relief Unit

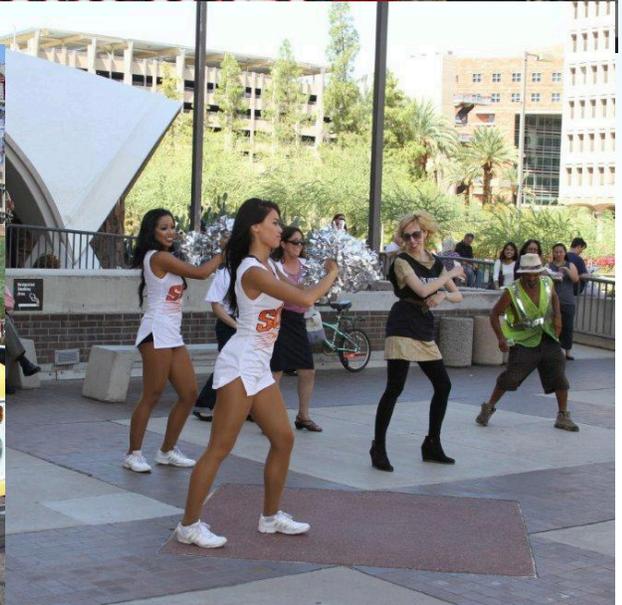


Court Orientation for Dependent Youth Project

Maricopa County 2015 Charitable Campaign

Maricopa County kicked off its' 2015 Charitable Campaign. The campaign is one of the County's most important traditions. With the support of County employees, various local charities help improve the quality of the community and the lives of fellow citizens.

Here are some highlights from an event held in Downtown Phoenix. *(Photos courtesy of Maricopa County)*



Caption Contest



E-mail the caption to Karen Arra (karra@superiorcourt.maricopa.gov) or Vincent Funari (funariv@superiorcourt.maricopa.gov). The winning caption will be announced in next month’s newsletter.

Please send us any interesting photos you would like captioned in upcoming newsletters.

Last Month’s Winner

Last month’s winner is **Judge Mark Brain**. Thanks to everyone who submitted a caption!



Dumb and Dumber

Library Receives Grant

Maricopa County Superior Court’s Law Library Resource Center was awarded an AmeriCorps grant to help deliver a higher level of customer service to self-represented litigants.

The grant will fund the Providing Access to Court Services (“PACS”) program. A major component of the program will be to train Arizona college students, as AmeriCorps Members, to assist individuals navigating the judicial process. The students will provide much needed legal information and personal assistance to individuals with such matters as orders of protection and injunctions against harassment. The members will also address custody and child support issues, and provide help to litigants seeking assistance for Arizona’s vulnerable adult population in Probate Court.

“The Law Library Resource Center will give our customers, the vast majority of which are here for Family Court matters, quality access to justice and the protections of the law. We anticipate the extra resources and attention will familiarize them and increase their knowledge of the court process. The AmeriCorps grant is a key component in our overall plan to create a premier Law Library Resource Center for the citizens of Maricopa County,” Presiding Judge Janet Barton said.”

Through the PACS program, the Court will also provide seminars and information through local experts, staff, and Arizona college students, on various issues including domestic violence, adoption, sex trafficking and available behavioral health services for families in crisis.

Starting in January, the Court plans to have 38 AmeriCorps Members working in the Law Library Resource Center of the Maricopa County Superior Court to serve self-represented litigants.

Shawn Friend, Director of the Law Library Resource Center is very excited to have this opportunity, “These AmeriCorps Members will be able to help the self-represented litigants who come to the Court, especially those in crisis. They will speak to people one-on-one, giving them the help they need to find a form or get to a courtroom while treating them with dignity and respect. These new services will assist in giving the public an improved impression of the Court as someplace that can help them and give them all an opportunity to be heard.”

A Day of Planning



Brenda Wagenknecht-Ivey, a nationally renowned consultant brought in through an SJI grant, facilitates a discussion with the Judicial Branch Executive Team.



Members of the Judicial Branch Executive Team participating in activities at the day-long workshop.

On Wednesday, September 16, the Judicial Branch Executive Team, along with Presiding Judge Janet Barton, came together to discuss the future of the organization and identify the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. To meet the evolving needs of our community, Judicial Officers and employees, it is important the Judicial Branch conduct this planning exercise to maintain our level of excellence and high achievement in the future.

Submitted by Cindy Reid

Human Resources Open House



On September 24, the Judicial Branch Human Resources Department held an open house for supervisors and managers to learn more about the services that HR provides. Nearly 100 employees from Adult Probation, Juvenile Probation and Superior Court attended the event.