

Justice Matters

A publication from the Maryland Judiciary

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Baltimore County Finalizes Adoptions at Festive, Moving Ceremony

Local National Adoption Day Celebration Puts Spotlight on Adoption



courtesy of the Baltimore County Bar Association

Joined by a mother and son on the bench in Baltimore County's Ceremonial Courtroom No. 5 in Towson, Baltimore County Circuit Judge John O. Hennegan finalizes the boy's adoption during the court's National Adoption Day celebration.

Baltimore County Circuit Judge John O. Hennegan granted the wishes of 10 families this fall during a ceremony in Towson.

But, unlike the fairy godmother waving her wand for Cinderella, Judge Hennegan used a special pen when finalizing the adoptions for each of these families November 19 as part of Baltimore County's celebration of National Adoption Day.

The pen holds a special place in his heart, as it is the same one used to finalize the adoption of his own son 20 years earlier.

"This pen's never done anything wrong," he told the families filling Ceremonial Courtroom No. 5 at the Old Courthouse in Towson. "It's only used for good things."

cont. on p. 10

Interpreters Bridge Language Gap in Court

Even people with the highest level of education can find the legal system to be complex. For those participating in a trial, understanding all the procedures becomes that much more important—a task even more daunting for people who cannot speak or understand English.

Realizing that an ever-growing number of Maryland residents speak little or no English, the Maryland Judiciary is one of just a few states offering interpretation services for both criminal and civil cases. Most states offer such services only for criminal cases.

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Business Court Judges Form National Organization

Judge Albert J. Matricciani, Jr., Baltimore City Circuit Court
and Judge Steven I. Platt, Prince George's Circuit Court

Last fall, at a three-day conference at the Brookings Institution in the District of Columbia, judges from around the country met to form a new organization, the American College of Business Court Judges. This new group will foster the formation and development of business and commercial courts and serve as a forum for judges from around the country to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Three designated judges from the Maryland Judiciary's Business and Technology Program attended the initial meeting and its programs, which included panels on class action litigation, Delaware corporate law, litigation involving accounting firms, and state unfair competition laws.

Chancellor William B. Chandler, III, of the Delaware Court of Chancery gave a talk about the 37-day trial he conducted in Georgetown, Del., concerning whether the board of directors of The Walt Disney Co. breached their fiduciary duties to shareholders in hiring and then terminating Michael Ovitz as president of Disney.

Judge Ben Tennille of the North Carolina Business Court was elected as the inaugural president of the College and Prince George's Circuit Judge Steven I. Platt was named vice-president. Baltimore City Circuit Judge Albert J. Matricciani, Jr., is serving as chair of the committee on educational programs.

Information about the College, which is open to any interested state court judge, may be obtained from Judges Platt or Matricciani.



Peace/protective order hearings, criminal proceedings now housed “under one roof”

Baltimore City Establishes New Integrated Domestic Violence Court



To promote victim safety, ensure ongoing compliance with court orders, and improve tracking of companion criminal and civil cases, the District Court launched an integrated domestic violence court in Baltimore City December 1.

As a result of the project, all civil domestic violence hearings previously held at the civil courthouse at 501 E. Fayette St. moved to the Eastside District Court at 1400 E. North Ave. In addition, assistant state’s attorneys assigned to the domestic violence unit and House of Ruth representatives are now present during civil proceedings to assist those involved in domestic violence cases.

Services Under One Roof

“An integrated domestic violence court offers a venue under one roof for victims of domestic violence; instead of having to go to multiple locations to ensure different types of protection, they can achieve the same result at one location,” said Baltimore City District Judge Jeannie J. Hong, who is in charge of the Eastside District Court. “An integrated court also increases offender accountability by ensuring compliance with court orders, immediate enforcement of violations, while in addition offering easier access to resources for all of those involved in a domestic violence case.”

There are also plans to construct a commissioner’s office along with a clerk’s intake office designed specifically for domestic violence petitioners. Previously, the situation at the civil courthouse building at Fayette and Gay streets required that domestic violence petitioners share counter space with plaintiffs and defendants in regular civil proceedings.

The integrated court comes after a year of planning, transition, and discussion by a committee that included

representatives from the District Court, Circuit Court for Baltimore City, court commissioners, court clerks, Judicial Information Systems, Baltimore City Police Department, Baltimore City Sheriffs’ Office, State’s Attorney’s Office, Public Defender’s Office, and the House of Ruth.

Prior to this move, domestic violence victims went to separate courthouses for civil and criminal proceedings. The Eastside District Court was selected for the program because the location already has a full-time, specialized domestic violence court.

Smooth Transition

The civil courthouse handled 10,961 combined civil protective and peace order cases in 2004. Baltimore City is second only to Prince George’s County in the number of domestic violence cases it handles.

Judge Hong said she is pleased with how the move has gone so far, especially with the undertaking involved in moving all the various cases and personnel to the Eastside District Court. The court was showcased to invited guests in an open house on February 6 when members of the Judiciary, state and local elected officials, and community leaders saw for themselves the innovative approach to dealing with domestic violence cases.

“I feel progress in this transition has gone relatively smoothly so far,” Judge Hong said.

Baltimore City Administrative District Judge Keith E. Mathews credited Judge Hong for taking charge in helping make the integrated domestic violence court become a reality. “Judge Hong should be given credit for her leadership in making the concept, first developed by Ben C. Clyburn, the Chief Judge of the District Court, while an associate judge of the District Court serving in Baltimore City, a reality,” Judge Mathews said.



photo by Ron Snyder

Baltimore City District Judge Jeannie J. Hong (right) speaks while Baltimore City State’s Attorney Patricia C. Jessamy and Chief Judge Ben C. Clyburn of the District Court of Maryland listen February 6 during an open house for the Integrated Domestic Violence Court.

Chief Judge Commends Drug Treatment Court Graduates at Prince George's Ceremony

When four people graduated from the Prince George's County Circuit Court's drug treatment court program on January 26, Chief Judge Robert M. Bell of the Court of Appeals congratulated them in person.

Maryland's drug treatment courts incorporate varying levels of treatment as well as vocational, educational and life skills training and other services to address issues that contribute to drug abuse and criminal behavior. Maryland has 27 established drug treatment courts.

Here are excerpts from Judge Bell's remarks at the ceremony:

"For you, the graduates, this occasion is evidence of your success—of your having achieved a significant goal in your long and difficult battle with drug abuse and anti-socialism. It is proof of your will and your dedication, and of your ability to internalize and externalize meaningful values and concerns for self—and perhaps, communal betterment. . . .

"But, do not dwell too long on the success of the moment, for this achievement cannot and should not be viewed as an end in itself or your final goal. As great as your accomplishment is, there is still much farther to go. This is a beginning for you—only one signpost along the road of life—the road, hopefully, to a fulfilling and meaningful life. It is hoped that along this road you will encounter many more signposts, each representing an important accomplishment which will give you an occasion to celebrate. You need to know that a successful future, like the fulfilling and meaningful life, is not yet assured.

"It has been said that the most solid stone in a building should be the lowest one in the foundation. In other words, the training and discipline you receive early will determine the extent to which you will be able to cope with problems and obstacles which you will encounter from time to time throughout life. . . .

"The temptations will come frequently – their bearers may be those whom you call friends. Societal pressures will not lessen. Employment may be difficult to obtain or the past may be used against you. Remember, the world to which you return is unstructured and is real. But, recall always the message of Frederick Douglass—'Power concedes nothing without a struggle. It never has and it never will.' That message is as applicable to life as it is to the struggle for human rights. Whatever is worth having is worth fighting for—so, go forth prepared to struggle if you wish to succeed—prepared to apply that will to an even greater degree if you would succeed."

" "

Chief Judge Bell



Chief Judge Robert M. Bell of the Court of Appeals (left) joins Prince George's County Circuit Judge Maureen Lamasney in congratulating Prince George's County Drug Treatment Court graduate Donte Young after the recent graduation ceremony.

Mediation Programs Expand to Orphans' Courts in Baltimore County, Baltimore City

Chief Judge Theresa A. Lawler of the Baltimore County Orphans' Court contributed to this story

Looking to build upon the success of a similar program in Baltimore City, the Baltimore County Orphans' Court launched a pilot mediation program January 9. The programs are part of a growing movement to use alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in Maryland's courts.

The new program, which allows Chief Judge Theresa A. Lawler and Associate Judges Julie L. Ensor and Gloria J. Butta to refer certain cases to mediation, came to fruition thanks to a grant from the Maryland Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office and support from the Maryland Institute for Continuing Professional Education for Lawyers. Other assistance came from the Maryland State Bar Estates and Trusts Section Council and the Baltimore County Bar Association Estates and Trusts and ADR Sections.

"As a result of the pilot, should a probate case filed with the Baltimore County Orphans' Court be eligible for mediation, a judge will schedule both a court hearing and sign an order for mediation," Judge Lawler said. "If the parties accept mediation, the court will require that they go through at least a two-hour session with the option of extending it if they choose. However, mediation is voluntary and the parties involved can opt out of the session."

Less Expensive, More Convenient

If everyone agrees to mediation, a trained neutral party, or mediator, assists the parties in exchanging information and talking about ways to reach an agreement that satisfies everyone's needs. Through this exercise, the parties—rather than the courts—resolve the dispute. Unlike a public court case, mediation proceedings are confidential, with the parties splitting the \$150 per hour cost.

"Mediation generally is less expensive than having to go to trial and sessions may be scheduled at mutually convenient times; consequently mediation may save the parties time and money," Judge Lawler said.

If the matter is resolved, an agreement is then written, signed by the parties, and submitted to the Orphans' Court. If the Orphans' Court accepts the agreement, the case is taken off the docket. If no agreement is reached, or if only

a partial agreement is reached, the parties then proceed with the regularly scheduled court hearing.

"Since the parties themselves create the agreement, often the results are a more acceptable and effective resolution for everyone involved," Judge Lawler said.

"Baltimore County's program was modeled after the Baltimore City program which was officially launched in 2004 after more than a year of training. Although Montgomery County has made mediation available in probate cases through its circuit court mediation program since 2000, the Baltimore City Orphans' Court was the state's first traditional three-person orphans' court to refer cases to mediation. So far, more than a dozen cases have been settled through mediation in Baltimore City. Orphans' courts are specialized courts that have jurisdiction over the administration of estates of the deceased.

Getting to the Root of the Problem

"Some of our cases that have gone to mediation have been through the courts two or three times for a variety of reasons," said Chief Judge Joyce Baylor-Thompson of the Baltimore City Orphans' Court. "Mediation is the perfect venue for preventing similar cases from occurring because it helps people talk and get to the root of the problem."

Another benefit of mediation is preserving relationships that often are left strained or destroyed by going to trial. This could especially be true in cases normally heard before the orphans' court since cases there frequently involve family disputes.

"I view mediation in orphans' court the same way I would with family court," Judge Baylor-Thompson said. "When they come to us, a family is already suffering from the loss of a loved one or else they wouldn't be here. I want to do what I can to keep the family intact."

For more information about the Baltimore County Orphans' Court pilot mediation program call (410) 887-6516 or e-mail orphanscourt@co.ba.md.us. For information about Baltimore City's Orphans' Court mediation program, call (410) 396-5034.

“The Future Ain’t What

Just imagine! It may be possible to repair an injured spinal cord with stem cells that differentiate into nerve cells, or to employ stem cells to free children with Type 1 diabetes from the daunting dangers that result from the destruction of their insulin producing islets. Gene therapies may become available to address a host of inherited diseases. Positron Emission Tomography (PET) and Single Photon Emission Computer Tomography (SPECT) that identify brain activity may assist in the detection and treatment of neurodegenerative disorders, such as Alzheimer’s disease.

Maryland’s Advanced Science and Technology Adjudication Resource judges were introduced to these spectacular possibilities, the underlying science, and the

ethical issues raised thereby in an extraordinary three-day program in January at The Johns Hopkins University (JHU) School of Medicine.

On the first day of the training, our hosts concentrated on molecular biology and genetics, including cell biology and physiology, molecular biology, and proteomics, the study of the full set of proteins encoded by a genome (an organism’s genetic material). Genetic manipulation and testing were also examined.

Bioethicist Dr. Debra Mathews, raised significant questions apposite to genetic testing, such as:

- Who should be advised of the results? Family members who may share the same genetic trait? Insurance companies, which may deny coverage based on the results? Employers who may exclude persons from employment due to safety or other concerns?
- What is the potential discriminatory impact of genetic testing?
- To what extent does our genotype (genes) determine who we are, and to what extent are our behavioral traits a complex combination of genes and environment?

Stem cell research was the focus of the second day, beginning with a stem cell primer by Dr. John Gearhart from JHU’s Departments of Gynecology and Obstetrics and Physiology, and the Division of Comparative Medicine. According to JHU’s Web site, Dr. Gearhart “led the Hopkins research team responsible for first isolating and characterizing human pluripotent stem cells, which are cells that develop into the different types of tissues that make up humans. These cells have the potential to revolutionize therapeutic treatments of diseases and injuries such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease), diabetes, Parkinson’s Disease, stroke, and spinal cord injuries.”

Adult tissues contain an array of stem cells, such as hematopoietic cells (from the blood system), neural stem

What is ASTAR?

Through the Advanced Science and Technology Adjudication Resource (ASTAR) program, the Maryland Judiciary is training 21 circuit court judges and two appellate judges to become “science and technology resource judges” for Maryland. The judges are receiving training in advanced bioscience, biomedical, and biotechnology issues and related adjudication/mediation skills.

Resource judges will assist their jurisdictions with bench/bar and educational leadership activities and, within ethical constraints, serve as resources to their colleagues when adjudication issues are raised by novel and complex scientific evidence.

The Maryland Judiciary and The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine hosted a workshop for judges January 19-21 at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore.

Prince George’s County Circuit Judge Cathy H. Serrette, who is becoming an ASTAR resource judge, offers a glimpse into the judges’ experience.

It Used to Be" *

Judge Cathy H. Serrette, Prince George's Circuit Court

cells, and epidermal stem cells. Embryonic stem cells are deemed to be unique insofar as they are totipotent (able to produce every type of cell in our bodies) and capable of unlimited self-renewal. In addition to the underlying science, the program explored the ethical considerations setting the parameters of stem cell research, in vitro fertilization, and preimplantation genetic diagnosis.

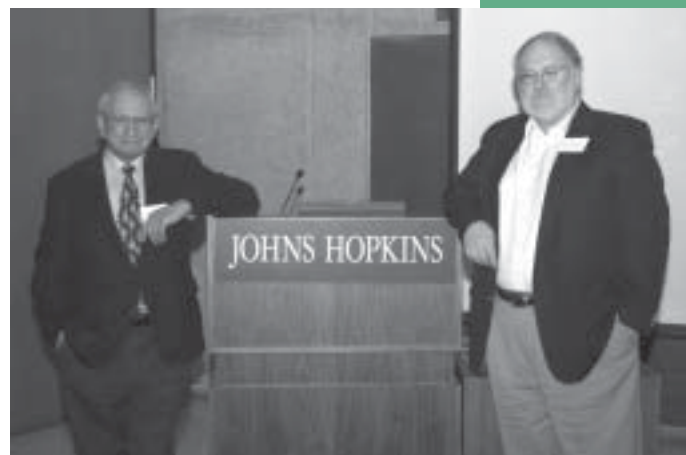
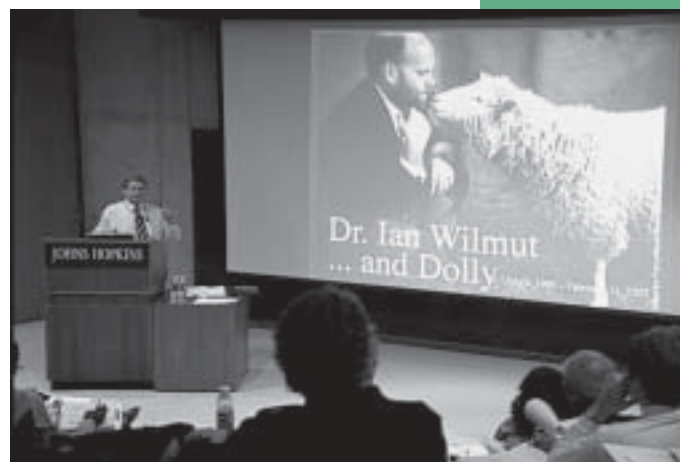
Day three focused on neuro-imaging, including the physics of the methodologies employed.

Each day, the ASTAR judges were treated to tours of the labs and equipment involved in the research performed by our world-renowned presenters. Court of Special Appeals Judge Ellen Hollander and Wicomico County Circuit Judge W. Newton Jackson, III, volunteered to serve as MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) subjects, and, not surprisingly, both proved to have substantial gray matter.

The curriculum also included daily discussions amongst the judges and scientists of hypothetical litigation dealing with scientific issues raised during the day. Our symbiotic relationship was apparent. For while our justice system will inevitably be shaped by the burgeoning sciences, the development and application of the sciences will likewise be shaped by our courts.

* Yogi Berra. Quoted in Dr. John Gearhart's PowerPoint presentation.

Doctors at Johns Hopkins University lectured on such topics as the development of PET scans (top) and genetics (center) to a group of judges, including Court of Appeals Judges Alan M. Wilner and Glenn T. Harrell, Jr. (bottom), during a three-day ASTAR conference in January at JHU. Judge Wilner, chair of the board of directors for the Judicial Institute, gave opening remarks at the conference.





Montgomery Judges Help Teen Girls Prepare for Success

Judge Katherine D. Savage, Montgomery County Circuit Court

Montgomery County Circuit Judge Katherine D. Savage, president of the Montgomery County Women's Bar Foundation, reports that the Foundation's fifth annual Fall Forum, "Preparing for Success," took place on November 19 at Montgomery College's Rockville Campus.

Montgomery County District Judge Mary Beth McCormick and Montgomery County Circuit Judge Marielsa Bernard volunteered to help with the free all-day seminar geared toward high school-aged girls in Montgomery County.

Students started the day with a light breakfast followed by the keynote speaker, Susie Kay, president and founder of The Hoops Dreams Scholarship Fund. This year the workshop topics were: Street Law and How to Stay Safe; Budgeting for "Bling"; Resume Writing and Interview Techniques; and Survivors' Guide to Independence. The day ended with a fashion show and raffle prizes.

This annual event is co-sponsored by the Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College, Montgomery County Commission for Women, J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association, and the Maryland Hispanic Bar Association. This year, one of the many volunteers from the Department of Juvenile Services was a young woman who attended the Fall Forum a few years ago.

The Montgomery County Women's Bar Foundation also awards scholarships every year to local law school students, as well as to Montgomery Community College students. In 2005, the Foundation awarded four law school scholarships and two Montgomery College scholarships totaling \$8,350. For more information about the Fall Forum, visit www.preparingforsuccess.org. To learn about the Foundation Scholarships Program, contact Judge Savage at (240)777-9372.



Photos courtesy of Judge Katherine D. Savage

Montgomery County Circuit Judge Katherine D. Savage interacts with young women from the stage at the "Preparing for Success" event.



During the program Montgomery County District Judge Mary Beth McCormick joins a group of teenagers for food and conversation.



News from the Bench

Hon. Michael John Algeo was elevated to the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, replacing Judge Patrick L. Woodward, who was elevated to the Court of Special Appeals.

Hon. Richard R. Bloxom was appointed to the Circuit Court for Worcester County, filling a vacancy created as a result of the enactment of Chapter 199 of the 2005 General Assembly Legislative Session.

Hon. Sidney S. Campen, Jr., was appointed to the Circuit Court for Talbot County, replacing Judge William S. Horne, who retired.

Hon. Thomas L. Craven was elevated to the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, replacing Judge Dennis M. McHugh, who retired.

Hon. Robert A. Greenberg was appointed to the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, replacing Judge D. Warren Donohue, who retired.

Hon. Robert B. Kershaw was appointed to the Circuit Court for Baltimore City, replacing Judge Paul A. Smith, who retired.

Hon. Timothy J. Martin was appointed to the Circuit Court for Baltimore County, filling a vacancy created as the result of the enactment of Chapter 199.

Hon. William C. Mulford, II, was appointed to the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County, filling a vacancy created as a result of the enactment of Chapter 199.

Hon. Ronald B. Rubin was appointed to the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, filling a vacancy created as the result of the enactment of Chapter 199.

Hon. Michael J. Stamm was appointed to the Circuit Court for St. Mary's County, replacing Judge Marvin S. Kaminetz, who retired.

Hon. H. Patrick Stringer, Jr., was appointed to the Circuit Court for Baltimore County, replacing Judge Christian M. Kahl, who retired.

Hon. Krystal Q. Alves and **Hon. John P. Morrissey** were appointed to the District Court for Prince George's County, filling vacancies created as the result of the enactment of Chapter 199.

Hon. Daniel R. Mumford and **Hon. Gerald V. Purnell** were appointed to the District Court for Worcester County, filling a vacancy created as the result of the enactment of Chapter 199 and replacing Judge Richard R. Bloxom, who was elevated to the circuit court.

Hon. Howard Jack Price, Jr., was appointed to the District Court for Allegany County, replacing Judge Paul J. Stakem, who retired.

Hon. Thomas J. Pryal and **Hon. Danielle Marie Mosley** were appointed to the District Court for Anne Arundel County, filling a vacancy created as the result of the enactment of Chapter 199 and replacing Judge Martha F. Rasin, who retired.

Hon. Mary C. Reese was appointed to the District Court for Howard County, replacing Judge Louis A. Becker, III, who was elevated to the circuit court.

Hon. Robert B. Riddle was appointed to the District Court for Calvert County, filling a vacancy created as a result of the enactment of Chapter 199.

Hon. Devy Patterson Russell was appointed to the District Court for Baltimore City, filling a vacancy created as the result of the enactment of Chapter 199.

Hon. Karen H. Abrams was designated administrative judge for the Circuit Court for St. Mary's County effective November 7, replacing Judge Marvin S. Kaminetz, who retired.

Hon. Eugene Wolfe was designated administrative judge of District 6 for the District Court, which serves Montgomery County, effective January 1. Judge Wolfe replaced Judge Cornelius J. Vaughey, who retired.

National Adoption Day, from 1

The ceremony, a collaborative effort with the Baltimore County Bar Association, was one of many that took place across the country to celebrate adoption and make people aware of the 126,000 foster children looking for a permanent home. About 690 children are ready for adoption in Maryland.

Although adoption ceremonies are held regularly throughout Maryland, the November event in Baltimore County marked the first celebration in the state to be held on National Adoption Day. The Committee on Public Awareness will promote Baltimore County's event as a model for courts throughout the state.

Family court judges, pro bono lawyers, foster care professionals, child advocates and community volunteers, recently adopted children and their families—and Baltimore area news reporters, photographers, and videographers—attended the Baltimore County ceremony.

Judge Hennegan helped make each adoption personal, taking his time with each case as the family members and the soon-to-be adopted child stepped up to his bench. He then looked over each file to ensure everything was in order before making children part of their new families with a stroke of his pen as siblings, relatives, and friends—often with video cameras recording the event—watched. The judge even allowed one little boy to adopt his teddy bear by drafting actual papers, while also changing the bear's name from Chocolate Chip to Boo Hoo during the process.

Adoption clerk Pat Almony came to work early that day specifically to draft the paperwork. "This is the most rewarding part of my job," said Judge Hennegan, who became emotional at times during the ceremony.

Donna and Jason Neidinger attended the ceremony for Judge Hennegan to finalize the adoption of their daughter, 15-month-old Amaris. The infant is the fifth child for the eastern Baltimore County couple, who had three chil-



all photos courtesy of the Baltimore County Bar Association

TOP: Members of the Baltimore media focus their cameras on the festivities surrounding the National Adoption Day event in Towson.

BOTTOM: Baltimore County Circuit Judge John O. Hennegan talks with a family as he prepares to finalize one of 10 adoptions November 19 as part of National Adoption Day.

NEXT PAGE: A little girl makes her way up to the bench.



dren of their own before adopting 3-year-old Matisse-Sage in May. The older children are Gabrielle, 16; Storm, 14; and Chandler, 12.

“We don’t know what it’s like not to have kids because we were very young parents,” said Donna Neidinger, whose family has taken in 20 foster children through the years. “It was very easy for us to take the kids in, but it was difficult not to envision every one of them as a member of our family. We’ve got pictures of each one of them hanging on our walls.”

Like the Neidingers, Edward and Ann Bartlinski already had a full family when they decided to adopt 3-year-old Mary Mei from China. The Catonsville couple had four biological children before the desire to help a child in need led them to adoption. Mary Mei has a cleft palate.

“We wanted to help give a child with special needs a home,” Edward Bartlinski said. “It’s an incredible feeling going through the adoption process and an event like this really stresses the importance of placing children in a loving home.”



Annual Ceremony in Baltimore City Has Put Spotlight on Adoptions for Years

National Adoption Day got its start in 2000 as part of a nationwide effort to promote adoptive families and educate the public on how many children are in need of loving homes.

Family court judges in Baltimore City are also keenly aware of this need and have been on a similar mission for two decades, holding an annual adoption ceremony on the day before Thanksgiving. Again last fall, the judges finalized 32 adoptions November 23 at the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center.

“This is the most rewarding part of my job,” said Circuit Judge Martin P. Welch, outgoing judge in charge of the Family/Juvenile Division in Baltimore City. “Everyone leaves the courthouse happy.”

As a way of stressing the importance of adoptive families, Baltimore City’s adoption ceremony brought all three family court judges and nine masters together for a single, large-scale event, Judge Welch said.

As part of the ceremony, judges handled each case one at a time to make the adoptions as personal and as special as possible for the children and families involved. Each family also had their picture taken with the judge who finalized the adoption.

“You learn along the way how to make each adoption personal,” Judge Welch said.

Judge Welch said that while every adoption he finalizes is special, he is especially happy to see children from difficult circumstances find a family to call their own.

“It’s especially gratifying to see older kids or those with known and severe special needs get adopted,” Judge Welch said. “It takes a special family to make a decision to adopt children with needs like that.”

Somerset County Circuit Judge Offers Child Support Offenders Job or Jail

“Job market” mobile unit visits court on child support days

Lynn Cain, Court Administrator, Somerset County

Somerset County Circuit Judge Daniel M. Long is taking an innovative approach to punishing parents who fail to pay their child support. Instead of sending them to jail, Judge Long gives them the alternative of agreeing to find a job. Once they accept this “sentence,” they must report to the local job service.

Making serving that “sentence” even easier, the Maryland Job Service provides access to the “One Stop Job Market” mobile unit on days child support cases are heard in the Circuit Court for Somerset County. The unit parks next to the court, allowing for close and convenient accommodation for clients referred by the court.

One Stop Job Market

The idea was conceived several years ago as a result of a meeting that included officials from the Somerset County State’s Attorney’s Office, the local Department of Social Services, and Judge Long. The meeting was called to explore alternatives to sending parents who are chronically delinquent in child support payments to jail.

Child support offenders in Somerset County are given two choices: pay a monetary purge amount or agree to get a job. Parents agreeing to find a job must leave court and report to the “One Stop Job Market” mobile unit and must secure a job within 30 days. Parents who fail to report to the job center unit and find a job within the 30-day time frame are typically sentenced to a jail term at the local detention center.

Judge Long’s philosophy toward child support offenders is that if fathers or mothers are incarcerated, they have no ability to support their children financially. Judge Long also believes it is important to encourage parents to get into the work force.

Although the “Job or Jail” approach is not successful in every case, the effort results in more children being supported by working parents—benefitting both their children and taxpayers.



photo courtesy of Lynn Cain

Somerset County Circuit Judge Daniel M. Long, administrative judge of the First Judicial Circuit, stands with Linda Benton, assistant director of child support for the Somerset County Department of Social Services, and Philip Widdowson, assistant state’s attorney for Somerset County, beside the “One Stop Job Market” mobile unit.

Judiciary to Gather for Statewide Meeting

The first statewide meeting of the Maryland Judicial Conference in four years will be held May 16-19 in Cambridge. The topics to be addressed during the conference include access to court records; court interpreters; judicial campaign conduct; and catastrophic health emergencies and the continuance of operation plans for the Judiciary.

The conference will also feature a speech by Chief Justice of the United States John Roberts.

Congratulations to:

Chief Judge Robert M. Bell of the Court of Appeals, who was named one of The Lawdragon's 500 Leading Judges in America. The judges were selected based on more than 20,000 lawyer nominations and significant contributions to the legal community. Judge Bell also received the 2006 University System of Maryland's Frederick Douglass Award, an annual achievement award designated for the single individual who best exemplifies the principles, values, and goals to which Douglass dedicated his life.

Prince George's County Circuit Administrative Judge William D. Missouri, who received the R.C. Tolbert Achievement Award at an event at Newton White Mansion in Mitchellville. Judge Missouri is chair of the Maryland Conference of Circuit Judges.

Montgomery County District Judge Michael J. Algeo, Howard County District Judge Pamila J. Brown, Baltimore County Circuit Judge Kathleen G. Cox, Baltimore City Circuit Judge M. Brooke Murdock, and Baltimore City Circuit Judge Carol E. Smith, who were 2005 recipients of *The Daily Record's* Leadership in Law awards.

Howard County District Judge Pamila J. Brown, who received the Margaret Brent-Juanita Jackson Mitchell Award from the Bar Association for Baltimore City. The Brent-Mitchell Award was established to recognize women lawyers and judges who exemplify the pioneer spirit of Margaret Brent and Juanita Jackson Mitchell, who have achieved a high degree of success in the field of law, and who have paved the way for women in the law.



Judge Ben C. Clyburn

Chief Judge Ben C. Clyburn of the District Court of Maryland, who was honored by Baltimore City District Court Administrative Judge Keith E. Mathews and the District 1 court commissioners at a ceremony February 2. The Clyburn Conference Room in the Eastside District Court building has been named in the judge's honor. (See photo, left)

Retired Anne Arundel District Judge Martha F. Rasin, who was honored February 20 by the House of Delegates in recognition of her retirement after 16 years of service, including two years of service as administrative judge and five years as Chief Judge of the District Court of Maryland.

Retired Talbot County Circuit Judge William S. Horne, who was honored by the Maryland Court Appointed Special Advocates Association at a ceremony January 31 in Annapolis. Judge Horne was recognized for his commitment and dedication to Maryland's most vulnerable children.

The **Baltimore County Circuit Court clerks**, who were chosen as one of five finalists for the WJZ Manic Monday Meltdown Award. The clerks earned the recognition for their performance of the song, "Manic Monday," on the WJZ Morning Show in October. (See photo, right)

Baltimore County Circuit Court clerks



The Story of a Court Interpreter

How One Woman's Global Experiences Led Her to a Prince George's Courtroom

Julie Rotter, Court Interpreter

You may ask, “What makes an excellent interpreter?” Superb language skills are a must. But an interpreter must also be intelligent, knowledgeable, confident, quick, multi-cultural, experienced in a wide range of life experiences, and blessed with incredible memory skills. Diana Jovanovic, a Spanish interpreter for the Prince George's County courts, is all that and more.

Born in Shanghai, China, Diana Jovanovic was the daughter of an American attorney representing U.S. interests in China and a Russian immigrant. When World War II rocked the world and the Japanese occupied China, her parents were put in concentration camps. Jovanovic was left in Shanghai with her Russian grandmother. Once the war ended and her parents were liberated, the family was reunited. Within a couple years, however, her father died.

The widow and daughter moved to California where Jovanovic's mother had family. After several years, her mother met and married a Brazilian doctor. As a teen, Jovanovic traveled to and lived in Peru, Columbia, Venezuela, Brazil, and El Salvador.

Thinking she might like to become an ambassador, Jovanovic enrolled in Georgetown University. She found numerous ways to pay for school, including working at the school library and administrative offices, selling Avon door to door, babysitting, and interpreting. As a student,

Jovanovic participated in a year abroad in Brazil. When she graduated from Georgetown with a Bachelor of Science in languages and linguistics, she simultaneously earned her master's degree equivalent in Spanish and Portuguese interpretation and translation.

Interpreting Is in Great Demand

While attending a party after graduation, someone invited her to come to the State Department and take the interpreter test. Jovanovic showed up and nailed half the test—the language portion. Unfortunately, the test had two parts: “Language” and “Americana.” Because Jovanovic had lived most of her life outside the United States, and did not know or care who had the record for home runs or who had won the World Series, she bombed the “Americana” portion. Unfortunately, the test was offered only once every two years. Jovanovic was ready to head back to Brazil, when two things happened: The people from the State Department decided she was a talent for whom they would make an exception and offered her a retest, and a friend agreed to meet her for dinner every night for a month and teach her American trivia. A month later she squeaked by on the “Americana” portion.

Once Jovanovic was a State Department-qualified interpreter, she found she was in great demand. Conferences, seminars, country negotiations—there was no subject too complex nor too mundane. Jovanovic traversed the United States and the world, hitting every state in the union except Alaska and Wyoming and 52 countries. Early in her career, Jovanovic made a list of places she thought she could use her language skills: White House, Vatican, United Nations, Pentagon, Federal Aviation Administration, Smithsonian, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and countless private industry big names such as Boeing and IBM. It is no surprise to anyone who knows her that she accomplished all that and more. In the meantime, Dejan Jovanovic escaped communist Yugoslavia and found his way to America, charmed his way into Diana's life, married her, and they had three children. Sadly, Dejan died in 1985.



Interpreters Bridge Gap in Court, from p. 1

Maryland is home to about 125 state-certified interpreters who handle cases with participants who speak languages such as Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Korean, Arabic Cantonese, and American Sign Language. In addition, the state soon plans to certify interpreters who speak Haitian and Mandarin.

Marta S. Goldstein, the lead instructor for the Court Interpreters Orientation Program and Skills Building classes has been an interpreter for 25 years and is also a Montgomery County resident. Mrs. Goldstein said becoming a certified interpreter is far more difficult than just being fluent in a second language. Out of more than 42,000 people who have ever taken the federal certification test nationally, Goldstein is one of only 800 interpreters to pass. Mrs. Goldstein has interpreted in Federal Courts, State Courts, Federal agencies and even for justices on the Supreme Court of the United States and meetings at the White House.

Courtroom interpreters not only have to be fluent in the languages they are interpreting, they have to have a command of the vocabulary used by legal professionals and expert witnesses, along with street slang that may come up during a trial. Court interpreting is the highest and most difficult form of interpreting, even more so than

cont. on p. 16

"If you're not prepared, you can get into a world of trouble. You have to work toward 100 percent accuracy in literal translation because making a mistake with one word can lead to a mistrial."

Marta S. Goldstein, Interpreter



Photo courtesy of Sandra Dalton

At a civil marriage ceremony held December 2 in Frederick County, JoAnn Griffin, a sign language interpreter, assisted Deputy Clerk Buzz Working with the marriage. The newlyweds are Russell and Heather Kestenbaum, shown here with their children, J.T. and Ashlee Kestenbaum.

An Interpreter's Story, from p. 14

While raising her children, Jovanovic has continued to travel and interpret internationally but has increasingly sought assignments closer to home. As her children grew, Jovanovic began working more frequently in the court system so she could be home at night.

Jovanovic has worked in the District Court for Prince George's County for years—she has been listed on the court register since 1995. Years before the certification test was first administered in 1997 and years before she and three others were first offered permanent positions later that year, Jovanovic was working in nearly every jurisdiction in the state and beyond. Now, every time Jovanovic walks into a courtroom to facilitate the communication between the bench, the state, witnesses, and defendants, she brings with her an unparalleled lifetime of experience, training, expertise, and wisdom for which the citizens of this county and state are grateful.

Interpreters Bridge Gap in Court, from p. 15

medical interpreting.

“Interpreters can’t know everything on an expert level, so preparation for a trial is key,” said Goldstein, who is considered the state’s senior interpreter and has helped develop state policies related to her field. “Along with a laptop, I usually have 120 glossaries and seven or eight dictionaries available to help me with any words that may come up during a trial. “

“If you’re not prepared, you can get into a world of trouble. You have to work toward 100 percent accuracy in literal translation because making a mistake with one word can lead to a mistrial.”

Of the 125 state-certified interpreters, 100 speak Spanish. The state also relies on about 800 other eligible interpreters representing dozens of languages. Interpreters who are certified have attended an orientation workshop for court interpreters, passed a background check, passed a written exam, and passed an oral exam. Eligible inter-

preters, called to work when a certified interpreter is not available, are interpreters who have fulfilled the above requirements with the exception of passing an oral exam.

A Number of Challenges Fulfilled

While the Judiciary works to find an interpreter for any language, including searching through the nationwide Consortium for State Court Interpretation Certification or contacting a private interpreter agency, there can be a number of challenges as well, said Assistant Administrator Linda Etzold. Those challenges include not only certifying interpreters in languages other than Spanish, but finding interpreters who can adapt to the nature of courtroom discussions and handle the complex terminology involved in the legal process.

Goldstein said the state Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) has been at the forefront of improving interpretive services when compared to many other states. Maryland was one of the first nationally to join the now 35-member Consortium.

“Twenty-five years ago when I started, there was no training, no consortium, and anyone who could speak a second language could be an interpreter,” she said. “The AOC understands how important an issue this is while some states don’t do anything at all.”

Still, Goldstein said there is always room for improvement as there is a need to attract more non-Spanish interpreters while also working to find better ways of teaching those in the field how to be good interpreters. The profession requires two main forms of interpreting, simultaneous and consecutive. Simultaneous is the interpretation of everything during a proceeding from English into the language of a person (usually a defendant) sitting at counsel table. Consecutive is the interpretation of questions from judges and lawyers from English into another language and the witness’s or party’s answers from that language into English.

“There’s a big difference between being just bilingual and being a good interpreter,” Goldstein said. “Although simultaneous interpreting sounds more difficult because you are speaking at the same time, consecutive for some is the more difficult of the two. That requires an interpreter to have great short-term memory, visualization skills, along with the ability to take great notes. That’s not something you get just by knowing a second language.”

Law Day 2006 to Celebrate “Liberty Under Law”

When Law Day is celebrated again this year on May 1, the theme will be “Liberty Under Law: Separate Branches, Balanced Powers.”

The American Bar Association established Law Day in 1957 with Congress designating it as an annual event through a joint resolution in 1961. Law Day is designed to be a celebration of the U.S. legal system through public awareness, educational, and community outreach activities.

For more information on Law Day, visit the official Web site at www.abanet.org/publiced/lawday/home.html.

ABA Poll Emphasizes Need for Judiciary's Educational Outreach

A recent survey commissioned by the American Bar Association cemented the need for the Maryland Judiciary to continue to offer programs that educate the public about the roles of the three branches of government, especially the judicial branch.

At a time when relations are strained among the three branches of government, a majority of Americans support the constitutional concept of separation of powers and the related idea of checks and balances, according to the survey of 1,002 Americans ages 18 and older commissioned by the American Bar Association and released to the public in August.

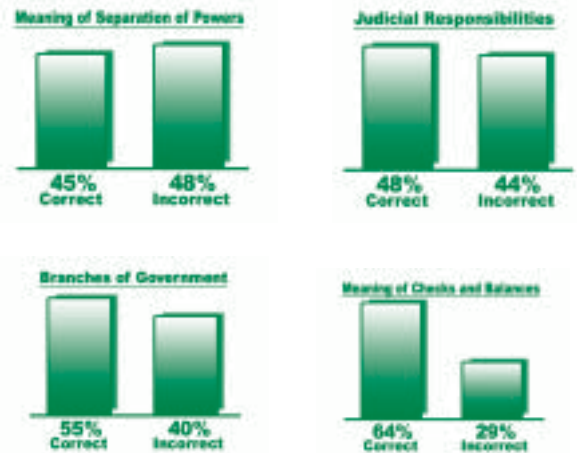
However, while 82 percent of those surveyed viewed separation of powers as important and 86 percent feel similarly about checks and balances, many responses also revealed how little many citizens know about the workings of the government. Just more than half of those surveyed (55 percent) correctly identified the three branches of government, less than half (45 percent) correctly defined separation of powers, 48 percent knew that one role of the judiciary in the federal government is to determine how existing laws apply to the facts of a case, while 36 percent did not correctly identify the principle of checks and balances.

In addition, 22 percent of respondents identified the three branches of government as Republican, Democrat, and



Anne Arundel District Judge Vincent A. Mulieri speaks to students November 9 during his "Schools in the Courts" program.

ABA Civics Education Survey Evaluates Citizens' Understanding of Government Concepts



Graphs do not reflect respondents who either declined to respond or responded "unsure."

courtesy ABA

Independent, while 29 percent believe a role of the judiciary branch on the federal level is to advise the president and congress about the legality of an action they intend to take in the future.

To increase public understanding of these issues, the Judiciary offers a variety of educational programs, including courtroom tours, the Speakers Bureau, and the "Learning the Law" coloring books for children.

Other more locally driven programs, such as the Schools in the Courts program, educate students about the justice system while warning them about the consequences of their actions, including drinking and driving, drug use and other crimes. Anne Arundel County District Judge Vincent A. Mulieri organizes the program twice a year, giving students the opportunity to view live cases and hear from judges, community leaders, and drunk driving offenders.

Meanwhile, Chief Judge Ben C. Clyburn of the District Court of Maryland is reaching out to at-risk teens through his "Choices" lesson plan. In visits to schools, Judge Clyburn tries to educate students about the Judiciary, while also engaging in discussions to help the students make the best decisions possible.

Judiciary Staff Open Their Hearts and Pockets for Annual Holiday Decorating Contest

Nancy Kline, Training Specialist, Human Resources

“It is a great way to raise money for charity, and that is really what the spirit of Christmas is all about,” said Janet Fox, clerk in the Circuit Court for Wicomico County.

Fox and many of her co-workers, including Wendy Renstein, chief deputy of the Circuit Court for Wicomico County, have entered the contest for several years. “The employees in our office are very competitive,” Renstein said. “Plans are kept secret until the big unveiling. Work is done at home and a couple of spouses also help. I am always amazed.”

Raising Money and Spirits

Now in its seventh year, the statewide Holiday Decorating Contest for Charity is designed to raise money for charities and raise holiday spirits throughout the Judiciary. Entering as individuals or as part of a group, contestants donate \$4 per person to decorate their doors or work areas for the holiday season. Judges choose a first-place winner in each location, and all the money raised in that location is donated to the winner’s charity.

This year, the contest raised a record \$1,473 for charities such as St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital, House of Ruth, Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, Hospice of St. Mary’s, The Salvation Army, and the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

The contest first started when the Internal Audit department shared space with Judicial Information Systems (JIS) in Annapolis.

“We generally had a morale booster each month and when the door decorating idea came up it took off with just about the entire building signing up,” said Mary Hutchins, security administrator for JIS.

After contacting some of the Judiciary’s judges to

choose the winners, the contest spread throughout the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Since then, the contest has been embraced statewide. One courthouse staff with a long history of charitable giving is the Circuit Court for Frederick County. The courthouse staff has continuously raised the most money of any courthouse. “The friendly competition and good sportsmanship show one’s character, and the financial generosity of those that contribute to a worthy cause warms my heart,” Clerk of Court Sandra Dalton said.

This year’s contest also boasted a new first—a commissioners’ entry.

“When Administrative Commissioner Patrick Loveless encouraged all of the commissioners in District 4 to participate in the contest last year, we were somewhat slow to respond,” said Commissioner Eleanor Peppi-Murphy. “By the time we got ourselves together and completed the door, it was too late to enter the contest. However, we were so impressed with the results that we were anxious to compete this year.”

The group’s winning door shows Santa’s Helpers (the commissioners for Charles County) trying to get Santa (Chief Judge Ben C. Clyburn of the District Court of Maryland) unstuck from a chimney. “We had fun, enjoyed the door, laughed at ourselves, and contributed to a worthy cause,” Peppi-Murphy said.

So how do Judiciary employees choose their creative designs? Lynda Byrd from the Circuit Court for Frederick County

explains, “They are almost always something that touches me personally. For example, someone close to me is in the military, so my door one year reflected military loved ones far from home. Last year a family member had to deal with a very rare form of cancer, so my door was dedicated to all types of cancer.”



photo courtesy of Sandra Dalton

The Civil Department of the Circuit Court for Frederick County designed this winning door.

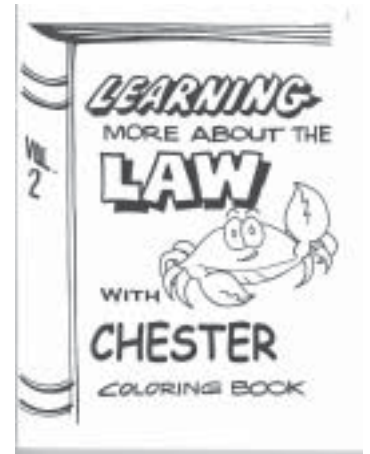
“Chester the Crab” Teaches Kids about the Courts

With a friendly crab named “Chester” as their guide, Maryland’s children can learn about their courts in new coloring books developed by the Maryland Judiciary.

The first two books, titled “Learning the Law” and “Learning More About the Law” are designed to introduce children in third grade or younger to the legal system and the judicial branch. The books—which debuted November 19 at Baltimore County’s National Adoption Day event—include a variety of activities such as coloring, fill-in-the-blank tests, and matching terms with pictures that offer a fun way to teach children the basics of the legal system.

“The whole purpose of the coloring books is to provide a vehicle by which young children can be educated about the courts and the Judiciary in a fun and informative context,” said Judge Jean Szekeres Baron, chair of the Committee on Public Awareness, which developed the books. “We even adopted a mascot, Chester the Crab, who is featured as a sort of judicial guide—the children will find him absolutely endearing.”

Justin Lloyd, a graduate of Maryland Institute College of Art, donated his time and talent to create Chester and assisted with the design of the coloring books. Volumes 3 and 4, including a Spanish version, will be available this spring. The coloring books may be downloaded for free at www.courts.state.md.us/publications/coloringbooks/.



News from the Bench, from p. 9

■ Retirements

The following judges have announced their retirement from the bench. No additional appointments have been made as of press time:

Hon. Bonita J. Dancy, Circuit Court for Baltimore City

Hon. William S. Horne, Circuit Court for Talbot County

Hon. Marvin S. Kaminetz, Circuit Court for St. Mary’s County

Hon. Paul A. Smith, Circuit Court for Baltimore City

Hon. Cornelius J. Vaughey, District Court for Montgomery County

■ In Memoriam

Hon. Alan B. Lipson, retired, Baltimore City District Court judge from 1981 to 1995.

Hon. Thomas J. Curley, retired, Anne Arundel County District Court judge from 1965 to 1991.

Hon. Frederick William Invernizzi, retired, Baltimore City judge from 1973-1977 and the first Administrative Director of the Courts of Maryland from 1955-1973.

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 361 Rowe Blvd.
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www.courts.state.md.us

Law Library Unveils New CourtNet Page

Catherine McGuire, State Law Library

To assist with quick referral to useful legal sources, the Maryland State Law Library has recently designed and posted a new Web page for CourtNet users.

This quick-start page includes links to most-used databases and recent publications. A link is also provided to the new library newsletter, with the inaugural issue dated Winter 2006.

