

# Justice Matters

A publication from the Maryland Judiciary

Vol. 10, Issue 4 February 2007

## 2007 Legislative Session

# E-Citations, New Courthouses on District Court Wish List

Ken Brown, Coordinator, Customer Information Services, District Court, contributed to this story

In order to launch new technology and to create new facilities, the Judiciary is asking for the support of the General Assembly and the Governor for two initiatives. These initiatives will improve safety for officers, increase efficiency for the courts, and address the needs of a growing population.

in June 2003 became involved in efforts to electronically process these citations to save time, paper, and staff resources for police agencies and the

cont. on 4

### inside



judicial information systems ..... 6



problem-solving courts ..... 9



staff volunteers ..... 12



national adoption day ..... 14

## E-Citations

The District Court is poised to begin an innovative electronic citation project, which will increase efficiency and police officer safety. However, before the project can start, legislative changes are needed.

The District Court handles more than 1.3 million traffic citations each year, and



photo by Dawn Robinson

A Maryland state trooper demonstrates the e-citation system.

## Court's in (Jam) Session



photo courtesy of Cheré Brown

Music, activities, and celebrations are part of Baltimore City's "new and improved" juvenile drug treatment court. Shown here, staff members from the Baltimore City Department of Juvenile Services demonstrate a variety of instruments during "jam session."

See full story on page 15

## editorial board

Judge Dennis M. Sweeney  
Chairman, Howard County  
Circuit Court

Judge William H. Adkins, III  
Talbot County District Court

Judge Jean Szekeres Baron  
Prince George's County  
District Court

Ken Brown  
District Court Headquarters

Judge Ralph M. Burnett  
Garrett County District Court

Judge William O. Carr  
Harford County Circuit Court

Sandra Dalton, Clerk  
Frederick County Circuit Court

Valerie Dawson, Court Reporter  
Wicomico County Circuit Court

Judge James R. Eyer  
Court of Special Appeals

Judge Marcella A. Holland  
Baltimore City Circuit Court

Catherine McGuire  
Maryland State Law Library

Judge Emory A. Plitt  
Harford County Circuit Court

Sally W. Rankin  
Court Information Officer

Judge Russell Sadler, Howard County  
District Court, Retired

Judge Gail J. Schaffer  
Anne Arundel County  
Orphans' Court

## staff

Mary Brighthaupt, designer

Rita Buettner, editor

Molly Kalifut, writer

Dan Clark, photographer

Jack Fino, photographer

Justice Matters is published quarterly.  
We welcome your comments or ideas.  
Contact us at:

Court Information Office  
361 Rowe Blvd.  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Tel: (410)260-1488  
cio@mdcourts.gov



# News from the Bench

## Appointments

**Hon. George L. Russell, III, and Hon. Pamela Janice White** were appointed to the Circuit Court for Baltimore City, filling vacancies created by the retirement of Hon. Clifton J. Gordy and Hon. Joseph P. McCurdy, Jr.

**Hon. A. Michael Chapdelaine** was appointed to the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, filling a vacancy created by the retirement of Hon. Steven I. Platt.

## Retirements

**Hon. Alan M. Wilner**, Court of Appeals

**Hon. Steven I. Platt**, Circuit Court for Prince George's County

**Hon. William B. Spellbring, Jr.**, Circuit Court for Prince George's County

## In Memoriam

**Hon. Stanley B. Frosh**, Circuit Court for Montgomery County from 1975 to 1989.

**Hon. Frederick A. Thayer, III**, Garrett County Circuit judge from 1977 to 1996.

**Hon. Mabel E. Hubbard**, District Court for Baltimore City from 1981 to 1985, Circuit Court for Baltimore City from 1985 to 1999.



The Joint Bench/Bar Conference will be held June 12-16 in Ocean City.

# Human Resources Gains New Leadership

Sharon Sampson Ball was named executive director of human resources (HR) for the Judiciary on November 1, following the retirement of Linda Love McCormick. Ball plans to draw on almost three decades of experience in state human resources management to help the Judiciary become an employer of choice. She has been implementing changes that she hopes will provide “progressive, innovative, results-oriented human resources’ services to internal and external customers.”

In December, the department produced the first of periodic fact sheets on policies, practices, and procedures. These fact sheets will be posted on CourtNet and are designed to provide practical technical help to Judiciary managers, supervisors, and employees. The first contained policy-specific technical information concerning early release for holidays.

“The fact sheets are one way for HR and the services we provide to be viewed as more user-friendly, more customer-focused,” Ball said. “Human resources, as a discipline, can be very laborious, and the policies can be very complex.”

In January, Ball named Sharon Borland deputy executive director of the department. Borland has more than 15 years experience in human resources management including the last six with the Judiciary.

Ball and Borland look forward to expanding employee training opportunities. They will also form a human resources liaison group where, at periodic meetings, Judiciary employees who perform human resources functions in their positions will take part in relevant training and networking opportunities.

“By meeting face-to-face, we can get feedback from them, learn what their specific questions are, and provide the information needed to perform these tasks,” Ball said.

The department also plans to build partnerships with colleges, increase the Judiciary’s presence at job fairs, and explore a variety of internship opportunities.

“I believe in a collaborative approach to human resources management,” Ball said. “As we evaluate policies and procedures, we need to ask ‘Why?’ and ‘Does it still work?’ The answer should never be, ‘That’s the way we’ve always done it.’”

## Professional Profile: Sharon Sampson Ball

Sharon Ball has served 29 years in the areas of equal opportunity and human resources management. Before joining the Judiciary, she had been human resources director at Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation, and prior to that, had served as recruitment and examination, training and employer-employee manager, and deputy personnel director at the Maryland Departments of Employment and Training, Economic and Employment Development and Labor, Licensing, and Regulation. She holds a bachelor’s degree in political science from Hampton University, and received her master’s in public administration from Northern Illinois University.



photo by Molly Kalifut

L-R: Sharon Ball and Sharon Borland

# E-Citations, New Courthouses, from 1

court. Statutory changes are necessary to allow for the electronic transmission of ticket data in lieu of traditional paper citations, new means of identifying and verifying persons' identities, and the inclusion of multiple citations on a single document.

The e-citation initiative would improve officer safety by reducing the amount of time an officer is outside the cruiser by 80 percent. E-citations also provide citizens with a more accurate record of alleged offenses as officers give citizens citations generated in the laptops in their cruisers. The data would then be electronically transferred to the police agencies and then to the courts, reducing both law enforcement and court data entry errors. If the project is implemented, citizens could also eventually pay citations online.

"This is not only an example of efficient, good government created through the effort of so many stakeholders—more importantly, it's an innovative approach to improving officer safety," said Chief Judge Ben C. Clyburn of the District Court. "This proposal is really going to change how a lot of people do business."

The Judiciary is collaborating on this effort with the Maryland State Police, Maryland Transportation Authority, Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland Defense Council, Maryland Trial Lawyers Association, Office of the Public Defender, Maryland State's Attorney's Association, Motor Vehicle Administration, and the Maryland State Bar Association. The state police will conduct an "e-warning" pilot to test the system before implementation.



photo by Dawn Robinson

The laptop in each state police cruiser will be equipped to transmit data directly to police agencies and courts.



photo by Rita Buettner

Chief Judge Ben C. Clyburn of the District Court explains e-citations to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

## New Courthouses Needed

While e-citations bring processing caseloads into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Judiciary is also seeking help to replace outdated, inadequate buildings and facilities from the previous century. The court is seeking funding for new District Court facilities in Rockville, Cumberland, and Catonsville.

In Rockville, construction funds are requested to build new court facilities to replace leased space shared with the Circuit Court for Montgomery County. "The current location lacks modern court security features and is inadequate to accommodate the caseload," Judge Clyburn said. In Cumberland and Catonsville, funds are sought to acquire land for the future construction of new court facilities to replace buildings that have limited space and outdated security features.

"Citizens deserve access to justice in adequate facilities," Judge Clyburn said. "In Catonsville, for example, we have women handcuffed to chairs and defendants being led down hallways next to judges' chambers. This is a real safety issue for everyone—detainees, citizens, and court employees."

To date, this year's capital budget does not include funding for these projects. Judge Clyburn has asked Gov. Martin O'Malley to consider funding the projects in his supplemental budget and has met with legislators to seek their support.

"The funding for these vital projects is a small fraction of the total capital budget of almost \$718 million," Judge Clyburn said. "And for \$68 million, so much can be accomplished to provide efficient services in safe environments."

# Congratulations to:

■ **Chief Judge Robert M. Bell** of the Court of Appeals, who received the Keys to Access Award on December 9 at the Fourth National Symposium on Dispute Resolution in Special Education at the Academy for Education and Development in the District of Columbia.

■ **Court of Appeals Judge Glenn Harrell, Jr.; Court of Special Appeals Judge Ellen Hollander; Baltimore City Circuit Judge Kaye Allison; Baltimore City Circuit Judge Stuart Berger; Baltimore City Circuit Judge Evelyn Omega Cannon; Anne Arundel County Circuit Judge Philip Caroom; Montgomery County Circuit Judge John Debelius, III; Carroll County Circuit Administrative Judge Michael Galloway; Anne Arundel County Circuit Judge Paul Hackner, Prince George's County Circuit Judge Michele Hotten; Wicomico County Circuit Judge Newton Jackson,**



ASTAR logo

**III; Baltimore County Circuit Judge Ruth Ann Jakubowski; Howard County Circuit Administrative Judge Diane O. Leasure; Montgomery County Circuit Judge Michael Mason; Washington County Circuit Judge John Hankins McDowell; Harford County Circuit Judge Emory Plitt, Jr.; Queen Anne's County Circuit Administrative Judge Thomas Ross; Prince George's County Circuit Judge Cathy Serrette; Garrett County Circuit Administrative Judge James Sherbin; Anne Arundel County Circuit Judge Ronald Silkworth; Frederick County Circuit Judge Julie Stevenson Solt; Prince George's County Circuit Judge Sean Wallace; and Dorchester County Circuit Judge Brett Wilson,** who became ASTAR fellows in October at the conclusion of the 2006 Advanced Science and Technology Adjudication Resource Center (ASTAR) National Judges' Science School in Chicago. These judges will continue on to more advanced study in the future and will participate as moderators and faculty for future programs designed for the next class of judges. The ASTAR program strives to offer a high level scientific, technological, and medical curriculum to trial court judges to better equip them to understand and preside over cases that involve such issues.

■ **Calvert County District Judge Stephen L. Clagett,** who received the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence's 2006 Law Enforcement/Criminal Justice Award October 26 at the group's annual meeting and awards dinner.

■ **Retired Prince George's County District Judge Gerard F. Devlin,** who was named Maryland's Veteran of the Year by the Maryland Joint Veterans Committee.



Sharron Bickel, Crisis Intervention Center director and MNADV executive secretary, presents Judge Stephen Clagett with the 2006 Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence's Law Enforcement/Criminal Justice Award.

## Judiciary asks General Assembly to support initiatives

# JIS Leads Courts through

Robert Bruchalski, Deputy Director, Planning and Application Services, Judicial Information Systems, contributed to this story

When Cookie Pollock took a job with Judicial Information Systems in 1982, she found herself working in the former Buzzy's Pizza Parlor in Annapolis. Because the only parking was two-hour parking on the street, Pollock and her colleagues took turns rolling their cars "to make the chalk disappear."

Those were the days Pollock now recalls as the "Middle Ages of computers." She remembers how they worked with keypunch cards and dumb terminals (computers before PCs). When they needed to connect to the Annapolis Data Center, "we would dial up and wait for the tone."

At that time, JIS was comprised of the office in Annapolis, which supported District Court systems, and a Baltimore office to support the Circuit Court for Baltimore City.

Today, after 30 years as the Judiciary's information technology arm, JIS provides 24-hour-a-day support to more than 3,500 users in the District Court, Circuit Courts, appellate courts, Administrative Office of the Courts, and court-related agencies. JIS also serves external agencies, such as the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, the Motor Vehicle administration, and the Department of Juvenile Services, and the general public.

"You have all these various projects that you need to look at holistically as a portfolio," said Robert Bruchalski, deputy director of planning and application services for JIS. "We have to look at projects, ensure that they're meeting needs, are on schedule and on budget."

The role of JIS continues to expand to address the Judiciary's increasing use of technology. During the live webcasting of Court of Appeals arguments, for example, JIS staff make sure that the streaming server network is functioning properly and that the bandwidth is acceptable.

In addition to maintaining the day-to-day operations of court computer systems statewide, JIS directors regularly introduce initiatives to enhance services. This year the Judiciary has requested funding for informational technology initiatives in the budget submitted to the General Assembly.

## Jury Management System

Last summer efforts began to purchase a jury management system that will provide automated management of jurors through the entire jury life cycle, including random selection, notification, qualification, placement on a jury, payment, and record of service. The system will include Web-based functionality to allow potential jurors the option of qualifying, requesting a postponement or an excusal online, and provide updates on service dates. With approved funding—including \$1 million requested for fiscal year 2008—a pilot program will commence followed by statewide



# 30-year Evolution

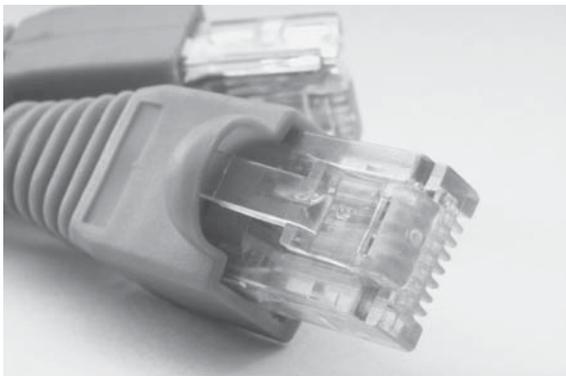
implementation. Currently the Circuit Courts use a variety of systems for jury management, and most use a system that does not integrate with other court functions. The current jury system model presents significant issues and challenges, which include manual efforts, integration with other systems (e.g. case management), consistent reporting and statistics, the effective use of Web-based technology, and increasing support costs.

“We have a mix of jury systems out in the field,” Bruchalski said. “We’re in the process of procuring a new modern jury management system capable of supporting all the courts.”

## Expanding Case Search

The Maryland Judiciary Case Search (<http://casesearch/inquiry/inquiry-index.jsp>) provides public online access to the Judiciary’s case records. The first phase was implemented in January 2006. As of January 2007, Case Search provides Internet access to case information of all trial courts, including information from the Circuit Courts for Montgomery and Prince George’s counties, which was previously unavailable through the site.

The second phase has, to date, implemented the expansion of case information for criminal cases in



Cookie Pollock

photo by Rita Buettner

accordance with rule changes effective July 2006. As a result of this implementation, the existing dial-up capability for criminal data has been replaced. The third phase, beginning in the latter half of fiscal year 2007, will provide bulk data downloading capabilities that are currently fulfilled through custom programming.

## Changing Times

Now project manager for the District Court for JIS, Pollock can appreciate how much has changed since her first days at JIS. Not only has the world of technology changed, but she long ago upgraded from the dumb terminal in the former pizza parlor; today she works at the JIS headquarters on Riva Road in Annapolis—where the Data Center is manned 24-hours-a-day.

Despite all the changes during Pollock’s 25 years at JIS, she has seen one constant. “There are other stresses,” she said, “but the people are just wonderful.”

# Program that Helps Parents Pay Child Support Marks Milestone

A program that began with a casual conversation between a judge and a state administrator has just celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Since it began in 1986, the Harford County Absent Parent Employment Program (APEP) has helped more than 1,600 participants find jobs and pay close to \$3 million in child support services. APEP has also become a model for similar programs. The Circuit Court for Baltimore County started one in 2004 that has helped recoup nearly \$250,000 in child support payments. And, eight months ago, the Circuit Court for Baltimore City began a partnership with the city's STRIVE program to help prepare fathers for work.

## Seeing the Need

APEP began in 1986, when Harford County Circuit Judge William O. Carr was talking casually with an administrator in the state's job service program. Judge Carr mentioned that he wished there were jobs for the parents who appeared before him for being delinquent in child support payments; the administrator replied that he wished he had more applicants for the jobs his office was advertising. They created APEP that same year, securing funding for the program through the state Department of Human Resources in 1988.

"It's a positive, effective program because we focus on getting child support payments to the children," said Judge Carr, who hears all child support cases in the county.

When Judge Carr orders parents into the program, they are initially assessed regarding their skills, abilities, and needs. They meet weekly with an APEP counselor and have access to a variety of services, including job search and interview training, resume writing assistance, and job referrals, as well as substance abuse treatment, and family mediation, anger management, and mental health services. Participants who are still looking for employment have a "show cause" hearing before Judge Carr each month.

APEP operates in conjunction with the county's Office of Child Support Enforcement, Department of Social Services, Sheriff's Department, and the State's Attorney's Office. Team members—many of whom have been the same since the program's start—meet each month to discuss cases.

"We've gotten to know each other really well," said Julie McFillin, the program supervisor who has been with APEP since it began. "Clients come back to visit all the time. They know we are here to help, and we take the time to sit down with clients and listen. They're welcome to come back anytime."

## Program Grows

Baltimore County based its Family Employment Support Program, which it launched in 2004, on APEP, and Circuit Judge John O. Hennegan has noticed other benefits besides recouping money for child support. "This program can be measured in more than the dollars and cents," he said. "I've seen it create self-esteem, improve family harmony, help resolve underlying issues and conflicts. In my conversations with participants, it's clear that these intangible benefits are there."

In 2006, the Circuit Court for Baltimore City began a partnership with STRIVE, a program through the city's Center for Fathers, Families and Work Force Development, to help non-custodial fathers. "It offers an opportunity to educate fathers and prepare them

for work, and also assists them in having a better relationship with their children," explained Judge Audrey J.S. Carrion, the judge in charge of the family division docket. Fathers have access to an employment resource list and referrals for help with housing issues.

"We need to find employment for non-custodial parents," Judge Carrion said. "Any help within the community helps. This program gives fathers some hope that they can get help with education, finding a job, and building a relationship with their children."

**"It's a positive, effective program because we focus on getting child support payments to the children."**

**Judge William O. Carr**

# Standing Committee Established for Problem-Solving Courts

Chief Judge Robert M. Bell of the Court of Appeals has issued an administrative order to establish a Standing Committee on Problem-Solving Courts. These courts, such as drug treatment and mental health courts, have grown as the public and other branches of state government look to the courts to help solve the problem of crime through non-traditional methods.

According to the administrative order, the committee will be the statewide superintendent for these courts. Baltimore City District Judge Jamey H. Weitzman is the chairperson. This committee does not disband the current Drug Treatment Court Commission or change its focus. The commission now will report directly to the standing committee.

The committee will review all requests to set up problem-solving courts and make recommendations to the chief judge of the Court of Appeals, serve as the clearinghouse for all grant-funding requests, create a program to evaluate their performance, and recommend best practices and standards for their operation and maintenance.

The Standing Committee on Problem-Solving Courts includes two oversight committees: the Drug Court Oversight Committee, chaired by Baltimore County Circuit Judge Kathleen Gallogly Cox; and the Mental Health Court Oversight Committee, chaired by Baltimore City District Judge Charlotte Cooksey, which will respond to mental health court needs.

The administrative order is online at <http://mdcourts.gov/adminorders/index.html>.



# Anne Arundel Circuit Court Launches E-Filing Pilot

The Clerk's Office along with the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County is preparing to launch its two-year pilot e-filing project. Following a plan approved by court order on October 13 by the Court of Appeals, the Clerk's Office in the Circuit Court will file all civil cases electronically, with the e-filing of other cases to follow.

An e-filing task force has been formed in Anne Arundel County whose co-chairs are Anne Arundel Circuit Judge Ronald A. Silkworth and Clerk of Court Robert P. Duckworth.

"The Clerk's Office has been promoting the e-filing of court cases for a long time and is excited about being the pilot project for the Maryland Judiciary. When the pilot concludes, I would expect that we can move to have the entire state Judiciary Circuit Courts follow suit," Duckworth said.

"We will begin with civil but we will eventually do family, juvenile, and criminal," said Anne Arundel Circuit Judge Ronald A. Silkworth.

The project will integrate the LexisNexis File & Serve system with the Judiciary's Uniform Court System. LexisNexis has taken the lead with e-filing systems in other state and local courts throughout the nation.

"We would not have done it unless it was integrated," Judge Silkworth said. "We've actually been considering e-filing for quite some time, but in order to get to

where we are today we had to have our case management database system."

The court has worked with the Anne Arundel Bar Association's technology committee to include their input in the project development, and LexisNexis will provide training for the judges and attorneys.

Attorneys—and even self-represented litigants will be able to get an account and file online from another location. "The nice thing from a lawyer's standpoint is that filing doesn't end at 4:30 p.m.," Judge Silkworth said.

Self-represented litigants who are not familiar with the system can turn to the clerks for assistance in uploading and scanning paper documents into a digital format. "We intend to have public access terminals available in the courthouse," Duckworth said. Project manager Doug Hofstedt and Kimberle Earle, representing the Clerk of the Court, will be operationally setting up the e-filing system.

"In order to do a project like this, you really have to have a very capable courthouse team," Judge Silkworth said. "Change is challenging to many people, but I think in the end we'll see a good result, a good product, and we'll have good information for the Court of Appeals to decide what to do statewide."

For further information visit <http://www.circuitcourt.org/efilingpilot.htm>.

## Renovations Still on Track Despite Blaze



photo courtesy of Judge Albert Willis Northrop

A two-alarm fire in January closed streets and caused the evacuation of the historic Prince George's County Courthouse. The blaze reminded many of the fire in November 2004 that ravaged the 1881 courthouse when renovations were almost complete. This most recent fire broke out on the roof of the same section, but this time the flames were contained to the roof, and the renovations will continue on schedule, with the project due to be completed by the end of 2008. No one was injured, and the contractor has agreed to pay for the damages, estimated at about \$75,000.

## Court of Appeals Broadcasts Arguments Live Online

Nearly 1,300 of the people who watched the Court of Appeals arguments on December 4 didn't have to worry about finding a seat in the courtroom. They merely clicked on the Maryland Judiciary's site to watch the arguments live online. After the success of the pilot webcasting project, launched November 30, the Judiciary is moving forward to have permanent cameras installed in the courtroom this spring. Live and archived webcasts can be viewed at <http://mdcourts.gov/coappeals/webcast.html>.

<http://mdcourts.gov/coappeals/webcast.html>



photo by Rita Buettner

Seated in the Court of Appeals courtroom, Media Specialist Dan Clark reviews webcast footage after the day's arguments have been concluded.

## Discussing Best Practices in Family Law

by Lynn Cain, Court Administrator, First Circuit

During the "Best Practices for Family Law" seminar at the Circuit Court for Wicomico County in November, Matthew Mills, vice-president of the Wicomico County Bar Association (left), pauses for a photograph with Wicomico County Circuit Judge Kathleen L. Beckstead, First Circuit Administrative Judge Daniel M. Long, Winnie Borden, executive director of the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (MVLS), and Worcester County Circuit Judge Richard R. Bloxom.

Hosted by Judge Beckstead, the seminar was designed to provide "best practice" information from Lower Shore judges and masters who preside in domestic matters to area attorneys who predominantly practice family law. The seminar also offered a forum for MVLS to identify attorneys to volunteer in domestic cases whose litigants are indigent.

Participating judges and masters presented the courts' perspective on practices that facilitate timely and effective litigation of domestic cases, and attending attorneys were able to pose questions of the judges and masters.



photo by Lynn Cain

# Helping Matters

This is the first installment in a series of profiles of Judiciary employees who volunteer in their communities. If you are a volunteer or would like to nominate a fellow employee to be profiled, please write to [cio@mdcourts.gov](mailto:cio@mdcourts.gov) or call (410)260-1488.

## Sarah Peach

**Judiciary job:** Court reporter with the Circuit Court for Howard County.

**Volunteers at:** The Hippodrome Theatre in Baltimore.

**What she does:** Scans tickets as a volunteer usher on Sunday evenings when there's a show or event.

**Why she does it:** "I've always been a theater buff. Our 'pay' is that we get to see the show we're working at. I love comedies and musicals, but I was very impressed with '12 Angry Men' that played here recently."

**Don't ask:** She can't get discounts for family or friends —and can't even get one for herself. She pays full price for any show at which she's not working.

**When she's not at work or volunteering:** She's a member of the audience. She has season tickets to the Hippodrome, and travels to New York City at least three to four times a year to see plays.



photo by Karen Eske, Hippodrome Theatre

## Harold Meiklejohn

**Judiciary job:** Managing commissioner with the District Court for Montgomery County.

**Volunteers with:** Youth football and baseball leagues in Damascus.

**Main event:** He's the football commissioner for the Cougars Football Association, running the day-to-day operations of one flag and 10 tackle football teams for kids ages 5-14.

**How it all began:** Started coaching and helping out when his son joined the baseball team at age 6, then football at age 8. He was asked to become commissioner in 2000.

**Why he does it:** "Helping kids has always been what this is all about. This is a way I can give back to the community, and maybe keep some kids out of trouble. We joke that we know where the kids are when they're done with practice or a game: They're at home because they're too tired to be anywhere else."

**Track record:** Since he became football commissioner, the league has grown from 175 players to 275.

**Where's his son now?** At 16, Tim still plays both sports. Meiklejohn coaches him in baseball, but, as for football, "He's out of my league."



photo courtesy of Harold Meikeljohn

## Cynthia Tensley

**Judiciary job:** District Court commissioner for Baltimore City.

**Volunteers as:** an EMT-B (IV Tech) with the Artbutus Volunteer Fire Department, she started in 2005 and is due to graduate the paramedic course in May.

**Why she became an EMT:** “Years ago, I trained as a medic when I was in the Army Reserves. For years, I had been thinking about going back to school. Then when 9/11 happened, and the natural disasters, especially Katrina, I wanted to help in a more meaningful way. There’s always a shortage of medical personnel. I thought about it; I prayed about it; I figured I’d go where the need was.”

**What makes it exciting:** “When you go out on a call, you don’t know what you’re going to run into. Even though your adrenaline is pumping, you have to stay calm and proceed in an ordered, decisive way.”

**How the jobs are similar:** “With both jobs, there is the pressure of trying to remember everything, and there is the necessity that you make the right decision and that mistakes aren’t made. Both have their own rewards as well that thankfully counterbalance the pressures. In both situations, there is personal satisfaction in knowing that I’m a part of something bigger than myself and that I do make a difference.”



photo courtesy of Cynthia Tensley

## Ed Jowett

**Judiciary job:** Records clerk with Central Records, District Court Headquarters.

**Volunteers with:** Historic Annapolis Foundation, which is dedicated to preserving the downtown’s historic character and educating visitors and locals about the city’s history.

**How he helps:** Serves as a liaison during the Historic Annapolis Antiques Show and as a history interpreter during tours.

**Why dwell on the past:** “The history of Annapolis has always been of great interest to me, and Historic Annapolis Foundation volunteers have all the fun. We share a common interest, we work in wonderful venues—historic homes and areas—and we meet people and can share our interests with the public.”

**His favorites:** “I look forward to Annapolis by Candlelight each year and the Kitchens of Annapolis tour, which is relatively new, is a wonderful way to see how people have used their creativity to keep the feeling of an era in a small, intimate space.”

**Don’t miss this:** “If you visit the William Paca House only once a year, visit during the holidays. It’s a wonderful season—the house and grounds are all decorated by volunteers and it’s absolutely beautiful.”

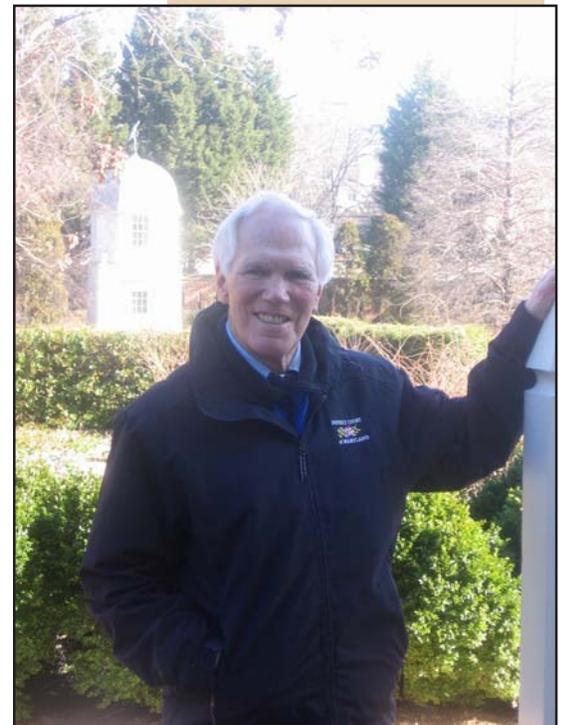


photo by Molly Kalifut

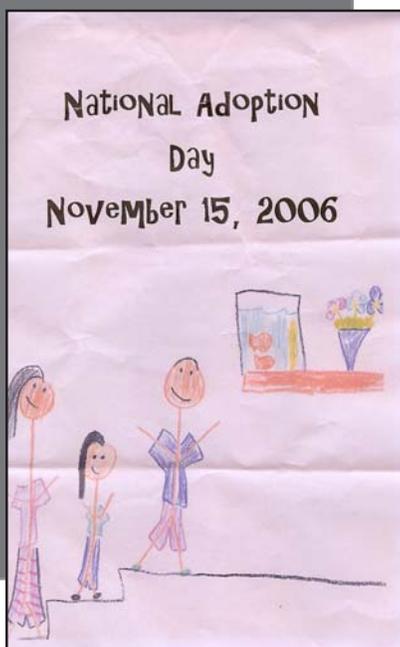
# Courts Help Build Families During National Adoption Day Events



Several courts in Maryland joined in the celebration of National Adoption Day in November. In Baltimore, three Circuit judges—Administrative Judge Marcella A. Holland, Judge Audrey J.S. Carrion, and Judge Edward R.H. Hargadon—presided over more than 40 adoptions in the Ceremonial Courtroom on Saturday, November 18.

On that same day in Baltimore County, Circuit Judge John O. Hennegan presided as 10 families welcomed new members. In Prince George's County, six children were adopted at a special event held by the Circuit Court on Wednesday, November 15. Circuit Judges Steven I. Platt; Larnzell Martin, Jr.; Graydon S. McKee, III; and Melanie Shaw Geter assisted Administrative Judge William D. Missouri in the day's presentation. Harford County also celebrated on November 15, when retired Circuit Judge Cypert O. Whitfill presided over the adoptions of six children. In Anne Arundel County, Circuit Judge Nancy L. Davis-Loomis presided over eight adoptions on Thursday, November 16, as the families were treated to bagpipe music performed by Robert G. Wallace, court administrator.

In Maryland, the Committee on Public Awareness has encouraged Circuit Courts to plan events recognizing National Adoption Day, which is celebrated each year to raise awareness of the more than 100,000 children in foster care throughout the United States waiting to find permanent families.



Program cover designed by Kailyn Geter, age 7



photos courtesy of Judge Larnzell Martin, Jr.

Judge Larnzell Martin, Jr. (left); Anthony Visk; Annabelle Visk; Angelina Ines Anna Visk; retired Judge Steven I. Platt; and Judge Melanie Shaw Geter pause for a photograph during Prince George's County Circuit Court's National Adoption Day celebration.

## Juvenile Drug Court Updates

### Report Shows Juvenile Drug Courts to be Effective

Juvenile defendants who participated in a Maryland drug treatment court were less likely to commit crimes afterwards, and the program saved money overall. These are the findings of an intensive study of the Harford County juvenile drug court, recently released in a final report by Portland, Ore.-based NPC Research.

“The two very important questions this study answers are, ‘Do juvenile drug courts reduce recidivism?’ and ‘Do juvenile drug courts save taxpayers money?’ The answer to both questions is a resounding ‘Yes,’” said Gray Barton, executive director of the Office of Problem Solving Courts.

Participants in Harford County’s juvenile drug court had 36 percent fewer juvenile and adult arrests than non-participants, and 59 percent fewer days on probation or parole. The independent study also found that

the average cost to the criminal justice system was 60 percent less for participants in the year following their involvement in drug court.

“We get kids that you’d think won’t make it,” said Harford County Circuit Judge William O. Carr. “But we have a consistent team and a strong tradition of interagency cooperation. I knew that if the program was run correctly, it would make a difference in the lives of these young people.”

Drug courts provide intensive treatment, supervision, and comprehensive judicial monitoring to habitual offenders whose crimes are addiction driven. Juvenile drug courts also involve families and schools.

A copy of the report is available at <http://mdcourts.gov/dtcc/publications.html>

### Baltimore City Revitalizes Court

Sheila Peksenak, Juvenile Drug Court Coordinator, Baltimore City Circuit Court, contributed to this story

Baltimore City’s juvenile drug treatment court is offering a variety of new activities for participants such as Birthday Club, jam sessions, and demonstrations.

Frederick Douglass High School’s jazz band has performed for participants, and drug court staff members have staged a jam session and hands-on demonstration of music-making. These sessions introduce music as another positive outlet, and participants are encouraged to continue instruction in the community if they are interested. Birthday Club celebrates participants’ birthdays during group meetings with cake and highlights of their progress and accomplishments. The staff developed the club after learning that some participants had never had a birthday party.

The staff also plans kick-boxing demonstrations by a certified personal trainer, with an opportunity for interested participants to take lessons. These innovations are the result of efforts by staff of the Baltimore City Department of Juvenile Services and the University of Maryland Harambee Treatment Center to enhance the Baltimore City Juvenile Drug Treatment Court.



photo courtesy of Baltimore City Juvenile Drug Treatment Court

Clinical staff members gathered during an open house to unveil the “new” Baltimore City Juvenile Drug Court (left to right): Robert Greene, Stephen Carter, Michael Marshall, Cheré Brown, Harold More-Bey, and Jay Henderson.

**Court Information Office  
Robert C. Murphy Courts of Appeal Building  
361 Rowe Blvd.  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401**

**[mdcourts.gov](http://mdcourts.gov)**

## First Circuit's Truancy Program Celebrates Somerset Student's Success

When LaVern H. entered the First Judicial Circuit's Truancy Reduction Program Pilot, she had 65 un-excused absences and a 1.00 GPA. Now that she has successfully completed the program, she has had no un-excused absences over an extended period of time and her GPA is 3.16. She has also become significantly involved in school activities.

The courts of First Judicial Circuit—Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties—are presently involved in the pilot program to assist local boards of education in reducing truancy. Students successfully complete the program and are recognized for their accomplishment once they have shown sustained school attendance with improved performance.

Based on a similar program in Delaware, the pilot program was launched after discussions with education and court leaders. In 2004 legislation was passed to implement the pilot program. If legislation is passed this session, the Judiciary will also introduce a similar program in Prince George's County.

By Lynn Cain, Court Administrator, First Circuit



photo by Lynn Cain

Somerset County Master Robert E. Laird, Jr., LaVern H. (student), First Judicial Circuit Administrative Judge Daniel M. Long, and Del. Norman H. Conway celebrate LaVern's accomplishments.