

# Hot Topics Newsletter

## GENERAL NOTICES

- The Maryland Judiciary Human Resources Division would like to remind you about how it can support and assist your loved ones when a senior or retired judge passes away. For additional information, please contact them at 410-260-1731, or see the PDF document posted on the Senior Judges page, [Judge's Beneficiary Support Assistance \(mdcourts.gov\)](https://mdcourts.gov/judges/beneficiary-support).
- All overnight lodging requests should be arranged through the AOC Travel Coordinator, Allison Leebrick, at [allison.leebrick@mdcourts.gov](mailto:allison.leebrick@mdcourts.gov), unless otherwise approved by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Maryland, the State Court Administrator (SCA), or their designee. Please allow as much time as possible to make these arrangements. Once completed, your room reservation will be emailed to you.
- For State Retirement updates, visit: <https://sra.maryland.gov/members> and for the newsletter: [https://sra.maryland.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/retireenewsfeb2023\\_-\\_final\\_for\\_web.pdf?1677782761](https://sra.maryland.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/retireenewsfeb2023_-_final_for_web.pdf?1677782761).
- For the latest news, updates, payroll info, Hot Topics and more, check out the Senior Judge webpage, <https://mdcourts.gov/hr/seniorjudges>. Don't forget to save the link so you can refer to it at any time.

## PRESCRIPTION DRUG UPDATE (FITCH CASE)

The *Fitch* case, which challenged the State statute ending the prescription drug plan for State retirees, has been decided in favor of the State. Changes resulting from that decision will not go into effect until January 1, 2025. Keep an eye on your inbox and mailbox for an update on prescription drug coverage for State retirees that will be coming soon from the Senior Judges Committee.



## LESSONS LIVED AND LEARNED: MY LIFE ON AND OFF THE BENCH

The Honorable Steven I. Platt, having served on the District Court in Prince George's County, the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, and in the Orphans' Court for Prince Georges County from 1978 to 1986 as a Chief Judge and Judge, wrote a fascinating and, at times a comical memoir, *Lessons Lived and Learned:*

*My Life On and Off the Bench*. His book is based on 30 years of experience as a jurist and numerous lessons learned along the way. Judge Platt gave us insight into his writing in response to a questionnaire.

**SJC:** *Lessons Lived and Learned: My Life On and Off the Bench* is the fourth book you have written in addition to writing your blog, *A Pursuit of Justice: Examining the Intersection of Business, Law, and Politics*, and being featured in the Guest Commentary section of MarylandMatters.org. What is your writing process like?

**SP:** My writing process differs depending on the forum, the publication, and the purpose for writing. The writing process, which I employed in writing my

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Memoir - *“Lessons Lived and Learned: My Life On and Off the Bench”* is best described in the *EPILOGUE* of that book. That process, to quote myself, is to “relate the lessons of my life with the two big “H’s”: Humility and Humor.”

All of my books were written to focus on the people, institutions, relationships, communities, and trust that I and others have relied on during our lifetimes, particularly now. Many of them appear to be forgotten, failing, and/or under attack. My writing is intended to defend, to revive their memory, and if necessary, rebuild and reinforce them in a way that they will be remembered and cherished long after I am gone with all of their character and complexity intact.

**SJC:** At what point did you decide to be an author, and what was your path to publication?

**SP:** I decided to become an author, first of my Blog, which was also published for 13 years as an Op-Ed column for **The Daily Record** beginning in the Fall of 2006 and later as **Guest Commentary on Maryland Matters Website**. The idea for the Memoir is described in detail in the Chapter entitled, “A Letter to my Grandchildren.” Those words were:

“Until about two years ago, I had no thought of writing a book about my life or anything else but as you guys came into my life - Dylan on December 28, 2016, Ben and Charlie on May 17, 2019 - and I watched you grow and develop your own personalities, I couldn't help but recall how little time my dad, Nathan (who passed away when he was 70 - younger than I am now), had to spend with his grandchildren - my son, Jason, only nine years (Ben and Charlie's dad) and my daughter, Sarah, only six years (Dylan's mom); and how that little they would ultimately be able to know and remember about him.

I then began to think about writing to you, like I am today, hopefully to help you remember me when I am long gone.

That's kind of selfish, I know! But I started thinking I've had an interesting life, and I believe I've, at times, done important work; I

want my grandsons to know about it and remember me, the life I have led, and the work I have done.

That's when the idea of a book, a memoir, first occurred to me. I followed up those thoughts with conversations with my family; your parents, Jason and Sarah, and their spouses, Anne and Kevin; my Significant Other, Francie Glendening; your grandmother; and now my good and special friend, Patti. All of them encouraged me beyond my expectations.

I would have asked you guys what you thought, but I figured you probably want to wait a few years and read the reviews first.

After that, I had further conversations with my well-regarded publisher and editor, Tatia Gordon-Troy (Ramses House Publishing LLC) and my writing coach, Dr. Marilyn Smith, as well as my friend and Administrative Assistant, Penny Simpson. They encouraged me even further to the point that as I pin this final chapter, I am beginning to believe that my story to my grandsons may be of interest to others as well. We'll see.”

**SJC:** What do you do when a new idea jumps out at you while you're still working on a book?

**SP:** I, at that moment, make a written note on it to record my thoughts including any points and complexities. I then include it on my To Do List – Book.

**SJC:** What's next for you as an author?

**SP:** Not sure – But we live in an interesting and challenging time. If I can contribute to rescuing and preserving the memory of people and constitutions whose work and character inspired me, my purpose will have been served and my future and legacy as an author will be established.

It's a great benefit for the Committee that Judge Platt's career path led to law and not the medical field. For additional information on his book, please visit [judgestevenplatt.com](http://judgestevenplatt.com) and check out the article in the summer 2023 issue of the Maryland Bar Journal.

**THE HONORABLE  
THERESA NOLAN**

BY: HON. PATRICE LEWIS  
AND THE SJC



On March 22, 2023, the Honorable Theresa A. Nolan passed away. Her judicial career spanned just over 15 years, serving as Associate Judges of the District Court and Circuit Court for Prince George's County. She was the third woman to be appointed to the bench in the District Court in Prince George's County.

Judge Nolan entered college at 34 when her youngest of eleven children was two years old. While at school, she worked full time as a legal secretary, for now senior Judge Pat Duley's father. In 1975, she earned her law degree, and passed the bar the following year.

Theresa was a devout Catholic, a member of multiple bar associations, women's organizations, and a regular attendee of the MSBA and NAWJ annual meetings. It was quite common for Theresa to locate the nearest Catholic Church and "encourage" lapsed Catholics and others to attend mass with her. For those who would beg off, you would be put on "the prayer list".

She loved the gathering of people and was instrumental in organizing the annual Prince George's Co. Bar Association Follies. They occurred the first Tuesday in June, while ballots were counted to determine the new leadership. The rehearsals in her basement, around the piano were an activity that drafted many new lawyers. These weekly practices slowly moved many from hesitant to stop by, to members of the chorus, to part of Theresa's usual suspects, to joining everyone in Ocean City for the MSBA Annual meeting. She was a master at making individuals feel that were special and absolutely necessary for its success.

Being a pioneer in the women's movement, she advocated for women's rights and against gender

bias. Her accolades include being the first woman President of the Prince George's County Bar Association; being the first female domestic relations master; being a mentor to young lawyers; serving as district director of District 4 of the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ); and receiving numerous awards including the 1986 Business and Professional Woman of the Year and was recognized as one of Maryland's Top 100 Women for 1998. In 2014, her daughter, Chrissy Nolan, published a book titled *Your Honor, My Mom*.

She cherished her faith, family, and friends.

**PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS FOR JUDGE AND COURT  
STAFF**



As the Judiciary mourns the tragic death of Circuit Court for Washington County Judge Andrew Wilkinson, we want to assure you that all available resources will be shared with judges and Judiciary staff to assist you during this difficult time.

Personal safety tips for judges and court staff, home security audit information, and other mental health support services are available on the CourtNet Safety and Security Resources page, <https://courtnet.courts.state.md.us/employees/securityandsafetyresources.html>.

Please review and feel free to take advantage of these resources.

**IN MEMORIAM**

- ❖ Hon. Justin J. King  
Circuit Court for Baltimore County  
Associate Judge
- ❖ Hon. Robert C. Nalley  
Circuit Court for Charles County  
County Administrative Judge and Associate Judge;  
District Court in Charles County  
Administrative Judge, and Associate Judge
- ❖ Hon. Andrew F. Wilkinson  
Circuit Court for Washington County  
Associate Judge

## JIS CORNER: STAY IN THE KNOW

### Importance of Security Awareness Training:

Security Awareness Training aims to educate our staff, judges, justices, and administrative officials about common security threats. By understanding these threats, we are better equipped to recognize and respond, significantly reducing the likelihood of security breaches. Security incidents are costly and can damage the Judiciary's reputation, resulting in a loss of public trust.

Training is essential, as it helps the Judiciary build an organizational culture around security, reducing risks, protecting data, and ensuring compliance with regulations. It empowers all of us to be vigilant and take an active role in safeguarding organizational digital assets, making it a vital component of the Information Security program.

**Judicial Information systems cannot achieve this security culture without your help. JIS cannot stress enough the importance of completing security awareness training when it's released.**



### October is Cyber Security Awareness Month.

During the month of October, the JIS Information Security department sent several memo emails with helpful tips for staying secure and protecting the Judiciary against threats.

### Here are some things we can do to prepare ourselves for cyber-attacks:

- **Trust your instincts:** If something feels off, it probably is. Always take a moment to consider the legitimacy of any unexpected request, especially if it asks for sensitive information or actions.
- **Be cautious and vigilant:** If you receive a request to share passwords, financial details, or other

sensitive information, especially if the request is out of the ordinary, report it to Information Security immediately.

- **Check email addresses:** If you receive a suspicious email, check the sender's email address. It might resemble a legitimate address but may have slight variations.
- **Examine URLs carefully:** Hover over hyperlinks without clicking on them to see the actual URL. Compare it to the legitimate website's URL. Look out for misspellings, extra characters, or other irregularities.
- **Check for unsolicited contacts:** Be wary of unsolicited phone calls, emails, or messages. Legitimate companies usually do not make unsolicited requests for personal or financial information.
- **Analyze the urgency of a message:** Social engineering often creates a sense of urgency to push their victims into making hasty decisions. Statements like "Your account will be disabled unless you respond immediately" should raise suspicions.
- **Check for generic salutations:** Phishing emails, a common form of social engineering, might start with generic greetings like "Dear Customer" rather than using your actual name.
- **Look for poor grammar and spelling:** Many phishing emails have spelling and grammar errors. Pay attention to awkward phrases and mistakes, especially in emails that claim to be from reputable organizations.

### Here are some easy steps to follow while teleworking:

- **Clean desk rule:** Keep your workspace clear of sensitive information, such as documents, post-its, files, etc. Keep work-related material in a locked drawer or cabinet.
- **Lock your computer:** Always lock your computer anytime you walk away from it.
- **Do not provide family or friends access to your computer.**
- **Create a strong Wi-Fi password** and update it every six months.
- **Home router maintenance:** Change/update your default router credentials.
- **The "clean desk rule" and "locking your computer"** also apply while working in the office.

**What is the Report Suspicious Email Button?**



**The Report Suspicious Email Button**

is an Outlook security feature that allows you to easily forward potentially malicious emails to the Information Security team for review. By using this feature, suspicious emails that contain malicious content will be automatically removed and deleted from your inbox.



Additionally, the Report Suspicious Email button limits a malicious email from being sent to other users in the Judiciary or potentially affecting our network. If you suspect an email does not seem right or asks you to do something, such as click on a link, open an attachment, or provide sensitive information, report it. Even if there is a hint of doubt, report it; it is better to error on the side of caution.

JIS conducts simulated phishing exercises to increase our situational awareness of current threat vectors targeting the Judiciary. This allows the Judiciary to teach best practices and how to identify red flags.

For additional computer safety tips, visit the [Information Security](#) page on CourtNet

**UPCOMING ADVANCED PAYROLLS FOR SENIOR JUDGES**

**11/08/23 – 11/21/23** Timesheets will be due for approval by noon on Friday, November 17<sup>th</sup>.

**\*12/06/23 – 12/19/23** Timesheets will be due for approval by noon on Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup>.

**01/31/24 – 02/13/24** Timesheets will be due for approval by noon on Monday, February 12<sup>th</sup>.

**05/08/24 – 05/21/24** Timesheets will be due for approval by noon on Monday, May 20<sup>th</sup>.

\*Senior Judges - This will be the last pay period paid in 2023. The 2024 Earnings Limitation will begin on December 20, 2023.

**THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL’S SENIOR JUDGES COMMITTEE**

- Hon. James A. Kenney III, Chair, Senior Judge
- Hon. Deborah Sweet Eyler, Vice Chair, Senior Judge
- Hon. Jean Baron, Senior Judge
- Hon. Lynne A. Battaglia, Senior Judge
- Hon. Paul M. Bowman, Senior Judge
- Hon. Lawrence R. Daniels, Senior Judge
- Hon. Steven I. Platt, Senior Judge
- Amanda Purnell, Court Administrator, Circuit Court for Talbot County
- Hon. Irma S. Raker, Senior Judge
- Sharon Reed, District Court Headquarters
- Hon. Marcus Z. Shar, Senior Judge
- Hon. Nancy B. Shuger, Senior Judge
- Hon. Norman R. Stone III, Senior Judge
- Hon. Dennis M. Sweeney, Senior Judge
- Eliana Pangelinan, Staff

**RETIREMENT SERVICES CONTACT LIST**

**Maryland State Retirement and Pension System** – 1-800-492-5909

Shane Brown  
[sbrown@sra.state.md.us](mailto:sbrown@sra.state.md.us)  
 410-625-5664

**Social Security Administration (SSA)**  
[www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)  
 1-800-772-1213

**Centers for Medicare and Medicaid**  
[www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)  
 1-800-633-4227

**Maryland Supplement Retirement Plan (MSRP)** – 1-800-545-4730

Angela Anderson  
[angela.anderson@maryland.gov](mailto:angela.anderson@maryland.gov)  
 443-305-9055

**Department of Budget & Management, Employee Benefits Division**  
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