

JUDICIARY TIMES

A Publication of the  New Jersey Courts

Summer 2009

Law Day 2009

Celebrating Lincoln's Legacy of Liberty

Editor's Note: Instituted by the American Bar Association (ABA) 50 years ago, Law Day (May 1) is observed each year throughout New Jersey by the Judiciary in partnership with county bar associations.

A special day set aside to focus on the American heritage of liberty under law, Law Day was officially designated by a joint resolution of Congress in 1961.

The event has grown over the years, with many counties hosting activities throughout the month of May. This year's theme was "A Legacy of Liberty: Celebrating Lincoln's Bicentennial."

The following are but a few of the many high points of this year's observances:

Atlantic/Cape May

Jointly sponsored by Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage and the Atlantic and Cape May Bar Associations, this year's Law Day program was one of the best.

Three courthouses in Atlantic City, Mays Landing and Cape May Courthouse hosted a Law Day Meet and Greet Fair.

The event began with award ceremonies and receptions honoring the mock trial team competitors for 2009. Students from Lower Township Regional High School were the Cape May County winners, while students from Mainland Regional High School in Linwood received awards for winning the Atlantic County and state competitions.

The Meet and Greet Law Day Fair included partners from the community that set up displays with the court and the bar association. The displays included brochures, handouts, games for the children, face painting, dogs from the sheriff's departments, a safe driving display, Lincoln-related art work



Burlington Vicinage Assignment Judge Ronald E. Bookbinder shares a proud moment with Abraham Lincoln (portrayed by Christian Johnson) and Kenneth Roth, past president of the Burlington County Bar, as they honor the winners of the Law Day Art Contest. Burlington's Law Day activities are detailed on Page 3

and historical documents.

There were opportunities for visitors to speak with attorneys, court personnel, sheriff's officers, surrogates, county adjusters, Puerto Rican Action committee members, staff from the prosecutor's and public defender's offices, Legal Services and CASA representatives.

Presentations by Assignment Judge Valerie H. Armstrong and Trial Court Administrator Howard H. Berchtold Jr. kicked off the Law Day Fair.

Pleasantville High School students received a special welcome.

"You are always welcome to visit us at any time" Armstrong said.

"We love when students visit with us, and we know that you will get a great deal of valuable information to take back to school with you," Berchtold said.

The students visited the fair and spent time with Superior Court Judge Max A. Baker; law clerk Mona Prakash; jury supervisor Richard Hunter; operations supervisor Carolyn Henderson and Jill Solimani, a team leader in the civil division.

The students had many questions and were particularly interested in information about careers in the Judiciary.

Bergen

The Bergen Vicinage Minority Concerns committee hosted more than 100 students from Bergen County schools for

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Courthouses Around New Jersey Mark Law Day and Lincoln

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Law Day activities.

Nikki Mehran, a student at Ridgewood High School, was selected the first-place winner of the 2009 Bergen Vicinage Minority Concerns Law Day Essay Contest. The theme of the essay contest was "The Legacy of Lincoln."

Ashka Sevak, a student from East Brook Middle School in Paramus, was selected the first-place winner of the 2009 Bergen Vicinage Minority Concerns Law Day Poster Contest. The theme of the poster contest also was "The Legacy of Lincoln."

The program began in the courtroom of Assignment Judge Peter E. Doyne. Minority Concerns Committee Chairperson Betty Williams and Vice Chair Margaret Mc Laughlin welcomed the students.

The students then watched a videotaped message of Chief Justice Stuart Rabner about Law Day and



Superior Court Judge Donald R. Venezia sings "The Star-Spangled Banner" at the start of Law Day festivities in Bergen Vicinage.

Lincoln's legacy.

Vicinage volunteer coordinator Nola Steele discussed the various divisions that comprise the vicinage and showed a video about the vicinage.

Superior Court Judge Joseph S. Conte discussed the role of the Judiciary, and a question and answer session followed.

The Bergen County Sheriff's Department gave a presentation on the role of the department's K-9 unit and on alcohol awareness. Students were given a walking tour of the historical courthouse and of the old jail by members of the Vicinage Minority Concerns Committee and the Vicinage EEO/AA Advisory Committee.

The sheriff's department honor

guard began the formal Law Day program with the presentation of colors. Superior Court Judge Donald R. Venezia sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" and Bergen County Sheriff Leo McGuire led the Pledge of Allegiance. Conte moderated the program.

The keynote speaker was New Jersey Bar Association President Peggy Sheahan Knee. She was followed by Bergen County Executive Dennis Mc Nerney and Bergen County Bar President Anthony M. Carlino.

The Ridgefield Park High School Chorus performed several numbers throughout the program. Essay contest winner Nikki Mehran read her essay and received an award from Williams

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Judiciary Times is published by the Office of Communications and Community Relations, the Administrative Office of the Courts, for employees of the Judiciary, volunteers who work with the court system and the public.

The chief justice is Stuart Rabner. The acting administrative director of the courts is Judge Glenn A. Grant.

Please send short news articles, photos and suggestions to Mike Mathis, Editor, *Judiciary Times*, Office of Communications and Community Relations, PO Box 037, Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, Trenton NJ 08625-0037 or via e-mail at Mike.Mathis@judiciary.state.nj.us. Submissions are subject to editing, and not all can be published.

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Visitors to the Cape May County Courthouse participated in a Law Day fair that included displays, demonstrations and games for children. Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage held similar fairs in Atlantic City and Mays Landing.

New Judiciary Judiciary Celebrates Law Day 2009 and Lincoln

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and McLaughlin.

Various awards were presented by the Minority Concerns Committee, the Bergen County Clerk and the Bergen County Bar Association. Superior Court Judge Ellen L. Koblitz then presided over the swearing-in of new citizens.

Burlington

"He looks real."

"Wow, he's so tall."

"Do you think his beard is real?"

These were some of the remarks made by the art contest winners about meeting Abraham Lincoln, portrayed by Christian Johnson of the American Historical Theatre in Philadelphia at Burlington Vicinage's kick-off to Law Day.

Lincoln was brought to life before the students, invited guests, court staff and public when he visited the Olde Courthouse on May 5.

This year's theme, "A Legacy of

Liberty: Celebrating Lincoln's Bicentennial," was the focus of the art contest sponsored by the Burlington Bar Association and the vicinage. Assignment Judge Ronald E. Bookbinder opened the ceremony by reading the Law Day proclamation. He was followed by Lincoln, who entertained the audience with stories and anecdotes of life as an attorney and as the 16th president of the United States.

The ceremony continued with a dramatic re-enactment of Lincoln's famous "Almanac" murder trial, in which Lincoln won an acquittal for his client in a murder case after he discredited a witness by producing an almanac showing that the full moon did not rise until several hours after the murder.

Attorney Tim Farrow portrayed Lincoln, and law clerks played the parts of defendant, witness, and the weeping mother. Trial Court Administrator Jude Del Preore took on the role of Judge James Harriott. Public Defender

Kevin Walker set the scene.

Following the trial, Burlington County Historian Joseph Laufer retold stories about the practice of law in Burlington County when Lincoln was a practicing attorney.

Burlington Vicinage also sponsored a variety of Law Day events for the county's elementary, middle and high school students and the community.

This year's Juror For a Day program was the most successful to date, with participants from seven middle schools.

Law clerks wrote an original mock trial, *State v. Danny Riley*. Riley was accused of assault with a paintball gun against his flower-loving neighbor, Mrs. Vanderslice. The participating seventh- and eighth-grade students took on the roles.

Assisting the students were Walker and First Assistant Burlington County Prosecutor Raymond Milavsky, who reversed roles. Retired Superior Court Judge John A. Fratto, who is serving on recall, presided.

The vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns hosted an elder law informational seminar at the Willingboro Senior Center. The seminar attracted more than 100 seniors who heard from experts in the areas of probate, consumer fraud awareness, veteran services, safety and legal rights and services.

As Lincoln said, "Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other." Burlington Vicinage's Law Day programs grow in success each year in true partnership between the court, the bar and the education community.

Deborah Ustas, Served in Family and Criminal Divisions in Bergen Vicinage

By Ann Fabens-Lassen

Intern, Office of Communications and Community Relations
Administrative Office of the Courts

Judge Deborah L. Ustas, a woman known for her benevolence, died of cancer on July 10. She was 50.

Ustas, who lived in Clifton, served as a judge in Bergen Vicinage since 2005 and sat in the family and criminal divisions.

Before that, Judge Ustas was a founding partner of Weinberg & Ustas, a law firm specializing in matrimonial and family matters.

Judge Ustas also had served as public defender, prosecutor and judge in the Paramus Municipal Court.

Judge Ustas also served on the Supreme Court's District IIA (North Bergen) Ethics Committee and was an executive committee member/master of



Judge Deborah L. Ustas

the Northern New Jersey Family Inn of Court.

She was a trustee for First Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey and supported Shelter of Our Sisters, a non-profit agency that assists women and children who are victims of domestic violence, and Eva's Village, a non-profit organization that helps homeless and

Camden

Camden Vicinage welcomed close to 50 students from Brimm Medical Arts, Haddon Township and Woodrow Wilson high schools on May 5.

Superior Court Judge Michele M. Fox shared information about the background and purpose of Law Day and helped the students understand the many functions

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New Jersey Judiciary Celebrates Lincoln's Legacy on Law Day

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of the Judiciary.

Fox, who is the vicinage's Lincoln expert, also spoke about spending time at Gettysburg and discussed what Lincoln's legacy meant to her.

In keeping with tradition, representatives of the Camden County Bar Association, the Camden County Prosecutor's Office, the Office of the Public Defender and South Jersey Legal Services also addressed the students.

The speakers enlightened the students about the responsibilities of and challenges faced by each of their agencies. They also talked about how each of their paths was linked with Lincoln's legacy.

The students also participated in two interactive activities that helped them discover how much they really knew about Abraham Lincoln and his work as president.

"Of, For and By" gave students the opportunity to consider what Lincoln may have meant when he said in the Gettysburg Address that our nation should have a government "of the people, for the people and by the people."

"Lincoln in Jeopardy" gave the students an opportunity to have a little fun and increase their "Lincoln IQ" at the same time.

The traditional Judicial Jeopardy game included questions about Abraham Lincoln's childhood and pre-presidential career.

First place winners of the Law Day Essay

Editor's Note

The deadline for the fall 2009 edition of the *Judiciary Times* is Friday, Aug. 28

I am interested in feature stories about court programs and newsworthy profiles about judges and court staff.

I'm also interested in current stories and information about court staff and events and submissions of awards, honors, promotions and appointments for *JT* Briefing, the Judiciary's monthly e-newsletter.

JT Briefing can be found at njcourts.com/jt/

I can be contacted at Mike.Mathis@judiciary.state.nj.us or at 609-292-9581..



Superior Court Judge Harold U. Johnson Jr. speaks about Abraham Lincoln and the Underground Railroad to students at Buckshutem Elementary School in Bridgeton. Three judges in Cumberland/Gloucester/Salem Vicinage visited local schools as part of Law Day activities.

and Poster contests received plaques, and second and third place winners received certificates to commemorate their achievements.

During a luncheon, Superior Court Judge Charles W. Dortch Jr., who sits in the family division, gave students insight into the types of the matters he hears in juvenile court. He implored them to continue to make wise decisions as they pursue their educational endeavors.

Cumberland/Gloucester/Salem

Superior Courts in Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties celebrated Law Day 2009 with a program called "Quilt of Change—Stitching Together a Plan for a Better America."

"During these times of challenge and change, it is important to remember that these are also exciting and creative times," Assignment Judge Georgia M. Curio said. "The Quilt of Change provides us an opportunity to recognize that we have faced difficult times but have been able to grow from them."

"We are also able to empower our young people to participate in the efforts to change America for the better," she said.

Superior Court judges visited students at three schools to talk about Abraham Lincoln and the Underground Railroad.

Judge Harold U. Johnson Jr. met

with fourth graders at Buckshutem Elementary School in Bridgeton on April 22, Judge David W. Morgan met with fourth graders at Aura Elementary School in Glassboro on April 23 and Judge Benjamin C. Telsey spoke to students at Salem Middle School in Salem on May 28.

The students heard about court cases and laws that addressed slavery. The students were asked to decide the case after the facts were presented to them.

The students also were shown a demonstration quilt with patterns that may have been used as code to guide slaves on the Underground Railroad.

A guide describing each pattern and its probable message was distributed to the students.

Students were asked to draw on squares made of fabric the changes they would implement to make America better.

The squares were sewn together to make quilts that will be displayed at each of the courthouses throughout the summer.

Essex

In its 13th year of celebrating Law Day, Essex Vicinage continued its tradition of educating the future leaders of our community with the annual mock trial program, awards luncheon and art and essay contests.

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Vicinages Celebrate Law Day with an Array of Activities

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Essex County judges, attorneys and sheriff's officers visited 36 schools to lead students through a mock trial.

This year, the committee wrote a case about a high school student who is charged with aggravated assault after she throws her phone at a student and injures another student. This thought-provoking case allowed students to participate in the mock trial as co-counsel to the visiting attorneys, witnesses and jurors.

In addition to the schools, the vicinage expanded its Law Day educational initiatives by inviting the students at the Essex County Juvenile Detention Center to participate in the mock trial program.

Professor Laura Cohen and her students from Rutgers School of Law-Newark joined Anthony J. Frasca, presiding judge of the Municipal Court, at the detention center and participated in the event. This endeavor was well received by the students at the detention center.

The Law Day Committee also held its art and writing contests. Students were asked to create artwork, posters and essays based on this year's theme, "A Legacy of Liberty: Celebrating Lincoln's

Bicentennial."

The winning entries were showcased in the first Law Day calendar, which begins in May 2009 and ends in May 2010. The calendar also contains facts about Lincoln, the Gettysburg Address, the Emancipation Proclamation and other important moments in history.

The front cover of the calendar features Newark's Statue of Seated Lincoln, which is located in front of the Essex County Historic Courthouse. The statue was sculpted by Gutzon Borglum in 1911.

The festivities concluded with an awards luncheon. Kenneth S. Levy, presiding judge of the chancery division, recognized the art and writing contest winners. The judges, attorneys, students, teachers and court staff in attendance also received copies of the Law Day calendars.

The Essex Law Day activities were co-sponsored by the New Jersey State Bar Foundation and were made possible through funding from the IOLTA Fund of the Bar of New Jersey. The committee is already planning its Law Day 2010 program.

Hudson

This year's Law Day activities kicked off with a mock trial competition involving eight high schools in the Hudson County Court House.

Students needed to become familiar with the facts and legal procedures of a fictitious case involving downloading music and copyright infringement. The competition was hard fought between all of the high schools. Bayonne High School emerged the victor.

The Hudson County Bar Association sponsored the event in collaboration with the Law Day Activities Committee. Stephen J. McCurrie, a member of the committee and coordinator of the mock trial event in Hudson County, facilitated efforts with the competing schools, volunteer attorneys and the courts.

Numerous teachers, local attorneys, and law clerks worked with the students to prepare them for the competition.

Two-judge panels composed of members from both the Judiciary and bar fulfilled the vital role of evaluating the case presentations.

Students from around Hudson County submitted artwork, photography, essays and poetry related to this year's Law Day theme.

The Law Day Activities Committee made an intensive effort to gain support from the schools within our county for these contests.

School principals, teachers and administrators were invited to a roundtable discussion to gain support. The superintendents and teachers offered great help and feedback to our committee, and suggested that the contest be expanded to include middle school students.

Awards were bestowed at a ceremony on May 1.

The keynote speaker was Eugene O'Connell, past president of the Lincoln Society and an executive board member. Jules Ladenheim received a standing ovation after his recitation of the Gettysburg Address.

The Judiciary Voices in Unity sang two songs reflective of the time period of Abraham Lincoln. Closing the



Students packed the rotunda of the Hudson County Courthouse during the Law Day awards ceremony. Hudson Vicinage hosted a wide range of activities for Law Day, including a mock trial and a recitation of the Gettysburg Address. Students from throughout Hudson County submitted Lincoln-related artwork, photography, essays and poetry.

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Programs, Speeches and Contests Highlight Law Day 2009

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ceremony was Gerard Breland, who sang "America the Beautiful."

The premier event was the Court Night Program, which was held April 29 in the Justice William J. Brennan Courthouse.

The program, which was attended by 212 Hudson County residents, consisted of six legal workshops: landlord/tenant issues, divorce, child support, expungement of a criminal record, immigration and juvenile offender prevention.

The program was sponsored by the Law Day Activities Committee, the Hudson County Advisory on Minority Concerns and the Hudson County Bar Association.

A juror education/appreciation program was held May 5.

A total of 350 jurors and prospective jurors participated in the program, which included presentations, speakers, a panel discussion, educational games and giveaways.

Mercer

Mercer proudly continued its tradition of offering a variety of programs appealing to all audiences in collaboration with the Mercer County Bar Association and the Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns.

The public and courthouse staff enjoyed commemorative displays located in the civil courthouse during the first week of May. The displays showcased information about the history of Law Day and proclamations.

Artwork depicting Abraham Lincoln was presented by Mercer County elementary school students. First, second and third place winners received U.S. Savings Bonds from the Mercer County Bar Association.

A total of 90 high school seniors and juniors from Trenton Central, Trenton Catholic, Marshall Academy, and Steinert high schools the Law Day High School Summit on May 1.

Marshall Academy won the 2009 Mercer County Mock Trial

Competition.

"The law protects our freedom, guides our conduct, permits us to express our opinions and ideas, vote for our political leaders, worship where we choose, and pursue our livelihood," Superior Court Judge Thomas W. Summers Jr. said. He encouraged students to "dedicate ourselves, this Law Day, and to help the whole community understand its role in enabling us to be free."

Participants saw a videotaped message from Chief Justice Stuart Rabner, which was followed by a dynamic presentation by Nick C. Travisano titled, "Hey, I'm 18."

The presentation covered useful information on the rights and responsibilities of adults.

Students enjoyed an interactive educational contest, "Who Wants to Be a Lincolnaire," which was presented by assistant Mercer County Prosecutor Jennifer Downing, who is co-chair of the Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns.

Michael P. Riccards, executive director of the Hall Institute of Public Policy, documented life story.

A Law Day expo was held at Quakerbridge Mall on May 13. Free 15-minute consultations with members of the bar through the Lawyers C.A.R.E. program were offered.

The Mercer County Clerk's Office operated a passport station, and court

staff provided information about court services, programs, forms and self-represented litigant packets, volunteer and employment opportunities.

Middlesex

Middlesex Vicinage, along with the members of the Vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns, held its annual Law Day celebration on May 11.

Keeping with this year's Law Day theme, "A Legacy of Liberty: Celebrating Lincoln's Bicentennial," more than 200 students from Middlesex County school districts participated in the event, which was highlighted by a presentation from the American Historical Theatre called "The Wit and Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln."

Actor Christian Johnson gave the students insight into our country's great emancipator. Johnson's portrayal of Lincoln brought the Civil War era to life for the students, particularly how Lincoln struggled with a divided nation.

Through it all, Lincoln kept his wit and humor.

Judge Mathias E. Rodriguez delivered the keynote speech. Judge Rodriguez spoke to the students about their responsibilities as citizens and the opportunity they will have to be a

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Winners of Mercer Vicinage's "Who Wants to Be a Lincolnaire" game display their awards. Youth education was a key component of Law Day activities throughout New Jersey.

New Jersey Courthouses Recall Lincoln's Legacy and the Law

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judge.

Rodriguez emphasized that democracy requires understanding of the nature and basis of our freedoms and recognition of the individual responsibilities those freedoms impose.

He spoke of the importance of the Sixth and Seventh amendments to the Constitution which pertain to the right to a trial by an impartial jury and their responsibilities.

Students from the county selected as winners in the Creative Expression contest on the theme "Legacy of Lincoln," presented their work and received awards during the ceremony.

The ceremony began with a videotaped welcome address by Chief Justice Stuart Rabner.

The 2009 Law Day Proclamation was presented by the event emcee, Trial Court Administrator Gregory Edwards.

Administrative Specialist James Podeszwa and Middlesex County Bar President Mary P. Nelson also spoke. The Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission and the Middlesex County Bar Association supported the event.

Monmouth

Monmouth Vicinage joined the Monmouth Bar Association to conduct a formal ceremony focused on this year's Law Day theme.

Speakers included Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson and Monmouth Bar Association President Kerry I. Higgins. State Sen. Jennifer Beck delivered the keynote address.

The Daniel J. O'Hern Mock Trial Award, named for the late Supreme Court associate justice, was given to the Monmouth County Academy of Allied Health and Science in Neptune, and the Abraham J. Zager Professionalism Award was given to Daniel J. O'Hern Jr. on behalf of his father.

Lawson and Beck presented awards to the student winners of the Law Day 2009 Poster and Essay Contest, which was sponsored by the Monmouth Vicinage Advisory Committee on



Monmouth Vicinage Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson poses with the winners of the 2009 Law Day Poster and Essay Contest.

Minority Concerns.

The Monmouth Vicinage Office of the Ombudsman hosted two community outreach seminars.

The first, which was held in conjunction with Ocean-Monmouth Legal Services, addressed foreclosure. Court staff discussed the Judiciary's Foreclosure Mediation Program, and certified housing counselors spoke about foreclosure prevention and counseling eligibility.

A Spanish interpreter from the Latino Leadership Alliance provided interpreting services.

A question-and-answer period provided homeowners with additional information and resources on the foreclosure process.

Those who attended the second outreach event learned about landlord/tenant issues such as how to file a complaint, eviction, illegal lockouts and the court process.

Staff from Monmouth and Hudson vicinages, the Monmouth County Fair Housing Board, Ocean-Monmouth Legal Services and the Community Health Law Project answered questions.

"As these programs are extremely beneficial to our citizens, I am coordinating future seminars that will further assist and educate our community," ombudsman Theresa Romano said.

Morris/Sussex

In Morris County, the Morris/Sussex Vicinage celebrated Law Day 2009 with its annual ceremony at the Morris County Courthouse during the lunch hour on May 1.

In keeping with tradition, the Morristown High School Vocal and String Ensemble delighted the audience with various musical selections, including the national anthem.

Assignment Judge B. Theodore Bozonelis welcomed the audience, which included court staff, members of the local bar, county officials, and members of the community.

Because of inclement weather, the ceremony was moved to the assignment judge's courtroom.

Supreme Court Associate Justice Jaynee LaVecchia delivered the keynote speech on this year's Law Day theme. Morristown High School senior Nathaniel Rossoff also engaged the audience with a tribute to Lincoln's legacy.

Roy J. Evans, president of the Morris County Bar Association and Brian J. Fruehling, president of the Morris County Bar Foundation, honored this year's mock trial winners from West Morris Mendham High School in Mendham.

The annual celebration in Sussex

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Judiciary Marks Law Day 2009 With Celebrations, Seminars

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County occurred April 30 with a ceremony at the Sussex County historic courthouse. Musical selections from Lincoln's era were performed by the Law Day Brass Quintet.

Mark J. Hontz, Sussex County Bar Association Law Day chair, delivered the keynote address. Jennifer Kovach, Sussex County Bar Association president, honored the mock trial team from High Point Regional High School in Sussex.

Ocean

Ocean Vicinage's Law Day celebration was held in Historic Courtroom 1 in the Ocean County Courthouse in Toms River on May 1.

Assignment Judge Vincent J. Grasso helped get the celebration underway, providing opening remarks and introducing the county's judges before a standing-room-only audience.

Robert F. Costello from The Lincoln Experience was dressed in full Abraham Lincoln regalia when he delivered the keynote speech, which included the Gettysburg Address.

Pamela Gethard's kindergarten class from South Toms River Elementary School brightened the event with patriotic songs.

The program recognized Monsignor Donovan High School in Toms River, winner of this year's Ocean County Mock Trial Competition. The 2009 Ocean County Bar Association scholarship recipients were announced, along with the recipients of the bar's Achievement, Young Lawyer and Citizenship awards.

Passaic

Passaic Vicinage celebrated Law Day with a guest appearance from President Abraham Lincoln and a naturalization ceremony presided over by Supreme Court Associate Justice Helen E. Hoens.

Students from nine Passaic County schools attended Lincoln's performance on May 8 in the jury assembly room



Superior Court Judge Peter A. Buchsbaum moderates a panel on immigration at the Somerset County Vocational and Technical School in Bridgewater. The immigration seminar was the featured event of Law Day activities in Somerset/Hunterdon/Warren Vicinage

of the Passaic County Courthouse in Paterson.

A short time later, Hoens administered the Oath of Allegiance as 39 immigrants from 14 countries raised their hands to become U.S. citizens.

"My ancestors were immigrants too," Hoens told the new citizens. "As you sit here on the brink of citizenship, I know how proud Lincoln would be if he were alive today."

Assignment Judge Donald J. Volkert Jr.; Superior Court Judge Miguel de la Carrera, chair of the vicinage Minority Concerns Committee; U.S. Rep. William Pascrell; Assemblywoman Elease Evans; Passaic County Freeholder Director Tahesha Way; Passaic County Sheriff Jerry Speziale; and Richard Miller, president of the Passaic County Bar Association, also spoke.

Prior to the naturalization ceremony, the new citizens had the opportunity to learn about the election process, passport guidelines and jury selection.

After the ceremony, students returned to the courthouse to participate in mock Supreme Court arguments.

In April, Judiciary law clerks visited the participating schools to prepare students for a hearing on freedom of the press during wartime.

Following the mock Supreme Court

arguments, students were treated to a Law Day pizza luncheon. Student representatives from each school gave a brief summary of their Law Day experience.

Margaret Martin, a student at Apschawa Elementary School in West Milford, was honored as the winner of this year's Law Day photo contest.

Municipal court judges and members of the bar visited local schools to talk about their work and this year's Law Day theme.

Law Day is jointly sponsored by the Passaic Vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns and the Passaic County Bar Association.

Somerset/Hunterdon/Warren

The primary Law Day event in Somerset/Hunterdon/Warren Vicinage was an immigration seminar, which was held at the Somerset County Vocational and Technical School in Bridgewater on May 7.

The program explored the challenges undocumented people face when they navigate the judicial system and addressed challenges non-profit agencies that assist immigrants face.

Among the topics discussed were adoptions; effects of plea bargains on noncitizens' immigration status; rights

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Law Day is Celebrated in Courthouses Throughout the State

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of battered spouses; divorce; rights of undocumented and documented juveniles; employment discrimination and employer obligations under existing immigration laws.

The speakers were Robert Frank, past chairman of the New Jersey chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), Jerard A. Gonzalez, chairman of the New Jersey chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) and Michael Ligorano, a vicinage immigration attorney and a member of the Vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns (VACMC).

In continuing to assist the Judiciary in implementing the 53 approved recommendations outlined in the Supreme Court Committee on Minority Concerns task force report, the committee agreed to sponsor a community education program on immigration.

After conducting research with Ligorano's assistance, the committee became familiar with some immigration trends that could hinder public access to the courts.

The vicinage also sponsored an art contest for schools in all three counties. Three members of the Vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns and a guest judge who is an art teacher at a high school in another vicinage selected three winners.

Union

Union Vicinage, along with the Union County Bar Association, Union Vicinage Minority Concerns Committee, Bar Foundation of Union County, Asian Pacific American Lawyers Association, Garden State Bar Association and Hispanic Bar Association, held its Law Day celebration May 20.

Union County middle schools competed in essay, poster, and spoken word/rap/poetry contests on this year's Law Day theme.

The winning schools were Carl H. Kumpf Middle School in Clark and the



Superior Court Judge Frederic R. McDaniel poses with T. Christopher Elliot of New Jersey Orators, who delivered the keynote speech at Union Vicinage's Law Day celebration. Elliot's speech was called "A Letter from My Grandmother."

Charles J. Hudson School 25, Ronald Reagan Academy and St. Genevieve School, all in Elizabeth.

Monica Perez, a member of the Union County Bar Association, presented the Mock Trial Award to Oratory Preparatory High School in Summit, winners of the Union County Mock Trial Competition.

Superior Court Judge Frederic R. McDaniel, co-chair of the Minority Concerns Advisory Committee for Union Vicinage and chair of the Law Day program, presided over the celebration along with Assignment Judge Karen M. Cassidy.

The Charles Hudson School Band opened the event with a number of musical selections including "The Star-Spangled Banner." Superior Court Judge Lisa F. Chrystal led the assembled crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The keynote speaker was T. Christopher Elliot of New Jersey Orators, who delivered a speech called, "A Letter from my Grandmother."

As part of the Law Day outreach, an Information Fair was conducted.

Representatives from civil, criminal, family and special civil part and representatives from volunteer services, human resources, Court Appointed

Special Advocates (CASA), child support and probation were available to answer questions. The county clerk, surrogate and representatives from the Board of Elections provided information to guests and court users.

Deborah Ustas, Sat In Family Division in Bergen

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drug-addicted persons.

She received a bachelor's degree from Montclair State College, a master's degree from Pace University and a law degree from Seton Hall University School of Law.

Judge Ustas is survived by her parents, four sisters, a brother, two nephews and a niece.

Funeral services were held July 14 at the Bizub-Quinlan Funeral Home in Clifton. Donations can be made to Eva's Village, 389 Main St., Paterson.

Did You Know?

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For more information, go to njcourts.com.

Superior Court Clerk's Office Reorganizes, Marks Accomplishments

By **Jennifer M. Perez**

Clerk of the Superior Court

You may not have noticed, but the Superior Court Clerk's Office has undergone a significant transformation over the past year.

While continuing to handle a high volume of work, we have reorganized our office to enable us to more efficiently meet the needs of our customers within the Judiciary and the public.

The office has been organized into three functional sections.

The Customer Service Section, managed by Kate McCann, handles copy requests, public access reports and general public and Judiciary staff inquiries.

This group is developing a standard operating procedures manual that will provide information on our processes to our staff and the vicinages.

This section is also partnering with the Judiciary's Office of Communications and Community Relations to develop content for a Superior Court Clerk's Office Web page.

The Customer Service Section recently implemented a new call center, which is the main contact point for general inquiries from internal users as well as the public.

The call center can be reached at **(609) 421-6100**.

The Records Management Services Section, headed by Dave Lucas, is responsible for the Judiciary's archived records. The records group has been reaching out to the vicinages to provide records retention and archiving assistance and will be developing a training program and Web site content focused on the local management of records.

This group also manages a project aimed at converting archived paper records into images and microfilm, and they are exploring ways to make document images of archived records more accessible to vicinage staff.

The third section, the Court Processing Services Section, handles case management of Foreclosure matters and the statewide Civil Judgment and Order Docket.

The teams in this area have been working diligently to streamline processes

and increase efficiency.

This has been a significant challenge given the large growth in foreclosure filings as a result of the nation's economic crisis, growing from about 25,000 filings in New Jersey in 2006 to more than 51,000 in 2008.

Our records indicate that the clerk's office served approximately 12,000 visitors in 2008; filled approximately 150,000 pages of copy requests; filed more than 150,000 papers and 163,000 files; entered more than 93,000 documents relating to judgments and entered more than 260,000 documents related to foreclosures.

All of this work was accomplished without increasing our staffing.

To recognize our many accomplishments over the last year, our staff held a "Delicious Food Day" on April 17.

Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts and Steven D. Bonville, special assistant to the director, attended.

Highlights of the luncheon included inspirational remarks by Grant and a presentation of the AOC's Employee Recognition Award to Superior Court Clerk's Office staff member Madhu Patel.

Patel, a 14--year veteran of the office assigned to the Foreclosure Processing

Services Team, was recognized for her exceptionally strong data entry skills, efficiency, and low error rate.

Of the more than 260,000 documents filed by the Foreclosure Processing Services Team in 2008,

Patel entered more than 50,000 documents, or 20 percent of all documents entered.

Grant described Patel as "the Michael Jordan of data entry." We all took pride in a member of our team achieving such an honor.

"Delicious Food Day" bolstered our determination to forge ahead to meet our responsibility to the public this year and in future years.

Did You Know?

Essex Vicinage has four courthouses: the Historic Courthouse, the Veterans Courthouse, the Hall of Records and the Wilentz Justice Complex.

The Olde Burlington County Courthouse was built in 1796 and is one of the oldest courthouses in continuous operation in the country.

Look for stories about New Jersey's courthouses in future issues of *Judiciary Times*.



Superior Court Clerk Jennifer M. Perez and Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts, congratulate Madhu Patel for winning the AOC's Employee Recognition Award. Patel was recognized for her strong data entry skills, efficiency and low error rate.

Monmouth Honors 'Pioneers of Justice' for Contributions

By Janet Slocum

Administrative Specialist 4
Monmouth Vicinage

There is great pride in identifying "firsts" in our society, whether in the field of business, entertainment, science, health or politics.

As our nation recently focused on "firsts" in government, Monmouth Vicinage applied this concept to its own organization.

The vicinage paid tribute to the distinctive talents and diversity of those who led the way in shaping its culture and accomplishments.

More than 150 guests gathered on April 3 to acknowledge service and contributions by more than 40 people designated as Monmouth Vicinage "Pioneers of Justice."

The honorees included judicial, administrative and other employees

For some, having family members in the audience made the proud moment even more special.

Honorees received elegantly designed and framed proclamations that conveyed a meaningful phrase: "We celebrate those who have forged ahead to overcome challenges and achieve ground-breaking status within the vicinage."

Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson was recognized for instilling a legacy of diversity, leadership and excellence during his tenure in the vicinage.

"At the Monmouth Vicinage, where, thanks to the multitude of backgrounds that are represented, we have the potential to strengthen the ties between the vicinage and the citizens that we serve...we should make the most of being the "first," using our differences to foster inclusiveness, respect, and a sense of belonging for all," Lawson told the audience.

Trial Court Administrator Marsi L. Perkins was commended for blazing a path for employee development and organizational growth through innovation.

In her remarks, Perkins praised the honorees for demonstrating courage,



More than 40 people designated as Monmouth Vicinage 'Pioneers of Justice' were recently honored for helping shape the culture and achievements of the vicinage. Judge Glenn A. Grant, administrative director of the courts, said the event was an opportunity to "...reflect on the positive organizational and individual accomplishments that have occurred in our system."

confidence and perseverance in bringing their diverse talents to the organization.

She reminded everyone of their potential to be a pioneer, encouraging them to build unity and create milestones in developing better methods of serving our citizens.

As a symbol of the vicinage's esteem, Lawson presented Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts, with a plaque bearing the Judiciary's mission statement.

Grant praised the event as an opportunity to "...reflect on the positive organizational and individual accomplishments that have occurred in our system."

Yolande P. Marlow, manager of the Minority Concerns Unit at the AOC, and Middlesex Vicinage Trial Court Administrator Gregory Edwards also attended.

Superior Court Judges Honora O'Brien Kilgallen and Thomas F. Scully hosted the program, delighting guests with their wit and wisdom.

Lawson acknowledged Kilgallen's work as chair of the Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns and Scully's efforts as chair of the EEO/AA Advisory Committee.

He also expressed appreciation to the Monmouth Bar Association and the Probation Association of New Jersey for their support of the event.

Ocean Vicinage Revives Display Case to Help Foster Understanding

By Brian Giustozzi

Court Services Supervisor 2
Ocean Vicinage

After a brief hiatus, the glass display case in the Ocean County Justice Complex in Toms River has been relocated and is back in service.

The case was located on the first floor of the Justice Complex outside of Courtroom 12 until one of the glass panels was damaged.

The display case has been repaired and has been moved to the hallway that leads to the trial court administrator's office.

Among the items that have been displayed are tapestries, literature and vases from Bolivia.

Anyone interested in displaying items in the case can contact Sonal Pushko, vicinage EEO/AA officer, at 732-288-7231.

Did You Know?

The most frequent search time for the New Jersey Judiciary's Web site, njcourts.com, is from 10 to 11 a.m.

The most popular content searches on njcourts.com are "forms" and "divorces."

More than 17,000 documents are available on njcourts.com.

Morris/Sussex Marks Anniversary of Family Drug Court Program

By Yolander Hill

Family Drug Court Coordinator
Morris/Sussex Vicinage

This spring marked the fifth anniversary of New Jersey's first family Drug Court program.

Morris/Sussex Vicinage had the first family Drug Court program in New Jersey, thanks to the support of Assignment Judge B. Theodore Bozonelis, Trial Court Administrator Michael Arnold and the Administrative Office of the Courts. Essex Vicinage also has a program, and Camden is in the process of developing one.

The Drug Court concept was developed and introduced in Florida in 1989 to provide intensive supervision and support to substance abusing defendants instead of sentencing them to jail terms that would not address their substance abusing behavior.

The family Drug Court, created in 1998, was developed because of the large number of parents whose substance abuse contributed to the abuse and neglect of their children, resulting high percentage of children involved in the child welfare system.

The family Drug Court provides necessary support and services to parents

in an effort to stabilize the parent and maintain the family.

Morris/Sussex Vicinage began providing intensive supervision in child welfare cases in 2005 through the family Drug Court program.

The program allows parents the opportunity to work closely with the state Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) and others to begin the process of providing a safe and secure environment for themselves and their families by assisting parents with recognizing their illnesses, securing treatment and other services, bonding with family and friends and regaining custody of their children.

Family Drug Court participants are required to complete four phases, each focused on gradually strengthening the parent and fortifying one's independence.

Phase one of focuses on securing substance abuse and mental health services for the parent. Phase two begins the process of making the parent independent by searching for employment or continuing their education.

Phase three focuses on reunifying the family. The last phase completes the process of reunification and memorializes the parent's independence with the

use of communal supports.

Each week, our family Drug Court team, including family court judges, treatment professionals and representatives from state agencies such as DYFS and the state Attorney General's Office, meet to discuss how best to serve participants.

Judges speak on the record with parents about their sobriety. During these conversations, parents receive incentives for compliance with program rules and regulations, or sanctions for failure to comply.

Family Drug Court in Morris County meets Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Morris County Courthouse in Morristown. Superior Court Judge Stephan C. Hansbury presides.

Superior Court Judge William J. McGovern presides over the family Drug Court in Sussex County, which meets Tuesdays from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in the Sussex County Courthouse in Newton.

For more information or to attend a session, call (973) 656-4301.

Ocean Vicinage Holds Discussions on Cultures

By Brian Giustozzi

Court Services Supervisor 2
Ocean Vicinage

Ocean Vicinage recently held two cultural events that educated and entertained employees.

A seminar on Asian culture was held May 15. Win Win Kyi is a member of the speakers bureau of the New Jersey Council for Humanities and a professor at Bergen County Community College and Yale University, spoke about Myanmar and the Asian New Year.

The Asian New Year is not marked by the Julian calendar, but by the lunar calendar. It is a four-day affair that is not only a time to celebrate but also a time of profound reflection of self and of giving help to others.

Beverly Friend hosted a presentation about the Lenape on May 7. Friend

Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work in Morris/Sussex

By Sandra P. Caicedo-Gomez

Training Coordinator
Morris/Sussex Vicinage

Morris/Sussex Vicinage held its annual Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day on April 23 at the Morris County Courthouse in Morristown.

As always, the program focused on providing children with an opportunity to learn more about the court system and about how their parents contribute to the organization each day.

This year's program, which was attended by 36 children and their parents, featured a criminal trial role play by Superior Court Judge Thomas V. Manahan and Mercedes Avalos of Interpreting Services, a jury process presentation by Jury Manager Mary

Kay Ciriaco, and a civil mediation presentation by Lisa Paradiso, a team leader in the civil division.

A presentation by the New Jersey Department of Corrections Gang Awareness and Prevention Program allowed students and parents to hear about the consequences of joining a gang from the perspectives of a corrections officer and a former gang member.

The feedback from both children and parents was positive, especially regarding the gang awareness presentation, which included a lively question and answer segment.

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Passaic Hosts Cultural Diversity Day for Staff and Judges

By Sharon Kinney
EEO/AA Officer
Passaic Vicinage

More than 200 judges, managers and employees participated in Passaic Vicinage's fifth annual Cultural Diversity Day celebration on April 24.

The theme of this year's program was "The Passaic Vicinage: United in Our Diversity."

Organized by the vicinage EEO/AA Advisory Committee and friends, the event featured entertainment and an expansive international luncheon

with foods from six continents and more than 20 countries, including: Italy; Poland; Russia; the Philippines, Colombia; Cuba; China; Turkey; Egypt; Dominican Republic; Peru and Greece.

Lily Wei, an instructor at the Lily Music Dancing School was dressed in traditional Chinese ensemble when she performed a beautiful rendition of the song "Phoenix Tail Bamboo Under Moonlight" on the Chinese yunnan hulisi, a flute musical wind instrument.

Christine Conforti, a supervisor in the family division, sang an Italian love

song a capella and a Stevie Wonder song.

The room was decorated with travel posters and artifacts from around the world.

For the last few years the program has been held in April, which has been designated Celebrate Diversity Month. It is a time when organizations, communities, and citizens are encouraged to set aside time to participate in activities that build bridges of understanding and acceptance of others,



Superior Court Judge Miguel A. de la Carrera makes the opening remarks during Passaic Vicinage's fifth annual Cultural Diversity Day celebration. The celebration featured entertainment and an international luncheon. Among the items displayed were Peruvian dolls (below).



Ocean Vicinage Holds Discussions on Cultures

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shared many interesting facts and stories combined with a display of animal skins and hand-crafted items.

The Lenape respected all things around them and used their environment to survive. Friend shared how corn was utilized as food. The husk was used for baskets, children's dolls, containers and bandages aids, the cob was used to decorate pots, and the corn silk was used medicinally in tea.

Middlesex Vicinage Welcomes Kids to Work

By Betty Agin
Administrative Specialist 4
Middlesex Vicinage

Superior Court Judge Jamie D. Happs has organized the Middlesex County Vicinage "Bring Your child to Work Day" for six years. The full-day program has proved to be educational and fun.

This year, the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office presented an Internet safety course. The children were warned of the perils of surfing the Internet.

The Middlesex County Special Operations Response Team (S.O.R.T.) also gave a presentation and allowed the children to inspect their work gear and

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Essex Hosts First Information Fair to Showcase Services

By **Shazeeda Samsudeen**
Ombudsman
Essex Vicinage

Essex Vicinage held its first court and community information fair at the East Orange Public Library on June 27. From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Essex County residents received information from Superior Court staff as well as representatives from 23 local organizations.

About 100 members of the public attended the fair, which was held in a spacious room on the second floor of the library. This space allowed representatives to disseminate their organizations' pamphlets and brochures and to answer questions.

Attendees received an array of information about legal assistance, health awareness, treatment programs, domestic violence, welfare, career skills, housing and immigration issues.

Yesenia Rios and Kimberly Cicala, community relations liaisons, Shazeeda Samsudeen, ombudsman and Kelly Smith, family division mediator, provided information from the court's information table.

Members of the public who visited the court's table received information about the landlord/tenant process, small claims, expungements, custody, visitation and child support.

Cicala and Rios, who work in the Information and Community Relations Center, recruited the participating agencies, publicized the event and coordinated the setup at the library. In addition, the Essex Vicinage Customer Service Committee helped to identify the organizations that were invited to participate.

Many of these organizations were selected because they provide services to the same court users who also use the services of the Office of the Ombudsman and the Information and Community Relations Center.

The court and community information fair is one example of Essex Vicinage's ongoing community outreach initiatives.

The fair, seminars, court tours and

speakers bureau program help to educate and inform the community about the court's services. Partnerships between the court and local organizations are instrumental in ensuring that the vicinage meets the needs of the community it serves.

Many of the representatives from the organizations at the fair indicated an interest in participating in future court outreach events.

In addition to Essex Vicinage, the following organizations participated in the fair: New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services; Essex County Division of Community Action; Essex County CASA; Newark Emergency Services for Families and Essex County Division of Welfare.

Also, Community Health Law Project; Partners for Women and Justice; American Friends Service Committee; New Jersey Organ & Tissue Sharing Network and the Office of the Essex County Public Defender.

Also, University Hospital; East Orange Department of Health and Human Services; La Casa de Don Pedro; Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan New Jersey and Dress for Success Newark.

Also, New Jersey Citizen Action; Newark Housing Authority; Hispanic Development Corp.; Integrity House; East Orange General Hospital; Essex County Mental Health Association; the

Office of the Essex County Prosecutor and Essex – Newark Legal Services.

Burlington Ombudsman Is Going on the Road

Burlington Vicinage is improving access to the court through a mobile Ombudsman's Office.

Heshim "Chip" Thomas, the court's ombudsman, will assist court users at off-site locations in Willingboro and Pemberton townships.

Thomas will provide information to the public and self-represented litigants on court forms, services and programs and will distribute brochures and other information about the courts.

When appropriate, he will refer customers to relevant social service agencies or other local agencies for assistance. While the ombudsman cannot provide legal advice, he can help court users find local lawyer referral services.

Community outreach hours are:
Willingboro: Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Willingboro Senior Citizen Center, Kennedy Center, 429 J.F. Kennedy Way.

Pemberton: Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Pemberton Township Municipal Court, 500 Pemberton-Browns Mills Rd. Additional information is available through the Office of the Ombudsman at 609-518-2530.



Kelly Smith, a family division mediator in Essex Vicinage, was one of several court employees who volunteered their time and offered assistance at the vicinage's first court and community information fair.

Monmouth Vicinage Gives Drug Court Clients Hope and Skills

By **Adri Lieb**

Drug Court Coordinator

and **Janet Slocum**

Administrative Specialist 4

Monmouth Vicinage

Throughout the month of May, Monmouth Vicinage joined the nation in observance of National Drug Court Month.

Events were planned to mark the important anniversary reflected in its theme, "Celebrating 20 Years of Drug Court: Restoring Lives, Reuniting Families and Making Communities Safer."

As part of the commemoration, the vicinage Drug Court team conducted activities focused on strengthening clients' resolve and providing useful tools for their life-changing journeys.

During the first week of May, a workshop for phase one and phase two clients offered information on interviewing skills, resume writing and appropriate interview attire.

Criminal Division Manager Mary Ann McGevna, Assistant Criminal Division Manager Sue Callaghan and vicinage Assistant Chief Probation Officer Ralph Esposito shared their knowledge and experience as they role-played during mock interviews. Clients assumed the roles of jobseekers to become better prepared and more confident when searching for employment.

At the Drug Court reporting session held the following week, nine clients proudly advanced from Phase three to Phase four of the program.

The ceremonies were especially meaningful when Monmouth Vicinage Drug Court Judge Thomas F. Scully, presiding criminal judge, involved every member of the team by reading certificates, presenting tokens of recognition and offering words of encouragement.

"The ongoing celebration of National Drug Court Month in Monmouth County is truly a tribute to our vicinage community," Scully said. "Our assignment judge, our criminal division manager and assistant manager, our

assistant chief probation officer, graduates of Drug Court, our team, and our Drug Court participants all made meaningful contributions to our events throughout the month.

"This spirit of cooperation and enthusiasm is reflective of the sincere commitment the people of this vicinage have made to the success of our Drug Court program," he said.

Other activities included a question and answer forum that involved clients from all four phases of the program.

Detailed questions were posed to phase four clients about their individual efforts to maintain compliance with the program's requirements.

Insightful discussions ensued as the entire group spoke about balancing recovery with other aspects of their lives, rebuilding healthy relationships with family and friends, developing faith in their own abilities, and remaining patient throughout the process.

On May 26, Drug Court graduates addressed phase one clients.

One graduate described his initial resistance to following rules and his realization that the program was his only hope for survival.

He admitted that breaking his "street mentality" was the most difficult part of overcoming his addiction.

As he highlighted his experiences in the legal system and his recovery, he reassured every client of their ability to accomplish healing through hard work and determination. He then applauded the courage and tenacity of those who embraced the program and altered their futures.

The Drug Court team received a great deal of positive client feedback on the presentations. Participants were grateful for the information and inspiration they gained, and they expressed pride in being part of the Drug Court movement.

To provide enhanced client benefits, similar interactive exercises will be planned for future reporting sessions. The team also will develop new ways to serve these individuals to help them achieve even greater triumphs.

Middlesex Vicinage

Welcomes Kids to Work

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vehicles.

The Middlesex County Sheriff's Department presented a program on bullying. Officers taught the children how to spot a bully and what to do if they are the victim of a bully.

The sheriff's department also presented a program entitled "Tools of the Trade," which allowed the children to inspect two of their vehicles.

Assistant Probation Chief Julie Nomides presented a program that has been a favorite in the past, a reenactment of the famous Hall – Mills murder case. Evidence that was presented at the actual trial was used during the reenactment.

Rutgers University pre-law students were assigned to each group of children and gave them a tour of the courthouse. The Rutgers students also answered questions about college and their studies.

Lastly, Torch, the fire dog and Xena, the county's bomb sniffing dog, exhibited their skills.

Happas credited the success of the program to the hard work and dedication of the members of the working committee.

"We begin planning next year's event within weeks of the conclusion of the current program" Happas said. "There is no greater joy than watching the smiling faces of the children of our vicinage's employees. You know they had a great time when they ask at the end of the day if they can come back next year."

Children's Artwork Brightens the Middlesex County Courthouse

By **Betty Agin**

Administrative Specialist 4
Middlesex Vicinage

The Middlesex Vicinage Courthouse Art Advisory Committee's latest project was installed in the Middlesex County Family Courthouse in New Brunswick in May.

This was the first project of its kind in the Family Courthouse.

A reception was held on June 17 to celebrate the installation and to honor the people who worked to make it possible.

Superior Court Judge Nicholas J. Stroumtsos Jr. welcomed everyone, and presiding family Superior Court Judge Deborah J. Venezia discussed the process of getting the schools involved in the project.

Appellate Judge Amy Piro Chambers expressed her enthusiasm about the continuing efforts of the art committee.

The themes were "What Family Means to Me," "My Favorite Family Vacation," "A Day in the Life of My Family," "All About My Family" and "My Favorite Family Moment."

"This was a fun project designed to not only beautify the space but to provide positive reminders of the value of family," said Venezia, who was involved in the supervision of the project.

The Children's Art Project was dedicated to the memory of Middlesex Bar Association member Roberta Glassner, who died earlier this year.

Glassner contributed to many court art projects and wrote the scripts for the exhibit in the criminal wing of the courthouse.

Bertram Glassner accepted the honor on behalf of his wife.

The Children's Art Project is a permanent exhibit in the public corridor on the first floor of the Middlesex County Family Courthouse. It was the result of the combined efforts of the art advisory committee and the New Brunswick School District.



Marie Agosto, a bilingual investigator in the family division of Middlesex Vicinage, poses with her twin daughters, Gabriela and Monica, in front of the artwork the girls created for the Children's Art Project. Children of staff from the Middlesex County Family Courthouse and students from the New Brunswick School District submitted the artwork, which explored family-related themes.

The project was funded with a grant from the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission.

Children of staff from the Family Courthouse and students from the New Brunswick School District submitted artwork that depicts family-related themes. The themes were selected by the subcommittee of the art advisory committee.

"It was great exposure for all children and their parents," said Marie Agosto, whose children contributed artwork. "I knew my twins felt special that their art pictures were framed and displayed for all to see."

The following individuals contributed to the Law Day stories in this issue of the *Judiciary Times*: Aime Alonzo-Serrano; April Bailey; Lawrence Bethea; Jane P. Carey; Ann Marie Fleury; Gina Goldstein; Sandra Lopez; Kathleen Obringer; Janie Rodriguez; Theresa Romano; Shazeeda Samsudeen; Laura A. Simoldoni; Janet Slocum; Linda Wiggins and June Zieder.



Mission Statement of the New Jersey Court System

We are an independent branch of government constitutionally entrusted with the fair and just resolution of disputes in order to preserve the rule of law and to protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States and this State.