

JUDICIARY TIMES

A Publication of the  New Jersey Courts

Summer 2014

Chief Justice Earns Tenure, New Justice Seated *Rabner and Solomon Take Oaths in June Following Approval of State Senate*

By **Mike Mathis**
Judiciary Times Editor

Not only did Chief Justice Stuart Rabner begin his second term on the New Jersey Supreme Court with tenure on June 20, he started what could become the longest tenure of a chief justice in the state's modern history.

If the chief justice serves until he reaches the age of 70 in 2030, he will have completed 23 years on the court. The longest serving chief justices are Robert N. Wilentz and Joseph Weintraub, both of whom served for 16 years.

The state Senate approved the nominations of Rabner and Judge Lee A. Solomon to the court on June 19, Rabner for tenure; Solomon for a 7-year term.

The chief justice administered the oath of office to Solomon in a private ceremony in the governor's office in the Statehouse following the Senate vote.

Justice Jaynee LaVecchia administered the oath of office to the chief justice during a private ceremony at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton the next day.

Solomon, who was serving as assignment judge in the Camden Vicinage when Christie nominated him to the court, sat for his first Supreme Court session on June 24.

He joined Justice Faustino Fernandez-Vina, who was the Camden Vicinage assignment judge when Christie named him to the court. Fernandez-Vina took his seat on Nov. 19. Solomon was named to succeed him as assignment judge on Nov. 20.

Rabner is the eighth chief justice to lead the New Jersey

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Supreme Court Associate Justice Jaynee LaVecchia administers the oath of office to Chief Justice Stuart Rabner during a private ceremony in the Supreme Court courtroom at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton on June 20. With him is his family.



Gov. Chris Christie watches as Chief Justice Stuart Rabner administers the oath of office to Justice Lee A. Solomon during a private ceremony at the Statehouse in Trenton on June 19. With him is his family. (Governor's Office Photo)

Vicinages Mark Law Day With Celebrations and Ceremonies

Editor's note: Instituted by the American Bar Association (ABA) 56 years ago, Law Day 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 May. This year's theme was Democracy and the Rule of Law: Why Every Vote Matters.

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

Atlantic/Cape May

Law Day Week began April 28 with events in all three vicinage courthouses and Atlantic and Cape May County buildings.

On April 28, the Brigantine North Elementary School pres

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Chief Justice Rabner, Justice Solomon Seated on Supreme Court

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Supreme Court since the 1947 state constitution.

Among the initiatives begun during his first term were the Guardianship Monitoring Program, the Veterans Assistance Project, the Benchmarks civics education project and the Supreme Court Committee on Access and Fairness.

He has been invited to deliver a number of lectures across the country in connection with the court's landmark decision on eyewitness identification in *State v. Henderson*. The ruling has been cited in various federal and state court decisions.

He has been a staunch advocate for the advancement of technology through electronic filing, mobile applications for jurors and attorneys, text messaging and online surveys for jurors, online searchable index of civil judgments and the posting of Attorney Disciplinary Review Board decisions and Tax Court

opinions.

Solomon was first appointed to the bench in January 2006 by Acting Gov. Richard J. Codey. He served in the Camden Vicinage for two years in the family division, and then for two years in the criminal division. In February 2010, Gov. Chris Christie named Solomon president of the Board of Public Utilities.

He left the bench to lead the BPU until December 2011, when he was nominated by Christie to return to the bench in Camden. He rejoined the court in the civil division.

The chief justice named Solomon presiding judge of the criminal division

in April 2013 and assignment judge in November 2013.

Prior to his judicial career in 2006, Solomon served as deputy U.S. attorney for the southern vicinages of New Jersey, appointed in 2002 by then-U.S. Attorney Chris Christie. He previously served as Camden County prosecutor for five years and acting prosecutor for one year.

Before his appointment as prosecutor, he served for five years in the New Jersey General Assembly.

Solomon received his law degree from Widener University School of Law in 1978 and his bachelor's degree from Muhlenberg College in 1975. He is married and has three children.

New Jersey Celebrates Law Day 2014 with Speeches, Special Events

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its New Jersey Bar Association award winning mock trial before Assignment Judge Julio L. Mendez at the Atlantic County Civil Courts Building in Atlantic City.

The Atlantic County Law Day Fair hosted by the Atlantic County Bar Association and the courts was held in the Atlantic County Office Building in Atlantic City on April 29.

On April 30, an awards ceremony honoring the mock trial team from Mainland Regional High School, winners of the Atlantic County Mock Trial Competition, was held at the Atlantic County Criminal Courts Complex in Mays Landing. Members of the Atlantic County Institute of Technology mock trial team were recognized as the most improved team. Members of the Atlantic County Sheriff's Department Explorers Program also were recognized.

On Law Day, May 1, Cape May County hosted a naturalization ceremony at the William E. Sturm Jr. Administration Building at the Crest Haven Complex in Cape May Courthouse. Mendez administered the Oath of Citizenship to 21 people from 16 countries.

The week concluded with the Cape May County Law Day Fair, which was hosted by the Cape May County Bar Association. Awards were given to Cape May County mock trial winner, Middle Township High School.

Bergen

The Bergen Vicinage, in partnership with the Bergen County Bar Association and vicinage Minority Concerns Committee, joined the nation in celebrating Law Day on May 1. The ceremony was held in Assignment Judge Peter E. Doyne's courtroom.

Supreme Court Associate Justice Barry T. Albin delivered the keynote address.

Albin reminded attendees - and the 35 new U.S. citizens to whom Assignment Judge Peter E. Doyne later administered the Oath of Citizenship - of the importance and privilege of having the right to vote.

"Across the globe, people are prepared to die for the right to vote," Albin said. "Would all these people place their lives in jeopardy if they didn't believe that every vote mattered?"

Doyne also emphasized the importance of voting when he administered the Oath of Citizenship. "I can think of

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Judiciary Times is published by the Office of Communications and Community Relations, 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@judiciary.state.nj.us. Submissions are subject to editing, and not all can be published.

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Law Day Celebrated in New Jersey With Lectures and Contests

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no more important civic duty than to keep yourself abreast of developments so that your vote can be informed as it is always meaningful,” Doyne said.

Judge Susan J. Steele, chair of the Law Day program, addressed the crowded courtroom with welcoming remarks and a brief history of Law Day. A rendition of *The National Anthem* was sung by Sarah Zhukovin, a student at Ridgefield Park High School. Additional selections were performed by the Ridgefield Park High School chorus.

Other speakers included Bergen County Executive Kathleen Donovan and Bergen County Bar President Linda Schwager, who presented the Mock Trial Competition Award to Mahwah High School. The Bergen County Poster Contest awards were presented by Bergen County Clerk John Hogan.

Burlington

Retired New Jersey Supreme Court Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz opened Law Day 2014 in the historic Olde Courthouse on May 1 by leading a panel discussion on the history of judicial independence of the New Jersey courts. Professor Robert Holmes of Rutgers School of Law-Newark and Professor Robert Williams of Rutgers School of Law-Camden joined Poritz on the panel.

The national theme for Law Day was threaded throughout discussions by reminding everyone that voting was an opportunity to directly participate in our democracy. Poritz encouraged “citizen activism” to bring public awareness to the importance of judicial independence and the impact it can have on their lives.

Deputy Public Defender Kevin Walker gave an overview of New Jersey’s rich judicial history with an emphasis on post-1947, when the new state constitution formed the modern Judiciary and Supreme Court.

The annual celebration ended with Assignment Judge Ronald E. Bookbinder reading a proclamation declaring Law Day in Burlington County. Students from local high



New citizens display their Certificates of Citizenship after they became U.S. citizens in a ceremony in Cape May County Court House. Assignment Judge Julio L. Mendez administered the Oath of Citizenship to 21 people from 16 countries

schools participated in the day’s event by singing patriotic songs and presenting the colors.

Law Day gives courts the occasion to educate the community about the rule of law and the important role it plays in society.

The Juror for a Day program complements this effort. A total of

160 local seventh- and eighth-graders were summoned to serve jury duty in Burlington. The students learned firsthand what it was like to serve on a jury. A mock trial penned by law clerks brought criminal charges of burglary, theft and criminal mischief against defendant Gold E. Locks. Joining the

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Judiciary Times Places Third in Professional Journalism Contest

Judiciary Times, the quarterly newsletter of the New Jersey Judiciary, has received a third place ranking in newsletter writing from the New Jersey Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists (NJSPJ). This is the fourth consecutive year the newsletter has received an NJSPJ award.

The publication, edited by Judiciary Publications and Video Production Manager Mike Mathis under the direction of Judiciary Communications and Community Relations Director Winnie Comfort. The contest was judged by out-of-state journalism professionals.

The award was given at a ceremony at Monclair State University June 28.

Each quarter, *Judiciary Times* publishes statewide and local news

stories about the New Jersey courts, including new programs and services offered by the Judiciary, recent events held around the state and accomplishments of judges and staff.

The Society of Professional Journalists was founded in 1909 to encourage excellence in the journalism field. Emphasizing the critical role that journalists play in making sure that America’s citizenry is well-informed, the society aims to protect the freedom of speech and freedom of the press as guaranteed in the Constitution.

The New Jersey Chapter of SPJ was founded in 1959, and its annual journalism awards program has grown steadily over the years to become one of the most competitive and prestigious in the state.

Chief Justice Commends Judges and Staff for Their Work

Reviews Accomplishments of First Term; Speaks of Vision for the Future of Judiciary

By Mike Mathis
Judiciary Times Editor

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner lauded the work of judges and Judiciary staff during his annual State of the Judiciary speech before the New Jersey State Bar Association convention in Atlantic City on May 16.

The chief justice spoke about the many projects underway and those under consideration for the coming year, all of which “reflect the important work that goes on in the state’s Judiciary each and every day.”

They include the Veterans Assistance Project, Foreclosure Mediation and Guardianship Monitoring Programs and numerous technological advances that the chief justice said he hoped would one day result in a full-fledged eCourt.

The Veterans Assistance Project identifies veterans entering the criminal justice system as defendants in municipal and Superior Court and refers them to outside agencies for available services. More than 2,400 veterans have been referred for services since the project began statewide in 2009.

“Our hope throughout has been to help improve the lives of veterans who appear in criminal matters so that we do not see them a second time in the criminal justice system,” he said. “Today, thousands who sacrificed for and served our nation have benefitted from that approach.”

Responding to the dramatic increase in mortgage foreclosure filings, the Judiciary instituted a program that requires mediation as part of all contested foreclosure actions and encourages mediation in uncontested cases, which account for 94 percent of filings.

In the five years since the program began, more than 11,000 cases have completed mediation, and more than 5,000 cases have been settled - before, during, and after actual mediation sessions.



Chief Justice Stuart Rabner addresses the annual meeting of the New Jersey State Bar Association in Atlantic City in May. (NJSBA Photo/Amanda Brown)

“That represents more than 5,000 instances in which underperforming loans on a bank’s balance sheet have been turned around, and more than 5,000 families whose homes were not foreclosed,” he said.

Because foreclosures are rising once again, he said, the Judiciary will continue to devote resources to use mediation to help resolve the crisis.

The Guardianship Monitoring Program, which is designed to monitor the work of thousands of guardians appointed by the court to help the elderly, people who suffer from mental illness and other disabilities and those who cannot manage their own affairs, is being rolled out statewide. The Judiciary reached out to volunteers to enlist their help in researching case files and reviewing reports generated each year.

To date, volunteers have entered data in more than 1,200 cases, reviewed hundreds of annual reports, and relayed one urgent report to the court that is being pursued.

“In the end, we expect not only to uncover problems but also to deter people from committing fraud. In doing so, we hope to help people who can’t protect themselves — a meaningful and important endeavor,”

the chief justice said.

Addressing the Judiciary’s focus to use technology to make the courts more efficient and user-friendly, the chief justice cited several ways in which the courts have become more accessible.

Tax court opinions and attorney discipline decisions are posted online, and there is an online attorney index of more than 70,000 names.

There is now mandatory e-filing for large filers in special civil part. Last year, 208,000 cases were filed electronically, which amount to 88 percent of filings for that part, resulting in savings in processing time and ease of use for judges and staff.

The public can now search for liens through a recently created online index of civil judgments instead of traveling to county courthouses.

The Judiciary now sends text messages to jurors to remind them of their

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Editor’s Note

The deadline for the fall 2014 edition of the *Judiciary Times* is Friday, Aug. 29.

Feature stories about court programs and newsworthy profiles about judges and court staff are welcome.

Voting Rights Was Focus of Law Day Celebrations in N.J.

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defendant in testimony were the Three Bears, Hansel and Gretel and Miss Riding Hood.

Burlington paired with federal judges to offer a presentation on social media and the U.S. Constitution. More than 300 high school students were reached by the judges and attorneys.

"My sincere thanks to the judges and presenters for taking time to speak with our students," Shawnee High School teacher Martin Rotindo said. "They enjoyed the program immensely and have spread the word on how informative it was."

Law Day programs continued throughout May. Community educational activities such as the award contest for fourth and fifth grade students, the Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns expungement seminar, Senior Exposition, courthouse treasure hunt, and the Black Women Lawyers program all highlighted the Burlington Vicinage's outreach goal to inform, education, unite and inspire.

Camden

Despite the flooding that detoured motorists and shut down major roads in Camden on May 1, Camden Vicinage's Law Day celebration exceeded expectations.

With nearly 60 high school students in attendance from L.E.A.P. Academy, Camden County Technical School Pennsauken Campus, and Camden County Technical School Gloucester Township Campus, Law Day was a success.

In her opening remarks, Administrative Law Judge Lisa James Beavers spoke of the importance of voting, and about the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The students then watched a video of Chief Justice Stuart Rabner and heard from Natonya Phillips, EEO/AA officer, about her role and how the Judiciary ensures that its work force is diverse.

Lloyd Freeman of Archer & Greiner

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Supreme Court Associate Justice Barry T. Albin delivered the keynote address at the Bergen Vicinage's Law Day ceremony in Hackensack on May 1.

Chief Justice Reviews Accomplishments

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service days in advance and to tell them, the night before and each night during their service, whether they have to show up in court the next morning. New Jersey was the first state in the nation to implement such service.

The Judiciary has released two apps, *NJJuror* and *NJAttorney*. *NJJuror* tells jurors how to get to the courthouse, where to park, where to find local restaurants, and provides links to the Judiciary's website and details about jury service.

NJAttorney enables attorneys to access Judiciary news releases, Notices to the Bar, directions, contact information, and announcements about unscheduled closings for the Supreme Court, the Appellate Division of Superior Court, the Tax Court, and each Superior Court location. The app also can be used to watch archived Supreme Court webcasts.

Also available are the location, court hours, court leadership and contact information for each of the state's 522 municipal courts.

Both apps are available for Apple, Android and Windows mobile devices.

The Judiciary also has developed a system to accept motions and accompanying documents online in criminal cases. The system gives lawyers, judges, and court staff the ability to access those filings remotely, at any hour.

"This is an important step, but only a step," the chief justice said. "To design, construct, and maintain new systems for other case types and filings - as we must - we cannot proceed with our existing budget alone. That will require a sustained, additional funding source. "We look forward to working with you on that challenge so that, together, we can better meet the needs of lawyers and the public."

Three reports that cover bail reform and speedy trials in the criminal courts, expedited civil actions, and complex commercial cases propose significant improvements to how the court system operates and are intended to improve the Judiciary.

"We develop new initiatives to improve the justice system and our ability to serve the public fairly, not only poor defendants who cannot post \$500 toward bail but also Fortune 500 companies and all those in between," the chief justice said. "We make decisions and strive to draft opinions that are faithful to the rule of law."

"We try to treat people who come to court with respect and humility and recognize that each matter, large and small, can have a profound effect on peoples' lives. And we strive for excellence and integrity every day," he said.

Speeches, Seminars and Expos Mark Law Day 2014 in N.J.

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and Lloyd Henderson, president of the Camden County East NAACP, spoke about the cases they handle and answered questions.

Ombudsman Vanessa Ravenelle spoke about her role in the courts and community outreach and also provided information on the Juvenile Conference Committee.

Superior Court Judge Gwendolyn Blue spoke about becoming a judge and answered questions about what it takes to be a lawyer/judge.

The program ended with Superior Court Judge Charles W. Dortch Jr., who discussed his education and reminded students that they are capable of achieving their goals in life. His remarks also highlighted the importance of voting and why every vote counts.

Students were given drawstring bags with gavel pencils and information on voting. Lunch was provided by the Association of Black Women Lawyers from the New Jersey State Bar Foundation.

Students throughout Camden County also participated in the essay, poetry and poster competition.

In keeping with tradition, the vicinage held workshops and seminars throughout Camden County to educate court users. Students from several schools in Camden County toured the Hall of Justice, and judges and court staff conducted educational programs in schools.

Essex

Essex Vicinage began its Law Day 2014 celebration on March 27 with a CLE-qualifying voter education program.

The event, which was open to Judiciary staff, attorneys, university and law students and the public, took place in the jury management area of the Veterans Courthouse in Newark. Panelists included Essex County Clerk Christopher J. Durkin, attorney Rajiv D. Parikh, attorney Alexander Shalom, Essex Vicinage Civil Division Manager Debra Dadic and Thomas Puryear, president of the Oranges & Maplewood branch of the NAACP.



Participants in a panel discussion on the history of judicial independence in New Jersey at Burlington Vicinage's Law Day ceremony were Kevin Walker, deputy public defender; retired Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz; Robert Williams, Rutgers School of Law-Camden; Robert Holmes, Rutgers School of Law-Newark, and Assignment Judge Ronald E. Bookbinder.



Judge Charles W. Dortch gives closing remarks during the Camden Vicinage's Law Day event.

On April 9, students and teachers from seven Essex County high schools attended a similar event, at which master poll worker Michelle Bobrow also presented.

Landlord Tenant Hearing Officer Bruce Humphreys moderated both events, which included question and answer sessions and materials for attendees.

An awards ceremony recognizing students who submitted outstanding entries to the writing and poster contests was held in the courtroom of Civil Division Presiding Judge Dennis F. Carey III in the Essex County Courthouse in Newark on May 2.

This year, more than 550 students from 25 Essex County schools sub-

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Law Day is Celebrated in Courthouses Around the State

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mitted 400 posters, 130 essays, and nearly 30 poems for consideration.

Members of the Law Day Committee, Customer Service Committee, and Vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns reviewed and voted on the winning entries.

Family Division Presiding Judge Sallyanne Floria presented medals and certificates to the winning students. Essex County Bar Association President Kenneth A. Rosenberg and bar members Amber Loughran and Sarab Thapar were present to recognize the students.

Hudson

Supreme Court Associate Justice Jaynee LaVecchia was the keynote speaker at Hudson Vicinage's Law Day ceremony on May 1. The ceremony was held in the rotunda of the William Brennan Courthouse and was well attended by judges, court staff, students and invited guests.

LaVecchia's speech focused on the right to vote and why every vote matters.

The ceremony began with the presentation of the flags by the Hudson County Sheriff's Department Honor Guard.

Assignment Judge Peter F. Bariso Jr. welcomed the students and invited

guests and explained the meaning of Law Day. Fourth graders from Midtown Community School in Bayonne recited the Pledge of Allegiance and the Judiciary Voices in Unity Choir performed.

A video presentation by Chief Justice Stuart Rabner discussing the Law Day theme was aired for the audience, followed by the issuance of the Law Day proclamation by William A. Gaughan, chief of staff to the Hudson County executive.

The ceremony concluded with the announcement of the winners of the art, photography, essay, poetry and rap contests, along with the winners of the Vincent J. Apruzzese High School Mock Trial Competition.

Students in grades six through 12 competed in art, photography, essay, poetry and rap contests that were related to the Law Day theme. The Law Day Planning Committee, chaired by Judge Martha Royster, received 947 essays, 116 poems and seven rap entries and more than 100 art submissions for the various contests this year.

The first and second place winners in each category were invited to the ceremony to be recognized. Union City High School was honored as the winner of this year's mock trial competition.

This year was the first year that Hud-

son County hosted a mini mock trial in which fourth graders from Midtown Community School tried The Case of the Missing Lunch. Members of the class played the roles of judge, prosecutor, public defender, and jury. The mini mock trial participants were invited to the ceremony to celebrate their victories.

The Liberty Bell Award was presented to Hudson County Clerk Barbara A. Netchert in recognition of her community service. Netchert explained to the students the importance of her position as it relates to the election process.

Middlesex

Middlesex Vicinage held several events in May to educate students about the Law Day theme.

The program *Why Every Vote Matters* was presented to students at Highland Park High School, Perth Amboy High School, North Brunswick High School and Piscataway High School.

Judges Heidi W. Currier, Alberto Rivas, Lisa Vignuolo and Vincent LeBlon presented the programs, which gave an overview of the New Jersey court system. The program also provided information on New Jersey election law and the role of the Superior Court on Election Day. Each session opened with the Law Day 2014 video message from Chief Justice Stuart Rabner.

The Law Day 2014 theme gave vicinage staff the opportunity to educate students on the importance of voting and on landmark legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

During the visit to the schools in Perth Amboy, Rivas reminded students that the first African-American to vote in an election under the provisions of the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was Thomas Mundy Peterson, who cast his ballot in Perth Amboy on March 31, 1870.

Monmouth

The Monmouth Vicinage com-



Among those participating in the Essex Vicinage's Law Day program were Sarab Thapar of the Essex County Bar Association, Family Division Presiding Judge Sallyann Floria, Essex County Bar Association President Kenneth A. Rosenberg and bar association member Amber Loughran.

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Vicinages Celebrate Law Day with an Array of Activities

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memorated Law Day on May 1 with a program at the historic general equity courtroom in the Hall of Records.

The program opened with remarks from Peter C. Lucas, president of the Monmouth Bar Association. After a moment of silence honoring the members of the nation's armed forces, Lucas discussed the value of Law Day as a vehicle to honor the law and the nation.

Judges' secretary Tarika Jean-Pierre delivered a rendition of God Bless America.

Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson gave the opening remarks. He spoke about the Law Day theme and how it relates to the courts and to each individual citizen.

"The message that we can take away from this year's Law Day theme is to use our vote and our voices to make a difference in our community, our state and even our nation," Lawson said.

Former Supreme Court Justice Roberto A. Rivera-Soto presented the keynote address. Rivera-Soto presented a detailed review of the history of democracy and defined Law Day as a way to uphold the moral and civil obligation to preserve and strengthen democracy.

Despite the sacrifices of those who fought for the right to vote, Rivera-Soto noted that, alarmingly, only four in 10 eligible voters participated in the 2012 presidential election.

Rivera-Soto concluded with powerful words for the millennial generation, reminding them that the nation's form of government is not a right, but a gift handed down through generations by those who made great sacrifices. He said that to honor these individuals, we must bless future generations with a better version of democracy than in the past.

The simplest way to accomplish this is by casting an informed vote, he said.

The program shifted to recognize retired Judge Bette E. Uhrmacher with the Abraham J. Zager Professionalism Award, which is the Monmouth Bar Association's highest honor. Judge



Supreme Court Associate Justice Jaynee LaVecchia (center) poses with Hudson Vicinage Assignment Judge Peter F. Bariso Jr. and Judge Martha T. Royster. LaVecchia was the keynote speaker at Hudson's Law Day ceremony.

Uhrmacher was commended for her commitment to the legal profession through her work as an assistant U.S. attorney, Superior Court judge, mediator and law school professor.

For the second consecutive year, the mock trial team from Colts Neck High School was presented with the Daniel J. O'Hern Mock Trial Award.

The program concluded with Judge Lawson's presentation of awards to the

student winners of the Law Day 2014 Poster and Essay Contest.

Morris/Sussex

In Morris County, the traditional lunchtime ceremony was held on May 1 at the Morris County Courthouse in Morristown with a welcome by Assignment Judge Thomas L. Weisenbeck.

Supreme Court Associate Justice

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Judge's Secretary Tarika Jean-Pierre sings God Bless America at the Monmouth Vicinage's Law Day program.

Law Day 2014 Features Speeches on Importance of Voting

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Anne M. Patterson delivered the keynote address.

Patterson expanded on the Law Day theme by discussing the historical contributions of three New Jersey residents: Thomas Mundy Peterson, who was the first African American to cast a vote in the United States; Alice Stokes Paul, who fought for the right to vote for women; and Nicholas Katzenbach, who served in the administrations of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson and was instrumental in getting the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 enacted.

The Morris celebration also featured speeches by John P. Robertson II, president of the Morris County Bar Association, Robin C. Bogan, bar foundation president, and Morris County Freeholder Kathryn A. DeFillippo.

The mock trial team from West Morris-Mendham High School was honored for winning the county, regional, and state competitions. The Morris-town High School Vocal and String Ensemble, under the direction of Norma Davis, performed for the audience.

The Sussex County celebration was held May 1 at the historic courthouse in Newton. The keynote was delivered by Nancy H. Reading, bar association president.

The county mock trial winners from High Point Regional High School were honored, as was retired appellate judge Lorraine C. Parker, who was presented with a portrait.

Passaic

Julio M. Fuentes, a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, administered the Oath of Citizenship to 36 new citizens from 15 countries during the Law Day Naturalization Program on May 2 in the Passaic County Administration Building in Paterson.

A total of 15 countries were represented: the Dominican Republic, India, Bangladesh, Peru, Canada, Poland, Haiti, Syria, Macedonia, Philippines, Spain, Colombia, Guyana,

China and Mexico. Three couples from Canada, India, and Peru participated.

Judge Sohail Mohammed led the new citizen program, sharing his own experiences on emigrating from India as a young boy and becoming a naturalized citizen.

Assignment Judge Donald J. Volkert Jr., U.S. Rep. William J. Pascrell Jr., Passaic County Freeholder Director Pat Lepore, John E. Thompson, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services district director, and Louis J. Serafini, president of the Passaic County Bar Association, spoke.

The Passaic County Technical Institute ROTC Honor Guard presented the colors and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Middle school and high school students submitted posters, poetry and videos that best illustrated the Law Day theme.

Winners watched the naturalization ceremony and participated in an awards ceremony, a presentation on voting rights and a demonstration of a voting machine. They also enjoyed a pizza luncheon provided by the Passaic County Bar Association.

Two high schools, Passaic Valley High School in Little Falls and Passaic County Technical Institute in Wayne, were finalists in the mock trial competition and participated in the final competition, which was watched by middle school students. Passaic Valley High School was judged the winner by a panel of attorneys, judges, freeholders and others.

The Law Day Committee also presented panel discussions on domestic violence at Women in Transition in Wayne and the Islamic Center of Passaic County in Paterson on May 5 and May 12, respectively. Panel members included attorneys who specialize in the area of domestic violence.

Somerset/Hunterdon/Warren

The Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns for Somerset/Hunterdon/

Warren Vicinage hosted a seminar, *RACE-The Power of an Illusion: A Film and Community Discussion* on May 15 at the Somerset County Historic Courthouse.

A total of 71 people, including Judiciary staff, law clerks, attorneys, educators, law enforcement, social workers, Somerset County employees and assistant prosecutors, attended.

Classie Davis, a committee member and volunteer, gave opening remarks and introduced Khyati Joshi, the presenter and moderator for the program. Joshi, an associate professor in the School of Education at Fairleigh Dickinson University, spoke about the past, present and future of race in the United States; definitions of race and racism, and discussed how races are distinguished.

The audience watched a PBS documentary, *Race: The Power of an Illusion – The House We Live In*, which detailed the evolution of race and race relations in the United States, immigration laws, U.S. Supreme Court decisions, and a history of U.S. policies regarding race. The film also revealed how American courts have defined “whiteness” and citizenship from the early 20th century through the 1930’s to the passage of the National Housing Act in 1934.

At the conclusion of the video, small groups formed to discuss reactions to the film. Joshi led a large group discussion about the U.S. census and how racial categories changed over time.

The Naturalization Act, Chinese Exclusion Act, and Asians and Immigration Act and court decision also were discussed.

Attorneys who attended obtained 2.7 ethics continuing legal education credits. Other eligible attendees received 3.0 professional development credits.

Union

Union Vicinage held its Law Day celebration on Friday, May 2 in the courtroom of Assignment Judge Karen M. Cassidy. The event was co-spon-

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Courthouses Around NJ Celebrate Law Day With Activities

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sored by the Union Vicinage Minority Concerns Advisory Committee; Union County Bar Association; and Hispanic Bar Association.

Judge Frederic R. McDaniel, chair of the Minority Concerns Advisory Committee for Union Vicinage, presided over the celebration with Cassidy.

Benjamin Franklin School # 13 in Elizabeth opened the event with a number of musical selections and concluded with *God Bless the USA*. The 23 member school band accompanied a choir of 15 students.

Andrew J. Gibbs, a member of the Union County Bar Association, conducted a special awards presentation to Oratory Preparatory School of Summit, winners of the Union County Mock Trial Competition.

Connor Mooney, a senior, delivered a speech about the importance of participating in the mock trial process and how the experience had provided him insight about the law, increased his problem solving skills, and gave him greater confidence with public speaking. He encouraged all students to volunteer in the program at their schools.

The keynote speaker, Dennis Kobitz, administrator of the Union County Election Board, accentuated the year's Law Day theme by giving an overview

of the importance of a citizen's right to vote and the challenges in ensuring that all Americans have the right to vote.

He described several situations where citizens were denied the right to vote on Election Day and how they were able to appeal to a judge.

Kobitz also told the audience that every vote counts and described two incidents where elections were decided by one and four votes, respectively.

After the program ended, the election board demonstrated how a voting machine works. Students were able to cast a vote using the machine.

Union County schools competed in essay, poetry and poster contests focused on the Law Day theme. Students placed first, second and third in each category.

The vicinage also hosted an infor-

Did You Know?

The Judiciary uses Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to communicate the work of the courts to the public and court staff?

The Judiciary uses RSS feeds and SMS text alerts to inform users about court news, closings and Supreme Court decisions.

To sign up for these services, go to nj-courts.com and look for the icons on the right side of the page.

Burlington Vicinage Participates in Mentor Program

By Robin Smith

Human Resources Manager
Burlington Vicinage

The New Jersey Judiciary has embarked on a pilot mentor program that allows employee participants to expand their view of the Judiciary while promoting staff development.

The voluntary mentor program was first implemented in the central office. The Burlington Vicinage began participating last fall.

The program was designed to help participants increase their level of engagement and job satisfaction by developing leadership, coaching, and interpersonal skills that help them grow personally and professionally.

Vicinage employees were invited to attend an informational session and apply to participate as a mentee or mentor. The goals of the mentee applicants were reviewed by a committee that mentees with mentors. A total of ten pairs of mentors/mentees were selected.

"The mentoring program is a wonderful opportunity for Judiciary employees to cross-train in other divisions," said Amy Chack, who was a mentee. "The exposure that is received enables us to better serve the public and helps us to grow professionally."

After initial training sessions were conducted, an orientation was held in which the mentors and mentees participated in activities to become acquainted with each other's goals and to define expectations and results from the program.

"I joined the program because it was a great opportunity to help with the career development for our employees," said Civil Division Manager Nina Thomas, who served as a mentor. "I strongly encourage others to become part of the program."



Passaic Vicinage Judge Thomas J. LaConte presides over a mock trial as part of Law Day festivities in Paterson.

Arthur Simpson, First Acting Administrative Director, Dies at 88

By Mike Mathis

Judiciary Times Editor

Arthur J. Simpson Jr., the first judge to serve as acting administrative director of the courts, died May 9, three days after his 88th birthday.

Prior to Judge Simpson's appointment, the two men who held the position - created with the adoption of the 1947 state constitution - were attorneys. Willard G. Woelper held the post from 1948 to 1953, and Edward B. McConnell served from 1953 until 1973.

When then-Chief Justice Richard J. Hughes appointed Judge Simpson to the post in July 1973, the word "acting" was added to the administrative director's title because judges cannot hold two constitutional offices.

Judge Simpson, who was acting assignment judge in Bergen Vicinage when he was named administrative director, served until January 1980.

Among his accomplishments were the overhaul of the Judiciary's administration and updating the court's computer systems, both with the goal of maintaining an independent Judiciary.

"Judge Simpson had a clear view of the importance of the judiciary and of court administration in its formative years," said Judge Glenn A. Grant, the current acting administrative director of the courts.

Born in Philadelphia, Judge Simpson was a graduate of two law schools, Columbia Law School and University of Virginia Law School, as well as the City College of New York, U.S. Army Command & General Staff College and U.S. Army War College. He was a veteran of World War II and the Korean War and retired as a colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve after 36 years of service.

Judge Simpson, who also was a certified public accountant, was an attorney in private practice in Oradell, Bergen County when Hughes, then governor, nominated him to the bench in 1966. Judge Simpson sat on the



Arthur J. Simpson Jr.

District Court and Superior Court benches before Hughes, who became chief justice after serving two terms as governor, appointed him acting administrative director of the courts.

"There was a desire to have somebody in the office from the judicial perspective, from the trial court perspective," said retired Judge Edwin H. Stern, whom Judge Simpson hired in December 1973 to head the criminal practice division at the Administrative Office of the Courts. "He was a person who had great vision for the court system and a desire to promote its importance."

"Arthur Simpson, with his background in accounting and the military, was the perfect person, with

great vision and the discipline to carry it out," Stern said.

After leaving his job as acting administrative director, Judge Simpson served as assignment judge in Camden and Gloucester counties, assignment judge in Bergen Vicinage and in the Appellate Division before he retired in 1996, when he reached the constitutional retirement age of 70. He later was of counsel to Winne, Banta, Hetherington & Basralian in Hackensack.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Marian; his children, Linda Simpson Ettinger, Nancy Simpson Walsh and Arthur J. Simpson III, and six grandchildren.

Judge Marks 35 Years

Continued from page 12

and Julio Mendez. Switzer is a graduate of Duke University and Temple Law School.

He hears about 35,000 cases a year. He has served for many years on the Supreme Court Municipal Court Practice Committee and has had numerous other assignments.

He teaches at Atlantic Cape Community College and lectures on municipal law throughout the state.

In Darkness and In Light



When a blown transformer forced the closure of the Atlantic County Civil Courthouse in Atlantic City on May 30, Judge Alan Littlefield moved the five weddings he had scheduled that day to a nearby gazebo.

Municipal Court Staff Participates in Powerful School Program

By Charisse Avoletta

Municipal Division
Morris/Sussex Vicinage

Kinnelon Municipal Court staff recently participated in *Every 15 Minutes*, a two-day program for high school juniors and seniors to teach them about the perils of drunken driving and its aftermath.

The program began when students were randomly removed from their classrooms every 15 minutes to simulate deaths from alcohol related incidents.

Volunteers from Kinnelon Borough then staged a crash scene, starting with a chilling 911 call. Firefighters, police officers, paramedics, and the coroner all responded as they would to a real accident. The students observed the “crash” and its aftermath.

Classmates played the victims. One victim was declared dead on the scene and one was airlifted to the hospital. Students were told the fate of two other victims: one died in the hospital; the other was left paralyzed for life.

The drunk-driving defendant, also a student, was given a field sobriety test and was arrested at the scene. Students then watched a mock trial and sentencing of the defendant to a 50-year prison sentence, 40 years for both deaths and 10 years for aggravated assault for serious life changing injuries.

Her driving privileges were revoked.

Assistant Prosecutor Brad Seabury and attorney John Velez, as defense counsel, participated in the mock trial. Municipal Division Presiding Judge Andrew Wubbenhorst sentenced the defendant in accordance to the sentencing guidelines.

The students who were pulled out of their classrooms earlier in the day were considered “dead” and therefore spent the night at Kinnelon High School to prevent any communication with their parents and friends. They were allowed to write letters to their loved ones.

The second day of the program was equally dramatic. Parents selected caskets, wrote obituaries, attended a funeral and read love letters from family and friends to the deceased. The program ended with stories told by those who lost loved ones to alcohol related crashes.

Municipal staff, municipal courts, and schools throughout the Morris/Sussex vicinage have participated in the *Every 15 Minutes* program.



A staged drunk driving accident was the focus of training staff from the Kinnelon Municipal Court.

Atlantic/Cape May Judge Marks 35 Years on Municipal Court Bench

By Louis J. Belasco Jr.

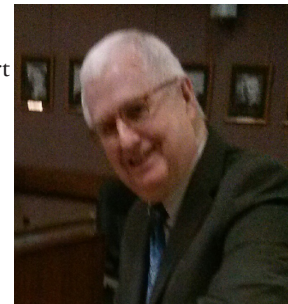
Presiding Municipal Court Judge
Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage

The Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage Municipal Division, municipal court judges and court staff celebrated with Judge H. Robert Switzer on May 16 as he marked 35 years as a municipal court judge.

Egg Harbor Township appointed Switzer as its municipal court judge in June 1979.

Switzer, then 29, became one of the youngest municipal court judges in New Jersey. Hamilton Township selected him as its municipal court judge the next year, followed by Estell Manor in 1992. He continues to sit on the bench in all three municipalities.

During his time as a municipal court judge, he has worked with six assignment judges: George Francis, Phillip Gruccio, Richard Williams, Michael Winkelstein, Valerie Armstrong



H. Robert Switzer

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Mission Statement of the New Jersey Courts

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.