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JUDICIARY TIMES
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Back to the Future

New Mercer County Criminal Courthouse Opens; Building Proposed 30 Years Ago

Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes cuts the ribbon on the new Mercer County Criminal Courthouse in March. Pictured with him at right are Assignment Judge Mary C. Jacobson, Chief Justice Stuart Rabner, retired Assignment Judge Linda R. Feinberg and Trial Court Administrator Sue Regan.

By Mike Mathis
Judiciary Times Editor

A project that began about 30 years ago culminated on March 20 with a ribbon cutting for the new Mercer County Criminal Courthouse in Trenton.

More than 200 Judiciary, state and Mercer County dignitaries were in attendance as speakers described the collaboration between the various levels of government that brought what was called the largest public project in Mercer County history to fruition.

"Countless citizens will come here when they seek justice, and when they believe they have been wronged, in order to vindicate their rights," Chief Justice Stuart Rabner told those gathered in the Special Proceedings Courtroom.

The 142,000-square-foot, 4-story courthouse at South Warren and Market streets opened in January. It includes nine courtrooms, judges' chambers and offices for court staff and sheriff's officers.

The courthouse includes three separate pathways through the building: one for the public, one for judges and their staff, and a third for prisoners and law enforcement. Detainees are transported to courtrooms through two prisoner-only elevator shafts.

To meet the U.S. Green Building Council's environmental standards, the building has efficient mechanical systems, water-saving plumbing, and includes large windows and skylights to maximize use of natural light.

The roof makes use of solar reflectance materials to lessen air conditioning use, rainwater is collected for use in flushing toilets, and construction materials were selected from local sources to cut down on long distance deliveries.

The $80 million cost of the project included demolition of a parking garage and preparation of the site for construction. An adjoining parking area of 88 parking spots is reserved for judges and judicial staff.

Discussions to replaces the old Criminal Courthouse, a classical Beaux Arts building constructed in 1903 that faces South Broad Street, began about 30 years ago. The plans never materialized, and the condition of that building deteriorated steadily over the next three decades, officials said.

Plans for the old building have not been finalized. Retired Mercer Vicinage Assignment Judge Linda R. Feinberg said she called Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes the day after his November 2003 election to discuss the project.

Feinberg, for whom a training room in the new courthouse will be named, said Hughes had the "energy and enthusiasm to get this done."

She credited Mercer Vicinage Trial Court Administrator Sue Regan for completing the building.

"When our citizens interact with the legal system, they do so locally," Feinberg said. "In New Jersey and in all states, courts are the most visible part of our legal system."

The Special Proceedings Courtroom in the new Mercer County Criminal Courthouse is one of the building's nine courtrooms. The courthouse replaces a 110-year-old building located behind the new one. See Page 4 for more photos.

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Youth Incarceration in N.J. Plunges By More Than 50 Percent

Juvenile Detention Altenatives Initiative Cited For Sixth Largest Decrease in Nation

The number of incarcerated juveniles has plunged by more than 50 percent, due in large part to the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI).

The drop was the sixth largest recorded nationally, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF), which released a report recently that detailed a dramatic drop in juvenile incarceration rates across the country.

The KIDS COUNT Data Snapshot analyzes data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Between 1997 and 2010, New Jersey's juvenile population held in county-operated detention centers, as well as Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) residential programs and secure facilities, fell from 2,250 to 1,179.

Much of this change can be attributed to the implementation of the Casey Foundation's JDAI in New Jersey.

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 to Mike.Mathis@judiciary.state.nj.us Submissions are subject to editing, and not all can be published.

Director of Communications and Community Relations
Winifred Comfort

Editor
Mike Mathis

Contributors
Siobhan Fay; Tammy Kendig; Kathleen Obringer; June Zieder and the AOC Print Shop.

Sixteen of the state's 21 counties participate in JDAI. They are Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Cumberland, Essex, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Union, Warren, and Gloucester.

"JDAI continues to be a great story in New Jersey," said Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts. "Today's report from the Casey Foundation shows what can be achieved when we work together to do the right thing by kids who need supervision, not incarceration, to address their issues.

"The collaboration among government agencies, including the Juvenile Justice Commission and county and social service agencies, along with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is clearly bringing benefits to our youth and our communities at large," Judge Grant said.

"The JJC, in cooperation with its partners including the Judiciary, is successfully changing the system of juvenile justice in New Jersey, thereby ensuring that juveniles' needs are met and that public safety is maintained," said Kevin M. Brown, the JJC's acting executive director.

Through JDAI, probation has worked to implement a system of graduated responses to rule violations to redirect youth in a positive way and substantially reduce reliance on incarceration for noncompliant behavior.

While these decreases in juvenile incarceration have taken place, nationally down by 37 percent, juvenile arrests rates have not increased.

The results demonstrate the vast majority of the young people who remain in their community do not pose an increased public safety threat.

As a result of these changes, secure placements in New Jersey and increasingly across the country are reserved for those youth at the "deep-end" of the juvenile justice system.

Research demonstrates that detained youth are more likely to be incarcerated in a state placement at the point of sentencing than non-detained youth with similar offenses.

"For many years, New Jersey's detention centers operated at a level that often exceeded their individual capacities, some greatly so. They were filled with low level offenders, not because they met the requirements for detention, but because there were no reasonable alternatives to incarceration," Brown said.

Through JDAI, sites have implemented a wide array of detention alternative programs, including electronic monitoring, evening reporting centers, supervised home detention, and shelter care.

At many JDAI sites, youth also have access to case managers, employment programs, or other services to help keep them arrest-free.

In some counties, transportation is made available to ensure youth appear for required court hearings, evaluations, or service appointments, minimizing non-appearance, which can result in detention.

Almost 97 percent of youth placed on these detention alternatives complete their placement without a new delinquency event.

In New Jersey, reliance on incarceration as a sentencing option is also reduced through the efforts of county Youth Services Commissions, which receive funding from the JJC to implement an array of community-based programs for use by the court as sentencing alternatives.

As a result of these efforts, youth incarcerated with the JJC today are now those with the most complex issues and the most serious delinquency histories.

Many of the juveniles committed to the JJC have serious drug addictions, mental health disorders and gang

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Judge Joseph A. Falcone, 70, Assignment Judge in Two Vicinages

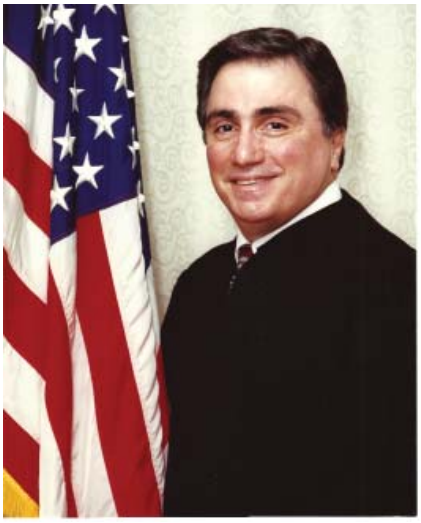
By Mike Mathis
Judiciary Times Editor

Judge Joseph A. Falcone, 70, an assignment judge in the Essex and Passaic vicinages whose career in public service spanned more than 40 years, died Jan. 12 at his home in Wayne, Passaic County.

"Judge Falcone was a giant in the legal community," Chief Justice Stuart Rabner said. "He was a well-respected leader and a tireless public servant."

Judge Falcone began his career in public service in 1969, when he became an assistant Essex County prosecutor. He became first assistant Passaic County prosecutor in 1975 and became prosecutor in 1980.

He was appointed to the bench in 1990 and started serving as assignment judge of the Passaic Vicinage in 1996. Judge Falcone served as assignment judge in the Essex Vicinage from 1999 to 2004, when he was elevated to the Appellate Division.



Judge Joseph A. Falcone

He returned to the criminal division in Morris County the following year and later returned to the Passaic Vicinage. He retired in 2011.

"While I very much enjoyed my assignment in Morris County, I am thrilled to be returning home," Judge Falcone said at the time.

"To the extent that leadership involves organizing people to achieve a common goal there was no one better at it than Judge Falcone," Passaic Vicinage Assignment Judge Donald J. Volkert Jr. said. "He defined leadership and always led by example.

"I have never met or known anyone who worked harder or had more clearly defined goals," Judge Volkert said. "He was demanding but fair, never asking anything from others that he didn't demand from himself. As (the late Essex Vicinage Assistant Trial Court Administrator and Camden Vicinage TCA) Mike O'Brien said, 'working with Judge Falcone was a privilege.' I couldn't have said it better."

Judge Falcone was a graduate of Rutgers University and Rutgers School of Law-Camden.

He is survived by his wife Beverly and his daughter, Larissa Ubriaco, and her husband Thomas.

Services were held at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist Church in Paterson.

Michael O'Brien, Trial Court Adminstrator in Camden Vicinage, Dies at 58

By Mike Mathis
Judiciary Times Editor

Michael O'Brien, the Camden Vicinage trial court administrator whose Judiciary career began when he was a student at Rutgers, died Feb. 20 at St. Peter's University Hospital in New Brunswick. He was 58.

A resident of Milltown, Middlesex County, O'Brien was named TCA in Camden in 2002 after serving as assistant TCA in the Essex Vicinage since 1995.

"From the platform of the Administrative Council, Mike served with distinction and took on committee work and special projects that helped direct the work of the courts for more than a decade," said Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts.

"His work with the religious and community organizations in Camden City on re-entry projects demonstrated his empathy for those less fortunate," Judge Grant said. "We have lost a valued member of our organization, but his legacy and mark on the administration of justice will be felt for a long time."

Grant said O'Brien had a passion for working in an urban environment and was happy to accept the TCA position in Camden, where he could use the skills he attained at Rutgers University and honed in Newark.

"I enjoy the urban environment, because you know you are serving a population that really relies on court services," O'Brien said in an interview in the *Judiciary Times* following his appointment as Camden Vicinage TCA. "You get a unique sense of the impact of the court on a wide range of issues."

Michael O'Brien

O'Brien worked closely with county officials on major projects in Camden and Essex counties.

He played an integral role with Camden's involvement as a pilot county with the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), which

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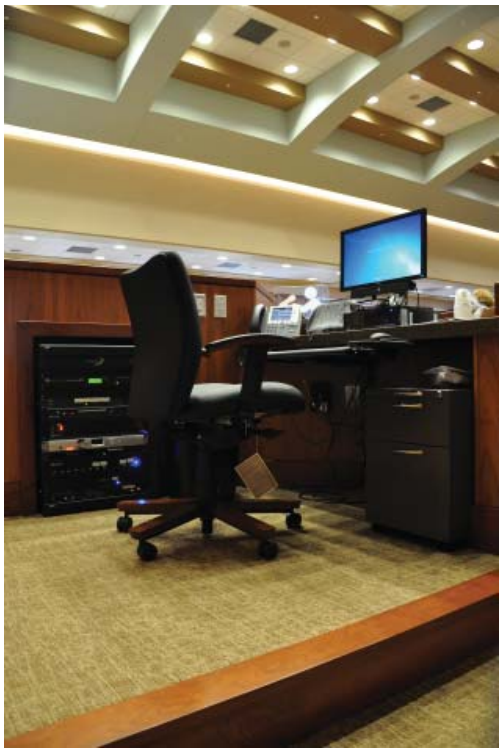
New Mercer County Criminal Courthouse Opens In Trenton

The public corridors in the building are spacious and bright with plenty of natural light.

An architectural feature of the building are these arches, which resemble the arches on the nearby "Trenton Makes" bridge that spans the Delaware River.

A side view of the courthouse, which is located at South Warren and Market streets. The old Mercer County Crminal Courthouse can be seen behind the new building.



Each of the nine courtrooms contains modern sound and recording equipment.

The information desk

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Richard Young, 52, Headed Judicial Education and Training Unit

By Mike Mathis
Judiciary Times Editor

Richard Young, who headed the Judiciary's Judicial Education and Performance Program, died Jan. 4 at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. He was 52.

Young, who lived in Moorestown, Burlington County, worked at the Administrative Office of Courts for 29 years. He was instrumental in creating the Judiciary's judicial performance program and organized and ran the annual Judicial College.

He became chief of judicial education and performance in 2009.

"He was completely organized and calm. He had a wonderful sense of humor," said Judge Mary Catherine Cuff, who chairs the Supreme Court Committee on Judicial Education. "He had everything under control, even when it seemed it wasn't. He was just a pro."

Richard Young

Young was born in England and was raised in Cinnaminson.

He earned a bachelor's degree in political science in 1982 from Brandeis University in Waltham, Mass. returned to Cinnaminson, and enrolled at Rutgers University, where he studied part-time for a master's degree while working at the AOC.

Young coached youth sports in Moorestown, including soccer, baseball, street hockey and roller hockey.

He struggled with health issues throughout his life, but they did not deter him from doing his job.

"While we knew for many years that Rick was not well, it seemed he always overcame each medical setback, and was back at his desk doing his work as if nothing happened," Judge Cuff wrote in a note to judges following Young's death.

"We have lost a man who approached his various tasks with energy, insight, complete dedication, and a wonderful sense of humor," she said. "We have also lost a friend. He was extraordinary."

He is survived by his wife Elaine and their two children, Timothy Young and Colleen Young, and his parents, M. Godfrey Young and Anna Jarvis Young. Services were held at the First Presbyterian Church in Moorestown.

Michael O'Brien, TCA, Served in Camden, Essex

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resulted in a major decrease in the number of youth placed in detention.

"Mike O'Brien was an extremely accomplished trial court administrator, and was respected and admired by all who knew him," said Camden Vicinage Assignment Judge Faustino J. Fernandez-Vina. "He had many God-given gifts, among them his personality, his loyalty, friendliness and sense of humor. His loss leaves a void we can never fill."

Born in Jersey City, O'Brien earned a bachelor's degree in urban studies from Rutgers and became a deputy court clerk in Teaneck in 1975.

He served as court violations clerk in Teaneck before he was named special criminal assignment clerk in the Bergen Vicinage in the early 1980s.

He became the statewide speedy trial coordinator at the Administrative Office of the Courts and was named criminal division manager in Essex in 1990. Mr. O'Brien also served as acting family division manager in the Essex Vicinage.

"Mike's life is woven into the fabric of our courts," said Judge Grant. "We have lost a valued member of our organization, but his legacy and mark on the administration of justice will be felt for a long time."

O'Brien enjoyed discussing politics, was a loyal Rutgers fan and loved fine dining.

He is survived by his wife Esther, and his children, Elizabeth and Joseph.

Editor's Note

The deadline for the summer 2013 edition of the *Judiciary Times* is Friday, June 7.

Please send feature stories about court programs and newsworthy profiles of judges and court staff to Mike.Mathis@judiciary.state.nj.us.

Current stories and information about court staff and events and submissions of awards, honors, promotions and appointments are being accepted for JT Briefing, the Judiciary's e-newsletter.

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

JDAI Dramatically Reduces Incarceration

Continued from page 2

involvement, necessitating a high level of care.

The AECF has named New Jersey the model for other states seeking to implement JDAI.

Eight states, including Arizona, Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, and Ohio states have sent delegations to New Jersey to receive guidance on how to successfully implement this program.

The report can be found at http://www.aecf.org/

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.

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Liz Domingo Named Assistant Director of Probation Services

By Tammy Kendig
Communications Manager
Administrative Office of the Courts

Union Vicinage Trial Court Administrator Elizabeth Domingo has been named assistant director for probation services.

Domingo succeeds Kevin M. Brown, who was recently named acting executive director of the Juvenile Justice Commission. The appointment is effective May 1.

"Liz has excelled in her current role as trial court administrator of the Union Vicinage," said Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts. "She has overseen the operations of one of our busiest courthouses with wisdom and patience and she will provide exceptional leadership to our probation services division."

As assistant director, Domingo will promote the welfare of children, families and communities in New Jersey by leading the approximately

Elizabeth Domingo

1,600-member division in enforcing orders of the courts regarding the supervision and monitoring of adults and juvenile offenders sentenced to terms of probation or admitted to an intensive supervision program; the payment of fines and restitution by adult offenders; and the payment of child support by non-custodial parents.

Domingo also will work with the Conference of Vicinage Chief Probation Officers to develop and implement policies and procedures to improve and enhance the Judiciary's delivery of probation services throughout New Jersey.

She will work closely with managers in other divisions, including the family, criminal and finance divisions of the Judiciary, the state Department of Children and Families, and other agencies.

"As a former probation officer, I am thrilled to have the opportunity to lead the probation division at a very exciting time," said Domingo. "There have been many strides forward in recent years in technology, in our approach to rehabilitation, and in our case management techniques. I am eager to work with our terrific probation officers and managers to keep these developments moving forward."

Domingo joined the Judiciary in 1985 as a probation officer in Hudson County. She later served as an assistant jury manager, then jury manager, before being named assistant civil division manager.

She moved to the Morris/Sussex Vicinage in 1997, where she served as assistant trial court administrator.

In 2003, Domingo moved to the Union Vicinage as the Judiciary's first Hispanic trial court administrator.

Domingo is an active member of the New Jersey Council on Juvenile Justice System Improvement, co-chair of the state's Subcommittee on Racial Disparities and Disproportionate Minority Contact in the Juvenile Justice System, and co-chair of the local county council in Union Vicinage for Juvenile Justice System Improvement. She is the president of the Mid-Atlantic Association for Court Management.

Domingo has a bachelor's degree from Seton Hall University and a law degree from Seton Hall School of Law. She also holds certificates in court administration and public management.

She has completed the Court Executive Development Program of the National Center for State Courts' Institute for Court Management and is certified as a fellow.

She lives in North Brunswick with her husband, Edward, and their two children.

New Video Helps Attorneys Serve Indigent Defendants

The New Jersey Judiciary has released a training video for attorneys who represent indigent defendants in domestic violence contempt cases. The video is the first in a series of training videos designed to help attorneys assigned by the courts to represent indigent defendants.

The attorneys provide this service "pro bono," which is a shortened Latin phrase that means "for the public good."

In his introduction to the video, Chief Justice Stuart Rabner says, "Pro bono work is vital to our court system. One of the most cherished protections our citizens have is the constitutional right to be represented by counsel."

In New Jersey, defendants who cannot afford an attorney are entitled to free legal representation in certain types of cases.

While public defenders are available in certain case types, private attorneys share the burden of providing counsel when the law does not provide for the public defender to do so.

The attorneys are assigned on a rotating basis. They receive no compensation. With few exceptions, all New Jersey attorneys are required to accept pro bono assignments.

Attorneys doing pro bono work might not have experience in practicing the type of law that applies in their assigned case. The video series will help them prepare to represent their clients.

The first video provides guidance on how and when to set up an initial meeting with a client; what to expect at the initial court hearing; the documents and information that the attorney should expect to receive from the prosecutor during discovery; how to handle a guilty plea; and how to proceed if the defendant requests a trial.

Additional videos will help pro bono attorneys represent clients in municipal appeals and in parole revocation hearings.

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Painting the Town

Mural of Atlantic City Landmarks Unveiled During Adoption Day Celebration

By Kathleen Obringer
Ombudsman
Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage

A mural depicting famous Atlantic City landmarks now hangs in the Family Court waiting area of the Atlantic County Civil Courts Building in Atlantic City.

The mural, which was painted by artist and Atlantic City resident Tyrone Hart, extends over four walls and measures more than 500 square feet.

It depicts several well-known Atlantic City attractions, including the boardwalk and beach, the Atlantic City Lighthouse, the Steel Pier Ferris wheel, the Atlantic City Aquarium, and the beach patrol headquarters.

The mural also includes a child reading a book in the children's library and a signature scroll from the 2012 National Adoption Day celebration. A ceremony to unveil and dedicate the mural was held Feb. 27.

"This is a very special moment in our courthouse," Assignment Judge Julio L. Mendez said. "Our vision of having the waiting area to be a child-friendly inviting place becomes a reality. I am particularly grateful for the dedication of artist Tyrone Hart to make this stunning mural bright, inviting, and uplifting for our court users."

Hart donated his time and talent to paint the mural.

More photos of the mural can be seen at judiciary.state.nj.us/atlantic/index.htm

Atlantic/Cape May Assignment Judge Julio L. Mendez stands with Atlantic City artist Tyrone Hart at the dedication of Hart's mural at the Atlantic County Civil Courthouse in Atlantic City. The mural, which was painted on the walls of the Family Court waiting area, depicts several of the

Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage Assignment Judge Julio L. Mendez, artist Tyrone Hart, Trial Court Administrator Howard H. Berchtold Jr. and Family Division Manager Florine Alexander stand in front of a portion of the mural, which extends over four walls and measures more than 500 feet.

Morris/Sussex Vicinage Seeks Court Volunteers

The Morris/Sussex Vicinage is seeking dedicated volunteers to assist the court and provide vital services to the community.

As courthouse services assistants, volunteers help judges and court staff at the county courthouses in Morristown and Newton.

Under the direction of a judge or other court staff, volunteers can assist with directing and escorting litigants and jurors, answering and making phone calls, entering data, making photocopies, presenting paperwork to judges and court users, and other tasks as assigned.

Prospective volunteers must be fingerprinted for a background check.

For more information, contact Janie Rodriguez, ombudsman, at 973-656-3969 or Brenda Soto at 973-656-3997.

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Mental Health Probation Officers To Continue Their Work

BySiobhan Fay
Probation Mental Health Grant Coordinator
Administrative Office of the Courts

A total of 30 probation officers hired in 2010 under a federal grant to develop adult mental health caseloads have been hired permanently.

The Judiciary's probation services division obtained the grant in 2009, using its successful pilot in four vicinages, Atlantic/Cape May; Camden; Cumberland/Gloucester/Salem; and Ocean, as a model and recognizing the challenges and unique needs of the mentally ill probationer.

Mental health clients require more services, have greater difficulty than traditional probationers in fulfilling court and probation conditions, and do not respond well to conventional, confrontational strategies for addressing noncompliance.

The grant provided a cost effective alternative to incarceration and hospitalization for mentally ill probationers through highly structured supervision and access to community treatment and services

The program has been successful, resulting in more than 300 successful client discharges to independent living and more than 400 clients in transition to regular, less costly models of probation supervision.

Probationers have better access to treatment and services such as housing and employment.

There also has been improved coordination of state and local mental health network treatment providers, agencies, and policymakers and better management of hospitalizations, arrests, revocations and placements in county jails.

The officers were hired based on their education and experience in the mental health field. The officers were trained in criminal thinking, personality disorders, co-occurring disorders, crisis intervention and motivational interviewing.

Probation services has been working with Nancy Wolff, director of The Center for Behavioral Health Services and Criminal Justice Research at Rutgers University, to evaluate the program. Her final study will be released later this spring. Each vicinage continues to operate specialized mental health caseloads. A mental health working group has been established to create a permanent mental health supervision model for implementation statewide.

Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts, congratulates John Pizarro, acting assistant director of probation services, for his work with the mental health probation officers program.

Passaic Opens Child Support Call Center

By June Zieder
Ombudsman
Passaic Vicinage

After many months of planning and training, Passaic Vicinage's Child Support Call Center went live on Feb. 25. The center is manned by staff who respond to child support related questions and concerns.

Similar call centers are in operation throughout New Jersey.

Callers are given a PIN number to access information over the phone. Questions that require follow up are referred to a local case worker who will respond to the client within 48 hours.

Use of the call center assures all parties that every phone call will be answered.

The New Jersey Family Support Service Center (NJFSSC) State Disbursement Unit (SDU) is responsible for collecting, receipting, and processing of all child disbursement services.

The SDU operates a statewide call center and an enhanced Interactive Voice Response (IVR) phone system that provides information to child support callers.

Although in its infancy, the call center has taken many calls and is helping improve customer service.

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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.

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