

# JUDICIARY TIMES

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## JUDICIARY CELEBRATES ADOPTION DAY

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# Volunteers needed to monitor guardianships

By Judge Glenn A. Grant  
Acting Administrative Director of the Courts



Judge  
Glenn A. Grant

People with mental or physical disabilities who are unable to manage their personal affairs or their property are among the most vulnerable members of society. Fortunately, the courts provide a way to protect these individuals through the appointment of guardians.

Most court-appointed guardians responsibly perform essential services to support the well-being and financial security of incapacitated persons. Regrettably, a small minority of guardians exploit their positions by stealing from those whose financial affairs they have been entrusted to manage.

The New Jersey Judiciary takes potential threats to incapacitated persons very seriously and has developed and implemented procedures to prevent and to respond to guardian misconduct through our Guardianship Monitoring Program (GMP).

An initiative of Chief Justice Stuart Rabner, the GMP is a statewide volunteer-based court program that monitors cases handled by guardians who manage the personal and financial affairs of incapacitated individuals, including elderly and developmentally disabled adults.

The GMP uses trained volunteers as a frontline defense to protect persons subject to guardianship. GMP volunteers, supported by court staff, monitor periodic reports filed by guardians, track compliance with court requirements and identify issues of potential concern that may be elevated to a judge for review and intervention.

The GMP could not have been established at a better time because rates of guardianship filings continue to increase. In 2018, about 2,900 adult guardianships were filed statewide. Just six years ago, that number was closer to 2,400.

Demographic trends in New Jersey and nationally predict an expected significant increase in the number of people who may be placed in guardianships in the coming years - particularly as baby boomers age.

GMP volunteers must be 18 years of age or older and willing to commit to serve for at least one year. Candidates undergo standard screening for Judiciary volunteers, including an interview, background check and fingerprinting. Volunteers are expected to contribute about six to 12 hours per month to the program, and schedules are generally flexible.

For more information about the GMP, please visit our website at [njcourts.gov](http://njcourts.gov).

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**Stuart Rabner**  
Chief Justice

**Judge Glenn A. Grant**  
Acting Administrative Director  
of the Courts

**Peter McAleer**  
Director of Communications and  
Community Relations  
[Peter.McAleer@njcourts.gov](mailto:Peter.McAleer@njcourts.gov)

**Mike Mathis**  
Editor  
[Mike.Mathis@njcourts.gov](mailto:Mike.Mathis@njcourts.gov)

**Nicholas A. Mancini**  
Senior Digital Designer  
[Nicholas.Mancini@njcourts.gov](mailto:Nicholas.Mancini@njcourts.gov)

Contributors: Carl Biscaldi, Kim Casamassina, Pauline Daniels, Luis Hernandez, Diane Lanza, Colleen Lore, Keisha Manning, Donna Mazzanti, Jennifer Montano, Janet Slocum, MaryAnn Spoto, June Zieder and the AOC print shop.

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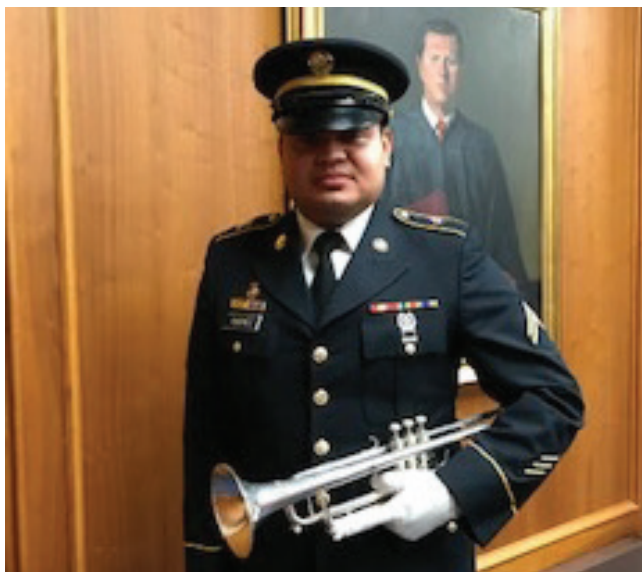
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# Attorneys honored during Pro Bono Week



The New Jersey Judiciary on Oct. 25 recognized nine attorneys from across the state for their pro bono services. The ceremony at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton, was held during Pro Bono Week, an opportunity to recognize the efforts of volunteers across all professions. A video profiling the attorneys and their work can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JE5rOJMsZqg>

## Monmouth Vicinage recognizes local veterans



The Monmouth Vicinage on Nov. 13 held its Veterans Day program, which included a presentation of colors by the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office Honor Guard, an instrumentalist from the 63<sup>rd</sup> Army Band of the New Jersey National Guard and personal stories of military service.

# Craig D. Bailey named assistant director of human resources at the AOC

By MaryAnn Spoto  
Communications Manager  
Administrative Office of the Courts

Craig D. Bailey is the Judiciary's new assistant director of human resources. He succeeds Janet Share Zatz, who retired Nov. 30, 2018.

Bailey oversees the development and implementation of human resources policies and procedures as well as recruitment, classification, compensation, performance management, benefits and labor and employee relations functions for more than 9,000 Judiciary employees. He also is responsible for human resources information systems and organizational development and training.

"We are most appreciative of the 10 years of outstanding service Janet has given to the Judiciary and welcome Craig to his new position," said Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts. "Craig brings a wealth of experience to a position that requires his extensive knowledge of human resources, labor relations and the many other matters the office handles that are so critical to the smooth operation of our organization."

Bailey most recently served as human resources division manager for the Passaic Vicinage, where he was responsible for recruitment, training and development, and payroll and benefits for approximately 450 employees.

Bailey joined the Judiciary in 2000 when he served as a hearing officer in the counsel's office. After eight years in that post, he became the Passaic Vicinage's general operations division manager before being named the vicinage's human resources division manager in 2011.



**Craig D. Bailey**

He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Concord University in West Virginia and a law degree from Rutgers University-Newark. He clerked for the Office of Administrative Law in Newark before joining the law firm of Murray, Murray & Corrigan in Little Silver, Monmouth County. For more than two years beginning in 1994, he worked as an attorney handling labor and employment law matters in the Burlington County Solicitor's Office.

From 1996 to 2000, he was an associate with the Mount Laurel law firm of Capehart & Scatchard, specializing in labor and employment law.

"Working with the talented and dedicated management team and staff in the Passaic Vicinage has been a rewarding and gratifying experience," Bailey said. "I am grateful and humbled by this opportunity to work with the Central Office management team, staff and the vicinages. I look forward to working with them on overcoming current challenges and meeting our collective goals."

## Camden welcomes new attorneys



**Camden Vicinage Assignment Judge Deborah Silverman Katz administered the New Jersey oath of admission to new attorneys and delivered opening remarks during a swearing-in ceremony Dec. 12 at the Hall of Justice in Camden. Superior Court Judge Gwendolyn Blue administered the Pennsylvania oath of admission and Ronald Lieberman, president of the Camden County Bar Association, addressed the new attorneys.**

## Middlesex Vicinage celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

**By Luis Hernandez**  
Ombudsman  
Middlesex Vicinage

The Middlesex Vicinage celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month in October with quizzes that tested staff knowledge of Hispanic history. Staff also was invited to display items relating to their Hispanic culture.

The vicinage held a Hispanic Heritage Month luncheon at the main courthouse in New Brunswick on Oct. 11. Assignment Judge Alberto Rivas and Trial Court Administrator Dawn Brevard-Waters delivered opening remarks.

The guest speaker was Judge Victoria Pratt. As chief judge of the Newark Municipal Court, she spent years gaining a deeper understanding of how justice could be delivered in a manner that boosts participants' trust in the legal system. "Customer service is critical to those who seek justice, no matter the economic or social status of the litigant," Judge Pratt said.

She holds a bachelor's degree from Trenton State College, now known as The College of New Jersey, in Ewing.

## Colleen P. Lore named trial court administrator in Camden Vicinage

**By MaryAnn Spoto**  
Communications Manager  
Administrative Office of the Courts

Colleen P. Lore is the new trial court administrator in the Camden Vicinage, effective Feb. 2, 2019. Assignment Judge Deborah Silverman Katz announced Lore's appointment in November.

Lore, operations division manager for the vicinage, succeeded Carole A. Cummings, who is retiring after 30 years with the New Jersey Judiciary.

"Carole has been an invaluable administrator and we are indebted to her vision and commitment to the vicinage," Judge Silverman Katz said. "While we will miss Carole, we're excited about Colleen's appointment. She brings extensive expertise and experience to her new responsibilities as trial court administrator and we are happy to welcome her to that role."

Lore will work closely with Judge Silverman Katz and vicinage leadership to manage a court operation that includes 29 judges and 655 staff members.

The trial court administrator is the highest-ranking staff executive in the vicinage in charge of all court operations, including financial management, human resources, information systems, case coordination, case flow management, probation services, jury utilization, facilities, equipment, maintenance, records management and statistical analysis.

Under New Jersey court rules, the administrative director of the courts appoints the trial court administrator in each vicinage. Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts, named Lore on the strong recommendation of Judge Silverman Katz.



**Colleen P. Lore**

A graduate of Rutgers University–Camden, Lore joined the Judiciary as an administrative specialist in the Camden Vicinage in 2013 and held the position of court services supervisor in the criminal division for six months before she was appointed to her current position.

Before joining the Judiciary, she was owner and vice president of operations for a delivery company in Barrington and also served as delivery manager for an appliance company before becoming an office manager and paralegal for a Haddonfield law firm.

She is co-chair of the New Jersey Judiciary Conference of Operations Division Managers, staffs the vicinage's Court Security Committee and chairs the vicinage's Labor Management and Health and Safety committees.

"I am honored and excited to get started in my new role," Lore said. "I look forward to continuing our tradition of excellence."

# Judiciary celebrates National Adoption Day

**National Adoption Day, held annually on the third Saturday in November, gives judges, attorneys, court professionals and child advocates the opportunity to come together as they witness the courtrooms fill with smiles as children become a permanent part of their new families. For those who are committed to creating forever families for these children, this annual event has become a highlight they look forward to every year. The following is a look at some Adoption Day activities across the state.**

## Burlington

The Burlington Vicinage celebrated its 12<sup>th</sup> annual Adoption Day on Nov. 16. Judges Richard L. Hertzberg, Aimee R. Belgard and John L. Call Jr. finalized the adoptions of 21 children.

The celebration opened with welcoming comments from Assignment Judge Ronald E. Bookbinder, Family Presiding Judge Richard J. Nocella and Surrogate Mary Ann O'Brien.

A luncheon for the children and their families was held at the Funplex in Mount Laurel.



**About the Cover: Austin, 2 sleeps in the arms of his mother, Julie Moon, as father Jacob Moon and siblings Mackenzie, Aubrey, and Lucy show their affection.**

## Hudson

Presiding Judge Nesle A. Rodriguez and Judges Bernadette N. DeCastro and Lois Lipton presided over the finalization of the adoptions of 15 children on Nov. 16.

"National Adoption Day is always the highlight of the court year," Judge DeCastro said. "Seeing the children with their newly formed families is heartwarming. It validates the difficult decisions that family court judges have to make in terminating someone's parental rights."

A small reception was held after the adoptions were finalized. Assignment Judge Peter F. Bariso Jr. congratulated the families and read from the presidential proclamation that was issued for National Adoption Day. He also stated how important it is for children to have a family they can call their own.

Darlene Fusco, Bergen/Hudson area director of the state Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) congratulated the families and children. She noted that seeing the happiness on the children's faces made the long

adoption process worthwhile. DCP&P managers gave the families plaques and gifts to the children. A celebration was held at Liberty Science Center in Jersey City on Nov. 17 for the families and children who were adopted throughout the year.



**Assignment Judge Peter F. Bariso Jr. displays a banner to celebrate National Adoption Month. He is joined by Superior Court Family Division Judge Bernadette N. DeCastro on his right, Beverly Savage, executive director of Hudson County CASA on his immediate left and Darlene Fusco, Hudson Bergen area director of the state Division of Child Protection and Permanency. The banner hung outside of the Hudson County Administration Building in Jersey City through November to raise awareness for the 117,000 children in foster care across the country awaiting permanent homes.**

## Monmouth

A total of 20 children and one adult were welcomed into their forever families at the Monmouth Vicinage's 13<sup>th</sup> Adoption Day ceremony on Nov. 15. Family Division Presiding Judge Kathleen A. Sheedy and Judges Teresa Kondrup-Coyle, Angela White Dalton, Gregory L. Acquaviva, Henry P. Butehorn and Andrea I. Marshall presided over the adoption proceedings.

Continued on page 7

Judge Sheedy opened the program, noting that Adoption Day is the best day in the courthouse. She encouraged public awareness of safe haven laws that allow a parent or their representative to anonymously surrender an infant less than 30 days old to any police station or hospital emergency room. Paul and Lori Umbria spoke about their experience as foster parents and as the adoptive parents of their 15-year-old daughter.

They explained that the official symbol of adoption, a triangle intertwined with hearts, represents the love that is involved in adoption and said that the points of the triangle stand for the powerful bond between the parents and child. A heartwarming family photo montage was shown.



**In Monmouth, Paul and Lori Umbria (with their daughter) spoke of their experience as foster parents.**

The adoptive families attended a reception where they were presented with framed family photos. The youngest adoptees received a teddy bear and a pin that read, "I'm Special, I Am Adopted." Other adoptees received gift cards. The Monmouth Bar Association provided the gifts for the adoptees.

The celebration was co-hosted with the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P), the Monmouth County Surrogate's Office, the Monmouth Bar Association, and the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). Material about the adoption process was provided, and representatives from DCP&P and the Monmouth County Surrogate's Office assisted families and answered questions.



**The Wiley family celebrate Adoption Day in the Monmouth Vicinage.**

### Passaic

The Passaic Vicinage hosted its 11<sup>th</sup> Annual National Adoption Day program on Nov. 16. Despite unexpected inclement weather and a delayed opening, this year's event was once again a success. Judges Imre Karaszegi Jr. and Judge LaToyia K. Jenkins finalized 15 adoptions. Children received a stuffed animal of their choice, a certificate from Surrogate Bernice Toledo and two gifts donated by state Sen. Kristin M. Corrado's office and the Passaic County

Court Appointed Special Advocates. Assignment Judge Ernest M. Caposela and Family Division Presiding Judge Rudolph A. Filko addressed the more than 100 guests in attendance. Karen Backiel, field support supervisor for the state Division of Child Protection and Permanency, was master of ceremonies.

After the proceedings, the festivities continued at Planet 301 across from the courthouse at the Center City Mall.

### Somerset / Hunterdon / Warren

The annual National Adoption Day program for the Somerset/Hunterdon/Warren Vicinage was celebrated on Nov. 16 at the Hunterdon County Courthouse in Flemington.

The joyous occasion concluded with the adoption of six children by four families. Family Presiding Judge Kimarie Rahill led the celebration and recognized the parents, children and well-wishers. "Adoption Day is the happiest day of the year for the Judiciary. Every year, the family division looks forward to hosting this great event, and it is a rewarding experience witnessing children officially becoming part of forever families," she said.

This year's theme was Ohana, which refers to family

in Hawaiian culture, but in a much broader sense. The concept behind Ohana is that families are bound together and they must work together, care for each other and remember each other. The theme was incorporated into the decorations, games and festivities.

The children were presented with gifts that were chosen specific to their interests. Families were photographed and given framed photographs as mementos. Children enjoyed crafts, face painting and a luncheon. The celebration highlighted the partnership between the Judiciary, the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency, the Court Appointed Special Advocates program, the Hunterdon and Somerset County bar associations, the Hunterdon County Surrogate's Office and Hunterdon Healthcare.

# Out of sight, out of mind, out of time.

**Editor's Note: This is the eighth in a series that highlights interesting complex business litigation cases. The Complex Business Litigation Program is designed to streamline and expedite service to litigants in complex business litigation. Under the program, cases are assigned either to the complex commercial case type or the complex construction case type, and are individually managed by a judge with specialized training on business issues. The Supreme Court established the program, which became effective on Jan. 1, 2015, to resolve complex business, commercial and construction cases.**

## Pancake Republix, LLC v. ConnectOne Bank and Chanel Rojas

This action arose out of a series of forgeries. The relevant facts are undisputed. Plaintiff, Pancake Republix, LLC, is a business operating as a restaurant owned by Bobby Bournias.

Bournias handled all finances and accounting for the Pancake Republix himself. Pancake Republix maintained the two business operating accounts with defendant, ConnectOne Bank, for which Bournias maintained a checkbook. These accounts were governed by ConnectOne's standard business deposit account agreement.

The agreement provided that, unless otherwise agreed to in writing, most checks are processed automatically without review, which is a common banking practice, and that periodic statements of account activity would be provided. The agreement further states: "You must notify us within 30 days after we mail [the statement] or otherwise make available to you of any discrepancies. If you fail to notify us, you will have no claim against us..."

In the summer of 2015, Bournias hired his sister-in-law, Chanel Rojas, as a manager and assistant. Before going on vacation in July 2015, Bournias gave Rojas a key to his office so she could access his computer. Bournias did not reconcile the checkbooks for the two accounts when he returned, even though he received overdraft notices from June through October 2015. It was not until March 2016 that Bournias reviewed the statements and realized that since July 2015, 50 checks had been forged and negotiated by Rojas from the business accounts for a total of \$216,567.

Once Bournias informed ConnectOne about the fraudulent checks, the accounts were closed, new accounts were created, and stops were placed on all outstanding checks. Rojas ultimately pled guilty and was sentenced to three years in prison.

Pancake Republix then filed a civil suit against ConnectOne alleging violations of the New Jersey Consumer Fraud Act (CFA) and the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC). ConnectOne filed a motion for summary judgment seeking to dismiss the CFA and UCC claims.

The court granted ConnectOne's motion and dismissed Pancake Republix's claims under the CFA. The court relied on

an Appellate Division case with nearly identical facts. In that opinion, it was noted that, absent a special relationship, a customer cannot assert a claim under the CFA against a bank as it would conflict with the UCC and lead to inconsistent jury verdicts. The plaintiff failed to allege any special relationship; therefore, the plaintiff's claims were exclusively governed by the UCC.

The court also granted ConnectOne's motion regarding the UCC claims, as the plaintiff failed to timely notify the bank of the fraudulent checks. The UCC provides banks a safe harbor with respect to fraudulent items paid out so long as they provide customers with monthly statements. The agreement also specifically requires that customers review statements within 30 days and promptly report any fraud.

ConnectOne provided monthly statements reflecting all account activity, including the fraudulent checks. However, it is undisputed that for eight months, Bournias did not use an accountant, a bookkeeper or a procedure to review and reconcile the statements himself. The court concluded that Pancake Republix failed to exercise reasonable promptness in accordance with its responsibilities pursuant to the agreement and the UCC. Therefore, the plaintiff's claims for any checks paid prior to the 30 days before ConnectOne was provided notice were dismissed.

The court also dismissed any claims for checks paid within 30 days of providing notice to ConnectOne pursuant to the UCC's "Repeater Rule." The Repeater Rule allocates responsibility between the bank and the customer in which a repeat offender commits numerous frauds, imposing a duty on the customer to diligently review statements to discover the pattern.

Once Bournias notified ConnectOne of the fraud, ConnectOne took immediate action and did not honor any more fraudulent checks. Bournias' failure to review the monthly statements allowed Rojas to perpetuate the fraud for more than eight months.

All of Pancake Republix's claims for the fraudulent checks against ConnectOne were dismissed. ConnectOne's counterclaims for breach of contract and indemnification are pending.

# Passaic Vicinage remembers those fighting, lost to cancer

By June Zieder  
Ombudsman  
Passaic Vicinage

For the second consecutive year, the Passaic Vicinage sponsored Cancer Awareness Day to honor and remember those who survived cancer, those who lost the fight, and just as critically important, those who care for those going through the battle.

The inspiration for this event originated from Assignment Judge Ernest M. Caposela, who wanted to find a way to educate the public about the effects of cancer while taking into account the many employees and their families who are affected by the disease.

This year's Cancer Awareness Day was held on Oct. 26 in the rotunda of the historic Passaic County Courthouse in Paterson. Guest speakers included Adrian Allotey, a doula and certified reiki specialist who discussed her work with the physical, emotional and spiritual phases for end-of-life care, and the Rev. William Cash, a prostate cancer survivor who shared his story on winning the war against cancer.

To mark the day, staff created posters on cancer awareness that were hung in the rotunda with dedication bags that were placed outside the Historic Courthouse to honor those taken by the disease. Remarks by Judge Caposela and Shierff's Office Chief Daryl Walton on the importance



**Passaic Vicinage judges and staff stand on the front steps of the historic Passaic County Courthouse in Paterson with posters honoring those who died of cancer.**

of recognizing cancer awareness paved the way for the final event of the day, a walk around the courthouse by vicinage staff and the public to symbolize the fight against cancer. Many wore their Cancer Awareness Day T-shirts with the slogan *Live for Life, Hope for all*.

Vendors, community agencies and departments staffed tables with information on cancer detection, support groups, caretakers and programs for those fighting cancer. Among the agencies represented were Hackensack Meridian Health, St. Joseph's Medical Center, Passaic County Board of Social Services, Cancer Treatment Centers of America, Erica Hill – Alternative for Wellness, American Cancer Society, Cancer Support Community Center, Fighting Children's Cancer, Englewood Hospital, Pink Breast Center and CURE Magazine.

# Hudson Vicinage helps juveniles answer the question, 'What would you do?'

By Carl Biscaldi, Assistant Family Division Manager  
Pauline D. Daniels, Ombudsman  
Hudson Vicinage

The Hudson Vicinage held a public education seminar on the juvenile justice system on Nov. 7

The seminar, *What Would You Do?: Increasing Success for System-Involved Youth*, was held to educate the public about the difference between the adult and juvenile justice systems by highlighting the restorative nature of the juvenile system.

Court staff and representatives from the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office, Public Defender's Office, New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission, and Hudson Care Management Organization (CMO) facilitated an interactive discussion before approximately 35 participants at the Mary McLeod

Bethune Community Life Center in Jersey City. Through interactive scenarios that walked participants through the juvenile justice system, participants were able to offer suggestions on how delinquent behavior should be addressed. Community leaders offered suggestions on how their organizations could offer intervention services to system-involved youth.

The court recruited three new Juvenile Conference Committee volunteers, and several women offered to mentor girls on probation. The program was co-sponsored by the Hudson County Community Outreach Committee of the Local Council on New Jersey Juvenile Justice System Improvement and the Jersey City Woman's Clergy Alliance. The community outreach subcommittee is committed to educating the public on the juvenile process and demonstrating how they can become involved in the lives of youth in their community.

# Hudson Vicinage hosts annual “aging out” seminar for children

**By Carl Biscaldi**  
Assistant Family Division Manager  
Hudson Vicinage

The Hudson Vicinage hosted its eighth annual aging out seminar on Oct. 12 at New Jersey City University.

This event allowed children who are aging out of the child welfare system an opportunity to learn what is available to them.

The day included presentations, panel discussions, a youth talent show, a drop-in center and an information fair.

Family Division Judge Bernadette N. DeCastro and family division staff members Carolyn Then and Priscila Pender welcomed the children and encouraged them to get as much information they could about the services that are available.

“(I was) so happy to be able to spend the day at this year’s event,” Judge DeCastro said. “It was heartwarming to get a chance to spend time with the youth outside of the courtroom setting.”

Kate Findley from Rutgers University presented Aging Out, Don’t Miss Out, which emphasizes that children should

meet early with their caseworker from the state Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) and their law guardian so they can set goals before they turn 18.

During a presentation on relationships, Juanita Henry then made the children realize that they are in charge of their lives and they have to make the correct decisions regarding relationships.

A total of 27 vendors attended the information fair, which allowed the children to learn what services and job opportunities are available and how to apply to college.

Volunteers from the National Basketball Association, Rutgers Law School and the Family Services Organization of Hudson County staffed the drop-in center.

Children worked with the volunteers to develop resumes and cover letters, search for employment and start college searches.

The family division, DCP&P and the Court Appointed Special Advocates hosted the event.

## Middlesex volunteers recognized for their work

**By Luis Hernandez**  
Ombudsman  
Middlesex Vicinage

The Middlesex Vicinage’s annual volunteer dinner was held on Nov. 1 in North Brunswick. The vicinage recognized its volunteers for their work throughout the court year.

The theme for the dinner was Volunteers Help Build Stronger and Resilient Communities.

Trial Court Administrator Dawn Brevard-Waters was the master of ceremonies. She spoke about the important role volunteers play in helping the court system function.

Assignment Judge Alberto Rivas thanked the volunteers for their work and spoke about the positive effects of volunteering in the court system. Each volunteer program coordinator personally thanked their volunteers.



**Among those attending the volunteer dinner were (from left) Judges Phillip E. Paley, Sheree V. Pitchford and Michael Toto, Trial Court Administrator Dawn Brevard-Waters. Judge Marcia Silva and Assignment Judge Alberto Rivas.**

# Essex judges, staff learn about dealing with domestic violence victims and cases

By Kesha Manning  
Assistant Family Division Manager  
Essex Vicinage

The Essex Vicinage hosted a domestic violence summit at the Seton Hall University School of Law in Newark on Sept. 21 to increase awareness and identify risk factors posed to victims of domestic violence and their families.

More than 200 people attended the summit, which was held under the direction of Assignment Judge Sallyanne Floria and served as a platform for training judges, judicial staff and stakeholders who work with victims of domestic violence.

In a county where about 3,500 temporary restraining orders were granted during the previous court year, the training was relevant.

An overarching consensus was that staff and judges must strengthen communication and share information to improve the processing of domestic violence cases.

Systems should be examined to ensure they are yielding effective results. Emphasis was placed also on the need to monitor and hold domestic violence batterers accountable. Among the organizations represented were the state Division of Child Protection and Permanency, Jewish Family Service, Rachel Coalition, Safe House and Shani Baraka Women's Center.

The summit was a collaborative effort between the Essex County Domestic Violence Working Group and the Essex County Family Justice Center. Presiding Family Judge David B. Katz and Trial Court Administrator Amy K. DePaul, co-chairs of the Essex County Domestic Violence Working Group, developed the summit with Family Division Manager Karen D. Smith, Assistant Family Division Manager Keisha Manning, Nancy Kessler and the Essex County Family Justice Center.



**Top: Essex Vicinage staff who helped coordinate the summit included (from left) Kesha Manning, Patricia Draude, Jane Michaels, Shavonne Jones, Mmaezi Chiobi and Shalaya Williams.**

**Bottom: Essex Vicinage Presiding Family Division Judge David B. Katz and Trial Court Administrator Amy DePaul were among those who developed the idea for the summit.**



## Editor's Note

The deadline for the spring 2019 edition of the *Judiciary Times* is Friday, March 15. Feature stories about court programs and newsworthy profiles about judges and court staff are welcome. Submissions can be sent to [Mike.Mathis@njcourts.gov](mailto:Mike.Mathis@njcourts.gov).

# Spotlight: Camden County Courthouse

*Editor's Note: This story is the 10<sup>th</sup> in a series detailing the rich histories of New Jersey's courthouses.*

**By Mike Mathis**  
Judiciary Times Editor

When Camden County was formed from Gloucester County in 1844, it was not a forgone conclusion that the county seat – and the county courthouse – would be located in the new county's namesake.

It took a series of elections and legal challenges before the decision was made to locate the seat of the new county government and courts in Camden. Among the communities vying for the honor besides Camden were Haddonfield, Mount Ephraim and Long-A-Coming (present day Berlin Township and Berlin Borough), according to the book *Camden County New Jersey* by Jeffery M. Dorwart.

The vote for Long-A-Coming was decisive in one of the four elections, prompting the Camden County Board of Freeholders to purchase property for county buildings there, Dorwart wrote. However, the New Jersey Supreme Court in May 1851 ordered that Camden, winner of the most recent election for the county seat, be made the permanent seat of government, Dorwart wrote.

That did not end the controversy as to where the courthouse and county offices should be built.

Two rival ferry owners vied for placement of the buildings near their respective landings, but the Cooper family, which had interests in both companies, settled the dispute by offering land between Federal and Market streets between the two ferry landings.

The first Camden County Courthouse, a two-story brick building with an iron cage to hold convicted murderers, was dedicated in March 1855.

The total cost of the building was \$40,970.79, according to an April 1906 story in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that detailed the structure's demolition. During the construction of the new courthouse in 1904 on the same site, court sessions were held in the first City Hall, which was built at Haddon Avenue and Benson Street in 1876.

The second Camden County Courthouse, a four-story white granite building with a rotunda, opened in 1906 at a cost of \$700,000. This building was razed in the 1950s to make way for the construction of a Lit Brothers department store, which today is the Camden County Althea R. Wright Administration Building. Wright was elected to the Camden County Board of Freeholders in 1993 but died the following year.

Court events were then held in the adjacent Camden City Hall, which was constructed between 1929 and 1931. A jail was added in the late 1960s when City Hall was expanded from five to 21 floors. The jail was decommissioned when Camden County built a new jail next to the Hall of Justice in 1988.

The current courthouse, the Hall of Justice, was built in the early 1980s on South Fifth Street between Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Federal Street. The building was dedicated in May 1996 to Maria Barnaby Greenwald, the first woman to hold the offices of Cherry Hill mayor, Camden County freeholder, director of the Camden County Board of Freeholders and Camden County surrogate. Greenwald died in a car accident in January 1995.



**The second Camden County Courthouse as it appeared in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Photo courtesy of the Camden County Historical Society.)**



**The Camden County Hall of Justice in Camden, which was built in the early 1980s.**