

# JUDICIARY TIMES

A Publication of the New Jersey Courts | Summer 2021



Administrative Office of the Courts | Trenton, NJ



## THE SLOW, STEADY MOVE TO A NEW NORMAL

Page 2



## SUE REGAN RETIRES

Page 8

## LAW DAY ACTIVITIES

Page 15

## SPOTLIGHT: MIDDLESEX COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Page 16

# The slow steady move to a new normal

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



Judge  
Glenn A. Grant

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the New Jersey Judiciary has made decisions on how to conduct of court operations based on guidance from our state's experts in the Department of Health and from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Judges and staff meet regularly to discuss state and national trends and to adjust our operations accordingly.

Throughout the pandemic, the courts have remained operational virtually, with in-person public access to our court buildings limited unless court users were attending a scheduled court proceeding or had an appointment.

On Aug. 2, all state courthouses reopened fully to the public. That is, members of the public no longer need to have a scheduled court proceeding or an appointment in order to enter a state courthouse.

With the limitations on the types of matters that were able to be addressed while we were in remote operations, we are now confronted with an extraordinary number of pending cases in various case types. So that we can begin to address the large number of cases that have been delayed, courthouses and the central office returned to full staffing as of September 7, after increasing incrementally over the summer.

It has been challenging for everyone, but our judges and staff have continued to serve the public during these trying times.

To further safeguard the health of our judges, staff and the public, we are requiring all staff and state court judges to either provide proof that they have been vaccinated against COVID-19 or submit results of a weekly COVID-19 test.

We instituted this new policy to support a safe workplace for all members of the Judiciary and all court users amid worsening COVID-19 trends in New Jersey and across the nation. The Judiciary will maintain the confidentiality of all vaccination and testing records.

Meanwhile, we continue to consider what the courts will look like after the pandemic. Criminal jury trials will be held in-person, most civil trials will be held remotely for now, while other proceedings could take place in a hybrid format.

We will continue to be guided by our health officials to sustain the health and safety of our judges, staff, and the public while maintaining our constitutional role to fairly and justly resolve society's disputes.



*Judiciary Times* is published quarterly by the Office of Communications and Community Relations, Administrative Office of the Courts.

**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: Donna Coppola,  
Sarah Hatcher, Assignment Judge  
Jeffrey R. Jablonski, Sandra LeBron,  
Colleen Lore, Jeanne Seymour,  
Janet Slocum, MaryAnn Spoto and  
June Zieder.



[www.twitter.com/njcourts](https://www.twitter.com/njcourts)



[www.facebook.com/njcourtsgov](https://www.facebook.com/njcourtsgov)



[www.youtube.com/njcourts](https://www.youtube.com/njcourts)



[www.instagram.com/njcourts](https://www.instagram.com/njcourts)



[www.linkedin.com/company/new-jersey-courts](https://www.linkedin.com/company/new-jersey-courts)

# Supreme Court authorizes resumption of in-person criminal jury trials and grand jury proceedings

By MaryAnn Spoto  
Communications Manager  
Administrative Office of the Courts

Criminal jury trials resumed in person in June under a Supreme Court order issued May 11 that revised juror service based on the easing of COVID-19 restrictions in New Jersey. The Court's order directs the resumption of in-person criminal jury trials beginning June 15, with cases that involve detained defendants receiving the highest priority.

Civil trials will continue to be conducted in a virtual format, unless an assignment judge determines there are compelling circumstances to warrant an in-person trial. For example, cases that involve a plaintiff whom doctors have determined has a limited life expectancy will be prioritized for in-person trials. The order, signed by Chief Justice Stuart Rabner, states, "The Judiciary throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been guided by the recommendations of public health authorities, including the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH). Today, based on positive trends statewide, key public health indicators regarding COVID-19 in New Jersey are encouraging."



**Jury and Non-Jury  
Criminal Trials Completed  
July 2019 - 35**

In a separate order, the Court directed the resumption of in-person grand juries on or after June 15, with each county to have at least one in-person panel in place by Aug. 1. The in-person panels would also be permitted to meet in non-court locations. Grand jury selections will continue to be conducted in a virtual format.

For criminal trials, jury selection will be virtual for the first phase and will be in person for the final phase. Jury selection for civil trials will remain remote. All in-person court events will be conducted with appropriate health precautions, including face masks and social distancing. For remote events, the Judiciary will provide electronic devices and related support to jurors who need such assistance to participate.

Since March 16, 2020, judges at all levels of the New Jersey courts have conducted nearly 181,000 remote court events involving 2.4 million participants. In addition, with training and support from the Judiciary, more than 6,000 jurors have participated in virtual jury trial selections since the start of the pandemic.

<b>July 2019</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>August 2019</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>September 2019</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>October 2019</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>November 2019</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>December 2019</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>January 2020</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>February 2020</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>March 2020</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>April 2020</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>May 2020</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>June 2020</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>July 2020</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>August 2020</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>September 2020</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>October 2020</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>November 2020</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>December 2020</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>January 2021</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>February 2021</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>March 2021</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>April 2021</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>May 2021</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>June 2021</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>July 2021</b>	<b>18</b>



**Jury and Non-Jury  
Criminal Trials Completed  
July 2021 - 18**



# Supreme Court special committee report outlines plan to prepare for pending landlord/tenant crisis

By MaryAnn Spoto  
Communications Manager  
Administrative Office of the Courts

A special committee formed by Chief Justice Stuart Rabner released a series of recommendations today to reform how courts handle landlord-tenant matters and to confront the impending flood of cases they will be asked to hear once a statewide moratorium on evictions is lifted. The report outlines 18 recommendations that address the immediate impact of COVID-19 and long-term improvements for the handling of landlord-tenant matters.

"The committee's work complements the Judiciary's ongoing efforts with Executive and Legislative branch leaders to try to prevent widespread housing instability and homelessness once the moratorium on residential evictions ends," Chief Justice Rabner said. "The Court welcomes comments on the committee's proposals, which are designed to improve the overall landlord-tenant process and fairly and expeditiously resolve the large number of filings expected soon."

COVID-19 has left tens of thousands of tenants struggling or unable to pay their rent. At the same time, landlords who rely on rent to pay their bills have seen their own livelihoods placed in jeopardy. Residential evictions currently are on hold under a moratorium imposed by Gov. Phil Murphy. Central to the report of the Judiciary Special Committee on Landlord Tenant are the following recommendations:

- Hire and train legal specialists to assist with more than 50,000 pending eviction cases and more than 194,000 new filings expected by 2022.
- Create structured opportunities to resolve landlord-tenant matters at case management and settlement conferences.
- Connect individuals with rental resources available through the state Department of Community Affairs and other sources.

Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts, served as chair of the special committee and thanked its members for identifying collaborative solutions to confront a pending crisis and for laying the foundation for a better process for handling landlord-tenant cases in the future. Burlington County Assignment Judge Jeanne Covert served as vice-chair.

The Special Committee brought together various stakeholders, including the New Jersey State Bar Association, Legal Services of New Jersey, the New Jersey Apartment Association, and a coalition of housing advocates.



**Tenancy Cases Pending  
Statewide**  
July 2019 - 10,854



**Tenancy Cases Pending  
Statewide**  
July 2021 - 56,889

July 2019	10,854
August 2019	9,850
September 2019	11,183
October 2019	11,752
November 2019	11,955
December 2019	13,429
January 2020	12,572
February 2020	11,316
March 2020	12,813
April 2020	16,376
May 2020	21,099
June 2020	25,680
July 2020	30,194
August 2020	33,060
September 2020	35,702
October 2020	39,252
November 2020	41,656
December 2020	45,242
January 2021	47,855
February 2021	49,864
March 2021	52,706
April 2021	54,221
May 2021	55,507
June 2021	56,533
July 2021	56,889

# Courthouses provide technology rooms for easier access to court proceedings for litigants and attorneys

By MaryAnn Spoto  
Communications Manager  
Administrative Office of the Courts

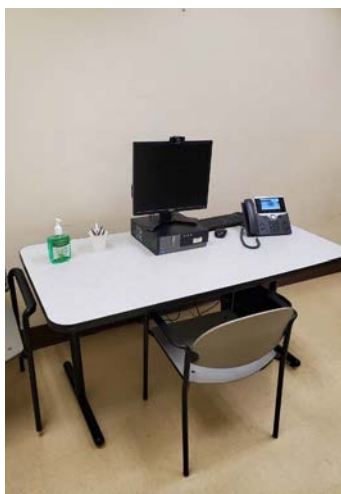
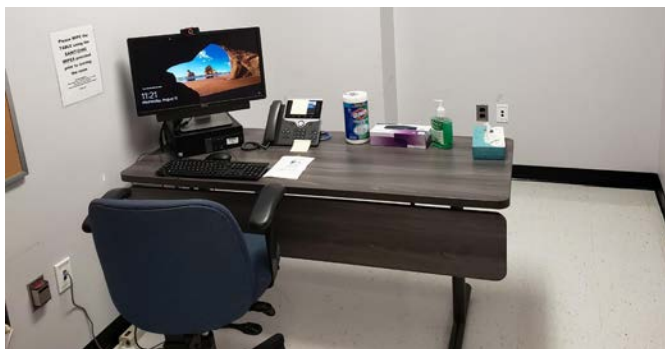
The New Jersey Judiciary has equipped state courthouses with special rooms that allow court users with limited or no access to technology to participate in judicial functions during the COVID-19 health crisis. The more than 21 county courthouses have a designated space where litigants and attorneys can participate in court matters remotely by using computers directly connected to their proceeding.

Courthouse technology rooms enable parties without reliable personal technology to participate in scheduled matters, including Children in Court, domestic violence, and adult guardianship proceedings. The technology rooms can be reserved, but also are available for those with emergent matters or users requiring certain ADA accommodations.

Applicants for emergent relief can use technology rooms to request domestic violence restraining orders and to prevent illegal lockouts. "When the COVID-19 health crisis required us to move to virtual proceedings, we recognized right away that we needed to assist those who do not have the necessary technological skills or resources to participate remotely. Technology rooms are one of the tools being



utilized by the New Jersey Judiciary to provide access to our courts even during this pandemic," said Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts. The private rooms, sanitized after each use, are equipped with a desk, chair, monitor, webcam, and sanitizer and are designed to reduce the number of surfaces users must touch. Court facilities have signs and other precautions reminding visitors not to enter if they are sick or have been exposed to COVID-19.



## Use of Tech Rooms in Selected Vicinages' (Since 2020)

Atlantic/Cape May	91
Burlington	112
Camden	332
Essex	115
Middlesex	332
Morris/Sussex	31
Passaic	1,234
Union	22

## Monmouth Vicinage hosts state's first naturalization ceremony since start of COVID-19 pandemic



For the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services was able to hold a large group naturalization ceremony in New Jersey. A total of 25 people became citizens at the ceremony, which was held June 14 at the Monmouth County Courthouse in Freehold.

## Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage hosts open houses

The Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage hosted an open house in each of its three courthouses during the first week of June.

Though a guided tour, court staff highlighted the COVID-19 safety measures throughout the courthouse, including the strategic placement of social distancing markers and personal protective equipment in courtrooms, jury assembly areas, and service counters.

There also were presentations about court events held throughout the past year. Slideshows will be displayed on monitors throughout the courthouses, highlighting court events and initiatives conducted in both counties amid the pandemic.

In accordance with New Jersey's COVID-19 regulations, attendees were required to wear face coverings and maintain social distancing.





# Justice Jaynee LaVecchia to remain on the bench through the end of the year



Associate Justice Jaynee LaVecchia, the Court's senior associate justice who is retiring at the end of the year after 21 years on the state's highest court, was honored by her colleagues during the Court's final sitting of the 2020-2021 term on June 29. The session was the Court's first in its courtroom at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020.



## New Jersey Supreme Court Associate Justice Lee Solomon receives tenure, sworn-in

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner on June 7 administered the oath to Associate Justice Lee Solomon, who the state Senate reappointed with tenure four days earlier. They were joined in person by Associate Justice Fabiana Pierre-Louis, who is set to mark her first anniversary on the court on Sept. 1. The ceremony was held at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton.

## Construction Corner

By Mike Mathis  
Judiciary Times Editor

The following are updates on some of the construction programs around the state.

### Bergen

Renovate Main Courthouse - The first phase is complete; the bidding process for the second phase being contested in the Appellate Division. Until the case is resolved, the bid will not be awarded.

### Essex

The Martin Luther King Jr. Justice Building was dedicated during a ribbon cutting ceremony on June 17 (see photos at right). The third and fourth floors include courtrooms for the Tax Court and Appellate Division.

### Hudson

Work continues on the construction of two courtrooms in the Brennan Courthouse. Construction of the new justice

complex is underway. Construction of a parking garage will run concurrent with construction of the justice complex.

### Monmouth

New Security Entrance - Construction continues. The estimated completion of this project is winter 2022.

### Passaic

Renovation of Annex Building - Staff moved into the building on June 1 after the installation of security cameras was completed.

### Ocean County Justice Complex

The project involves renovating two existing courtrooms at the Ocean County Justice Complex for criminal courtrooms. Ocean County Commissioners are planning to construct a new family building at a projected cost of \$50 million. The vicinage is working with the architect to provide space planning requirements.

### Salem

Space for New Courthouse - Bids came in under budget and construction has begun. Completion of this project could be affected by delays in material delivery.

# After more than four decades of Judiciary service, Sue Regan retires

By Mike Mathis  
Judiciary Times Editor

Sue Regan never had a job she didn't like. In a time when few people spent their entire careers in one organization, Regan ascended over four decades from probation officer to the highest administrative judicial official in the vicinage where the state capital is the county seat. And she's enjoyed every position she's held.

"I've loved every role I've ever had, and I've loved all 44 years," said Regan, who retired June 30 as the Mercer Vicinage's trial court administrator. "(The Judiciary) was a great place to work." As the highest-ranking staff executive in the vicinage, the trial court administrator is responsible for all court operations, including overseeing budget development and expenditures, supervising all judicial support personnel, managing facilities and resources, and directing program development and analysis.

Regan has been succeeded by Edward D. Wingren III, who served as assistant trial court administrator in the Essex Vicinage. Regan arrived in the Mercer Vicinage in February 2005 from the Hunterdon/Somerset/Warren Vicinage, succeeding Jude DelPreore, who became trial court administrator in the Burlington Vicinage. DelPreore retired in June 2019 after a 45-year career with the New Jersey Courts.

Among Regan's accomplishments during her 16 years in the Mercer Vicinage were the construction of the new criminal courthouse, ensuring the continuation of court services during the COVID-19 pandemic and when the Mercer County Civil Courthouse was closed for an extended period in 2015 after a water pipe burst, causing extensive damage to the building as well as personal property.

"Sue Regan will be missed," said Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts, "She leaves a legacy of dedication and expertise that benefitted the work of the courts not only in the Mercer Vicinage but also throughout the state. She was a leader among leaders and served as a respected and informed voice for the Judiciary's trial court administrators."

Raised in Perth Amboy, Regan was a classmate and high school friend of retired Hunterdon/Somerset/Warren Assignment Judge Yolande Ciccone, who is now the Middlesex County prosecutor.

A certified public manager, Regan has a bachelor's degree in political science and criminal justice from the University of Scranton. Regan joined the Judiciary in 1977 as a probation officer in Hunterdon County and became the assistant family division manager there in 1984. She was named assistant trial court administrator in the Hunterdon/Somerset/Warren Vicinage in 1991.



**Sue Regan retired June 30 as Mercer Vicinage's trial court administrator, capping a 44-year career with the New Jersey Courts.**

During her 13 years in that position, she participated in the design and development of the new Hunterdon County Justice Center and oversaw the transition into that facility in 1996. Regan said she regards retired Hunterdon/Somerset/Warren Vicinage Trial Court Administrator Eugene Farkas, retired Mercer Vicinage Assignment Judge Linda Feinberg – who hired her for the Mercer position – and recently-retired Assignment Judge Mary Jacobson as mentors. "Gene empowered me to be a court administrator," Regan said. "Were it not for him, I don't know if I would've taken on the TCA role."

"I worked with two absolutely phenomenal assignment judges," she said. "They were role models to me, and I enjoyed every moment working with them." Current Hunterdon/Somerset/Warren Vicinage Trial Court Administrator Adriana Calderon said Regan's kindness, companion and her ability to find good in just about everyone and everything were the reasons why she has had a successful career in the Judiciary.

"Sue is a trailblazer, and as such, she leads with grit as well as grace," Calderon said. "There has never been a worthy issue that she has not championed, even if she was the only person in the room with the courage to say something about it. If Sue thinks it's important and the right thing to do, she speaks her mind. She challenges without confrontation but with purpose, respect, and results. Very few, if any, can say no to her. And very few have tried."

While Regan said would miss the judges and staff with whom she has worked, she said she wouldn't miss the long commute to Trenton from her Warren County home. She said she plans to spend more time with family and friends, especially her two grandsons, ages 5 and 3. She eventually hopes to do volunteer work.



## Chief Justice names Robert Lougy to lead Mercer Vicinage

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

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner announced June 8 that Superior Court Judge Robert Lougy will lead the Mercer Vicinage, effective Sept. 1, 2021. Judge Lougy will succeed Judge Mary C. Jacobson, who is retiring after 20 years on the bench, the last nine as assignment judge.

"The assignment judge for the Mercer Vicinage often hears cases relating to Executive, Legislative, and agency actions that have statewide impact. Judge Jacobson served in that role with great distinction. Judge Lougy is a proven leader who possesses the experience and skills to ably guide the Mercer Vicinage going forward," Chief Justice Rabner said.

Judge Lougy served in the vicinage's civil division since 2019 and was named presiding judge of general equity the following year. He served in the family division for three years after joining the bench in 2016. "I am grateful to the Chief Justice for his confidence in me and in my ability to serve a remarkable vicinage that has benefited greatly from Judge Jacobson's leadership and command of the law. I look forward to continuing to work together with the vicinage's exemplary judges and staff, as well as members of the bar," Judge Lougy said.

Before joining the bench, Judge Lougy served 10 years with the state Attorney General's Office, the first three years in various capacities as a deputy and assistant attorney general. From 2010 through 2015, he worked in the



**Judge Robert Lougy**

Division of Law as an assistant attorney general and deputy director. In 2015, he was chief of staff and then first assistant attorney general. He served as acting attorney general briefly in 2016.

Judge Lougy began his career in public service as a public defender in Essex County from 2004 to 2006. A graduate of Pennsylvania State University, Judge Lougy earned his law degree from Columbia Law School, and clerked for Chief Justice Deborah Poritz from 2002 to 2004.

## Edward D. Wingren III named trial court administrator for Mercer Vicinage

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

Edward D. Wingren III is the new as trial court administrator in the Mercer Vicinage, effective July 1. Wingren, assistant trial court administrator for the Essex Vicinage since 2017, joined the Judiciary in 2005 as a team leader in the Union Vicinage's criminal division. He moved in 2013 to the Passaic Vicinage, where he served as criminal division manager for four years.

"Ed brings a wealth of experience to the position and is committed to working with judges and staff to ensure that justice is administered fairly. I have no doubt Ed will provide the strong leadership that staff in the Mercer Vicinage have historically demonstrated, as evidenced by the great insight, energy, and management Sue brought to the vicinage," said Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts.

Regan is retiring after 44 years in the Judiciary, the last 16 as trial court administrator. "Sue Regan will be missed. She leaves a legacy of dedication and expertise that benefitted the work of the courts not only in the Mercer Vicinage but also throughout the state. She was a leader among leaders and served as a respected and informed voice for the Judiciary's trial court administrators," Judge Grant said.

In welcoming Wingren to his new role, Assignment Judge Mary C. Jacobson said, "We are confident he will continue the high standards our judges, staff, and the public have come to expect in the Mercer County Superior Court."

Wingren earned his bachelor's degree from Rutgers University and a master's degree in education from Harvard University. He earned his law degree from Rutgers School of Law – Newark. "I am truly humbled by this opportunity and look forward to joining the Mercer Vicinage family," Wingren said. "I will work tirelessly to support the efforts of our judges and staff as we continue to serve the public."

# Hudson Assignment Judge Bariso retires

**Editor's Note:** Hudson Vicinage Assignment Judge Jeffrey R. Jablonski delivered the following remarks at the March virtual retirement ceremony for Peter J. Bariso Jr., who retired on April 1. Judge Bariso previously served as the vicinage's civil presiding judge from 2006 to 2012.

*During his tenure, Judge Bariso was a member of the Conference of Assignment Judges and sat on the Judicial Council. He also chaired the civil subcommittee of Supreme Court Special Committee on Preemptory Challenges and Jury Voir Dire. He also is a former member of the Supreme Court Civil Practice Committee.*

*Judge Bariso frequently lectured on civil litigation issues for the Judiciary, the New Jersey State Bar Association, the Hudson County Bar Association, and the New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education. He has been an instructor for ICLE's civil law segment of the skills and methods course for newly admitted attorneys.*

*In 2015, Judge Bariso received the NJICLE Alfred C. Clapp Award for Excellent in Continuing Legal Education. He previously received the NJICLE Distinguished Service Award for Excellent in Continuing Legal Education.*

*Before his appointment to the bench, Judge Bariso chaired the litigation department at Chasan, Leyner, Bariso & Lamparello, P.C. in Secaucus and was certified by the New Jersey Supreme Court as a civil trial attorney. Judge Bariso served as an attorney for the East Rutherford Board of Education for 20 years.*

*Judge Bariso received his bachelor's degree, magna sum laude, from Rutgers University and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He received his law degree from Rutgers Law School.*

The past month, I've been shadowing Judge Bariso and trying to learn how to do this job from the master. As we go from group to group, one recurring note that I noticed always enters into the conversation was a reference to the fact that you will always know that Peter is in the room, because you'll hear him.

Invariably, in short order, his predecessor, Judge Gallipoli, will be remembered as having a similar inability to embrace one's inside voice.

I have huge shoes to fill, and I want to do a good job, so I'm getting the impression that as a prerequisite to being a Hudson AJ, well, you have to be loud. I'm generally not, so I invested in this. When I tested it and turned it up to 11, I realized that it didn't even come close to the Bariso pipes. We don't even need zoom, or to open a window for that matter. Aside from the volume, however, it's the voice that commands respect and admiration.

This is only one of the many, many traits that we know and love about Judge Bariso. Another is one that you may not be conscious of. It seems like every time that you refer to our colleagues in a group, you always refer to us, and proudly, as "my judges."



Assignment Judge Peter F. Bariso Jr.

And we are. There is not one among us that you have not touched. Sometimes it has been a pat on the back, or a kind word. Other times it has been a kick in the pants. All, however, dedicated to the singular goal of making us better judges and this a better vicinage. And you succeeded. Within our county, you fostered an environment of equality, created a spirit of inclusion, and developed an atmosphere of diversity. Within the judiciary, you cultured tolerance, patience, and compassion. Our colleagues are true public servants dedicated to the pursuit of justice, because of that which you, sometimes by word, and always by example have taught us. For that, your colleagues, say thank you.

At retirement celebrations, it's customary to give a gift to commemorate one's years of service. The Rolex Automatic Chronometer Diamond Silver Dial Men's wristwatch has a stunning 18k white gold case. It boasts a blue diamond set bezel and features platinum hour markers. It is an industry-leading dive watch that's water resistant to 1000 feet and features a scratch resistant sapphire crystal and an opal stem. This sounds really great, doesn't it? Well, we didn't get that for you.

What we did, get, however, was something a little more meaningful, which for state workers on a budget is a euphemism for much less expensive. Seriously, travel back about 5 years, post judicial college and we all gathered together in Belleville at a little, but famous, hole in the wall-Belmont Tavern- a place that was near and dear to you through

your formative years. You shared that memory with us.

As the conversation flowed, as did the wine- from a can, I think, the bonds of friendship strengthened in the most modest of surroundings. We, your Hudson family, enjoyed every minute of it. On behalf of the Hudson Vicinage, we'd like to allow you a number of dinners (when it's open) at the Belmont.

A word that has been used most frequently over the past few days, and most appropriately, is legacy. As the Chief and the director noted, what will become a tangible sign of your efforts will rise over the next few years. As the director said the time and the talent that you contributed to bring this project to completion is absolutely true.

Marie Kerrivan has an operations center alongside her office that is dedicated to everything courthouse. You can peruse the plans, the renderings, and the mockups- but with all of the newness that we so look for and cannot come fast enough, there's something that's missing. Study construction, you'll come to realize that all buildings have one central component, something around which the entire structure is built. The total

weight of the entire edifice rests on this particular element. If it weren't in place, the structure would crumble. This element keeps the walls straight, and the foundation firm. Only if this element is set properly will all of the other corners of the building, be at the correct angle. In essence, this element is what holds the entire building together. It is what creates and maintains the strength of the building.

In an allegorical sense, that is you to us.

This element is known as a cornerstone.

Its sole purpose is to create and maintains the strength of the building. Just like the building's strength is secured by this element, so too are our judicial careers by you. This will be installed in the new building, will sit atop a pedestal for the time being that is crafted from wood from the Brennan and asbestos from the administration building.

It will occupy there a place of honor to remind us of our AJ, our mentor, and most importantly, our friend.

## Judiciary celebrates Juror Appreciation Week

As part of Juror Appreciation Week in April, the New Jersey Judiciary recognized the contributions to justice made by citizens who serve as jurors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

More than 3,500 jurors have participated in virtual jury trial selections for remote criminal and civil cases since the start of the pandemic. Thousands more have participated in virtual grand jury selections during that time.

The assignment judges of the Judiciary's 15 vicinages prepared brief videos thanking jurors for their dedication during the past year.

"Jury service remains the cornerstone of our justice system. Jurors, as they always have, continue to provide a critically important service to our democracy, and do so with integrity and dedication," said Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts.

To ensure that all citizens have the opportunity to participate on remote juries, the Judiciary has loaned hundreds of pieces of electronic equipment, including tablets, and provided technical assistance for prospective jurors.



## Juneteenth flag flown over Justice Complex

Members of the Administrative Office of the Courts attended a flag-raising ceremony June 17 held by the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton to commemorate Juneteenth. It was June 19, 1865 when slaves in Galveston, Texas received word that they were free. This was the first year that Juneteenth was celebrated as a state and national holiday.



# Judiciary welcomes new judges to the bench



Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage Assignment Judge Julio L. Mendez administered the oaths to Judges Dorothy M. Incarvito-Garrabrant, Peter M. Sarkos and Danielle J. Walcoff.



The Hudson Vicinage welcomed Judge Veronica Allende to the bench. Assignment Judge Jefferey Jablonski administered the oath. Judge Allende is assigned to the family division.



The Morris/Sussex Vicinage recently added new judges who are assigned to the family division. Judge Jonathan Romankow (left) is temporarily assigned to the Somerset/Hunterdon/Warren Vicinage. Also pictured are Superior Court Judges Marcy McMann (Morris), Claudia Jones (Sussex), Patricia O'Dowd (Morris) and Vijayant Pawar (Morris).



Ocean Vicinage Assignment Judge Marlene Lynch Ford administered the oath to Judges Dina M. Vicari, Brian C. White, Pamela Madas Snyder and Kenneth T. Palmer. They are assigned to the family division.







Camden Vicinage Assignment Judge Deborah Silverman Katz (left) recently administered the oath to newly tenured Judges David Ragonese, Sherri Schweitzer, Morris G. Smith (assigned to the Appellate Division) and Daniel Bernardin.



The Camden Vicinage recently welcomed Judge John S. Kennedy. Assignment Judge Deborah Silverman Katz administered the oath. Judge Kennedy is assigned to the family division.



The Middlesex Vicinage welcomed three new judges. Assignment Judge Michael A. Toto administered the oath to Judges Thomas P. Abode (family division), Brian M. English (civil division) and Bina K. Desai (civil division).

Burlington Vicinage Assignment Judge Jeanne T. Covert (left) administered the oath to Judge Reema Scaramella, who is assigned to the family division.



## Editor's Note

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)

# Judiciary celebrates Probation and Pretrial Services Week

By MaryAnn Spoto  
Communications Manager  
Administrative Office of the Courts

The New Jersey Judiciary recognized Probation and Pretrial Services Week by celebrating the work of professionals whose efforts to rehabilitate adult and juvenile offenders also protect the safety of the community. For this year's celebration, which ran from July 18 to July 24, the Judiciary recognized probation and pretrial services staff for their diligence during the COVID-19 pandemic, maintaining safe contact with defendants while helping them meet their court obligations.

In fiscal year 2020, probation officers supervised 48,083 adults and 5,487 juveniles. They conducted 19,132 inspections and 63,347 visits to clients' homes. Probation clients performed 436,700 hours of community service. The Judiciary's more than 1,900 probation officers perform a number of vital roles, including supervising adult and juvenile offenders and ensuring compliance with court-ordered obligations. Those obligations can include finding and maintaining a job, performing community service, paying fines and restitutions, attending school and substance abuse treatment programs, and adhering to curfews.

During fiscal year 2020, probation officers in New Jersey distributed \$1.198 billion in child support to families, an increase from \$1.175 billion pre-pandemic in 2018. "Throughout the pandemic, our child support and supervision units have continued to work collaboratively

to address the needs of the clients and to make sure child support obligations are being met," said Rashad Shabaka-Burns, director of Probation Services.

Jennifer Perez, director of Trial Court Services, said pretrial services staff maintained contact with nearly 40,000 defendants on pretrial monitoring in 2020. Pretrial services, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, conducts public safety assessments and monitors defendants who are released on conditions imposed by the court. If not for their efforts, more defendants who are presumed innocent would await their trial in jail, with potential exposure to health risks during the pandemic.

The office of pretrial services was created in 2017 to support the operation of Criminal Justice Reform. Its staff of more than 300 pretrial services officers and supervisors keep in contact with defendants awaiting trial in their community rather than in jail. They provide information on local services, check in with defendants regularly, and remind them of upcoming court dates and the requirements to follow during their pretrial release.

"Throughout the pandemic, staff have continued to meet with defendants who have adapted well to the new model of reporting remotely. Their efforts allow these defendants to continue to work or care for family, particularly during these trying times," Perez said. "We appreciate their commitment toward building a fairer justice system."

## Essex County Justice Building opens



The Essex County Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Justice Building in Newark was dedicated June 17. Chief Justice Stuart Rabner and Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts, attended. The ceremony included an unveiling of the Martin Luther King Jr. statue.



# Law Day 2021

*Editor's Note: Instituted by the American Bar Association (ABA) 63 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. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, vicinages held their celebrations virtually. This year's theme was "Advancing the Rule of Law, Now."*

## Burlington

The Burlington Vicinage, in partnership with the Burlington County Bar Association, held its annual Law Day celebration on May 3 via Zoom. Assignment Judge Jeanne T. Covert kicked off Law Day 2021 with the reading of a proclamation designating May 3 as Law Day. Law Day activities included the participation of the Sacred Heart School 5th grade class in an art project, illustrating their understanding of the Law Day theme. As part of the One Judge, One School program, Superior Court Judge Aimee R. Belgard and Administrative Law Judge Kim Belin spoke to Edgewater Park's Ridgeway Middle School 8th grade class and Burlington City High School AP history and civic classes.

The Burlington County Bar Association hosted a continuing legal education program, "Whither the First Amendment? The Polarization of Public Discourse in America and the Impact of Disinformation on Social Media and Journalism" on May 12. First Assistant Public Defender Kevin Walker moderated the event. Ellen Goodman, a law professor at Rutgers Law School - Camden, and Warren Faulk, an attorney specializing in First Amendment cases, were among the panelists. The Association of Black Women Lawyers of New Jersey held a virtual presentation, Advancing the Rule of Law on May 13 for Willingboro High School students, Burlington County Group-Teen Shop, and the local NAACP teen group. The presentation featured New Jersey Supreme Court Associate Justice Fabiana Pierre-Louis, Assignment Judge Jeanne T. Covert, Superior Court Judge Lisa James-Beavers, and Cumberland County Prosecutor Jennifer Webb McCrae.

## Essex

Throughout the month of May, the Essex Vicinage celebrated Law Day 2021 with countywide writing, video and art contests. More than over 2,200 students from Essex County schools participated in the vicinage's Law Day programs. A commemorative video recognizing students for their outstanding entries in the Law Day contests was distributed to winners and participating schools. First place essay and poem winners recited their entries. Law Day medals and certificates were given to the winning students. The 2021 Essex Vicinage Law Day souvenir booklet can be found [here](https://www.njcourts.gov/courts/vicinages/essex/lawday.html) (https://www.njcourts.gov/courts/vicinages/essex/lawday.html).

Assignment Judge Sheila Venable spoke and acknowledged this year's winner of the Assignment Judge Spirit Award, Municipal Presiding Judge Anthony J. Frasca. Judge Frasca has a longstanding record of steadfast dedication to the Essex Law Day program and the students of Essex County. For more than a decade, Judge Frasca has made significant contributions to the Essex Law Day program and ensured the annual mock trial program was available to students throughout the county despite historic shortages on the bench. Superior Court judges visited local schools via Zoom and Webex to facilitate open discussions with students about the rule of law and its role in everyday life. Students and teachers expressed their appreciation to judges for taking the time to meet with them address their questions about this year's Law Day theme and how it relates to current events. The Essex Vicinage Law Day activities were co-sponsored by the New Jersey State Bar

Foundation and made possible through funding from the IOLTA Fund of the Bar of New Jersey.

## Monmouth

The Monmouth Vicinage partnered with the Monmouth Bar Association for the annual observance of Law Day, introducing an enhanced schedule of programs and events focused on the national theme. Beginning in April, the Monmouth Vicinage annual Law Day art, essay and poetry contest engaged more than 85 students from 15 school districts. The students submitted entries portraying various topics such as America United, how the rule of law protects minority groups, and how the United States is a republic with a government of laws, not of men.

More than 120 people from three countries attended a virtual Law Day ceremony on May 5. Assignment Judge Lisa P. Thornton and Monmouth Bar Association President Christine Hanlon presented awards to the student content winners. The ceremony featured keynote remarks by Jessica Lewis Kelly, special assistant to Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts. In her presentation, Trailblazing with Technology: Maintaining Transparency and Citizen Involvement in Jury Trials During a Pandemic, Lewis Kelly discussed how the New Jersey Judiciary switched to remote operations and how it engages the public in decision-making processes.

The Daniel J. O'Hern Mock Trial Award was accepted on behalf of the Colts Neck High School Mock Trial Team by attorney coach William Visone and coaches Holly Lucarelli and Cassandra Dalton. Attorneys Jonathan Goldsmith Cohen and Elissa Perkins discussed their roles coordinating the county mock trial competition. More than 100 community members attended the virtual ceremony, and videos of the ceremony and keynote address are available on the New Jersey Courts YouTube channel.

## Passaic

Passaic Vicinage, in partnership with the Passaic County Bar Association, celebrated Law Day on May 7. Due to the pandemic, this year's program was done virtually. A video created by the Law Day Committee was made available to Passaic County middle and high schools on May 5. The video featured members of the Law Day committee speaking on the Law Day theme and the importance of the celebration. Jeh Johnson, who served as secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security from 2013 to 2017, spoke about the Law Day theme and his experiences. Prior to his presentation, students submitted questions to Johnson that were asked during the presentation.

Middle and high school students in Passaic County participated in the annual Law Day contest by submitting posters, poems, songs and videos highlighting this year's theme. The winners were announced at the end of the Law Day video. The Law Day program was sponsored by the Passaic Vicinage Law Day Committee, chaired by the Superior Court Judge Justine Niccolai, and the Passaic County Bar Association.

# Spotlight: Middlesex County Courthouse

*This story is the 17<sup>th</sup> in a series detailing the rich histories of New Jersey's courthouses.*

**By Mike Mathis**  
Judiciary Times Editor

New Brunswick is perhaps best known as the home of Rutgers University and pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson.

It's also the Middlesex County seat. But it hasn't always been that way. Long before the establishment of New Jersey, the land now comprising the state was divided into two sections, East Jersey and West Jersey. Perth Amboy was selected the provincial seat of East Jersey in 1683; Burlington City served as the provincial seat of West Jersey.

Middlesex County was one of four original New Jersey counties. The only two townships in Middlesex County at that time were Woodbridge and Piscataway, according to the Middlesex County website.

By June 1683, the first county court session was held at Piscataway. The court sat alternately in Piscataway and Woodbridge until 1688, when Perth Amboy was added as one of the three alternate sites, the county website states.

The county's first courthouse was built between 1714 and 1717 in Perth Amboy. Renovations were performed in 1745, 1767, 1826, and 1872.

The county seat was moved to New Brunswick in 1793. The county's fourth courthouse – the first in the new county seat – was built in 1840 on the block of Bayard, Paterson and Kirkpatrick streets and Elm Row at a cost of \$40,000. It was enlarged in 1913. It was latter razed, and the firth and present courthouse was constructed on Paterson Street between 1957 and 1959. The family courthouse on New Street was constructed between 1998 to 2000.

*The first courthouse was built between 1714 and 1717 in Perth Amboy.*

*The county seat was moved to New Brunswick in 1793*



**The Middlesex County Family Courthouse in New Brunswick as it appears today.**



**The old Middlesex County Courthouse, which occupied a block bordered by Bayard, Paterson and Kirkpatrick streets and Elm Row in New Brunswick.**



**The Middlesex County Courthouse in New Brunswick as it appears today.**