

Judiciary Times

The newsletter of the New Jersey Judiciary

Winner of the Gold Astra Award for Newsletter Writing from the N.J. Communications, Advertising and Marketing Association



Art in the Courts--Middlesex Civil Presiding Judge Amy Piro Chambers (left) and Efeme Onadowan, a Mason Gross School of the Arts student, review plans as an art exhibit is mounted at the courthouse. (See article on page 8.)

Standardized Civil Operating Procedures

The Civil Standard Operating Procedures Manual, approved by the Judicial Council last summer, has been shared with assignment judges and staff throughout the state. The manual sets out the operational and case-processing details for the Civil Division and is intended to promote uniform practices statewide.

“As such, it should be seen as part of the Judiciary’s overall standardization effort,” wrote Judge Philip S. Carchman, administrative director of the courts, in a memorandum to

assignment judges and trial court administrators.

The document may be downloaded from the Judiciary’s Web site, njcourtsonline.com.

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Trial Court Administration: An Evolving Profession

by Charles E. McCaffery
Trial Court Administrator, Ret.
Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage



Charles E. McCaffery

The profession of trial court administration plays a major role in the smooth operation of the justice process but has a relatively short history in New Jersey. Charles

E. McCaffery, who has been in court administration since 1982, offers his perspective and reflections on the evolution of the profession in Part I of this article. Part II will appear in the spring edition of Judiciary Times. New Jersey’s senior trial court administrator, McCaffery retired Dec. 31.

In 1947 a new state constitution was adopted for the State of New Jersey.

At that time, no one could have imagined that a small provision in the new constitution eventually would lead to the development of a profession which some 60 years later is still in the process of evolving.

When the modern court system in New Jersey was established, one would have expected Chief Justice Arthur Vanderbilt and his successors to be the administrators of the system. After all, the new constitution provided that “the chief justice shall be the administrative head of all the courts in the state” (Article VII, Section VI, and Par. 1).

However, there was a provision in the same paragraph that would lead to the development of a new profession within the Judiciary in New Jersey: court administration. The constitution provided that “He (the chief justice) shall appoint an administrative director to serve at his pleasure.” An editorial in the Sept. 30, 1948, edition of the New Jersey Law Journal

described the role of the administrative director of the New Jersey courts. It stated,

“In the New Jersey Court system as in the federal courts, the primary function of the administrative director is to gather, study and report the statistics and other information pertaining to the operations of the courts.”

Upon becoming the first chief justice under New Jersey’s new constitution in 1948, Arthur Vanderbilt appointed Willard Woelper as the first administrative director of the state’s court system. Woelper was well qualified for the position. He was very familiar with both the former and newly created court system. As an attorney he had served as secretary to the rules committee which had drafted the rules governing the practice of law in the new court system. He also had previously worked with the chief justice in his former law firm. When Woelper decided to return to private practice in 1953, Edward McConnell,

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Judiciary Wins Two National Awards

The New Jersey Judiciary received two awards from the Center for Digital Government at its annual conference, Judge Philip S. Carchman, acting administrative director of the courts, announced recently. The Center for Digital Government is a national organization providing resources and support to government technology efforts.

"These awards are a well-deserved recognition of the Judiciary's efforts to use technology to improve the services we provide our citizens," said Judge Carchman. "I especially want

to congratulate James R. Rebo, our chief information officer, and Robert W. Smith, our assistant director of municipal court services, for overseeing both of these projects," he added.

NJMCDirect, the Judiciary's online ticket payment service, won in the Best Application Serving the Public category. The Web site allows citizens to access court information and satisfy moving and parking tickets issued in New Jersey. Online ticket payment is a fast and convenient way for citizens to pay their tickets and have court records and motor vehicle records updated immediately. Currently, about 75,000 transactions, totaling \$4 million per month, are processed through the site.

The Judiciary's new Electronic Complaint Processing System, which

is used to produce electronic criminal complaints online, won in the Best IT Collaboration Among Organizations category. Designed to be the nation's first statewide system for filing criminal complaints over the Internet, the system was developed with the New Jersey State Police and other law enforcement agencies.

Law enforcement personnel can use the system to generate an electronic complaint form that is shared immediately with the courts, prosecutors, correction agencies and other participants in the criminal justice system. The electronic complaint system helps ensure the timely filing of criminal complaints, improves the reliability of criminal data and streamlines the sharing of information among agencies.

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

The Chief Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court is Deborah T. Poritz. The Acting Administrative Director of the Courts is Judge Philip S. Carchman.

Please e-mail short news articles saved as Word documents in plain text without formatting, as well as photos and/or suggestions to: Linda.Holt@judiciary.state.nj.us or send disk, photos and paper copy to: Editor, *Judiciary Times*, Office of Communications, PO Box 037, Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, Trenton NJ 08625-0037. Submissions are subject to editing, and not all can be published.

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Thanks to the other Judiciary staff who contributed articles, information and photographs.

Judge Daley Sworn in as Council President

Supreme Court Justice Barry T. Albin recently swore in Middlesex County Family Court Judge Roger W. Daley as president of the New Jersey Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NJCJFCJ). The ceremony took place in New Brunswick.



New Officers--Left to right are: Judge Paul A. Kapalko, treasurer; Judge Roberto Alcazar, secretary; Judge Sallyanne Floria, vice president; and Judge Roger W. Daley, president.

Other newly elected officers include Judge Sallyanne Floria, Essex, vice president; Judge Roberto Alcazar, Union, secretary; and Judge Paul A. Kapalko, Monmouth, treasurer. Judge Daley and the other new officers are serving during court year 2005-2006.

Judge Daley presented outgoing NJCJFCJ President Judge Max A. Baker, Atlantic, with a plaque in appreciation for outstanding leadership during the past year.

All New Jersey Family Court judges are members of the NJCJFCJ. Meetings are held monthly in various locations throughout the state with scheduled presentations and discussion of matters of mutual concern. Judge Daley delivered his inaugural remarks to a large group of Middlesex County judges, Family Court judges from around the state and representatives of the Middlesex County Bar Association. He indicated that programs for this year will primarily focus upon juvenile justice issues.

IOLTA: A Court Committee Working Behind The Scenes to Bring Legal Aid to the Poor

Jenny's father didn't want anything to do with her. Dirty and wearing tattered clothes, the six-year-old moved countless times with her alcohol-addicted mother, sometimes staying with an elderly grandfather.

One time, when they were homeless and destitute, the mother begged Jenny's father to take them in for the night. Dad, who had substance abuse and crime issues of his own, finally let them sleep overnight: in an empty chicken coop in the backyard!

The case attracted the attention of the office of the Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) of the Morris/Sussex Vicinage. A CASA volunteer investigated the case and reported the full story to a judge.

With funding from a little-known committee of the New Jersey Supreme Court, CASA helped bring a happy ending to Jenny's story. After much care, persistence and advocacy on her behalf, Jenny was legally adopted by a loving aunt and now has a safe, caring and permanent home.

The behind-the-scenes player that makes this and tens of thousands of other human success stories possible each year is Income on Non-Interest Bearing Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA). IOLTA programs exist in every state and Canadian province. New Jersey's IOLTA provides funding to Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ), CASA and dozens of other programs throughout the state.

Created by the Supreme Court in 1988, IOLTA employs a novel approach to generating income to help people. The program creates a system for investing the money lawyers put

into short-term escrow accounts. The money may come from sources such as a deposit on a residential home or a short-term retainer for an attorney. Individually, these accounts don't earn much interest because of the short time they reside in banks. But collectively, the interest earned is significant and has provided the funding source for millions of dollars in grants to organizations helping people in need. IOLTA has been in the news

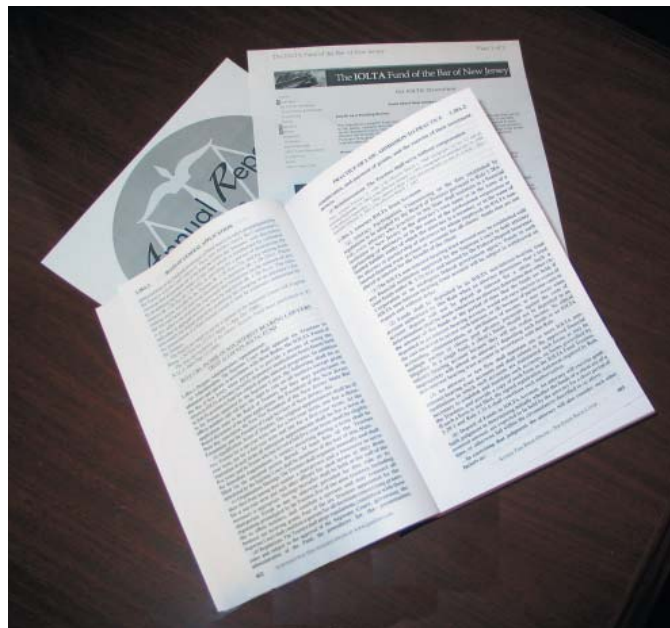
"Without IOLTA, some 20,000 people wouldn't have legal services help in 2005," said Melville D. Miller Jr., LSNJ president and an IOLTA trustee.

In addition to providing LSNJ with a third of its budget, funds from IOLTA support programs of the New Jersey Bar Foundation, such as the Legal Eagle newspaper for young people and mock trial programs.

IOLTA also provides grants to smaller organizations that provide legal aid to the poor and improvements to the administration of justice.

IOLTA dollars are translated into timely aid to people in cases that include child support, domestic violence, landlord/tenant disputes, food stamps, consumer complaints and many other issues.

"There is no other program like this in New Jersey," said Ellen D. Ferrise, IOLTA executive director since 1998. "It truly is unique. Court personnel work with IOLTA-funded organizations all the time and may not even realize



Court Rule 1:28a deals with IOLTA trust accounts.

recently because the Supreme Court rewrote some of the rules to ensure a fair return on these deposits. All attorneys in New Jersey are required to register and participate in IOLTA.

Under Court Rule 1:28a, not less than 75 percent of IOLTA funds goes directly to LSNJ, an independent non-profit organization that provides free legal assistance to low-income people in civil matters. Since LSNJ was created nearly 40 years ago, Legal Services lawyers represented more than 1.5 million people in need, many of whom would otherwise have had no legal assistance.

it."

CASA is a good example of a program that depends on IOLTA for support. In the Morris/Sussex Vicinage, IOLTA funds the salaries of nine staff who each supervise 25 trained volunteers. That's a total of 234 supervisors and volunteers funded by interest generated on short-term escrow accounts in banks throughout the state.

"We are forever grateful to the attorneys and banks who participate in this program," said Barbara Ward, executive director of Morris/Sussex CASA.

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For the Court and in the Community: Minority Concerns Training, Education and Outreach Initiatives

by Yolande P. Marlow, Ph.D., Manager, and Lisa Burke, Administrative Specialist 3
Minority Concerns Unit

The New Jersey Judiciary has long been recognized for its comprehensive and well-developed in-service training and public education outreach programs. Actively contributing to these programs are staff of the Minority Concerns Unit of the Judiciary's Central Office, members of the statewide and vicinage Minority Concerns Committees, and Vicinage Advisory Committee staff liaisons throughout the state.

The Minority Concerns initiatives in these areas stem from the Action Plan on Minority Concerns approved by the Supreme Court in 1993. Twelve of the 53 recommendations in this plan involve some aspect of training for the court community or the public. Minority Concerns Committee members, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Minority Concerns Unit staff, and vicinage staff liaisons provide valuable training and education to judges, law clerks and court staff at all levels as well as to members of the public.

During 2005, Minority Concerns Unit staff and Vicinage Advisory Committee for Minority Concerns (VACMC) staff liaisons developed in-service staff training opportunities and public educational outreach programming. Highlights from around the state demonstrate the breadth of these curricular offerings.

In August 2005, Minority Concerns offered a workshop on customer service at the Third Annual Camden Cultural Sensitivity Institute in Voorhees, N.J. Previously, the Judiciary sent staff to the event as participants. In 2005, the organizers of the event invited the Judiciary to conduct a workshop. Camden Family Judge Octavia Melendez, VACMC chair, worked with Dunia Lorena Quezada, at that time the Camden ombuds-

man and VACMC staff liaison, and Dr. Yolande Marlow, manager of the AOC's Minority Concerns Unit. As a result of their efforts, Lisa Burke, administrative specialist in the AOC's Minority Concerns Unit, and Judith Irizarry, ombudsman and EEO/AA officer for the Mercer Vicinage, presented "From the Court Customer's Point of View," a session on customer service.

On Sept. 12, Camden Civil Judge Ronald J. Freeman, chair of the Supreme Court Committee on Minority

Concerns, moderated a workshop on access for linguistic minorities at the annual Orientation for New Judges. The workshop, "Please Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood," was co-presented by Linda Lamitola, certified American sign language interpreter and administrative specialist, Trial Court Services-Language Section; Judge Melendez; and Irene D'Emilio, court interpreter, formerly of Camden Vicinage and presently serving Ocean Vicinage. Participants in this workshop received

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Minority Concerns Committees Serve Statewide and by Vicinage

The Supreme Court Committee on Minority Concerns (SCCMC) is a permanent standing committee composed of judges, attorneys, representatives of the legal, education and faith communities, and the general public. The current committee, which was convened in 1992, continues the work of the predecessor Task Force on Minority Concerns and serves the court in an advisory capacity on the ongoing implementation of the court-approved Action Plan on Minority Concerns (1992) that included 53 recommendations addressing issues of equity and access throughout all areas of the court's reach.

The SCCMC is chaired by Judge Ronald J. Freeman, Camden Civil Division. In addition to the chair, its executive board includes the chairs of the five subcommittees and the ex officio elected delegate of the Statewide Conference of Vicinage Chairs. The SCCMC currently has 43 members appointed by the court and is supported by one executive staff and five support staff.

In addition to the permanent standing SCCMC, the court also mandated

the creation of Vicinage Advisory Committees on Minority Concerns (VACMCs) in each of the 15 vicinages. The court directed the creation of the VACMCs to facilitate systemwide implementation of the plan throughout the Judiciary. While the SCCMC reports to the chief justice, the VACMCs report to the respective assignment judges. Although the sizes of the vicinage committees vary according to local needs, each has a chair or co-chairs and an assigned vicinage staff liaison.

The statewide Conference of VACMC Chairs meets quarterly with the staff liaisons and AOC Minority Concerns Unit staff, and the VACMC staff liaisons generally meet bimonthly with the AOC Minority Concerns Unit staff. As mentioned, the chair of the statewide Conference of VACMC Chairs is an ex officio member of the SCCMC Executive Board.

On the statewide and vicinage levels, the committees base their programming and action plans on the 1992 Action Plan for Minority Concerns and the seven overarching goals of the statewide initiative.

Minority Concerns Education and Outreach Initiatives

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information on linguistic minorities and an overview of the New Jersey Judiciary's policies and procedures on providing access through the use of interpreting services.

During Fall 2005, the authors of this article presented several informational sessions to new VACMC members and new vicinage staff liaisons and offered orientation sessions to new VACMC staff liaisons. This orientation included a history of Minority Concerns initiatives in the New Jersey Judiciary; a description of the mission and mandate of the Supreme Court Committee on Minority Concerns and the VACMCs; and an overview of the role of the staff liaison in carrying out the work of the Committee on Minority Concerns.

Orientation topics for new staff also include how to conduct needs assessment and the essentials of developing an action plan. New staff liaisons learned about the significant role played by the Supreme Court Committee on Minority Concerns and its predecessor, the Task Force on Minority Concerns, in advancing fairness in and access to the New Jersey court system for the past 22 years. Veteran Minority Concerns staff liaisons Carmen Flores of the Monmouth Vicinage and Pauline Daniels of the Hudson Vicinage also served as co-presenters at the Nov. 7 orientation session.

At the 2005 Judicial College, the Supreme Court Committee on Minority Concerns presented an elective workshop, "Exploring the Intersections of Religion, Culture and the Rule of Law." Judge Freeman served as moderator of the panel. Panelists included Perry Dane, professor of law, Rutgers Law School-Camden; Bernard Freamon, professor of law, Seton Hall Law School; and Alan D. Bowman and Hany Mawla, attorneys.

In this workshop, Dane provided a theoretical overview of the rela-

tionship between religious laws and secular laws while Freamon discussed the history of Islamic Law and current misconceptions. Bowman and Mawla discussed examples of religious issues that arise within criminal and family law.

Minority Concerns staff also continue to take training sessions on the road in response to invitations from the vicinages. A recent example includes a presentation of "From the Court Customer's Point of View" and a workshop on the distinctions between legal advice and legal assistance prepared for staff in Monmouth Vicinage.

Training, public education and community outreach continues to be alive and well in the vicinages. In

...taking training on the road in response to invitations from vicinages...

addition to the activities described in an article on Diversity Day in another part of this newsletter, other programs include the following:

Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage in collaboration with VACMC has sponsored annual observances of Law Day and the annual Cultural Heritage Day. In addition, VACMC members were involved in local awareness programs on issues of interest to the community including programs aired on public radio and television.

Bergen Vicinage presents its public education programs to churches, schools and community organizations and welcomes visitors to the courthouse through its tour program. Recently the Bergen's VACMC worked with the vicinage training coordinator and Family Division staff to develop a series of five seminars around the theme, "The Impact of Ethnic and

Cultural Differences on Attitudes towards Domestic Violence."

The Burlington Vicinage's recent programs are described in the Diversity Day article.

On Oct. 27, Camden Vicinage's minority concerns advisory committee, Sensitivity and Cultural Awareness Now (SCAN), presented a Domestic Violence Awareness Month brown-bag lunch seminar in the Hall of Justice. The seminar was open to Judiciary staff, domestic violence service providers and the general public, and included presentations by representatives from the Camden County Women's Center, Volunteers of America's Family Violence Prevention Program and the Camden Center for Law and Social Justice. The program was an open forum at which professionals provided valuable information regarding prevention of domestic violence, strategies victims can employ to exit an abusive relationship and take charge of their lives, and programs available for reform of domestic abusers.

The Essex Vicinage Minority Concerns Committee, in its ongoing participation on the Essex County Juvenile Justice Racial Disparity Study, is participating in the planning of a countywide training conference scheduled for May 19 for all stakeholders in the Essex County Juvenile Justice system. The purpose of the conference is to review the findings of the recently concluded disparity study and develop a comprehensive plan to initiate measures to correct the identified disparity.

Additionally, the advisory committee has teamed up with a battered women's shelter to conduct a holiday toy drive for the children at the shelter. Finally, the advisory committee is planning a 10th anniversary celebration of the vicinage committee's founding and the initiation of the countywide Law Day mock trial program. The emphasis will be on public education programs

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Minority Concerns Education and Outreach Initiatives

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based on the issues dealt with by the committee over the years.

Hudson Vicinage recently instituted a diversity seminar series for judges. Seminar sessions in 2005 have focused on the dynamics of power, privilege and difference as it relates to the bench and court access issues for immigrant communities. Future seminars will address a variety of diversity issues, including cultural

Seminars for judges and staff focus on customer service, immigration issues and related topics.

perspectives of violence and court access issues for linguistic minorities.

Mercer Vicinage celebrated its annual observance of National Customer Service Week with a series of seminars, workshops and open houses for both staff and members of the public.

The Middlesex Vicinage Minority Concerns Advisory Committee implemented mentoring programs including the job shadowing program, Paul Robeson School (New Brunswick) Career Day, Perth Amboy Elementary Program, and A Day in the Life program. Job shadowing is unique in its approach to career mentoring. Its focus is on providing students with academically motivating activities that demonstrate how the skills they learn in school relate to the workplace. It provides the answers to students' question "why do I have to learn this?" Courthouse tours are available to youth groups and schools. The Middlesex Vicinage Minority Concerns Advisory Committee participates annually at the NAACP Health Fair and the Hispanic Festival of the Puerto Rican Action Board of New Brunswick where information

and brochures about Judiciary related matters such as Juvenile Court, expungement process, municipal court appeal procedures, special civil part and landlord/tenant are distributed.

The Monmouth Vicinage conducted an extensive series of community outreach programs as a means of educating the public on a variety of court-related subjects. These programs, spearheaded by the Minority Concerns Committee, were a collaborative effort by the local bar, the Ocean Monmouth Legal Services, the Hispanic Affairs and Resources Center, the NAACP, *NOSOTROS* Spanish newspaper, "180, Turning Lives Around," a private, non-profit organization dedicated to ending domestic violence and sexual assault in the community; the Monmouth County Human Relations Commission and the Freehold Borough Intermediate School. In the spring, the Monmouth Vicinage held Legal Expo 2005 at the Monmouth Mall, where staff provided information about the court to the public. In addition, staff participated at outreach sessions at the African-American Heritage Festival, the Monmouth County Fair, the Freehold Raceway Mall, the Monmouth County Latino Outreach Initiative and the Prison Education Program. The vicinage also participated in events sponsored by the Hispanic Women's Resources Center, Rutgers University, Monmouth University, Georgian Court College, the New Jersey Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the New Beginning Agape Christian Center.

Morris/Sussex Vicinage reached out to college and universities including Rutgers University-Newark, Kean College, Centenary College, Drew University and New Jersey City University. Staff participated in community events and organizations like the Morristown Fall Festival on the Green, the New Jersey Hispanic State Chamber of Commerce, the

Morris County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Asian Diversity Job Fair in New York City. Another significant initiative has been the vicinage's information sessions presented onsite at the Office of Hispanic Affairs in Dover.

The Passaic VACMC hosted a Community Forum Nov. 17 at the Great Falls Academy in Paterson. Members of the committee spoke to parents and members of the community about voting rights and restoration, immigration and naturalization laws, and expungement procedures. Ombudsman Renita Mc Kinney was on hand to follow up on specific issues affecting individuals, and informational material was distributed. The Passaic VACMC also co-sponsored a program with the Vicinage EEO/AA Advisory Committee on Dec. 2 at the courthouse. The program, "Faces of Reality," involved students from Rosa Parks High School's drama group

Community participation is an important part of many vicinage programs.

who formed an award-winning presentation on racism, discrimination, sexism and stereotyping.

The event was open to Judiciary and county employees and members of the public.

Union Vicinage held a successful community outreach seminar, "What Are Your Rights?", June 11 in the Stephen Sampson Center in Elizabeth. The seminar consisted of three workshops on DYFS issues, records expungement, and immigration.

As reported in the Fall 2005 edition of *Judiciary Times*, the Hunterdon/Somerset/Warren Vicinage presented a public forum in the spring on child support. The program, "Child

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John M. Chacko Sr. Named Clerk of Appellate Division



John M. Chacko

December by Judge Edwin H. Stern, Presiding Judge for Administration of the Appellate Division.

As clerk of the division, Chacko's responsibilities will include managing the central office operations of the Appellate Division as well as providing support for Appellate Division judges and their staff located in chambers both in the Justice Complex in Trenton and

New Jersey Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz signed an order appointing John M. Chacko Sr. clerk of the Appellate Division of the Superior Court, it was announced in

around the state. The clerk's office files more than 7,000 appeals each year. He succeeds James M. Flynn, who retired. The Appellate Division's central office operations also include court reporting, maintenance of the court's automated systems, including the automated docketing system, and overseeing the video conferencing network that connects courts with various court users around the state and sometimes across the nation.

"John Chacko is a proven manager who brings to the Appellate Division a deep understanding of case management issues as well as a host of experience gained from working on a variety of statewide projects," said Judge Stern.

"We are going to miss John, but we are very happy for his richly deserved appointment as clerk of the Appellate Division," said Middlesex

Assignment Judge Robert A. Longhi. "In our view, John is one of the best division managers in the state. He has been great to work with, and the judges and staff here will miss him dearly."

In announcing Chacko's appointment, Judge Stern also acknowledged the work of Acting Clerk Jeffrey A. Newman: "I cannot thank Jeff enough for filling in as acting clerk in addition to his own responsibilities during this process. Jeff will continue in his important role as Deputy Clerk of the Appellate Division," said Judge Stern.

Chacko and his wife, Arlene, live in Freehold. They have a daughter and son-in-law, CariAnn and Richard Junkierski, a son and daughter-in-law, John Jr. and Amy, and four grandchildren: Amanda, Tyler and Tanner Junkierski, and Sydney Chacko.

Minority Concerns Education and Outreach Initiatives

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Support: What You Need to Know," provided the public with information from a variety of sources.

Ocean Vicinage held several cultural seminars for employees throughout the year, including "Asian Cultures," "Immigration Issues," "Understanding Islam," "Jewish Culture" and "Indian Culture: Wedding Customs and Traditions of the Gujarat Region."

The Cumberland/Gloucester/Salem VACMC's Project KIDS (Knowledge and Information Disseminated Strategically) conducted a targeted community workshop July 15. Approximately 100 people attended.

Presentations were made by a poet as well as representatives from Juvenile Probation and the Division of Addiction Services. Refreshments and musical entertainment were provided.

While public education and community outreach is but one aspect of the Minority Concerns mandate, it is a significant one that the committee and its staff continue to embrace with enthusiasm, energy and dedication.

Contributors to this article included VACMC staff; Michael Shannon, Atlantic/Cape May; Laura Simoldoni, Bergen; Deborah R. Edwards, Burlington; Nalo Brown and Dunia Lorena Quezada, Camden; Pauline Daniels, Hudson; Judith Irizarry, Mercer; Carmen Flores,

Monmouth; Kim Daniels Walsh, Morris/Sussex; Sharon Kinney and Donald DeHart, Passaic; Gretchen King, Union; Ann Marie Fleury and Lilia López, Ocean; and Benjamin Mike, Cumberland/Gloucester/Salem. Theodore J. Fetter, AOC deputy administrative director, provided editorial assistance.



Hudson Vicinage staff serve and enjoy food from many cultures during Spanish Heritage Month in September.

New Art Installation Serves Customer Service Function at Middlesex County Courthouse

by Nancy Einbinder
Administrative Specialist 4
Middlesex Finance Division

A new art installation opened in New Brunswick this fall, but not in a location most would expect.

Thanks to the efforts of graphic design students and faculty at Rutgers' Mason Gross School of the Arts, the Middlesex County Courthouse at 1 JFK Square became the latest member of the New Brunswick arts community.

The students completed two semester-long projects in the courthouse: an art installation in the Arbitration Area, where parties attempt to resolve civil disputes without going to trial; and a hallway exhibit on the New Jersey 1947 Constitution and Convention. These displays are complemented by a third exhibit composed of copies of historical documents, maps and photographs selected by court staff from the Special Collections and University Archives of the Rutgers University Libraries. All three exhibits remain on permanent display in the courthouse.

A committee of judges and courthouse personnel commissioned the Mason Gross design project, and three professors—Gerry Beegan, Jacqueline Thaw and Brian Janusiak—offered guidance throughout the process. The goal was to provide law-related education and artwork for the courthouse while giving the design students a comprehensive practical experience.

For the Arbitration Area project, the students spent some time learning about the arbitration process before compiling a collection of original photos depicting people having conversations. From a distance, the pictures seem out of focus, but as the viewer draws closer to the conversation things become much clearer, reflecting the clarity that comes from effective communication. In this

manner the exhibit emphasizes that good communication may resolve disputes.

Students expanded the concept of conversation to include the layout of the room itself, moving furniture and décor into arrangements that encourage the people in the room to talk to each other.

“What really struck me was how uncomfortable it was,” said Graciela Meza, who worked on the project. “Most of the people coming in here weren't even sure what arbitration was, so they were scared to begin with.”



Judge Chambers and Art Committee members review designs.

Assistant Professor Jacqueline Thaw agreed that the room needed to be redesigned. “We actually went further than just dressing up the walls,” she said. “The students treated the whole environment as an installation.”

For the Constitutional Law Project, the students selected historical photographs from the New Jersey State Archives to accompany a script provided by Civil Division Presiding Judge Amy Piro Chambers. To highlight the rights provided by the

constitution and apply them to modern life, they commissioned a photo shoot to express the concepts visually. The resulting display informs the viewer about the 1947 Constitutional Convention and about important provisions in the State Constitution. The project was funded with a grant from the Middlesex County Bar Foundation.

“The Mason Gross students, along with their professors, have produced works that are visually attractive and convey a law-related message appropriate for the courthouse environment,” Judge Chambers said. “We were thrilled with the creativity, enthusiasm and careful thought they brought to these projects.”

Both student groups benefited immensely from learning how to plan and execute a design from start to finish while working under budgetary and time constraints for a real client. They presented ideas, contracted student photographers, ran photo shoots and worked with vendors to produce and install the project.

“Experience designing in a group and working with a client's vision is something that you usually don't get much of an opportunity to do in design school,” said Chris Johanesen, who worked on the Constitutional Law Project. “While most of our design classes taught us invaluable design and conceptual skills, I think that having this real-world experience gives us a great advantage professionally.”

The exhibit created by court staff highlights the history of New Brunswick and the courthouses that have served Middlesex County through the years. The items in the exhibit are accompanied by panels that describe the images and offer a history lesson on New Brunswick, which beat Perth Amboy in a close election to become the site of the Middlesex County Courthouse. The Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission provided the funding for this exhibit.

Twenty-four Staff Graduate from AOC CERT Program

Twenty-four central office staff graduated from the Judiciary's Community Emergency Response Team

(CERT) program on Nov. 15 in the Justice Complex in Trenton. This brings to 42 the number of Judiciary

employees certified to provide leadership during a disaster.

"This was an arduous program," Judge Philip S. Carchman, administrator director of the courts, said in an address to graduates during the ceremony. "You are to be commended. We're very proud of you."

State Police Sgt. Julian Castellanos, who conducts the CERT training, was on hand to congratulate Judiciary staff who received certification.

CERT training includes 20 hours of classroom instruction as well as practical exercises at the Dempster Fire Academy in Lawrenceville. Participants studied everything from the use of a fire extinguisher to disaster psychology.

Gerald A. Williams, Support Services administrator, and Arlene Bonville, administrative specialist 4, Court Access Unit, also offered greetings and congratulations.

The new graduates are:

Russel Allgor
David Blank
Patricia Brown
Charles Carr
Noemi Castro
Jorge Colon
Edward Feinberg
Cheryl Fowler
Valerie Hofer
Annette Isreal
Tracy Jackson-Eason
Denise Jenkins
Pamela Lynch
Kathleen MacLennan
John MacMillan
Diane McCarthy
Frank Medvetz
Ava Patterson
Dee Pollace
Daniel Puica
Jasper Reaves
Joseph Warner
Ellen Wry
Konstantin Zingerman



Ready to Help--Jorge Colon (right), an Intensive Supervision Program (ISP) officer, displays some of the safety equipment he received when he graduated from the CERT program. With him is Don Bornheimer, ISP supervisor. (Photo by L. Holt)

Guidelines Offer Consistent Approach To Providing Public Access to Records

Judge Philip S. Carchman, acting administrative director of the New Jersey Judiciary, has released guidelines to court staff throughout the state for public access to case-related records. The procedures provide staff with a consistent approach to handling requests for records that are public according to the Rules of Court.

"After an informal inquiry, we learned that the public encountered processes that varied from courthouse to courthouse and even from division to division," said Judge Carchman. "Perhaps this lack of uniformity was simply a previously undetected vestige of the old '21-county-courts' system, but clearly it was not acceptable for a unified, statewide Judiciary," he added. "With these guidelines, we have resolved those concerns."

The staff guidelines are compiled in "New Jersey Judiciary Open Records: Policies and Procedures for Access to Case-Related Records-Staff Guidelines." The guidelines are posted on the courts' Web site at njcourtsonline.com and are available upon request at courthouses.

Correction

An article submitted to *Judiciary Times* on Vicinage 13's diversity celebration incorrectly listed Sharon Emery as a master probation officer. Her correct title is court services supervisor 2. The article appeared in the Fall 2005 edition.

Many Sources, One People: Diversity Day

Editor's note: A number of vicinages celebrate Diversity Day to recognize the varied cultural backgrounds of the many people who contribute to the life of the court. The following essays describe some of the Diversity Day celebrations that occur throughout the Judiciary.

Music, Art and Literature Tell the Burlington Vicinage Diversity Story

by Deborah R. Edwards, EEO/AA Officer, Burlington Vicinage

More than 250 people attended the Burlington Vicinage's First Annual Diversity Day celebration on Oct. 28. The theme of Burlington's program was Diversity is the S.P.I.C.E. of Life. The S.P.I.C.E. acronym stands for Similarities, People, Ideologies, Cultures and Ethnicities.

Organized by the vicinage's EEO/AA Advisory Committee, the celebration served as a reminder to employees, court users and visitors

that strength lies not only in similarities, but also in the differences that make people special and unique.

Burlington Vicinage Assignment Judge John A. Sweeney and Trial Court Administrator Jude Del Preore provided formal remarks opening the Diversity Day celebration.

Judge Sweeney highlighted the need for vicinage employees and court users to treat each other with dignity and respect. Vicinage leadership also noted that the theme of the event will be carried out throughout the vicinage over the next year. As just one example of the vicinage's diversity initiatives, posters created by vicinage employee Felechchia Slater to highlight Burlington's commitment will be strategically placed, indefinitely, throughout the vicinage.

Burlington's Diversity Day included a musical program of patriotic selections played on the saxophone by vicinage employee Marc Gottel. James Maitland of the Administrative Office of the Courts played the bagpipe in the courtyard to signal the



A dancer performs at the Passaic Vicinage's celebration.

start of the event. The day also included African storytelling by Pauline Cohen and music from the British Isles played on the hammer dulcimer by local musician Rich Carty.

In addition, the program included a presentation by Sumanthy She-shadri on Indian culture. Angela Gonzalez, executive director of Servicios Latinos, spoke about the Latino culture.

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Lilia L. López and Sonal Pushko during the wedding custom presentation in the Ocean Vicinage.

Wedding Customs of the Gujarati Region

Employees in the Ocean courts got an inside look at wedding customs in the Gujarati region of northwestern India during the vicinage's diversity celebration in October.

Born in Gujarat, Sonal Pushko, a team leader in Ocean's Civil Division, presented two sessions on Gujarati wedding customs and traditions on Oct. 21. A member of the EEO/AA Advisory Council, Pushko displayed her wedding album and gown, wedding invitations, local currency, wall hangings, flag, jewelry, formal wedding outfits for men, women and children, and day-to-day saris worn by Indian women.

The presentations included music and food prepared by her mother, Jaya Gohel. Staff had the opportunity to sample samosas (potatoes and vegetables wrapped in dough and fried),

lassi (mango shakes), chips, and a rice and potato dish.

Wearing Indian dress and jewelry, Lilia L. López, EEO/AA officer, introduced Pushko. Using a PowerPoint presentation, Pushko showed examples of the colorful clothing and described traditions followed at an Indian wedding. A question and answer session followed.



Celebrating What Makes Us Who We Are

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The event was held in a room of the Rutgers Extension Building on the courthouse campus. Maps and cultural artifacts on display ranged from African musical instruments to origami, and included Italian marble, Asian art, Jewish artifacts and an African-American heritage quilt. Elementary school students from the Charles Street School in Palmyra provided “people cutouts” to represent cultures from around the world.

For many, the highlight of the day was an international buffet consisting of 40 dishes contributed by staff. Jambalaya, jerk chicken, curried chicken, brisket, coq au vin, chili, stuffed cabbage, collard greens, candied sweets and black-eyed peas are just a sampling of the hot dishes which made up the buffet.

Employees from throughout the vicinage voiced their appreciation for the event, the first of its kind in Burlington.

Hudson Vicinage Continues Celebrating Its Diversity

by Rebecca Y. Natal
Vicinage Training Coordinator, and
Elizabeth M. Vazquez
Administrative Specialist 2

Sponsored by the Cultural Awareness Team, the Hudson Vicinage celebrated Spanish Heritage Month Sept. 23 with delicious food and ethnic music and dance that motivated several onlookers to participate. The beat of the drums and the lyrics of the music momentarily allowed us to leave our everyday worries behind and to enjoy life and celebrate.

“Hudson County is the most diverse county in New Jersey, ranking 42nd in diversity in the entire United States and second only to Bronx County in the tri-state area,” said Assignment Judge Maurice J. Gallipoli. “Diversity training is imperative so that we can adequately and fairly serve our client base which is drawn from such a demographic.”



A display recognizing diversity at the Passaic Vicinage’s celebration.

African Musical Instrument Exhibit Featured in Ocean Vicinage Celebration

by Lilia L. López, EEO/AA Officer,
Ocean Vicinage

The Ocean Vicinage celebrated Diversity Month with a display of African musical instruments on loan from the Newark Museum’s Educational Loan Collection. The EEO/AA Office brought the exhibition titled, “Sub-Saharan African Musical Instruments” to vicinage employees and court users from August 25 through September 30. The instruments were on display on the first floor of the Justice Complex.

Ocean County Superior Court secured the loan of the Sub-Saharan African Musical Instruments as part of the EEO/AA Advisory Council Education Program for its employees. Instruments on display included wind instruments, drums, strings and idiophones, a group that includes rattles, bells, sistrums, gongs and xylophones.

This exhibition was made possible with the support of Assignment Judge Eugene D. Serpentelli and Richard D. Prifold, trial court administrator.

Other cultural events were two Islamic culture and beliefs interactive workshops, India’s Gujarati wedding customs and Jewish Culture.

Passaic’s Annual Cultural Diversity Day Sept. 30

by Sharon Kinney, EEO/AA Officer,
Passaic Vicinage

The Passaic Vicinage’s second annual Diversity Day was held Sept. 30. Working with my office to make the day a success were Lydella Clarkson from Criminal, Rosa Guardiola and Ethan Kemp from Civil, Ying Lan Ho and Vivian Oliver from Information Technology, Millie Santiago, Fatima Manese and Kira Struble from Family, Renita Mc Kinney and Noemi Perez from Operations, Dorothy Howell and Amin Jihad from Probation

Mike E. Taylor, the vicinage’s audio-visual specialist, photographed many of our staff, creating a 30-minute video with music to illustrate the diversity of our workforce. Staff also marked world maps with stickers to denote their countries of origin.

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Many Sources, One People: Diversity Day

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The room was decorated with balloons, posters of the continents, flags and cultural artifacts from around the world. Approximately 300 vicinage employees attended the event held in the Jury Assembly Room of the County Administration Building. This year nearly half of the vicinage staff participated. Many prepared dishes, some performed, others served food, some set up, cleaned up or decorated, and many contributed financially. More than 150 food dishes from all around the world were served.

This year the entertainment section was expanded to include Italian and Portuguese songs by Family Division's Christine Conforti and her band, American patriotic songs by Criminal's Juwann Hubbard, Columbian dancing by Probation's Amanda Biscaia Cabrera and Bangladeshi dancing by Probation's Liza Chowdhury. African-American poet Dawn West rounded out the entertainment section of the program by reciting poetry on diversity.

Trial Court Administrator Kirk Nixon offered some welcoming remarks on diversity in the community and workforce. Assignment Judge Robert Passero recognized Sohail Mohammed, a member of the Passaic Vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns, with a certificate for promoting diversity in the workforce

by voluntarily training more than 200 judges, senior managers and staff in the program, "Understanding Islam, Religious Beliefs vs. Cultural Practices." Judge Stephen H. Womack, chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns, spoke about the importance of diversity.

Feedback for this year's event was very positive.

response as a result of the last year's event.

Union Vicinage employees enjoyed more than 60 dishes that were either prepared or purchased by Judiciary staff that were indicative of either their ethnic, regional or religious background. Dishes reflected the cuisines of many parts of the world, including the southern region of the United States, India, Italy, France, England, Ukraine, Greece, Ghana,

Philippines, Cuba, Ireland, Lithuania, Puerto Rico, Scotland, Spain, Jamaica, Peru, Poland and Portugal. Flags and musical instruments from many countries were on display.

Musical performances included an Indian Dholki drum performance by Madan Madi, dance performed by Danyel Jones, sister of Union Vicinage employee Selena Holland, Family Division and a performance of "Preciosa," a Puerto Rican anthem, by Carmen Rivera, Family Division.

"Guantanamo," a Cuban anthem, was performed by members of the interpreters' unit including Margarita Smishkewych, Miguel Socarras, Ileana Marti and Gunilla Medina, along with Roman Smishkewych, Civil Division; and accompanied by Sal Rancine, Operations Division on acoustical guitar, Jesse Rivera, Operations Division manager also on electric guitar; and Juan Alvarez, IT Division on conga drums.

The celebration ended with two modern line dances performed by



Drumming demonstration in Union, as TCA Liz Domingo looks on.

Union Vicinage Cultural Diversity Day

by Gretchen D. King, EEO/AA Officer and Ombudsman

"Music Around the World" was the theme of the Union Vicinage's second annual Cultural Diversity Day on Oct. 14. The event was held in the Elizabeth Public Library Conference Center across the street from the courthouse. This location was chosen for its size because of the tremendous

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Celebrating What Makes Us Who We Are

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Sharon Cosby, Probation Division; Yolanda King, Probation Division; Anita Gallon, Probation Division; Vilmary Lopez, Probation Division; Kimberly Jones, Criminal Division; Kiki Black, Criminal Division; and Hackalyn Harris, Family Division. All performers were presented with certificates of appreciation for their participation.

"Diversity Day this year was absolutely wonderful," said Danielle, Jones, a team leader in the Criminal Division's Pre-sentence Unit. "It gave

us a chance to see each other in a different light other than just sitting behind a desk. The food was good, and the entertainment was phenomenal. The organizers did a fantastic job and I look forward to it again next year."

The chairs for this year's event were Sharon Cosby, Probation Division; Nancy Spano Yurek, Family Division; and Gretchen D. King, EEO/AA officer and ombudsman. This celebration of different cultures was sponsored by the Union Vicinage EEO/AA Advisory Committee.

Diversity Day Gains Statewide Momentum

Here are some other Diversity Day activities reported from the vicinages:

The Middlesex Vicinage designates certain months during the year as a heritage month (e.g., African-American month and Asian/Pacific Islander month). According to Wayne Fiorino, general operations manager, the vicinage plans to observe Hispanic month and Native American month in the future. Also the vicinage recently hosted a diversity potluck luncheon for which staff provided food from different cultures.

The Hunterdon/ Somerset/Warren Vicinage held its first Diversity Day last year. Celebrations were held June 3 in Warren County; June 10 in Somerset County and June 17 in Hunterdon County. An article on these events appeared in the Fall 2005 edition of Judiciary Times. Tentative dates for 2006 are May 19 in Somerset County, Sept. 15 in Hunterdon County and Dec. 8 in Warren County.

Sept. 8 was Diversity Day in the Camden Vicinage. Employees prepared dishes from around the world and enjoyed musical entertainment and an arts and crafts display.

The Cumberland/Gloucester/Salem Vicinage plans to hold Diversity Day in spring 2006.



Posters announce Diversity Day in the Union (above) and Burlington Vicinages (below right).

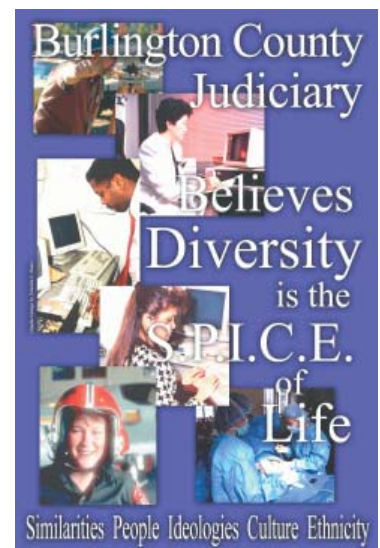
Judiciary Times Wins Gold Award

Judiciary Times received a Gold Award during the annual JASPER Awards ceremony of the Jersey Shore Public Relations and Advertising Association (JSPRAA) at the Forsgate Country Club, Jamesburg, on Oct. 14. The award recognized creativity in writing.

The judges' panel consists of experts in the advertising, public relations, graphic design and communication industries. Judges are not JSPRAA members, nor are they clients of, or agencies to members. There is a gold and silver award in

each category. However, if entries do not meet the minimum scores, there may be no award presented in a category. A total of 95 awards were presented, mostly to representatives of the state's leading public relations and advertising agencies.

According to its mission statement, the Jersey Shore Public Relations & Advertising Association is dedicated to professional growth and development and seeks to establish the highest standards of excellence in communications in central New Jersey and throughout the state.



Mercer Vicinage Shares a “A Spirit of Service” With Internal and External Court Customers

by Judith Irizarry
Ombudsman
Mercer Vicinage

The Mercer Vicinage celebrated its fifth Customer Service Week from Oct. 3 through Oct. 7. The program was coordinated by the Office of the Ombudsman and the Service Quality Improvement Committee.



Committee member Renae Dudich views one of the displays at the Appreciation Open House

Customer Service Week (CSW) reinforces commitment to quality customer service and promotes innovation in the management of the courts by encouraging participation of court personnel, partners in service and the public.

In keeping with the national customer service week theme, A Spirit of Service, the committee developed educational and employee recognition activities.

Focusing on Internal and External Customers

The vicinage was responsive to internal and external customers by providing information sessions of

interest based on inquiries and questions received from court customers and staff throughout the year. Public information programs included Child Support: An Overview of the Court Process, Civil Courts 101 for the New Legal Professional and two parent education programs. Employees were invited to attend a Tax\$ave 2006 Employee Seminar, a Benefits Questions and Answer Session and a Resume Clinic. Staffed court information tables were located in the halls of both courthouses, and divisions hosted demonstrations and presentations.

Customer Service Appreciation

In an atmosphere of celebration and appreciation, Assignment Judge Linda R. Feinberg and Trial Court Administrator Sue Regan took time to acknowledge and thank court employees for their dedication and support during Customer Service Week.

During an Appreciation Open House, a display including appreciation letters from the public and a PowerPoint slide show illustrated court employees' commitment to service in action.

Employees received a copy of the Mercer Vicinage Internal Customer Service Resource Guide that provides

vicinage-wide contact information and explanations of the work of each division or office.

The Mercer Information Technology Division hosted its CSW Expert User Appreciation Program and provided special acknowledgements and certificates to local expert users and their partners in service from the Administrative Office of the Courts.

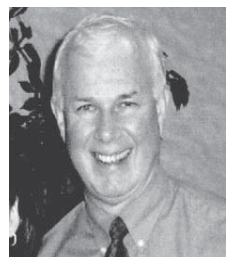
A Significant Customer Service Improvement

Each year the vicinage identifies and highlights at least one significant customer service project. This year the vicinage held a law library ribbon-cutting ceremony during which Gregory Eldridge, general operations manager, introduced the enhanced Mercer Vicinage Law Library.

Improvements to the library include public access terminals, Internet access, streamlined collections, the addition of staff, coin operated copier and printer machines as well as spacious tables for visitors.

These improvements were the result of the implementation of various recommendations made by the vicinage library committee appointed by Assignment Judge Feinberg and led by Judge Jack Sabatino, J.S.C.

Thomas Farrell Receives Awards From Dispute Resolution Groups



Thomas Farrell

Thomas Farrell, manager of Complementary Dispute Resolution Programs in the Special Programs Unit of Trial Court Services, received two honors at a dinner meeting on Nov. 16.

The New Jersey Chapter of the

Association for Conflict Resolution honored Farrell for “inspirational leadership and significant contributions to conflict resolution, its high ethical ideals and legitimacy in New Jersey.”

In addition, the Dispute Resolution Section of the New Jersey State Bar Association presented Farrell with a glass statuette engraved with the words, “With deepest admiration and appreciation to Thomas N. Farrell.” Farrell is planning to retire from state service in 2006.

Project P.R.I.D.E. Helps Juveniles Make Positive Choices in Monmouth

by Theresa Romano
Ombudsman
Monmouth Vicinage

For three years, the Monmouth Vicinage Probation Division, Juvenile Supervision, has presented Project P.R.I.D.E. (Promoting Responsibility in Drug Education) to juveniles on probation and their families. The Probation Division has found the program an effective tool in helping young people make positive choices.

Developed by the Department of Corrections, Project P.R.I.D.E. is a program in which minimum-custody adult offenders, escorted by correction officers, speak with young probationers about the inmates' own personal experiences with drugs and alcohol. The program is designed to reduce the appeal of drugs and

alcohol and to promote positive decision-making skills, according to the Corrections Web site.

Coordinated in the Monmouth Vicinage by Senior Probation Officer Jill Trudel in conjunction with the Department of Corrections, the program touches the hearts and changes the lives of everyone involved. Project P.R.I.D.E. programs also are offered by the Probation Divisions in the Burlington and Ocean Vicinages.

The success of Project P.R.I.D.E. is due in part to the intimacy of the setting. A small group of juvenile probationers, parents and inmates come together for a discussion. Sessions last 3-1/2 hours and run four or five times a year. During the session, inmates tell personal stories, speak candidly about the harsh realities of jail and educate juveniles about how

their lives were negatively impacted by drugs and alcohol. There is no screaming or emotional rhetoric. Everything is done in a calm, respectful manner. Juveniles can speak with visiting inmates; many of who were once juvenile offenders themselves.

Prior to the evening event, Trudel sets the stage for the program by discussing the juveniles' situations with Michael Ritter from the New Jersey Department of Corrections and the visiting inmates. The inmates learn about the backgrounds of the juveniles and are better prepared to address their specific concerns.

Project P.R.I.D.E. was initially supported through a grant by the Department of Education. Unfortunately, funds were eventually exhausted from the grant. However, Officer Trudel did not give up. As usual, vicinage staff came through and were able to find a grant from the county Department of Human Services. Project P.R.I.D.E. is now celebrating its third year of operation in Monmouth.

Juveniles who participate in Project P.R.I.D.E. may initially be reluctant and skeptical. By the end of the experience, however, it is clear that the juveniles are personally affected. Several have asked to participate again, and some have later credited their own healthy choices directly to the Project P.R.I.D.E. experience. One parent commented, "It's been a positive influence on my child... They can hear what prison life is about without being in the institution."

Project P.R.I.D.E. has proved to be a very valuable experience for juvenile offenders in the Monmouth Vicinage, and we look forward to the program's continued success.

Editor's note: Project P.R.I.D.E. also has been offered in the Burlington Vicinage. The Ocean Vicinage has offered a similar program to boys 13 years old and younger.

Phyllis Girgenti Celebrates 40 Years With Camden Vicinage Probation

by Maryann Jenkins
Principal Probation Officer
Camden Vicinage



Phyllis Girgenti

laughter and tears.

Phyllis was born and raised in Camden. "Little Phyllis Corrao," as she was known, started her career fresh out of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel high school. Her first position was as a clerk typist earning \$2,600 per year. The office was located on the seventh floor of city hall. The department consisted of approximately 15

On Oct. 25, Camden employee, Phyllis Girgenti celebrated 40 years with the Probation Division. This special occasion was celebrated with cake, memories,

employees, who did everything from taking complaints to going to court. Phyllis' family operated a restaurant called "Maria's" down the street from the office where many of the employees frequently enjoyed a nice lunch.

Over the years, as the furniture moved from place to place, Phyllis moved right along with it, never complaining and always diligently working. A retired employee recalled, "When the rest of us were trying to get into trouble, Phyllis was always one of the straightest shooters I have ever known."

Phyllis is a compassionate, dedicated, hard-working employee, who is respected by supervisors and co-workers. Phyllis is married to Anthony Girgenti and is the mother of three children, Anthony, 25; Christina, 23; and Gina, 17. The Camden Probation family congratulates Phyllis on this accomplishment and wishes her the best in her future endeavors.

Project Safe Neighborhood Makes A Difference in Mercer County

by Frank DiGiaino
Vicinage Chief Probation Officer

Project Safe Neighborhood (PSN), a joint venture of the Mercer Vicinage Probation Division, the Trenton City Police Department and the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC)-Parole, has been helping juveniles stay on track in Mercer County since the program started in September.

PSN seeks to improve the enforcement of juvenile court orders, increase the safety of the community, enhance services to juvenile offenders and assist the partnering agencies in developing and sharing new resources.

As part of the program, teams consisting of a probation officer, a Trenton police detective and a JJC-Parole officer visit juvenile offenders

in their homes and neighborhoods during the evening. They talk to parents, guardians and young people, conduct curfew checks and execute outstanding warrants.

The partnering agencies expect to make a difference in the community by reducing the number of crimes committed by juveniles on probation and parole. They also expect violations of conditions of supervision to be detected earlier by the officers, resulting in quicker intervention as needed.

Project Safe Neighborhood is the result of the recognized need to enhance cooperation and collaboration between agencies involved in juvenile justice. An advisory board consisting of the three primary team members in addition to community partners such as the schools, Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) and counseling agencies meets every other Friday at the Trenton Police Department to discuss the operation of the program, identify juveniles for the next scheduled date and implement solutions to problems.

In addition, team members share information and resources and engage in ongoing conversation to address specific community crime-related concerns.

In its first six weeks of operation, team members visited more than 90 homes resulting in an increased number of referrals to Mercer's Juvenile Drug Court program, successful educational placements, proactive responses to non-compliance and an increased amount of information sharing between the partners and the community.

Project Safe Neighborhood recognizes the importance of incentives that encourage lawful behavior. Therefore, officers emphasize the need for education and employment, while promoting fairness in the development of a strong, viable community partnership.

Newark Staffer Releases Poetry CD

by Michelle LaPread
Administrative Specialist
Essex Vicinage



Ameera Ahmad

As a court employee, Ameerah Ahmad serves as court clerk to General Equity Presiding Judge Kenneth S. Levy

in Newark. As an artist, she serves to enlighten and entertain her listeners about a strong sense of community.

Ameerah released her new CD, *Poetically Speaking*, in November. The album is dedicated to the community, and the 14 tracks feature content for people of all ages. The subject matter includes the importance of time on "It's Later than We Think," young urban fashion on "Big White Tee" and the Wizard of Oz fantasy versus real life for women on "My Name's not Dorothy." The messages are creative and strong. Ameerah gives a new perspective on many topics that are relevant for the community to which she speaks.

All the poetry is written and performed by Ameerah, and she also served as the album's executive

producer. It took her one-and-a-half years to complete this project mostly because she had to break up the studio time for the professional musicians and engineers. The album was recorded at Black Wax Studios in Jersey City and mastered at The Loft in East Orange by Bill Blast. Ameerah, who performs under the name Butterfly Reflections, says that she identifies with the monarch butterfly because it is fragile, feminine, strong and beautiful.

"I relate to the development and travel of this creature," she said. Over a few months the monarch travels from Canada down to Mexico. "I believe that the Black community in this country is developing, much like the monarch butterfly," she said.

In addition to *Poetically Speaking*, she is the author of a book of poetry entitled *Echoes and Visions*. She has also completed another CD titled *Dance Freedom*, not yet released, which is a narrative of her personal journey learning African dance steps.

Ameerah has received the Paul Robeson Award from the Jersey City Public Library for her contributions to the cultural arts. She grew up in Jersey City but currently resides in Montclair. She is the mother of three sons and two daughters. Ameerah's Web site, www.butterflyreflections.net, is currently under construction.

Louis Narvaez Named Camden Vicinage Chief Probation Officer



Louis Narvaez

by Terry Grabert
Court Services Supervisor
Camden Vicinage

Louis Narvaez has been appointed as vicinage chief probation

officer in the Camden Vicinage. The Probation Division has approximately 238 employees.

Chief Narvaez brings to the Camden Vicinage 20 years' experience in the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania. During his career in Philadelphia, he worked in the District

Attorney's Office as a prosecutor's assistant. Throughout his career with the First Judicial District, he served as a warrant officer, child support hearing officer and probation/parole officer. As a line officer, he supervised a caseload of 200 probationers. He was also assigned to specialized units such as the intensive supervision program and the house arrest program. As a manager, he supervised a team of eight officers who each supervised 250 to 300 driving-under-the-influence cases.

In 2002, Chief Narvaez continued his career with the Superior Court of New Jersey. He was appointed as assistant chief in the adult section in the Mercer County Probation Division. He is especially proud of assisting his teams in exceeding collection goals.

This was accomplished by working closely with his supervisors, especially his Comprehensive Enforcement Program manager, in developing strategies that helped achieve the desired outcome.

He was also instrumental in involving the Probation Division in local job fairs and assigning employment specialist duties to a probation officer. This resulted in the publication of Hot Jobs which listed employment opportunities for probationers. As assistant chief, he enhanced the partnership with the Sheriff's department resulting in Probation receiving access to the Sheriff's Picture Link System and Comprehensive Enforcement Program warrant sweeps.

He was influential in Mercer County Probation's participation as a pilot county for oral swab drug testing. The findings submitted by Mercer and the other pilot counties resulted in the oral swab becoming an approved and acceptable method of testing throughout the state. He also worked with his teams to identify the substance most commonly used by Mercer's population and selected a test cup panel more appropriate for their population.

Chief Narvaez's vision for Camden is to take Probation to another level of excellence. The initial phase of his plan involves the assessment of the operation by staff. This will enable Probation's management team to determine where they are in relationship to where they need to be. The information that is received from staff will be helpful in developing an operational plan that will comply with the best practices adopted by the New Jersey Supreme Court and the Judicial Council. Accountability, productivity and the use of management reports are a recurring theme for the new chief.

Staff College Focuses on Core Values And Looks Positively to the Future

A total of 589 Judiciary managers and supervisors attended this year's John Neufeld Judicial Staff College held Nov. 21 and 22 in a single facility in East Brunswick. Previously in recent years, the college had been offered in two locations throughout the state.

Judge Philip S. Carchman, administrative director of the courts, presented an address to all those in attendance following the keynote presentation on Nov. 22.

Judge Carchman praised the leadership of Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz and the Judiciary's great strides during the past 10 years in unification and improving access to justice through technology. These changes have been the "result of her vision and commitment to ensuring that this is the finest Judiciary in the United States," he said.

He reminded his audience that in another year, there would be a new chief justice.

"I see this as an opportunity...to think creatively about our Judiciary and its next 10 years," he said. "We have built a solid foundation for the next chief justice, and we have done so with your efforts, commitment and dedication," he said. "We thank you for the past and encourage you for the future."

Conducted by the Organizational Development and Training Unit in the Administrative Office of the Courts, this year's staff college received high marks from those attending.

The theme, "Drilling to the Core: Our Purposes and Responsibilities as Managers in the New Jersey Judiciary," focused on core values and achieving the Judiciary's vision. Twenty-two workshop topics were offered in policy and operations tracks. The three top-rated workshops focused on PowerPoint, compassion fatigue and "how to keep people from pushing your buttons."

IOLTA Brings Legal Aid to the Poor

Continued from page 3

All attorneys in New Jersey must participate in IOLTA, while banks do so on a voluntary basis. In fact, two of IOLTA's four-person staff at the Law Center in New Brunswick work full-time registering attorneys and interacting with banks throughout the year.

Partners for Women in Justice in the Essex Vicinage is another organization that relies on IOLTA funding for several of its free legal assistance programs for low-income and abused women dealing with family law and related issues. The programs partially funded by IOLTA run the gamut from phone advice and counsel to a pro bono program that links attorney volunteers with disadvantaged women in need of legal counsel.

"One woman recently told me she was afraid to appear in court on her own in a child support case," recalled Jane Hanson, executive director of Partners. "She said, 'I'm afraid I will shake like a leaf.' But after she went through one of our programs before appearing on her own in court, she called and left an excited message, 'I did it! I went to court by myself and received child support. I was nervous at first in front of the judge, but you had told me what to expect, and I also kept telling myself, it's for my kids, and then I wasn't nervous any more. Thanks for helping me out.'"

Hanson said IOLTA dollars helped her organization provide legal assistance to more than 100 IOLTA-qualified women in need in 2005.

According to Ferrise, IOLTA funds most of the lead domestic violence agencies in each county.

"You may have noticed people stationed in court to assist victims of domestic violence who are applying for a temporary restraining order," she said. "These individuals may take victims aside, explain what's happening, help them prepare for an appearance or provide follow-up if the victim needs a final restraining order.

"Though they frequently are seen in courtrooms, these people are not court staff," she noted. "Their positions are funded by IOLTA."

Covenant House, a service group that helps homeless youth, is another example of an IOLTA beneficiary.

"You'd be amazed to learn about the legal problems homeless young people have," Ferrise said. "Some of these young people can't rent an apartment because their parents or others have stolen their identity and ruined their credit! Others may have mental illnesses and need legal representation in order to obtain Social Security Disability benefits."

Among the many other organizations IOLTA supports are Lifetime Support of Union County, which helps families arrange legal guardianship of adult disabled children; and Jewish Family and Vocational Service of Middlesex County. Among its many services, the latter organization provides representation in Immigration Court for people who do not understand English, or who may be elderly or disabled.

IOLTA also funds agencies that are part of Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment, created in the late 1970s as the National Displaced Homemaker Network. This program helps women who have lost their status as full-time homemakers through divorce or death of a spouse. But the typical displaced homemaker is not a middle-aged or older woman who has lost a husband.

"In some counties, the largest growing segment of this population is single parent heads of households who are teenagers," said Ferrise. "This demographic surprises a lot of people. These young women need job training and day care. They learn how to prepare for an interview and to handle legal problems, often involving child support."

Because it relies on unpredictable interest rates, IOLTA funds vary from year to year. "We went through

a couple of economic cycles since '98, including some drops in interest rates," said Ferrise, who has a background in commercial banking. "But we take a business approach to our program and have had some very good years. When we have very good revenue, it really helps the legal aid system to maintain programs that they know work to assist poor people with legal problems."

--Linda Brown Holt

Courts Receive One Millionth Electronic Filing

One million electronic Special Civil Part filings have been received by the courts since the Judiciary's Electronic Filing/Imaging System (JEFIS) was implemented statewide, announced Judge Philip S. Carchman, acting administrative director of the courts.

"JEFIS represents the epitome of teamwork: our statewide electronic filing system is the result of the hard work and cooperation of our Special Civil Part, the Civil Practice Division, our automated Trial Court Services unit, and our Information Technology staff. Together, they made this happen. This is the future of the Judiciary," said Judge Carchman.

Using JEFIS, participating attorneys can use the Internet to file DC docket type Special Civil Part cases, which are civil cases involving damages of less than \$15,000. The cases are docketed automatically, initiating the necessary notices, all of which also are sent electronically. Electronic filing eliminates the need for court staff to enter case information into the Judiciary's Automated Case Management System, resulting in greater efficiency and fewer clerical errors at critical points in the case processing system. It saves attorneys time, effort and cost in delivering documents to the courts. These savings can in turn be passed on to litigants.

Trial Court Administration: An Evolving Profession

Continued from page 1

also an attorney, assumed the duties of administrative director.

The original rules adopted by the Supreme Court divided the state into 11 regions presided over by administrative judges appointed by the chief justice. The number of regions was increased to 12 in 1965 and to 15 in 1983. Under McConnell, the Judiciary's central office (the Administrative Office of the Courts, or AOC) was involved continuously in the administration of county-level trial courts, becoming a national model in the 1950s and 1960s.

In 1967 McConnell authorized administrative assistants to work directly for the administrative judges in the six of the larger regions. With legal, business and government backgrounds, these individuals assisted their administrative judges in the daily operations of the courts in their regions. As caseloads grew statewide, so did the number of personnel working for the courts. Through the 1960s, some judges and the administrative assistants were on the state payroll while other judges and court personnel in the regions were on county payrolls.

In 1970 at the urging of United States Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger, the Institute for Court Management (ICM) was established to train court administrators throughout the country. McConnell strongly supported this program. By 1972, eight of the 12 administrative assistants working in New Jersey had completed ICM's Court Executive Development Program. Beginning in 1973, the title for these positions was changed to trial court administrator.

In 1973 McConnell left New Jersey to become president of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) in Williamsburg, Va. Judge Arthur Simpson, who had served as the administrative or assignment judge in two regions (vicinages), was selected to succeed McConnell

as administrative director. Caseloads and case management responsibilities continued to expand in the 1970's. Federal funds under the State Law Enforcement Planning Agency (SLEPA) were obtained to underwrite the cost of intervention programs such as pre-trial intervention, bail teams and juvenile intake as well as to hire assistant trial court administrators in some of the larger regions. Efforts to

unify the bifurcated state and county costs of operating the courts continued. The regional or vicinage role in the administration of the courts in New Jersey also continued to develop during this period with increasing oversight and management of budgets, jury selection, municipal court functions, county court caseloads and the beginning of automation.

to be continued

New Jersey Judiciary Assists Louisiana Courts with Surplus Computer Equipment

The New Jersey Judiciary has sent 120 laser printers to the Louisiana court system to help replace equipment destroyed by Hurricane Katrina, announced Judge Philip S. Carchman, acting administrative director of the courts.

"Like others around the country, we were looking for ways that we could help the citizens of the Gulf region, and we are pleased to be able to help out in this way," said Judge Carchman.

Ordinarily, surplus state property is disposed of through the New Jersey Department of the Treasury. In this case, Treasury agreed to the Judiciary's request that these printers be sent to the Louisiana court system.

The printers were used in courthouses around the state and are being replaced as part of a regular maintenance cycle.

Dr. Hugh Collins, judicial administrator for the Louisiana courts, expressed appreciation for the donated printers. "Many of our staff and judges have been making do--or doing without--since the hurricane, so they are grateful for this donation," he said.

The printers will be distributed to court offices, judges' chambers, district attorneys, public defenders and other participants in the justice system in and around New Orleans. The Louisiana court system is paying for shipping costs.

Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection Reaches Milestone

For the first year since its inception in 1969, the New Jersey Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection has recovered from dishonest attorneys and other sources more than one million dollars to replace the money it pays out in claims.

The fund's previous record for recovering such money was \$984,000 in 2001.

The fund reimburses clients who suffer losses caused by the dishonest conduct of their lawyers. Punishment for such misdeeds generally includes suspension of the lawyer's license followed by disbarment and,

often, criminal prosecution.

The fund pays claims where three things are proven: a specific loss, caused by dishonest conduct, within an attorney-client relationship. In return for the award paid, claimants assign to the fund their rights to restitution. In turn, the fund aggressively pursues these rights against the dishonest former lawyers and any other party who may be liable by virtue of how the loss occurred.

A board of trustees, chaired by Alan L. Williams, is appointed by the Supreme Court of New Jersey to oversee the fund.



Tech-KNOWLEDGE-y

Look, Ma, No Hands!

by Janet Bastien, Project Manager, Information Technology

While your mother may not work here, imagine what she might say about your posture if she did.

Are you slumped over your keyboard, resting your hands on your wrist-rest, staring at the screen, typing or surfing for hours on end? The University of California at Berkeley reports the most common areas of the body to experience discomfort at the computer are the hands, wrists, elbows, shoulder and neck. Your slumping posture may be the cause. Proper posture at the computer means that your feet are flat on the floor and your arms and thighs are parallel to the floor. Your monitor should sit on your desk about two feet away from you.

Stop beating up your little keyboard! Pounding on the keyboard can lead to tendonitis, so type lightly. Reduce the amount of typing you do altogether by using macros and short-cuts instead of complex key sequences.

That wrist rest is really a misnomer. According to Berkeley U, wrist-rests should only be used to rest the heel of your palms, not your wrist, and only on break, not during typing. Armrests are only for taking breaks, too; don't rest your non-mousing arm on it or that will set your proper computer posture off kilter. Better yet, let your arms just hang at your sides when you need a break.

Clean up your work area! A cluttered and disorganized work area causes stress and decreases produc-

tivity. Arrange your mouse, keyboard and monitor so they are comfortable for you. Keep the mouse close by so you don't continually over-reach, placing stress on your shoulder, upper back and elbows.

If you are typing from a document, the monitor and the material being typed should be placed at a similar angle. This helps reduce head, neck and eye movements, which helps reduce strain to the eyes.

"Since working at a computer is such a visually-intense task, people use their bodies to locate their eyes so that they can best see and interact with the computer," says Dr. James Sheedy, O.D., Ph.D., of Walnut Creek, CA, in an article published on the American Optometric Association Web site. "They accommodate their eyes at the expense of good posture, which results in musculoskeletal difficulties like neckache, shoulder pain and backaches."

According to Dr. Elise Brisco, an optometrist practicing at the Hollywood Vision Center in Los Angeles, "Too many people stare into the monitor for hours on end. This can help foster Computer Vision Syndrome."

Optometrists such as Dr. Brisco endorse the 20/20/20 computer vision rule: 20 minutes of computer use followed by a 20-second vision break, focusing on something at least 20 feet away. Put a note on your computer to remind you to look away and blink every now and then. Blinking helps prevent dry eyes. And give your

whole body a break every 45 minutes, even if it's only for a minute or so. Get up and stretch; move all your muscles periodically.

While your mother may have taught you to wash your hands after visiting the loo, did she ever tell you to wash up after using the computer?

Consider a study conducted by the University of Arizona and reported on ElectricNews.net that found there are about 400 times the number of germs at computer workstations in the U.S. than there are on a toilet seat. Yes, keyboards serve up about 3.295 germs per square inch and the desk surface hosts about 20,961.

But before you close the lid on lunching at your desk, know that this 2001 study recommends a daily swipe with a disinfectant to send the germs at your desk packing. Wait! Don't spray that stuff at your computer! Never spray or squirt any type of liquid onto any computer component. Spray it onto a cloth and then wipe down your components and desktop.

While we don't have to look both ways and cross with traffic to do our online shopping and chatting, Mother never dreamed about us overstressing our wrists or eyes. The computer has brought information to our fingertips (which we must still wash) and made us more productive, but at the expense of body kinks and blurry eyes, unless we take precautions.

So sit up straight, eat your vegetables (at your cleaned desk) and keep both hands off the wrist-rest.



Mission Statement of the New Jersey Court System

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