



Fair and Just



# Annual Report of the New Jersey Judiciary 2000-2001

Quality  
Service



Protect

Rights



Integrity



## **New Jersey Supreme Court**

*Seated (left to right):* Justice Gary S. Stein; Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz; Justice James H. Coleman Jr.

*Standing (left to right):* Justice Jaynee LaVecchia; Justice Virginia A. Long; Justice Peter G. Verniero; Justice James R. Zazzali.

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## **The State of New Jersey Judiciary**

### *Administrative Office of the Courts*

Judge Richard J. Williams  
Administrative Director of the Courts

Theodore J. Fetter  
Deputy Administrative Director

David P. Anderson  
Director, Office of Professional and Governmental Services

Winifred M. Comfort  
Director, Office of Public Affairs

Frank C. Farr  
Director, Office of Management and Administrative Services

John P. McCarthy Jr., Esq.  
Director, Trial Court Services

James R. Rebo  
Chief Information Officer

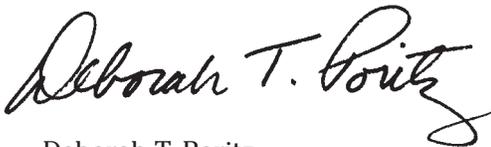
## ***A Message from Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz***

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the New Jersey Judiciary for the Court Year 2000–2001.

The report describes the work of the Judiciary during the past year and highlights particular areas of accomplishment. It highlights the dedication and talent of our judges and staff, their concern for the values of fairness and independence, and their commitment to improved accessibility and service.

Now more than ever, it is important to demonstrate the strength of our fundamental institutions. The work of the court—to fairly and peacefully resolve disputes and protect the rights and liberties of our citizens—is critical for a civilized and just society. It embodies the values we believe in as a people.

The accomplishments included in this report have strengthened the foundation of our justice system. We are proud of what we have accomplished, and we will continue to work toward improving our services in a manner that supports our values of independence, integrity, fairness and quality service.



Deborah T. Poritz  
Chief Justice  
New Jersey Supreme Court





## *A Message from Judge Richard J. Williams*

This is a rewarding and a challenging time to share in the work of the New Jersey Judiciary. We are engaged in an ongoing process to reform and strengthen a Judiciary that in many areas already has been recognized as a national model. While the origins of our efforts can be found in the constitutional mandate to create a unified Judiciary, the energy that sustains our work comes from a common understanding and commitment to a vision of what we want for the future.

It is a vision that sees a Judiciary unified in all respects. To be sure, we want a justice system that is unified in the sense that resources and responsibilities are fairly allocated and fairly shared, but we also want much more. We want a Judiciary that offers the same programs and services, the same practices and procedures, and the same high quality of service in every courthouse in the state. We recognize that basic fairness requires nothing less.

Our vision also sees a Judiciary that is intensely focused on service, with a goal of meeting or exceeding the expectations of our citizens. We want to be a Judiciary that will provide equal access to a fair and effective system of justice without excessive cost, inconvenience or delay, and that will consistently seek out the best practices in every area of our work as part of a process of continuous renewal and improvement.

And finally, our vision sees a Judiciary that has earned the respect and confidence of an informed public, maintaining our independence while at the same time strengthening relations with the other branches of government, the bar, and the increasingly diverse public we serve.

The accomplishments outlined in the pages of this report represent significant progress toward making our vision a reality. They are the product of the dedication and hard work of countless judges, administrators, professional and clerical staff and volunteers. It is work of which the Judiciary is proud.

I invite you to share in our sense of accomplishment as you read about our progress to improve the quality of justice in every corner of our state.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard J. Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard J. Williams, J.A.D.  
Administrative Director of the Courts  
State of New Jersey

## ***Making Progress, Measuring Success***

### **Providing Consistency for New Jersey’s Courts**

Six years have passed since the massive project of unifying the New Jersey Judiciary began. Initiated by voters as a constitutional amendment and enabled by legislation, statewide unification has been a multi-faceted effort affecting every court in the state. Numerous challenges have been met in order to reach the ultimate goal: uniform justice, statewide.

New Jersey is one of the first states to achieve a comprehensive unification of its court system. Previously under local funding, the system saw wide disparities from county to county in areas such as staffing, salaries, job titles and case management systems, as well as in locally established cultures and norms that had developed over time. Following the vision of the Judiciary’s 1998 strategic plan, disparities in staffing from county to county now have been eliminated. Standardizing classification and compensation of staff has succeeded in reducing more than 600 job titles to 69. Salary disparity among people working in different counties has been eliminated. With the achievement of these formidable administrative goals of unification, attention now has focused on developing consistency in the quality of services and programs that are offered statewide.

### **Establishing Standards and Best Practices**

Long recognized as a leader in judicial reform, New Jersey has continued that tradition with its innovative approach to the development of statewide standards through best practices. The best practices approach is an ongoing process of standardization that allows for maximum input from those involved in the day-to-day management of the courts. Judges from each vicinage collaborate regularly to develop a list of practices and procedures for their respective divisions. The most successful of these are identified through consensus of the various Conferences of Presiding Judges and Division Managers, with broad

participation from trial judges, the bar, relevant state agencies, and others. The proposed best practices are then published for comment by judges, lawyers and the public prior to approval by the Supreme Court for statewide implementation.

The results of best practice standardization are different for each division. For example, best practice standardization in the Civil Division means that cases are assigned to tracks depending on their complexity. Discovery issues are handled uniformly throughout the state and cases are more likely to be heard on their assigned trial date. In the Family Division, best practice standards enable children in foster care to receive stable placements as quickly as possible, ensure that juvenile delinquency cases are handled consistently and expeditiously, and provide for the prompt resolution of divorce proceedings.

Through best practice standardization, the local practices and traditions that evolved into separate “legal cultures” in each vicinage have been transformed into a consistent statewide system of programs and procedures. In addition to realizing the goal of equal justice, statewide operational consistency offers a number of practical benefits—it serves lawyers well, for they know what to expect as they move around the state in the course of their practice; it serves the public well, by facilitating the equitable allocation of resources to support similar programs in all counties; and it serves the court well, by removing barriers to efficiency and allowing for more accurate comparison of performance and results.

Best practice policies and procedures in each division are updated on a regular basis following the same method of collaboration and consultation. The implementation and ongoing evaluation of best practices are bringing the cultures and norms of 21 individual counties into one statewide court system that provides equal access, equal protection, and equal quality of service to all.

### **Reducing Backlog**

One of the greatest challenges that all organizations face today is to offer services in a manner appropriate to the

accelerated pace of contemporary life. This challenge is particularly important for a Judiciary in a world whose citizens require prompt and effective resolution of disputes. The longer it takes to resolve matters, the greater the expense, and the greater the possibility that satisfactory results will be compromised.

Under the leadership of the assignment judge in each vicinage, the unified court system has become increasingly efficient, with the reduction of backlogged cases taking high priority. The Judiciary has established appropriate

percent), non-dissolution cases (51 percent), and civil and special civil cases (22 percent each). These figures reflect the diligence and efficiency with which judges and their staff have been working to reduce the backlog and improve the timeliness of case resolution.

### Expanding Drug Courts

The Judiciary continues to seek ways to improve the effectiveness of its services. One initiative that has proven particularly effective is the Drug Court Program. During

the past year, the Judiciary worked closely with the Governor’s Office and legislative leaders to promote the expansion of drug courts to every county. Drug courts are dedicated exclusively to cases involving drug-using offenders, offering comprehensive supervision, drug testing, treatment and immediate sanctions and incentives. Drug courts have proven effective at breaking the cycle of drug abuse and crime, giving drug addicts the opportunity to become productive citizens. They are a cost-effective alternative to incarceration, and contribute significantly to reducing racial disparity in prison populations. The program involves a team approach on the part of judges,

### What is Backlog?

Active pending cases are considered to be either in “inventory” or “backlog.” Cases that are younger than the case processing time goals are considered to be in inventory. Cases that are older than the time goals are considered to be in backlog. The following table lists goals.

Criminal Pre-Indictment	2 months	Dissolution (New)	12 months
Criminal Post-Indictment	4 months	Dissolution (Reopened)	6 months
Municipal Appeals	3 months	Delinquency	3 months
P.C. Relief	3 months	Non-Dissolution	3 months
		Domestic Violence	1 month
Equity	12 months	Abuse/Neglect (to fact finding)*	
Civil Track 1	12 months	Out of Home	4 months
Civil Track 2	18 months	In Home	6 months
Civil Track 3	24 months	Adoption*	
Civil Track 4	24 months	Agency	2 months
Special Civil	3 months	Stepparent	4 months
Probate	12 months	Private Placement	12 months
		CPR (to permanency hearings)*	12 months
Municipal Courts	2 months	Juvenile Family Crisis	1 month
		Termination of Parental Rights	6 months
		Criminal/Quasi-Criminal/Other	3 months
* Pending Implementation			

times for disposition for each type of case in the system and measures every case against those expectations. The term “backlog” is assigned by the Judiciary to any of its cases that are not terminated within the expected time frame.

Statewide, in court year 2001 the backlog of cases dropped dramatically by 21 percent, from 52,783 to 41,800. Some of the most dramatic reductions occurred in domestic violence cases (67 percent), delinquency cases (52

prosecutors, defense counsel, probation officers, law enforcement and correctional personnel, educational and vocational experts, substance abuse treatment specialists, community leaders, and others.

First piloted with federal funds in Camden, Essex, Mercer, Passaic and Union Counties, drug courts have been named a “best practice” by the Conference of Criminal Presiding Judges and the Judicial Council. So far, more than one thousand participants are being helped by drug court

programs around the state. Plans are under way to expand drug courts to five additional vicinages by the spring of 2002, with full statewide implementation to be completed by 2003.

### **Increasing Accessibility**

Efforts to make the courts more easily accessible to the public have resulted in several new initiatives, including more help for people representing themselves in court, interpreting services for non-English speakers, and an updated equal employment opportunity plan designed to ensure a workforce that understands and is responsive to the needs of an increasingly diverse population.

#### *Assisting Self-represented Litigants*

Self-representation can be a daunting proposition, but a growing number of New Jersey residents choose this route each year. The Judiciary now offers forms and information specifically designed for people wishing to represent themselves in court. After preliminary testing in Essex, Hudson and Mercer Counties, standardized packets of information and forms were made available to pro se litigants statewide in March 2001. The Judiciary's Ad Hoc Working Group on Pro Se Materials developed the new uniform packets over the last two years with extensive input from judges, court staff and the Supreme Court Committee on Minority Concerns. Packets were designed for several areas, including small claims/auto, small claims/non-auto, appeal of a municipal court judgment, and motions to increase/decrease alimony and child support. The forms and other information included in the packets may be used in any Superior Court in the state. The Working Group anticipates developing additional packets for other types of cases in the future. The packets urge citizens with special civil claims and municipal court appeals to consider getting a lawyer to assist them. The packets are available at each courthouse, and also may be downloaded from the Judiciary Web site.

#### *Providing Telephone Interpreting*

New Jersey has one of the most linguistically diverse populations in the nation. Interpreting services for over forty languages were provided in New Jersey courts last year. Statewide implementation of the Telephone

Interpreting Program began in Superior Court in March 2001 and in the Comprehensive Enforcement Program, Domestic Violence Hearing Officer Program and Child Support Hearing Officer Program in April 2001. A supplement to the Judiciary's long-standing program of in-court interpreters, telephone interpreting is appropriate for emergent court matters and matters of short duration. Telephone interpreting eliminates the need for those seeking court services to rely on friends or relatives for interpreting services, reduces travel costs for state-paid interpreters, and makes court services available for those whose languages are not spoken by local or immediately available interpreters. Telephone interpreting is presently available in all court rooms and will be available in all Civil, Criminal and Family Division offices, as well as Probation, by early 2002.

#### *Assuring Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EEO/AA)*

Because of the great diversity of New Jersey's citizens, the New Jersey Judiciary bears a particular responsibility to be responsive to the needs of a diverse population and to employ a workforce that understands the needs of New Jersey citizens. The New Jersey Judiciary, working with its Minority Concerns Committee, has been at the forefront of national efforts to provide a fair and respectful court environment for everyone who comes into contact with the courts, including litigants, lawyers, jurors, and witnesses. The Judiciary's Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Master Plan was approved by the Supreme Court in May 2000, instituting a statewide plan of action for ensuring fairness, equality, courtesy and respect for all individuals working for or interacting with the court system. To carry out the plan, the Court approved the hiring and training of an EEO officer in each of the fifteen vicinages, as well as three regional officers responsible for investigating complaints in the North, Central, and Southern regions. Extensive training programs also were designed and implemented for EEO/AA committee members appointed in each vicinage and the Administrative Office of the Courts. Currently, the Judiciary is conducting an in-depth workforce analysis that examines equality of employment opportunity for each job

title in the court system. The Judiciary will continue working diligently to build a work force that is the product of equal opportunity for all segments of the labor pool from which its employees are hired and promoted.

### **Improving Service with Technology**

The New Jersey Courts continue to marshal technology to provide better service and reduce costs. With adoption of an Information Technology Master Plan during the past year, the Judiciary is better able to focus future efforts to increase quality and efficiency in the areas of court management and administration.

#### *Filing Electronically*

Statewide electronic filing of cases has been a milestone achievement for service in the Special Civil Part. More than 28,000 cases were filed electronically statewide during the first year of operation statewide. As part of electronically filing their complaints, lawyers submit an electronic data file that automatically docket the case, reducing the need for court personnel to enter information by hand. Once the data has been entered into the Automated Case Management System (ACMS), court-generated notices are sent electronically to participating firms. Clerical errors are avoided, and encryption secures the documents as they are transmitted to the system. Electronic filing reduces the time it takes to enter data into ACMS by more than fifty percent.

#### *Expanding Audio and Video Conferencing*

During the past year, the Judiciary established a statewide video conferencing network in every courthouse in the state. Audio conferencing also is now available in every civil, equity and family courtroom. Whether used for meetings, for oral arguments, or for taking testimony from remote locations, those networks hold exceptional potential for savings of time and expense as well as offering greater convenience to attorneys, witnesses and litigants. Expert witness testimony may be obtained more economically if time and travel costs are reduced. In addition, experts may be more readily available by video conferencing than in person. Expanded use of audio conferencing allows attorneys to work more efficiently by participating in motion arguments via telephone. Both

audio and video conferencing are critical tools in the Judiciary's efforts to improve service to the public by saving attorneys and litigants time and money. In addition, they reduce government costs by saving the expense of transporting prisoners to court from jail.

#### *Enhancing the Judiciary Web Site*

The information on the New Jersey Judiciary's extensive Web site ([www.judiciary.state.nj.us](http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us)) is accessed daily by employees of the courts, members of the Bar, and the public at large. With over five thousand files, the site disseminates information such as descriptions of each court division, calendars, news releases, and other pertinent information. Legal forms can be downloaded, research conducted, and information for each vicinage can be accessed. Updated daily, the Judiciary Web site has become one of the most important communication tools used by the various court offices as well as the public.

Some of the new additions to the Web site this year include the Civil Motion Calendar, which allows attorneys, litigants and citizens to find out when motions are scheduled in each vicinage, and the Mass Tort Information Center, which serves as a clearinghouse for information on those special cases. Another addition this year was the Mediator Search tool, which allows users to enter information about their cases and search for qualified mediators on-line. All Supreme and Appellate opinions and notices to the public also are now posted on the Web site.

The Web site earned public recognition at the National Center for State Courts Technology Conference in its Top Ten Court Web Sites competition. The New Jersey Judiciary has the added distinction of being the only statewide Web site to be included in the top ten.

### **Working to Increase Juror Fees**

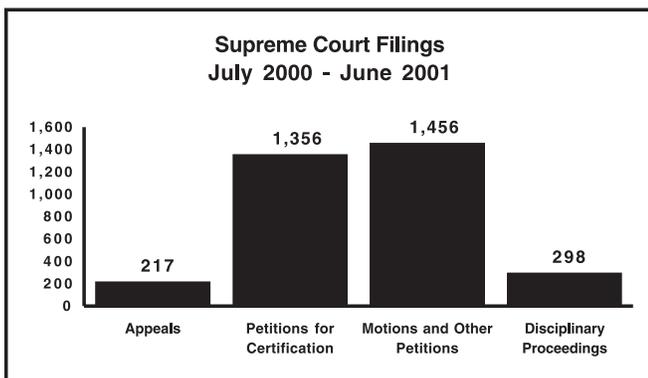
Jurors were provided a significant fee increase through legislation signed into law on March 23, 2001. For more than fifty years, juror fees in New Jersey remained at the same level. As a result of long-standing efforts by the Judiciary, with strong legislative and gubernatorial support, jurors serving more than three days now will be

paid forty dollars per day starting on the fourth day of service. This “raise” lessens the financial burden that serving on a jury presents for citizens who often forgo their salaries in order to serve. The long-standing five-dollar per diem barely covered the cost of lunch for many jurors, while the new rate better signifies the importance of their work.

## The Supreme Court

The seven members of the Supreme Court are appointed by the Governor for a seven-year term, after which they may be reappointed to serve until they reach the age of 70. Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz was appointed in 1996. Justice Gary S. Stein was first appointed in 1985. Justice James H. Coleman Jr. joined the Court in 1994. Justices Virginia A. Long and Peter G. Verniero were appointed in 1999. Justices Jaynee LaVecchia and James R. Zazzali were appointed in 2000.

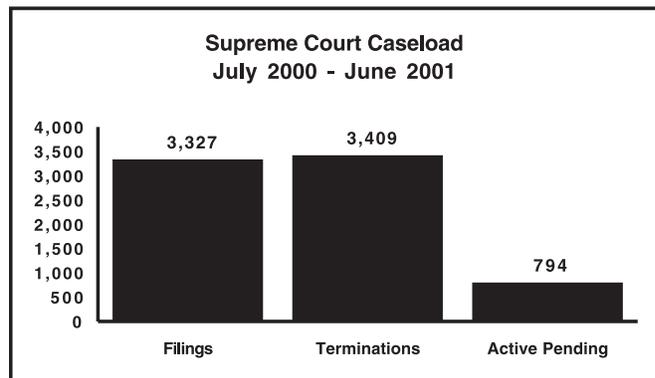
New Jersey laws allow for a limited number of cases to come to the Supreme Court by way of appeal as a matter



of right; such cases include those in which there was dissent in the Appellate Division and those that raise substantial constitutional questions that have not been decided previously in the Appellate Division or in the Supreme Court. In addition, the state constitution requires the Supreme Court to review all death penalty cases directly, bypassing the Appellate Division. As part of its consideration of such appeals, the Court conducts a

proportionality review to determine whether the sentence of death fits the crime in comparison with other cases.

Most cases are filed with the Supreme Court as petitions for certification. As to those cases, the Court engages in a discretionary review in order to determine whether to hear the matter. The Court grants certification only in a limited number of cases. Examples include cases that are of general public importance and cases that present issues



that have resulted in conflicting decisions in the Appellate Division. Of the 1,356 petitions for certification added this year, the Court granted 127, or nine percent. The Supreme Court also received a total of 1,456 motions and disposed of 1,498. In addition, the Court issued 98 opinions on 113 appeals and disposed of 302 disciplinary matters.

Cases reviewed by the Supreme Court may require the Court to interpret the state and federal constitutions, laws enacted by the New Jersey legislature or regulations adopted by administrative agencies. The Chief Justice and the Supreme Court also oversee the attorney and judicial ethics system, which includes the Disciplinary Oversight Committee, the Disciplinary Review Board, the Office of Attorney Ethics, and the Advisory Committee on Judicial Conduct.

In the area of judicial administration, the Supreme Court has numerous practice committees that report biannually regarding changes in court rules. During court year 2000–2001 the New Jersey Supreme Court appointed a special commission to review the American Bar Association’s proposed revisions to the Model Rules of Professional Conduct and other recent ethics issues. The

25-member commission will release a report on its findings during the next court year. The report will play an important role in shaping professional rules of conduct for lawyers throughout the state.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Bar Admissions, which convened for the first time in March 2001, has been charged with the responsibility of looking at the issue of multi-jurisdictional bar admissions. The committee will consider the creation of an appropriate mechanism to permit qualified foreign-educated attorneys to take the New Jersey bar examination, rules authorizing admissions to the bar by motion, and the status and oversight of in-house counsel and transactional attorneys who are not admitted to the bar of New Jersey.

## *The Appellate Division of Superior Court*

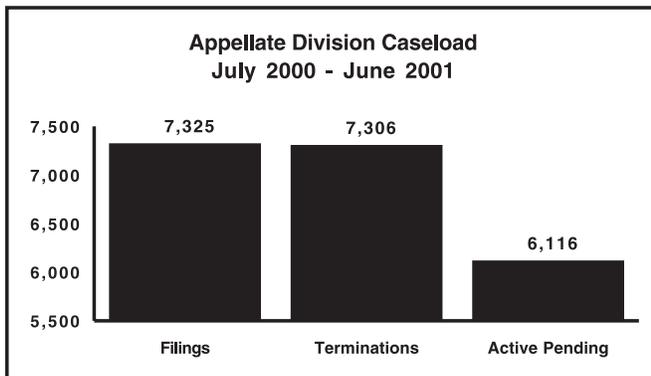
The Appellate Division of Superior Court is New Jersey's intermediate appellate court. The Court ordinarily consists of 32 judges grouped into parts of four judges each. Each part is administered by a presiding judge who presides over the sessions, makes opinion assignments, and oversees the part's overall work flow. In addition, one of the presiding judges is designated as the presiding judge for administration of the Appellate Division. The Hon. Sylvia B. Pressler currently holds that title. The Appellate Division considers appeals timely taken as of right from the final judgments of the trial divisions of Superior Court,

as well as the final decisions of state administrative agencies. Litigants seeking Appellate Division review of an interlocutory or interim order of a trial court or agency may do so only with leave of the Court.

The Appellate Division benefited from upgrades in technology during the past court year. A Web-based filing process for the initiating of appeals was established. Attorneys can access the Judiciary Web site and file their notices of appeal 24 hours a day using standard Internet software.

In support of the Judiciary's efforts to streamline the processing of parental termination, child abuse and neglect, and contested custody appeals, the Appellate Division has developed and implemented a protocol to provide rigorous guidelines that compress the processing time and decision time for these appeals. The protocol was developed in conjunction with the Family Division, the Public Defender, and the Attorney General. It provides for expedited production of transcripts, assignment of counsel by the Public Defender, brief submission, motion practice, and opinion completion. The processing of these appeals is overseen by a judge of the Appellate Division to assure compliance with the protocol.

During the 2000–2001 court year, 7,325 appeals were added to the docket, most of which eventually were briefed and their issues considered by the court. For the same period, 7,306 appeals were disposed of. These figures represent a slight decrease in appeals added and a slight increase in appeals decided.



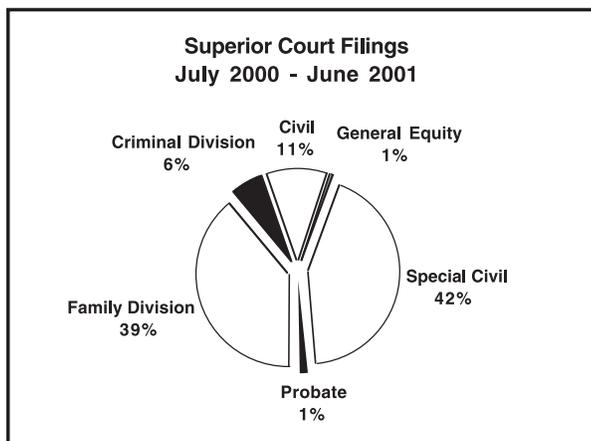
The Civil Appeals Settlement Program (CASP), established in 1981, was designed to identify at the initial phases of processing those appeals which possibly could be settled. Alternatively, appeals with very complex issues may be selected for a pre-argument conference in order to delineate and clarify those issues prior to briefing. For the 2000–2001 court year, the number of CASP dispositions rose to more than 500.

Sentencing appeal calendars were started in 1982 as the Excessive Sentence Program, initially designed to dispose of those appeals in which the sole issue on appeal was the

excessiveness of the sentence imposed. The program since has been expanded to include additional sentencing issues. Because of the narrow issues being addressed, appeals considered in this program are argued without the need for full briefing. During the 2000–2001 court year, 720 appeals were disposed of by this program.

## The Trial Courts

New Jersey’s Judiciary is organized into 15 districts, or vicinages, where cases involving criminal, civil and family law are heard. Each vicinage is overseen by an assignment judge, who is assisted by a trial court administrator in



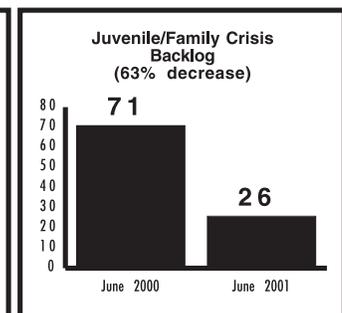
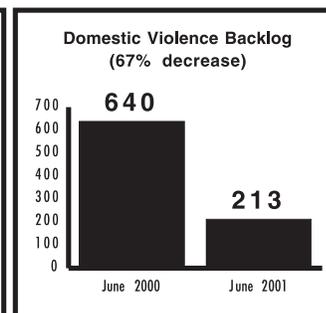
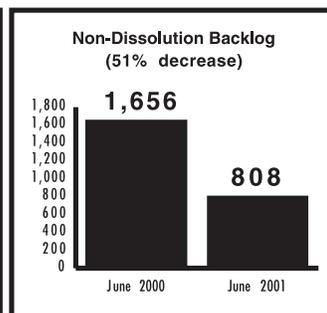
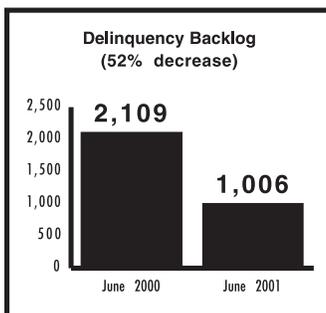
managing day-to-day business. The trial courts are organized into the Family, Criminal, Civil and General Equity Divisions of Superior Court. The trial court administrator’s office and the Probation Division support the work of the trial divisions. Each trial division is led by a presiding judge, assisted by a division manager.

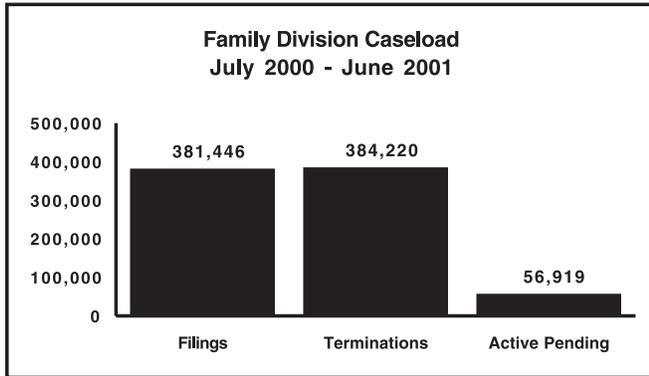
Filings in the trial courts increased one percent over last year, for a total of 970,664 cases. Dispositions totaled 992,717, for a clearance rate of 102 percent. Active pending cases on June 30, 2001, numbered 216,963, an eight percent decrease from the previous year. Overall, the trial courts reduced the backlog by 21 percent.

### The Family Division

The wide variety of cases handled in the Family Division, including divorce, domestic violence, adoption, child support, juvenile delinquency, parental rights, foster placements, child abuse and child neglect, makes its services critical to thousands of children and families in the state. The implementation of best practice standards has helped minimize trauma and disruption for many of these children and families. They enable children in foster care to receive stable placements as quickly as possible, they ensure that juvenile delinquency cases are handled consistently and expeditiously, and they provide for the prompt resolution of divorce proceedings.

For example, in the area of dissolution (divorce) cases, discovery time goals have been assigned to each of four types of cases, from expedited cases involving relatively few assets to priority cases where contested custody is a factor. Case processing manuals for many areas, including delinquency, non-dissolution, and domestic violence, have assisted with the implementation of standardized case management. Vicinages have been asked to provide regular updates on implementation, and technical assistance teams have been formed to visit each vicinage and offer feedback and advice on the implementation of new standards.





These initiatives have resulted in significant backlog reduction. The Family Division reduced backlog in delinquency cases by 52 percent, non-dissolution cases by 51 percent, domestic violence cases by 67 percent and juvenile/family crisis cases by 63 percent.

The Family Division addressed the issue of domestic violence through two new initiatives during the past court year. As part of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Superior Court received federal funds to provide training for judges, court staff and probation officers on domestic violence issues. A one-day training session was held for family court judges, and a two-day session was held for probation officers and other personnel.

A centralized statewide database of domestic violence restraining orders also was implemented. The database allows police officers to find out instantaneously if a person is in violation of a restraining order, allowing them to act immediately to protect victims. Each vicinage offered training on the use of the database for law enforcement officers. A technical assistance team and an assessment of the county’s response to domestic violence were made possible with funds from an additional VAWA grant.

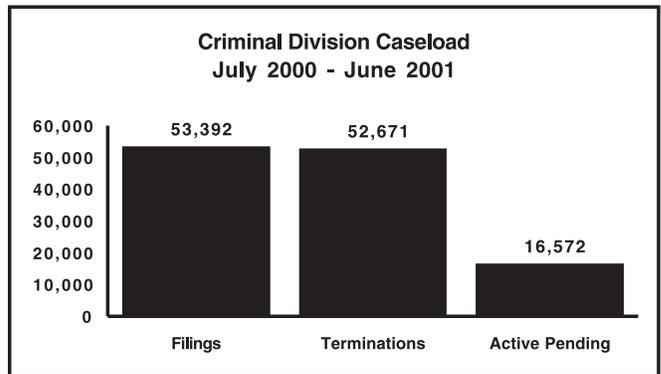
Children were the focus of two important initiatives in the Family Division. The Children’s System of Care Initiative provides coordinated care to children with emotional and behavioral problems. In response to the Federal Adoption and Safe Families Act and the accompanying New Jersey ASFA statute, the Family Division has adopted best practice standards to reduce the time children in foster care must wait to find a permanent placement. Under the new

guidelines, all children are given a hearing to determine permanent placement within twelve months of initially entering the system. Significant inroads were made during court year 2001 to manage the caseload according to the new standards. Further, in spite of a six percent increase in child abuse and termination of parental rights cases, the backlogs were reduced by one percent in each area.

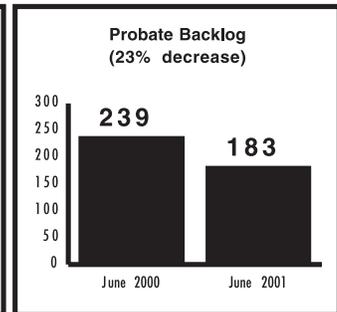
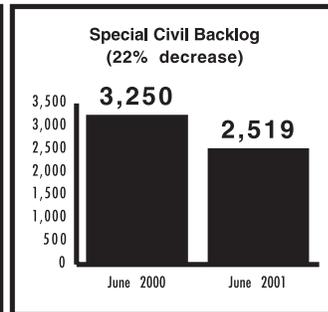
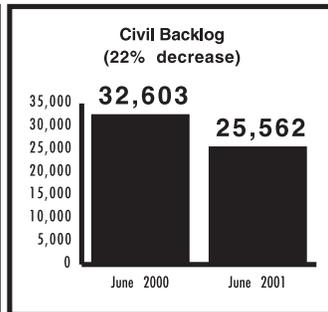
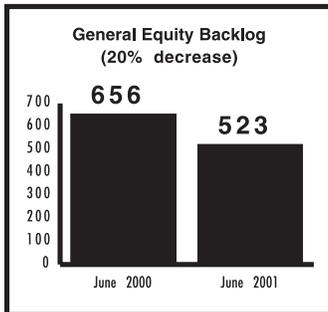
In the 2001 court year, Family Division added 381,446 cases to the docket and disposed of 384,220, for a clearance rate of 101 percent. Case backlogs were reduced 32 percent overall.

### *The Criminal Division*

In addition to laying the groundwork for the expansion of drug courts in the state, the Conference of Criminal Presiding Judges responded to two important legislative acts in 2001. The No Early Release Act, signed in 2000, requires criminals convicted of certain violent crimes to fulfill 85 percent of their sentence before their release. Until the law was further codified, the Conference devoted much of its time to delineating the case types relevant to this legislation. The Conference also devoted its attention to the Bail Forfeiture Act, which provides for punitive actions against bonding companies whose clients do not appear for their specified court date.



Technological enhancements have allowed the Criminal Court in each vicinage to acquire on-line data entry systems. On-line data entry means that all court procedures can be entered in the courtroom as events occur, increasing the accuracy of court records and saving



significant data entry time. Finally, the Criminal Division has been refining its established best practice guidelines and fine-tuning its team management structure to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal courts.

In spite of a ten percent increase in filings, the clearance rate for the Criminal Division was 99 percent. A total of 53,392 cases were filed, and 52,671 cases were terminated in Criminal Court. As of June 30, 16,572 active cases were pending.

### The Civil Division

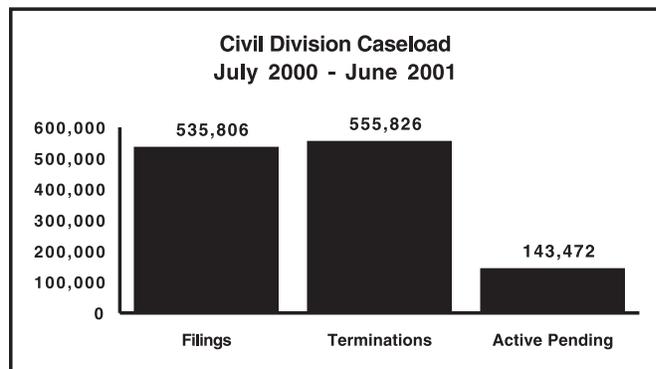
The Civil Division implemented the civil best practices standards adopted in September 2000. The purpose of civil best practices was to develop a comprehensive, standard civil case management system that would operate with consistency and substantial uniformity in all counties, thereby doing away with local rules and procedures. A key element of civil best practices is the provision, to a far greater degree than has been possible in the past, of trial date certainty.

Standardization through best practices has led to a statewide system of tracking cases in the Civil Division. Each case is assigned to one of four tracks based on its complexity; each track provides a specific discovery period based on the presumed discovery needs of the case types allocated to the particular track, from 150 days for Track I cases to 450 days for Track IV. The separation of cases into tracks effects a more certain trial date by reducing adjournments and lengthy delays.

The civil calendar is healthier now than it has been in more than a decade. Backlog has decreased remarkably in

the past year, and this translates into better customer service to litigants who have been waiting to have their disputes resolved and into increased public confidence and trust in the Judiciary. Backlogged cases were reduced 20 percent in equity, 22 percent in civil, 22 percent in special civil, and 23 percent in probate.

This year the Supreme Court approved a set of principles and standards pertaining to the posting of trial court decisions on the Internet. In order to disseminate information to lawyers and litigants promptly and efficiently, judges may, at their discretion, post their decisions on the Judiciary’s Web site. The court advises all parties if the decision will be posted, and posted decisions remain on the site for six weeks. Hard copies also are



made available at the request of the parties. The posting of decisions on the Internet ensures fairness by letting all parties learn of the decision at once, and enhances customer service by reducing the time parties and lawyers must wait before receiving written notice of the decision. The Web site also has a searchable motion calendar that

allows lawyers and litigants to find out the status of any motion in any case anywhere in the state.

Civil case filings numbered 105,510, with a disposition total of 122,702 and a clearance rate of 116 percent. In addition, the number of active pending cases was reduced from 125,784 on June 30, 2000, to 109,670 on June 30, 2001, a 13 percent decrease; the number of backlogged cases was reduced from 32,603 on June 30, 2000, to 25,562 on June 30, 2001, a 22 percent decrease.

### Special Civil Part

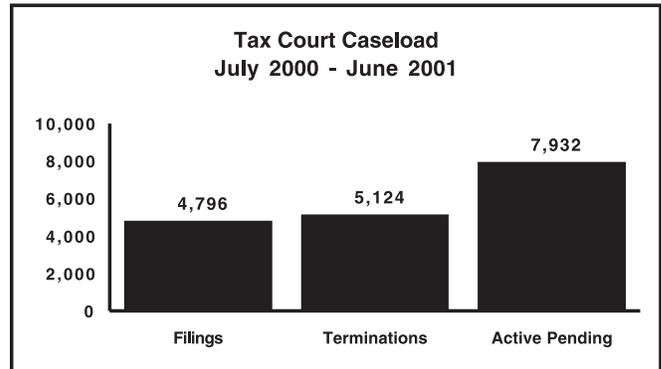
The Special Civil Part is a court of limited jurisdiction that handles landlord/tenant matters, small claims, and monetary actions that do not exceed \$10,000. Best practices standards for the Special Civil Part have been proposed and will soon be considered for adoption by the Supreme Court. In the Special Civil Part, filings totaled 413,912 and dispositions totaled 416,143. The Special Civil Part reduced backlogged cases by 22 percent.

### General Equity Division

During the 2001 court year, the Conference of General Equity Presiding Judges began its work on standardization and best practices by circulating among its members a survey designed to identify similarities as well as differences among the vicinages. In addition, General Equity is working to standardize operations in other areas, and has been coordinating efforts to educate court staff in the area of foreclosures. General Equity received 4,954 filings this year, and terminated 5,343 cases, clearing its calendar by 389 cases. Overall backlog reduction in this area was 20 percent.

## The Tax Court

The Tax Court of New Jersey was established in 1979 to provide taxpayers prompt and impartial hearings and resolutions of their disputes with local and state governmental taxing agencies. The Court reviews the determinations of assessors, county boards of taxation, and state officials with regard to local and state taxes. Tax Court judges may also hear Superior Court cases involving complex tax issues.



During the 2001 court year, Presiding Judge Michael A. Andrew retired, and leadership was assumed by Judge Joseph C. Small. There were 4,796 cases filed and 5,124 cases terminated, for a clearance rate of 107 percent.

## Probation Services

Probation was established by statute in New Jersey in 1900. Probation supervision provides offenders the opportunity to remain in the community subject to compliance with the rules and conditions imposed by the sentencing court. Judges rely on probation officers to serve as their enforcement arm in the community.

With Judiciary unification, the environment for accomplishing statewide uniformity and standardization has improved substantially. Evidence of this can be seen in the results of the efforts undertaken by the Conference of Chief Probation Officers to implement significant statewide changes and lay the foundation for significant reform of probation supervision. The vehicle for this reform is the new outcome-based supervision model. Rather than following a traditional model of accountability based on caseload and number of contacts made with probationers, probation officers now are focusing on the achievement of court-ordered conditions of probation, such as acquiring jobs, attending school or paying fines. Measuring and reporting on outcomes of supervision will enable the probation divisions to document the results of their efforts. Clearly emphasizing results achieved by probationers, rather than activities of probation officers, provides unambiguous direction to staff on how best to use time and resources.

Probation's Office of Child Support Enforcement Services, in cooperation with the Department of Human Services Division of Family Development, has centralized the collection of child support payments in New Jersey. The centralization of collections streamlines the process, reduces the burden on local processing facilities, improves the time frame for payments to reach their recipients and gives the Judiciary a better audit trail of payments. It also allows employers to send payments to one centralized post office box, further reducing the time it takes to process payments and the possibility of processing errors.

The Probation Division and the Division of Family Development in the Department of Human Services began implementation of the Financial Institution Data Match Program in August 2000. This program identifies the financial accounts of people who owe child support and seizes funds from these accounts to pay off child support debts. Through the program, \$3.7 million has been collected and dispersed to over 3,600 child support recipients. In addition to the funds collected directly from the financial institutions, collections have been received from people who owe child support who choose to remit payments in response to their accounts being frozen.

The Probation Division dispersed a total of \$834,158,735 to 286,784 child support recipients last year. This figure represents an increase of \$48,308,912 over the prior year.

## ***Municipal Courts***

The Municipal Courts in New Jersey are courts of limited jurisdiction, having responsibility for motor vehicle and traffic violations, municipal ordinance violations, and

other matters. The 537 Municipal Courts handle approximately 6.3 million cases annually.

The joint committee of the statewide conferences of Municipal Court presiding judges and division managers, in consultation with the Municipal Court Services Division, has begun standardization through best practices. The efforts of the committee have led to several new initiatives in the areas of customer service and case management that will improve the efficiency of Municipal Courts.

Over 530 municipalities have joined the ACH (automatic clearing house) electronic disbursement of funds program. The program enables these municipalities to manage their financial interactions with the Judiciary and state agencies electronically. The municipalities can save significant time and money by making payments to state offices electronically rather than relying on court personnel to send checks manually. In addition, electronic fund management increases efficiency and reduces errors by recording payments and balancing accounts automatically.

The Municipal Court Services Technical Assistance Unit was formed during the past court year. At the request of vicinage management, staff members from this unit can serve as a quick response team to assist courts that have staffing problems or are in need of management or administrative restructuring. The program supports municipal court division managers and presiding judges in their efforts to ensure that the municipal courts they oversee run smoothly and effectively.

The municipal courts achieved a clearance rate of 104 percent during the past court year, reducing the number of cases pending in municipal courts from 1,698,213 in court year 2000, to 1,387,879 in 2001.

## Judges Who Served During the 2000–2001 Court Year

### Supreme Court

Deborah T. Poritz,  
Chief Justice  
James H. Coleman Jr.  
Jaynee LaVecchia  
Virginia A. Long  
Gary S. Stein  
Peter G. Verniero  
James R. Zazzali

### Superior Court

Salem Vincent Ahto  
Roberto Alcazar  
Christine Allen-Jackson  
Edwin R. Alley  
John A. Almeida  
Carmen H. Alvarez  
Frances Lawrence  
Antonin  
Ross R. Anzaldi  
Paul W. Armstrong  
Valerie H. Armstrong  
Leonard N. Arnold\*  
Victor Ashrafi  
Eugene H. Austin  
Mark A. Baber  
David S. Baime  
Max A. Baker  
Marc M. Baldwin  
Walter R. Barisonsek  
Raymond A. Batten  
Linda G. Baxter  
Edward W. Beglin Jr.  
Marie White Bell  
Edmund R. Bernhard  
Stephen J. Bernstein  
Maryann K. Bielamowicz  
Audrey Peyton Blackburn  
Peter F. Boggia  
Ronald E. Bookbinder  
Salvatore Bovino  
G. Thomas Bowen  
B. Theodore Bozonelis  
Dennis J. Braithwaite  
Kathryn A. Brock  
Thomas F. Brogan  
Thomas A. Brown Jr.  
Thomas C. Brown  
Frank A. Buczynski Jr.  
Kevin G. Callahan  
John F. Callinan  
Richard C. Camp  
Donald F. Campbell  
Jane B. Cantor  
Ernest M. Caposela  
Philip S. Carchman

Michael R. Casale  
Karen M. Cassidy  
Joseph C. Cassini III  
Thomas W. Cavanagh Jr.  
Paul F. Chaiet  
Amy Piro Chambers  
Lisa F. Chrystal  
James J. Ciancia  
Yolanda Ciccone  
James N. Citta  
Marilyn C. Clark  
Patricia DelBuono Cleary  
James D. Clyne  
Donald S. Coburn  
Eugene J. Codey Jr.  
Diane B. Cohen  
R. Benjamin Cohen  
Mary Eva Colalillo  
Edward M. Coleman  
Rudy B. Coleman  
Donald G. Collester Jr.  
N. Peter Conforti  
Erminie L. Conley  
Kyran Connor  
Michael R. Connor  
John A. Conte  
Joseph S. Conte  
James B. Convery  
Robert A. Coogan  
William J. Cook  
Rosalie B. Cooper\*  
Marina Corodemus  
Patricia K. Costella  
Gerald J. Council  
James P. Courtney Jr.  
Cynthia E. Covie  
David S. Cramp  
Mary Catherine Cuff  
Philip B. Cummis  
Georgia M. Curio  
Barbara A. Curran  
John D'Amico Jr.  
William M. D'Annunzio\*  
Arthur N. D'Italia  
Roger W. Daley  
Wendel E. Daniels  
Rachel N. Davidson  
Elaine L. Davis  
Theodore Z. Davis  
Estela M. De La Cruz  
Lawrence P. DeBello  
Donald W. deCordova  
Edward J. DeFazio  
Michael J. Degnan  
Charles A. Delehey  
Ralph L. DeLuccia Jr.

Paul M. DePascale  
Harriet E. Derman  
Hector E. DeSoto  
Francis P. DeStefano  
Frederick P. DeVesa  
Michael K. Diamond  
Thomas H. Dilts  
Louise D. Donaldson  
Frank M. Donato  
Michael A. Donio  
Joseph P. Donohue  
Peter E. Doyne  
Raymond F. Drozdowski  
W. Hunt Dumont  
Katherine R. Dupuis  
Naomi G. Eichen  
Mark B. Epstein  
Gerald C. Escala  
Lawrence A. Eleuteri Sr.\*  
Joseph A. Falcone  
Robert A. Fall  
Timothy G. Farrell  
Michael D. Farren  
Mahlon L. Fast  
Linda R. Feinberg  
Robert Feldman  
Bradley J. Ferencz  
Carol A. Ferentz  
Carmen A. Ferrante\*  
Robert P. Figarotta  
Michael Brooke Fisher  
Clarkson S. Fisher Jr.  
Patrick F. X. Fitzpatrick  
Sallyanne Floria  
Terence P. Flynn  
Marlene Lynch Ford  
William L. Forester  
F. Lee Forrester  
Robert E. Francis  
Travis L. Francis  
Sheldon R. Franklin  
John A. Fratto  
Ronald J. Freeman  
Victor Friedman\*  
Jose L. Fuentes  
Harold W. Fullilove  
Bruce A. Gaeta  
Sebastian Gaeta Jr.  
Maurice J. Gallipoli  
Edward V. Gannon  
Albert J. Garofolo  
Bryan D. Garruto  
Melvin L. Gelade  
L. Anthony Gibson\*  
F. Michael Giles  
William P. Gilroy

Peter J. Giovine  
Donald S. Goldman  
Myron H. Gottlieb  
Jane Grall  
Glenn A. Grant  
Vincent J. Grasso  
Ronald B. Graves  
Anthony J. Graziano  
Martin L. Greenberg  
Robert R. Guida  
Nestor F. Guzman  
Douglas T. Hague  
Robert E. Hamer\*  
Gerald B. Hanifan  
Stephan C. Hansbury  
Jamie D. Happas  
John J. Harper  
Craig Randall Harris  
Jonathan N. Harris  
James M. Havey  
Rudolph N. Hawkins Jr.  
James C. Heimlich  
Martin A. Herman  
Marilyn Rhyne Herr  
Carol E. Higbee  
John G. Himmelberger Jr.  
Helen E. Hoens  
Barnett E. Hoffman  
Michael J. Hogan  
Michelle Hollar-Gregory  
Harold C. Hollenbeck  
John S. Holston Jr.  
Jared D. Honigfeld  
Louis F. Hornstine  
Mac D. Hunter  
James P. Hurley  
Eugene A. Iadanza  
Paul Innes  
Joseph V. Isabella  
David J. Issenman  
James L. Jackson  
Mary C. Jacobson  
Joseph E. Kane  
Martin Karavark\*  
Thomas P. Kelly  
James A. Kennedy  
Camille M. Kenny  
Howard H. Kestin  
Fred Kieser Jr.  
Michael P. King  
John Francis Kingfield\*  
Edmond M. Kirby  
Harriet Farber Klein  
Ellen L. Koblitz  
Paul T. Koenig Jr.  
Melvin S. Kracov

Ira E. Kreizman  
Theodore J. Labrecque Jr.  
Catherine M. Langlois  
Frank M. Lario Jr.  
Lee B. Laskin  
Lawrence M. Lawson  
Vincent LeBlon  
Patricia Richmond LeBon  
Steven L. Lefelt  
Alexander D. Lehrer  
Arthur J. Lesemann  
Betty J. Lester  
Kenneth S. Levy  
Laura Lewinn  
Jose L. Linares  
Jack L. Lintner  
Joseph F. Lisa  
Severiano Lisboa III  
Charles A. Little  
Louis F. Locascio  
Sebastian P. Lombardi  
Robert A. Longhi  
Thomas N. Lyons  
Kenneth C. MacKenzie  
Roger F. Mahon  
John F. Malone  
John B. Mariano  
Ronald G. Marmo  
Walter L. Marshall Jr.  
Ann Graf McCormick  
Anne McDonnell  
James McGann  
John A. McLaughlin  
F. Patrick McManimon  
John T. McNeill III  
Margaret Mary McVeigh  
Daniel P. Mecca  
William C. Meehan  
Anthony J. Mellaci Jr.  
Donald W. Merkelbach  
Carmen Messano  
Joseph C. Messina  
E. Benn Micheletti  
Charles Middlesworth Jr.  
Elijah L. Miller Jr.  
Christine L. Miniman  
David W. Morgan  
George P. Moser\*  
Sybil R. Moses  
Scott J. Moynihan  
Robert Muir Jr.\*  
James F. Mulvihill  
Joyce E. Mukacsi  
Joseph M. Nardi Jr.  
Samuel D. Natal  
Mark J. Nelson

**Judges Who Served During the 2000–2001 Court Year,  
Continued**

Michael J. Nelson  
Richard Newman  
Thomas E. O'Brien  
Amy O'Connor  
Robert W. O'Hagan  
John A. O'Shaughnessy  
Edward M. Oles  
Thomas P. Olivieri  
Francis J. Orlando Jr.  
Robert W. Page  
Phillip Lewis Paley  
Lorraine C. Parker  
Anthony J. Parrillo  
George W. Parsons Jr.  
Robert J. Passero  
Edith K. Payne  
Norman J. Peer  
Stuart L. Peim  
Joseph P. Perfilio  
Jamie S. Perri  
John A. Peterson Jr.  
James J. Petrella  
Michael A. Petrolle  
John Pisansky  
Francis P. Piscal  
Richard F. Plechner  
Alan J. Pogarsky  
Sylvia B. Pressler  
Charles R. Previti  
Lorraine Pullen  
John H. Pursel  
James E. Rafferty  
Charles M. Rand  
Donald R. Reenstra  
Susan L. Reisner  
John F. Richardson  
Joseph J. Riva  
Alan A. Rockoff  
Ariel A. Rodríguez  
Mathias E. Rodríguez  
George F. Rohde Jr.  
Patrick J. Roma  
Graham T. Ross  
Sylvan Rothenberg\*  
Karen D. Russell  
Mark M. Russello  
Edward J. Ryan  
Peter V. Ryan  
Jack M. Sabatino  
George E. Sabbath  
Leonard S. Sachar\*  
Paulette Sapp-Peterson  
Joseph F. Scancarella

Stephen J. Schaeffer  
Marvin E. Schlosser  
Francine A. Schott  
Francis B. Schultz  
Edward R. Schwartz  
Vincent D. Segal  
Anthony J. Sciuto\*  
George L. Seltzer  
Eugene D. Serpentelli  
Harry K. Seybolt  
Neil H. Shuster  
Marguerite T. Simon  
Marie P. Simonelli  
Nancy Sivilli  
Stephen Skillman  
Lawrence D. Smith  
Donald A. Smith Jr.  
Stephen F. Smith Jr.  
Thomas S. Smith Jr.  
Andrew J. Smithson  
Irvin J. Snyder  
Maureen P. Sogluizzo  
Ronald B. Sokalski  
Miriam N. Span  
Jo-Anne B. Spatola  
George H. Stanger Jr.  
Reginald Stanton  
Isabel B. Stark  
Isaiah Steinberg  
Edwin H. Stern  
Nicholas J. Stroumtsos Jr.  
Randolph M. Subryan  
Cornelius P. Sullivan  
Mark A. Sullivan Jr.  
Timothy J. Sullivan\*  
John A. Sweeney  
Maria Marinari Sypek  
Patricia M. Talbert  
Joseph P. Testa  
Stephen W. Thompson  
William C. Todd III  
Daryl F. Todd Sr.  
Shirley A. Tolentino  
John Tomasello  
Edward V. Torack  
Edward Toy\*  
John S. Triarsi  
James G. Troiano  
Edward J. Turnbach  
Bette E. Uhrmacher  
Peter J. Vazquez  
Hector R. Velazquez  
Thomas R. Vena

Deborah J. Venezia  
Donald R. Venezia  
Paul J. Vichness  
Barbara Ann Villano  
Joseph C. Visalli  
M. Allan Vogelson  
Donald J. Volkert Jr.  
David Waks  
John E. Wallace Jr.  
Charles J. Walsh  
Alexander P. Waugh Jr.  
Barbara Byrd Wecker  
Renee Jones Weeks  
Dorothea O'C. Wefing  
Lawrence Weiss  
Harvey Weissbard  
Craig L. Wellerson  
Harold B. Wells III  
Glenn R. Wenzel  
William L'E. Wertheimer  
Melvin S. Whitken  
Richard J. Williams  
Rosemarie R. Williams  
Deanne M. Wilson  
Robert C. Wilson  
Theodore A. Winard  
Michael Winkelstein  
Douglas K. Wolfson  
Stephen H. Womack  
Joseph L. Yannotti  
Judith A. Yaskin\*  
Thomas P. Zampino  
Barbara Zucker-Zarett

**Tax Court**

Michael A. Andrew Jr.\*  
Francine I. Axelrad  
Vito L. Bianco  
Angelo J. DiCamillo  
Joseph L. Foster  
Raymond A. Hayser  
James E. Isman  
Roger M. Kahn  
Harold A. Kuskin  
Marie E. Lihotz  
Peter D. Pizzuto  
Joseph C. Small

\*retired during  
2000–2001 court year

**Judges Who Served on  
Recall During the 2000–2001  
Court Year:**

Melvin P. Antell  
Lawrence Bilder  
John M. Boyle  
John J. Callahan  
Michael Caruso  
Peter J. Cass  
Frances M. Cocchia  
Peter Cooper  
Rosalie B. Cooper  
Thomas DeMartin  
Neil G. Duffy  
David G. Eynon  
Philip M. Freedman  
Herbert S. Friend  
Robert E. Gaynor  
Herbert S. Glickman  
Joseph F. Greene Jr.  
Manuel H. Greenberg  
Charles J. Harrington Jr.  
Harry Hazelwood Jr.  
Burrell Ives Humphreys  
Anthony J. Iuliani  
Bernard A. Kannen  
Irwin I. Kimmelman  
Paul R. Kramer  
David Landau  
B. Thomas Leahy  
Samuel D. Lenox Jr.

Lawrence Lerner  
Paul G. Levy  
John J. Lindsay  
Thomas B. Mannion  
Harry Margolis  
Seymour Margulies  
John A. Marzulli  
Patrick J. McGann Jr.  
A. Donald McKenzie  
Arthur Minuskin  
Paul Murphy  
Robert Neustadter  
George J. Nicola  
J. Wilson Noden  
Thomas S. O'Brien  
Serena Perretti  
Florence R. Peskoe  
Murray G. Simon  
Kenneth R. Stein  
June Strelecki  
C. John Stroumtsos  
Samuel L. Supnick  
Birger M. Sween  
Norman Telsey  
Charles E. Villanueva  
James J. Walsh  
Frederic G. Weber

**In Memoriam**

Thomas J. Beetel  
William G. Bischoff  
Roger W. Breslin  
Bernard F. Conway  
Robert E. Guterl  
August Heckman  
Frederick W.  
Kuechenmeister  
William T. McElroy

Stephen Mochary  
James A. O'Neill  
John A. Ricciardi  
Jan M. Schlesinger  
David J. Schroth  
Murray G. Simon  
Joseph B. Sugrue  
Theodore W. Trautwein  
Leon A. Wingate Jr.



## Members of the Judicial Council

*Seated (left to right):* Assignment Judge Eugene D. Serpentelli; Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson; Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz; Administrative Director Judge Richard J. Williams; Assignment Judge Edward W. Beglin, Jr.

*Standing (left to right):* Assignment Judge Francis J. Orlando, Jr; Deputy Administrative Director Theodore J. Fetter; Assignment Judge Reginald Stanton; Assignment Judge Valerie H. Armstrong; Assignment Judge Arthur N. D'Italia; Assignment Judge Robert J. Passero; Assignment Judge Robert A. Longhi; Assignment Judge Sybil R. Moses; Judge James D. Clyne (Chair, Conference of General Equity Presiding Judges); Judge Elaine L. Davis (Chair, Conference of Criminal Presiding Judges); Assignment Judge George H. Stanger, Jr.; Assignment Judge Joseph A. Falcone; Judge Donald J. Volkert, Jr. (Chair, Conference of Family Presiding Judges); Assignment Judge Linda R. Feinberg; Judge Maurice J. Gallipoli (Chair, Conference of Civil Presiding Judges); Assignment Judge Graham T. Ross; Assignment Judge John A. Sweeney

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