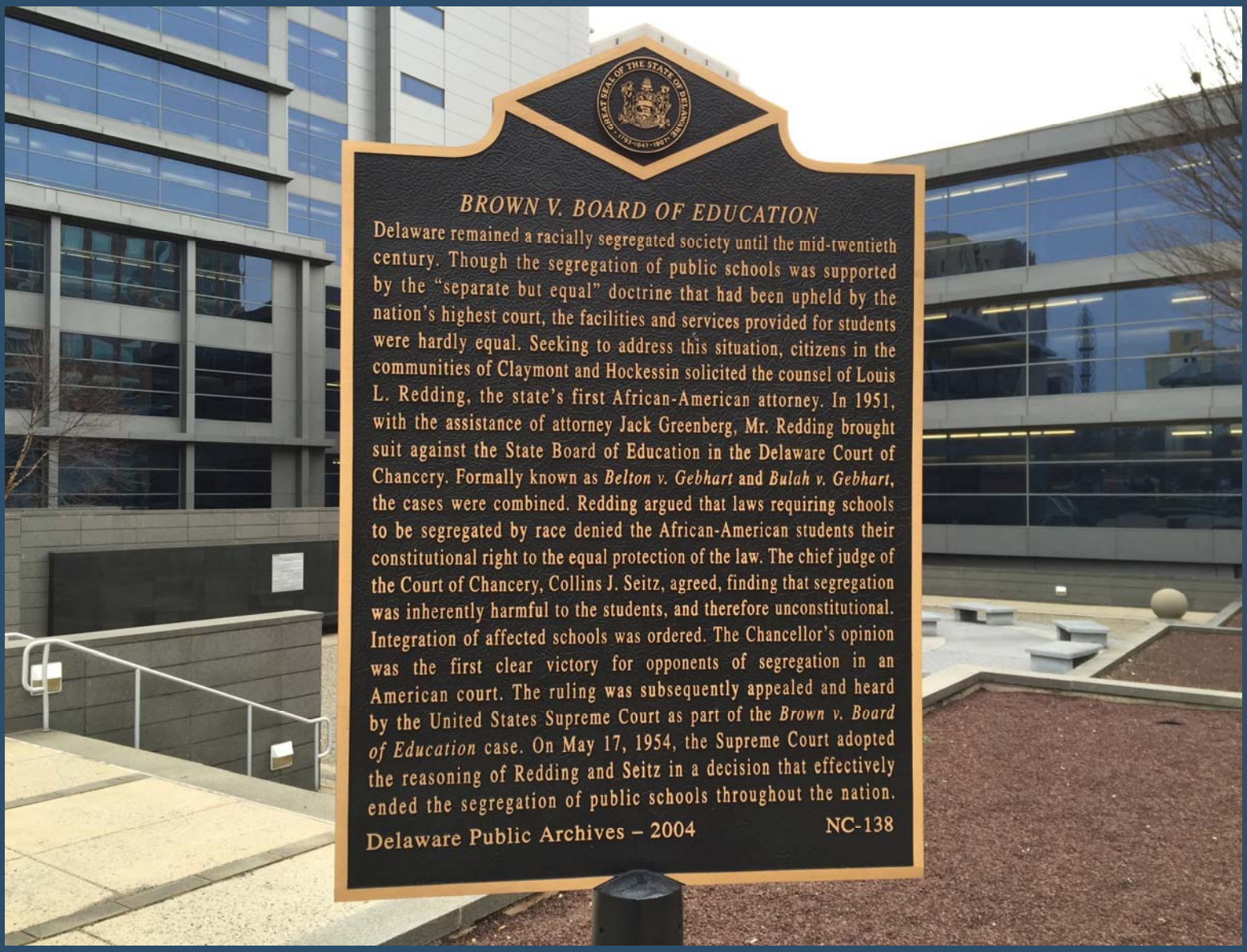
The Delaware Judiciary

Annual Report



2015

A tradition of Access to Justice

ON THE COVER:

The plaque outside the New Castle County Courthouse in Wilmington commemorating Delaware's unique role in the landmark school desegregation case Brown v. Board of Education. One of the Delaware schools involved in that case, Howard High School in Wilmington, was the site for the December 8, 2015 public forum held by the Delaware Access to Justice Commission's Fairness Committee that is investigating the root causes of racial disparities in the criminal justice system.

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MESSAGE FROM CHIEF JUSTICE LEO E. STRINE, JR.

CHIEF JUSTICE LEO E. STRINE, JR.

During this past year, the Judicial Branch has focused on ways to work "smarter" and more efficiently through using technology wisely and rethinking old processes through innovation. Our courts continue to enjoy a well-earned national reputation of excellence and are consistently recognized for their timely resolution of cases. Delaware remains the state of choice for business entities due, in large part, to our Judiciary's expert resolution of corporate and commercial disputes. We benefit from an excellent relationship with the Delaware State Bar. And, we have made important progress on our policy goals – despite the fiscal challenges that our State is facing – due to these strengths and the commitment of judges, employees, the Bar, and the other branches of government to improve our justice system. As a framework to guide our efforts to make a strong Judiciary even stronger, long-term Judicial Branch policy goals were developed after extensive discussions with judges, attorneys, and a diverse group of citizens affected by the justice system. This message addresses the Judicial Branch's progress toward meeting those goals over the past year.

Improving Access to Justice for Delaware Citizens and the Justice System Overall

The Judicial Branch's long-standing dedication to a just, effective, and efficient system of justice remains strong. The Supreme Court's Access to Justice Commission, which held its kick-off meeting in December 2014, is looking at ways to make our justice system – both civil and criminal – fairer to all citizens of our state. The Commission was intentionally composed so that distinguished members of the public would be the only voting members and could hold our justice system accountable for delivery on its full promise. During the past year (and their first year of operation), the committees under the Access to Justice Commission focused on information-gathering. The committees addressing civil reform are exploring ways to fill existing gaps in legal services and eliminate barriers that can make access to justice difficult for our citizens. Early recommendations have proposed transforming underutilized resources by repurposing the law libraries to make them a main location for *pro se* services, putting more information online, as well as engaging our public libraries as partners in putting information in the hands of citizens. Combining resources in this efficient way should be a cost-effective opportunity to support *pro se* litigants.

The Commission's Committee on Fairness in the Criminal Justice System is examining the causes of the stark disparity between the percentage of Delaware's prison population who are black and the percentage of Delaware's overall population who are black, and proposing ways to reduce those disparities and improve public safety. During the past year, the Fairness Committee completed a series of public informational sessions and public forums on such topics as alternatives to incarceration, bail and pre-trial issues, charging and sentencing decisions, policing strategies, and the root causes of racial disparities in the criminal justice system. To give the Committtee a strong starting point, nationally recognized experts from the University of Pennsylvania Law School's Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice, the Equal Justice Initiative, and the University of Delaware presented detailed papers on policy solutions that have promise. Using that input and the thoughts provided by members of the public, the Fairness Committee is now

embarking on an exploration of identified problems and potential solutions, with the goal of making specific short and long-term reform recommendations over the next year or so. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." We must continue efforts to deliver fully on the promise that everyone has certain inalienable rights and is equal before the law.

Meeting the Business World's Need for Cost-Effective and Timely Dispute Resolution

This past April, the Delaware General Assembly passed, and Governor Markell signed into law, the Delaware Rapid Arbitration Act ("the DRAA"). The effort to craft the DRAA was led by the Secretary of State, the Delaware State Bar Association, and the Judiciary, with support from key leaders in the General Assembly. This measure will help Delaware remain competitive in the formation of business entities, both nationally and internationally, by offering entities that form in Delaware access to swift, certain, and cost-effective dispute resolution. The DRAA was drafted by leading Delaware lawyers and judges in consultation with the Corporate Law Section of the Delaware State Bar Association, based on extensive consultation with attorneys and others throughout the country and globe. The new arbitration process is designed for sophisticated business entities that are willing to limit traditional litigation process protections – such as extensive discovery and full appellate review – in favor of a faster, confidential resolution of their disputes. Passage of this Act sent a clear signal that Delaware continues to be committed to meet the ever-changing needs of businesses in a rapidly globalizing economy. The DRAA is a perfect example of our State at its best – showcasing our ability to achieve cooperation among the public and private sectors, all branches of government, and both major political parties.

Consistent with this focus, the Judiciary also recently created a new Chancery mediation center in the New Castle County Courthouse, in space made available next to the Court of Chancery Chambers (and the new location of the Register in Chancery).

Maximizing Limited Resources

November 2015 marked the one-year anniversary of our 10-year agreement with the Alfred Lerner School of Business and Economics at the University of Delaware to work cooperatively on process improvement in the Courts and strengthen our overall management muscle. Through this partnership, administrative leaders and high-level managers and others from the Courts and all of our partner agencies – including the Attorney General, the Office of Defense Services, the Department of Correction, the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services, and the Governor's Office – have been trained in Lean Six Sigma process improvement techniques, which in plain words mean finding ways to remove waste and cut unnecessary steps from our processes. During the first year, the Judicial Branch and partner agencies completed 19 projects, which have saved more than 4,250 staff hours. Highlights of this effort include:

- Replacing the Court of Common Pleas' manual bail tracking process with a computerized system that will save between 400 and 600 hours annually;
- Improving the Department of Correction ("DOC")'s processing of sentencing order information, saving an estimated 100 to 160 hours annually, and saving an additional 2,000 staff hours by reducing or eliminating paper filings by DOC, as well as reducing long-term storage space needs;
- Statistically validating the Office of Defense Services' effort to provide "vertical" representation to their clients;
- Standardizing the Attorney General's witness data entry processes; and
- Consolidating specific docketing activities at the Court of Common Pleas, which should save 1,000 employee hours annually.

This initiative offers Lean Six Sigma certification training to our employees, benefitting our efforts to improve efficiency and building our employees' personal skills for the future. We remain committed to investing in our employees and recognize that they have struggled with salaries that lag behind inflation and increasing workload demands, during these difficult fiscal times.

Process improvement has also shaped the Judicial Branch's efforts over the past year in many other ways. One example is the creation of our comprehensive, user-friendly online guide for Judicial Branch administrative directives and policies. In the spirit of openness and transparency, the new Judicial Branch Operating Procedures, which were issued in August 2015, consolidated and modernized the dozens of

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administrative directives that dated back decades and were extremely difficult to navigate because they were not organized by topic. This new online resource makes the game of "find the policy" a thing of the past by putting all key administrative policies of the Judicial Branch in one place with a clear subject matter index. In that same spirit, the Judicial Branch also established a new Media Working Group, a cooperative effort between the Delaware Courts and the media, to foster stronger communication, avoid misunderstandings, and facilitate thoughtful coverage of the Delaware Judicial Branch and state courts.

Another critical process improvement and technology initiative is our ongoing effort to establish a single e-filing system for all civil and criminal cases in all Delaware courts, which will make us a pioneer among the nation's state court systems. This unified approach will make the process easier for litigants, maximize sharing and accessibility of information, and eliminate archiving of "paper" court records. Major progress has been made on this project over the last year, and our goal is that every court in this State will be on the same, high-quality e-filing system within the next two years.

The extension of e-filing to criminal cases will be especially important. Components of the docket will be at the fingertips of judges, lawyers, and staff when they need it, which is often not the case now. Storage, printing, and archiving costs will be cut. But, perhaps most critically, e-filing will capture important data early and the e-filing system will be able to help populate the case management systems of partners like DOC. Time will be saved for probation and parole officers, prosecutors, and defense attorneys who will be able to file documents more easily. Clear and understandable sentencing orders should be expected in all cases, because there will be no excuses, given how easy e-filing will make the generation of clear, printed sentencing orders. E-filing will boost our ability to analyze criminal justice data, saving huge amounts of time and money for litigants and taxpayers in coming decades.

Conclusion

This report on important developments understates the challenges that face us. As this is written, the Judiciary, Bar, and its partners in the other branches of government and public sector are working together to address serious deficiencies in our downstate Family Court facilities, to fix the inequitable pay suffered by New Castle County based employees who work in downtown Wilmington, to improve the performance of our problem-solving courts, and to make sure that the Judiciary has the predictable technology funding it needs to serve future generations of Delawareans well and efficiently. As we move forward, the Judicial Branch will continue to work – both through process improvement and the smart use of technology – to provide the people of Delaware and business litigants with efficient, effective, and equitable ways to resolve their legal disputes. As important, we will continue to seek out the views of those we serve to get their advice about how we can do better, and to reflect constantly on what we can do to make sure we handle our cases as justly and promptly as humanly possible. We are grateful for the support of the other branches of government, the Bar, and our justice system partners for their cooperation and help in our effort to improve the Delaware Courts. Working together – with thoughtfulness, patience, and perseverance – we can build on the solid foundation left us by prior generations and make Delaware's justice system even stronger.

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Standing from left to right is Chief Justice Leo E. Strine, Jr., Dean Bruce Weber from the Alfred Lerner School of Business and Chief Judge Alex Smalls of the Court of Common Pleas.

Photograph taken at first year anniversary event held on November 19, 2015, for the ten year partnership between the Courts and the University of Delaware promoting process improvement in the Courts and the justice system

MESSAGE FROM THE STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

HONORABLE PATRICIA W. GRIFFIN

Fiscal Year 2015 brought great progress on a number of Judicial Branch initiatives introduced by Chief Justice Leo E. Strine, Jr. in his 2014 State of the Judiciary address. Under the guidance of Chief Justice Strine, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) has embarked on a series of new reforms that focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of justice provided to the citizens of Delaware. I would like to take the opportunity to highlight some of those efforts below:

Managing Our Limited Resources More Effectively

Recognizing the ever-growing demand for more efficient and cost-effective processes while ensuring access to justice for all, the AOC oversaw a number of process improvement projects stemming from the 10-year partnership between the Judicial Branch and the Alfred Lerner School of Business and Economics at the University of Delaware, that began in November 2014. Led by the AOC's Judicial Information Center (JIC), the courts and other system partners (including the Attorney General, the Office of Defense Services, the Department of Correction, the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services, and the Governor's Office) worked with the University to develop new ways to work smarter and more efficiently across the justice system using validated Lean Six Sigma techniques. In the first year of the partnership, these efforts have already yielded a savings of more than 4,250 staff hours across 19 projects in both the courts and at participating partner agencies.

E-filing and Technology

In other efforts to improve productivity and ease access to information, the Judiciary is on target to move all of the Delaware Courts to a single, high-quality e-filing system in all civil and criminal cases by 2017. Implementation of one statewide filing system for all cases should be easier for litigants to manage, minimize staff costs, and simplify information sharing and accessibility.

The Office of State Court Collections Enforcement (OSCCE), which is a division of the AOC that handles collection of court-ordered financial assessments, continued to upgrade and improve payment kiosks introduced in 2010. This year, kiosks expanded to Division of Motor Vehicle offices to make them more convenient to members of the public who have court-ordered payments in all of the Delaware State Courts, along with certain Department of Corrections fees and child support payments. With real-time payment processing, most failure to pay capiases are now automatically cleared upon payment at the kiosks without the person having to go to a courthouse. OSCCE expects to add more kiosk locations and further expand services in FY 2016.

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Increased Access to Information

Similarly, AOC staff played a key role in modernizing and updating the Judicial Branch's operating procedures this past year. Transforming hard-to-find Administrative Directives into a comprehensive procedures manual organized by topic and indexed, the new online document should be easier to access and use by court staff, attorneys and the public. The Operating Procedures for the Delaware Judicial Branch can be found online at http://courts.delaware.gov/Supreme/operating-procedures.stm.

Another initiative to improve access to information is the overhaul of the Delaware Courts website at www.courts.delaware.gov. JIC, and others in the AOC and the Courts, have been working in cooperation with the executive branch and its technical support division – the Government Information Center (GIC) — to redesign the Delaware Courts' website with a more modern looking, user-friendly and responsive design based on current best practices for the web. GIC recently completed a similar upgrade of the Delaware.gov website and the Courts are benefitting from their experience and expertise. We are grateful for their assistance in this effort. Because the redesigned Delaware Courts' website uses the latest programming language, the website's content can be as easily viewed and used on a smart phone and tablet computer as it is on a desktop computer.

Access to Justice

AOC continued to provide administrative, logistical and technical support for another on-going, key initiative – the Supreme Court's Access to Justice Commission. The Commission is charged with identifying barriers to access to justice and developing recommendations designed to improve access to justice for all Delawareans. Under Chief Justice Strine, the Commission's four committees have made great progress this year on issues related to funding for, and the expansion of, *pro bono* services; support for *pro se* litigants; and fairness in the criminal justice system. The committees are in the process of collecting data through surveys, interviews, public hearings, research and analysis. Those committees looking at issues on the civil side are expected to submit their final recommendations to the Delaware Supreme Court in the fall of 2016. Preliminary proposals involve new uses of limited resources, including transforming existing law library space into modern day resource centers for *pro se* litigants navigating the court system.

The Committee on Fairness in the Criminal Justice System, aided by the AOC, is working with criminal justice experts from the University of Pennsylvania Law School's Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice, Bryan Stevenson's Equal Justice Initiative, and the University of Delaware to identify reforms to reduce crime and increase racial equity in the justice system. The experts presented their research to the committee at two public informational sessions this fall. Community members were then invited to share their ideas with the committee to improve the criminal justice system at a series of public hearings held throughout the state and to submit written comments on the Fairness Committee's webpage created by the AOC. That webpage, which is located at http://courts.delaware.gov/Supreme/access.stm, serves as a central hub for the Committee's work and contains up-to-date agendas, important background material, copies of the experts' reports to the Committee and videos of the informational hearings. All public comment and experts' submissions will be considered as the Committee identifies possible reforms for Delaware and determines the next steps.

In another access-related initiative, the AOC assisted the American College of Trial Lawyers and the Delaware State Bar Association in conducting a survey of the Delaware Bar and judicial officers about how the Delaware Courts' operations could be improved and enhanced. The resulting recommendations are expected to be released early in 2016. The AOC also supported the work of the Criminal Justice Council for the Judiciary. Under the leadership of co-chairs President Judge Jan Jurden and Superior Court Judge William Carpenter, the Council has worked with experts from American University to evaluate the State's problem-solving courts and make recommendations to enhance their effectiveness, improve the consistency of operations across counties and courts, employ measurable standards in their operations, and consider their effect on key agency partners, such as Probation and Parole. Recommendations stemming from that review will be presented to the Supreme Court for consideration over the next few months.

Ongoing Operations and Programs

In addition to these new initiatives, the AOC continued its work to support the courts and those who conduct business within our facilities, including:

Security and Facilities

The security of those who work in and visit our court facilities has remained a top priority for the Judicial Branch. In October of 2015, the AOC hosted nearly 90 court security officers from across Delaware and three surrounding states for a two-day court security training seminar in Dover. The pro-

gram was conducted by the Virginia-based National Sheriffs' Association and focused on such matters as courtroom security, defendant management, judicial threat management, professional awareness, emergency events and high-profile cases. The goal is for a more unified statewide approach to security training at our courthouses.

The AOC spearheaded a number of initiatives aimed at making sure that our facilities can meet the demand of increasingly complex caseloads. The AOC supported the work of the Court Facilities Improvement Working Group which was established to develop flexible, cost-effective and potentially innovative solutions to court facility space issues. With input from all branches of government and private partners, the Working Group issued its report targeting critical facility needs for the Family Court in Kent and Sussex Counties in January 2015. The AOC also worked with courts throughout the state to plan for, and secure, needed improvements to maintain the facilities so that we can continue to effectively and safely serve the public.

Court Interpreter Program

The Court Interpreter Program continues to see a steady increase in requests for services, particularly for Limited English Proficient litigants speaking Spanish and Haitian Creole in all types of civil and criminal proceedings. The AOC Program Coordinator has introduced training sessions for court staff to help them understand how interpreters work inside the courtroom. Additionally, new continuing education training was offered to court interpreters and a new structured shadowing program for prospective interpreters was introduced to assist prospective interpreters in enhancing their language and interpretation skills and providing an opportunity to experience interpreting within a court setting. The AOC continues to look for ways to enhance the quality of interpretation services, streamline data collection, and manage limited resources responsibly.

Staff Training

The AOC introduced a number of new training options for court staff this year. New online training and other computer-based technologies allowed a broader audience to attend more training with limited impact to court schedules and work time. The catalog of training programs now established for court staff includes a vast array of topics including a new series of courses designed for supervisors on leading staff and a newly developed onboarding program for employees.

Grants

The AOC continued to oversee several federally supported Judicial Branch initiatives:

- The Bureau of Justice Assistance awarded the AOC a grant to support the development of a database collection platform tailored to the needs of Delaware's problem-solving courts. The database will allow each court to track the progress of defendants entering a program and provide data on the success rate of individual programs.

- The Office of Violence Against Women continued to fund services offered through the Victim Awareness and Safety Enhancement (VASE) project enabling the program to extend to litigants in the Court of Common Pleas' general criminal calendar. The VASE's mission is to provide trauma-informed care to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault who have been convicted of a crime.

Community Outreach and Education

The AOC continued its efforts to bring innovative civics educational opportunities to schools and community organizations. The Annual Delaware High School Mock Trial Competition was, once again, hosted at the New Castle County Courthouse with 24 teams participating from across the State; the Summer Volunteer Youth Program provided 48 high school students, many in foster care, with job skills training and the opportunity to get a first-hand look at careers within the Judicial Branch. The Youth Forum invited middle school students to learn about the court system by working with judges and attorneys in an impromptu mock trial held in a real courtroom setting. The Media Working Group was established as a forum to discuss the media's needs or issues of concern in the Delaware Court system. A new media policy discussing access to courthouse media rooms and more liberal cell phone access resulted from the work of this group and underscores

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the Courts' commitment to public access of information when possible.

Legislative Coordination

Over the past year, the Judiciary has refined its strategic and legislative approach through the establishment of the Judicial Strategies Committee (JSC) in May 2015, which was tasked with implementing a long-term strategic plan for the Delaware Courts that will facilitate the identification of emerging trends affecting the Courts and justice system, and the development of policy-oriented and legislative solutions to issues. The AOC plays a key role in the work of the JSC, as well as the coordination of the Judiciary's legislative initiatives and interactions with the Legislative and Executive Branches.

Fiscal Year 2016 is turning out to be a busy and exciting year. We are ready for the challenges ahead and the promise of new and better ways to serve the citizens of our State. On a personal note, I was honored to be selected to serve as president of the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) and vice-chair of the National Center for State Courts Board of Directors for a one-year term beginning in August 2015. In December 2015, I presented at a working session at the U.S. Department of Justice, and participated in a related session at the White House, on issues pertaining to court fines, fees and poverty. I am excited to work on national initiatives that will enhance access to justice that are being spearheaded by COSCA, the Conference of Chief Justices and the National Center for State Courts. Above all, I am grateful to the staff at the AOC and all in the Delaware Judicial Branch who work daily to make available to all Delawareans an effective and efficient system.

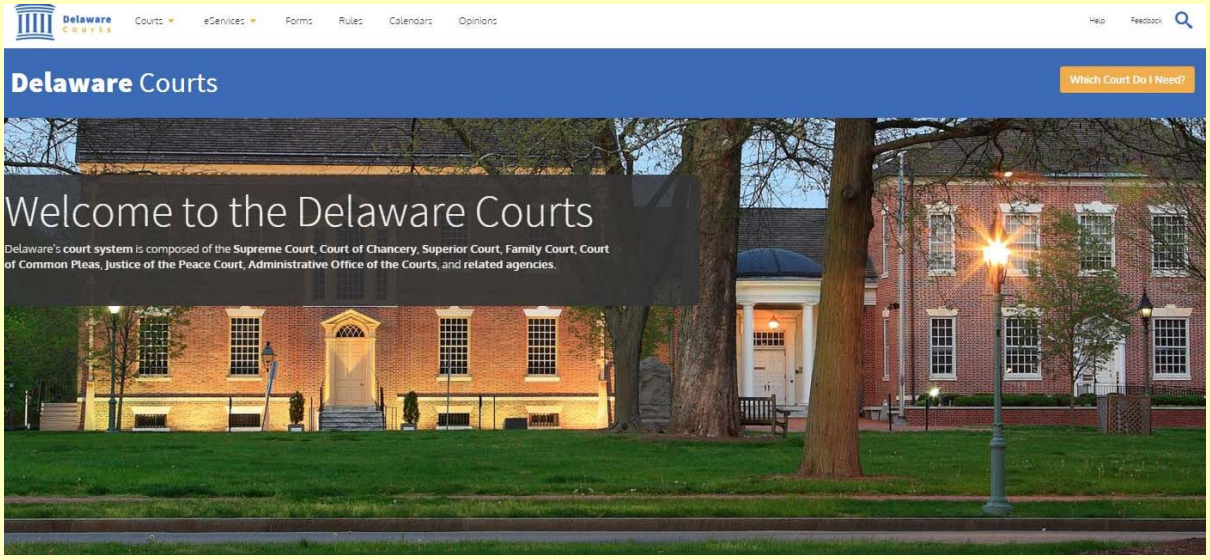
Patricia Griffin, State Court Administrator, presenting at the U.S. Department of Justice on December 2, 2015.

Lt. Michael Hertzfeld (front left), Deputy State Court Administrator James Wright (front center) and Lt. Lee Clough (front right) address the audience at the start of a two-day Court Security Training seminar held in Dover on October 29 and 30, 2015.

LEGISLATION

The Judiciary's legislative team brings together representatives of the Courts and the Administrative Office of the Courts to enhance the effectiveness of the Judicial Branch's relationship with the General Assembly by serving as the main Judicial Branch contact for legislative matters and by monitoring and analyzing legislation for impact on the Judiciary. The following legislation affecting the Judicial Branch was passed during FY 2015 by the 148th session of the General Assembly:

BILL NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
SB 67	Allows incumbent upper-level management of the Justice of the Peace Court to elect to remain in classified service or move to exempt service.
HB 57	Clarifies that work referral is an available option in lieu of fees and penalties in a civil traffic offense and that a failure to comply with a court-ordered work referral will not result in a contempt of court.
HB 63	Memorializes the Court of Chancery's long-standing practice of requiring notice to interested parties, appointment of an appraiser, and a return of sale in petitions to sell real estate owned by a person with a disability.
HB 112	First Leg of a Constitutional Amendment that adds the Chief Magistrate to the Court on the Judiciary ensuring that the six state courts are represented on the Court on the Judiciary.
HB 113	Allows the Delaware Supreme Court to hear arguments in locations other than Dover when time exigencies or special circumstances (such as the educational value of holding arguments at a law school) justify a departure from holding arguments in Dover.



The Delaware Judiciary is set to launch a re-designed and mobile-friendly website for the Delaware State Courts in the winter of 2016. In addition to having a more modern look and feel, the site has also been re-organized to make it easier for various constituencies – including the public, attorneys, jurors and the media — to find the information they are seeking with unique pages designed for each of those groups.

FISCAL OVERVIEW

SUMMARY OF JUDICIAL BUDGETS - FISCAL YEARS 2014-2016			
GENERAL FUNDS - State Judicial Agencies and Bodies			
	FY 2014 Enacted Budget	FY 2015 Enacted Budget	FY 2016 Enacted Budget
Supreme Court	$ 3,411,100	$ 3,368,200	$ 3,368,500
Court of Chancery	3,164,500	3,196,700	3,197,400
Superior Court	24,791,600	25,018,400	25,024,000
Family Court	20,581,200	20,940,100	20,947,800
Court of Common Pleas	9,947,900	10,120,000	10,121,900
Justice of the Peace Court	18,125,900	18,294,500	18,320,200
Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)	3,668,700	3,687,200	3,691,000
AOC Custodial Pass Through Funds*	3,043,700	3,023,700	3,017,200
Office of State Court Collections Enforcement	553,400	560,900	562,600
Information Technology	3,730,700	3,758,600	3,768,200
Law Libraries	467,600	469,600	470,000
Office of the Public Guardian	637,400	642,400	650,800
Child Placement Review Board	532,000	562,400	563,400
Office of the Child Advocate	917,600	922,100	979,500
Child Death, Near Death, and Stillbirth Commission	429,600	433,200	377,100
DE Nursing Home Residents Quality Assurance Commission	61,000	61,800	61,900
TOTAL	**$ 94,063,900**	**$ 95,059,800**	**$ 95,121,500**

* These programs are included in AOC funding but are shown separately because they are pass through funds. They include the Court Appointed Attorney Programs, Interpreters, Victim Offender Mediation Program, Elder Law Program, and other similar funds.

Source: Administrative Office of the Courts

FISCAL OVERVIEW

COURT GENERATED REVENUE* - FISCAL YEAR 2015					
SUBMITTED TO THE STATE GENERAL FUND					
	Fees & Costs	Fines	Interest	Miscellaneous	Total
Supreme Court	$ 92,600	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 92,600
Court of Chancery	7,100	-	-		7,100
Superior Court	2,837,000	409,300	400	113,700	3,360,400
Family Court	215,900	34,500	-	26,800	277,200
Court of Common Pleas	2,339,000	473,000	-	104,000	2,916,000
Justice of the Peace Court**	2,417,300	2,124,200	-	8,700	4,550,200
Office of State Court Collections		-	-		
OSCCE - DOC Fees***	661,500	-	-	-	661,500
State Total	**$ 8,570,400**	**$ 3,041,000**	**$ 400**	**$ 253,200**	**$ 11,865,000**
SUBMITTED TO COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES					
	Fees & Costs	Fines	Interest	Miscellaneous	Total
Superior Court	$ 133,000	$ 46,800	$ -	$ -	$ 179,800
Court of Common Pleas	700	501,100	-	-	501,800
Justice of the Peace Court	-	2,967,400	-	-	2,967,400
Counties and Municipalities Total	**$ 133,700**	**$ 3,515,300**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ 3,649,000**
GRAND TOTAL	**$ 8,704,100**	**$ 6,556,300**	**$ 400**	**$ 253,200**	**$ 15,514,000**

*Figures represent only revenue actually received, not the total amount of fines and costs assessed.
**In addition, JP Court also submitted $1,609,500 in prior year adjustments related to I&M (21 *Del. C.* § 2118(x)) and D.M.V.T. Funds (29 *Del. C*, § 6102(o)(1)).
*** OSCCE collected supervision fees on behalf of the Department of Correction (DOC).

Source: Administrative Office of the Courts

FISCAL OVERVIEW

COURT GENERATED REVENUE - FISCAL YEAR 2015			
RESTITUTION - FISCAL YEAR 2015			
	Assessed	Collected	Disbursed
Superior Court	$ 7,238,500	$ 2,081,800	$ 2,020,100
Family Court	69,500	189,100	186,100
Court of Common Pleas	1,006,500	755,800	749,000
Justice of the Peace Court	23,400	46,800	34,300
Office of State Court Collections Enforcement*	-	40,900	32,600
RESTITUTION TOTAL	**$ 8,337,900**	**$ 3,114,400**	**$ 3,022,100**

ASSESSMENTS AND COLLECTIONS FOR THE TRANSPORTATION TRUST FUND		
	Assessed	Collected
Superior Court	$ 267,800	$ 115,600
Family Court	4,900	5,700
Court of Common Pleas	610,800	405,800
Justice of the Peace Court	2,597,600	2,455,900
TRANSPORTATION TRUST FUND TOTAL	**$ 3,481.100**	**$ 2,983.00**

COLLECTIONS BY THE OFFICE OF STATE COURT COLLECTIONS ENFORCEMENT ON BEHALF OF COURTS AND AGENCIES**	
	Total
Superior Court	$ 2,785,200
Family Court	41,000
Justice of the Peace Court	109,600
Department of Correction	661,500
OSCCE - TOTAL COLLECTIONS	**$ 3,597,300**

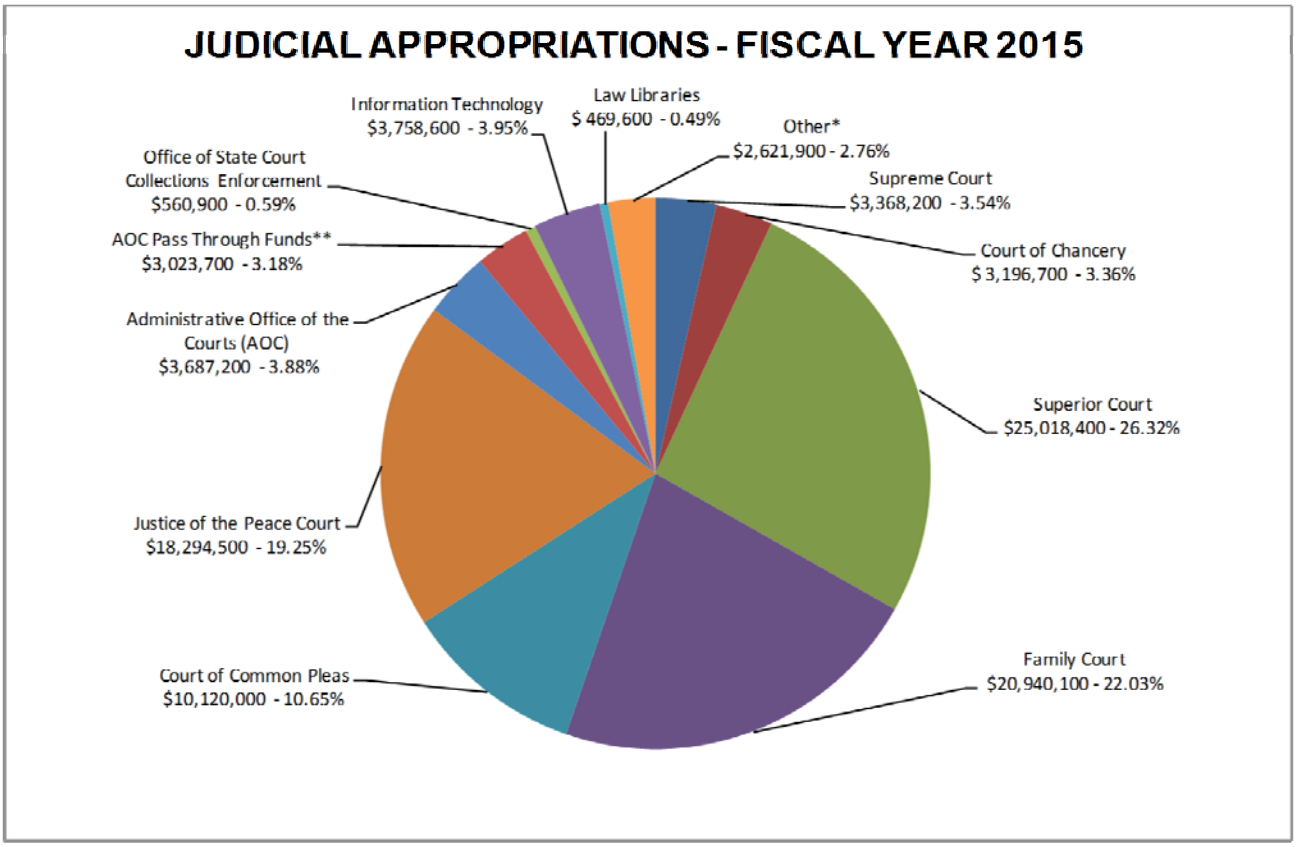
* The figures shown in this table for the Office of State Court Collections Enforcement (OSCCE) reflect restitution only for cases that have been closed by Family Court. OSCCE also collects restitution on current cases for Superior Court and the Justice of the Peace Court. Amounts collected by OSCCE on behalf of those courts are included in the restitution figures for those courts.

** In FY 2015, OSCCE collections included amounts submitted to the general fund, amounts submitted to non-general fund recipients, and restitution. Amounts collected by OSCCE on behalf of all courts, except Family Court, are also included in general fund and restitution figures for those courts.

Source: Administrative Office of the Courts

FISCAL OVERVIEW

GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATIONS - FISCAL YEAR 2015			
Public Education	$	1,267,581,100	33.27%
Health and Social Services		1,118,563,100	29.36%
Correction		277,487,900	7.28%
Higher Education		226,594,100	5.95%
Children, Youth and Their Families		154,607,700	4.06%
Safety and Homeland Security		125,618,100	3.30%
Judicial Branch		**95,059,800**	**2.50%**
All Other		544,022,500	14.28%
TOTAL	**$**	**3,809,534,300**	**100%**



* Other: Office of the Public Guardian; Child Placement Review Board; Office of the Child Advocate; Child Death Review Commission; and Delaware Nursing Home Residents Quality Assurance Commission.

** AOC Pass Through Funds consist of Court Appointed Attorneys/Involuntary Commitment, Interpreters, Victim Offender Mediation Program, and Elder Law Program.

Source: Administrative Office of the Courts

INTRODUCTION TO THE DELAWARE COURT SYSTEM

The Delaware Judicial Branch consists of the Supreme Court, the Court of Chancery, the Superior Court, the Family Court, the Court of Common Pleas, the Justice of the Peace Court, the Administrative Office of the Courts, and related judicial agencies.

In terms of interrelationships among the courts, the Delaware court system is similar to a pyramid. The Justice of the Peace Court represents the base of the pyramid and the Supreme Court the apex of the pyramid. As a litigant goes upward through the court system pyramid, the legal issues generally become more complex and thus, more costly to litigate. For this reason, cases decided as close as possible to the entry level of the court system generally result in cost savings in resources used to handle the matters and in speedier resolution of the issues at hand.

The Justice of the Peace Court, the initial entry level into the court system for most citizens, has jurisdiction over civil cases in which the disputed amount does not exceed $15,000. In criminal cases, the Justice of the Peace Court hears certain misdemeanors and most motor vehicle cases (excluding felonies) and the Justices of the Peace may act as committing magistrates for all crimes. Appeals from the Justice of the Peace Court may be taken to the Court of Common Pleas.

The Court of Common Pleas has jurisdiction in civil cases where the amount in controversy, exclusive of interest, does not exceed $50,000. In criminal cases, the Court of Common Pleas has jurisdiction over all misdemeanors except certain drug-related offenses. It also handles motor vehicle offenses (excluding felonies). In addition, the Court is responsible for preliminary hearings in felony cases. Appeals may be taken to the Superior Court.

The Family Court has exclusive jurisdiction over virtually all family and juvenile matters. All civil appeals, including those relating to juvenile delinquency, go directly to the Supreme Court while criminal cases are appealed to the Superior Court.

The Superior Court, Delaware's court of general jurisdiction, has original jurisdiction over criminal and civil cases except equity cases. The Court has exclusive jurisdiction over felonies and almost all drug offenses. In civil matters, the Court's authority to award damages is not subject to a monetary maximum. The Superior Court also serves as an intermediate appellate court by hearing appeals on the record from the Court of Common Pleas, the Family Court (in criminal cases), and various state agencies, boards and commissions. Appeals from the Superior Court may be taken on the record to the Supreme Court.

The Court of Chancery has jurisdiction to hear all matters relating to equity. The litigation in this tribunal deals largely with corporate issues, trusts, estates, other fiduciary matters, disputes involving the purchase of land, and questions of title to real estate, as well as commercial and contractual matters. The Court of Chancery has a national reputation in the business community and is responsible for developing case law in Delaware on corporate matters. Appeals from the Court of Chancery may be taken on the record to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court receives direct appeals from the Court of Chancery, the Superior Court, and the Family Court. As administrative head of the courts, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, in consultation with the other justices, sets administrative policy for the court system.

The Administrative Office of the Courts, including the Judicial Information Center and the Office of State Court Collections Enforcement, provides services to the Delaware Judiciary that are consistent with the statewide policies and goals for judicial administration and support operations established by the Supreme Court.

Other state agencies associated with the Delaware Judicial Branch include: Child Placement Review Board; Law Libraries; Office of the Public Guardian; Office of the Child Advocate; Child Death Review Commission; and the Delaware Nursing Home Residents Quality Assurance Commission.

THE DELAWARE COURT SYSTEM

Supreme Court

- Court of last resort.
- Final appellate jurisdiction for criminal cases in which the sentence exceeds certain minimums, and in civil cases as to final judgments, certain orders of the Court of Chancery, the Superior Court, and the Family Court and court designated boards.
- Issuer of certain writs.
- Jurisdiction over questions of law certified to the Supreme Court by other Delaware Courts, U.S. Supreme Court, a U.S. Court of Appeals, a U.S. District Court, a U.S. Bankruptcy Court, U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission, or the highest appellate court of any state.

Court of Chancery

- Equity court.
- Hear/determine all matters and causes in equity (typically corporate, trust, fiduciary matters, land sale, real estate, and commercial/contractual matters).

Superior Court

- Law court.
- Original statewide jurisdiction over criminal and civil cases (except equity cases).
- Exclusive jurisdiction over felonies and drug offenses (except marijuana possession and most felonies/drugs involving minors).
- Involuntary commitments to Delaware Psychiatric Center.
- Intermediate appellate court from the Court of Common Pleas, Family Court (adult criminal), and various state agencies, boards and commissions.

Family Court

- Extensive legal and equitable jurisdiction over all domestic relation matters, including divorce, custody, guardianships, adoptions, visitation, child and spousal support, and property division.
- Jurisdiction over intrafamily misdemeanors, misdemeanor crimes against children, and civil domestic violence protective orders.
- Jurisdiction over all juvenile offenses except certain serious offenses.

Court of Common Pleas

- Statewide jurisdiction in civil actions that do not exceed $50,000.
- All criminal misdemeanors (except certain drug-related offenses) and motor vehicle offenses (except felonies).
- Responsible for preliminary hearings.
- Appeals from the Justice of the Peace Court, Alderman's Courts, and the Division of Motor Vehicles.

Justice of the Peace Court

- Statewide jurisdiction over civil cases that do not exceed $15,000.
- Jurisdiction over certain misdemeanors and most motor vehicle cases (except felonies).
- May act as committing magistrate for all crimes.
- Jurisdiction over landlord/tenant (possession) disputes.

SUPREME COURT

SUPREME COURT

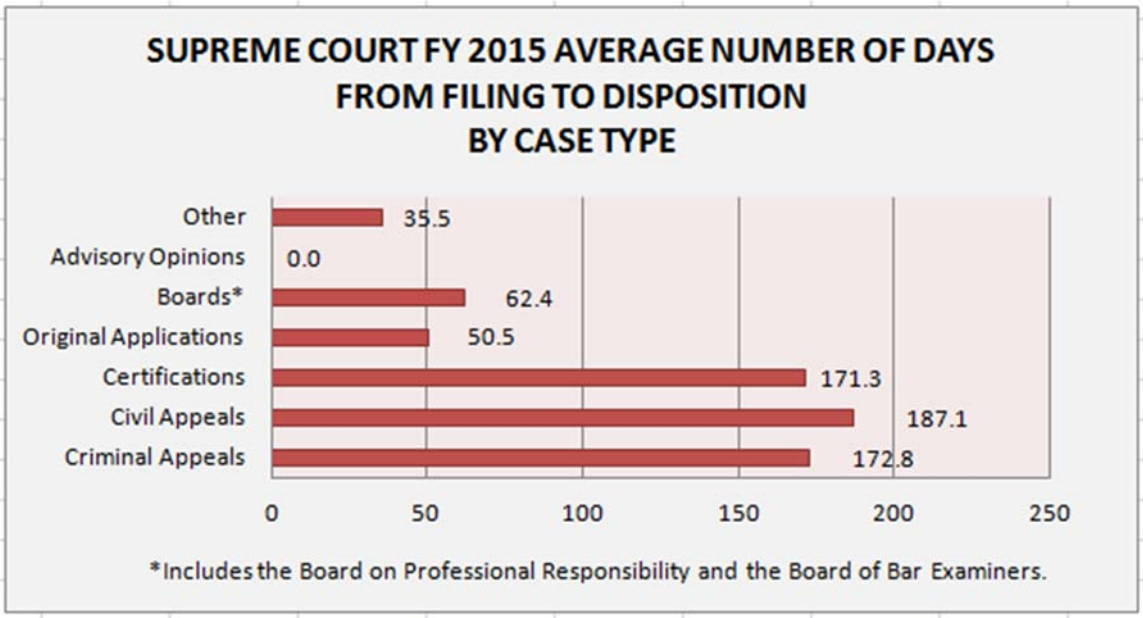
The Delaware Supreme Court has experienced a great deal of change in the past few years and 2015 was no exception. In January, Justice Henry duPont Ridgely left the bench, retiring after thirty one years of distinguished service to the citizens of Delaware. He began his judicial career in 1984 when he was appointed to the Superior Court. He later served as the President Judge and as a Resident Judge before his appointment as a Justice of the Delaware Supreme Court in 2004. Justice Ridgely was a special colleague, who was always willing to do more than his fair share. His excellent judgment, patience, and legal acumen made Delaware's Judiciary look good. We miss him.

Governor Markell quickly announced his choice of Collins J. Seitz, Jr., an outstanding Delaware business litigator and a founding partner of Seitz Ross Aronstam & Moritz, LLP, to fill the vacancy created by Justice Ridgely's retirement. His appointment was promptly confirmed by the State Senate and Justice Seitz's Investiture took place on May 1, 2015. The Court is grateful to the Governor and Senate for their dispatch and to be at full strength.

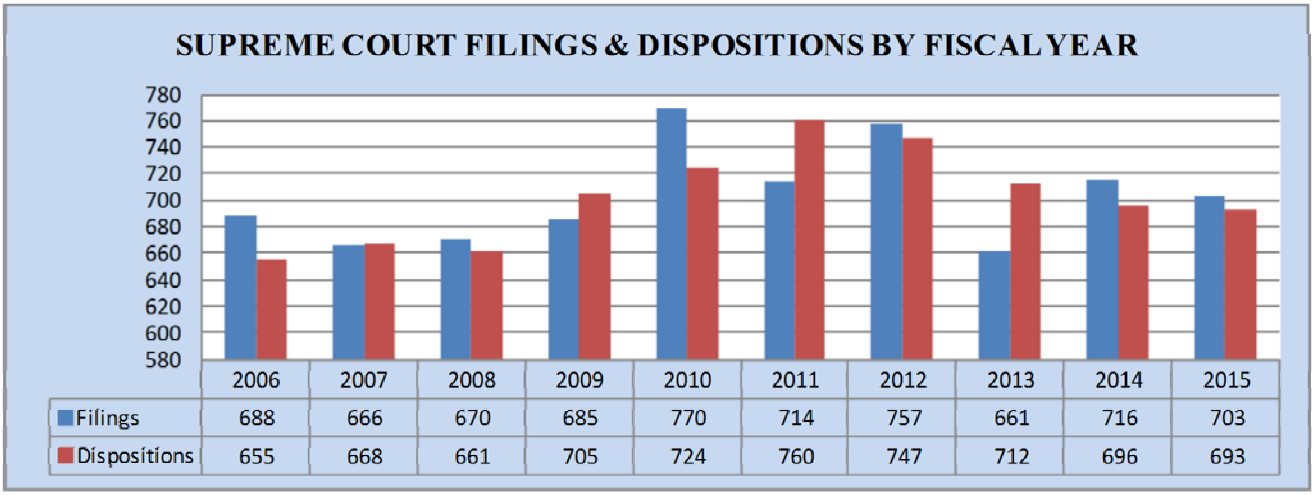
Throughout this period of transition and great change, from late 2013 through early 2015, the Delaware Supreme Court continued to handle its caseload in the timely fashion that is its long-standing tradition. This was due in large measure to the assistance of many hard-working trial judges who graciously and willingly served on many Supreme Court panels. Their contributions were instrumental in ensuring that the Court's high standards for the timely administration of justice were maintained during this time of great change.

The Court's continued commitment to the timely disposition of its caseload is measured by its performance against the benchmarking standards that the Court set for itself in 2005. These standards are based on the American Bar Association's Standards Relating to Appellate Courts.

In Fiscal Year 2015, the Delaware Supreme Court received 703 appeals and disposed of 687 of them by opinion, order or dismissal. The appeals were decided an average of 33.3 days from the date of submission to the date of final decision. In 96.4% of the appeals decided in Fiscal Year 2015 the Court met the standard for the Delaware Judiciary for deciding cases within 90 days of the date of submission. The Court also met its performance measure for disposition of 75% of all cases within 290 days of the date of filing of the notice of appeal, exceeding this objective by disposing of 87% of all cases within the 290 day timeframe.

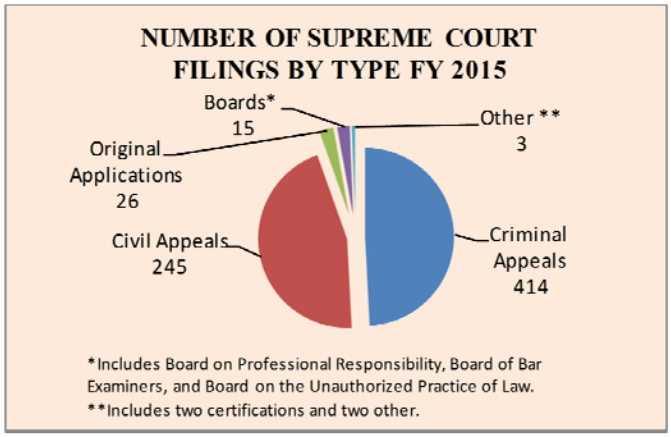


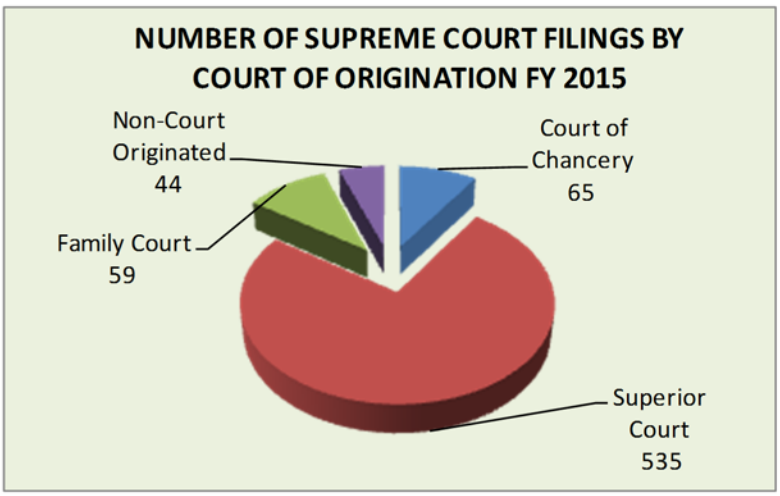
SUPREME COURT



	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Filings	688	666	670	685	770	714	757	661	716	703
Dispositions	655	668	661	705	724	760	747	712	696	693

In Fiscal Year 2015 the Court conducted a complete review of all its procedures, to make sure that we were as efficient as possible. As important, we wanted to make sure that the Bar and public had an up-to-date description of how the Court typically operates. This resulted in the adoption and promulgation of an updated set of Internal Operating Procedures for the Supreme Court. These provide a clear, useful description of how the Court operates in the usual course of events and are widely available on the Rules page of the Delaware State Courts website. All of these efforts are aimed at improving the administration of justice and improving public understanding of the Court's operations. For much the same reason, the Court also enhanced its website to provide more information about the Court of the Judiciary and its functionality, and those of other Arms of the Court. This work continues apace and we expect that 2016 will result in ever more easy-to-find information, which will be of help to the public, the press, and the Bar.





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Supreme Court Justices

Standing left to right:

Justice James T. Vaughn, Jr.
Justice Randy J. Holland
Chief Justice Leo E. Strine, Jr.
Justice Karen L. Valihura
Justice Collins J. Seitz, Jr.

The **Honorable Justice Collins J. (C.J.) Seitz, Jr.** was formally sworn in for his first term as Justice of the Supreme Court of Delaware on May 1, 2015. Prior to his appointment to the Supreme Court, Justice Seitz was a founding partner of Seitz, Ross, Aronstam & Moritz LLP. Justice Seitz's father, the Honorable Collins J. Seitz, Sr. (1914 – 1998), served on the Delaware Supreme Court from 1949 - 1951.

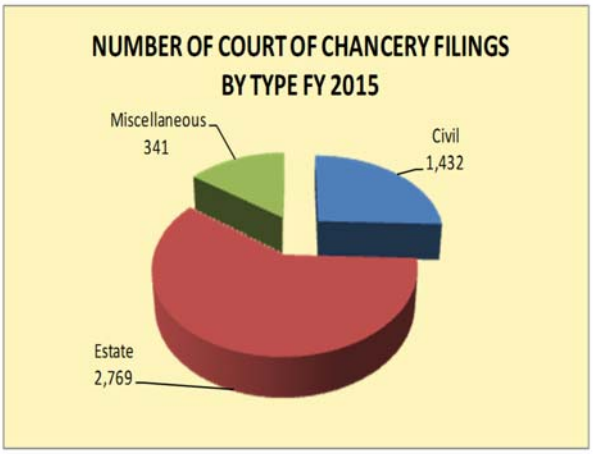
CHANCELLOR ANDRE G. BOUCHARD

CHANCERY COURT

Since the close of the fiscal year, the Court has experienced some changes. After twelve years of distinguished service, Vice Chancellor Donald F. Parsons, Jr. retired in October 2015. During his tenure, Vice Chancellor Parsons demonstrated a conscientious devotion to the work of the Court both through the management of his docket and his involvement in many committees supporting the operations of the Court. We wish him well in his retirement. Tamika Montgomery-Reeves was selected as Vice Chancellor Parson's successor. Her appointment is a historic one for the Court, as she is the first African-American and only the second woman to serve on the bench of the Court of Chancery.

In Fiscal Year 2015, the Court's caseload increased almost 2% over the previous year. This modest growth is attributable to a significant reduction in minor guardianship cases involving property as a result of legislation passed in 2014 to allow funds below a specified level to be placed in a Uniform Transfers to Minors Act account instead of establishing a guardianship. The reduction in cases of this nature has allowed the Court to devote greater resources to other matters, including guardianship cases that require more Court involvement.

A core goal of the Court of Chancery is to administer justice in a timely and cost-effective manner in the face of demanding caseloads and limited resources. Fulfilling this goal requires a constant reassessment of how we can operate more efficiently. To that end, we relocated the Register in Chancery to space on the 11th floor of the New Castle County Courthouse adjacent to the judges' chambers. This



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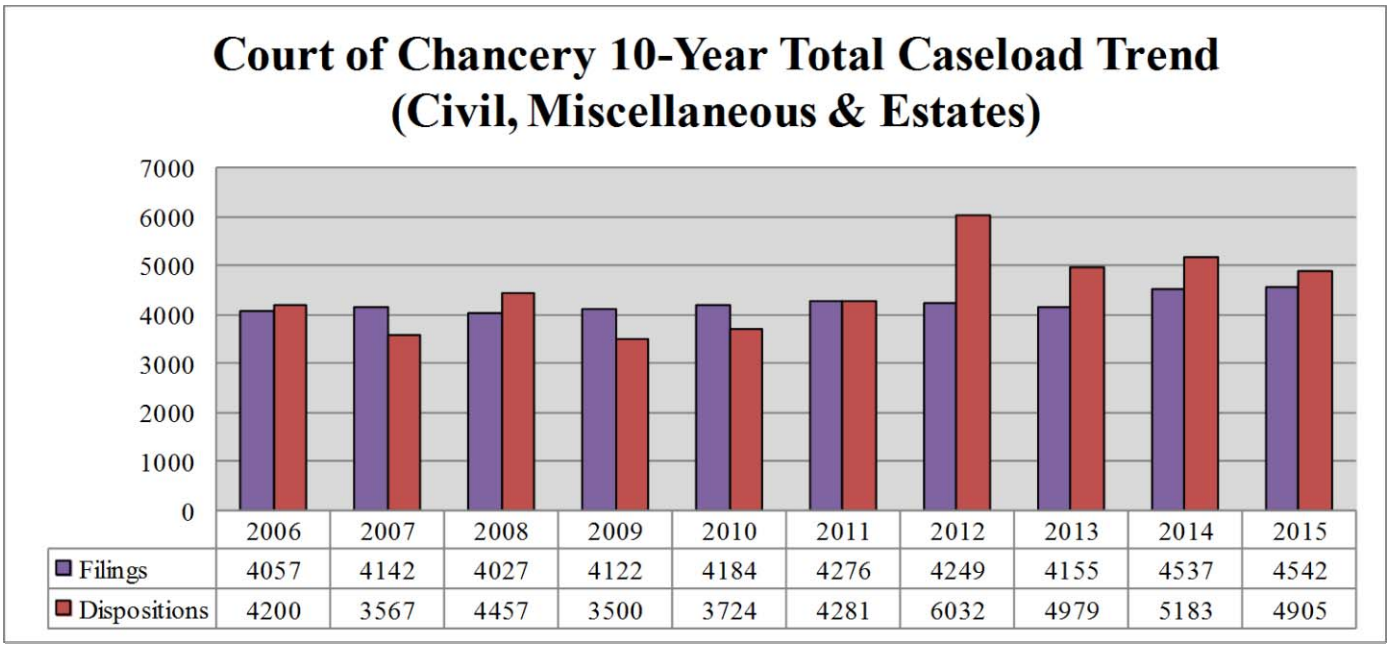


	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Filings	4057	4142	4027	4122	4184	4276	4249	4155	4537	4542
Dispositions	4200	3567	4457	3500	3724	4281	6032	4979	5183	4905

move has enhanced operational efficiencies and provided the opportunity for us to create better facilities for mediations involving a member of the Court. We now have a new mediation center that includes three conference rooms, providing the parties with adequate breakout space that was not available previously.

In May 2015, the General Assembly enacted and the Governor signed the Delaware Rapid Arbitration Act (DRAA). To implement that legislation, the Court amended its Rules to establish a process for commencing a summary proceeding to appoint an arbitrator under the DRAA when the parties cannot agree on an arbitrator, to enforce subpoenas issued in connection with a DRAA proceeding, and to determine an arbitrator's fees and enter judgment after arbitration.

The Court of Chancery has long been a leader in the implementation of technology to maximize efficiencies. In 2003, we implemented electronic filing in civil actions, with the goal of expanding e-filing to all aspects of the Court's docket over time. In 2012, the New Castle County Register of Wills was the first of the three county offices to implement e-filing, followed by the Kent County Register of Wills the next year. Effective July 1, 2015, the Sussex County Register of Wills office came on line, completing an initiative that promises to bring the advantages of technology to the administration of decedents' estates throughout the State.

As the Court moves forward into the new fiscal year, its goal will continue to be what it has been in the past: to provide prompt, expert judicial resolution of cases falling within the Court's jurisdiction. Consistent with that tradition, the Court will continue to innovate to meet new challenges to best serve the citizens of Delaware and all of the other constituencies who appear before us on a daily basis.

Court of Chancery

Standing left to right:
Vice Chancellor Sam Glasscock III
Vice Chancellor Tamika Montgomery-Reeves
Sitting left to right:
Vice Chancellor John W. Noble
Chancellor Andre G. Bouchard
Vice Chancellor J. Travis Laster

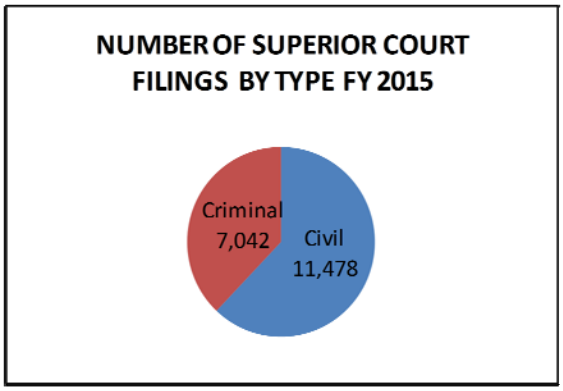
The **Honorable Tamika R. Montgomery-Reeves** was formally sworn in for her first term as a Vice Chancellor of the Delaware Court of Chancery on December 11, 2015. Prior to her appointment, Vice Chancellor Montgomery-Reeves was a partner at Wilson, Sonsini, Goodrich & Rosati. Vice Chancellor Montgomery-Reeves replaced Vice Chancellor Donald F. Parsons, Jr., who retired from the bench.

SUPERIOR COURT

PRESIDENT JUDGE JAN R. JURDEN

The mission of the Superior Court is to serve the public. We accomplish this mission by providing a fair and efficient system of justice, committed to excellence, fostering public trust, understanding and confidence.

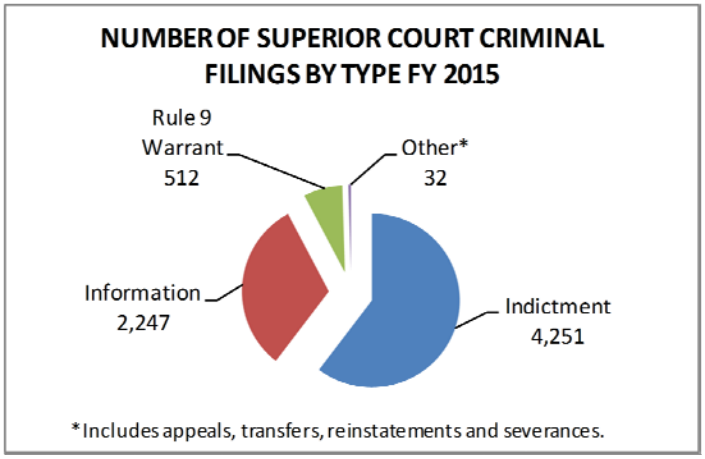
As Delaware's court of general jurisdiction, each year the Superior Court handles thousands of civil and criminal cases. Similar to preceding years, FY 2015 was a busy year for the Superior Court. Statewide, the Court handled 11,478 civil filings and 7,042 criminal filings. In FY 2015, there were 31 first degree murder cases pending statewide. Since 2002, the Superior Court has been consistently recognized by the United States Chamber of Commerce for excellence as the premier court of general civil jurisdiction in the country.



Since its establishment under the Constitution of 1831, the Superior Court of Delaware has undergone many changes, not just in size, but in its use of technology, investment in employees and implementation of innovative strategies to effectively and efficiently manage ever burgeoning caseloads while continuing efforts to administer swift and fair justice. In this trying economic climate, the Superior Court continues to review and explore ways to improve efficiencies. As part of this ongoing effort, the Court is reviewing all its forms and processes in an effort to streamline and standardize processes statewide.

The Court experienced a change in leadership early in 2015 when former President Judge James T. Vaughn, Jr. was elevated to the Delaware Supreme Court and Judge Jan R. Jurden became our new President Judge. Just a few months later, the Court welcomed Judge Jeff J Clark. Prior to joining the bench, Judge Clark practiced at Schmittinger & Rodriguez, PA, in Dover, where he was a partner maintaining a civil, criminal and commercial litigation practice. Judge Clark served as an attorney for the Delaware State Senate from 1997 through 2002, and as Chief Attorney from 2002 through 2012. He served on the Smyrna School Board for 15 years, and was a commissioner on Delaware's Public Service Commission from 2005 until his appointment to the Superior Court. Judge Clark is the seventh new judge appointed to Superior Court since 2012 – representing one-third of the 21

SUPERIOR COURT



judges on the Superior Court. In addition, the Court welcomed Bradley Manning as a Commissioner in Superior Court.

Critical to the Court's success and mission is its loyal and hardworking staff. Our employees are truly the backbone of the Court and work tirelessly to meet the justice needs of the community. The Superior Court also enjoys a high degree of collegiality which enables our judicial officers and staff to collaborate on such efforts. It is through this collaboration, and our mission to provide exceptional service to our litigants, that the Court is able to implement improvements while at the same time reducing costs.

The Court experienced change within the Court Administration Office. In June 2015, the Superior Court welcomed Mark Zaffarano as our new Court Administrator. Mr. Zaffarano brings a wealth of experience and knowledge with him as a founding member of the Mid-Atlantic Association for Court Management and as a past Court Administrator in federal court in Virginia and California. Shortly after Mr. Zaffarano took over as Court Administrator, the Court was fortunate to hire Barbara Mooney, former Controller of the Administrative Office of the Courts, as our new Controller.

These personnel changes, coupled with the infusion of energy brought by seven new judges within the last three years will enable the Court to improve its administration of justice by promoting innovative ideas and increased use of technology. The Court is poised to enhance its ability to serve the public and foster public trust, understanding and confidence.

> "The Superior Court has always been the bellwether court of general jurisdiction in Delaware. Recent management innovations such as electronic filing, drug court, case management technology, arbitration, mediation, summary procedures, videoconferencing, jury reform and other advances have only added to its nationwide reputation for excellence."
>
> ***The Honorable E. Norman Veasey, former Chief Justice of Delaware, describing the Superior Court in "The Drama of Judicial Branch Change in this Century," Delaware Lawyer, Vol. 17, No. 4, Winter 1999/2000.***

Although former Chief Justice Veasey uttered these words 15 years ago, his observation remains accurate—the Superior Court was and still is "the bellwether court of general jurisdiction in Delaware." Our innovative strategies remain key to the success of our mission.

Trial by jury is the bedrock of our criminal and civil justice systems. Every week, jurors are summoned by this Court for service in the Superior Court and the Court of Common Pleas in all three counties. This year, 134,248 jurors were summoned statewide for 277 cases, 31,685 jurors reported for service and 3,900 jurors were seated. Those civic-minded citizens who report for jury service play a crucial role in our justice system. We strive to make the experience of jury service a positive one, especially because for many Delaware citizens, jury service is their only contact with the justice system. A Superior Court judge personally addresses every jury pool on each trial day, and explains the critical role the availability and presence of jurors plays in trying and resolving cases. We are utilizing technology and implementing new software to improve the process for jury summonses and scheduling, and making it easier for prospective jurors to request rescheduling.

Sentencing is a critical component in the criminal justice system. The Court's efforts to reduce recidivism and provide equal justice for all are intrinsically linked to sentencing. Every year, the Court handles thousands of alleged violations

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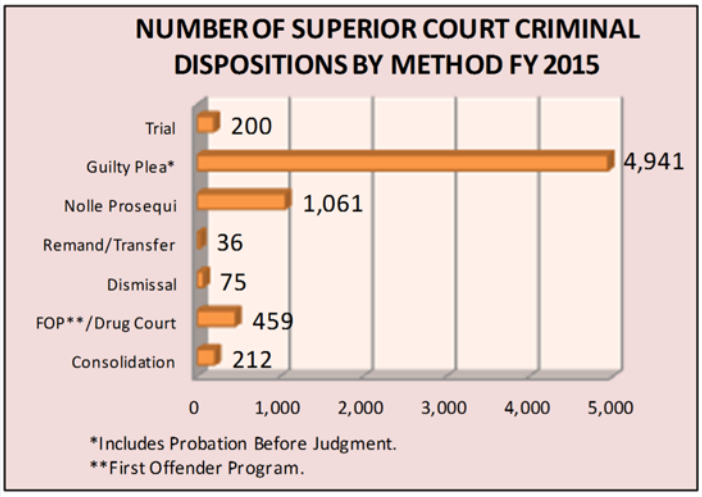


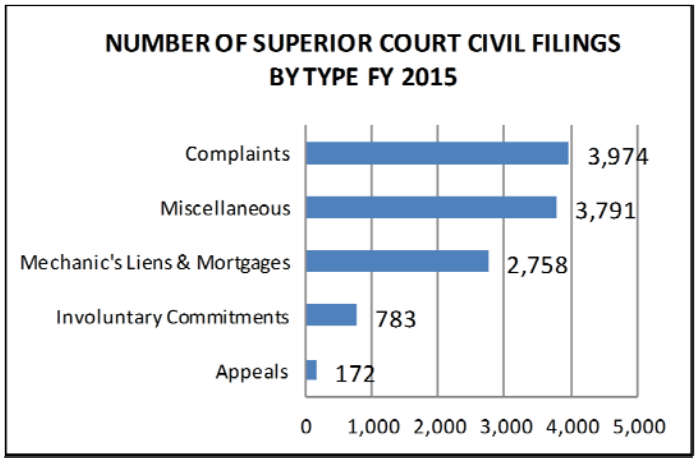
of probation. It is critical to address these allegations promptly and efficiently to protect the public. The Violation of Probation (VOP) cases statewide numbered 5,465 filings, 4,327 dispositions, and 793 cases with pending charges. To address the increasing number of VOPs, the Superior Court, in collaboration with the Department of Correction - Probation and Parole, created electronic resource mailboxes which are utilized in all three counties to improve the accuracy of violation reporting and speed of resolution.

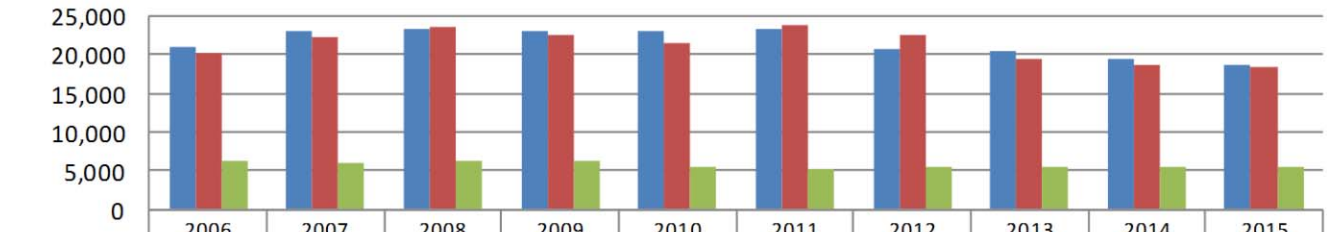
The Superior Court continues to explore innovative and more cost effective ways to handle its ever increasing workload and reduce recidivism. For example, in certain criminal cases, defendants can be diverted off the trial track and assigned to Problem-Solving Courts such as Drug Court, Mental Health Court, or Veterans Treatment Court. By addressing the underlying cause of the defendant's behavior, these courts strive not only to improve outcomes for the individual, but reduce recidivism and improve public safety. Last year, the Chief Justice created the Criminal Justice Council of the Judiciary which is reviewing, among other things, the efficacy of these courts. The goal is to have all Problem-Solving Courts operating efficiently, effectively and utilizing evidence-based best practices.

Eighteen years ago, the Delaware Superior Court established the first statewide Drug Court in the nation. This year, the statewide Superior Court Diversion Drug Court had 449 entries, 176 terminations, and 232 graduates.
Superior Court's Mental Health Court is a collaborative effort designed to heighten awareness of the particularized needs of justice-involved individuals with mental health issues, increase public safety, reduce recidivism, and enhance collaboration and information sharing between the Court, Department of Correction, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, private mental health agencies, and community treatment providers.

The Veterans Treatment Court, which has flourished since its inception in February 2011, is designed to assist justice-involved veterans with mental health and substance abuse issues in obtaining necessary services thereby eliminating or reducing the likelihood of re-offending. The Veterans Treatment Court continues to expand and offer an alternative approach to traditional court proceedings. Last year, the volunteer Peer Mentor Program was introduced to Veterans Treatment Court with widespread success. The peer mentor volunteers are uniquely positioned to support the participants in a wide variety of aspects, ranging from assisting with transportation to court and to appointments, to dealing with life's everyday challenges. In Delaware, veterans groups are poised to assist the Veterans Treatment Court and routinely inquire where their services could best be utilized. It is through the Superior Court's Veterans Treatment Court team approach to assisting justice-involved veterans that the participants are able to see a path forward after successfully completing this program. Part of the unique and beneficial approach of this Problem-Solving Court is that each presiding judge is a veteran.

After a short recess, the New Castle County's Reentry Court is back, up and running. This Problem-Solving Court targets repeat offenders who have been incarcerated at least one year and have a community service obligation





	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Filings	20,977	23,075	23,292	23,035	23,124	23,265	20,616	20,397	19,504	18,520
Dispositions	20,077	22,231	23,450	22,602	21,435	23,752	22,544	19,527	18,663	18,354
VOP Filings	6,349	6,055	6,151	6,255	5,523	5,271	5,384	5,520	5,378	5,465

as a condition of their release. The Court plans to utilize a database which will track the Reentry Court offenders and the participation of offenders and outside partners, in an effort to gather valuable data which will later be used to determine what programs are most effective at reducing recidivism and providing necessary treatment.

The Problem-Solving Court approach reflects the Court's efforts to be collaborative, innovative, and responsive to the community's needs. With respect to civil litigation, the Court also strives to be responsive to the litigants who rely on the Superior Court to resolve commercial disputes, including Delaware's corporate citizens. To that end, in 2010, the Superior Court created the Complex Commercial Litigation Division for commercial disputes where the amount in controversy exceeds $1 million. In the five years since its inception, there have been 264 cases assigned to the Complex Commercial Litigation Division and there are currently 68 cases pending disposition. This Division has been widely embraced by the legal community and continues to grow, demonstrating the Superior Court's ability to handle complex business disputes swiftly and expertly.

The Superior Court is also responsive to other issues affecting the community, such as home foreclosure. In January 2012, the Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program began as a combined effort between the Department of Justice and the Superior Court. The Department of Justice acts as the designated Administrator of the Program and continues to provide resources for homeowners facing foreclosures. This past fiscal year there were 1,795 mortgage cases filed which were eligible for the Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program. It is through a united effort that this program continues to provide a necessary service for those faced with losing their home. In addition, Project Rightful Owner continues to disburse excess proceeds to rightful owners of the money collected in sheriff's sales. Excess proceeds arise when the value of property, at the time of sale, exceeds the amount of money required to pay off all recorded liens and mortgages. In FY 2015, there were 44 hearings held, and 39 orders entered which disbursed a total of $727,904.39.

The Court has directed its efforts towards the needs of other vulnerable citizens as well. For example, in FY 2014, the Superior Court and Court of Common Pleas applied for and were awarded a grant which enabled us to launch the Victim Awareness and Safety Enhancement (VASE) Project. This first-of-its-kind, cross-court project initiative created a "specialized track" to identify justice-involved victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, and coordinate appropriate services and trauma-informed care. VASE provides these justice-involved individuals with the tools to end the cycle of violence and abuse; address the root cause of the problem that may have led to their involvement with the criminal justice system; and help reduce recidivism. The VASE project was made possible by a grant awarded to the Administrative Office of the Courts by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Violence Against Women. The documented success of this cross-court project resulted in the receipt of additional grant funds to continue VASE.

Superior Court strives to be accessible to the public. As such the Superior Court continues to publish among the greatest number of orders and opinions available for free public access and is consistently among the Courts that dominate the State Judiciary's website's "top hits." The Court's website is user-friendly and offers the Superior Court developed iCourtClerk™. This service not only helps the public, it also assists the Superior Court in identifying which topics are most important to the public in a given

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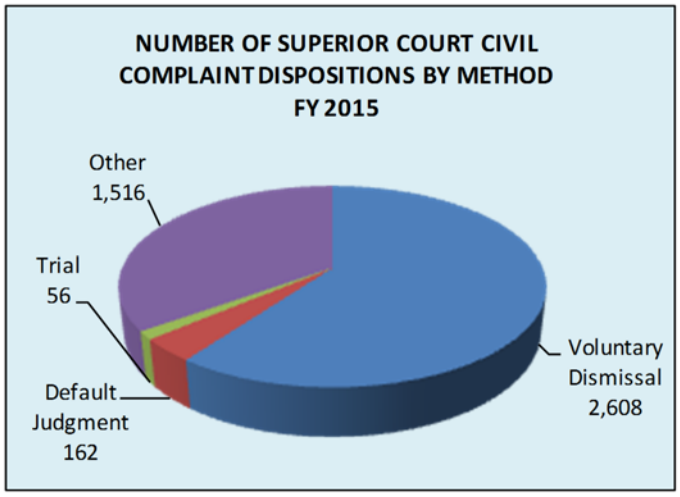

period of time and permits the Court to create new web pages and provide more focused site development to address the public's needs. Last fiscal year, there were over 3,497 public queries which is a 10% increase over the previous fiscal year. The ongoing site improvements are consistent with the Superior Court's mission to provide outstanding service to the public.

Consistent with our efforts to be a community partner, the Court unveiled a new high school internship program this past summer. This one-week program offered in New Castle County and Kent County was designed for high school students who demonstrated an interest in learning about the court and the criminal justice system. In Kent County, 16 students were selected and in New Castle County 20 students were selected. Interns learned about the inner workings of the Delaware court system through presentations by judicial officers, lawyers, court staff, police officers, probation officers and correctional officers. In addition, the interns observed various court proceedings including a trial, Mental Health Court, Drug Court, violations of probation hearings, arraignments and the call of the trial calendar. In Kent, at the end of the week, the students participated in a mock trial. In New Castle County, the students, after attending a one day trial, sat as a mock jury, and were able to compare their mock verdict to that of the real jury's verdict. The feedback from the students was uniformly positive and the Court intends to offer the program annually.

The most valuable resource of the Superior Court is our dedicated, long-serving, professional staff. The staff members of the Superior Court are committed, creative and compassionate. Our employees "go the extra mile." Just one example of outstanding performance is Rene Flores, Chief Security Officer (CSO) in Sussex County. While driving to Court in April, CSO Flores came upon an accident involving a dump truck and three school buses. One of the buses was carrying six small children between the ages of four and seven. CSO Flores, along with Justice of the Peace Court Security Officer Cody Clogg, stopped at the scene to render assistance. One of the vehicle's gas tanks had ruptured and fuel was spilling on the roadway. These two officers ran to the bus and escorted the children off the bus and out of harm's way. After checking to make sure none of the children had any visible injuries and inquiring of each if they were hurt, the officers then assisted the school bus drivers and the truck driver away from their vehicles to safety. Next, Chief Security Officer Flores and Court Security Officer Clogg assisted with directing traffic around the accident scene. In recognition of their bravery, the Governor will present them with the Delaware Award for Heroism during a formal ceremony planned for next spring. The Court is fortunate and grateful not only to have many security officers who risk their lives every day in service of the Court, but individuals who go above and beyond, even when not "on duty."

As noted above, the Court's ability to fulfill its mission depends on its employees. The Superior Court employs over 300 people and has several departments: Prothonotary – the hub of the courthouse where, among a multitude of other tasks, all filings and case processing functions are performed; Investigative Services Office – the officers who provide detailed pre-sentence reports upon which all judicial officers rely; Court Reporters — who record verbatim what is said in court proceedings; Court Security Officers – the bailiffs who provide order and security not only for the Judicial Officers, but for staff and the public as well; and Jury Services – the staff that coordinate juror summonses, reporting, logistics and management. In addition, judicial assistants located in judges' chambers provide administrative support and law clerks assist judicial officers with legal research and drafting of orders and opinions.

Each employee performs an important function and the Court recognizes the importance of investing in our employees. We strive to afford training opportunities and sufficient resources to enable employees to excel in their jobs, and to maintain high morale despite staggering caseloads, fiscal constraints and rising health insurance costs. The Superior Court remains steadfastly committed to improving the administration of justice and exemplary service to our litigants, jurors, the Bar and Delaware citizens.

SUPERIOR COURT

The Superior Court is proud of its employees and the work they do to serve the public. We will continue to work together to promote the administration of justice.

SUPERIOR COURT COMMISSIONERS

Standing (left to right):

Commissioner Andrea Maybee Freud
Commissioner Bradley V. Manning
Commissioner Lynne M. Parker
Commissioner Mark S. Vavala
Commissioner Alicia B. Howard

The **Honorable Bradley V. Manning** was formally sworn in for his first term as Commissioner of the Superior Court of Delaware on Novemer 14, 2014. Prior to his appointment, Commissioner Manning worked as an Assistant Public Defender for 13 years.

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SUPERIOR COURT

SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES

Front row (sitting left to right):
Judge Fred S. Silverman
(retired November 28, 2015)
Judge T. Henley Graves (SC Resident Judge)
President Judge Jan R. Jurden
Judge Richard R. Cooch (NCC Resident Judge)
Judge William C. Carpenter, Jr.

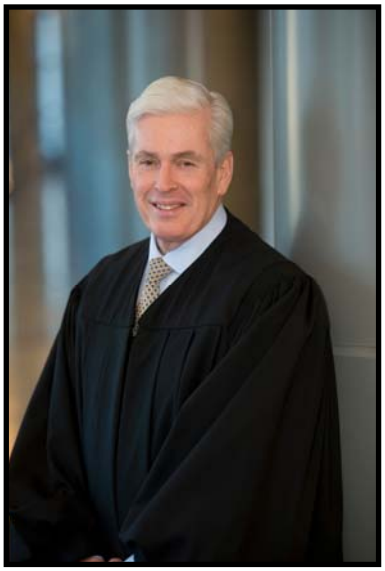
Middle row (standing left to right) :
Judge John A. Parkins, Jr.
Judge Robert B. Young
Judge Calvin L. Scott, Jr.
Judge Richard F. Stokes
Judge William L. Witham, Jr.
(KC Resident Judge)
Judge E. Scott Bradley
Judge Mary M. Johnston
Judge M. Jane Brady

Back row (standing left to right):
Judge Jeff J Clark
Judge Andrea L. Rocanelli
Judge Paul R. Wallace
Judge Charles E. Butler
Judge Diane Clarke Streett
Judge Eric M. Davis
Judge Vivian Medinilla
Judge Ferris W. Wharton

The **Honorable Jan R. Jurden** was sworn in as President Judge of the Superior Court of the State of Delaware on January 13, 2015. Prior to her appointment as President Judge, Jurden had served as a Judge of the Superior Court since 2001.

The **Honorable Jeff J Clark** was sworn in as a Judge of the Superior Court of Delaware on April 10, 2015. Prior to joining the bench, Judge Clark practiced law with Schmittinger & Rodriguez, PA, in Dover. Judge Clark filled the vacancy left when Justice James T. Vaughn, Jr. was elevated to the Delaware Supreme Court.

CHIEF JUDGE MICHAEL K. NEWELL



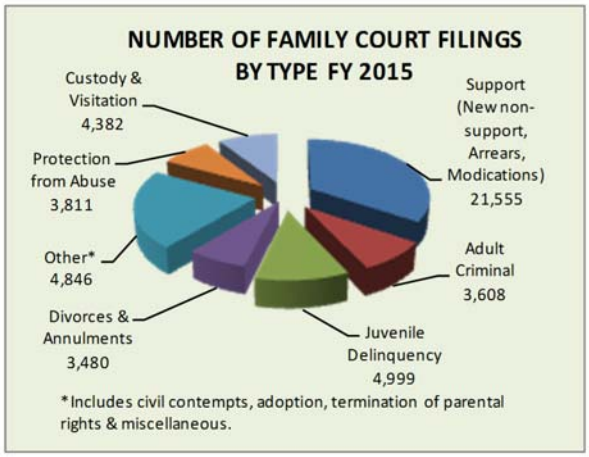
FAMILY COURT

Family Court remains committed to its goal of providing equal access to justice for the families and children under its jurisdiction in a manner that is fair and efficient and that maintains the public's trust and confidence in an independent and accountable judiciary.

To support this goal, Family Court is participating in several initiatives aimed at improving systems and processes, including the Family Court Enhancement Project, sponsored by the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women, in collaboration with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the Battered Women's Justice Project, the Center for Court Innovation, and the National Institute for Justice. The Project is working to address the challenges identified by the group related to the ability of self-represented litigants to access justice in Family Court, and the complicated nature of identifying, understanding, and accounting for domestic violence in custody decision-making.

In partnership with the University of Delaware, several members of Family Court staff were trained in Lean Six Sigma principles so that process improvement initiatives could be managed using recognized methodologies aimed at reducing waste and inefficiency. Family Court is applying the principles in conjunction with several projects related to Family Court operations.

In addition, Family Court held statewide staff training in October 2015 entitled "Putting the Pieces Together—Service in the Judicial Branch." The training provided a history of the American court system, the rule of law and the history of Delaware Family Court. Staff discussed the purposes of courts and explored how their daily tasks serve to protect the due process rights of the public accessing the court system. Finally, staff examined the application and relevance of the Judicial Branch Code of Conduct related to common situations that arise while working in the court system.



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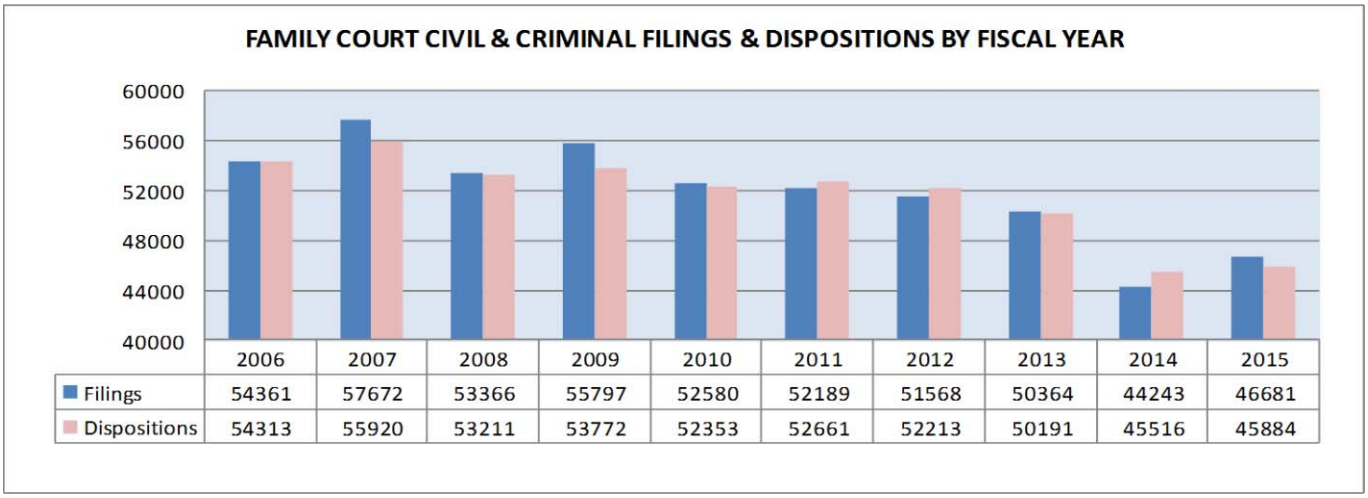
FAMILY COURT

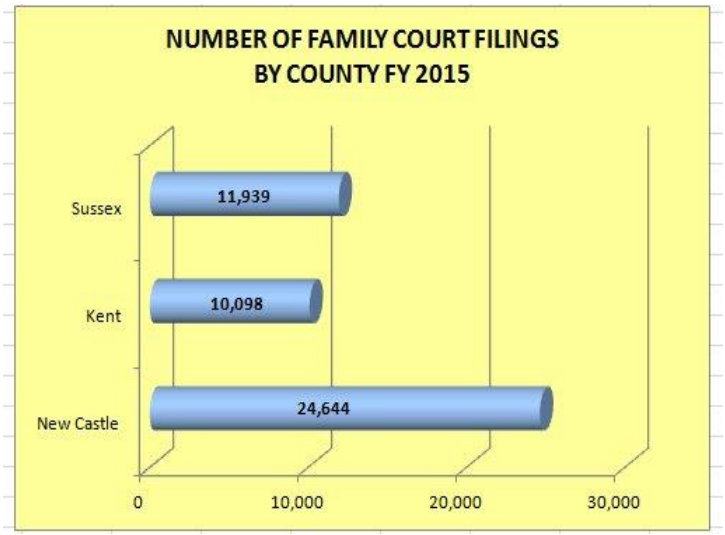


	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Filings	54361	57672	53366	55797	52580	52189	51568	50364	44243	46681
Dispositions	54313	55920	53211	53772	52353	52661	52213	50191	45516	45884

In February 2015 the Court Facilities Improvement Working Group issued its report reviewing court facility space needs in Kent and Sussex Counties and making recommendations. The group concluded that the need to address existing security and operational inadequacies in both Family Court's Kent and Sussex Courthouses remains critical and the current Family Court facilities do not offer the dignified and secure facilities necessary. The group also concluded that a primary factor in the selection among several options to address the situation should be the continued accessibility of facilities to litigants and client populations in Kent and Sussex Counties and to maximize the ability of the Family Court to cost-effectively construct new court facilities. It is essential that the cities and counties involved cooperate as partners with the State in developing and constructing the new court facilities, according to the group. Five hundred thousand dollars was allocated in the FY16 Capital Budget "to be used towards preliminary costs, including planning and design and architectural and engineering work to address deficiencies in current Family Court facilities in Kent and Sussex Counties…".

Fiscal Year 15 showed an 8% increase in civil filings in Family Court, a 2% decrease in juvenile delinquency filings and an 8% decrease in criminal filings. Family Court received more than 38,000 civil filings, almost 5,000 juvenile delinquency filings, and over 3,600 criminal filings. During this same period, the court disposed of almost 37,000 civil matters, more than 5,300 juvenile delinquency cases, and over 3,600 criminal matters.

In June 2015, former Chief Judge Chandlee Johnson Kuhn concluded her term as Family Court's fourth Chief Judge and returned to private practice. The Honorable Michael K. Newell, was nominated by Governor Jack Markell and unanimously confirmed by the Delaware Senate on June 11, 2015, becoming the fifth Chief Judge of the statewide Family Court. Felice Kerr was nominated by Governor Markell to fill the vacancy left by Chief Judge Newell's appointment to Chief Judge. On June 24, 2015, Judge Kerr was unanimously confirmed by the Delaware Senate. In addition, Family Court welcomed a new member to its Administrative Team with the promotion of Melissa Ziegler to Director of Operations in Kent County.



FAMILY COURT

FAMILY COURT JUDGES

Front row (sitting left to right):
Judge Alan Cooper (1952-2015)
Judge Mark D. Buckworth
Judge Mardi Pyott
Judge Aida Waserstein
Judge William N. Nicholas

Middle row (standing left to right):
Judge Felice Glennon Kerr
Judge Peter B. Jones
Judge Kenneth M. Millman
Judge William J. Walls
Judge Jay H. Conner
Judge Barbara D. Crowell
Judge Arlene M. Coppadge

Back row (standing left to right):
Judge Joelle Hitch
Judge William Chapman (retired September 24, 2015)
Chief Judge Michael K. Newell
Judge Robert B. Coonin
Judge Paula Ryan

Not pictured: Judge Natalie J. Haskins, Judge Jennifer B. Ranji

The **Honorable Jennifer B. Ranji** was formally sworn in for her first term as a Judge of the Family Court of Delaware on November 24, 2015. Prior to her appointment to the Family Court, Judge Ranji served as the Secretary of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families. Judge Ranji replaced Judge William L. Chapman, Jr., who retired from the bench.

The **Honorable Natalie J. Haskins** was formally sworn in for her first term as Judge of the Family Court of Delaware on January 22, 2016. Prior to joining the bench, Judge Haskins was an Assistant Public Defender representing juveniles in criminal litigation. Judge Haskins was named to fill the vacancy that was created as a result of the death of the Honorable Alan Cooper.

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FAMILY COURT COMMISSIONERS

Front row (sitting left to right):
Louann Vari
Pamela Holloway
M. DeSales Haley

Second row (standing left to right):
Sonja Wilson
Para Wolcott
Angela Fowler
Janell Ostroski
Mary Ann Herlihy
(retired November 1, 2015)
Loretta Young

Third row (sitting left to right):
Andrew Southmayd
Jennifer Mayo
David W. Jones
Susan Tussey
John Carrow

Fourth row (standing left to right):
Mary Much
Chief Judge Michel K. Newell
James Maxwell

Not pictured: Danielle S. Blount

The **Honorable Danielle S. Blount** was formally sworn in for her first term as Commissioner of the Family Court of Delaware on January 29, 2016. Prior to joining the Family Court, Blount served as Governor Jack Markell's deputy legal counsel.

IN MEMORIAM
THE HONORABLE ALAN N. COOPER

The Honorable Alan N. Cooper served as a Judge of the Family Court from 2005 until his passing on October 18, 2015. Judge Cooper practiced law in Wilmington, Delaware from 1985 until he was appointed to the bench, and was a founding partner at the law firm of Berkowitz, Schagrin & Cooper, P.A., which he earned the reputation as one of Delaware's most respected family law practitioners. While in private practice he gave generously of his time as a volunteer for Delaware Volunteer Legal Services, the Office of the Child Advocate, and the victim's Advocacy Program, and was the recipient of the Delaware Volunteer Legal Services Outstanding Pro Bono Service award in 2002. He carried his sense of commitment to the community with him to the Family Court, leading many of the court's initiatives for system change, particularly in the area of domestic violence. He was an active member of a number of national and local professional organizations, including the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the Delaware State Bar Association and its Family Law Section, and the Melson Arsht Inn of Court.

"Judge Cooper was a special person. He approached each day of his difficult job as a Family Court judge with enthusiasm and passion and a gratitude for being able to make a difference. Alan gave up one of the best practices in Delaware to become a judge because of his deep concern for families, especially vulnerable children. His intelligence, patience, and skill as a judge greatly enhanced the reputation of our Family Court." ***- Supreme Court Chief Justice Leo E. Strine, Jr.***

"Judge Cooper was a member of the Family Court Judiciary since December 7, 2005, and served the citizens of Delaware with distinction. His intellect, compassion, and concern for the parties who appeared before him were reflected in his many well written decisions. He also led Family Court's initiatives with respect to issues of domestic violence. His leadership resulted in many changes as to how Family Court processed and resolved petitions for Protection from Abuse. We, in the Family Court, and the citizens of Delaware, will reap the benefits from Judge Cooper's accomplishments during his too-brief tenure on the Family Court bench for years to come. We continue to miss his leadership, hard work, good humor, and positive personality." ***- Chief Judge Michael K. Newell***

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

CHIEF JUDGE ALEX J. SMALLS

Fiscal Year 2015 was a busy and challenging year for the Court of Common Pleas. The number of cases transferred to, and filed with, the Court of Common Pleas contributed to a high volume environment in the Court. While the criminal caseload indicates a slight decline from last year, civil caseload numbers are up by 15% and the complexity of the caseload and the number of cases proceeding forward to trial continue to increase, placing an ever-growing demand on the Court's and Judicial Partners' resources.

Civil Initiatives

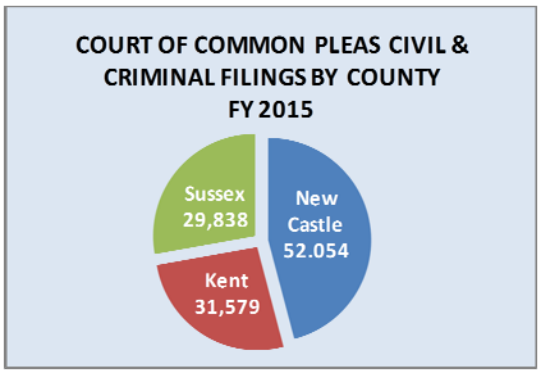
The Court of Common Pleas received 6,507 new civil complaints combined with 3,788 civil judgments, name changes and appeals, in FY 2015 resulting in a 15% increase in overall civil caseload since last year. In addition, the caseload continues to grow in complexity resulting in a more extensive motion practice and more trial time.

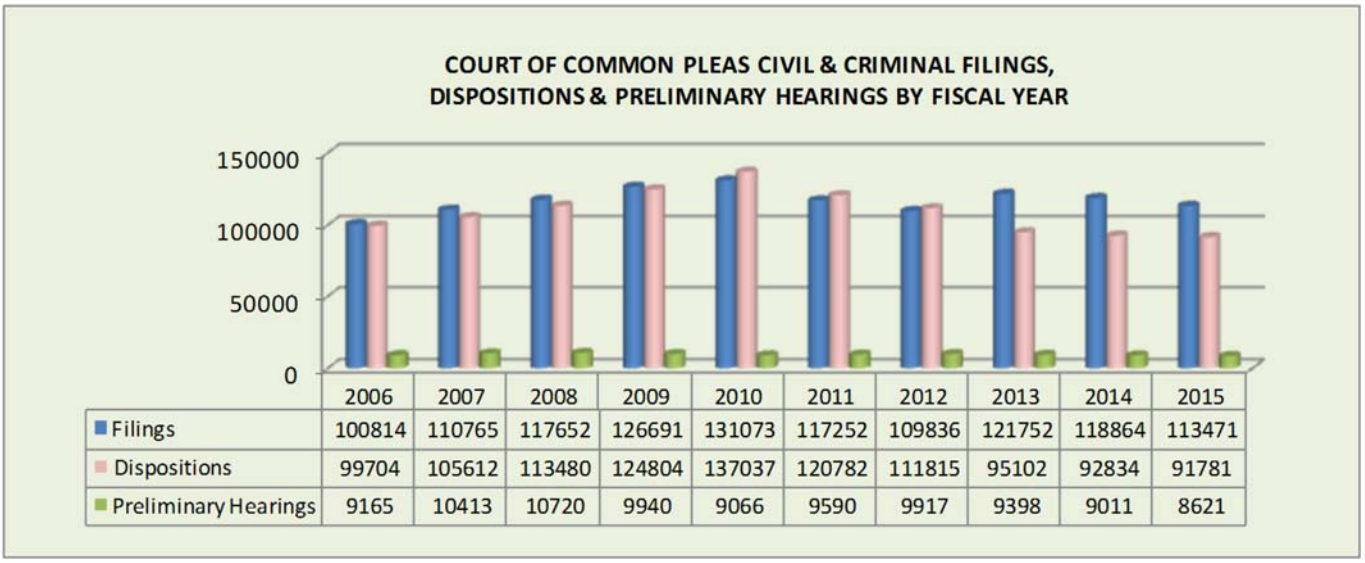
Likewise, there was an increase in the amount of consumer debt collection cases filed in the Court. In 2012, the Court adopted Administrative Directive 2012-2 setting forth procedural guidelines in consumer debt collection cases, with the goal of ensuring fairness to all litigants and improving efficiency in the administration of justice. There were 4,500 consumer debt cases filed with the Court in FY 2015 an increase of 32% over last year's number.

Criminal Initiatives

The Court of Common Pleas in collaboration with students from the University of Delaware's Alfred Lerner College of Business and Economics automated the Court's decade-old bail process. The Judiciary signed an MOU with the Lerner College of Business in FY 2015 and as part of the coordination of efforts, the Court identified its manual bail process as a project to engage Lean Six Sigma process improvement techniques. With the assistance of the University of Delaware students, the project to automate the bail process shaved significant time off of the Court's prior manual process. The Court continues to identify process improvement opportunities for further collaboration and re-engineering.

The number of criminal misdemeanor filings in the Court of Common Pleas in FY 15 was





	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Filings	100814	110765	117652	126691	131073	117252	109836	121752	118864	113471
Dispositions	99704	105612	113480	124804	137037	120782	111815	95102	92834	91781
Preliminary Hearings	9165	10413	10720	9940	9066	9590	9917	9398	9011	8621

103,176 with 8,621 preliminary hearings filed. The Department of Justice continues to aggressively review felony cases at preliminary hearings and, as appropriate, resolve those in the Court of Common Pleas. This effort has a positive effect on the entire criminal justice system because it eliminates the need for these cases to be handled twice in the Court of Common Pleas and once in the Superior Court. This occurs when felony charges are reduced to misdemeanors in Superior Court and returned to the Court of Common Pleas after being bound over at preliminary hearings.

Mediation

Since 2001, the Court has referred over 14,584 cases for mediation, with 1,499 referrals made to the program in FY 2015. Mediation provides an alternative to criminal prosecution, assists the Court in the management of its busy calendars, and leaves participants with an increased sense of satisfaction with the justice system. In FY 2015, the Court's mediation program had a success/satisfaction rate of 94 percent.

In recent years, the Court of Common Pleas extended its successful criminal mediation program to include civil cases. This option has been well received by civil litigants and has been responsible for the successful settlement of an increasing number of cases. The Court has also started a Community Mediation Program, which receives referrals regularly from the New Castle County Police's community section and municipalities seeking mediation assistance with minor neighborhood disputes, rather than referring matters for criminal or civil litigation. This growth has been a result of the positive relationships the Mediation Program has established with the community at large.

Treatment Courts

The Court continued to operate its highly successful court-supervised comprehensive Drug Diversion Program for non-violent offenders, which is now under the direction of Judge Robert Surles, appointed to the Court in 2013. This voluntary program includes regular appearances before a judge, participation in substance abuse education, drug testing, and treatment. The Drug Diversion Program represents a collaborative effort between the Court of Common Pleas, the Department of Justice, the Public Defenders, the Delaware Bar, the treatment providers, and the Treatment Research Institute (TRI) at the University of Pennsylvania. (The TRI program is limited to New Castle County). Collaboration with TRI provides a basis for observation, research, and analysis, which assists the launch of scores of other drug diversion programs throughout the United States and Internationally. The Court of Common Pleas Drug Diversion Program has served more than 8,123 participants since its inception in 1998.

To enhance its ability to identify the needs of all participants, the New Castle County Drug Diversion Program introduced a new tool on July 1, 2010. The tool referred to as the "RANT Assessment," a web-based placement tool developed by the Court's partners at TRI. "RANT" is an acronym for **R**isk **a**nd **N**eeds Assessment **T**riage. The assessment tool is used to assess each client's risks and needs. Based upon

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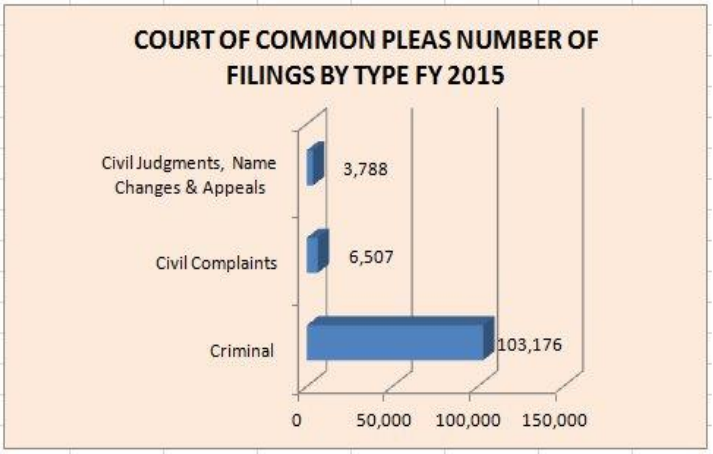


the results, a defendant is placed into one of four quadrants: low risks/low needs; low risks/high needs; high risks/low needs; and high risks/high needs. Identifying these risks/needs groups allows treatment to be tailored to meet the individual needs of the client, promoting successful program completion, and reducing recidivism.

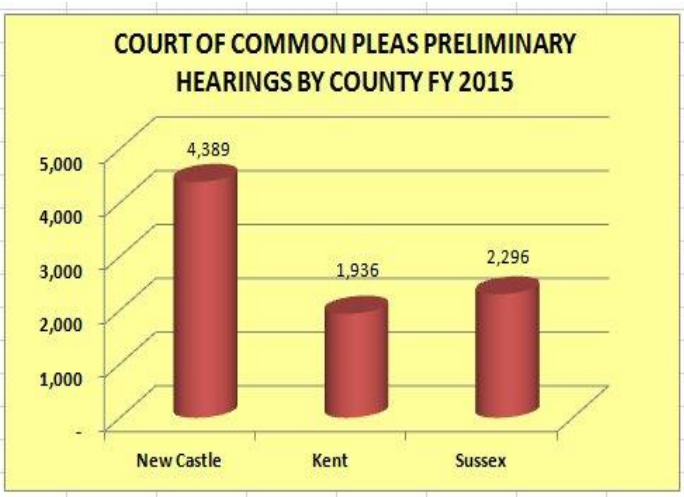
In 2003, the Court of Common Pleas established Delaware's first Mental Health Court in New Castle County. It was modeled on the concept of a problem solving court, which incorporates the judge into the rehabilitative process as an authority figure to provide positive feedback and impose sanctions for negative behavior. The Mental Health Court in New Castle County is supervised by Judge Carl C. Danberg. In 2012, the Court of Common Pleas received federal funding to expand its Mental Health Court to Kent and Sussex Counties. These programs are supervised by Judge Anne Hartnett Reigle in Kent County and Judge Kenneth S. Clark, Jr. in Sussex County. All three Mental Health Courts effectively serve the special needs of individuals suffering from mental illnesses, substance abuse and co-occurring disorders through continuous judicial oversight and intensive case management. This approach has reduced recidivism and the program participants' contact with the criminal justice system. Since its inception, approximately 74 defendants entered the Court of Common Pleas Mental Health Court statewide.

The Human Trafficking Court is a voluntary, treatment-focused program that began in January 2012. The target population is comprised of offenders who have experienced significant trauma in their lives and are caught in a cycle which typically manifests itself as an accumulation of charges involving prostitution, loitering, possession of drug paraphernalia, or other misdemeanors, combined with substantial addiction issues. This program is designed to offer a support system and helps to connect these probationers with drug treatment, mental health counseling, trauma services, housing options, and educational or employment training or both. During FY 2015, the Human Trafficking Court added 14 probationers to the program. During that same period of time, six women graduated from the program, bringing the total number of graduates since the program's inception to 29.

The Court of Common Pleas continued to operate eight comprehensive treatment courts in FY 2015. The treatment courts, though highly effective in addressing the specialized needs of the target populations, place a great demand on both limited judicial resources and the resources of the Courts' justice partners. In FY 2015, the Chief Justice appointed a committee, consisting of members from each of the courts to review the treatment courts statewide. The goal of the committee is to study, evaluate and analyze such courts and enhance delivery of services. The committee was also tasked with studying the possibility of working cooperatively across courts to reduce duplication of efforts and promote sharing of limited resources. Additionally, the hope is to promote consistency from court to court and county to county thereby reducing the demand for resources being placed on the justice partners, while continuing to offer the same high levels of service to the participants. The committee is expected to release its recommendation in early FY2016, which will likely reshape the future operations of the treatment courts statewide.

DUI Court

The Court of Common Pleas received 2,562 DUI cases in FY 2015. House Bill 378 was signed into law by Governor



Markell on July 18, 2012 and authorizes the Department of Justice to transfer certain Driving Under the Influence (DUI) cases to the Court of Common Pleas from the Justice of the Peace Court. The statute also provided that the Court of Common Pleas shall take steps towards implementation of a Driving Under the Influence Court. Senate Bill 260 was signed into law by Governor Markell on July 31, 2014 authorizing offenders charged with DUI offenses to participate in the Court of Common Pleas' DUI Treatment Program.

The DUI Treatment Court Program, under the direction of Chief Judge Smalls, accepted its first participants on December 19, 2014. To date, the DUI Court has accepted 46 individuals into the program with 44 currently active participants. In order to enter the program, the following requirements must be met: (1) the DUI must be a first offense with a high BAC level or a second offense; (2) the DUI must not have resulted in severe bodily injury or death; (3) the individual must be evaluated through the DUI-RANT Assessment and placed within the High Risk/ High Needs quadrant; and (4) the individual must waive his/her constitutional rights and plead guilty to the offense.

The promotion of lifestyle change through specialized treatment is a major focus of the DUI Court. Accordingly, participants must attend individual and group counseling sessions provided by Brandywine Counseling & Community Services. Specifically, they participate in the Prime For Life Program, a motivational program used to prevent alcohol or drug problems through activities which encourage participants to change behavior to protect what they value most in life. Participants also engage in numerous hours of community service.

As Driving Under the Influence is a serious offense, which has the ability to impact the lives of many, the program requires a high level of supervision and accountability by participants. There is zero tolerance for drug and alcohol use and participants are subject to random drug/alcohol screenings. Individuals are monitored by Probation and Parole through the use of a Transdermal Alcohol Device (TAD) worn on the ankle for 90 days. Additionally, an Ignition Interlock Device is required in order to operate any motor vehicle.

Our DUI Court participants have actively participated in this program and have shown enormous growth from their initial entry to their upcoming graduation dates. Expressions of hope and gratitude have been shared by many participants as they seek to become more positive contributors to our communities.

Grant Funded Initiatives

The Court continues to work aggressively to manage its caseload in spite of greater demands on judges and staff. Additional calendars and the application of aggressive case management techniques have reduced the time to disposition in most case categories. The Court received its third and final year of funding in FY 2015 from a Byrne Justice Assistance Grant to provide resources for the expansion of the Mental Health Court in Kent and Sussex Counties. Additionally, the Court received grant funding from the Office of Violence Against Women, for a coordinator to staff, on a part-time basis, the Court's Human Trafficking Court (formerly known as Trauma Informed Probation). In November 2014, a three-year grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance was approved through the Delaware Criminal Justice Council to fund the DUI Initiative. In May 2015, we received the final award letter from the Criminal Justice Council for that grant.

Enforcement of Court Orders

In FY 15, the Court of Common Pleas collected approximately $6,964,791 in fines, costs and assessments. A significant portion of the Court's collections also represents restitution and compensation payments for victims of crime. The Court returns more than 45% of its operating budget to the State's General Fund.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the challenges of managing a large and increasingly complex caseload, Judges and staff remain committed to "the mission of the Court of Common Pleas to provide a neutral forum for the people and institutions of Delaware in the resolution of everyday problems, disputes and more complex legal matters in a fair, professional, efficient and practical manner."

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COURT OF COMMON PLEAS COMMISSIONERS

Standing left to right:
Abby L. Adams
Mary McDonough

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS JUDGES

Front row (standing left to right):
Judge John K.Welch
Chief Judge Alex J. Smalls
Judge Rosemary Betts Beauregard
Judge Kenneth S. Clark, Jr.

Second row (standing left to right):
Judge Sheldon Rennie
Judge Robert H. Surles
Judge Charles W. Welch, III
Judge Anne Hartnett Reigle
Judge Carl C. Danberg

CHIEF MAGISTRATE ALAN G. DAVIS

Change is a word that people either love or hate to hear. Change can be difficult and intimidating, however, it can also be efficient and rewarding. The Justice of the Peace Court is no stranger to change and Fiscal Year 2015 was no exception, bringing many of the good changes that we all hope to see in furthering our efforts to improve the Court and its service to the public.

Structured Training Programs

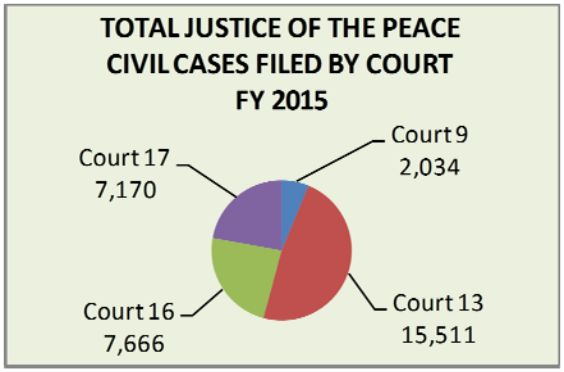
We are providing support to our staff by improving training opportunities through refocusing resources and starting to develop structured training programs. Building upon our long-term success with the judicial Basic Legal Education program, we established the first series of Clerk training classes designed to teach newly hired staff basic job functions. This initial training is presented in a central location focusing on standardized procedures during a six week development series. Upon completion, new staff members are better prepared to perform their duties and provide improved service to the public. All of our new training programs are being developed with more interactive features relevant to our clerks, security staff, managers, and our Judicial officers.

Drug and Psychological Testing

In an effort to enhance safety for employees, the public and court users, effective July 25, 2014, all new uniformed services employees are required to be screened for the use of alcohol/controlled substances and psychological impairment prior to a full offer of employment. This policy also affects all uniformed services employees who were employed at the time of implementation by establishing a random drug testing process and incident-based testing should circumstances warrant. Due to the nature of the work performed by uniformed services personnel, the Justice of the Peace Court believes that both drug testing and psychological evaluation of these employees helps to ensure the safety of everyone around them.

Information Center

The Justice of the Peace Court has established a centralized call routing system. Much more than a call center, we have dubbed this enterprise our Information Center. This group, working out of our Voluntary Assessment Center, is being positioned to answer all incoming Justice of the



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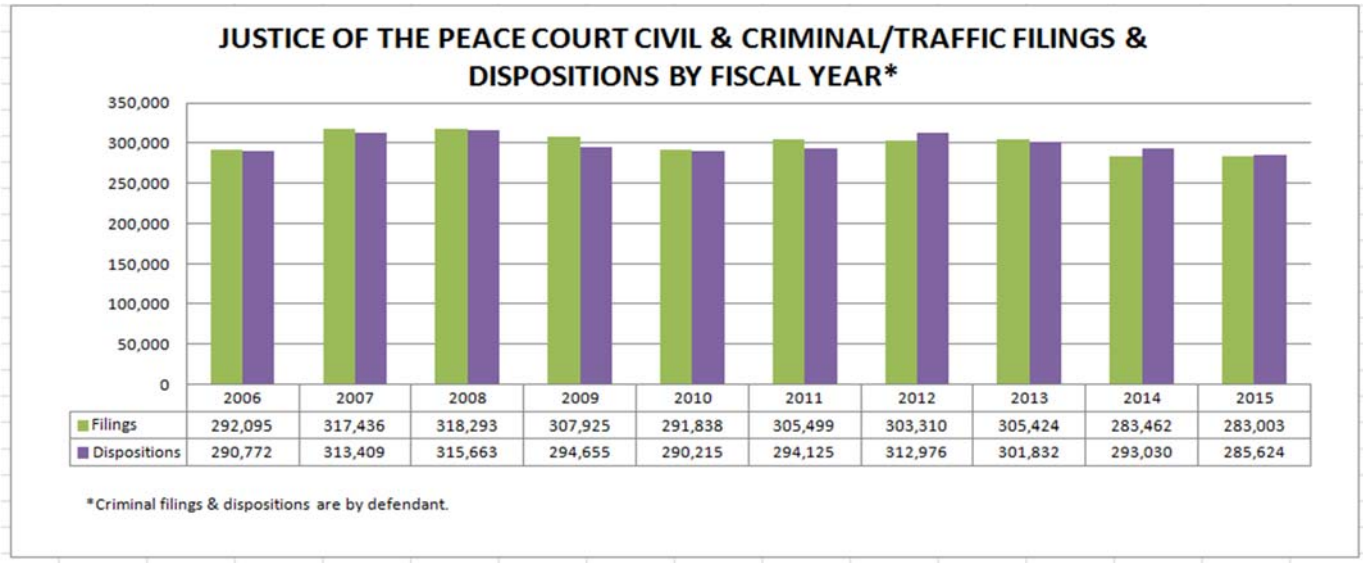


	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Filings	292,095	317,436	318,293	307,925	291,838	305,499	303,310	305,424	283,462	283,003
Dispositions	290,772	313,409	315,663	294,655	290,215	294,125	312,976	301,832	293,030	285,624

Peace Court calls. The first steps in this effort started on March 16, 2015 with a transfer of calls from Court 7. Calls from the remaining 24-hour court locations – Courts 11 and 3 – soon followed. By May 26, 2015 the staff of the Information Center took their ten thousandth call. The Information Center staff has shown that they are consistently able to resolve 90% of questions without the need to involve staff at the court location the call was originally directed toward. This frees front-line court staff to complete court business without the incessant interruption of phone calls. With these initial steps, we are already seeing an improvement in service to the public as well as an improved quality of work product in each court location.

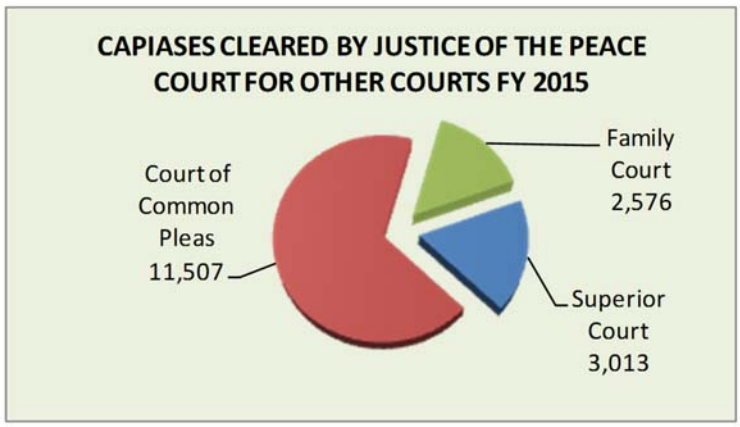
Motor Vehicle Network (MVN)

We worked with a private vendor, Motor Vehicle Network (MVN), to install monitors in our court lobbies to display court information, news and features of interest to the public while waiting in our lobbies. MVN is a private company whose tools are also used at Delaware Motor Vehicle locations. In addition to paid advertising, the court also posts information on criminal and civil procedures and where to find helpful information for litigants and other court users. These monitors have helped to make our lobbies more comfortable and welcoming for the public.

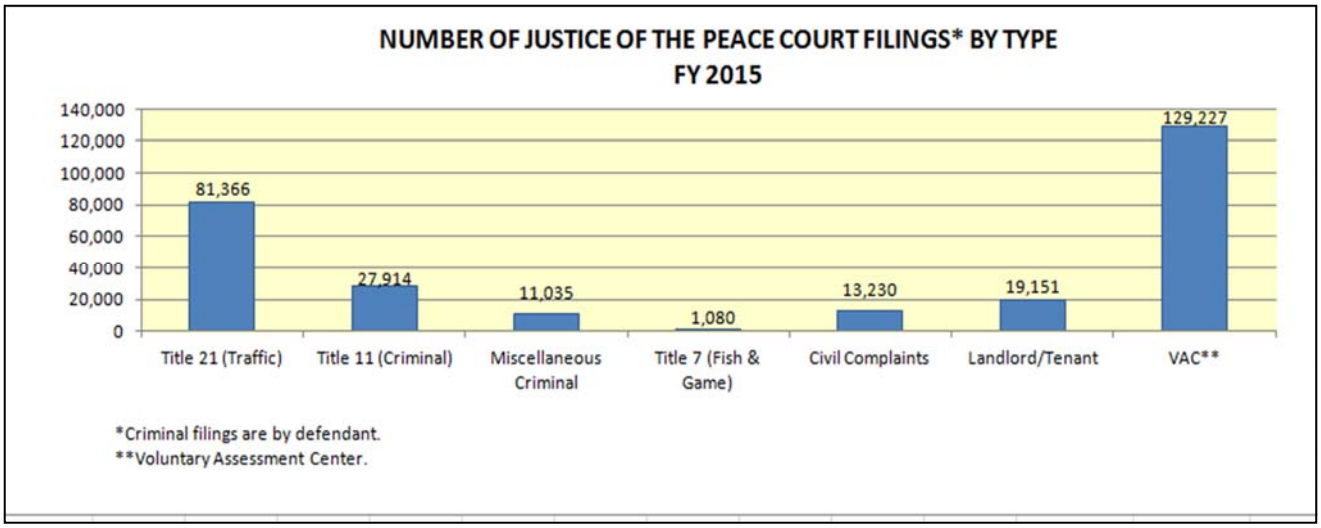
Court Recording Equipment

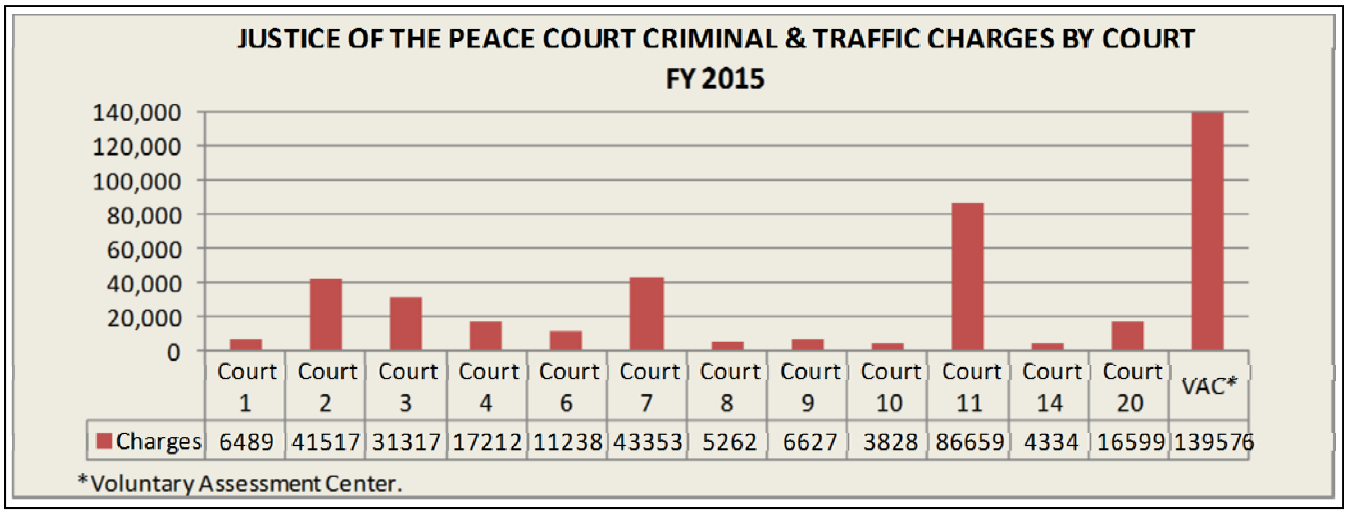
Other internal changes include installation of court recording equipment in every Justice of the Peace Court courtroom. While we are not required to keep an official record, having an audio record available for court proceedings will allow us to ensure that we have a clear record of what occurred in our courts. All judges will be required to record court sessions effective November 2, 2015.

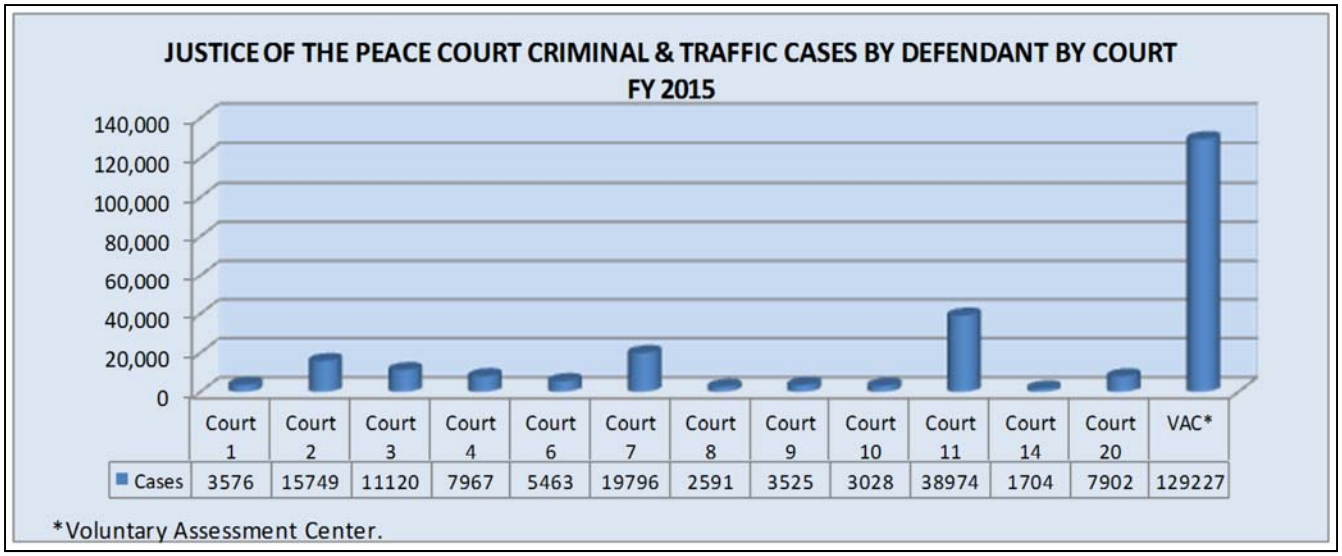
These changes are focused on providing improved service to the public and procedurally fair operations. The Justice of the Peace Court continually strives to improve operations and we look forward to continued change as we move into next year.



JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT







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JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT

NEW CASTLE COUNTY JUDGES

Sitting (left to right):
Cheryl Stallmann
Katherine Ross
Susan Ufberg
Bonita Lee, Deputy Chief Magistrate
Rosalie Rutkowski
Kathy Gravell
Marilyn Letts

Middle row (left to right):
Cheryl Mccabe-Stroman
Nancy Roberts
Deborah McNesby
Nina Bawa
Susan Cline
Amanda Moyer
Roberto Lopez
Carman Jordan-Cox
Sean McCormick

Back row (left to right):
William Moser
William Young, III
James Hanby
Vincent Kowal
James Tull
Gerald Ross, III
Christopher Portante
Chief Magistrate Alan Davis

Not Pictured: Thomas Brown, Emily Ferrell, Beatrice Freel, David Skelley, Vernon Taylor, Thomas Kenney

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT

KENT COUNTY JUDGES

Sitting (left to right):
Dana Tracy
Chief Magistrate Alan Davis
D. Ken Cox
Kevin Wilson

Middle row:
Alexander Montano

Back row (left to right):
Dwight Dillard
William J. Sweet
W. G. Edmanson, II
Michael Sherlock
James Murray

Not Pictured: Ernst Arndt, Deputy Chief Magistrate, Pamela Darling

Continued on next page

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT

SUSSEX COUNTY JUDGES

Sitting (left to right):
Stephani Adams
Rochelle Knapp
Jeni Coffelt
Sheila Blakely, Deputy Chief Magistrate
Deborah Keenan
Michelle Jewell
Jana Mollohan

Standing (left to right):
John McKenzie
William P. Wood
Larry Sipple
Christopher Bradley
James Horn
John Martin
Chief Magistrate Alan Davis
John Adams
John Hudson
Nicholas Mirro

Not Pictured:
William Boddy, III
Richard Comly
Herman Hagan

JUDICIAL BRANCH EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED

Daniel Slattery, Court Security Officer II, Court of Common Pleas, was named the **2014 JUDICIAL BRANCH EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR**, and recognized for his exceptional service as a court security officer and his willingness to "go above and beyond" to ensure a safe and secure court environment. Mr. Slattery was also a recipient of the **DELAWARE AWARD FOR HEROISM** for his efforts to assist a defendant in the court in need of medical attention. In October of 2014, Mr. Slattery immediately went to the aid of a defendant in court who was in distress. Mr. Slattery recognized that the person was reacting to a heroin overdose, and remained at the defendant's side gathering important information and keeping him conscious under the paramedics arrived. His efforts were instrumental in helping get the defendant proper treatment. Mr. Slattery was recognized for both of these awards at the Delaware Award for Excellence and Commitment in State Service annual awards ceremony on May 5, 2015.

Other employees nominated for the 2014 Judicial Branch Employee of the Year award, and who were honored as the Employee of the Year for their court or agency, are:

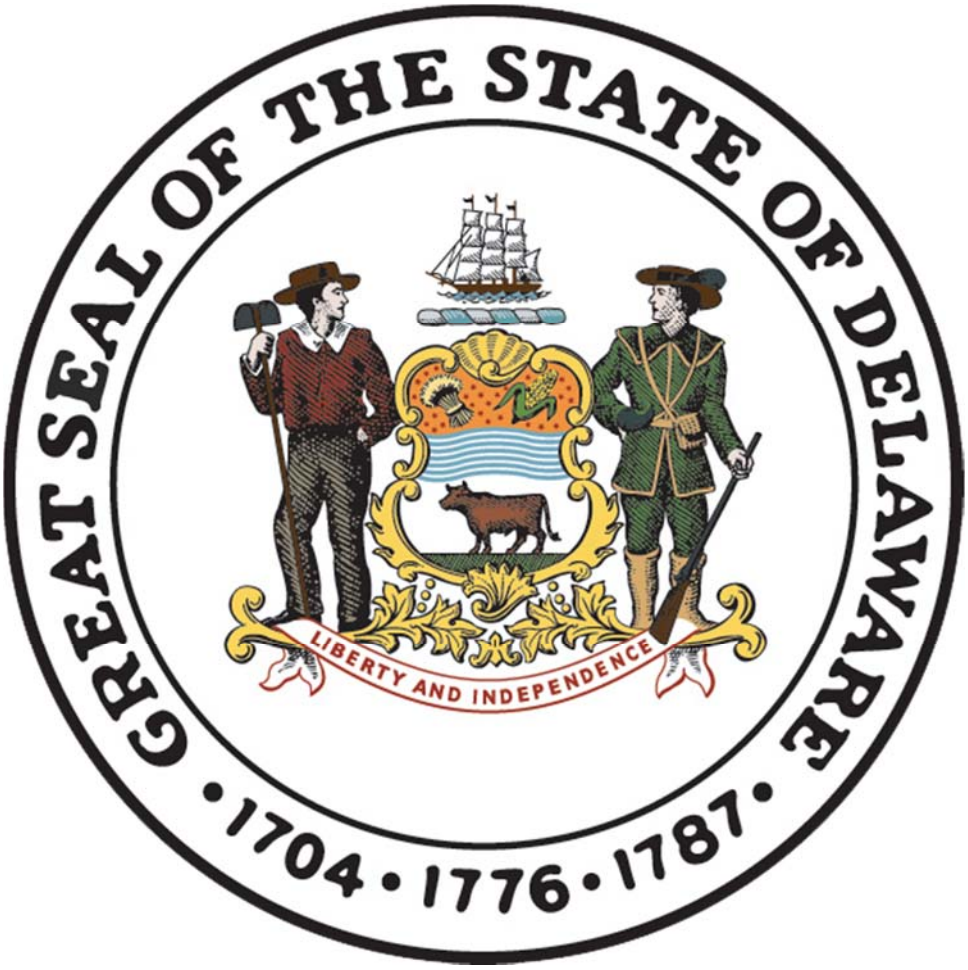
Joshua Brooks, Judicial Case Processor II, Justice of the Peace Court. Mr. Brooks was recognized for his outstanding reputation for treating all of his customers in an understanding and professional manner, and in assisting his coworkers whenever needed. Part of the Justice of the Peace Court's mission is to treat all persons with integrity, fairness, and respect. Mr. Brooks leads by example every day.

Marybeth Cassidy, Senior Human Resources Technician, Family Court. Ms. Cassidy's dedication was evident as she successfully managed the Family Court personnel file room to meet records retention and other requirements. Through her efforts, Family Court's human resources team was able to maintain its level of service during its staffing shortage.

The Criminal Division of the Kent County Prothonotary Office, including
- **Rebecca Calvello, Judicial Case Manager II**
- **Elizabeth Feliciano, Judicial Case Manager II**
- **Carol Gondeck, Judicial Case Manager II**
- **Kristin Hargett, Judicial Case Manager II**
- **Donna Price, Judicial Case Manager II**
- **Pamela Quail-Brummel, Senior Paralegal**
- **Melissa Ridley, Judicial Case Manager II**

During 2014, the number of vacant positions in the Criminal Division of the Kent County Prothonotary Office was at an all-time high. This dedicated group of employees made sure that Division operations continued to be handled in a professional, courteous, and timely manner by taking on extra duties in addition to their regular work.

Alkire (AJ) Doxie, Telecommunications/Network Technician III, Administrative Office of the Courts, Judicial Information Center. Mr. Doxie was recognized for providing outstanding information technology support to AOC and courts' staff. He is thorough, gets things done right the first time, and his positive personality helps him work well with his customers.



Many thanks to the Presiding Judges, Court Administrators and others in the Courts, and the Administrative Office of the Courts for their efforts in preparing this annual report.

http://courts.delaware.gov (Delaware Judiciary)

http://courts.delaware.gov/AOC/AnnualReports/FY15 (2015 Annual Report, Statistical Report of the Delaware Judiciary and additional Delaware Courts background information)