

# SUPREME COURT



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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.

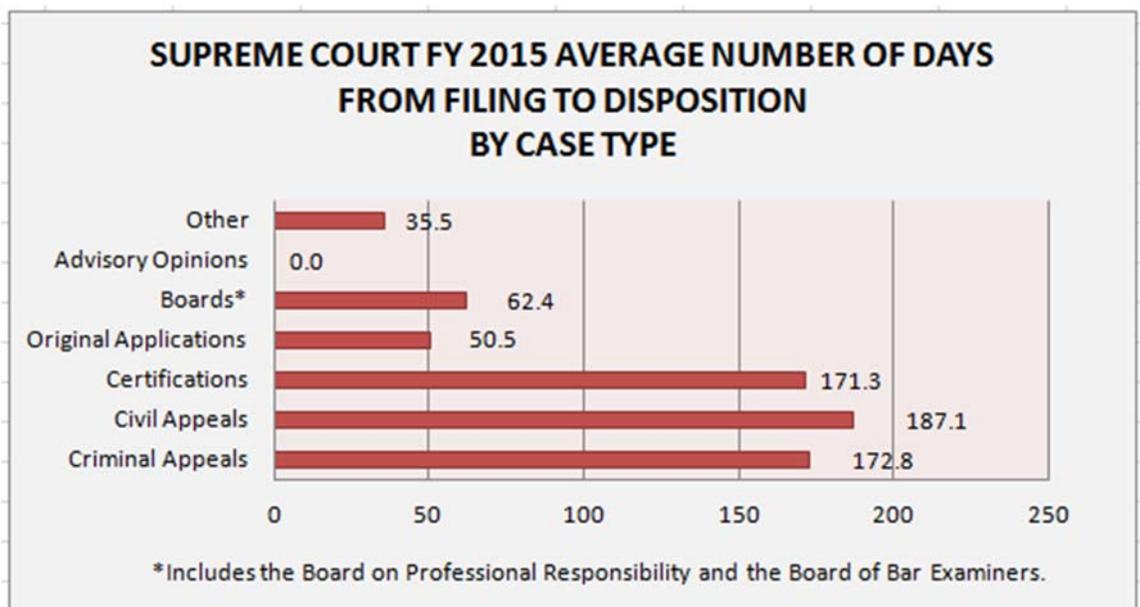
Governor Markell quickly announced his choice of Collins J. Seitz, Jr., an outstanding Delaware business litigator and a founding partner of Seitz Ross Aronstam & Moritz, LLP, to fill the vacancy created by Justice Ridgely’s retirement. His appointment was promptly confirmed by the State Senate and Justice 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-

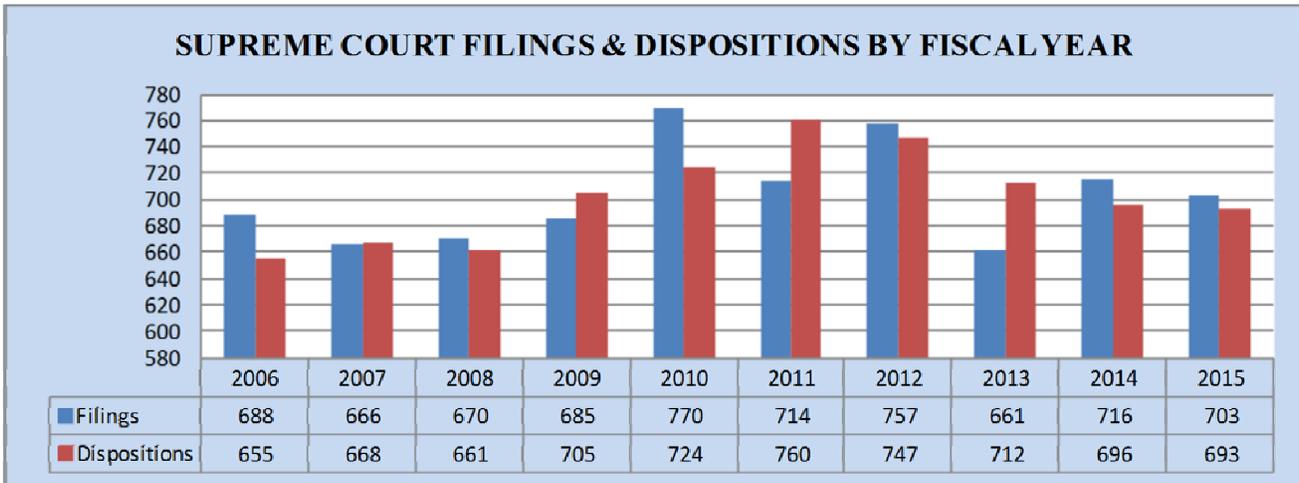
standing tradition. This was due in large measure to the assistance of many hard-working trial judges who graciously and willingly served on many Supreme Court panels. Their contributions were instrumental in ensuring that the Court’s high standards for the timely administration of justice were maintained 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.

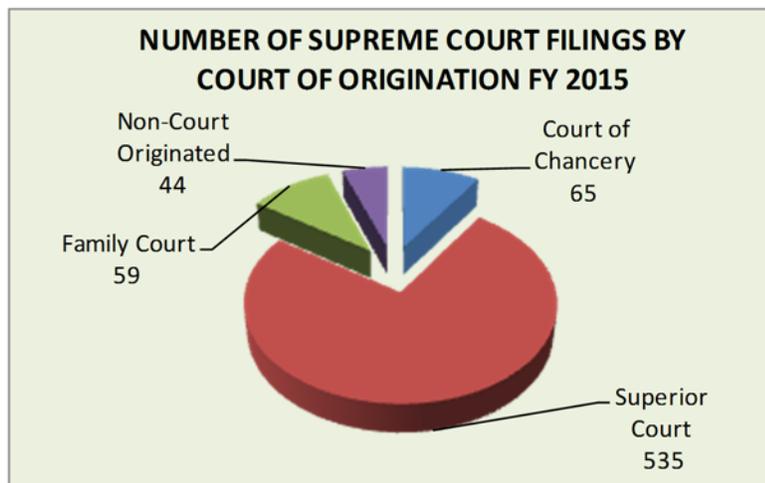
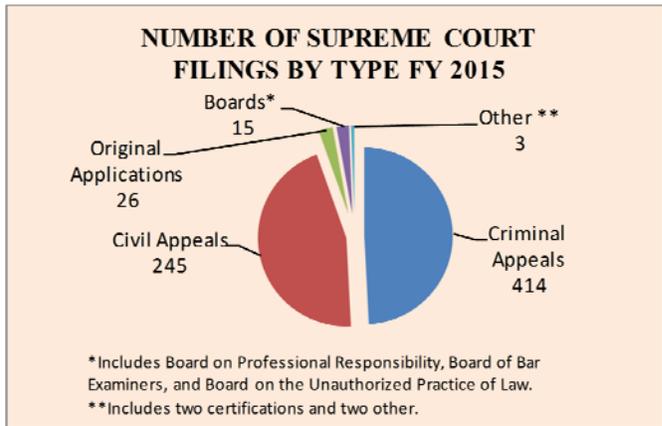
In Fiscal Year 2015, the Delaware Supreme Court received 703 appeals and disposed of 687 of them by opinion, order or dismissal. The appeals were decided an average of 33.3 days from the date of submission to the date of final decision. In 96.4% of the appeals decided in Fiscal Year 2015 the Court met 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.



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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.