SUPREME COURT OF DELAWARE

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CHIEF JUSTICE

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ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE NO. 127

This 10th day of April, 2001,

IT APPEARS THAT:

(1) The Delaware Judiciary constantly seeks to fulfill its mission of providing a fair, efficient, effective and prompt forum for the resolution of both criminal and civil disputes among the citizens of our State.

(2) In furtherance of this mission, the courts must proactively manage their caseloads from date of filing to final disposition and beyond to ensure expedition and the interests of justice.

(3) Each court has its own case management practices and procedures which may vary from county to county. These practices and procedures do not have uniform data definitions, operating protocols, financial systems or methods of exchanging or sharing information. The era of developing separate systems for individual courts must cease because

such an approach is not cost efficient and does not promote courtwide uniformity.

(4) The unmet need of litigants and lawyers to file cases and documents electronically with the courts using a common system is apparent as is the unmet need for the courts to provide electronic access to case information to both participants and the public. There is a need to transfer case information from court to court efficiently without requiring multiple entry of the same information by more than one court. There is also the need for the electronic transfer of financial and bail information among courts to ensure public safety, to enforce court orders, and to increase the collection of restitution, fines and costs.

(5) The development of the most integrated state civil and criminal justice system in the country is one of the top priorities of the judicial branch of each jurisdiction. A workable system must include integrated financial management and performance measures and allow the courts to share data, coordinate operations, increase efficiency, allow for easy access by the public, take advantage of recent technological advances, and be able to communicate seamlessly with other portions of the civil and criminal justice system including the Department of Justice, Office of the Public Defender and the Department of Correction.

(6) A special committee of the Judicial Branch was assigned to explore the use of a commercial off the shelf (COTS) case management system for the judiciary. This committee unanimously concluded that there were several available systems that could meet the courts' operational requirements with a minimal level of modification. The committee recommended to the Technology Policy Committee of the Executive Committee of the Judicial Conference that the COTS initiative be pursued. The Executive Committee of the Judicial Conference and the Delaware Supreme Court have endorsed this recommendation.

(7) The courts must adopt uniform case management systems to enable a COTS product to be successfully implemented statewide. A minimum 85% of the COTS system must be installed without modification. The remaining 15% of the COTS system will be available for modification to meet the requirements of the Delaware courts.

(8) It is desirable to form a Uniform Case Processes (hereinafter UCP) Committee to develop uniform courtwide operational practices and procedures for the Delaware court system. The Committee shall proceed under the direction of Carole B. Kirshner, Court Administrator of the Court of Common Pleas, as Chair and Cheryl Kingston, Information Systems Manager, Judicial Information Center, as Vice Chair.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS DIRECTED, with the unanimous approval of the members of the Supreme Court, pursuant to Delaware Constitution art. IV, § 13 (1) that:

(A) A Uniform Case Processes Committee is hereby established, consisting of one staff representative from each court and from the AOC as the Chief Justice shall determine from time to time. The Chair and Vice Chair of the committee shall be as follows:

Ms. Carole B. Kirshner, Chair
Ms. Cheryl Kingston, Vice Chair

(B) The UCP Committee will receive policy direction from the Technology Policy Committee of the Executive Committee of the Judicial Conference on issues concerning technology policy. The UCP Committee will receive policy direction from the Delivery of Criminal Justice Policy Committee on interagency "speedy trial" issues which impact not only the courts but also Executive Branch agencies and the Department of Justice or the Office of the Public Defender. The UCP Committee will report to and serve at the pleasure of the Chief Justice.

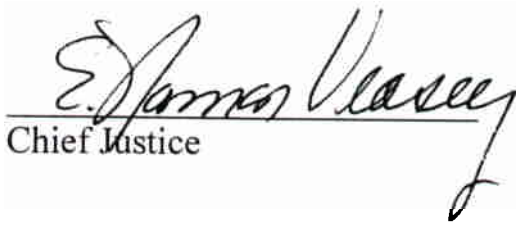
(C) The UCP Committee shall make recommendations to the Chief Justice concerning the development of statewide operational practices and procedures for the processing of both civil and criminal cases by all courts based on best practices and the requirements of the COTS system selected.

(D) The UCP Committee shall recommend a single COTS system to the Technology Policy Committee. The Technology Policy Committee shall recommend a COTS system for purchase by the courts to the Executive Committee of the Judicial Conference and to the Supreme Court.

(E) The UCP Committee shall develop a project plan, including oversight responsibilities, to implement the COTS system selected.

(F) The UCP Committee shall develop and implement a communications plan to keep all parties apprised of the Committee's progress.

(G) The Committee shall file an interim report by July 31, 2001 and a final report by December 31, 2001.



Chief Justice

cc: The Honorable Ruth Ann Minner
The Honorable Joseph T. Walsh
The Honorable Randy J. Holland
The Honorable Carolyn Berger
The Honorable Myron T. Steele
Members of the Judicial Conference
Dennis B. Jones
The Honorable M. Jane Brady
The Honorable Lawrence M. Sullivan
Court Administrators
Clerk of the Supreme Court