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DELAWARE JUDICIAL BRANCH EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR NAMED

Chief Justice Myron T. Steele of the Delaware Supreme Court has announced the selection of **Elizabeth Jonkiert**, the Employee of the Year for the Court of Common Pleas, as the overall Delaware Judicial Branch Employee of the Year for 2005.

Ms. Jonkiert received her award, including a plaque, savings bond, day off certificate and a personal gift, from the Chief Justice at the Court of Common Pleas Employee Recognition luncheon on May 12, 2006. She is a Management Analyst with the Court of Common Pleas and was selected for the outstanding contributions that she has made to the Court of Common Pleas and to the Judicial Branch as a whole. She has served in the Delaware Judiciary for almost 30 years and has become an expert in all aspects of criminal case flow, scheduling, calendaring, and statistics for the Court. In addition, she has served on numerous committees and is a respected resource for organizations throughout the criminal justice community.

Most recently, Ms. Jonkiert has been appointed as the lead representative of the Court of Common Pleas to the COTS project, which is the new integrated civil, criminal and financial case management system under development by the Judicial Branch.

Ms. Jonkiert is a native Delawarean and a resident of New Castle County. She was nominated by her colleagues in the Court of Common Pleas who noted her dedication, quality of her work, long hours spent at the job, and her willingness to go the extra mile quietly and without fanfare.

Other nominees were:

- **Shawn E. Lavallee** - Superior Court's Employee of the Year. Mr. Lavallee is a case

processing supervisor in the New Castle County Prothonotary's Office. His nominator praised his outstanding initiative and ability to foster excellent work from those he supervises.

- **Ronald W. Mattox** - Family Court's Employee of the Year. Mr. Mattox is a judicial assistant in the Family Court and was recognized for the manner in which he maintains security and courtroom coverage during staff shortages, as well as his professionalism and commitment to staff.

- **Dwight D. Dillard** - Justice of the Peace Court's Employee of the Year. Mr. Dillard, who is a judicial case processor at JP Court 7, was nominated for his professionalism, remarkable people skills and "can do" attitude.

- **Sarah Lubin** - Administrative Office of the Courts Employee of the Year. Ms. Lubin, Operations Policy Coordinator for the AOC, was recognized for her initiative and tremendous dedication to providing quality support services.

Each of these employees were recognized at their Courts' Employee Recognition luncheons.



Elizabeth Jonkiert receiving the Judicial Branch Employee of the Year Award from Chief Justice Steele.

DELAWARE'S COURT SYSTEM RANKED #1 FOR THE FIFTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

“. . .The Delaware Judiciary is committed to providing first class legal services to our individual and corporate citizens.”

Chief Justice Myron T. Steele

For the fifth year in a row, Delaware ranked as the number one court system overall in the 2006 Harris Poll State Liability Systems Ranking Study by the United States Chamber of Commerce Institute for Legal Reform. The study measured twelve key elements of state liability systems to determine that Delaware's legal system, again this year, does the best job in the nation in creating a fair and reasonable litigation environment. Delaware ranked number one in nine of the key elements: overall treatment of tort and contract litigation, class action and mass consolidation suits, punitive damages, timeliness of summary judgment or dismissal, discovery, scientific and technical evidence, non-economic damages, and judges' impartiality and competence. It ranked second in venue requirements and in the top five in the remaining categories pertaining to juries' predictability and fairness.

Chief Justice Myron T. Steele expressed his appreciation to the participants in the United States Chamber of Commerce survey for their support of and trust in the Delaware Judiciary.

He stated:

The Delaware Judiciary works together to ensure the fairness and efficiencies of the court process for all who litigate in Delaware's courts. I would like to commend my colleagues and the court staff whose hard work resulted in this recognition, which focuses on the efforts of **Delaware's Superior Court**, the premiere court of general jurisdiction in the country. The Delaware Judiciary is committed to providing first class legal services to our individual and corporate citizens.

ART IN THE NEW CASTLE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The New Castle County Courthouse, over the past few years, has had numerous sophisticated paintings, sculptures and works of art added to its walls. The efforts of the NCCCH Art Committee have made it possible for courthouse employees and the public to enjoy the art of nationally and internationally recognized artists on a daily basis.

The latest piece arrived on November 4, 2005, in the lobby of the courthouse. Named **"Floating Form"**, it is the work of Robert Goodnough, a well known painter and sculptor, who lives and works in the New York City area. His work is represented in the Museum of Modern Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City and in numerous museums across the country, including the Delaware Art Museum. Mr. Goodnough has been named by Time Magazine as one of the 100 best artists in America.



"Floating Forms" consists of three large panels, each of brightly colored metal shapes. "My intention here," said the artist "was to create a work that will uplift the spirit of those who see it."

The NCCCH Art Committee continues its efforts to make the New Castle County Courthouse an extraordinary place to work. Currently three more impressive pieces of art work are planned for the courthouse, with one planned for installation this summer.

For further information, contact Sarah.Lubin@state.de.us.

DELAWARE STATE COURT JUDGES NAMED AMONG THE 500 LEADING ATTORNEYS AND JUDGES NATIONWIDE

Three Delaware judges—Myron T. Steele, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Delaware; William B. Chandler, III, Chancellor of the Court of Chancery; and Leo E. Strine, Jr., Vice-Chancellor of the Court of Chancery—were named among the 500 leading lawyers in America. Lawdragon, an industry publication, published its list of the 500 leading lawyers in America based on 15,000 nominations from more than 1.1 million lawyers in this country.

These three judges, along with Jack B. Jacobs, Justice of the Supreme Court of Delaware, were also named among the 500 leading judges in America, in Lawdragon's first guide to the nation's 500 leading public and private judges, published earlier this year. The 500 leading judges in America were selected based on thousands of lawyer nominations and significant contributions to the legal community, from the more than 30,000 federal and state judges, plus the estimated 20,000 retired judges, arbitrators and mediators nationwide.

Other Delaware based judges on the 500 leading judges list included Thomas L. Ambro, 3rd United States Circuit Court of Appeals; Sue L. Robinson, United States District Court; and Peter J. Walsh, United States Bankruptcy Court.

NOT PICTURED: Chancellor William B. Chandler, III and Justice Jack B. Jacobs

Governor Ruth Ann Minner stated that: "These rankings demonstrate, once again, that the excellence of the Delaware Judiciary is recognized on the national level. We, in Delaware, are extremely proud of our outstanding bench, including these esteemed judges, and we are committed to ensuring that Delaware Courts remain the best in the nation."

Helen Winslow, president of the Delaware State Bar Association, noted that: "As Delaware's courts are ranked top in the country, and Delaware corporate law is admired throughout the world, it is no surprise that Delaware judges would have significant representation on the lists of top judges and attorneys in the nation. Chief Justice Steele, Justice Jacobs, Chancellor Chandler, and Vice Chancellor Strine have all played important roles in Delaware's judicial success."



Chief Justice Myron T. Steele

Vice Chancellor
Leo E. Strine, Jr.

For further information, contact Patricia.Griffin@state.de.us.

WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT THE JUDICIAL BRANCH'S BUDGET REQUEST FOR NEXT YEAR?

- The Judiciary's commitment to addressing "mission critical" needs only and fiscal accountability
- Unified budget process within the Judiciary
- "No frills, no fluff" budget request
- Requests the SMALLEST increase in "new" growth in recent years
- Focuses on the quality of legal services delivered to the indigent in criminal cases

- Priorities include resources for providing appropriate and safe facilities for the public, the prompt and efficient resolution of disputes, and administrative support to further the delivery of justice
- Requests resources needed to maintain Delaware Judiciary's preeminence



JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

This year, Delaware's Justice of the Peace Court celebrates its 40th anniversary as a state court. Until 1966, Justices of the Peace operated, for the most part, independently, without state oversight, with their salaries based on the fines they collected. In 1966, legislation was enacted which brought the Justice of the Peace Court under the umbrella of the State Judiciary.

The initiative for incorporating the Justices of the Peace into the state judicial system came from persons concerned with the fairness of the process, including the Delaware State Bar Association and civic-minded groups. Persons who were instrumental in implementing the change included the newly-elected Governor Charles L. Terry, Jr.; Joseph Walsh (who went on to become a Supreme Court Justice); and members of the legislature.

Representative Vincent Bifferato (who later became a Superior Court Judge) sponsored the legislation to make the Justice of the Peace Court a state court.

Over the summer, Chief Magistrate Alan G. Davis will be gathering historical information about the Justice of the Peace Court which he hopes to have available to the public, both in printed form and on the Justice of the Peace Court's website, in late fall. Judge Davis asks that all who would like to share pictures, stories, statistics, or other information of historical interest, contact his assistant Jamie Parkhurst. Judge Davis' Sussex County Office is at 5 East Pine Street, Georgetown, DE 19947. Telephone is (302) 856-5871; fax number is (302) 856-5919.

METHOD FOR ALLOCATING CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESOURCES PROPOSED BY RESOURCE ALLOCATION COMMITTEE

A report to the General Assembly issued March 15, 2006 by the Delaware Criminal Justice Resource Allocation Committee proposed a formula for allocating criminal justice resources among the courts, the Department of Justice, the Office of the Public Defender, and conflict counsel. The formula identifies the numbers of judges, court staff, deputy attorneys general, deputy public defenders, and conflict counsel needed for each 100 criminal court filings (in the Superior Court, Court of Common Pleas, Family Court, or Justice of the Peace Court). The Resource Allocation Committee was formed and the Report issued pursuant to the FY 2006 Budget Act. The Committee was chaired by Justice Henry duPont Ridgely of the Delaware Supreme Court and included members from each of the affected constituencies.

In addition to developing the allocation formula, the Committee made several related recommendations. First, the Committee recommended that the evaluation of resource needs be a continuing process and that the

standards used in the report be updated every three years. Second, the Committee recommended conducting a weighted caseload study to provide a more accurate foundation for the development of resource allocation needs, since such a study would translate the number of cases into a workload figure.

Finally, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly consider using a Criminal Justice Impact Statement for all future proposed criminal justice legislation in order to determine the impact of legislation on the system as a whole, much as is currently done with regard to the need for bed space in the Department of Correction. Such legislation would include bills creating new crimes, changing penalties, or other changes which may impact criminal justice constituencies. This would enable the General Assembly to consider the resource costs of proposed legislation to the entire system and to identify the constituencies which would require additional resources to implement the legislation.

For further information, contact Chris.Sudell@state.de.us.

eFiling

The Delaware judicial and legal communities have led the nation in the use of technology to improve the management of litigation. In particular, the Delaware Superior Court and the Court of Chancery have effectively used electronic filing and service for many years.

“We have seen significant efficiencies and paper saved since the eFiling of appeals started in the Supreme Court last October. . . .”

Justice Henry duPont Ridgely

Most recently, the Supreme Court became the first appellate court in the nation to require eFiling (using the LexisNexis File and Serve System) in October 2005. Starting June 1, 2006, the Supreme Court expanded its eFiling initiative to all new civil appeals from the Court of Chancery and Superior Court. This is the second phase of the Court’s implementation of the eFiling project. The first phase consisted of those civil appeals from the Court of Chancery and the Superior Court which were previously eFiled in those courts. The next phase of the project will be the eFiling of all criminal appeals from Superior Court to be followed by appeals from the

Family Court.

Consistent with the goal to use eFiling to reduce dependency on “paper” documents, Supreme Court Rule 10.2 has been amended recently to reduce the types of documents for which participants must provide courtesy copies to the Court.

Justice Henry duPont Ridgely, Chair of the Supreme Court’s eFiling Committee, commented on the expansion of the eFiling initiative and limitation on the filing of courtesy copies: “We have seen significant efficiencies and paper saved since the eFiling of appeals started in the Supreme Court last October. Thousands of pages in Supreme Court appeals have been filed electronically and even more have been efficiently served by the parties. With the benefit of our experience from Phase I, we are ready to expand and are looking forward to even greater benefits for the Court, lawyers and their staff, parties and the public.”

For further information, contact Steve.Taylor@state.de.us.

DELAWARE COURT INTERPRETERS PROGRAM CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

The Delaware Court Interpreters Program celebrated 10 years of service to the public and the Delaware Judiciary in April 2006. The program started in April 1996 as a result of the Delaware Supreme Court’s Racial and Ethnic Fairness Task Force Study (issued in October 1996). The Task Force identified a need for interpreters in the Delaware Courts to become certified through training and testing and for a list of qualified interpreters to be maintained by the Administrative Office of the Courts. Delaware joined the Consortium of State Court Interpreter Certification that year and began the process of recruiting, training and testing of all interpreters who practice in the Delaware Courts.

The Consortium was founded in 1995 for the purpose of assisting state courts in developing interpreter certification programs and is a project of the National Center for State Courts, in Williamsburg, Virginia. Today 35 states are members of the Consortium, and Delaware’s Court Interpreter Program Manager, Franny Haney, serves as the Chair of the Consortium for a second consecutive year.

The Delaware program annually conducts orientation and a skills building workshop for prospective interpreters in addition to testing in a variety of languages. Currently there are 12 Spanish interpreters and one Russian interpreter who have achieved the highest level of certification (Consortium certified). There are also 16 Spanish interpreters, one Haitian Creole and two Russian interpreters who have achieved the second level of certification (Delaware certified). The Delaware Certified Interpreters are only certified to interpret in Delaware. There are interpreters eligible to interpret in Delaware Courts but who are uncertified (have completed orientation but either have not successfully completed the certification process or interpret in a language for which there is currently no testing or certification available). Those interpreters provide services in the following languages: Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Danish, French, Haitian Creole, German, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Farsi, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, as well as interpreters for the deaf.

Continued on next page

The Delaware program has an Advisory Board which sets policy for the program. Judge Aida Wasserstein of Family Court is the chair of the Advisory Board and members consist of Judge Calvin Scott of Superior Court, Chief Judge Alex J. Smalls of the Court of Common Pleas, Judge Robert C. Lopez and Judge Jana Mollohan of the Justice of the Peace Court, and Maria Perez

Chambers, a Consortium Certified Interpreter in Delaware. Franny Haney of the Administrative Office of the Courts serves as staff to the Advisory Board.

The Delaware Court Program is proud of its success to date and looks forward to expanding the program, as well as increasing the number of certified interpreters, in the years to come.

For further information, contact Franny.Haney@state.de.us.

FOCUSING ON COURT SECURITY AND SAFETY AS A PRIORITY

Comprehensive security plans and programs for courts help ensure an atmosphere of relative comfort and safety in which to conduct judicial business. In addition to court security personnel and Department of Corrections and Capitol Police officers, who are responsible for overall court security in the courthouses, everyone involved in the court's business, including judges, staff, attorneys, litigants, and the general public, play a role. It is through cooperation, alertness to potential dangers, and knowledge of the security plan, that security can be fostered. Security plans include operational aspects (covering perimeter, facility, and internal security measures), plus coordinated responses to security incidents and threats.

Unless on-going efforts focus on security as a priority, awareness can fade with the passage of time and changes in personnel. Delaware's efforts to address court security have been ongoing, with the Court Security Task Force, jointly chaired by Superior Court Judge William C. Carpenter, Jr. and former Secretaries of the then Department of Public Safety, serving as an important initiative. The Task Force issued its Report on April 30, 2001. Subsequent to the Report, in 2005, the Judicial Branch reached out to the U.S. Marshals' Service and requested assistance in reviewing security in the Delaware state courts. The U.S. Marshal has completed a number of reviews, including the New Castle County Courthouse, the Supreme Court (Dover), the Chancery Court (Georgetown), and the Justice of the Peace Court (Georgetown), and is in the process of performing others.

Efforts to implement the U.S. Marshal recommendations are underway, with the New Castle County

Courthouse (NCCCH), for example, focusing on installing the latest security technology (new mail screening equipment) and implementing policy recommendations, such as prohibiting cell phones in the NCCCH, restructuring access to detentioners' holding cells, and enhanced screening of mail.

However, increased security comes at a "cost." Security enhancements may impact the speed and ease with which court users conduct their business in the courthouse. With over 1,033,543 persons being screened and 2,441 arrests by the Capitol Police at the NCCCH in 2005, the potential for delays in screening and the overall impact of security is understandable.

Security is everyone's business. Any occurrence that is suspicious in nature should be brought to the attention of a security officer in the courthouse immediately.

In the upcoming months, NCCCH employees will be introduced to the newly approved fire/safety evacuation plan. Training on the plan for NCCCH court personnel is scheduled to begin in June 2006. Jim Wright, Deputy State Court Administrator (AOC), has been appointed as the NCCCH Fire/Safety Director and Lt. Lee Clough, from Capitol Police and Ed Pollard, Court Administrator (Court of Chancery) serve as Deputy Fire Safety Directors. Testing of the new fire safety plan and fire alarm evacuations will occur during 2006 and several times a year after that.

Other safety-related projects being worked on by the Administrative Office of the Courts include the development of continuity of operations plans, management of issues related to possible pandemic influenza outbreaks, and the offer of assistance to all courts in development of security plans and programs.

For further information, contact James.Wright@state.de.us.



NEW CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR THE JUDICIAL BRANCH IS UNDER DEVELOPMENT

Anyone spending much time in the Delaware courts these days has probably heard the word “COTS” used frequently. So what is all of this “COTS” talk and why is everyone in the court system excited about it? COTS is a Judicial Branch-wide effort to create a new computerized civil, criminal and financial case management system for all of the State courts. The system, which is currently under development, will interface with the computer systems used by many of the courts’ justice partner agencies, such as the police and Department of Correction, and will provide better public and web access opportunities as well as e-filing of civil cases in all courts. (The system originates from a Commercial off-the-Shelf product – hence the initial origin of the acronym COTS, which now stands for Courts Organized to Serve.) When completed, it is anticipated that this new system will provide significant improvements in case processing and will introduce greater uniformity in processes among the courts. These changes will make it easier for the courts to do business and for the public and the courts’ justice partners to do business with the courts.

Because COTS is such a large undertaking, the new system will be implemented in several phases. The first phase will be the introduction of the civil case management system in the Justice of the Peace Court in Sussex County (J.P. Courts 17 and 19) and in New Castle County

(J.P. Court 12) this fall, with full implementation in the Justice of the Peace Court statewide in the spring of 2007. Statewide implementation of civil case management in all courts (other than the Family Court) is planned for the summer of 2008. Full implementation of the entire system, including civil and criminal case management and management reporting, is expected for the spring of 2010.

In the meantime, committees comprised of court staff, representatives of the courts’ justice system partner agencies, as well as representatives of the system’s vendor, Affiliated Computer Services, Inc. (ACS), are busy working on planning for all phases of the development of the COTS system. An important aspect of this planning is developing a “train the trainer” approach to ensure that all court employees who will use the COTS system are confident in their knowledge of and ability to use the new system prior to its actual implementation in their court.

Although much work on the COTS system remains, substantial progress has been made to date and with the continued commitment and support of the many participants, the Judicial Branch anticipates that the new system will help improve the quality of justice in Delaware and will better serve the public.

For further information, contact Carole.Kirshner@state.de.us.

CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE NAMED TO FEDERAL JUDICIAL COMMITTEE

United States Chief Justice John Roberts recently appointed Delaware Chief Justice Myron T. Steele to serve on the Federal Judicial Conference Committee on Federal-State Jurisdiction. “I am confident that your contributions will be many. Your willingness to serve over and above the performance of your regular judicial duties demonstrates your commitment to effective judicial administration, for which I am grateful,” said Chief Justice Roberts in his letter of appointment.

The Committee, which has 15 members, including eleven federal judges and four state Supreme Court justices, generally meets in January and June of each year. It has responsibility for reviewing legislation and other pro-

posals that could affect federal court jurisdiction. It may also initiate action and recommend statutory changes concerning federal jurisdiction to the Federal Judicial Conference. These recommendations may ultimately be included in the Federal Courts Improvement Act. In addition, the Committee serves as a conduit for communication on matters of mutual concern between the federal judiciary and state courts.

Chief Justice Steele’s appointment, which will last until October 1, 2007, will enable him to bring a state, and more specifically, Delaware, perspective to the federal-state issues under consideration.

JUDICIAL BRANCH AND GOVERNMENT INFORMATION CENTER COLLABORATE ON E-GOVERNMENT PROJECTS TO SERVE THE PUBLIC

Recently, representatives of the Judicial Branch and the Government Information Center have been meeting to discuss possible e-Government projects to help better serve the public. The first project under consideration is providing the capacity to research existing trade names for businesses online. Under Delaware law, any person, firm, or association that does business in the State must register its trade name with the Prothonotary of each county in which it does business (if the trade name does not disclose the actual names of the persons operating the business).

Currently, each Prothonotary maintains a written docket of such trade names. Anyone wishing to obtain information concerning existing trade names or the ownership of businesses operating under a trade name must conduct a manual search of the docket in the Prothonotary's Office. The new trade name initiative will permit online searching, providing a substantial time savings for those seeking this information. The project may also be extended to provide for online filing of trade name applications.

In addition, a number of other potential joint e-Government initiatives are under consideration. These could include such projects as placing older Delaware Supreme Court opinions and orders online, web broadcasting of Supreme Court oral arguments, online filing of lawyer registrations, and online applications such as guardianship forms, name change filings or notary applications. The projects under consideration are functions that are not related to specific court cases, and therefore, are not included in the new case management system (known as "COTS") currently under development for the Judicial Branch. These e-Government initiatives and the Judicial Branch's partnership with the Government Information Center can strengthen connections between the public and Judicial Branch services.

The Government Information Center is part of the Delaware Department of State and is charged with improving citizens' access to State government through assisting State agencies in providing web-based information and access.

For further information, contact Robert.Denton@state.de.us.

DELAWARE CO-SPONSORS EASTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR THE SELF-REPRESENTED

On May 10 through May 12, 2006, the Delaware Judiciary co-sponsored an Eastern Regional Conference on "Access to Justice for the Self-Represented: Court and Community-Based Strategies and Solutions" at the New York State Judicial Institute in White Plains, New York. Representatives from 21 states reaching as far as Alaska as well as from Canada attended.

As the number of self-represented litigants continues to increase, courts nationally are developing innovative programs through partnerships between the courts, the bar, and community groups to support and assist self-represented litigants. These programs provide various forms of assistance such as self-help centers, training programs for judges and court staff, informational web pages, and customer-friendly electronic filing. By providing a forum for sharing information on serving self-represented litigants, the conference sought to help jurisdictions learn from each others' ideas and experiences.

The representatives from Delaware serving as workshop panelists were: Michael W. Arrington, Esquire, of Parkowski, Guerke, Swayze, P.A. and Chair of the Delaware State Bar Association *Pro Se* Litigation Assistance Committee; Jody J. Huber, Esquire, Family Court Director of *Pro Se* Services; Thomas V. McDonough, Esquire, of Delaware Volunteer Legal Services, Inc.; and Julie S. Pezzner, Esquire, Administrative Office of the Courts, Manager of *Pro Se* Services.

The conference resulted from plans developed through the National Summit on the Future of Self-Represented Litigation held in Chicago, Illinois in March 2005. In addition to the Delaware Judiciary, sponsors included the New York State Unified Court System, the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, the Maryland Judiciary, the Legal Services Corporation, and the American Judicature Society.

For further information, contact Julie.Pezzner@state.de.us.

MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION PROVIDES IMPORTANT LESSONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Delaware's annual mock trial competition provides high school students with a chance to learn more about the justice system, as well as to develop a number of important life-time skills. The program, which is co-sponsored by the Delaware Judiciary and the Delaware Law Related Education Center, with funding from the DuPont Company and the Delaware State Bar Association, also selects one team as the winner who will compete in national competition.

What goes into preparing a high school team to excel in this arena? According to Chief Prosecutor for New Castle County, Paul Wallace, who (along with head coach Michael Clarke of the DuPont Company and faculty advisor Robin Lober) coached the Charter School of Wilmington team, this year's state winner, there is a lot of hard work involved. His team devoted many hours after school and on weekends to such tasks as reviewing the facts of the case, learning about the rules of evidence, and

through experience in standing up in front of a group and arguing persuasively. Members of the Charter School of Wilmington team were: seniors Shaun Kelly, Deji Ogunnaike, and Dasha Galperin; junior Eddie Kearns; sophomores Ben Wallace and Ian Burn; and freshmen Helen Tang and Michelle Barineau.

The Charter School team was selected over the other finalist, Alexis I. DuPont High School, as the best of the 24 Delaware teams participating in the mock trials held in the New Castle County Courthouse in February, to represent the state in the National High School Mock Trial Championship in Oklahoma City May 11-14, 2006. Although the team did not win the national competition, they did receive several awards for best lawyer and best witness in various rounds. They returned home with a true zeal for the competition and look forward to competing in future state and, hopefully, national competitions.



Justice Carolyn Berger, Justice Henry duPont Ridgely and Superior Court Judge Joseph R. Slights, III, are pictured with the members of the Charter School of Wilmington, the 2006 Delaware Mock Trial Champions.

Left to right: Dasha Galperin, Eddie Kearns, Helen Tang, Ben Wallace, Justice Berger, Justice Ridgely, Judge Slights, Michelle Barineau, Shaun Kelly, Deji Ogunnaike, Ian Burn.

discussing ethical concerns. All of this, according to Mr. Wallace, amounted to an incredible civics lesson for team members. In addition, Mr. Wallace, whose son, Ben, was one of the team members, praised the overall experience as being extremely beneficial to all participating students whether or not they have a specific interest in the law as a future profession. Mr. Wallace noted that participation teaches students analytical skills by requiring them to break down a problem into its parts and apply the appropriate rules. In addition, they learn presentation skills

Should they reach the nationals in 2008, they will not have to travel far. Delaware has won the bid to host the 2008 National Mock Trial Championship in the New Castle County Courthouse. It is anticipated that 1,000 students, families, and teachers will attend that competition.

For further information, contact Franny.Haney@state.de.us.

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS TRAFFIC COURT SIMPLIFIES THE HANDLING OF MINOR MOTOR VEHICLE OFFENSES

The Court of Common Pleas' "Traffic Court" initiative in New Castle County is saving time for members of the public and is expediting the disposition of motor vehicle cases. Under the new procedure, arraignment and trial are held on the same day so that a person contesting a minor traffic charge now need appear only once in the Court of Common Pleas.

Before the implementation of Traffic Court, persons who transferred their cases from the Justice of the Peace Court to the Court of Common Pleas had to appear for arraignment and trial on different days. Now, arraignments and pleas are handled every Tues-

day during the morning session and trials of litigants whose cases are not resolved by a plea are held during the afternoon session. Notices to defendants advise them to come prepared for both arraignment and trial and to bring all necessary witnesses and documents with them in the event their case goes to trial to ensure that they are ready to proceed that day.

Traffic Court has been well received by the public, the Department of Justice, the Public Defenders, and court staff as it saves time and reduces delays in scheduling.

For further information, contact Carole Kirshner@state.de.us.

SUPREME COURT HONORS "ARMS OF THE COURT" VOLUNTEERS

On June 6, 2006, the Delaware Supreme Court hosted a dinner at the Wilmington Club to honor the 135 volunteers who serve on the Arms of the Court, providing regulations of the Delaware State Bar. The Arms of Court include the Board of Bar Examiners, the Commission on Continuing Legal Education, the Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection, the Board on the Unauthorized Practice of Law, the Board on Professional Responsibility, and the Preliminary Review Committee of the Board on Professional Responsibility. All five members of the Supreme Court, Chief Justice Myron T. Steele, Justice Randy J. Holland, Justice Carolyn Berger, Justice Jack B. Jacobs and Justice Henry duPont Ridgely, attended this important event.

At the dinner, Justice Carolyn Berger presented the Andrew D. Christie *Pro Bono Publico* Award to Kevin F. Brady, in appreciation of his outstanding *pro bono publico* service to the Delaware Supreme Court in furtherance of the administration of justice. The Court also honored lawyers appointed, on a *pro bono* basis, and receivers in Board on Professional Responsibility cases for their service to the public.

"I'm really pleased that Kevin was selected to receive this very prestigious award. He has worked tirelessly to improve the Delaware legal community through activities such as founding the Rodney Inn of Court, serving on the Board of Directors of the Community Legal Aid Society, Inc. and Chairing the Board of Bar Examiners of the Delaware Supreme Court. The Andrew D. Christie Pro Bono Publico Award is not given out every year. It is only awarded to those who are truly deserving. Kevin is one of those few."

Justice Carolyn Berger

For further information, contact Steve.Taylor@state.de.us.

FAMILY COURT'S COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE PROGRAM CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

"Having the presence of a CASA in a dependency/neglect case is invaluable. Not only is the information presented in the courtroom generally objective and reliable, but the CASA sometimes uncovers important facts not known by the Division of Family Services, including "lost" fathers and identifying potential relative placements. When a CASA is assigned to a case, there can be more pressure on a social worker to do a conscientious and thorough job. Maybe most important for the older children is that they become aware that they have their own advocate in the process and that the judge is eager to hear their comments and concerns. Sometimes when social workers and foster homes and schools change, the CASA is the one consistent adult in the child's life throughout the foster care process. I am so grateful for their dedication and commitment to our children."

Judge Barbara D. Crowell -
New Castle County

"I find that the CASA's benefit dependency/neglect proceedings in many different ways. It is significant to me that they often come from a different professional background than others in the courtroom and are unaffected by some of the biases which, at times, affect those who spend their careers in the foster care field. They are a refreshing presence in the courtroom."

Judge Peter B. Jones - Sussex
County

In April 1981, Family Court of the State of Delaware, in collaboration with the Junior League of Wilmington and the National Council of Jewish Women (Wilmington Chapter), started a pilot program in New Castle County to address the needs of Delaware's abused and neglected children who appeared in the Court unrepresented. The pilot program originally was called the "Guardian ad Litem" program, and 25 volunteers represented the abused, neglected and dependent children appearing before the Court. Today, the program not only represents the abused and neglected children but assists parents in private custody cases and now is called the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program or CASA. The CASA volunteers have a passion for working with children and the children's families. When determining whether to return a child back to his or her family or to move the child to foster care or an adoptive home, the Family Court Judges depend on the CASAs for gathering data and making recommendations.

Since Loretta Deshields became the Statewide Director of the CASA program in 2005, over 500 children have been served. There is a staff of 10 coordinators (five in New Castle County, two in Kent County, two in Sussex County, and one who divides her time in Kent and Sussex Counties), and one administrative assistant. In addition, there are six attorneys and 10 Family Court Judges who participate in the CASA program on a regular basis.

The program continues to grow with 30 new CASA Volunteers trained and sworn in since August 2005, and has increased diversity of its staff and volunteers, allowing it to maintain its prestig-

ious position in the membership of the National Court Appointed Special Advocates. This brings the total number of CASA volunteers to 200.

This year, CASA volunteer Thomas Duffy Sr. was the recipient of the Gannett Foundation's Jefferson Award. This award is presented annually to an individual who has made a remarkable positive difference in society.

"The CASA program is very important to Family Court and the work we do in child welfare. The CASA volunteer brings a different perspective as their only motive is the best interest of the child, uncolored by a personal desire for placement. As a Court, we owe a great debt to our CASA volunteers who give so unselfishly of their most valuable asset – their time."

Judge Kenneth M. Millman - Sussex County

"Too many of our foster care children lack a parent with both the willingness and the ability to properly address the multitude of issues facing their kids. The CASA fills this critical role by identifying the children's needs and becoming the advocate for the delivery of services needed to address those needs. The CASA fills the void created by the lack of a protective parent by providing the child with a trustworthy adult upon whom he or she may rely, an adult with neither personal agenda nor design other than what is best for the child."

Judge Robert B. Coonin – New Castle
County

For further information, contact Loretta.DeShields@state.de.us.

ENHANCING DELAWARE JUDICIARY'S INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION

Two members of the Delaware Judiciary, Chief Justice Myron T. Steele and Vice Chancellor Stephen P. Lamb, were part of a team from Delaware that traveled to Israel in May to meet with members of the Israeli legal community. The team, which also included representatives of the Delaware Secretary of State's Office and the Delaware State Bar Association, was organized by the Secretary of State's Office to further strengthen economic ties between Israel and Delaware. (Israel is currently one of Delaware's 15 top trading partners and thousands of Israeli-based businesses are incorporated in Delaware.) The objectives of the trip were to: 1) enhance understanding of Delaware corporate law and Court of Chancery practice; 2) aid in establishing a specialized court for corporate law in Israel, and 3) strengthen international bar relations.

Among the highlights of the trip was a Delaware Corporation Workshop, chaired by Supreme Court Chief Justice Myron T. Steele, and a conference focusing on establishing a specialized corporate law court hosted by the State of Delaware, the University of Pennsylvania Law School and Ono Academic College, an Israeli law school. The conference included an afternoon session devoted to Delaware corporate law and a moot court, with Vice Chancellor Lamb presiding, followed by panel discussions including Delaware Chief Justice Steele and Israeli Supreme Court Justice Aharon Barak.

A final highlight of the trip was the annual meeting of the Israeli Bar Association, at which Chief Justice Myron Steele and Delaware State Bar Association President Helen Winslow, Esquire, addressed members of the Israeli Bar and other international Bar leaders on strengthening bar relations internationally.

In another effort of the Delaware Judiciary to work with the Delaware Secretary of State's Office, Justice Jack B. Jacobs of the Delaware Supreme Court traveled as part of a Delaware Secretary of State's office team to The Hague in April. The Netherlands, which has expressed the goal of becoming the "Delaware" of the European Union with regard to corporate law matters, asked Delaware to provide information in this area at a conference sponsored by the Ministry of Economic Affairs. Justice Jacobs presented a paper on the role of specialized courts in corporate law issues at the conference, focusing, to a large degree, on the experience of Delaware's Court of Chancery.

We are pleased to present the inaugural issue of the *Delaware Docket*, the Newsletter of the Delaware Judiciary, which will be published semi-annually to provide updates on activities and events in the Judicial community. All are welcome to suggest topics, contribute articles for future editions, and provide suggestions on the newsletter.

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