

SUPREME COURT



CHIEF JUSTICE LEO E. STRINE, JR.



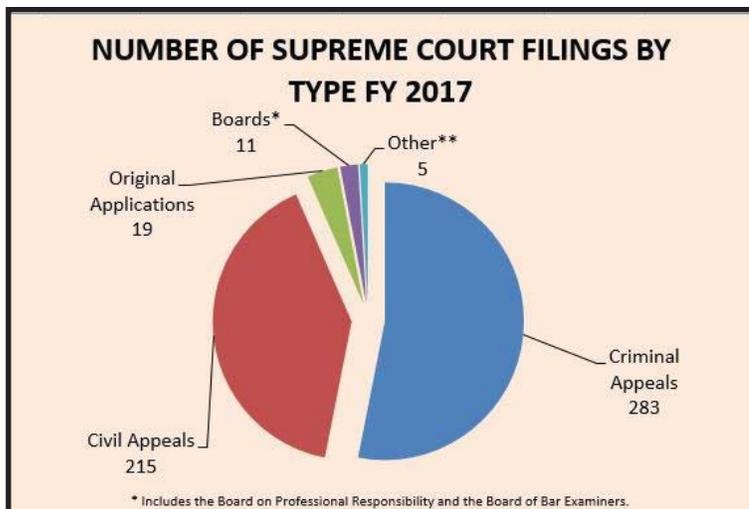
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This past summer, the Supreme Court warmly welcomed the Honorable Gary F. Traynor as its newest Justice when he was sworn in during a Special Session of the Court at Delaware Technical Community College's Owens Campus in Georgetown. Justice Traynor took the oath as his wife Kathleen Andrus and daughter Laura Johnson stood by his side.

Justice Traynor received his undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College, earned his law degree at the Delaware Law School of Widener University, and was admitted to

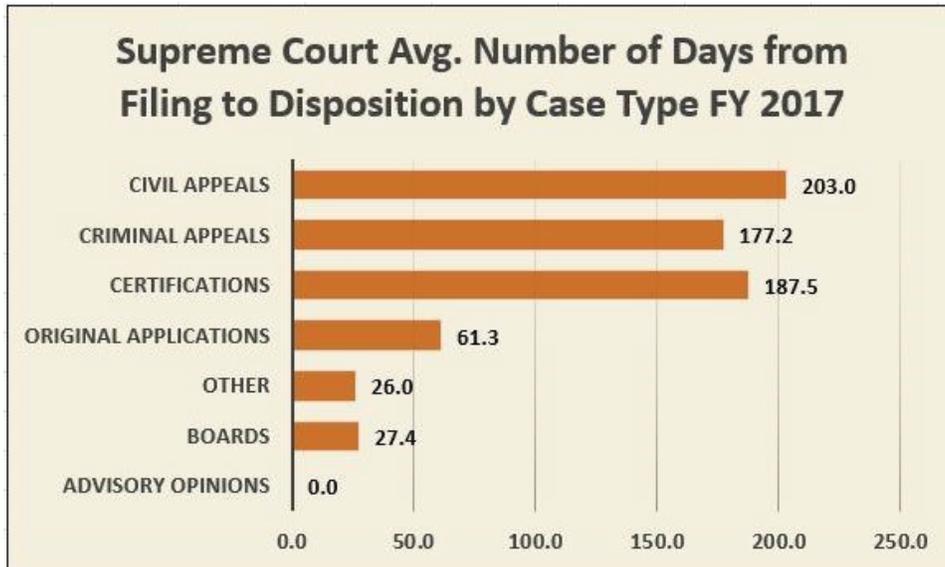
the Delaware Bar in 1982. From 1990 to 2014, Justice Traynor worked at Prickett, Jones and Elliott in Wilmington where he served as the firm's Managing Director from 2005 to 2007. While at the Prickett firm, Justice Traynor originally focused on general litigation including criminal defense, personal injury litigation, and domestic relations disputes. The focus of his law practice shifted in 2000 to complex corporate and commercial matters until 2014 when he left the firm to become an Assistant Public Defender in Sussex County representing indigent defendants accused of felony crimes.

Justice Traynor replaced the Honorable Randy J. Holland who retired from the bench on March 31, 2017. Upon his retirement, Justice Holland became the longest-serving Justice in the history of the Delaware Supreme Court. During his 30-year tenure, Justice Holland served the Court and the citizens of Delaware with great dedication



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and distinction, writing more than 700 reported opinions and several thousand case dispositive orders. He also wrote, co-authored or edited numerous books, and was an international leader in the Inns of Court movement. The Court will miss Justice Holland's keen legal mind, institutional memory and kind, compassionate demeanor and wishes him well in the new chapters of his life.

The Court's commitment to the timely disposition of the cases before it continued in Fiscal Year 2017. The Court received 533 new appeals and disposed of a total of 604 cases 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 98.1% of the appeals decided in FY 2017, 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 filing of a notice of appeal, exceeding this objective by disposing of 85.9% of all cases within the 290-day timeframe.

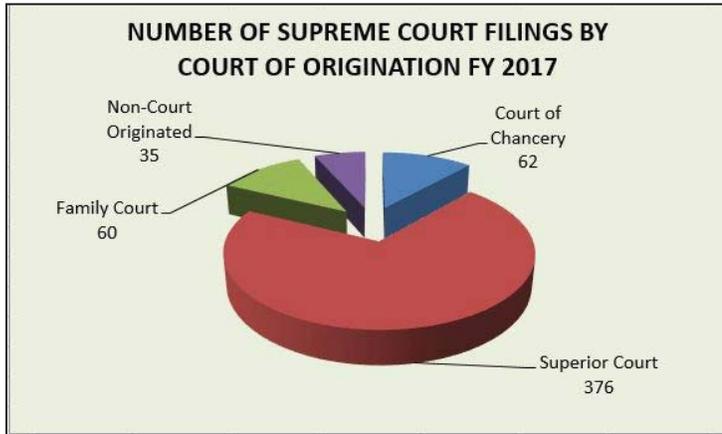
In 2017 the Supreme Court also made further strides in helping lawyers, litigants, and the public understand how the Court works and how to navigate the appeals process by adding several new features to its

website. The first was the electronic publication of "Case Scheduling Frequently Asked Questions." These ten informative FAQs are intended to demystify the process by which the court addresses its caseload. They provide clear explanations of a number of Court practices, including how the Court selects cases for oral argument, how the Court decides cases on the briefs, when the Court sits en banc, and how the Court approaches its workload and the calendaring of cases throughout the year.

Another new website feature called "Most Common Brief Deficiencies" is designed to help the Bar by facilitating the filing of briefs that are free of the most common mistakes that result in the need for a corrected filing. Recognizing that the correction of improperly filed briefs costs the Court, the attorneys, and the clients they serve, valuable time, effort and money—and increases stress and anxiety—the Court, its clerk staff, and staff attorneys compiled and posted a list of the most frequent reasons why deficiency notices are issued for briefs. This shorthand list is designed to support but not supplant the more detailed requirements for the filing of briefs that are found in the Supreme Court Rules.

Those with an interest in the history of the Delaware Judiciary will also appreciate the addition of the

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“Historical List of Supreme Court Justices—1951 to Present.” It provides a chronological list of the Court’s Chief Justices (with their biographical information and their official portrait or photograph) as well as a complete list of all the Court’s Justices. The link to this trove of information can be found on the “Judicial Officers” page on the Court’s website.

The Court relies heavily on a dedicated group of talented staff members to keep things running smoothly. Several staff accomplishments stood out this past year. In March, Chief Staff Attorney Gayle P. Lafferty was named Judicial Branch Employee of the Year for 2016. Gayle has worked for the Court for more than 20 years and supervises a small team of staff attorneys. In addition to her considerable daily duties, Gayle assists with and provides the necessary

leadership for any number of special projects, especially those that call on her substantial expertise in criminal law, professional ethics, and appellate practice. In recent years some of these have included working with a team on the development of the Supreme Court’s in-house intranet site, assisting the Superior Court in making changes to post-conviction procedures and working with the Criminal Justice Council of the Judiciary in the preparation of its Report on Delaware’s Problem Solving Courts.

The contributions of the Court’s staff also extend beyond Delaware’s boundaries and are recognized by their peers. This year, Margot R. Millar, the Executive Director of the Delaware Supreme Court’s Commission on Continuing Legal Education was named president of the national organization of officials in the legal CLE community, the Continuing Legal Education Regulators Association. Another valued employee, Patricia Bartley Schwartz, a staff attorney in the Office of Disciplinary Counsel, was elected to the board of directors of the National Organization of Bar Counsel and was selected to represent that organization at the annual meeting of the International Conference of Legal Regulators last fall. These affiliations are mutually beneficial as our employees share their knowledge with their national colleagues and learn about best practices of other states. ♦

SUPREME COURT FILINGS & DISPOSITIONS BY FISCAL YEAR



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Supreme Court Justices

Standing left to right:

Justice Collins J. Seitz, Jr.
Justice Karen L. Valihura
Chief Justice Leo E. Strine, Jr.
Justice James T. Vaughn, Jr.
Justice Gary F. Traynor