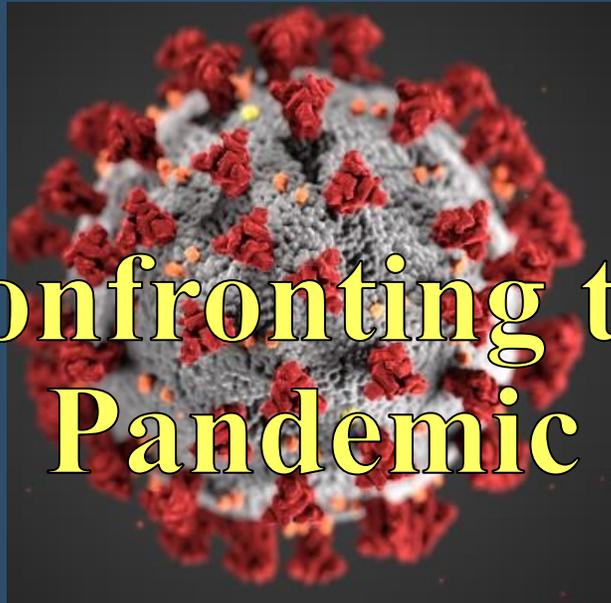
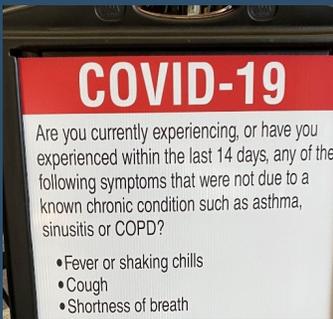
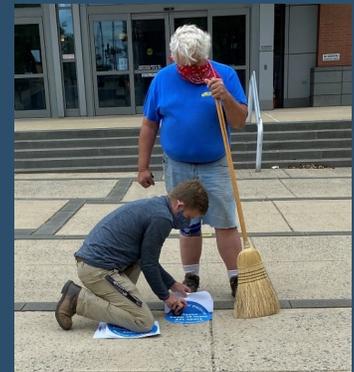


The Delaware Judiciary

Annual Report



Confronting the Pandemic



2020

On the cover:

On the Cover

On the top (left to right): A member of the cleaning staff at the Kent County Courthouse, a sign posted in Delaware courthouses encouraging mask use;

Center left: (top to bottom) a sign at the entrance of the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center (LLWJC), Chief Justice Collins J. Seitz, Jr.;

Center: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention image of the Novel Coronavirus — COVID-19;

Center right: (top to bottom) the jury box in Courtroom 7E in the LLWJC, crews installing social distancing markers outside LLWJC in July 2020;

On the bottom (left to right): the temperature check station at the entrance to the LLWJC, a member of the cleaning crew at the LLWJC.

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MESSAGE FROM THE STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

The 2020 Annual Report of the Delaware Judiciary

The year 2020 has been unlike any other. And despite the unexpected challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 also has been a year of tremendous achievement for the Delaware Courts. The declarations of national, state, and judicial emergencies, and the threat presented by the virus itself, fundamentally affected the normal operations of the Courts. Nonetheless, the Judicial Branch pulled together under the leadership of Chief Justice Seitz and the Presiding Judges of the trial courts to ensure that all of Delaware's Courts had the resources and support to continue providing essential services to the public and to continue making progress on important Judicial Branch initiatives. The key to the Courts' successful navigation of this storm has been the unwavering cooperation between the Courts, our employees, and our partners in the other branches of government.

You will see evidence of changes wrought by the pandemic reflected throughout this year's Annual Report, from our statistical information to the photographs of our judicial officers. What this Annual Report cannot adequately capture, however, is the tremendous effort of all the Judicial Branch employees who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to keep the wheels of justice turning. These unsung heroes include the court security and Capitol Police officers helping employees and the public navigate new safety protocols upon entering the court's facilities; the court clerks and case managers — so essential to the Courts' operations — who continued to report to work when so many other Delawareans were able to stay home per public health guidance; and the countless administrative support staff who resolved pandemic-related issues daily so that judicial officers could continue to focus on the Courts' core mission of resolving cases fairly and efficiently.

I particularly want to acknowledge and thank the AOC staff who, individually and collectively, leaned into the demands of this unprecedented situation. From procuring and distributing needed safety supplies and equipment, to obtaining COVID-related grant funding and CARES Act funding, to addressing novel legal issues, to keeping the public informed of the many changes in the Courts' operations, to ensuring employees were able to work and receive a paycheck, to paying the bills and meeting our obligations, the AOC staff—to a person—adapted quickly to working remotely and handled the increased workload without complaint. The continuity of our operations barely skipped a beat. They put in countless hours to ensure that all of the courts had the equipment, services and support they needed to keep operations running smoothly.

Although the AOC staff all deserve kudos, I particularly want to shine the spotlight on the staff of the Judicial Information Center and JIC Director, Ken Kelemen. They are the real heroes of the Courts' pandemic saga. Ken and the JIC staff were able to obtain needed equipment and licensing and to employ technology in innovative ways, which allowed many Court employees to transition quickly to working from home and allowed Court employees and judges within the Court facilities to hold essential in-person proceedings in a manner that minimized the risks of transmission of the virus to the participants. The Courts' successful operation in 2020 was owed in no small measure to the efforts and the support of JIC. I am grateful for Ken's steady leadership during this time and for his unparalleled work ethic.

If nothing else, 2020 has proven to us that the Delaware Courts can weather even the worst of storms. We are ready for whatever 2021 may bring.

Sincerely,



Gayle P. Lafferty

State Court Administrator



INTRODUCTION

Confronting the Pandemic

In 2020 the Delaware Judiciary confronted a challenge unlike any in the past 100 years in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the course of several days in March 2020, the State of Delaware went from hearing distant concerns about a seemingly far away pandemic, to Governor John Carney announcing a state of emergency and reported incidents of the infection in our courthouses.

The Delaware Judiciary was forced to find a way to meet the needs of our justice system and keep urgent and necessary business of the courts going while also finding ways to protect the health of the public, court staff and all those who use our court facilities.

This was not easy or simple and meant that, just a few months after the swearing in of Chief Justice Collins J. Seitz, Jr., followed by the appointment of Gayle Lafferty as the new State Court Administrator and Karlis Johnson as Supreme Court Administrator, the Delaware Judiciary had to set aside plans, priorities and programs to focus on keeping the courts operating safely. The result was a transformative change in the way the Delaware Judiciary administers justice.

After Governor John Carney announced a state of emergency to address the pandemic, Chief Justice Seitz followed suit, declaring a state of emergency for the Judicial Branch on Saturday March 14, 2020. Among other things, the order suspended speedy trial guidelines and put limits on the number of people in court facilities. The Delaware Judiciary also estab-

lished its COVID-19 response page at <https://courts.delaware.gov/aoc/covid-19> to keep the public, the Delaware Bar and our justice system partners updated on the judiciary's response to the pandemic.

Following the first report of possible COVID exposure in a court facility, on March 23, 2020, the Chief Justice took the unprecedented but necessary step to

close most court facilities to the public. He also directed judicial branch employees to work from home when possible. The Justice of the Peace Courts deserve special recognition for their work in the early days of the COVID-19 crisis, keeping their 24-hour essential operations going while Delawareans sheltered in place at home.

While the doors of most of the state's courthouses were closed to the public, the work of the courts continued. Pre-pandemic

the word "Zoom" conjured up images of speeding cars or rockets, not a video platform that has now become an integral part of daily judicial operations. Judicial officers used Zoom to hear cases and connect with justice partners and correctional facilities. And court staff frequently turned to the platform to take the place of face-to-face meetings. Prosecutors, public defenders, law enforcement and correctional officials met with Judicial Officers and court staff on daily conference calls (that later turned to weekly) to meet the challenge of hearing criminal cases during the COVID-19 state of emergency.



Sign outside the Renaissance Center in March 2020, with the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center reflected in the window.

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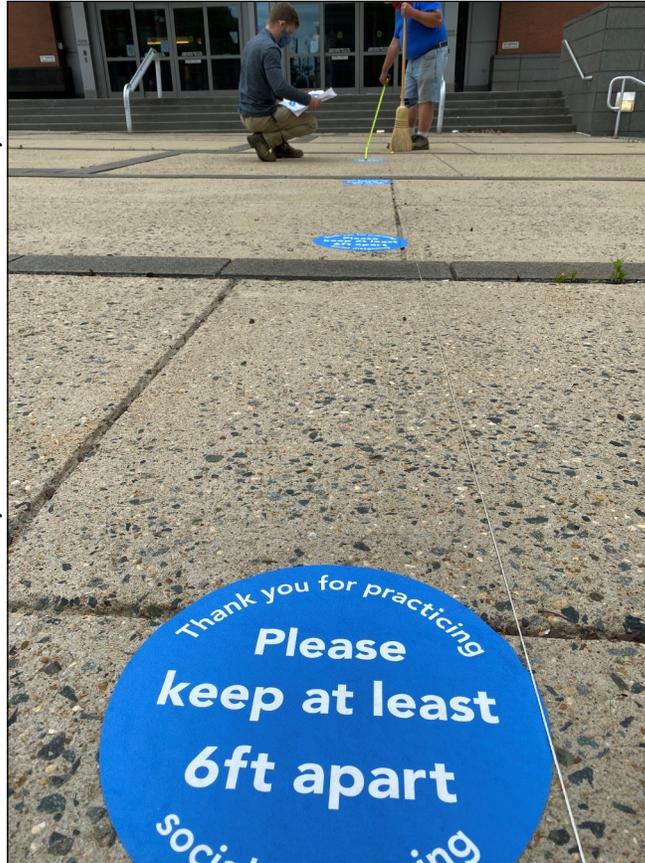
INTRODUCTION

The Delaware Courts confronted the challenges from the pandemic head-on and kept court proceedings moving. The Delaware Court of Chancery showed the world once again why it is the favored court to resolve global business disputes. During the early days of the pandemic, from March 15 to June 15, 2020, the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors held 279 audio or video hearings and issued 402 rulings. Masters in Chancery held an additional 56 remote hearings and issued 100 rulings. And according to an October 31, 2020 survey of 10 of the nation's top state court systems by Law 360, the Court of Chancery was one of only three state court systems that saw court filings increase in September 2020 over 2019. Others courts not only saw decreases but significant drops of almost half of the number of filings over the previous year.

During that same March to June 2020 period, the Delaware Supreme Court issued 108 final orders and 10 opinions. The Superior Court held 308 remote motion hearings and conferences in civil matters and 541 criminal proceedings, including bail matters, *capias* returns, violations of probation, and sentencing. The Superior Court issued 161 opinions or orders. The Court of Common Pleas, the Family Court and the Justice of the Peace Court also continued their work, holding hearings, issuing rulings and making sure essential and urgent matters were addressed.

Recognizing that closing judicial facilities indefinitely was not an option, early on the Chief Justice formed the Courts Reopening Committee, headed by

Superior Court Judge William C. Carpenter, Jr. The Committee included representatives from the Delaware Department of Justice, the Office of Defense Services, the Department of Correction, members of the Bar and law enforcement. The Committee put in hundreds of hours studying reopening plans, looking to the experience of other jurisdictions, and consulting with state health officials. The Chief Justice also hired an infectious disease expert, Dr. Alfred Bacon, to consult with the Committee and the courts to recommend best practices for reopening the courts and protecting the health and safety of litigants, attorneys, court staff and the public. In two town hall meetings held via Zoom on May 29, 2020, the Chief Justice and Judge Carpenter unveiled the Committee's reopening plan to court staff and members of the Bar. The 56-page plan called for the Court to reopen in a thoughtful and careful way over four phases. As the pandemic progressed, the Chief Justice also held several other video Town Hall meetings with Dr. Bacon for court employees, and shared with the Bar and public, to keep everyone up to date on developments.



Work crews installing social distancing stickers outside the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center in July 2020.

The courts launched Phase One of the reopening plan on June 8, 2020. Phase One was a "soft" reopening of court facilities to test social distancing and other safety measures. Phase One protective measures included requiring masks, limiting the number of people in the facility, temperature checks and screening questions at the entrances. A week later the courts went to Phase Two, which fully reopened court facilities to the public (though with at 50 percent of building capacity) and kept the Phase One safety measures in place while

INTRODUCTION



A sign about COVID-19 greeting visitors at the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center.

increasing the number of people and court staff allowed in court facilities.

Visitors returning to the courthouse in June saw a far different place than just a few months earlier. Outside our courthouses, visitors were greeted with social distancing stickers affixed to the pavement to ensure people stayed six feet apart as they

waited to enter. Inside, visitors saw masks on court security and all court employees, and all were required to stop at the new COVID screening stations where Capitol Police implemented the new protocols.

Past the screening area, visitors found clear plastic barriers installed throughout court facilities to slow or eliminate the potential airborne spread of the virus, particularly in places where the public interact with court staff. Cleaning staffers were also visible throughout the day, carrying out an increased cleaning regimen, with a particular focus on high-touch areas like railings, door handles and elevator buttons. Hand sanitizer was widely available at newly installed hand sanitizer stations in high traffic areas. And behind the scenes, the Judicial Branch also acquired several industrial “fogging” devices to completely disinfect courtrooms or other public spaces if someone infected with COVID-19 had been present.

There were also major changes in the courtrooms, the heart of any courthouse. Social distancing markers were installed on the benches or chairs in the public gallery. Clear plastic shielding was affixed to judges’ benches, on the areas where court clerks and staff sit, and on the witness box. In many courtrooms, plastic

barriers were also installed on counsels’ tables to allow attorneys to sit safely next to their clients. And in courtrooms used for jury trials, plastic barriers were installed in the jury boxes.

Once the Courts Reopening Plan was put into action, the Courts Reopening Committee turned its attention to creating a plan to safely restart jury trials, which would come as part of Phase Three. The Committee reviewed and reexamined every aspect of the courts jury selection process from the initial juror questionnaire to dismissal. Also, because each of Delaware’s three main state courthouses presented unique challenges, the Committee crafted new procedures for each building to ensure safety for each county’s prospective jurors. The new procedures reduced or eliminated the need for prospective jurors to stand in line or gather or move in large groups through the courthouses. For example, in the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center in Wilmington, 200 of the 260 chairs that had been in the jury assembly room were removed to allow for the proper distance between jurors as they waited in that room. In addition, judges used video technology to allow judges and other trial participants to appear remotely in the jury assembly room and interact with potential jurors, reducing or eliminating the need to have them brought to a courtroom. In Kent

County, jurors assembled in the largest room in the courthouse – historic Courtroom 1 – rather than the jury assembly room, so that they could be seated in a socially distant way. Once seated in Courtroom 1, the process was changed so that jurors remained there throughout check-in, juror orientation, most of voir dire, and then through the trial itself. The Sussex



Work crews installing clear plastic shields in a Wilmington courtroom in June 2020.

Continued on next page

INTRODUCTION

County Courthouse adopted a similar process, summoning smaller groups and using their historic Courtroom 1. Sean O’Sullivan, the courts’ chief of community relations, spearheaded new informational videos – available on the courts website at <https://courts.delaware.gov/superior/jury/juryfaq.aspx> – to walk prospective jurors through the new process and advise them of the new health and safety changes.



The Jury Services room at the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center after the chairs were rearranged to provide proper social distance.

On October 2, 2020, the courts moved to Phase Three of the reopening plan, allowing the resumption of jury trials. The first jury trial – a three-day DUI case involving six witnesses – was successfully held on October 26, 2020 in the Kent County Courthouse. However, on Nov. 16, 2020 following an increase in COVID-19 cases in Delaware, the Chief Justice in consultation with the other Justices and the Presiding Judges of all the courts and Dr. Bacon, put a pause on jury trials and moved the court system back to Phase Two until at least early 2021.



The entrance to Courtroom 1 at the Sussex County Courthouse with a reminder about the mask policy.

The full reopening contemplated in Phase Four of the Courts Reopening Plan will not happen until well into 2021 and perhaps for most of the year. And once the Delaware Courts move to Phase Four, we expect there will be a new normal, where some of the changes will become permanent, such as the continued use of videoconferencing technology. This change in particular has proven easier and more

efficient for all involved, saving both time and money. Other procedures adopted for health and safety reasons might also remain in place for years.

The pandemic has shown the resilience and adaptability of our justice system and taught us many important lessons that will guide the courts for a long time. Unfortunately, COVID-19 diverted the judiciary from many other pressing justice issues. For the past several years, the courts have focused on a wide range of justice reforms includ-

ing Access to Justice initiatives, Community Court programs, bail reform initiatives, fees and fines, and addressing implicit bias. The Delaware Courts remain committed to these efforts. When conditions improve, we will resume working closely with state legislators, our criminal justice partners, and community organizers to address these important initiatives.

The Delaware Judiciary also recognizes the need and benefits of increasing diversity in our Bar and on the Bench. The Delaware Bar is rightly proud that it can count among its members such consequential figures as Louis L. Redding and Leonard L. Williams, Jr., whose work shaped civil rights advances in Delaware and the nation. And last year, the Delaware Judiciary welcomed the historic confirma-

tion of Justice Tamika Montgomery-Reeves to the Delaware Supreme Court, making her the first African American to serve on our highest court. Several new diversity initiatives are also underway, includ-

INTRODUCTION

ing starting a pipeline program involving Delaware State University and the Delaware Law School at Widener University.

Finally, while the Delaware Courts continue to press for key infrastructure improvements – most notably the urgent need for new Family Court facilities in Kent and Sussex Counties to replace aging and unsafe buildings – the courts have reason to celebrate some infrastructure achievements. During the pandemic, construction was completed on new courtrooms on the 7th Floor of the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center in Wilmington. In addition to providing vital courtroom space, improvements on the 7th floor will eventually allow the Justice of the Peace Court to join the other courts in the main courthouse in 2021.

Looking to the needed Family Court facilities, building design is well underway, and the courts will once again ask the Governor and the General

Assembly to fund construction of these buildings as soon as possible.

In closing, we can take comfort in the fact we can now look at 2020 in hindsight. But as the year comes to a close, it is clear that the pandemic will stretch well into 2021, so our work to combat it and protect the health and safety of all who visit our court facilities is not yet done. At the same time the pressing needs and priorities that existed prior to the pandemic have not gone away and we are hopeful that in 2021 we will be able to address those issues.

While much remains uncertain about what the Delaware Judiciary will face in 2021, one thing is certain — even with our embrace of technology and new ways of doing business, the Delaware Courts remain committed to maintaining our status as a world leader in providing the fair, just and efficient resolution of criminal and civil disputes. ♦



A member of the courthouse cleaning staff wipes down a railing at the Kent County Courthouse.

THE YEAR IN PICTURES

The build-out of the 7th Floor at the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center



Courtroom 7E in January 2021, along with courtroom sign (left) and bar detail (right).

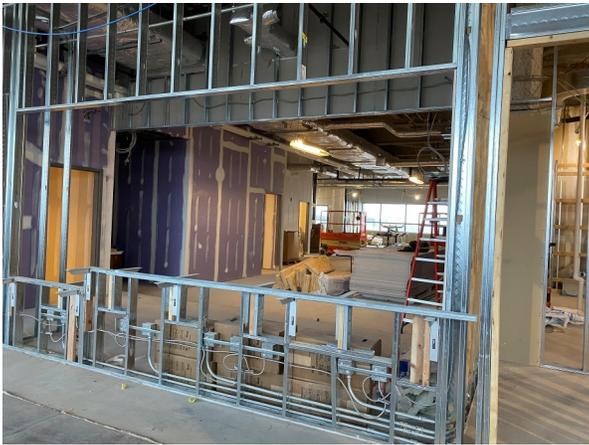
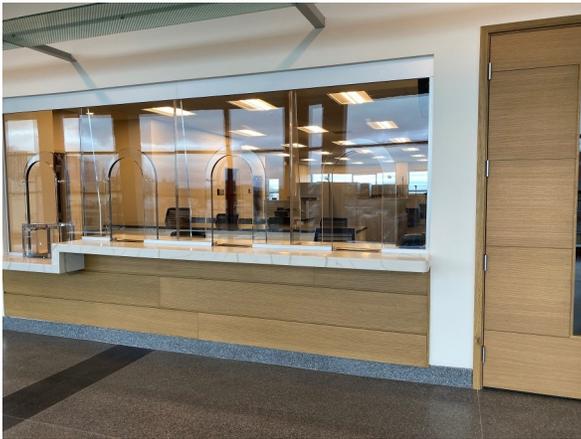


TOP: Courtroom 7E November 2020
BOTTOM: Courtroom 7E in January 2020.

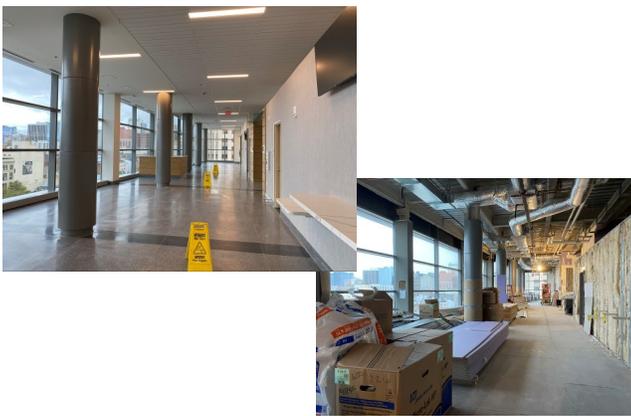
TOP: Courtroom 7E December 2020
BOTTOM: Courtroom 7E in January 2020.

TOP: Courtroom 7A December 2020
BOTTOM: Courtroom 7A in January 2020.

THE YEAR IN PICTURES



TOP: Justice of the Peace clerks' windows, December 2020.
 BOTTOM: Justice of the Peace clerks' windows, January 2020.



LEFT: The 7th Floor Hallway in December 2020.
 RIGHT: The 7th Floor Hallway in January 2020.



Signs outside the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center as an air handling unit is moved into place in April 2020.



LEFT: An air handling unit is moved into place, via crane, to the 7th floor of the LLWJC in April 2020.
 RIGHT: From November 2019, a construction elevator installed on the outside of the LLWJC to carry materials to the 7th floor.

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 \$25,000. 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 \$75,000. 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: 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/drug offenses 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 relations 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 \$75,000.
- 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 \$25,000.
- 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.



FISCAL OVERVIEW

SUMMARY OF JUDICIAL BUDGETS - FISCAL YEARS 2019-2021

GENERAL FUNDS - State Judicial Agencies and Bodies

	FY 2019 Enacted Budget	FY 2020 Enacted Budget	FY 2021 Enacted Budget
Supreme Court	\$ 3,434,700	\$ 3,508,400	\$ 3,541,100
Court of Chancery	3,948,100	4,024,800	4,064,100
Superior Court	25,728,800	26,408,300	26,761,900
Family Court	20,719,400	21,297,000	21,608,800
Court of Common Pleas	10,433,500	10,755,100	10,912,600
Justice of the Peace Court	19,063,700	19,538,900	19,890,000
Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)	3,789,700	3,849,000	3,882,700
AOC Custodial Pass-Through Funds*	2,113,100	2,921,600	2,921,600
Office of State Court Collections Enforcement (OSCCE)	597,600	614,300	625,900
Information Technology	3,850,800	3,899,900	3,936,000
Law Libraries	458,000	458,400	461,000
Office of the Public Guardian	679,800	800,400	811,800
Office of the Child Advocate	2,016,200	2,064,000	2,166,700
Child Death Review Commission	444,900	452,800	459,100
Delaware Nursing Home Residents Quality Assurance Commission	85,500	87,600	88,900
TOTAL	\$ 97,363,800	\$ 100,680,500	\$ 102,132,200

* These programs are included in AOC funding but are shown separately because they are pass-through funds. They include the CASA and Superior Court Appointed Attorney Programs, Interpreters Program, Victim Offender Mediation Program, Elder Law Program, and other funds. Technology Maintenance consists of pass-through funding to other state departments and vendors for equipment and services Branch-wide. Family Court Civil Attorneys were counted in this number until FY 2019 at which time the appropriation was transferred to Family Court..

Source: Administrative Office of the Courts

FISCAL OVERVIEW

COURT GENERATED REVENUE* - FISCAL YEAR 2020

SUBMITTED TO THE STATE GENERAL FUND

	Fees & Costs	Fines	Interest	Miscellaneous	Total
Supreme Court	\$ 103,838	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 103,838
Court of Chancery	992,028	-	-	-	992,028
Superior Court	2,882,091	199,784	4,004	193,819	3,279,698
Family Court	258,570	14,047	-	3,245	275,862
Court of Common Pleas	1,566,066	312,472	-	47,755	1,926,293
Justice of the Peace Court	1,508,552	1,515,441	-	6,304	3,030,297
Office of State Court Collections DOC Fees**	513,426	-	-	-	513,426
State Total	\$ 7,824,571	\$ 2,041,744	\$ 4,004	\$ 251,123	\$ 10,121,442

SUBMITTED TO COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES

	Fees & Costs	Fines	Interest	Miscellaneous	Total
Superior Court	\$ 95,409	\$ 29,791	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 125,200
Family Court	-	2,771	-	-	2,771
Court of Common Pleas	108	221,744	-	-	221,852
Justice of the Peace Court	-	2,334,001	-	-	2,334,001
Office of State Court Collections Enforcement	-	3,199	-	-	3,199
Counties and Municipalities Total	\$ 95,517	\$ 2,591,506	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,687,023

GRAND TOTAL **\$ 7,920,088** **\$ 4,633,250** **\$ 4,004** **\$ 251,123** **\$ 12,808,465**

* Figures represent only revenue actually received, not the total amount of fines and costs assessed. Figures include funds generated for the FY 2020 Fee Spending Plan and other ASF spending authorizations included in the FY 2020 State Budget Act.

** 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 2020

RESTITUTION - FISCAL YEAR 2020

	Assessed	Collected	Disbursed
Superior Court	\$ 2,118,366	\$ 2,013,066	\$ 1,785,096
Family Court	58,014	155,907	133,748
Court of Common Pleas	584,064	683,110	683,801
Justice of the Peace Court	9,556	26,697	29,210
Office of State Court Collections Enforcement*(OSCCE)	-	31,507	29,058
RESTITUTION TOTAL	\$ 2,770,000	\$ 2,910,287	\$ 2,660,913

ASSESSMENTS AND COLLECTIONS FOR THE TRANSPORTATION TRUST FUND

	Assessed	Collected
Superior Court	\$ 103,685	\$ 117,510
Family Court	1,432	2,084
Court of Common Pleas	246,993	255,743
Justice of the Peace Court	2,124,286	1,892,979
OSCCE	-	150
TRANSPORTATION TRUST FUND TOTAL	\$ 2,476,396	\$ 2,268,466

COLLECTIONS ASSISTANCE BY THE OFFICE OF STATE COURT COLLECTIONS ENFORCEMENT ON BEHALF OF COURTS AND AGENCIES**

	Total
Superior Court	\$ 2,447,974
Family Court	184,272
Court of Common Pleas	236,798
Justice of the Peace Court	88,702
OSCCE Receivables	37,283
Department of Correction	513,426
Court of Chancery	3,874
Child Support	241,128
OSCCE ASSISTANCE TOTAL	\$ 3,753,457

* Figures represent all efforts made by the OSCCE on behalf of the Delaware Judicial Branch.

** These figures, in large part, overlap with amounts collected by the various courts and agencies, and should not be considered additional.

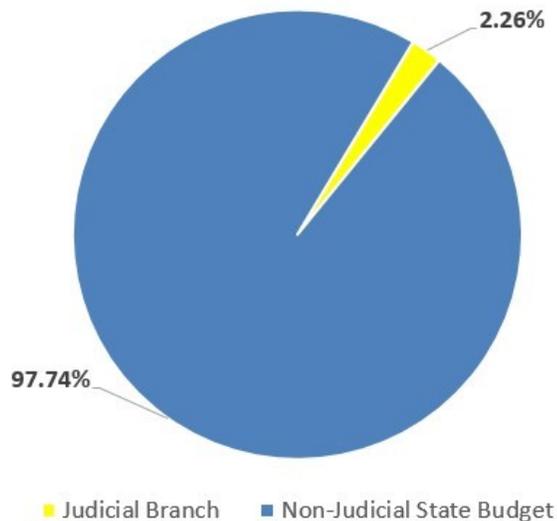
Source: Administrative Office of the Courts

FISCAL OVERVIEW

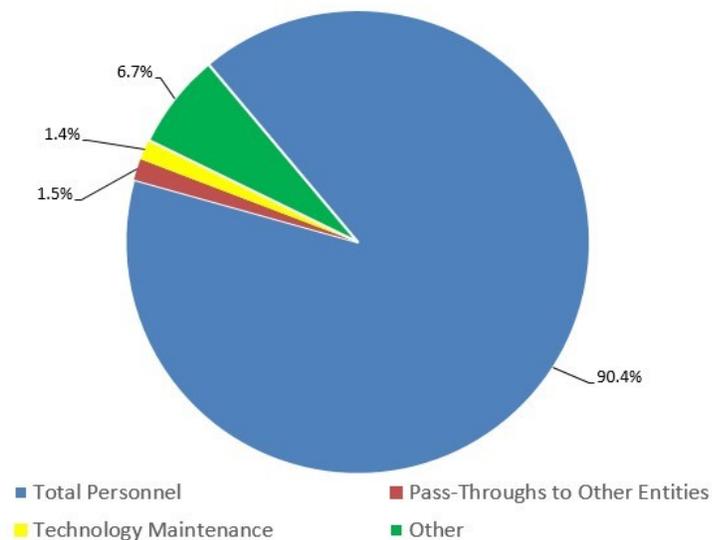
GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATIONS - FISCAL YEAR 2020

Public Education	\$ 1,571,706,400	35.3%
Health and Social Services	1,234,594,300	27.7%
Department of Correction	343,306,200	7.7 %
Higher Education	247,080,700	5.6 %
Children, Youth and Their Families	182,674,300	4.1 %
Safety and Homeland Security	143,783,800	3.2 %
Judicial Branch	100,680,500	2.26 %
All Other	628,071,800	14.4 %
TOTAL	\$ 4,451,898,000	100%

The Judiciary's FY 2020 appropriation is 2.26% of the State GF Budget.

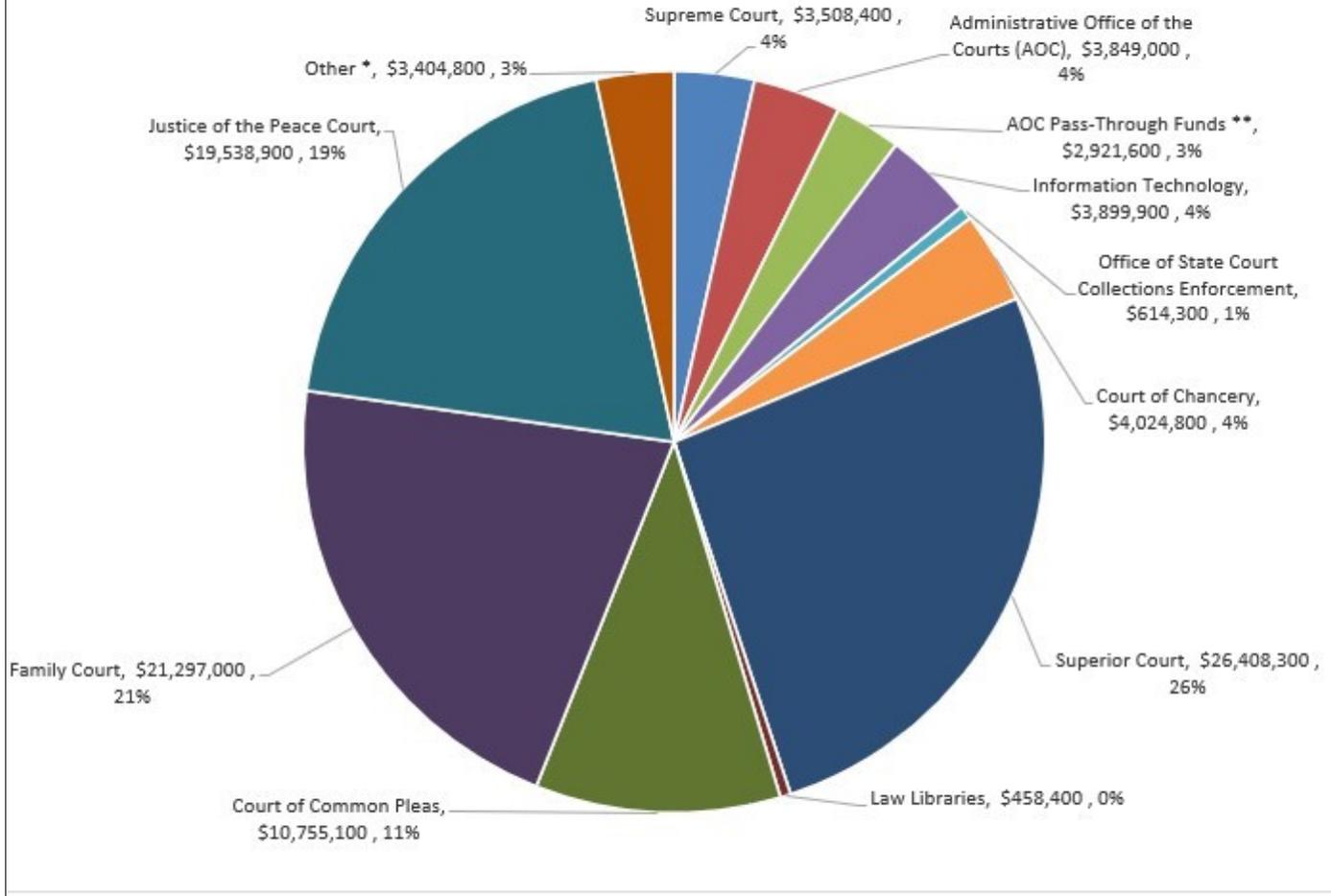


The FY 2020 Judicial Branch budget breakdown: 90.4% Personnel, 2.9% Pass-Throughs and Technology Maintenance, and 6.7% Other.



FISCAL OVERVIEW

JUDICIAL APPROPRIATIONS - FISCAL YEAR 2020



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

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

Source: Administrative Office of the Courts

SUPREME COURT



CHIEF JUSTICE COLLINS J. SEITZ, JR.



SUPREME COURT

COVID-19 significantly disrupted the Supreme Court and the Arms of Court in 2020. In the pandemic's early stages, the Court postponed oral arguments and gave litigants the choice of rescheduling arguments or having their appeals decided without argument. Many litigants chose to forego oral argument. Postponed oral arguments were rescheduled beginning in June. In response to the challenges presented by the pandemic, the Supreme Court relaxed deadlines, suspended paper copy requirements, and did

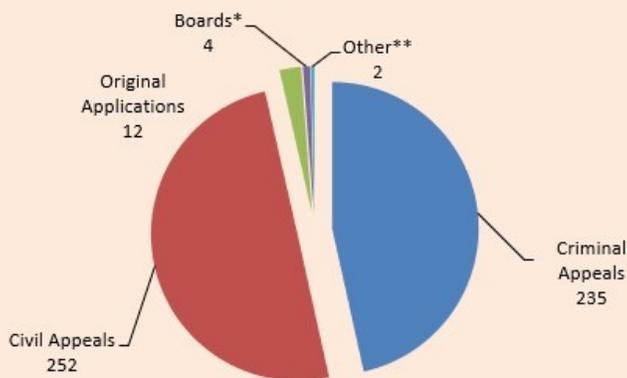
everything possible to allow lawyers and staff to turn their attention to family instead of work. Self-represented litigants, meanwhile, were given more filing options such as mail, email and in-person drop boxes in each county.

The Court held several in-person arguments early in the summer of 2020, but with continuing community spread of the virus, the Court decided to forego all in person arguments and instead use the Zoom video platform supported by Courtscribes.

The Court also cancelled its summer recess and heard oral arguments throughout the summer to catch up on pending cases. Because of the Court's rigorous summer schedule, the Court is now deciding appeals within 90 days from submission, with most appeals decided in 30-60 days. The result of this effort is the Court had no backlog of cases as 2020 ended.

In Fiscal Year 2020, the Delaware Supreme Court received 505 appeals and resolved 489 cases by opinion, order, or dismissal. The appeals were decided an average of 35 days

NUMBER OF SUPREME COURT FILINGS BY TYPE FY 2020



* Includes the Board on Professional Responsibility and the Board of Bar Examiners.
** Includes four certifications and one other.

Continued on next page

SUPREME COURT

from the date of submission to the date of final decision. In 100% of the appeals decided in FY 2020, the Court met the Delaware Judiciary standard for deciding cases within 90 days of the date of submission. The Court resolved 85% of all cases within 290 days of the filing of a notice of appeal, and 95% of all cases within a one-year timeframe.

The Arms of Court also had to adjust their operations in 2020 due to the pandemic. For the most part the Arms of Court staff have worked remotely. The

Office of Disciplinary Counsel, meanwhile, created an ethics hotline and participated in several highly successful CLE ethics programs for the Delaware Bar. CLE requirements were adjusted to allow on-line programs to satisfy reporting requirements. Of note this year, Patricia Bartley Schwartz, an attorney in the Office of Disciplinary Counsel, was elected President of the National Organization of Bar Counsel for 2020-2021.

The Delaware Board of Bar Examiners was perhaps most severely impacted by the pandemic. Unlike many other states, the Delaware Board is an all-volunteer group that still drafts and grades all of the substantive essays and conducts the character and fitness reviews. The Delaware bar exam, usually held in July, was rescheduled for the Harrington Fairgrounds and later cancelled when the health and safety risks of an in-person exam became unacceptable. Nearly 60% of the bar applicants were from out-of-state, including some areas with high infection rates. Quarantine requirements prevented travel to Delaware for the bar exam for many. As a

partial measure to address the disappointment and complications due to cancelling the bar exam, the Supreme Court entered an order adopting a limited

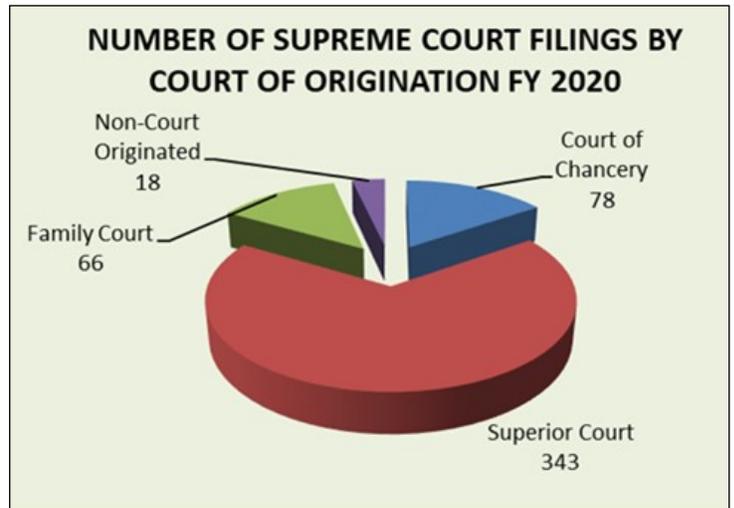
practice privilege, which will temporarily allow eligible bar applicants to engage in the practice of law under the supervision of a Delaware lawyer until they can sit for the 2021 Delaware Bar Exam.

The Court is grateful for the hard work of its staff and Court Administrator, Karlis

Johnson, for doing their best to keep the Court and its Arms operating under difficult circumstances. ♦

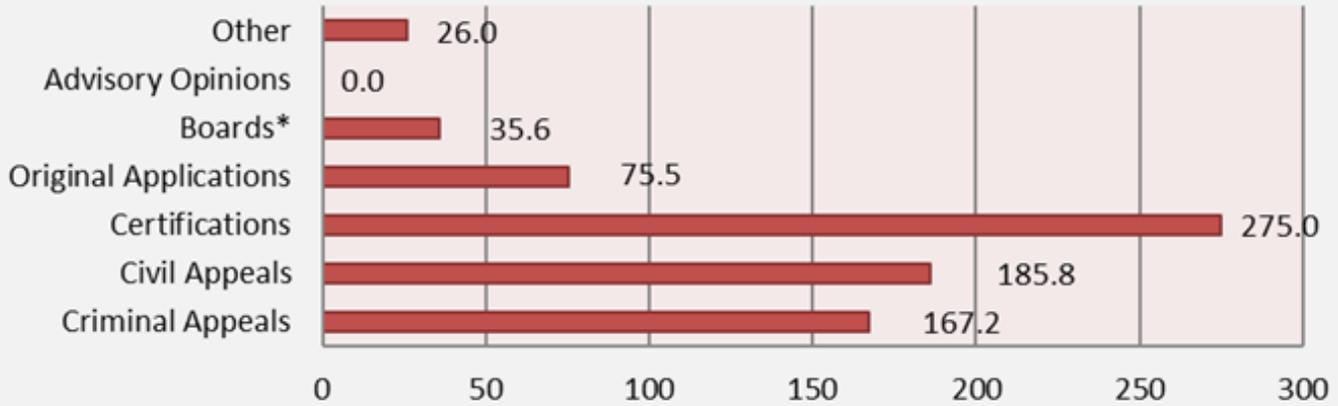


Delaware Supreme Court Chief Justice Collins J. Seitz, Jr. preparing for an oral argument by Zoom in December 2020.



SUPREME COURT

SUPREME COURT FY 2020 AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS FROM FILING TO DISPOSITION BY CASE TYPE



*Includes the Board on Professional Responsibility and the Board of Bar Examiners.

SUPREME COURT FILINGS & DISPOSITIONS BY FISCAL YEAR



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Filings	714	757	661	716	703	707	533	646	572	505
Dispositions	760	747	712	696	687	714	604	583	643	480

Continued on next page

SUPREME COURT



Supreme Court Justices

Standing left to right:

Justice Gary F. Traynor
Justice Karen L. Valihura
Chief Justice Collins J. Seitz, Jr.
Justice James T. Vaughn, Jr.
Justice Tamika R. Montgomery-Reeves

COURT OF CHANCERY



CHANCELLOR ANDRE G. BOUCHARD

As the format of this year's picture of our judicial officers exemplifies, 2020 was a year like no other in the 228-year history of the Court of Chancery. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the court quickly transitioned to hold hearings remotely using telephonic and video technologies. In-person hearings and gatherings, even to take a photograph of our current judicial roster, were minimized to ensure the safety of the public, litigants, practitioners, and court staff.

Apart from postponing some non-expedited trials, the court did not skip a beat in attending to its docket. During the first three months of our pandemic response, when the courthouses were closed by declaration of a judicial emergency, new filings continued at the same pace as last year, motions to expedite were filed in about one-third of our cases, and the court held over 300 hearings and issued over 500 rulings. Our ability to meet the demand was a team effort. We are grateful for the dedication of our

judicial assistants, law clerks, court reporters, and Register in Chancery staff who dutifully worked from home to allow us to operate as normally as possible while the courthouses were closed.

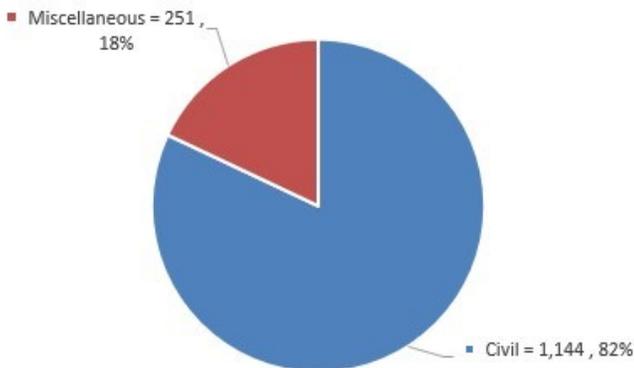
In June, when the first phase of the court reopening plan began, we were ready. Protective shields were installed in our courtrooms, which we reconfigured to maintain social distancing, and new protocols were established for returning

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COURT OF CHANCERY

Court of Chancery Filings by Type,
FY 2020



COURT OF CHANCERY

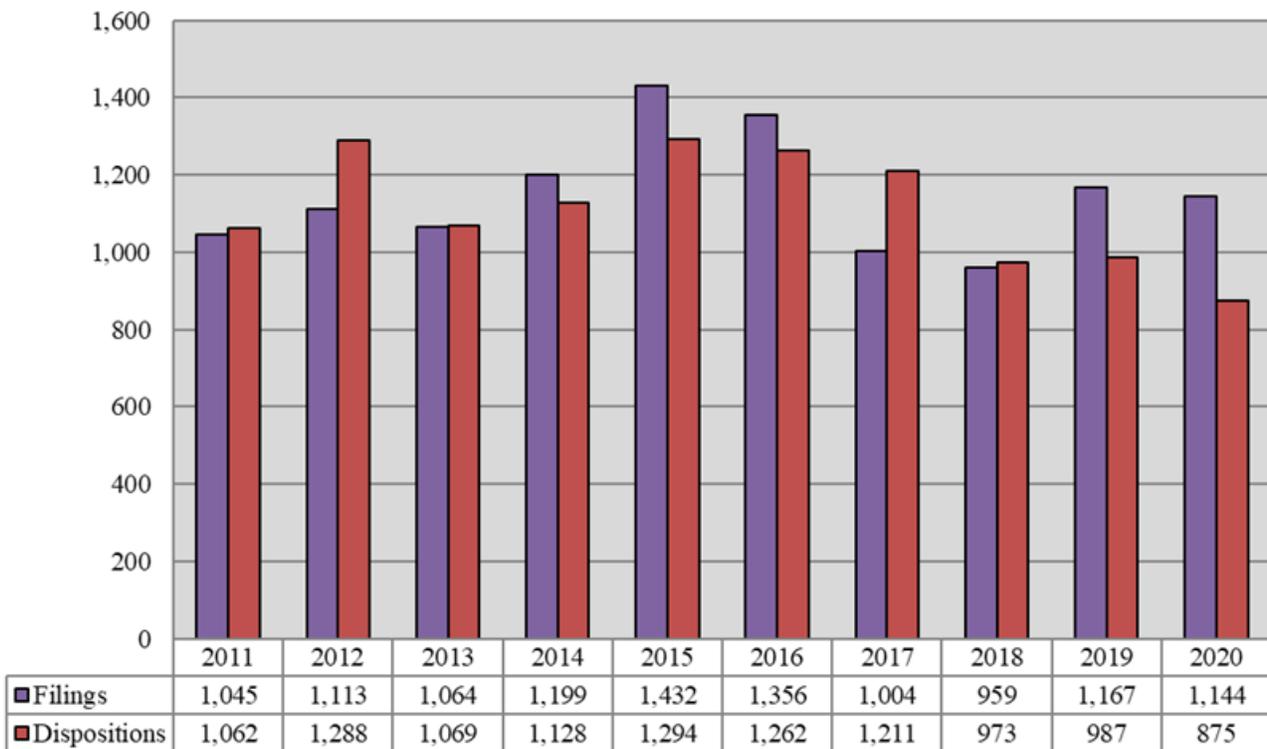
to in-person hearings when safe to do so. Filings and rulings have continued at a regular pace since the reopening and we adapted the now ubiquitous use of video technology to handle a number of expedited trials.

On February 10, 2020, Paul A. Fioravanti, Jr. took the oath of office in a private ceremony and began his term as our newest Vice Chancellor, filling the vacancy left from the elevation of former Vice Chancellor Montgomery-Reeves. Before becoming the forty-second member of the court in its history, Vice Chancellor Fioravanti was a director at Prickett, Jones & Elliott, P.A., where he focused on corporate and commercial litigation.

On March 2, 2020, Susan Judge became our new Court Administrator, replacing Karlis Johnson, who

became Court Administrator for the Supreme Court. Susan stepped in immediately and ably took charge of implementing our pandemic response. On June 5, Kenneth J. Lagowski, Office Manager for the Register in Chancery in New Castle County, retired after 44 years of state service, including 30 years with the court. Ramona Monsen, a long-time court employee, assumed Ken’s duties and became Deputy Court Administrator. On November 2, Neith Ecker retired as Chief Court Reporter, after a 49-year career as a court reporter, and Juli LaBadia was named as her successor. We thank Karlis, Ken, and Neith for their devoted service to the court and wish each of them well in their future endeavors. ♦

Court of Chancery 10-Year Civil Caseload Trend



Fiscal Year

Continued on next page

COURT OF CHANCERY

Speaker View Exit Full Screen

Vice Chancellor J. Travis Laster

Vice Chancellor Sam Glasscock III

Vice Chancellor Joseph R. Slights III

Vice Chancellor Morgan T. Zurn

Chancellor Andre G. Bouchard

Vice Chancellor Kathaleen St. J. McCormick

Master Patricia W. Griffin

Vice Chancellor Paul A. Fioravanti, Jr.

Master Selena E. Molina

Mute Stop Video

Participants Chat Share Screen Record Reactions

Leave

SUPERIOR COURT



SUPERIOR COURT

PRESIDENT JUDGE JAN R. JURDEN

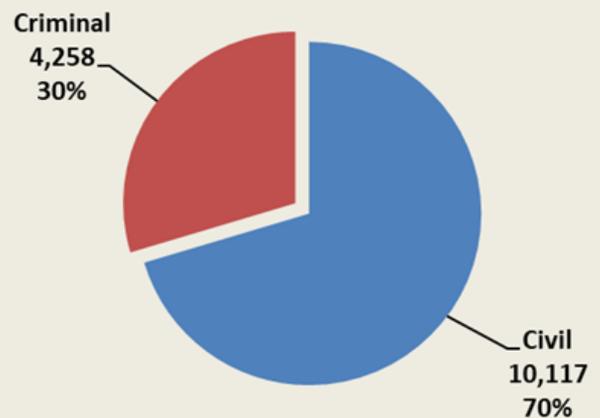


Like the rest of the world, the Superior Court continues to grapple with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March 2020, the pandemic has impacted all our employees and all aspects of our core functions. While the long standing mandated mission of the Superior Court – to serve the public by providing fair, prompt and well-reasoned decisions in all matters coming before the Court – remains the same, the methods, processes and procedures by which we carry out this critical mission have necessarily changed significantly. The level of ingenuity, creativity, hard work, dedication, flexibility and cooperation demonstrated by all Superior Court judicial officers and staff, in the face of the many challenges presented by COVID-19, was, and continues to be, outstanding. It was through every Court employee’s adherence to our core values “UNITED” - Unity, Neutrality, Integrity, Timeliness, Equality and Dedication that we were able to fulfill our mission in FY 20.

Due to COVID safety concerns, the Superior Court rapidly transitioned to remote/virtual civil and criminal proceedings in mid-March. On the criminal side, a collaborative effort with our

justice partners coordinated by the Judicial Information Center involved procuring and installing audiovisual equipment in the courthouses, Department of Correction institutions, and Probation and Parole offices which enables the Court to hold remote hearings with probationers and incarcerated individuals. The individuals involved in this extraordinary effort worked almost round the clock, and without their dedication and expertise, the Court would not have been able to perform its core functions. The Court is extremely grateful for the exceptional teamwork and collabora-

NUMBER OF SUPERIOR COURT FILINGS
BY TYPE, FY 2020

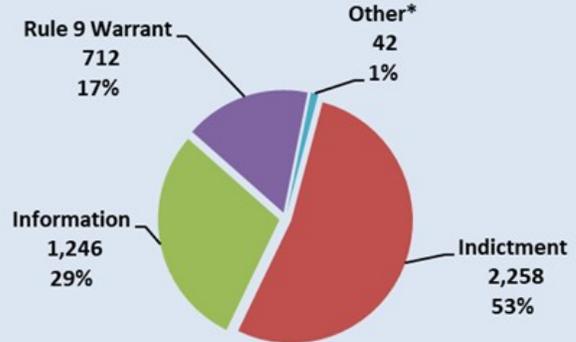


SUPERIOR COURT

tion of all the courts, the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Judicial Information Center, and our criminal justice partners. The Court is also grateful for the input and flexibility of the Civil Bar who worked with us to present important matters remotely. Long after we emerge from this pandemic, we will remember the significant assistance we received during this unprecedented and challenging time.

Technology was not the only issue critical to our operations during COVID. Communication was key. In March, before and after the Governor declared a State of Emergency and the Chief Justice declared a Judicial Emergency, the Superior Court engaged in frequent and regular communication with the other courts, the Capitol Police, the Department of Correction, Probation and Parole, the Department of Justice, the Office of Defense Services, the Department of Health and Social Services and law enforcement representatives. At the start, these teleconferences were daily – illustrating the fluidity of the situation. These ongoing discussions allowed us to exchange critical information, raise issues and concerns, problem-solve and plan – in real time. It is because of this communication we were able to ad-

NUMBER OF SUPERIOR COURT CRIMINAL FILINGS BY TYPE FY 2020



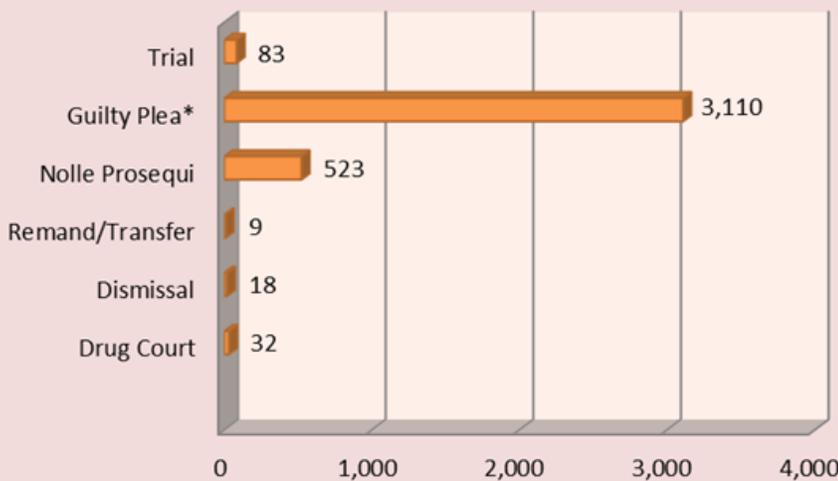
*Includes appeals, transfers, reinstatements, and severances.

just and adapt our processes to address issues raised by our partners and effectively implement innovative changes in response to the ever-changing and uncertain landscape.

Each year the Superior Court handles thousands of civil and criminal cases filings and cases. In FY 2020, we had 10,117 civil filings and 4,258 criminal filings. Due to the pandemic, Fiscal Year 2020 was different in many ways, including the manner in which cases and filings were processed, the temporary interruption of certain services, and the limited number of proceedings the Court was able to schedule. These factors most likely contributed to the slight reduction in filings from the prior year.

On the criminal side, the Court continued to handle a large number of first-degree murder and serious felony cases, including several complex multi-defendant, gang participation and criminal racketeering cases. During the pandemic, the Court was able to conduct 755 criminal proceedings remotely. On the civil side, thanks to electronic filing, the pandemic did not disrupt civil filings to the extent it did criminal. These electronic filings were reviewed and accepted mostly, and in some cases entirely, remotely.

NUMBER OF SUPERIOR COURT CRIMINAL DISPOSITIONS BY METHOD FY 2020



*Includes Probation Before Judgment.

**First Offender Program.

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SUPERIOR COURT

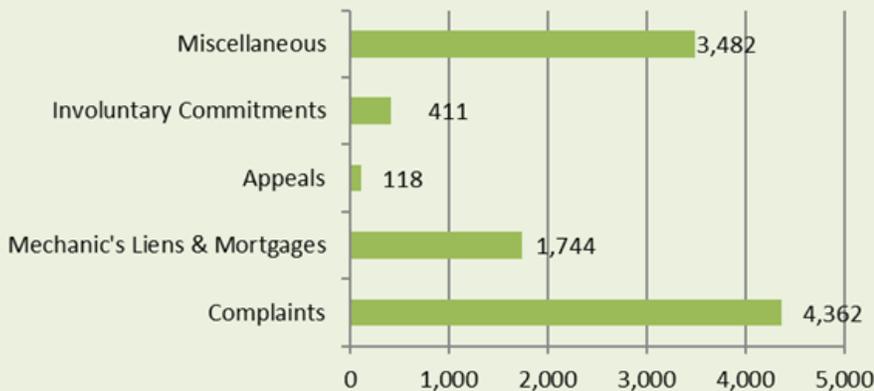
And, thanks to technology and the good help of the Judicial Information Center, as with criminal matters, we were able to quickly pivot and handle civil proceedings remotely/virtually. The first two weeks into Phase II, the Court was able to conduct 128 civil proceedings remotely. Through our Bench Bar Liaisons we received helpful suggestions, ideas and feedback from civil practitioners. That information proved very useful as we considered how to best implement remote/virtual civil proceedings during COVID-19. Moreover, through this open flow of communication, the Court was able to quickly identify issues affecting civil lawyers' ability to file cases and motions and to remedy any problem quickly. The disruption and many challenges presented by COVID caused the Court to take a hard look at its current practices and make changes to facilitate remote/virtual proceedings, improve efficiency, and better use our limited resources. The Court is committed to listening to feedback from the Bar and our justice partners, and improving our processes as needed in order to best serve the Bar and the public.

Throughout the pandemic, the Court continued to issue written opinions and orders. From March 16 to June 30, 2020, the Superior Court issued 408 civil opinions and orders and 293 criminal opinions and orders. Many of these civil and criminal opinions and orders are posted on the webpage. In addition to posting opinions and orders on its webpage, the

Court distributes its Administrative Directives, Administrative Orders and Rule Changes through the Bar's Listserv. The Court's webpage is routinely updated with new information to keep the Bar and the public informed. This webpage also provides useful information on court processes, forms, schedules and other material to aid in navigation of the court system.

In response to COVID-19, Governor Carney issued a State of Emergency and many modifications to that State of Emergency which impacted Court processes. The Governor's State of Emergency and the federal government's passage of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act ("CARES Act") established a moratorium on mortgage foreclosures, evictions and summary possessions. The Court worked with the Department of Justice and the Governor's Office on the implementation of this moratorium on new filings, previously filed matters, and those matters currently involved in Superior Court's Automatic Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program. In order to appropriately address the changing restrictions brought about by modifications to the State of Emergency and numerous federal entities on what actions could be taken on various mortgages, the Superior Court issued Administrative Orders requiring compliance with all federal, state, local and municipal statutes, orders, restrictions and preclusions.

**NUMBER OF SUPERIOR COURT CIVIL FILINGS
BY TYPE FY 2020**



Our acclaimed Complex Commercial Litigation Division (CCLD) saw 124 new filings in FY 20. CCLD cases include complex commercial/business disputes with an amount in controversy of \$1 million or more. Judges Mary M. Johnston, Eric M. Davis, Paul R. Wallace, and Abigail M. LeGrow expertly handle these cases. In addition to the specialized CCLD docket, the Court has a large docket of mass torts and asbestos cases. As of June 30, 2020, there were 1,504

SUPERIOR COURT

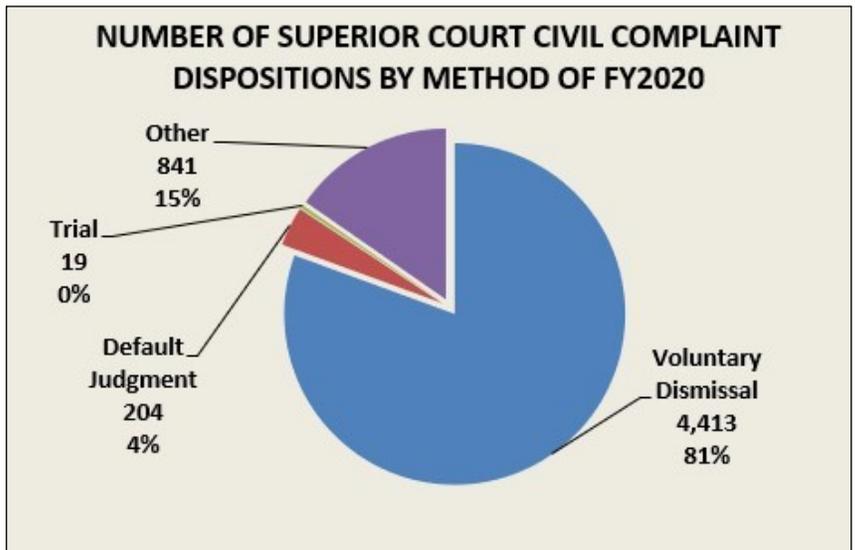
mass tort cases, 5,844 asbestos cases and 193 CCLD cases pending.

Along with managing our heavy civil and criminal caseloads, the Court expended significant time and resources preparing for the resumption of jury trials under COVID-19 safety protocols. This involved, for example, courtroom modifications, including installation of clear safety barriers and reconfiguration of juror seating in the courtrooms, and modified processes and procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of employees, jurors, litigants, witnesses and members of the press and public.

Through the middle of March 2020, the Court continued to summons jurors for service in the Superior Court and the Court of Common Pleas in all three counties. Due to safety concerns and in adherence to the Chief Justice's Reopening Plan, the Court did not summons any jurors from the middle of March through the end of June 2020. In June, the Chief Justice established a Jury Committee composed of judges and administrators to study and evaluate courthouse structures and jury processes in all three counties and provide a comprehensive report with recommendations as to how we could resume jury trials safely during COVID-19. The Committee's report, adopted by the Supreme Court, was the blueprint followed when we resumed jury trials in October. After holding one trial in Kent County Superior Court, the trials were again put on hold due to pandemic-related safety concerns in November and that pause is expected to last into January 2021.

We continue to review our jury management plan to ensure that we implement and maintain all necessary safety precautions and practices when jury trials resume.

Our improved Jury Management System enables jurors to complete their juror questionnaires and request for rescheduling or excusal online. We added additional questions to the questionnaire to address COVID-19 safety and concerns. In order to meet appropriate social distancing guidelines, we made mod-



ifications to the Jury Services Department in each courthouse. These include installation of safety barriers and the creative use of technology.

The right to trial by jury is the bedrock of our criminal and civil justice system. As such, we continue to scrutinize and update our processes in an effort to minimize juror inconvenience and maximize juror safety during this pandemic and into the future.

Superior Court's Problem-Solving Courts continue to work with our justice partners in an ongoing effort to improve outcomes for the individual participants, reduce recidivism and improve public safety. The Problem-Solving Courts include: the Mental Health Court presided over by judges Resident Judge Richard F. Stokes, Judge Andrea L. Rocanelli and Judge Jeffrey J. Clark and the Veterans Treatment Court presided over by Resident Judge William L. Witham Jr., Resident Judge Stokes, and Judge Paul R. Wallace. Resident Judge Witham worked collaboratively with the Supreme Court and the Board of Bar Examiners to have the military spouse rule (Supreme Court Rule 55.4) adopted in Delaware. Thus, effective November 1, 2019, military spouses licensed to practice law in another jurisdiction may apply for a certification of limited practice in Delaware. Resident Judge Charles E. Butler, who presides over Reentry Court, continues his work as Superior Court's representative on the Delaware Correctional Reentry Commission

Continued on next page

SUPERIOR COURT

established by Governor Carney’s Executive Order No. 27.

The Superior Court is privileged to have extremely hardworking, dedicated and loyal staff who work tirelessly to provide excellent service. Our staff is our greatest resource. This year, in particular, we are very proud of the outstanding efforts, flexibility, and innovation of the Court’s staff. Within weeks of the pandemic affecting Delaware, a system was in place enabling employees to work both remotely and safely onsite. The safety and well-being of our employees remains in the forefront of each decision made during this unprecedented time. Superior Court’s employees have shown their commitment to the Court and the citizens of Delaware through their outstanding work ethic during an unprecedented, extremely difficult time, and we are grateful.

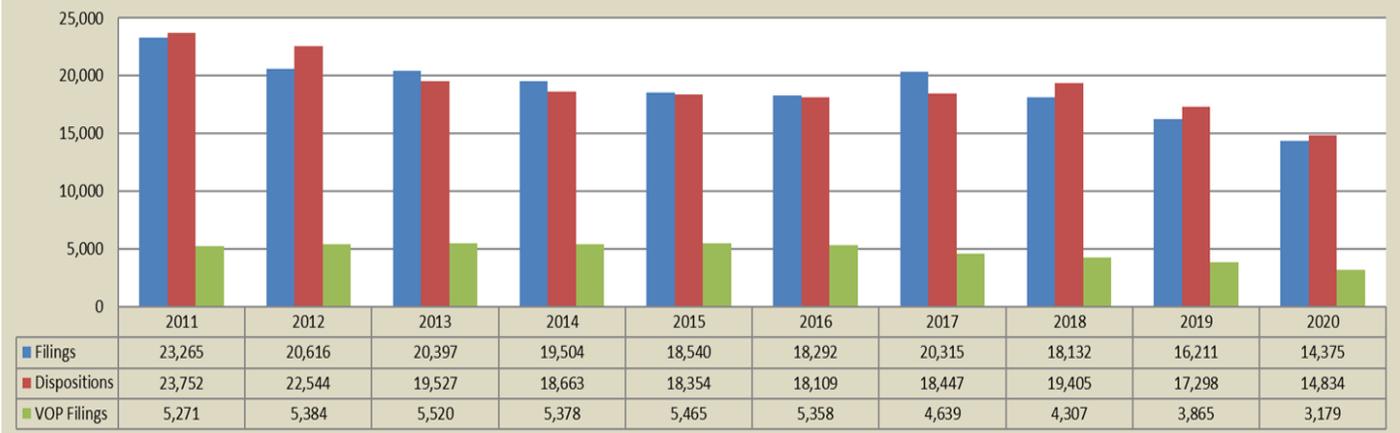
The Court would be remiss if it did not recognize Judge William C. Carpenter’s herculean efforts during this pandemic. On April 27, 2020, the Chief Justice tapped Judge Carpenter to chair the Courts Reopening Committee. That Committee consisted of members of the Judiciary, court staff, the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Department of Justice, Office of Defense Services, the Department of Correction, Capitol Police, law enforcement, and others, who were tasked with recommending criteria to safely increase courthouse operations while minimizing the risk of COVID-19 to employees and the

public. On March 26, 2020, the Committee submitted its report recommending a phased approach to reopening. The Chief Justice adopted the report’s recommended phased reopening starting on June 8, 2020. The Courts Reopening Committee then created a subcommittee, the Jury Management Working Group, which was also headed by Judge Carpenter. In addition, Judge Carpenter was tasked with leading the Superior Court through the implementation process detailed in these reports. As New Castle County Superior Court’s Criminal Administrative Judge, Judge Carpenter was also instrumental in devising completely new criminal events calendars, which enabled us to address criminal proceedings remotely. The Court thanks Judge Carpenter for his steady-handed guidance through this pandemic.

Fiscal Year 20 brought many changes to the Superior Court. Lisa Robinson, Kent County’s former Deputy Court Administrator, agreed to return to the Superior Court in the role of Court Administrator beginning August 1, 2020. Lisa brings with her 27 years of service to the Superior Court, working her way up the ladder to her current position from a casual seasonal position when she was first hired. Since her return she hit the ground running and has helped us navigate through all the many challenges posed by the pandemic. The Superior Court is grateful and we are delighted to welcome Lisa home.

The Court is extremely grateful that our Chief Staff Attorney, Linda Carmichael, agreed to serve as our

SUPERIOR COURT CIVIL & CRIMINAL FILINGS & DISPOSITIONS BY FISCAL YEAR



SUPERIOR COURT

Acting Court Administrator in March, right at the time the Judicial Emergency began. Linda's willingness to step up and assume this critical role during the pandemic, and on top of all her duties and responsibilities as our Chief Staff Attorney, are illustrative of her long standing dedication and exemplary service to our Court. Linda did an outstanding job in both roles for several months until our new Court Administrator took over in August.

On September 19, 2019, the Honorable Meghan A. Adams was sworn in as a Superior Court judge, filling the vacancy created by the retirement of our dear late colleague, the Honorable John A. Parkins, Jr. Prior to her appointment, Judge Adams was an attorney with Morris James LLP. The Court welcomes Judge Adams to her new role.

On May 1, 2020, Judge E. Scott Bradley retired after serving 20 years on the bench. Judge Bradley was nominated by former Governor Thomas A. Carper as a Judge of the Superior Court in 2000. The Court thanks him for his many years of service.

On June 2, 2020, Judge Charles E. Butler was sworn in as the Resident Judge of the Superior Court of New Castle County, the position formerly held by the Honorable Richard R. Cooch (retired). The Court welcomes Judge Butler to his new role.

On June 7, 2020, the Honorable Francis J. Jones, Jr. was sworn in as a Superior Court judge, filling the vacancy created by Judge Butler's move to Resident Judge. Prior to his appointment, Judge Jones was a partner at Morris James LLP. The Court welcomes Judge Jones to his new role.

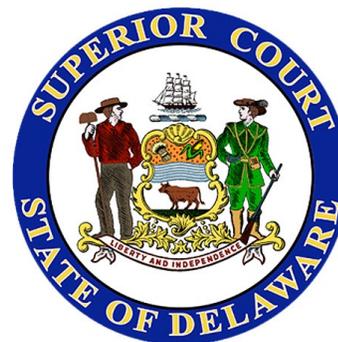


The jury box in Courtroom 8B of the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center in Wilmington where clear plastic shields were installed as a safety measure during the pandemic.

On July 6, 2020, the Honorable Mark H. Conner was sworn in as a Superior Court judge, filling the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Bradley. Prior to his appointment, Judge Conner was an attorney in the Office of Defense Services. The Court welcomes Judge Conner to his new role.

Notwithstanding a pandemic, heavy workloads, staff shortages, changing processes and uncertainty as to when all of us can return to a

“new normal,” Superior Court stands UNITED in our continuing efforts to provide exemplary service to those we are honored to serve. ♦



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SUPERIOR COURT

SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES



Top Row (L-R): President Judge Jan R. Jurden; Judge William C. Carpenter, Jr.; Resident Judge William L. Witham, Jr.; Resident Judge Richard F. Stokes;

Middle Row (L-R): Judge Calvin L. Scott, Jr.; Judge Mary Miller Johnston; Judge Diane Clarke Streett; Resident Judge Charles E. Butler;

Bottom Row (L-R): Judge Eric M. Davis; Judge Paul R. Wallace; Judge Vivian L. Medinilla; Judge Andrea L. Rocanelli.

SUPERIOR COURT

SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES



Top Row (L-R): Judge Ferris W. Wharton; Judge Jeffrey J Clark; Judge Abigail M. LeGrow; Judge Noel E. Primos; Judge Sheldon K. Rennie;

Bottom Row (L-R): Judge Craig A. Karsnitz; Judge Meghan A. Adams; Judge Francis J. Jones, Jr.; Judge Mark H. Conner.

Continued on next page

SUPERIOR COURT

SUPERIOR COURT COMMISSIONERS



Top Row (L to R): Commissioner Alicia B. Howard; Commissioner Andrea M. Freud; Commissioner Lynne M. Parker;

Bottom Row (L to R): Commissioner Katharine L. Mayer; Commissioner Janine M. Salomone.

FAMILY COURT



CHIEF JUDGE MICHAEL K. NEWELL



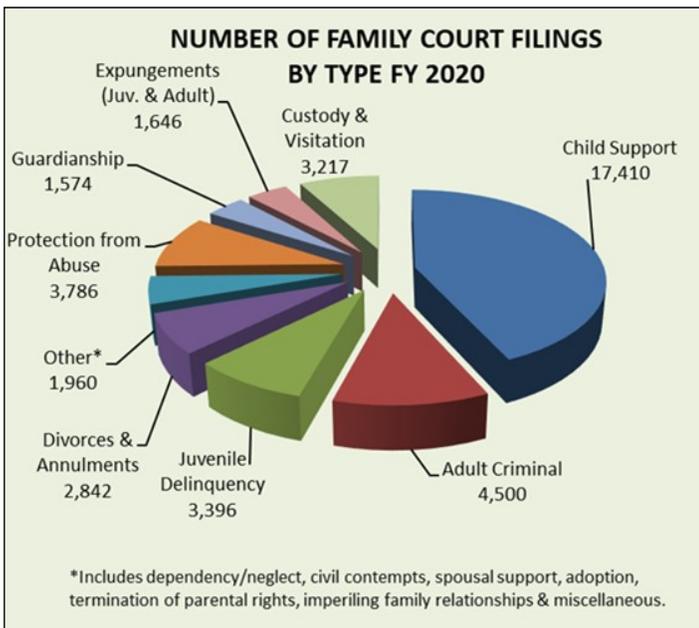
FAMILY COURT

Family Court continues to be guided by its mission: to provide 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. We strive each day to build an atmosphere that ensures all members of the public are treated with courtesy, dignity, and respect.

With the onset of COVID-19, this year presented Family Court with many obsta-

cles that affected not only our processes and procedures, but our caseload, as well. However, with these challenges and obstacles, we discovered opportunities to make positive change that will improve Family Court for the future. Throughout the pandemic, Family Court continued to accept filings and hold hearings. From March 15th to June 15th, the Court processed 1,489 criminal/delinquency filings, 5,078 civil filings, and over 2,000 motions. Over 6,700 dispositions were entered during this same period and all without eFiling or electronic document management capabilities.

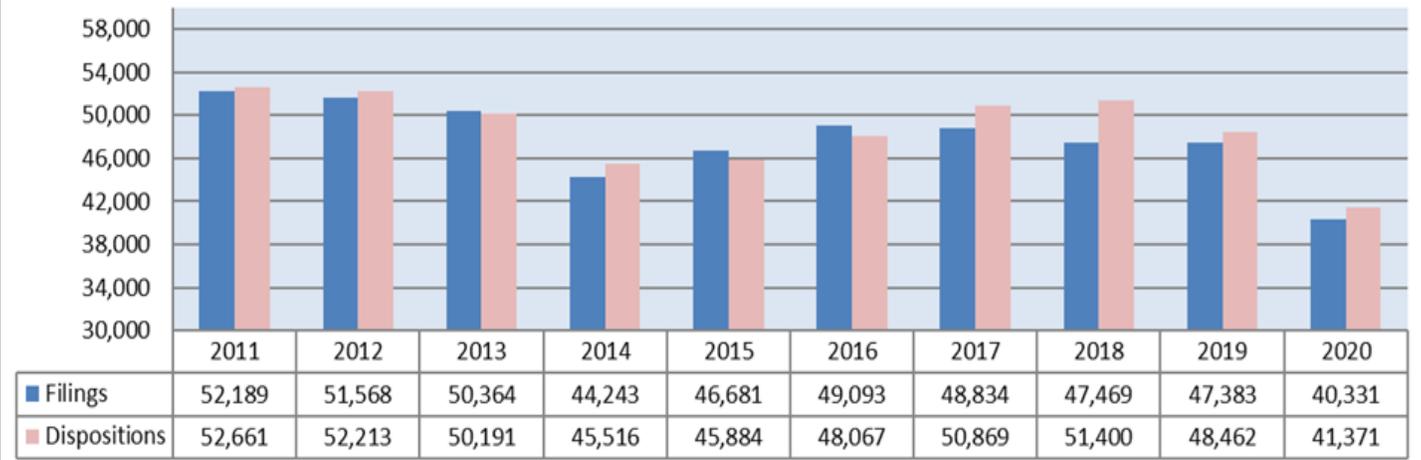
While the Court processed over 40,000 filings and issued over 41,000 dispositions for the fiscal year, this was a significant decrease of 14.9% and 14.6%, respectively, compared to the previous year. The Court's civil filings decreased by 16.8%, and its criminal and delinquency filings decreased



Continued on next page

FAMILY COURT

FAMILY COURT CIVIL & CRIMINAL FILINGS & DISPOSITIONS BY FISCAL YEAR



by 6.1%. The downward trend continued among all three counties with New Castle’s overall filings decreasing by 17.1%, Kent’s decreasing by 12.6%, and Sussex’s decreasing by 12%. These decreases were most evident in March, April, May, and June while the Court was working at a limited capacity.

Child support filings continued to represent the highest volume of filings for Family Court, but still saw a decrease of 20.4% statewide. Juvenile delinquency filings also decreased overall; however, there was an upward trend in juvenile felonies. In New Castle County, felony filings increased for a third year in a row by 3.2%. Sussex County saw an uptick in felony filings for the first time in five years by 2.3%. There were also some upward trends in the adult criminal category. New Castle County saw a continued increase of adult criminal violation of probation filings by 26.1%, and Sussex County saw an increase in Protection from Abuse (“PFA”) contempt filings by 4.4%. Juvenile violation of probation filings decreased statewide by nearly half of what was filed last year, at 47.7%. On the civil side, Family Court began accepting minor name change filings this year and received 137 petitions statewide.

In Fiscal Year 2020, Family Court continued to participate as a National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (“NCJFCJ”) Implementation Site. Family Court was chosen last year as an Implementation Site to enhance our Court Improvement Program (“CIP”) work, improve outcomes for children and families, and support our ever-evolving child welfare practices. As an Implementation Site, we have received individualized assessments, training, and technical assistance from NCJFCJ over this past year. This assistance has included a statewide training on NCJFCJ’s *Enhanced Resource Guidelines: Improving Court Practice in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases*, and facilitation of a virtual strategic planning session with child welfare stakeholders. This planning session was held to prioritize areas of focus for stakeholders and to assist in the planning and implementation for the various projects and initiatives included in the next five year CIP Strategic Plan.

This past year, Family Court entered the sustainability phase of the Family Court Enhancement Project. The project has focused on improving practices in domestic violence, custody, and visitation matters. Through work completed by a Domestic Violence Coordinator,

FAMILY COURT

Family Court has improved upon its PFA processes, case processing practices, and the overall courthouse experience for litigants. The Family Court continued the tradition of celebrating its successes during Domestic Violence Awareness Month with a Family Court staff and stakeholder “round table” discussion

ing well and many litigants are taking advantage of this new filing capability. Prior to the pandemic, Family Court had established a technology committee whose focus was on initiatives that expand the use of technology in order to increase access to justice for litigants. This committee will be reviewing the COVID-19 technology related process changes for potential long term improvements to our litigants’ experiences.

Family Court continued its efforts in FY 2020 to construct new Family Court buildings in Kent and Sussex Counties. The current buildings are undersized, undignified, and unsafe. These projects are critical in providing Family Court and the citizens of Delaware with adequate, secure, and dignified facilities. Governor Carney, in his State of the State Address, committed to the building of Family Court courthouses for Kent and Sussex Counties and the design process will begin in Fiscal Year 2021.



Architect's rendering of proposed Sussex County Family Courthouse in Georgetown.

on domestic violence initiatives and updates. The Domestic Violence Coordinator also aided in the implementation of virtual hearings, the creation of litigant self-help materials, and the addition of self-help materials to Family Court’s website in response to COVID-19.

Family Court continues to incorporate technology in its ongoing effort to enhance access to justice for self-represented litigants. The eCourtroom technology that is available now in each county has provided litigants and attorneys the opportunity to present evidence electronically during court proceedings. In response to COVID-19, Family Court quickly implemented a robust virtual hearing process in all three counties through the use of the Zoom platform. Because of the pandemic and a need to allow for electronic filing, Family Court also implemented an electronic system to accept all filing types. Although Family Court does not currently have an eFiling system, our in-house efforts have been work-

This past year, the Honorable Andrew Southmayd was reappointed to his sixth term as a Commissioner in Sussex County while the Honorable Danielle Blount and the Honorable Kim DeBonte were both reappointed to their second terms as Commissioners



Architect's rendering of proposed Kent County Family Courthouse in Dover.

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FAMILY COURT

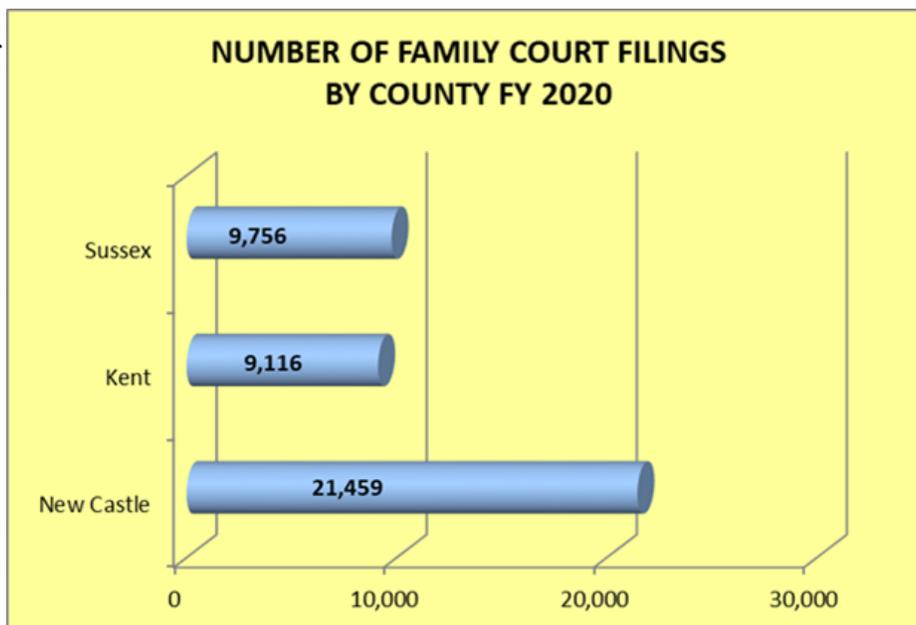
in New Castle County and Sussex County, respectively. Family Court welcomed a new Commissioner this year as the Honorable Francis Mieczkowski, III took the oath of office in June to serve in New Castle County. Commissioner Mieczkowski replaces the Honorable Susan P. Tussey, who retired this past year.

Finally, on June 11, 2020, the Judges, Commissioners, and administration signed and issued a Statement of Unity in response to the protests and racial unrest in the country and the State of Delaware. The Court denounced racism and committed to conversation and action to effectuate change. The Family Court established the Council on Racial Equity (“C.O.R.E.”) comprised of judicial officers and employees which developed the mission statement of C.O.R.E. to “eliminate systemic and institutional racism that serves as a barrier to accessing and achieving justice for litigants of color, and to promote a supportive and inclusive environment for employees that is dedicated to celebrating diversity by removing any social, cultural or other inequities that stifle professional development. Our primary goal will be racial equity and equal justice for all.” C.O.R.E. will continue to meet and address these important societal issues during the upcoming fiscal year.

The Family Court is privileged to serve all Delawareans and particularly children, our most vulnerable citizens. The Court has a large caseload and

hears some of the most intimate and sensitive issues that affect families, parents, and children. Our Judges, Commissioners, administration, and staff strive to ensure equal access to justice for our citizens and are dedicated to the Court’s mission. We

are proud of what we have accomplished during the past fiscal year and look forward to doing even more in the year ahead. ♦



FAMILY COURT



FAMILY COURT JUDGES

Front Row (from left to right): Judge Janell S. Ostroski; Judge Michael W. Arrington; Judge Natalie J. Haskins; Judge Paula Ryan; Judge Mark D. Buckworth; Judge Jennifer B. Ranji; Judge James G. McGiffin, Jr.;

Middle Row (from left to right): Judge Joelle P. Hitch; Judge Louann Vari; Judge Kenneth M. Millman;

Back Row (from left to right): Judge Arlene Minus Coppadge; Judge Peter B. Jones; Chief Judge Michael K. Newell; Judge Robert B. Coonin; Judge Mardi F. Pyott.

Not Pictured: Judge Felice Glennon Kerr; Judge Mary S. Much.

Continued on next page

FAMILY COURT



FAMILY COURT COMMISSIONERS

Front Row (from left to right): Commissioner DeSales Haley; Commissioner Para Wolcott; Commissioner Danielle S. Blount; Commissioner Emily Farley; Commissioner Loretta Young; Commissioner Samantha Lukoff; Commissioner Craig Fitzgerald;

Middle Row (from left to right): Commissioner Kim DeBonte; Commissioner Sonja Wilson; Commissioner Theresa Sedivec; Commissioner James Maxwell;

Back Row (from left to right): Commissioner Jennifer Mayo; Commissioner David Jones; Chief Judge Michael K. Newell; Commissioner Andrew Southmayd; Commissioner Gretchen Gilchrist.

Not Pictured: Commissioner Francis Mieczkowski III.

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS



CHIEF JUDGE ALEX J. SMALLS

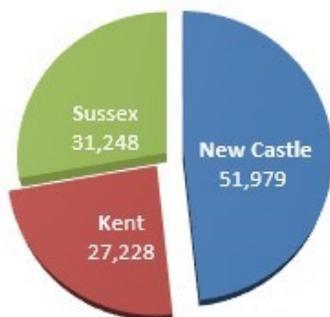
Fiscal Year 2020 was a year of unprecedented change within the Court of Common Pleas. However, the Court adapted and evolved to continue fulfilling its mission of providing a neutral forum for the people and institutions of Delaware, in the resolution of everyday problems, disputes, and more complex legal matters in a fair, professional, efficient, and practical manner.

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly changed operations within the Court of Common Pleas. All court facilities were closed to the public for the majority of the fourth quarter of FY 2020, from March 23,

2020 until June 8, 2020. The Court of Common Pleas acted quickly to maintain access to justice, and immediately began holding critical criminal proceedings for individuals in custody via audiovisual platforms. The Court of Common Pleas also undertook numerous measures to facilitate the progression of criminal cases for individuals not in custody. The Court simplified and streamlined the process for defendants to enter a plea of not guilty without appearing in court under CCP Crim. R. 10(c), and expanded the opportunities for defendants to enter a plea of guilty without appearing in court under CCP Crim. R. 43. The Court of Common Pleas staff also rose

to the occasion when faced with the challenges of continuing operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Court of Common Pleas deployed laptops to enable remote work, and developed work-from-home policies so that the critical needs of the Court could be met. The Court established strategies for conducting proceedings via video platforms and began retrofitting courtrooms to accommodate both video and in

**COURT OF COMMON PLEAS CIVIL & CRIMINAL
FILINGS BY COUNTY FY 2020**



COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

Continued on next page

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

-person proceedings under social distancing guidelines.

Civil case filings in the Court of Common Pleas decreased in FY 2020, but the Court continued to maintain a heavy civil caseload. In FY 2020, the Court of Common Pleas received 6,362 new civil complaints, in addition to 2,995 civil judgments, name changes, and appeals. Consumer debt collection continued to make up the bulk of the Court's civil caseload, accounting for 79.2% of the cases filed in FY 2020. Notably, to minimize the spread of COVID-19, the Court of Common Pleas established strategies for conducting civil proceedings, including motion hearings, pre-trial conferences, and name change petition hearings, via video platforms.

Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Court of Common Pleas has continued to be an extremely busy Court, with over criminal 79,162 case filings in FY 2020. Overall, total case filings were down 10.8% from FY 2019, but in the first three quarters of the fiscal year (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) filings in the Court of Common Pleas were up 5.2% over the same period last year. Criminal misdemeanor filings in the Court of Common Pleas in FY 2020 totaled 79,162, and 7,520 preliminary hearings were scheduled. These figures represent a 10.8% decrease in criminal misdemeanor filings and a 10.2% decrease in total criminal caseload compared to FY 2019. To manage this caseload, the Court of Common Pleas conducted criminal proceedings for defendants in custody by utilizing audio/visual technology. During the period that court facil-

ities were closed to the public (March 23, 2020, through June 8, 2020), the Court of Common Pleas held 3,344 criminal proceedings via video, the bulk of which were preliminary hearings.

While the criminal caseload has declined, the types of cases filed in the Court of Common Pleas are considerably more complex than in previous years. Traffic cases now make up a smaller share of the total caseload in each county. In FY 2020, there were 29,354 traffic charges filed in the Court of Common Pleas. This is a 16.6% decrease from the 35,190 filed in FY 2019. However, the overall misdemeanor filing total decreased by only 10.8% during the same period, and the growth rate of drug and alcohol cases has consistently outpaced other criminal filings. DUI transfers increased 31.7% — growing from 1,970 to 2,594 — between FY 2013 and FY 2020. In Sussex County, the Court's caseload grew with the drug cases doubling, from 5% of the county's total caseload to 11%, between FY 2012 and FY 2020.

DUI cases are among the most time-consuming events handled by the Court. In FY 2020, the part of the Court's criminal caseload consisting of DUI cases increased by 0.2%. From FY 2013 to FY 2020, the number of DUI cases transferred to the court increased by 31.7% statewide. All three counties followed a similar trend, which required additional time to adjudicate. While statewide DUI transfers increased by 31.7%, the number of DUI transfers in Sussex County rose 60.4% during the same period. This significant increase is being evaluated and addressed as we move forward.

The Department of Justice continues to aggressively review felony cases at preliminary hearings and, as



Cleaning staff disinfecting door handles at the Court of Common Pleas in Sussex County.

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

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; which occurs when felony charges are reduced to misdemeanors and returned to the Court after being bound over following preliminary hearings.

The Court of Common Pleas Mediation Program continues to distinguish itself as a valuable resource for criminal cases, civil litigants, and the community at large. The program provides an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) option within the Court, which serves a significant number of clients throughout the state. The Community section of the Mediation Program assists local police agencies in resolving neighborhood disputes as well as those who wish to resolve disputes without the need for costly criminal or civil litigation. In addition, the Mediation Program serves as an ADR educational resource for attorneys studying for the Delaware Bar exam or Mediation Certification. In FY 2020 there were 1,293 cases referred for mediation statewide, however since the Mediation Program began in 2001, there have been 20,692 cases referred for mediation. 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. In

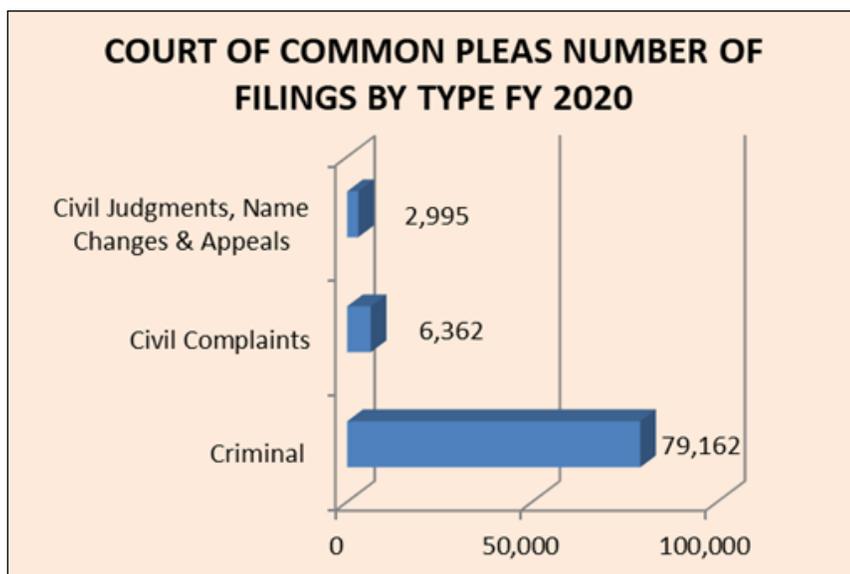
FY 2020, the Court's Mediation Program had a statewide success/satisfaction rate of 94%.

The Court Mediation Program continued to provide service without interruption during the COVID-19 Judicial Emergency. The Court of Common Pleas quickly adapted to provide services remotely through video, teleconference, and email. Alternative service options were developed for individuals required to perform community service including amending agreements to include donations to organizations providing service during the pandemic in lieu of community service. Statewide, clients of the Mediation Program have donated over \$2,000.00 to various organizations including the Food Bank of Delaware, local Domestic Violence shelters, and animal shelters.

The Court continued to operate its highly successful court-supervised comprehensive Drug Diversion Program for non-violent offenders. This program is under the direction of Judge Robert Surles in New Castle County, Commissioner Donald Bucklin in Kent County and Judge Kenneth Clark in Sussex County. The Drug Diversion Program represents a collaborative effort between the Court, the Department of Justice, the Office of Defense Services, the private bar, treatment providers and the Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC) formerly known as the Treatment Research Institute (TRI) of the University of Pennsylvania. Collaboration with

the PHMC provides observation, research and data analysis, which has assisted in launching scores of other drug diversion programs throughout the United States and internationally. The Court of Common Pleas Drug Diversion Program has served 9,114 participants since its inception in 1998.

The Court of Common Pleas continues to operate the DUI Treatment Court Program in New Castle County, under the direction of Chief Judge Smalls, and previously, with Judge Sheldon K. Rennie. The Court accepted its first participants on December 19, 2014. In FY 2020, in New Castle County, there were



Continued on next page

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

55 active participants in the program. To date, 206 individuals have entered the program, 164 individuals have successfully completed the program, and 14 individuals have been terminated from the program. On February 2, 2018, DUI Court was expanded to Kent County Court of Common Pleas under the direction of Judge Charles Welch III and Commissioner Donald Bucklin. In FY 2020, Kent County had 24 active participants in the program and to date 40 individuals have entered the program, 24 individuals have successfully completed the program, and 3 individuals have been terminated from the program.

The Court of Common Pleas has begun the planning and implementation and steps have been taken to expand the DUI Treatment Court Program to Sussex County Court of Common Pleas.

We look forward to having the program up and running during FY 2021. This would complete our efforts to make the DUI Treatment Court available to all possible participants in all three counties of the State of Delaware.

To be eligible for the program, the DUI must be a first offense with a high blood alcohol content (BAC) level or a second DUI offense; the DUI must not have resulted in severe bodily injury or death; the individual is subject to the DUI-RANT Assessment and must test within the High Risk/High Needs quadrant; and the individual must plead guilty to the offense. The program is authorized under 21 Del. C. § 4177(d) (2), and its goal is to enhance community safety through the promotion of lifestyle changes with specialized treatment.

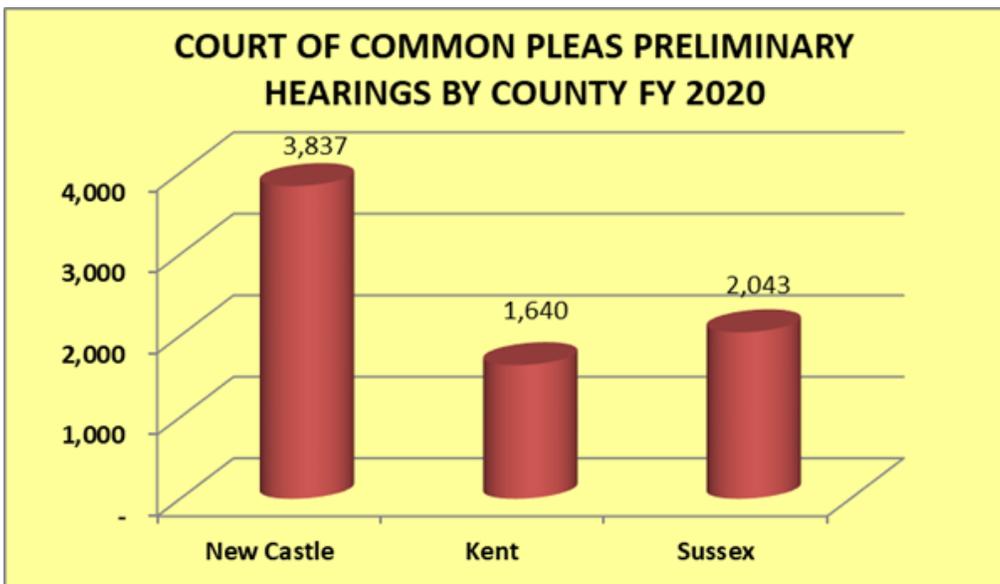
The treatment program requires all participants to be evaluated and complete a motivational intervention program to address alcohol or drug problems with a goal to change behavior. Participants also are required to complete 240 hours of community service.

The Court of Common Pleas also collaborated with other courts, justice partners, state service agencies and community groups to establish a Community Court in the City of Wilmington. A Community

Court Steering Committee consisting of Court representatives, justice partners, social service providers and community group members was created to manage the delivery of services. The purpose of the committee was

to “provide oversight to the planning process, guide the direction of the Community Court through the resolution of pertinent issues, and to assist in the development of necessary partnerships with the community and other entities.” The goal of Community Court is to build a stronger/improved relationship between the criminal justice system and the members of the community, by engaging the community members and focusing on criminal justice issues.

The Community Resource Center was completed and opened on the second floor of the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center in Wilmington bringing many service providers together in one location. Justice-involved individuals have immediate access at the courthouse to make connections with a variety of service providers to address needs ranging



COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

from education, mental health, substance abuse, housing, and food. One of the primary focuses of the resource center is connecting offenders with employment. Job training, resume writing, and connecting defendants with employers willing to give them a second chance to reenter the workforce are all accessible at the center. The resource center is open to anyone in the community. This was an innovative way to strengthen the relationship between the justice system and the communities it serves to improve access to justice and to foster the public's trust and confidence in the legal system.

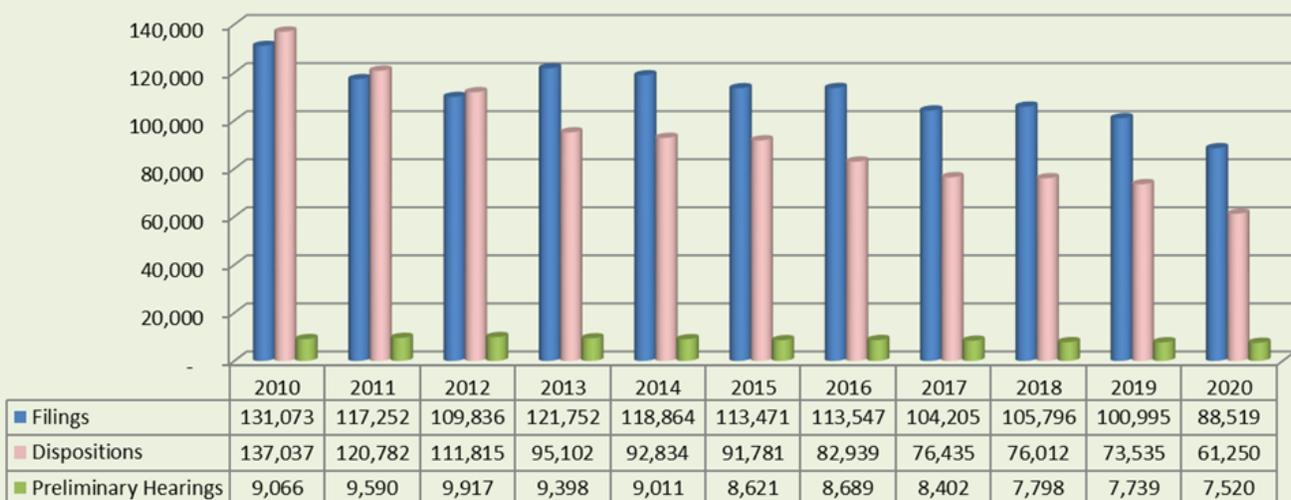
The Court of Common Pleas saw three judges retire during FY 2020. Judge Charles Welch III retired on January 1, 2020, after 20 years of dedicated service to the Court of Common Pleas for Kent County. Judge Rosemary Betts Beauregard retired on March 31, 2020, after 21 years of dedicated service to the Court of Common Pleas for Sussex County serving since April 22, 1999. Judge Beauregard has the distinguished honor of being the first female Judge to serve on the Court of Common Pleas. Judge John K. Welch retired on July 1, 2020, having served as an Associate Judge for the Municipal Court for the City

of Wilmington from June 1996 until his appointment to the Court of Common Pleas for New Castle County on May 1, 1998.

On January 31, 2020, the Court welcomed Judge Kathleen K. Amalfitano in Kent County. Prior to joining the Bench, Judge Amalfitano spent over 20 years as Assistant Supervising Attorney in the Office of Defense Services. In addition, Judge Amalfitano is an active member of the Delaware Army National Guard and provides legal assistance to members of the Delaware Air and Army National Guard. ♦



COURT OF COMMON PLEAS CIVIL & CRIMINAL FILINGS, DISPOSITIONS & PRELIMINARY HEARINGS BY FISCAL YEAR



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COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS JUDGES



Standing left to right: Judge John K. Welch; Judge Bradley V. Manning; Judge Kathleen K. Amalfitano; Judge Rosemary Betts Beauregard;

Seated left to right: Judge Robert H. Surles; Judge Kenneth S. Clark, Jr.; Chief Judge Alex J. Smalls; Judge Anne E. Hartnett; Judge Carl C. Danberg.



COURT OF COMMON PLEAS COMMISSIONERS

Standing left to right:
Commissioner Mary McDonough
Commissioner Donald Bucklin

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT



CHIEF MAGISTRATE ALAN G. DAVIS

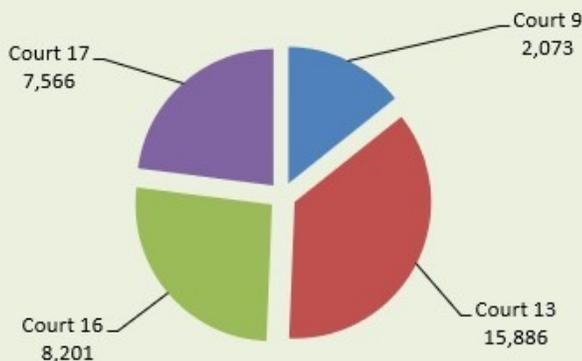
Preparing to write this message is a yearly chore that is usually accomplished by reviewing the good works of this Court and then giving a rundown of the highlights of which we are most proud or that have had the most impact on Court operations. While this past fiscal year had its share of achievements that the Court has reason to tout, the events of the last four months of the fiscal year saw such tremendous impact, they overshadow the rest of the year. The good news is that the Justice of the Peace Court responded as it always does – with grit, determination, and a “can do” attitude.

March 16, 2020 marked the last day of normal operations in the various locations of the Justice of the Peace Court. With the issuance of the emergency orders of both the Governor and the Chief Justice, the Court was limited to functioning only through its 24-hour locations and when presented emergency petitions at civil locations. For all practical purposes, the Justice of the Peace Court was the only public facing portion of the Delaware Judiciary for over two and a half months. While our sister courts continued to function on some level, we persisted as the only “open” facilities of the branch.



JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT

**TOTAL JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT CIVIL
CASES FILED BY COURT FY 2020**



Although the public was encouraged to contact the Court and handle matters from a distance, many matters were still handled in person. Decades of daily use of video-phone technology for interaction with the police became less of a smart use of resources and more of an essential method of keeping court staff, the police and the public socially distanced. Our staff in those open locations reported to work to staff the effort, and proved

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JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT

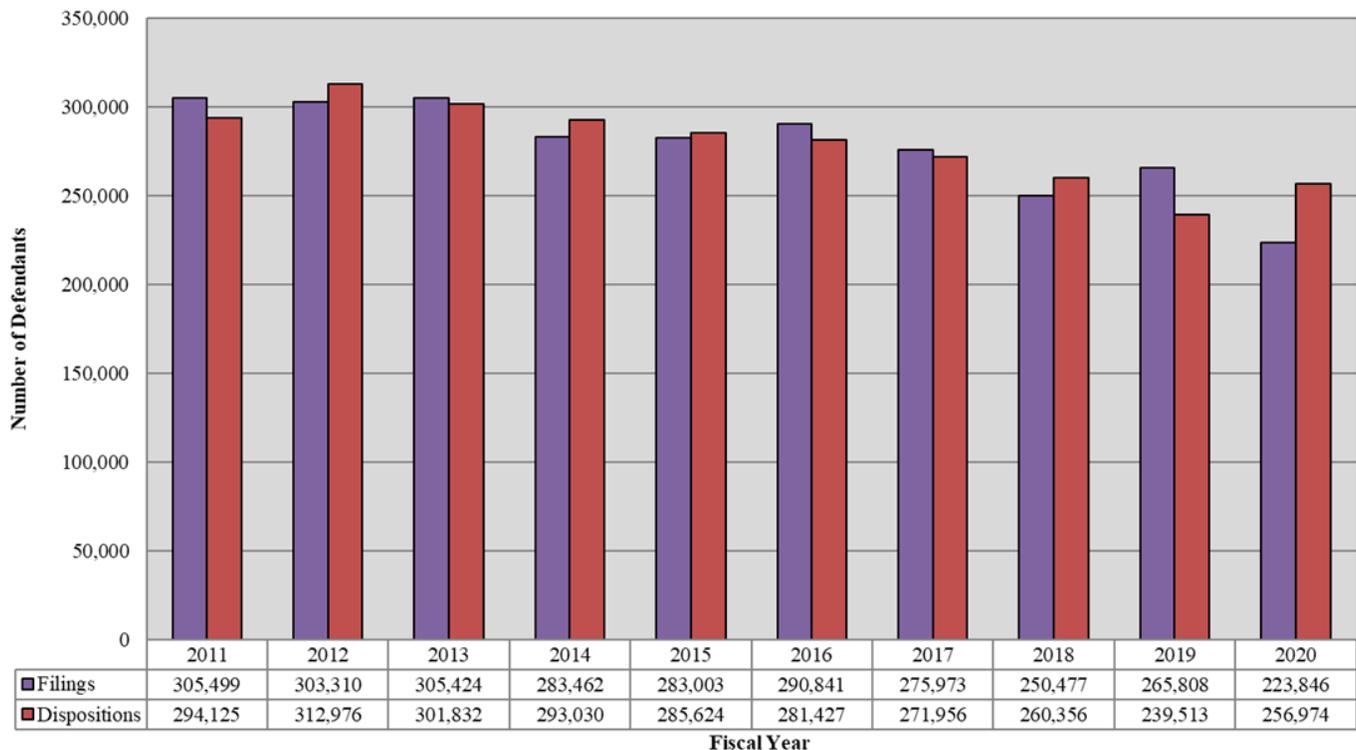
once and for all the meaning of the word essential. While many of them have had to labor through snow days, this quickly became the longest “storm” in the Court’s modern history.

Behind the scenes, other staff were fulfilling support roles, taking needed training and generally being available at a moment’s notice to fill needed gaps. The Court’s administrative staff convened in the early days on a daily basis, identifying new strategies for doing the work of the Court and seeking out the best methods for implementing those processes. All of these efforts were directed at the ultimate goal of reopening the Court’s many locations in a safe, orderly and efficient fashion, when given the go ahead by the Chief Justice.

In the meantime, the usual incoming work of the Court was also affected. Non-criminal police work ground essentially to a halt, with an over 85% reduction in traffic offenses written year-over-year for the last two weeks of March, though it began to steadily creep up after that. The Governor modified the emergency order to prohibit the filing of landlord-tenant actions. While the first development represented a helpful reprieve from creating an overwhelming backlog for the Court’s criminal locations, the second created a general sense of unease that the civil locations of the Court would be hit with an avalanche of filings once the limitation was lifted.

On June 4th, the judiciary reopened for limited business. The Justice of the Peace Court loca-

Justice of the Peace Court Civil & Criminal/Traffic Filings and Dispositions by Fiscal Year*



*Criminal filings and disposition information is by defendant

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT

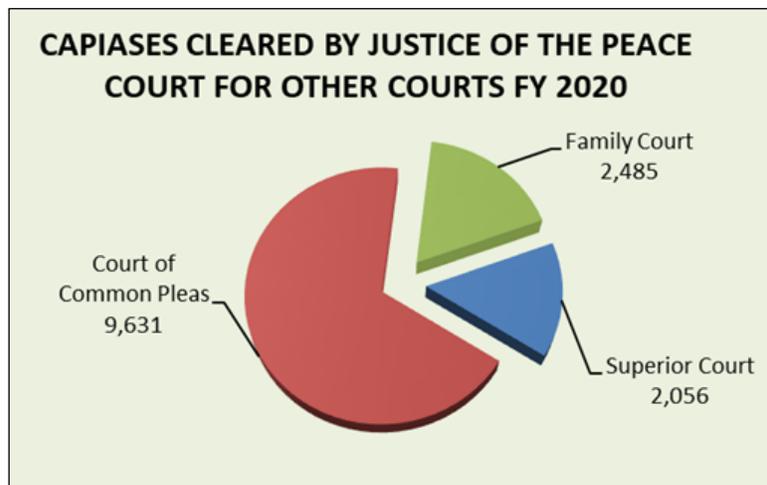
tions that had been reduced to emergency matters began to return to a new normal. The locations that had been open during the shutdown saw lifting of some restrictions. Everyone began absorbing the new ways that business was going to need to be done – virtual hearings, limited people in lobbies, the creation of “walk-in” courtrooms, for people without technology to allow for them to appear distantly. We all also started to see the limitations of this new way of doing business – lack of appropriate contact information for defendants on the criminal side and litigants on the civil severely limits the effectiveness of attempting to move to virtual proceedings.

Still, through all of those changes, our staff put every ounce of effort they could into serving the



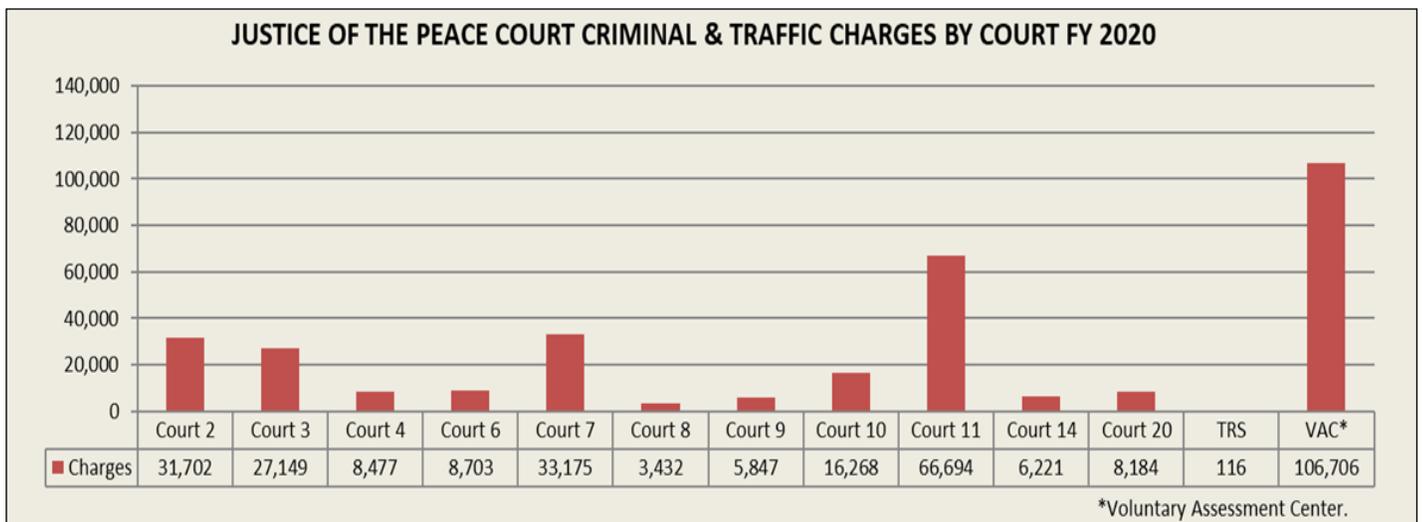
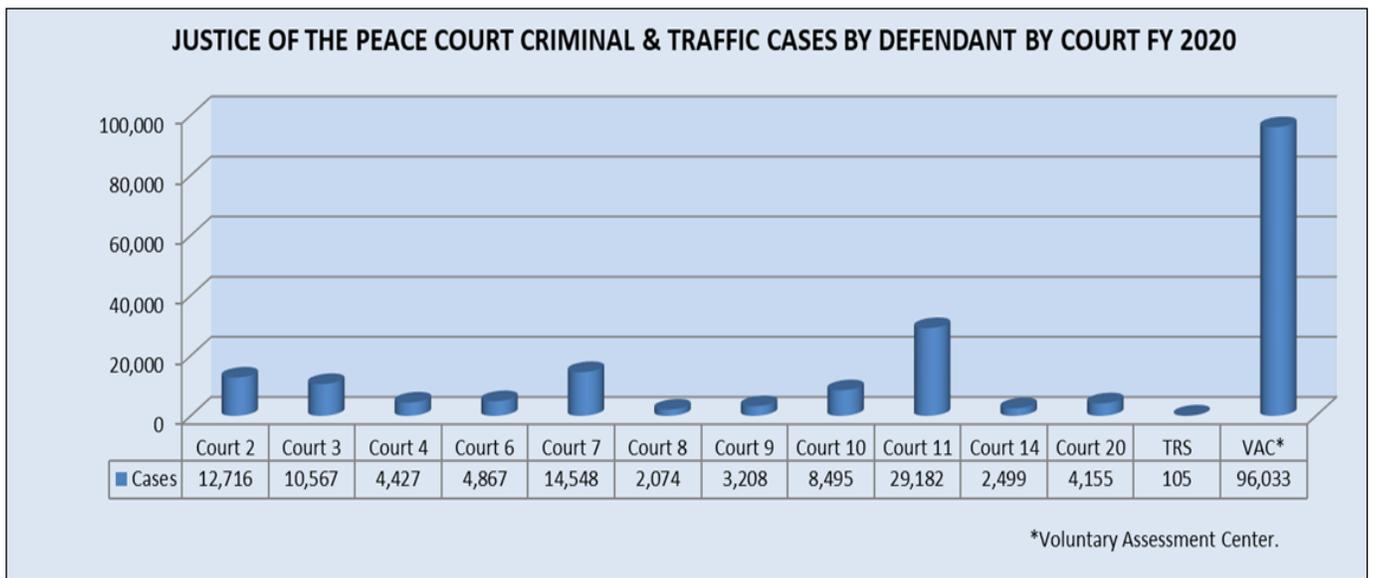
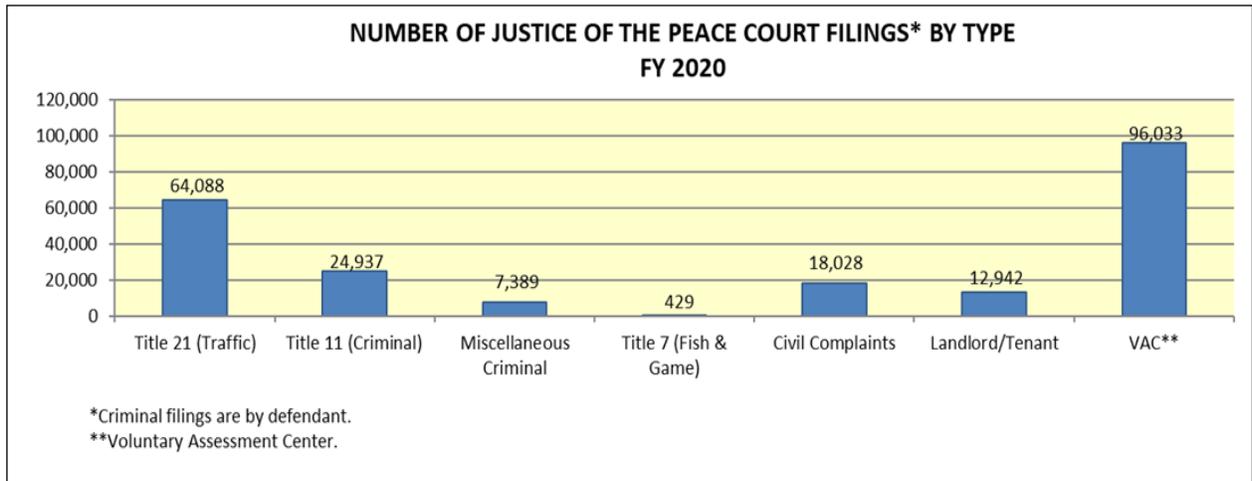
public, ensuring justice still moved forward. They did so despite not having all of the tools that we would like, having to learn new processes what felt like every single day, and still having health, childcare and oth-

er personal concerns of their own. Our staff and judges have proven they can take anything that is thrown at them. As we begin a new fiscal year, no one knows what the future holds. However, I am confident the individuals that make up the Justice of the Peace Court of the State of Delaware will be up to whatever challenge, whatever change, whatever responsibility that awaits. They will do so with the knowledge that the work they do matters, that they are essential, and that their efforts will not be overlooked. ♦



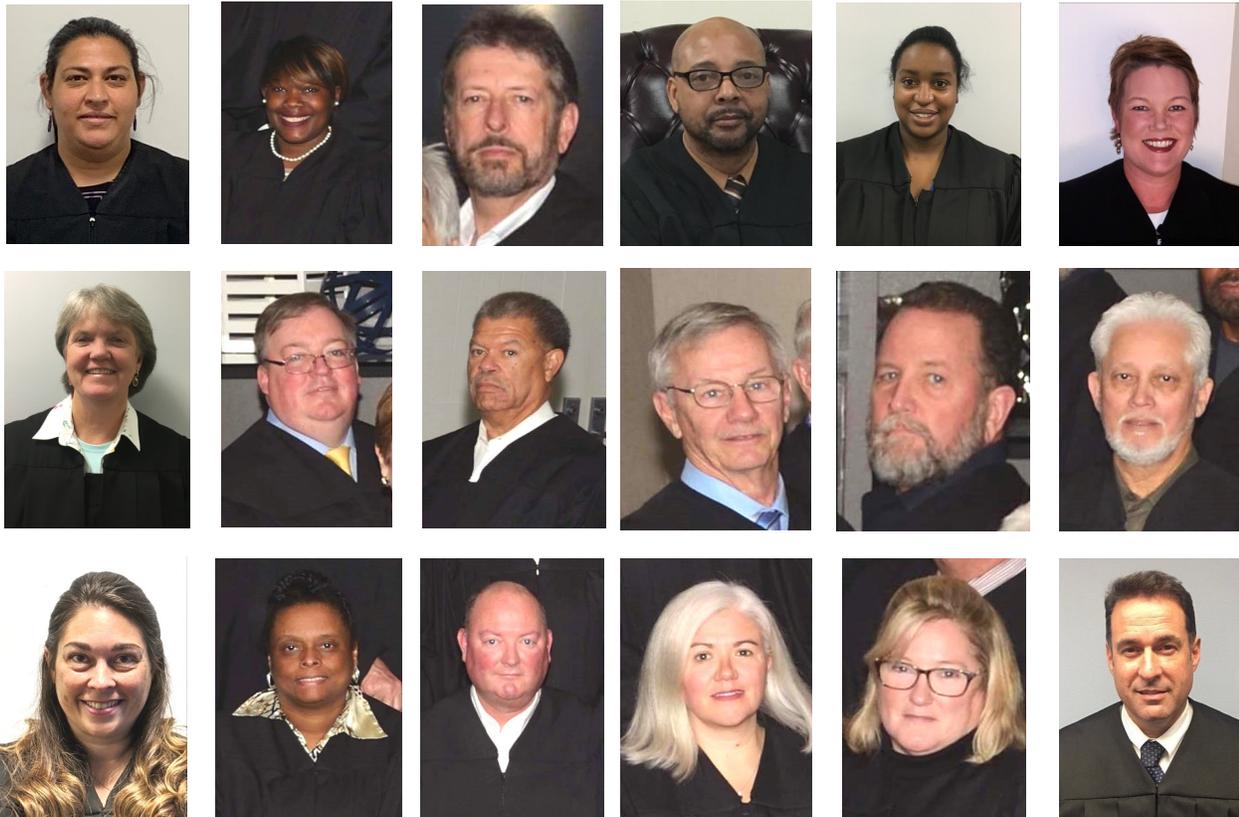
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JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT



JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT

NEW CASTLE COUNTY JUDGES



Top row (left to right):

Nina Bawa; Shameka Booker; Peter Burcat; Bracy Dixon, Jr.; Shanaya Eyong; Emily Ferrell;

Middle row (left to right):

Beatrice Freel; James R. Hanby, Sr.; Bobby Hoof; Thomas M. Kenney; Vincent Kowal; Roberto Lopez;

Back row (left to right):

Shelley Losito; Cheryl McCabe-Stroman; Sean McCormick; Amanda Moyer; Mary Ellen Naugle; Walter Newton.

Continued on next page

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT

NEW CASTLE COUNTY JUDGES



Top row (left to right):

Marie Page; Maria Perez-Chambers; Alex Peterson, III; Christopher Portante; John Potts; Gerald Ross, III;

Bottom row (left to right):

Katharine B. Ross; David R. Skelley; Kerry Taylor; Susan Ufberg; Rodney Vodery.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT

KENT COUNTY JUDGES



Top row, (left to right):

Nicole Alston-Jackson; D. Kenneth Cox; Dwight Dillard; Wallace G. Edmanson II;

Middle row (left to right):

Jamie Hicks; Cathleen Hutchinson; Alexander Montano; James A. Murray;

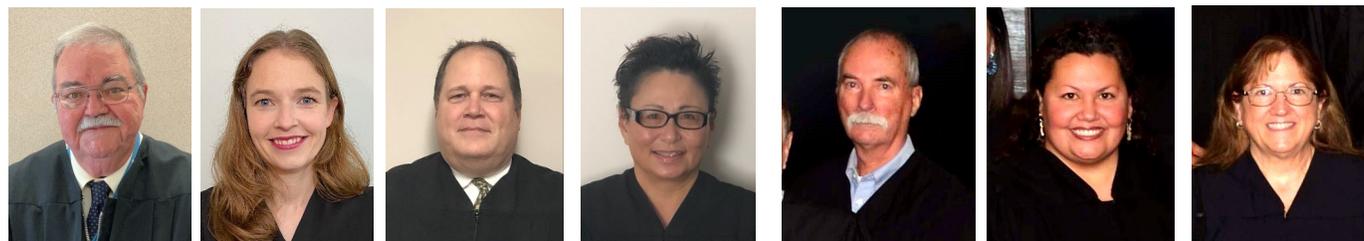
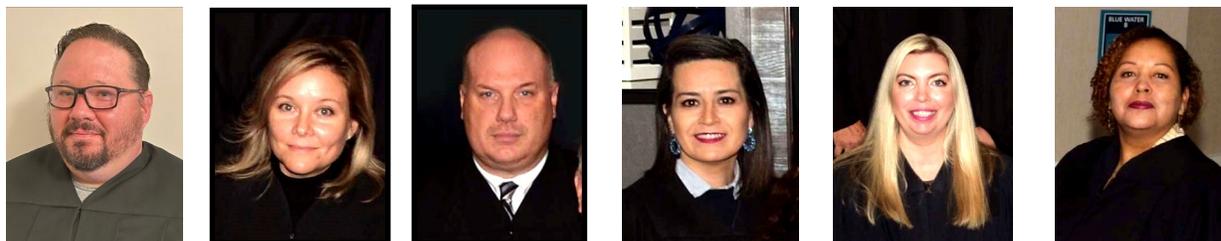
Bottom row (left to right):

Michael P. Sherlock; Judy Smith; Dana Tracy; Kevin Wilson.

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JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT

SUSSEX COUNTY JUDGES



Top row (left to right):

John J. Adams; Stephani Adams; Christopher A. Bradley; Maria Castro; Leah Chandler; Mirta Collazo;

Middle row (left to right):

Richard D. Comly; Bethany Fiske; Brett Graves; Catherine Hester; John R. Hudson; Michelle Jewell; Deputy Chief Magistrate Deborah Keenan;

Bottom row (left to right):

John D. McKenzie; Nicholas Mirro; Jennifer Sammons; Candace Whitelock; Scott Willey; William Patrick Wood.

JUDICIAL BRANCH EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED



*Chief Justice Seitz and
Francee Boulware*

Senior Accountant Francee Boulware at the Administrative Office of the Courts has been named the Judicial Branch Employee of the Year for 2019. Francee, who has seven years of full-time State service plus casual/seasonal and student worker experience, was recognized for her extraordinary work in the Accounting Unit during a particularly challenging time of transition for the small but busy department. The four-person unit lost both of its full time accounting specialists without much notice, leaving only Francee and a casual/seasonal employee to manage all the accounting duties for several months. Despite the loss of 50 percent of the unit, during one of the busiest times of the year for the department – the transition from one fiscal year to the next – Francee was able to keep the unit operating and fulfilling all of its duties to other departments without any noticeable delays or oversights during the search process for new accounting specialists and during the lengthy training process for the two new employees. And as one of the nominees wrote, “She also did it with a great attitude and without complaint ... during the rocky times, Francee really stepped up to the plate and performed exceptionally.” Perhaps just as importantly, once the department was back up

to full staff – as a second nominator wrote – “.... Francee took steps to mitigate this situation should it occur in the future I can't say enough about her conscientiousness.”

Court Security Officer Sean M. McHale of the Justice of the Peace Court was given the Delaware Award for Heroism for his actions on Nov. 6, 2019 when he came upon a multi-vehicle traffic accident on Del. 1 on his way to work. Court Security Officer McHale immediately stopped and rushed to an overturned Jeep, finding three people trapped inside. McHale, with the assistance of a bystander, then pulled all three individuals from the wreck to safety to await medical assistance. His actions dramatically reduced the likelihood of an additional collision, prevented further injury and perhaps the loss of life.



CSO Sean M. McHale

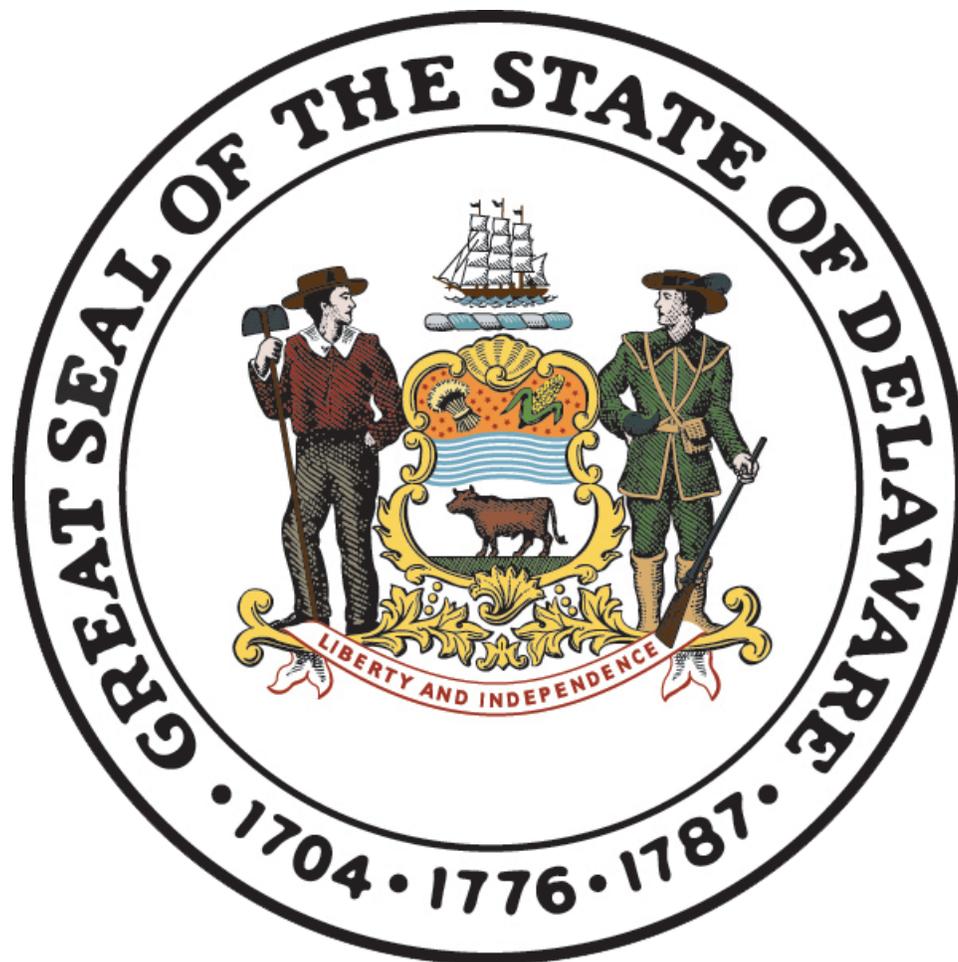
The Delaware Judiciary congratulates Ms. Boulware and CSO McHale on the well-deserved recognition. Other employees nominated for the Judicial Branch Employee of the Year, and who were honored and nominated as Employee of the Year for their respective courts include:

Leslie Rementer, Chief Deputy Prothonotary, Superior Court. Leslie, who has been with Sussex County Superior Court for over 25 years, was cited for her overall knowledge of the criminal justice system. Over the past year, Sussex County has been plagued with staff shortages and Leslie was always the first to volunteer in a variety of positions. “She is never afraid to get in the trenches to get work done You will never hear a final response from her of ‘I don’t know’; the response will always be ‘Let me find the answer,’” wrote her nominator.

Ronald Williamson, Electronic Court Reporter II, Family Court. Ronald, who joined the court in 2015, was cited for his exceptional performance, achievement, initiative and selflessness. “Throughout his career in Family Court, Mr. Williamson has developed a reputation for exceptional customer service, not only with Family Court, but with external vendors as well. Specifically in regards to his efforts toward the establishment of the eCourtrooms...,” wrote his nominator. “Ron is a very dedicated employee who is very dependable and pleasant to work with. Ron goes above and beyond to perform his work duties, he uses his knowledge to assist others and is very well respected by his co-workers.”

Joann Personti, Mediation Officer, Court of Common Pleas. Joann, who has worked for the Court since 2007, has successfully mediated thousands of cases and in 2019, the Mediation Program boasted a remarkable 94 percent success rate. Joann’s “organizational abilities, strong work ethic, and leadership skills were especially highlighted last year,” when she identified an issue with a vendor she oversees and quickly and professionally developed strategies to resolve the matter and put new procedures in place to ensure similar problems did not occur in future.

JoAnn Paskey, Judicial Case Processor III, Justice of the Peace Court. JoAnn who has been with the Justice of the Peace Court for 16 years, was cited for her performance during a particularly demanding year of turnover. She handled the simultaneous training of multiple new hires including as many as three at one time. In addition to her regular duties, she also serves on the Forms and Process Committee, which requires many hours of her time. “(H)er outstanding, dedicated service is a definite asset to the Justice of the Peace Court system,” wrote her nominator. ♦



Many thanks to the Presiding Judges, Court Administrators, 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/FY20>
2020 Annual Report, Statistical Report of the Delaware Judiciary and
additional Delaware Courts background information*