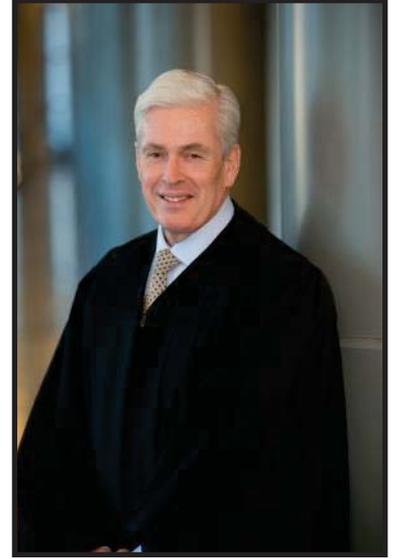


FAMILY COURT



FAMILY COURT

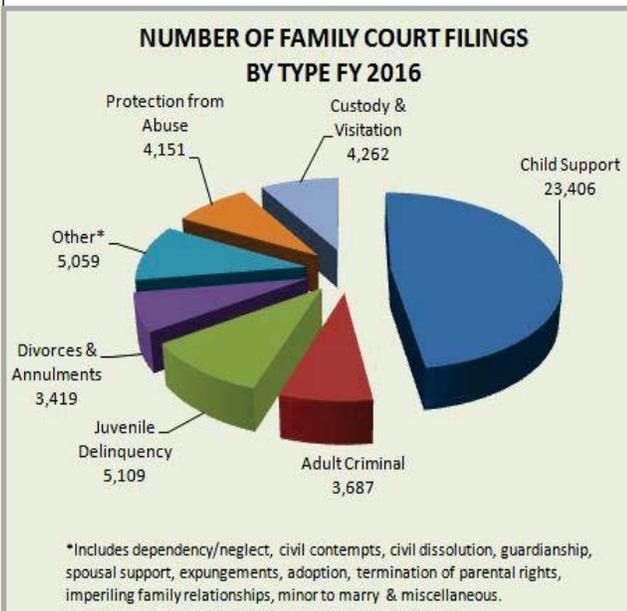
CHIEF JUDGE MICHAEL K. NEWELL



In FY 2016, Family Court continued its work in achieving its goal of providing 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.

Filings increased by 5.17% overall in FY 2016. The Family Court's civil filings increased by 5.84%, while the court's criminal and delinquency filings both increased

by 2%. By county, New Castle realized the most growth in its civil filings, with an increase of 13% from the previous year while Sussex County's civil filings decreased by 3%. Both Kent County and New Castle County realized a 6% increase in juvenile delinquency filings, while Sussex County's delinquency filings were down 12% from Fiscal Year 15. The Court's criminal filings increased by more than 8% in Kent County, 2% in New Castle County while decreasing in Sussex County by 6%.



In addition to growth in our filings, Family Court's criminal jurisdiction expanded to give the court jurisdiction over misdemeanor offenses between former spouses, persons cohabitating who hold themselves out as a couple with or without a child in common, and persons living apart with a child in common.

Family Court continued its work on several significant process improvement initiatives, including the Family Court Enhancement Project (sponsored by the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women, in collaboration with the National Council of Juvenile and Family

FAMILY COURT

FAMILY COURT CIVIL & CRIMINAL FILINGS & DISPOSITIONS BY FISCAL YEAR



Court Judges, the Battered Women’s Justice Project, the Center for Court Innovation, and the National Institute for Justice), a caseload assessment, a branch-wide electronic filing project, several projects related to trial court performance measurements and Family Court mediator training. The court looks forward to implementing the recommendations from several of these important projects next year. Under the leadership of Chief Judge Newell in FY 2016, the Family Court began a project to review and revise its Rules of Civil Procedure.

In partnership with the other courts and the Office of Management and Budget, Family Court continued its work to secure funding and to identify appropriate sites for new courthouses in Kent and Sussex Coun-

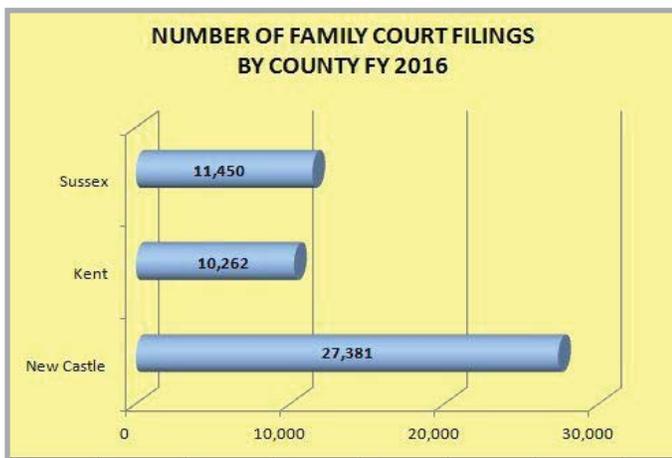
ties. In February 2015 the Court Facilities Improvement Working Group issued its report concluding that the need to address existing security and operational inadequacies in both Family Court’s Kent and Sussex courthouses remains critical and the current Family Court facilities do not offer the dignified and secure facilities necessary.

FY 2016 continued to bring new faces to the Family Court bench. In November 2015, the Honorable Jennifer L. Ranji was sworn in as a Family Court Judge serving in New Castle County, upon the resignation of the Honorable William L. Chapman Jr., who served the Family Court for more than 20 years with distinction. Also in November, the court welcomed the Honorable Danielle Blount who was sworn in as a Family Court Commissioner serving in New Castle County. Commissioner Blount filled the vacancy left by the well-deserved retirement of the Honorable Mary Ann Herlihy, who served the court for 16 years. The Honorable Arlene Minus Coppadge was reappointed as a Judge for New Castle County in November and began her second term with the Family Court.

In December 2015, the Honorable Natalie Haskins became a Family Court Judge, serving in New Castle County. Judge Haskins filled the vacancy left by the untimely death of the Honorable Alan N. Cooper,

Continued on next page

NUMBER OF FAMILY COURT FILINGS BY COUNTY FY 2016



FAMILY COURT

who passed away in October 2015, having served 10 years with the court.

In February 2016, the Honorable Kim DeBonte was sworn in as a Family Court Commissioner serving Sussex County, following the retirement of the Honorable Pamela Holloway, who dedicated more than 24 years to public service as a Family Court Commissioner.

In June 2016, the Honorable Mary Much was reappointed as a Commissioner for New Castle County

and two of the court's Commissioners were sworn in as Family Court Judges: the Honorable Louann Vari, in Kent County; and the Honorable Janell Ostroski in New Castle County. Judge Vari filled the vacancy created by the retirement of the Honorable William N. Nicholas, who retired after a distinguished judicial career spanning 24 years at Family Court. Judge Ostroski filled the vacancy left by the court's longest serving Judge, the Honorable Jay H. Conner, who retired after 34 years of dedicated service to Family Court as a Judge. ♦

On October 7, 2016 an inspirational mural dedicated to the memory of the late Family Court Judge Alan N. Cooper was unveiled in the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center. The Delaware Children's Department, the Office of the Child Advocate and the Delaware Youth Advisory Council organized the mural project. The artwork itself was designed and painted by foster children under the guidance of artist John Donato.

BOTTOM LEFT: Family Court Chief Judge Michael K. Newell speaks at the October unveiling of the mural outside Courtroom 3D.

BOTTOM RIGHT: The "Coop Moose" in the mural itself recalling the spirit of Judge Cooper (inset).



FAMILY COURT



FAMILY COURT JUDGES

Bottom first row (from left to right): Judge Barbara Crowell, Judge Mardi Pyott, Judge Aida Waserstein, Judge Paula Ryan, Judge Arlene Minus-Coppadge, Judge Felice Kerr, Judge Janell Ostroski, Judge Natalie Haskins.

Middle Row (on the steps from left to right): Judge William Walls, Jr. [retired], Judge Louann Vari, Judge Kenneth Millman, Judge Mark Buckworth.

Top Row (from left to right): Judge Joelle Hitch, Judge Peter Jones, Chief Judge Michael Newell, Judge Robert Coonin, Judge Jennifer Ranji.

Not pictured: Judge James McGiffin, Jr.

The **Honorable James McGiffin, Jr.** was formally sworn in for his first term as Judge of the Family Court of Delaware on Oct. 24, 2016. Prior to his appointment to Family Court, Judge McGiffin served as Counsel to the Majority Caucus in the Delaware State Senate and a Senior Staff Attorney with Community Legal Aid Society Inc. in Kent County. He also served as a Family Court Commissioner from 1994 to 1998. Judge McGiffin replaced Judge William Walls Jr. who retired from the bench.

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FAMILY COURT



FAMILY COURT COMMISSIONERS

Bottom Row (from left to right): Para Wolcott, DeSales Haley, Kim DeBonte, Susan Tussey, Angela Fowler, John Carrow, Sonja Wilson, James Maxwell, Danielle Blount, Loretta Young.

Top Row (from left to right): Jennifer Mayo, David Jones, Chief Judge Newell, Andrew Southmayd, Mary Much.

Not pictured: Gretchen Gilchrist and Theresa Sedivec.

The **Honorable Gretchen Gilchrist** was formally sworn in for her first term as Commissioner of the Family Court of Delaware on Nov. 18, 2016. Prior to joining the Family Court, Commissioner Gilchrist operated her own law firm in Smyrna and was Legislative Advisor to the Wilmington City Council.

The **Honorable Theresa Sedivec** was formally sworn in for her first term as Commissioner of the Family Court of Delaware on Dec. 19, 2016. Prior to joining the Family Court, Commissioner Sedivec served as the Unit Head of the Juvenile Delinquency and Truancy unit in the Family Division of the Delaware Department of Justice.