

# MESSAGE FROM THE STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

## The 2019 Annual Report of the Delaware Judiciary

I am pleased to present the 2019 Annual Report of the Delaware Judicial Branch. Our theme this year, “Building for the Next Decade,” highlights the successes achieved by the Delaware Judiciary during the tenure of retiring Chief Justice Leo E. Strine, Jr. and outlines a vision for the future that will build upon that strong foundation as a new decade begins under the leadership of Chief Justice Collins J. Seitz, Jr., who was sworn in as Delaware’s ninth Chief Justice in November 2019.

This report is designed to give an overview of our Courts, how we operate, our funding and the various initiatives that both the Branch as a whole and individual Courts are pursuing to help fulfill our mission of providing fair, just and efficient resolution of disputes under the rules of law and equity, and with the protection of all rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitutions of the State of Delaware and the United States.

This past year has been one of significant change in the Judicial Branch leadership. In addition to the retirement of Chief Justice Strine, the courts lost the insight and experience of two valuable long-time public servants and dear friends with the retirement of Supreme Court Administrator William Montgomery and the relocation of my predecessor, State Court Administrator Amy Arnott Quinlan. We wish them both well and will miss them greatly, but the work of the courts must continue. The Delaware Judiciary now looks to the future with the investiture of Chief Justice Seitz and the historic appointment of Justice Tamika R. Montgomery-Reeves to the Supreme Court.

I am excited to be returning to the Delaware Courts in 2020, following my 2018 retirement as the Delaware Supreme Court’s Chief Staff Attorney and a brief but invigorating term in 2019 working as a Staff Attorney at Legal Services Corporation of Delaware. I am thrilled to welcome Karlis Johnson as the new Supreme Court Administrator after more than a decade of service as the Court Administrator for the Court of Chancery. I also would like to offer special thanks to Elmer Setting for his excellent leadership as Acting State Court Administrator during the interregnum.

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) remains focused on our mission of providing administrative support for the Delaware Judiciary and Court initiatives, like our court modernization project that includes two new downstate Family Court facilities along with improvements to the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center and the launch of a new e-filing system for all of the Delaware Courts. With our new Justices and our new court staff in place, we are set to begin building for the next decade.

I hope you find this Report useful in understanding our Court System and our ongoing initiatives. I encourage you to visit our website at <http://courts.delaware.gov/> for the latest information about the Delaware Courts.

Sincerely,



Gayle P. Lafferty  
State Court Administrator

