

SUPERIOR COURT



PRESIDENT JUDGE JAN R. JURDEN



SUPERIOR COURT

The mission of the Superior Court is to serve the public by providing fair, prompt and well-reasoned decisions in all matters coming before the Court. Our core values remain **Unity, Neutrality, Integrity, Timeliness, Equality, and Dedication.**

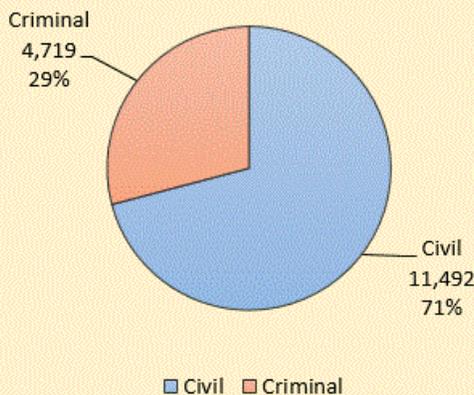
As Delaware's trial court of general jurisdiction, each year the Superior Court handles thousands of civil and criminal cases. Similar to preceding years, FY 2019 was a busy year for the Superior Court. The Court had 11,492 civil filings and 4,719

criminal filings. Twenty-eight First Degree Murder cases were filed in FY 19, and many complex multi-defendant, multi-count, gang participation and criminal racketeering cases were filed as well. Because of the number of defendants and attorneys involved in such cases, they often present significant logistical, staffing and scheduling challenges.

Trial by jury continues to be the bedrock of our criminal and civil justice systems. Every week, hundreds of jurors are summoned

for service in the Superior Court and the Court of Common Pleas in all three counties. In an effort to use technology to increase efficiency and make the process easier for prospective jurors, the Court has enhanced its Jury Management system. We now offer an online Juror Qualification Questionnaire and jurors have the ability to request excusals and postponements online. We have received very positive feedback from jurors regarding these enhancements. We continue to explore ways to min-

**NUMBER OF SUPERIOR COURT CASES
BY TYPE FY 2019**



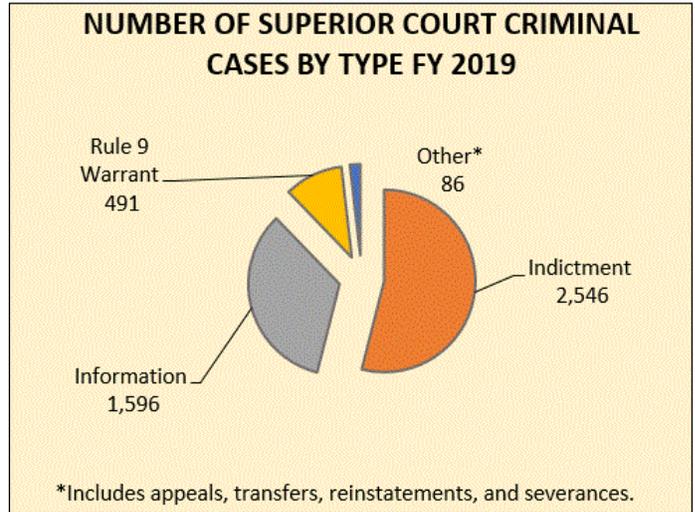
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imize juror inconvenience and make the process more efficient and less stressful.

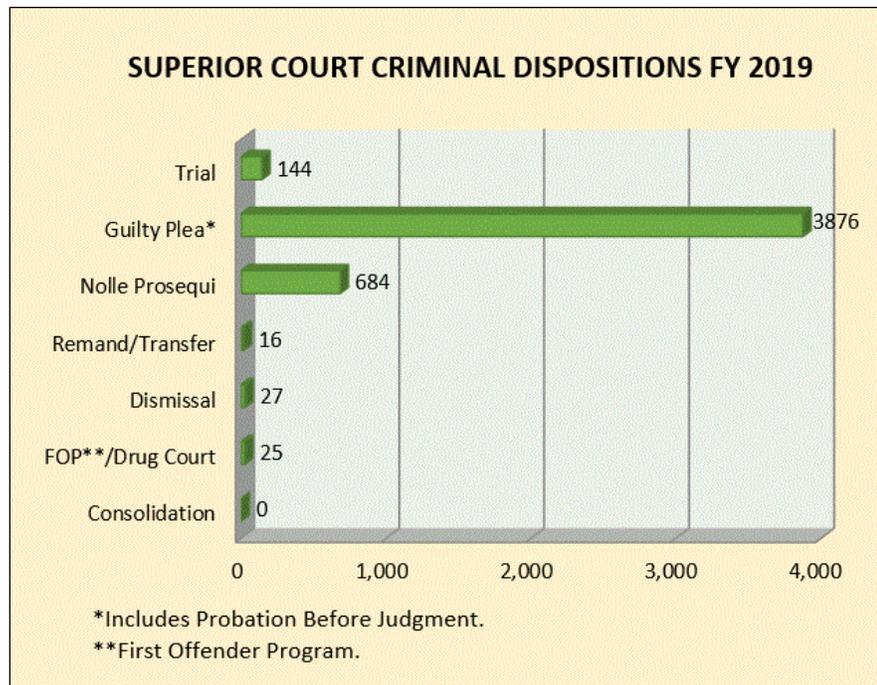
The Superior Court’s highly successful Complex Commercial Litigation Division (CCLD), now in its ninth year, saw a 39% increase in filings in FY19. These cases include commercial claims with an amount in controversy of \$1 million or more. Parties filing CCLD cases can expect trial date priority and, if requested, expedited scheduling. The CCLD judges are Judge Mary M. Johnston, Judge Eric M. Davis, Judge Paul R. Wallace and Judge Abigail M. LeGrow. In April, a delegation of six high-ranking judges from Taiwan met with President Judge Jan R. Jurden and the four CCLD judges to learn more about the Complex Commercial Litigation Division. Retired Supreme Court Justice Randy J. Holland hosted this delegation.

Judge Vivian L. Medinilla and Judge Jeffrey J Clark manage the Court’s large asbestos docket, with the able assistance of Special Master Matthew F. Boyer, Esquire. During FY19, there were 120 filings, 224 dispositions and 7,028 cases pending.



The Superior Court has a number of Problem-Solving Courts that strive to improve outcomes for the participating individuals, reduce recidivism and improve public safety. These include Mental Health Court (MHC), Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) and Reentry Court.

The Superior Court continues in its efforts to improve the administration of civil and criminal justice in order to better serve the public. Our efforts include: training and education on evidence-based best practices; greater and smarter use of technology; and collaboration with the Bar, courts, agencies and stakeholders on innovative ideas to ensure equal justice for all, reduce recidivism, and improve public safety. By way of example, our staff attends Access to Justice committee meetings; is assisting with the conversion of the law libraries to self-help resource centers; and is adopting and implementing evidence-based best practices and bench books for our Problem-Solving Courts.



In FY19, the Superior Court held its sixth annual summer program for high school students. This weeklong program affords students an opportunity to

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observe civil and criminal trials, motions, pleas and sentencings, and to shadow judicial officers. The program not only provides a unique opportunity for interested high school students to learn more about our courts and how they operate, but also about potential careers in the civil and criminal justice system.

With the support of the Chief Justice and the assistance of the Administrative Office of the Courts and the Judicial Information Center, the Superior Court continues to explore the use of technology to improve efficiency in all departments, and to ensure that our jury courtrooms are equipped with state of the art technology that meets the needs of our Bar and litigants. This remains a top priority.

We continue to review our criminal and civil court forms and processes in an effort to reduce redundancy, expedite processing, and standardize our processes. We are also developing training manuals to reduce learning curves for new employees. For example, the criminal division is developing a training guide outlining step-by-step procedures for all processes utilized in criminal cases. This training guide will enable new case managers to learn their duties and responsibilities more quickly and will educate them as to the purpose and importance of the procedures in the everyday functioning of the Court. This work will also be instrumental in ensuring a smooth transition to e-filing in criminal cases which we hope to implement in the next few years.

Each year the Superior Court issues thousands of orders and opinions which are published on the Court's website <http://courts.delaware.gov/opinions/>

We continually update our website in our concerted effort to keep the Bar and public informed, and to make the court system easier to navigate.

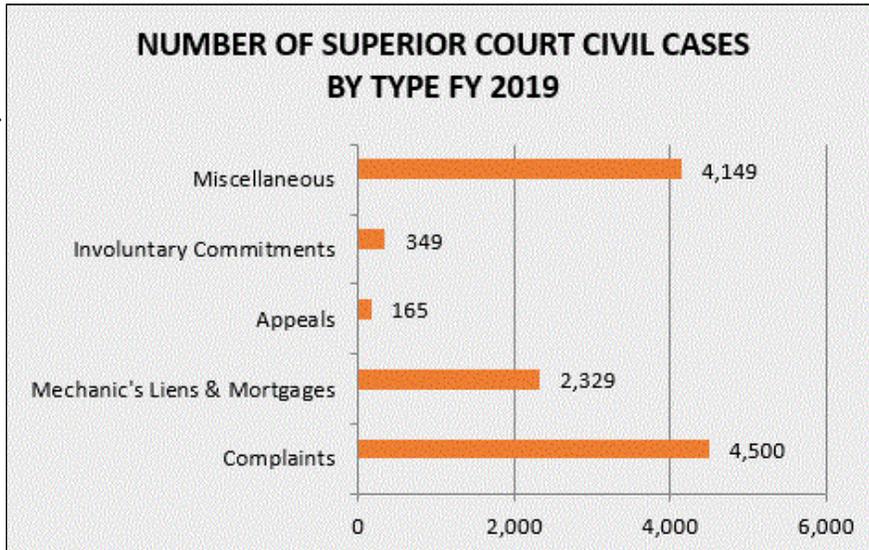
The Superior Court is fortunate to have extremely hardworking, dedicated and loyal staff who work tirelessly to maintain the level of superb service that litigants deserve and have come to expect. The Court is proud of our employees and the significant contributions they make.

Our Jury Services Judicial Case Processor Supervisor, Kenneth P. Creedon, was selected as Superior Court's Employee of the Year and the Judiciary's Employee of the Year. Governor John Carney presented Mr. Creedon with the Delaware

Award for Excellence and Commitment in State Service on May 9, 2019. In June, Mr. Creedon was sworn in as the Prothonotary in New Castle County.

In January 2019, Joyce M. Collins, who served as the Prothonotary in Sussex County for more than 29 years, retired. Myrtle Thomas, the former Sussex Chief Deputy Prothonotary with 33 years of service to the state, was sworn in as Prothonotary in Sussex County. Ms. Leslie Rementer was named the new Sussex Chief Deputy Prothonotary.

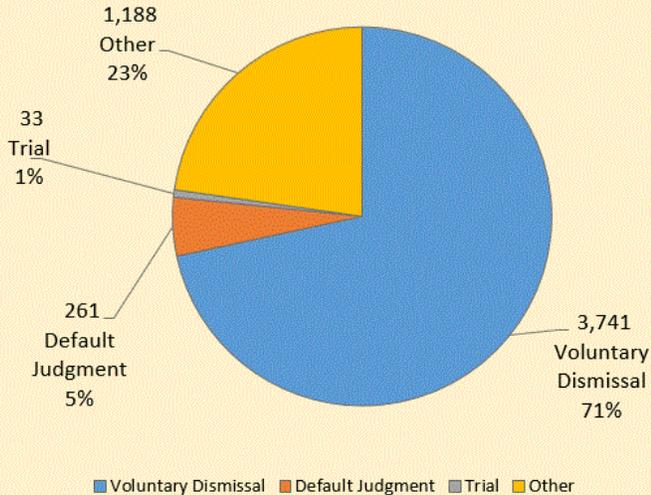
In October 2018, Judge Richard F. Stokes was sworn in as the Resident Judge of the Sussex County Supe-



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NUMBER OF SUPERIOR COURT CIVIL COMPLAINT DISPOSITIONS BY METHOD FY 2019

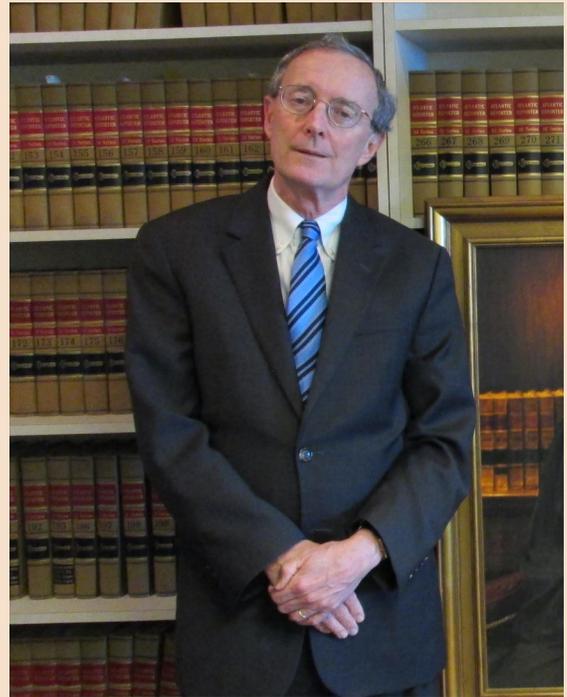


rior Court. Resident Judge Stokes' appointment comes after the retirement of Judge T. Henley Graves. On October 22, 2018 the Superior Court welcomed Judge Craig A. Karsnitz as a Judge in Sussex County. Prior to joining the bench, Judge Karsnitz was a partner with the law firm of Young, Conaway, Stargatt and Taylor.

On January 23, 2019, the Court welcomed Commissioner Janine M. Salomone. Commissioner Salomone replaces Bradley V. Manning who now serves as a judge on the Court of Common Pleas. Prior to joining the bench, Commissioner Salomone spent 19 years in private practice, most recently as a partner with Potter, Anderson & Corroon, LLP.

Superior Court lost two cherished colleagues this past year: Commissioner Michael P. Reynolds passed away on March 27, 2019 and Judge John A. Parkins, Jr. passed away on May 24, 2019. The Court is grateful for their many years of distinguished loyal service and their friendship.

Notwithstanding heavy caseloads and staff turnover, our Court continues to work hard to provide exemplary service to the people we are honored to serve. ♦



Thank You Judge Cooch

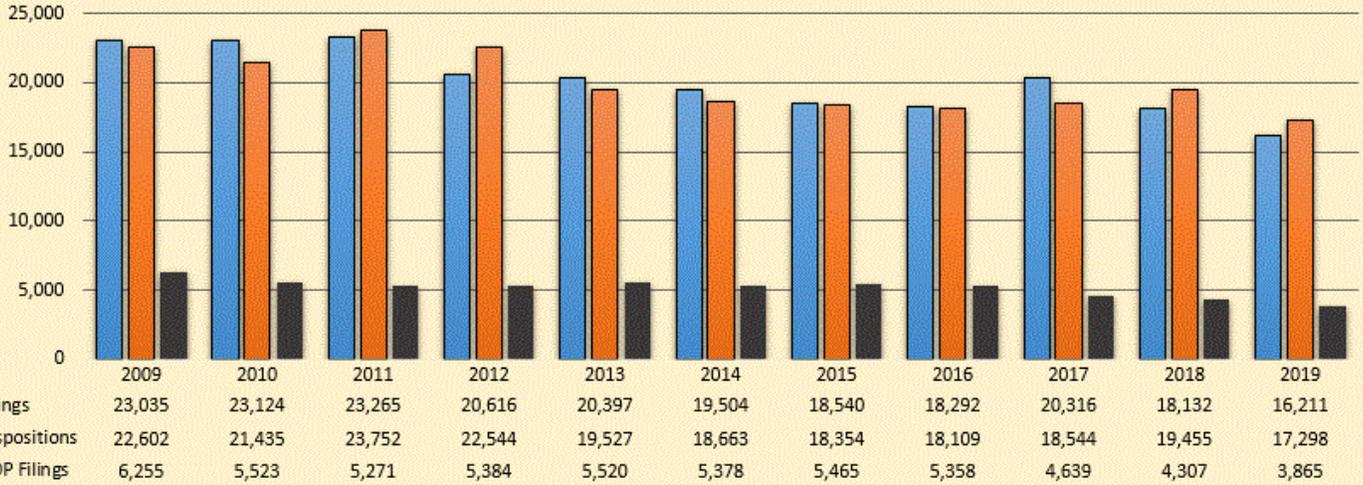
Resident Judge Richard R. Cooch retired effective January 1, 2020 after 27 years on the bench. Judge Cooch was appointed as a Judge of the Superior Court in 1992. He was then appointed as Resident Judge for New Castle County in 2000 and reappointed in 2012.

Prior to joining the bench, Judge Cooch was in private practice for 15 years at the law firm of Cooch & Taylor. A lifelong Delawarean, Judge Cooch was admitted to the bar in 1973 after receiving his J.D. from the University of North Carolina Law School. He served as a Deputy Attorney General from 1974 to 1977 and was an attorney for the Delaware House of Representatives from 1979 to 1981.

The Court thanks him for his many years of distinguished and dedicated service.

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SUPERIOR COURT CIVIL & CRIMINAL FILINGS & DISPOSITIONS BY FISCAL YEAR



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SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES

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

Middle Row (L-R): Judge Charles E. Butler; Judge John A. Parkins, Jr. (deceased); Judge Calvin L. Scott, Jr.; Judge E. Scott Bradley; Judge Mary Miller Johnston; Judge Diane Clarke Streett; Judge Eric M. Davis

Back Row (L-R): Judge Sheldon K. Rennie; Judge Abigail M. LeGrow; Judge Ferris W. Wharton; Judge Vivian L. Medinilla; Judge Paul R. Wallace; Judge Andrea L. Rocanelli; Judge Jeffrey J. Clark; Judge Noel E. Primos; Judge Craig A. Karsnitz

The **Honorable Meghan A. Adams** was sworn in as a Judge of the Superior Court on September 19, 2019. Prior to her appointment, Judge Adams was an attorney at Morris James LLP. Judge Adams fills a vacancy created by the retirement of the Honorable John A. Parkins, Jr.

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SUPERIOR COURT COMMISSIONERS

Standing (left to right):

Commissioner Janine M. Salomone

Commissioner Lynne M. Parker

Commissioner Alicia B. Howard

Commissioner Andrea M. Freud

Commissioner Katharine L. Mayer

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IN MEMORIAM

THE HONORABLE JOHN A. PARKINS, JR.



The Honorable John A. Parkins, Jr. was appointed to the Superior Court by former Governor Ruth Ann Minner and began service on August 21, 2008.

Judge Parkins clerked for the Delaware Supreme Court for former Chief Justice Daniel F. Wolcott and then-Associate Justice Daniel L. Herrmann. Afterward he became an associate at the now defunct firm of Murdock, Longobardi, Schwartz & Walsh.

At the age of 29 he became a Deputy Attorney General in the Delaware Department of Justice. He began representing the Department of Correction and was also Chief of the Appeals Division.

Judge Parkins worked in private practice for 23 years from 1985 through 2008 at the law firm of Richards Layton & Finger prior to his appointment to the Superior Court. Judge Parkins received his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Delaware and his law degree with honors from Washington & Lee University. He also proudly served his country in the U.S. Army.

Judge Parkins once modestly remarked that his legal career was more a result of being fortunate and also a good deal of luck over merit. He was always appreciative and at times humbled by the lifetime of support from peers, mentors, friends and family. As he stated during his investiture, "for my entire lifetime I have considered myself to be the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

Judge Parkins retired from Superior Court on April 1, 2019. He passed away on May 24, 2019 at the age of 72. He was a person of the highest integrity and intelligence and he was always pragmatic with a pretty good sense of humor. His Superior Court family will greatly miss all the qualities he brought to our court not only as a consummate jurist but also as the truly dear and compassionate friend we all admired. ♦

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IN MEMORIAM

THE HONORABLE MICHAEL PATRICK REYNOLDS



The Honorable Michael Patrick Reynolds was appointed by former Governor Thomas R. Carper and began service as a Court Commissioner of the Superior Court in and for New Castle County on October 17, 1994.

Commissioner Reynolds served on active duty in the United States Marine Corps from 1966 to 1970 which included 13 months in Vietnam [Service: 1967-68].

He received his Bachelor's Degree with highest honors from the University of Delaware in 1974 and his Juris Doctorate from University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1977.

From 1977 to 1981, Commissioner Reynolds was an Assistant City Solicitor for the City of Wilmington. He was an associate in private practice with Wilson & Whittington from 1981 to 1983. He then served as Council Attorney for New Castle County from 1983 to 1985. In 1985, Commissioner Reynolds returned to the Law Department of the City of Wilmington as First Assistant City Solicitor. He served as City Solicitor from 1987 to 1993. He then served as Staff Attorney for the Majority Caucus of the State Senate in 1993.

Prior to his appointment, Commissioner Reynolds served as Labor Relations Specialist in the State Personnel Office. He chaired the Labor and Employment Law Section of the State Bar Association during 1993-1994.

Commissioner Reynolds retired from Superior Court on September 1, 2015. He passed away on March 27, 2019 at the age of 72. He will be dearly missed by his Superior Court colleagues. ♦