In his first State of the Judiciary address, Chief Justice Leo E. Strine, Jr., laid out his priorities for the Judicial Branch to members of the Bench and Bar at the annual meeting on June 4, 2014. To meet the challenges of the future, the Chief Justice identified the following goals:

- Enhance options for cost-effective and timely dispute resolution practices;
- Maximize use of limited resources;
- Identify flexible funding solutions for Judicial Branch needs;
- Increase investment in employees, infrastructure, and technology;
- Improve access to justice for Delaware citizens; and
- Address work/life balance issues.

The Chief Justice opened his speech by stressing the importance of working with the legal community to develop more innovative ways to do business. “We got to where we are today because our predecessors prepared to meet the challenges of the future. The legacy they left us comes with the corresponding responsibility to act as stewards for coming generations,” said the Chief Justice.

**Involving the Bar and Our Constituents in Setting an Agenda for the Future**

To help meet those challenges, Chief Justice Strine announced plans to conduct a comprehensive review of Judicial Branch operations. The Delaware Chapter of the American College of Trial Lawyers (ACTL), with input from leaders of the Delaware State Bar Association (DSBA) and partnering with the Judicial Branch, will conduct a survey giving practitioners the chance to provide confidential input about how the court system is doing in all of the key practice areas. The goal of this “ground-up” approach is to develop the framework for a policy agenda to address long-term needs and “further enhance the type of Bench-Bar collaboration that is a hallmark of Delaware’s legal tradition.”

While this process is critical to helping set the long-term agenda for the Judiciary, the Chief Justice also outlined certain critical issues that need immediate focus and attention.

**Meeting the Business World’s Need for Cost-Effective and Timely Dispute Resolution**

Maintaining and growing Delaware’s reputation for being the premier venue to address the business world’s need for cost effective and timely dispute resolution must be a top priority. Delaware’s appeal “to those who form entities in the United States...is clear from the fact that 83% of domestic IPO’s last year involved Delaware entities,” said Strine. But, he warned,
“advantage must be earned constantly”, particularly where there is serious national and international competition for business.

The Chief Justice noted that the Governor, the Corporate Law Council, and key sections of the Bar, with assistance from the Courts, are working on new initiatives to add to “Delaware’s proven ability to help resolve commercial disputes swiftly and expertly” by offering business entities a “cost-effective, voluntary means to resolve business disputes...if they are willing to forego the costs of lengthy proceedings and full-blown discovery.” The purpose is to attract entrepreneurs around the world to form entities in Delaware by promoting Delaware’s well-developed corporate law and ability to deliver “well-reasoned decisions with real world business speed.”

Managing Our Limited Resources More Effectively

Recognizing the likelihood of continued modest state revenue growth, the Chief Justice stressed the importance of learning to do more with less - challenging the Judiciary to consider new ways of doing business through technology and rethinking old processes, including the following:

◊ **Consistent statewide problem-solving courts:** establish consistent, statewide standards and benchmarks for operations in problem-solving courts based on objective criteria.

◊ **Criminal Justice system:** rethink ways to deploy scarce treatment resources to reduce recidivism and improve the consistency of sentences for similarly situated offenders.

**Giving the Judicial Branch the Autonomy and Flexibility to Operate More Efficiently and Effectively**

The Chief Justice called for more autonomy and flexibility with Judicial Branch funding. The Judicial Branch continues to look for ways to fund initiatives without increased reliance on the General Fund. “To do that, however, we also need to have the corresponding flexibility to deploy non-General Fund sources of revenue ourselves and on a dependable basis,” said the Chief Justice. He continued, “If we can implement that concept with the Governor and Joint Finance Committee in good faith, there is room for us to make needed improvements in key areas such as technology and our human capital with less burden to state taxpayers.”

**Investing In Our Key Capital: Our Employees**

“The highest priority of our Judiciary this year... is to obtain some increase in compensation for our employees,” said Strine. Focusing particularly on Wilmington-based employees, the Chief Justice noted that these employees have been treated inequitably because they are forced to pay for parking when employees in other locations have free parking. The average wage for a New Castle County Courthouse employee is between $30,000 and $40,000 a year, while the annual cost for parking in Wilmington is approximately $1,500. On this point, Chief Justice Strine stated that this is not just a question of fairness, “we end up losing good employees to other better-paying, less stressful jobs.” He asked our partners in other Branches to help solve this problem.

**Dignified and Safe Courthouses Are Essential to Doing Justice**

Chief Justice Strine emphasized the need to reinvest in physical capital, pointing to the substandard conditions at the Family Court in Sussex and Kent Counties. In his speech, Strine said, “We are open to new modes of thinking, including the possibility of meeting future needs by building a single high quality facility in a location convenient to citizens of both counties and using that facility in concert with smaller sites in the traditional county seats to handle other less security-sensitive cases.”

**The Smart Use of Technology**

Chief Justice Strine challenged the Judicial Branch to embrace technology in an effective way to maintain its competitive advantage in a changing world. In so doing, the Chief Justice signaled his intention to seek support from the General Assembly and the Governor through a stable and predictable technology funding plan to include several key elements:
create a statewide high quality e-filing system for both civil and criminal cases;

⇒ develop a comprehensive case management system through a public-private partnership approach at a net benefit, not cost, to state taxpayers;
⇒ identify one effective approach to redesigning court paper-flow processes for all of the courts; and
⇒ deploy consistent Judiciary-wide approaches to purchasing and replacing technology to secure cost savings and service efficiencies.

Increasing Access to Justice for Ordinary People

Chief Justice Strine noted the important work of the upcoming Access to Justice Commission which will explore a number of initiatives aimed at ensuring access to justice for all Delaware citizens:

⇒ ensure that the organizations that provide legal services to the poor are coordinated and deploy limited resources efficiently;
⇒ explore creative means to address funding gaps;
⇒ encourage increased pro bono service from the Bar;
⇒ create training opportunities and additional resources to support solo and small practices;
⇒ confront the economic realities that make it difficult for lawyers to provide legal services to middle class clients;
⇒ examine whether representation by paraprofessionals, or more limited forms of representation by lawyers themselves, is appropriate in certain areas of critical need, such as family law or landlord-tenant law; and
⇒ consider what steps the Judicial Branch might take to address the disturbing racial disparity of citizens who are incarcerated.

Making It Easier To Be a Lawyer and a Good Spouse and Parent

The Chief Justice also remarked on the ever-increasing demand on lawyers by clients seeking quick responses to complicated questions. With the onslaught of 24/7 technology "[n]o hour of the day is left for lawyers to be with their families, undisturbed by client and business interruption.” The ACTL will explore through its survey "the ways in which the courts might help lawyers strike a better work-life balance...without diminishing the quality we all expect of ourselves. “

In closing, Chief Justice Strine thanked the members of the Bar for their service to the public and the cause of justice.

"Without the continued dedication of an amazing Bar of lawyers, our state would not be as prosperous and not have the reputation it has,” said the Chief Justice.

For more information, please contact Patricia Griffin at patricia.griffin@state.de.us.
GOVERNOR HONORS CAPITAL POLICE AND JUDICIAL BRANCH EMPLOYEES FOR COURAGEOUS ACTS DURING COURTHOUSE SHOOTING

On May 8, 2014, Governor Jack A. Markell and Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn recognized the recipients of the Delaware Award for Excellence and Commitment in State Service in a ceremony in Dover at the Delaware Technical Community College’s Terry Campus. Also recognized were the very first recipients of the Delaware Award for Heroism. Established in 2013, the Delaware Award for Heroism recognizes acts of heroism and courage among members of the State’s legislative, executive, or judicial branches. Recipients must demonstrate exceptional judgment and courage in a potentially serious situation, outside the scope of an employee’s normal job functions, whether or not the act was performed during working hours.

Supreme Court Chief Justice Leo E. Strine, Jr., President Judge James T. Vaughn, Jr., State Court Administrator Patricia W. Griffin, Deputy State Court Administrator Amy Quinlan, Superior Court Administrator Maureen Frederick, and Superior Court Chief Bailiff Robert Hastings were on hand to congratulate the Capitol Police officers and Judicial Branch employees who were recognized for their courageous actions during the New Castle County Courthouse shooting one year ago. On any given day, the New Castle County Courthouse welcomes over 200 jurors assembling for jury duty, 650 employees reporting for work, and hundreds of others who are conducting business or attending hearings. On February 11, 2013, at approximately 8:15 A.M., bullets rang out in the lobby, the actions of a lone gunman. Judicial Branch 2014 Employee of the Year, Jose E. Hernandez, Court Security Officer I, Superior Court, a 12-year veteran of the Superior Court security team, was one of the first security officers on the scene to render aid to the two female victims of the fatal courthouse shooting.

The collective actions of Capitol Police officers Sergeant Michael Manley; Corporal Steven Rinehart; Corporal Arlene Redman; Senior Corporal Scott Simpson; Master Corporal Lori Templin; Senior Security Officer Darryl Smith; Senior Security Officer Maureen McGill-Jones; Senior Security Officer Yvette Miller; Dispatcher Isaac Vaughn; the late Senior Security Officer Stephen Green; and now retired Lieutenant R. Marshall Martine, and David Brezenski, Social Service Specialist with the Administrative Office of the Courts, exemplify the qualities recognized by the Delaware Award for Heroism. When the shooting began, the Capitol Police officers tasked with protecting the courthouse reacted immediately, helping those in the courthouse lobby get out of the direct line of fire, shielding individuals with their own bodies, pursuing the shooter, and, ultimately, ending the shooting rampage.

Mr. Brezenski was staffing the Information Desk in the Courthouse lobby and placed a call to the Wilmington Police Department despite being in the direct line of fire when the shooting began. Mr. Brezenski gave an on-going, real-time account of the shooting as it occurred, providing critical information to responding police officers as they made their way to the Courthouse.
Honored to receive the award, Mr. Brezenski wanted nonetheless to recognize his colleague, Aida Torres, who worked beside him that morning. “Aida deserves as much praise as I do. She stayed beside me while I placed the call and did not leave until I was finished and we were able to go to a safe location.”

We thank Officer Hernandez, Capitol Police, and David Brezenski for their quick responses and willingness to place the safety and security of others over their own.

For more information, please contact Amy Quinlan at amy.quinlan@state.de.us

JUDICIAL BRANCH EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED

Jose E. Hernandez, Court Security Officer I, Superior Court. Mr. Hernandez was named the 2013 Judicial Branch Employee of the Year. Mr. Hernandez is a twelve year veteran of the Superior Court security team and was recognized for his unfailingly courteous and calm demeanor in the courtroom. One juror, after serving on a trial for which Mr. Hernandez was the bailiff, noted that he is a “remarkable bailiff.” He takes his job seriously and, when he is in a courtroom with a judge and jury, they are his first priority.

Other employees nominated for this award, and who were honored as the Employee of the Year for their respective courts, are:

Ruth Jones, Social Service Specialist III, Family Court. Ms. Jones was selected as Family Court Employee of the Year for her consistent and outstanding dedication and support in providing services to the public. On many occasions, she will handle incoming litigants while also covering other responsibilities such as juvenile bails. In addition, Ms. Jones provides an invaluable service to Spanish-speaking litigants by providing them instructions and direction.

Evelyn Tatum, Management Analyst II, Court of Common Pleas. Ms. Tatum continually exceeds the expectations of her daily job duties. She volunteers to serve as the Case Manager for the Court’s Trauma Informed Probation Program. Where there is work to be done or a project to be undertaken, Ms. Tatum is always ready and willing to lend a hand. She has a positive attitude and remarkable work ethic which has had an invaluable impact on her coworkers. Ms. Tatum exemplifies what it means to be a team player.

Irene Freeman, Judicial Case Processor III, Justice of the Peace Court. Ms. Freeman has been an employee of the Judicial Branch for fifteen years. She truly demonstrates what it means to be a superior leader and team builder. She handles not only her supervisory duties, but clerk duties as well. She is proactive in her work, ensuring that cases get promptly corrected in case of errors. She has exceptional organization skills, is loyal, and often works beyond her job description. Ms. Freeman always has a smile on her face and her laugh is contagious.

Maria Perez-Chambers, Coordinator of the Court Interpreter Program, Administrative Office of the Courts. The State of Delaware Court Interpreter Program was the 2013 winner of the John Neufeld Award. This award recognizes Delaware’s statewide language access program and the strong leadership role that Delaware has taken on the issue of language access at the national level. Ms. Perez-Chambers was instrumental in developing the new Limited Legal Assistance Program for limited English-proficient litigants and is a team player and a valuable asset to the AOC. She is never too busy to offer her assistance, adeptly handles any issue that arises, and always does her work with a smile.

For more information, please contact Amy Quinlan at amy.quinlan@state.de.us.
SUPREME COURT—The Honorable Karen Valihura was sworn in for her first term as Justice of the Supreme Court of Delaware on Friday, July 25, 2014. Chief Justice Leo E. Strine, Jr., administered the oath of office and remarks were made by Governor Jack A. Markell and Edward P. Welch, Esquire, head of the Wilmington office of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, LLP.

Prior to her appointment to the Supreme Court, Justice Valihura was a partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, LLP, where she practiced law since 1989. Her practice in complex commercial and corporate issues included federal and state securities fraud claims, mergers and acquisitions, and fiduciary duties of directors. Due to her preeminence in the field, Justice Valihura has been consistently selected for inclusion in Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business and The Best Lawyers in America.

Justice Valihura served on the Advisory Board of the John L. Weinberg Center for Corporate Governance and served two terms on the Supreme Court's Board of Professional Responsibility and five years on the Court's Permanent Ethics Advisory Committee on the Delaware Lawyer Rules of Professional Conduct. Additionally, Justice Valihura served her community as a member of the Board of Directors for the Delaware Special Olympics for eighteen years and as a member of the Delaware Bar Foundation for eight years. Justice Valihura received her undergraduate degree from Washington and Jefferson College in 1985 and her law degree from the University of Pennsylvania Law School. She was admitted to the Delaware Bar in 1989.

COURT OF CHANCERY—The Court of Chancery sat in special session in the New Castle County Courthouse for the investiture of the Honorable Andre G. Bouchard on May 23, 2014 as Chancellor of the Court of Chancery of Delaware. Governor Jack A. Markell and United States Senator Thomas R. Carper spoke at the investiture ceremony and Chief Justice Leo E. Strine, Jr., conducted the oath of office. Bouchard was sworn in as the 22nd Chancellor of the Court during a private ceremony on May 5, 2014. Chancellor Bouchard received his J.D. from Harvard Law School. Prior to his appointment, Chancellor Bouchard spent 28 years in private practice and most recently was the managing partner of Bouchard Margules and Friedlander, P.A., a corporate and commercial litigation boutique he founded.

SUPERIOR COURT—The Honorable Judge Ferris W. Wharton was sworn in for his first term as Judge of the Superior Court of Delaware on Friday, July 11, 2014. Participants in the ceremony included James T. Vaughn, Jr., President Judge of the Superior Court, who administered the oath of office, members of Judge Wharton’s family who assisted with the robing and led the Pledge of Allegiance, as well as Lt. Governor Matthew Denn, State Prosecutor Kathleen Jennings, and Public Defender J. Brendan O’Neill who made remarks.

Judge Wharton served as an Assistant Public Defender from 2007 until his appointment to the Superior Court. Prior to that, he was of counsel to the firm of Fox Rothschild LLP and an Assistant United States Attorney from 2003 to 2006. Judge Wharton served with the Delaware Department of Justice from 1980 to 2003 as Chief Deputy Attorney General, State Prosecutor, Chief Prosecutor for Kent County, Chief Prosecutor for New Castle County, as well as head of the Department’s Rape Response Unit, Drug Unit, and Felony Trial Unit. Judge Wharton was also a member of the Board of Bar Examiners from 1991 to 1999, and from 2007 until his appointment to the Bench. He is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Judge Wharton received his undergraduate degree from the University of Delaware in 1974 and his law degree from the University of Illinois College of Law in 1978.
**FAMILY COURT COMMISSIONERS JOIN THE BENCH**

The **Honorable Angela Fowler** was sworn in for her first term as Commissioner of the **Family Court of Delaware** on April 11, 2014. The Honorable Chandlee Johnson Kuhn, Chief Judge of the Family Court, administered the oath of office and Commissioner Fowler’s family and friends led the Pledge of Allegiance and assisted with the robing. Before her appointment, Commissioner Fowler served as a Hearing Officer for the Industrial Accident Board since 2009. Prior to that, she was a Deputy Child Advocate for the Office of the Child Advocate for eight years and a Deputy Attorney General. Since 2001, Commissioner Fowler has held the position of Adjunct Professor at Wilmington University. For the past three years, she has also been an Adjunct Instructor at Delaware Technical and Community College.

The **Honorable Para K. Wolcott** was sworn in for her first term as a Commissioner of the **Family Court of Delaware** in April 2014. Commissioner Wolcott began her career in the judiciary as a law clerk with Family Court of the State of Delaware (2005-2006). From 2006 until her appointment, the Commissioner worked as Deputy Attorney General with the Department of Justice in the Domestic Violence Unit, the Vehicular Crimes Unit, the Major Crimes Unit of the Criminal Division, and the Misdemeanor Trial Unit. Commissioner Wolcott also represented the Division of Family Services and litigated child abuse, dependency and neglect cases.

**The Courts Mourn the Death of Judge Vincent A. Bifferato, Sr.**

Judge Bifferato served on the Superior Court bench from 1968 until 2000. **Judge Biff**, as he was lovingly referred to in the courthouse, was a legal lion in Delaware. Before he returned to private practice he served as the New Castle County Resident Judge for the last eight years at court. Judge Biff enjoyed the camaraderie of the other judges and the unique and diverse backgrounds of those who appeared before him. He especially enjoyed mentoring young lawyers and those in law school. He served as an adjunct professor at Widener School of Law and began a program of free seminars for young lawyers, which later became known as the "Judge Vincent Bifferato Superior Court Trial Practice Forum." Even after he left the bench, he was always a willing and ready resource. After retiring from the Superior Court in 2000, he joined his two sons in private practice, focusing on alternative dispute resolution. In his retirement he quickly developed a passion for traveling to Italy. Before his death he had the opportunity to reconnect with his father’s family nearly one-hundred years after his father immigrated to the United States.

“As recent days have demonstrated, Judge Bifferato was probably the most beloved judge of our time. Judge Biff was a constant presence on the bench for over 30 years. He was predominantly gentle, and if there was an occasional outburst, it was temper fed by conscience and his desire that things go right and be fair. He stuck up for individual practitioners as the free CLE seminar program he started demonstrates. He also made us aware of how difficult it was for the small law office without in house accounting help to comply with demanding procedures and why it was that the small office was at greater risk to disciplinary action. The son of immigrant parents who was proud of his Italian and Catholic heritage and was the loving head of his own family, which is a lawyer enclave of its own. The world won't be the same without Biff.” Former Justice of the Supreme Court William T. Quillen.

“Judge Bifferato was the ultimate public servant. He recognized that the court was there to serve the public and to help solve problems, whether they involved large corporations or individuals, and that each of those deserved the same fair respect in a hearing.” Former Superior Court Judge Richard Gebelein.
Justice Randy J. Holland of the Delaware Supreme Court was the honored guest jurist at the 8th annual Columbia-Ono Corporate Law Symposium in Tel Aviv, Israel on June 9, 2014. In addition, Justice Holland has been selected as the 2014 recipient of the Lewis F. Powell Jr. Award for Professionalism and Ethics. This honor is awarded once a year by the American Inns of Court in recognition of a lawyer or judge who has demonstrated exemplary service in the areas of legal excellence, professionalism, and ethics. The award will be presented at the American Inns of Court Celebration of Excellence held at the Supreme Court of the United States on October 25, 2014 and hosted by the Honorable Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

After nearly 30 years on the bench, Justice Jack B. Jacobs of the Delaware Supreme Court retired from the Delaware Supreme Court on June 25, 2014. Justice Jacobs was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2003 by Governor Ruth Ann Minner from the Court of Chancery where he served as Vice Chancellor from 1985. Prior to joining the Court of Chancery, Justice Jacobs practiced corporate and business litigation in Wilmington at the law firm of Young Conaway Stargatt & Taylor, LLP. Justice Jacobs authored and co-authored numerous articles and spoke on issues related to corporate law in various venues. He received an undergraduate degree from the University of Chicago, a law degree from Harvard University, and an LLD from Widener University. In addition to his duties on the bench, Justice Jacobs has served as an Adjunct Professor of Law at the Law Schools of New York University, Columbia University, the University of Chicago, and Widener University. He is a member of the American Law Institute, where he served as an Advisor to its Restatement (Third) of Restitution and its Principles of the Law of Liability Insurance. After his retirement from the bench, Justice Jacobs joined the law firm of Sidley Austin LLP.

Justice Henry duPont Ridgely of the Delaware Supreme Court was a panelist at the Annual Meeting of P.R.I.M.E. Finance Foundation at the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands in February 2014. Justice Ridgely discussed financial derivatives in the courts on a panel that included U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Elizabeth Stong, Justice V. K. Rajah of the Supreme Court of Singapore, and Judge Natalia Pavlova of the Russian Supreme Commercial Court. During his visit, Justice Ridgely also lectured on Delaware corporate law and the chartering of corporations in Delaware at Leiden University and Rotterdam University.

Governor Jack A. Markell appointed Delaware Superior Court President Judge James T. Vaughn, Jr., to the Delaware Criminal Background and Child Protection Registry Checks Task Force on January 13, 2014. President Judge Vaughn also participated in Read Across America on March 7, 2014 and provided comments to the Smyrna Little League players on opening day, April 12, 2014. President Judge Vaughn also served as a panelist for the Superior Court Complex Commercial Litigation Division at the Delaware’s Business Courts: Recent Developments and Best Practices, Continuing Legal Education Program sponsored by the Delaware State Bar Association on May 5, 2014. Lastly, President Judge Vaughn looks forward to administering the oath to the new Delaware State Police Troopers in August as he has done in the past.

After 24 years on the Bench, the Honorable Charles H. Toliver IV retired from the Delaware Superior Court on May 3, 2014. Initially appointed in 1990 by Governor Michael N. Castle, Judge Toliver was reappointed in 2002 by Governor Thomas R. Carper. Judge Toliver was particularly committed to Reentry Court which focused on reducing the rate of recidivism among released jailed offenders. Prior to his appointments, Judge Toliver worked for the law firms of Leonard L. Williams & Associates and Biggs & Battaglia. Judge Toliver joined the law firm of Morris James LLP.

Judge Jan R. Jurden of the Delaware Superior Court delivered the keynote address at The Raymond C. Radulski Workers’ Compensation Seminar on May 7, 2014. Judge Jurden also presented on Mental Health Court at the State of Delaware Crisis Intervention Team Training on May 9, 2014 and on Delaware Superior Court practice at a Continuing Legal Education Seminar sponsored by the Litigation Section of the Delaware State Bar Association on May 16, 2014. She also served on two panels – “The Complementary Nature of The Court of Chancery and The Superior Court Complex Commercial Litigation Division” and “Selection of Venue and Best Practices Including Ex-
pert Discovery, E-Discovery and Technology Available in Delaware Courts” – at the Delaware’s Business Courts: Recent Developments and Best Practices, Continuing Legal Education Program, also sponsored by the Delaware State Bar Association, on May 16, 2014.

Patricia W. Griffin, State Court Administrator, recently joined the Board of Directors of the National Center for State Courts, a nonprofit organization that aims to improve administration of justice through leadership and service to the nation’s state courts. She will serve a four year term on the Board. In addition, she was elected Vice President of the Conference of State Court Administrator (COSCA), an organization established in 1955 to provide a national forum to assist state court administrators across the country in developing a more just, effective and efficient system of justice. She is Delaware’s first state court administrator to serve in either position. As Vice President, Pat is anticipated to assume the position of President of COSCA in August 2016.

SUPERIOR COURT VETERANS TREATMENT COURT HOSTS MENTOR TRAINING

On April 16, 2014, Resident Judge William L. Witham, Jr., and Judge Jan R. Jurden, both of the Delaware Superior Court, hosted an afternoon training for veterans who wish to serve as volunteer mentors in the Veterans Treatment Courts in Kent and New Castle Counties. Twenty-five veterans of the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and National Guard participated in the training designed to help them understand their roles as mentors in the Courts. Mentors can play a crucial role in helping justice-involved veterans navigate the system. Mentors do not replace counselors; rather they are there to offer moral support, provide positive encouragement, and guide justice-involved veterans to available resources.

The training was led by Jack O’Connor, the Volunteer Mentor Coordinator of the Buffalo Veterans Treatment Court in New York. Mr. O’Connor, a Vietnam Veteran, has served the Buffalo court since its inception in 2008. The Buffalo Veterans Treatment Court was the first Veterans Court to be established in the nation and Mr. O’Connor had a wealth of experience and knowledge to share with the Delaware mentors.

While the Kent County and New Castle County Veterans Treatment Courts are relatively new, established in 2011 and 2013 respectively, these courts are already demonstrating positive results. As of April 1, 2014, 88% of the Kent County Veterans Treatment Court participants had successfully graduated, and in New Castle County, 94% of the Veterans Treatment Court participants had successfully graduated. The support of a network of dedicated and generous volunteer mentors will enhance these courts’ services.

For more information, please contact Katie Wolinski at kathryn.wolinski@state.de.us.
On April 3 and 4, 2014, in an ongoing effort to improve systems and processes, the Family Court of Delaware launched an Enhancement Project focusing on issues related to domestic violence in partnership with the Battered Women’s Justice Project, the National Institute of Justice, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), and the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). The Family Court welcomed to the launch event its local partners in the project, including the Attorney General’s Office, law enforcement, advocacy groups, representatives of the legal community, and research partner, Dr. Ruth Fleury-Steiner of the University of Delaware.

The goal of Family Court’s project is to improve the court’s response to custody cases involving domestic violence so that resulting parenting and co-parenting arrangements protect the emotional and physical well-being of victimized parents and their children. Delaware was one of four sites chosen through a competitive selection process for the national project due to the unique combination of the enthusiasm of the people involved, the robust nature of the current programs, and the geographical qualities of the State.

There are several obstacles that the Court faces when confronted with domestic violence, including institutional barriers, limited resources, the effects of biases, and the difficulties with understanding and accounting for domestic violence in decision-making. The project will thoroughly evaluate the State’s weaknesses in the areas of domestic violence as it relates to custody and visitation, while strengthening existing protections and working on best practices and reasonable solutions to the issues within the system. Progress toward these goals will then be measured by data collection that is geared toward identification of which changes or programs have the greatest efficacy and where resources could be diverted to better serve victims of domestic violence and the public interest.

Through a collaborative effort, a diverse group of stakeholders identified areas of need and discussed the implementation of reasonable solutions to the problems endemic to the current model of domestic violence management. Though the project is still in its infancy, those involved are focused on improving services for victims of domestic violence.

A smaller group of stakeholders will be tasked with the ongoing work on the project. This team is comprised of Chief Judge Chandlee Johnson Kuhn; Judge Alan Cooper; Commissioner Louann Vari; Court Administrator Leann Summa; Addie Asay, Director of Legal Affairs; Mary Crabbe, Director of Case Management, all from Family Court; Andrew Gosner, Gosner & Gosner; James McGiffin, Delaware Community Legal Aid Society; Janine Howard O’Rangers, Delaware Volunteer Legal Services; Carol Post, Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Mariann Kenville-Moore, Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Ellie Torres, Domestic Violence Coordinating Council; Blanche Creech, Peoples Place 2; Tim Brandau, Child, Inc.; and Dr. Ruth Fleury-Steiner, the University of Delaware.

The Honorable Chandlee Johnson Kuhn, Chief Judge of the Family Court, noted:

“The Family Court is very excited to be a part of this project. The Delaware domestic violence prevention community is dedicated to the cause and passionate about our opportunity to impact the lives of victims and their families. We have a lot of work ahead of us, but I’m sure that, with assistance from NCJFCJ and OVW, we can make a positive impact.”

For more information, please contact Addie Asay at addie.asay@state.de.us.
MAY BRINGS YOUNG MINDS TO THE COURTHOUSE

More than flowers were blooming at the New Castle County Courthouse during the month of May. Employees and regulars of the New Castle County Courthouse may have noticed the presence of numerous young visitors as forty-five fifth graders from All Saints Catholic School came to the courthouse on May 6, 2014 to learn about the duties of Capitol Police Officers and witness the daily activities of the New Castle County Courthouse.

Twenty French exchange students from Tower Hill followed close on their heels to participate in a Youth Forum on May 13, 2014 and learn about the American judicial system. This visit has become a bi-annual event at the courthouse. The students had the opportunity to ask questions about the Delaware judicial system and, in particular, the death penalty – a topic of considerable interest for Europeans.

The last student visit was held on May 15 with nearly 30 students from H.B. duPont Middle School. These students are participants in the Cognitive Emotional Learning Esteem Building (CELEB) program founded by Pastor Derrick Johnson. CELEB seeks to promote smart, responsible decision making among young teens that will positively influence their lives and enrich their schools and communities. The Honorable Alex Smalls, Chief Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, met with the students in his courtroom and encouraged them to always seek out knowledge as a way to improve their lives. State Prosecutor Kathleen M. Jennings and Assistant Public Defender Natalie Haskins also spoke with the students about strategies for staying safe and out of trouble this summer.

None of these visits would have been possible without the help of Capitol Police, the Judicial Information Center, the Administrative Office of the Courts Information Desk, the Office of the Public Defender, the Attorney General’s Office, and the numerous judicial officers who volunteered their time to share their experience of the judicial system with the students.

For more information, please contact Katie Wolinski at kathryn.wolinski@state.de.us.

Singapore’s Chief Justice Visits Delaware’s Courts

On April 3, 2014, Justice Henry duPont Ridgely and Vice Chancellor Donald Parsons, Jr., welcomed Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon of Singapore to the New Castle County Courthouse for a day of cross-cultural exchange. Chief Justice Menon visited Delaware with members of his staff, including Chief Executive Juthika Ramanathan, Deputy Registrar Teh Hwee Hwee, and Assistant Registrar Justin Yeo, to learn about Delaware’s Supreme Court and Court of Chancery, as well as state and federal corporate and insolvency laws.

Chief Justice Menon and his staff spoke at length with Justice Ridgely and Vice Chancellor Parsons about the way in which Delaware’s Supreme Court and Court of Chancery operate, as well as the differences between courts in America and Singapore. Chief Justice Menon and his staff then met with members of the Corporation Law and Bankruptcy Law Sections of the Delaware State Bar Association in separate meetings to discuss pertinent laws and practices. The meeting concluded with Chief Justice Menon expressing his desire to continue an open exchange of information and his hope that additional members of Singapore’s judiciary will have an opportunity to visit and learn about Delaware’s model.

For more information, please contact Katie Wolinski at kathryn.wolinski@state.de.us.
Offices of the Chief Justice and the Administrative Office of the Courts Relocate as Part of Long-Term Vision for Judicial Facilities Statewide

The Chambers of Chief Justice Leo E. Strine, Jr., are situated in the Renaissance Centre across from the New Castle County Courthouse (NCCCH). The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) will relocated from the courthouse into the Renaissance Centre in early August. The move marks the beginning of the implementation of a long-term vision to address growing space deficiencies by investing in court facilities across the state.

When the NCCCH was designed more than 15 years ago on a tight budget, it was understood that future alterations would be necessary to ensure that the courthouse could meet the changing and growing requirements of the courts in that building. In 2012, a NCCCH space study identified the most critical space issues faced by the four courts co-located in the NCCCH. Those space deficiencies included additional space for clerk’s offices’ operations, more and larger courtrooms, and rooms for mediation and other alternative dispute resolution. In particular, serious inadequacies in the Court of Common Pleas (CCP) Clerk’s Office were identified because of insufficient space for staff, equipment, and files. The lack of courtrooms with adequate seating to accommodate large calendars (including non-jury and arraignment calendars) is a growing issue.

"The space needs of the Court of Common Pleas in New Castle County have hit a critical point and must be immediately addressed if we are going to continue to provide a high quality of service to the public."

Stephanie Fitzgerald, Court Administrator, Delaware Court of Common Pleas, stated:

Additionally, the Supreme Court space in the Carvel Building in Wilmington has remained relatively unchanged since 1978. The original plan for the NCCCH included relocating the Supreme Court to that facility in 2002, but other more pressing court needs, and budget constraints, scuttled that plan. On a long-term basis, the Supreme Court has supported efforts to address other courts’ space needs at the expense of its own. There are strong policy reasons for the Supreme Court and the Arms of Court to be located in close proximity to the trial courts and the AOC. The AOC serves as the administrative “arm” of the Chief Justice and operational efficiencies require its co-location with the Supreme Court. For 25 years – until it was moved to the NCCCH in 2002 – the AOC was co-located with the Supreme Court.

The interim move of the AOC and the Chief Justice’s Chambers to the Renaissance Centre offers an immediate opportunity to relieve the NCCCH’s most urgent space issues and provide tremendous benefits to the courts located in the NCCCH. It also avoids the aggravation of space issues within the existing Wilmington location of the Supreme Court. This move serves as the first step in realizing the vision for statewide judicial space needs, which will include bringing all of the Wilmington Supreme Court Chambers together with the AOC in close proximity with the trial courts, and in addressing the serious inadequacies in the Family Court facilities in Kent and Sussex County, among other critical needs.

For more information, please contact Patricia Griffin at patricia.griffin@state.de.us.
Delaware’s First Lady, Carla Markell, returned to present the keynote address for the second annual Sisters in Success Conference on Monday, May 12, 2014 at Baylor Women’s Correctional Institution. First Lady Markell, a long-time advocate of volunteerism, added her voice to the team of professional women from the local community who came together to offer a series of workshops designed to provide Delaware’s justice-involved women with the skills necessary to make a successful transition back into the community. Governor Jack Markell and Robert M. Coupe, Commissioner of the Delaware Department of Correction, were also in attendance and addressed ongoing efforts to enhance the State’s criminal justice system.

The theme for this year’s conference was “Find Your Voice” and the presentations covered a range of topics focusing on expressing yourself for success. The day-long conference, led by the Honorable Jan R. Jurden, Delaware Superior Court Judge, offered a variety of workshops moderated by various Delaware experts that explored issues related to finding your voice through personal growth and health awareness, positive relationships and setting appropriate boundaries, employment skills and the interview process, protecting privacy and concerns raised by social media, parenting issues, and re-entry services.

The event was sponsored by the Delaware Department of Correction, Baylor Women’s Correctional Institution; the Delaware Criminal Justice Council; and the Delaware Women in the Law Section, Delaware State Bar Association; and the Delaware Chapter of National Association of Women Judges. Members of the Sisters in Success steering committee include: Warden Wendi Caple, Baylor Women’s Correctional Institution; Deputy Warden Robert May, Baylor Women’s Correctional Institution; the Honorable Jan R. Jurden, Delaware Superior Court; the Honorable Andrea Rocanelli, Delaware Superior Court; the Honorable Barbara Crowell, Delaware Family Court; the Honorable Aida Waserstein, Delaware Family Court; the Honorable Loretta Young, Delaware Family Court; the Honorable Mary McDonough, Delaware Court of Common Pleas; Drewry Nash Fennell, Esq., Criminal Justice Policy Advisor to the Governor; Amy Herb, Criminal Justice Council; Laina Herbert, Esq., Immediate Past Chair, Women in the Law Section, Delaware State Bar Association; Faith Levy, Treatment Administrator, Baylor Women’s Correctional Institution; John R. (Jack) McDonough, Reentry Coordinator, Delaware Department of Justice; Tanya Sellers, Esq., Crossland & Associates; Jennifer Hutchinson, Community Advocate; June Benson, Mental Health Court Peer Mentor Program; and Amy Quinlan, Esq., Deputy State Court Administrator, Administrative Office of the Courts.

For more information, please contact Amy Quinlan at amy.quinlan@state.de.us.

U.S. MARSHAL PAPILI RECOGNIZED

Members of the New Castle County Courthouse Operations Policy Committee presented a tribute to District of Delaware United States Marshal Joseph A. Papili upon his retirement from the Marshal’s office in March 2014. The Judiciary thanked Marshal Papili for his many years of collaboration with the Judiciary on security matters and wished him the best in his next endeavor as Athletic Director of St. Elizabeth’s School.

Pictured from left to right: Vice Chancellor Donald Parsons, Chief Judge Alex Smalls (Court of Common Pleas), Marshal Joseph L. Papili, and Resident Judge Richard Cooch (Superior Court).
Mechanical failures can happen but when you have swindled your mechanic out of his savings, you may want to reconsider getting your car serviced there. Likewise, picking up your prescription medication from a pharmacist whose money was squandered in your Ponzi scheme may not be the wisest thing to do. In a plot worthy of an Agatha Christie murder-mystery, this year’s High School Mock Trial competition tried the case of State of Delaware v. Cameron Paul on February 21-22, 2014. What caused the fatal crash that took the life of the victim, a caring father according to his son, whose investment company, U.R. Rich, dissipated millions of dollars and cost people their life’s savings?

Student attorneys set about the task of proving whether Cameron Paul, the garage owner, was guilty of the murder of Thor Brush or whether reasonable doubt existed. Calling on expert witnesses, who pontificated on the merits of the theories, and witnesses, whose motivations were each more suspect than the next, the student attorneys directed and crossed, battled over objections and highlighted the strength of their case in their opening and closing arguments, while undermining the merits of their opponents’ case. After four rounds, the final two teams – the Charter School of Wilmington and Saint Mark’s High School – competed in front of a panel of judges that included Supreme Court Justice Randy J. Holland. The results were announced at a banquet held after the final round on February 22, 2014. This year, the Charter School of Wilmington had the honor of representing Delaware in the national competition which was held May 8 to May 10, 2014 in Madison, Wisconsin.

Thank you to all the numerous volunteers who willingly gave up their time to make this another successful Mock Trial competition. Judges, attorneys, and Widener Law students served as volunteer judges and provided feedback to the students. Members of the Delaware Paralegal Association served as runners and security officers, bailiffs, and court staff volunteered in various capacities throughout the courthouse. We would like to extend a special thank you to Capitol Police for so ably managing the additional influx of people into the courthouse and responding to the myriad needs of the participants.

For more information, please contact Katie Wolinski at kathryn.wolinski@state.de.us.

UPDATE TO TESTAMENTARY TRUST ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES IN THE COURT OF CHANCERY

With a recent amendment to 12 Del. C. §3521, trust beneficiaries can waive the need for future judicial accountings. For all existing testamentary trust cases for which waivers are not, or cannot be, obtained, and for any new testamentary trust cases, pleadings or accountings filed after July 1, 2014 must be electronically filed in the Court of Chancery Guardianship and Trusts Court on the File and ServeXpress system. Specific procedures related to e-filing testamentary trust case documents can be found at http://courts.delaware.gov/Chancery/docs/TUWnotice.pdf.

For more information, please contact Kenneth Lagowski at kenneth.lagowski@state.de.us.
For the third year in a row, the Women and the Law Section of the Delaware State Bar Association, in conjunction with the Supreme Court of Delaware, coordinated iCivics presentations in public elementary and middle schools throughout the State of Delaware during the month of May. Women and the Law Section member and former co-chair, Laina M. Herbert, Esquire, of Prickett, Jones, & Elliott, P.A., assisted by Katie Wolinski of the Administrative Office of the Courts, recruited members of the Delaware Judiciary and the Delaware State Bar Association to make the iCivics presentations. Justice Randy J. Holland of the Delaware Supreme Court serves as the Delaware Chair for iCivics.

iCivics was developed by retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor and a team of educational experts in 2010 to promote civic education in schools to counter Americans’ declining civic education and participation. The need to improve Americans’ waver-ing civic knowledge became even more evident with the 2011 release of the most recent report card from the National Assessment of Education Progress which found that only 27% of fourth graders, 22% of eighth graders, and 24% of twelfth graders were proficient in civics.

iCivics consists of interactive computer games that teach elementary and middle school students about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. iCivics has produced 16 educational video games and more than 70 lesson plans which meet the Common Core Standards. During the 2012-2013 school year, 35,000 educators in 9,000 different schools adopted iCivics curricula. During that same year, 5.9 million iCivics games were played by students.

For more information, please contact Katie Wolinski at kathryn.wolinski@state.de.us.

The Office of State Court Collections Enforcement (OSCCE) has announced plans to expand its successful payment kiosk system in the next six months. The kiosk program, aimed at making payments of fees and fines more accessible for Delawareans, provides easy to follow step-by-step instructions and allows payments to be made at any time to multiple agencies and courts from various locations.

Programming enhancements to the payment kiosk menu will enable payments to the Court of Common Pleas, Justice of the Peace Court, Family Court, and the Department of Correction to be paid in real time. Payments to a new agency – the Division of Child Support – will be featured on the menu of entities that can be paid through the payment kiosk as of August 2014. This new feature will interface with the Division of Child Support’s iPay system. OSCCE has partnered with the Department of Motor Vehicles to add payment kiosks at select DMV locations. The first of these kiosks will be placed in the Kent County Department of Motor Vehicles. If successful, other county locations will be added.

“In early fall of 2014, non-custodial parents will be able to make child support payments online as well as via the TouchPay™ kiosks located throughout the state. The kiosks will allow these parents to pay cash to avoid incarceration for contempt which will make the process of complying much easier for them. Currently, they need to purchase money orders or cashier’s checks and travel to one of the three child support office’s during business hours to make these payments which is often difficult for them. It will be particularly helpful when the kiosks are located in or near the Family Courts.”

Midge Holland, Chief of Administration, Division of Child Support Enforcement, Delaware Health and Social Services.

For more information, please contact Bill DiBartola at william.dibartola@state.de.us.

Given Family Court’s commitment to maintaining the highest ethical standards in an ever-evolving technological world, one focus of the training concerned the increasing presence of social media in society and the lives of judges and commissioners. Questions that just a few years ago would not have been asked were thoughtfully considered. Specifically, issues such as whether “friending” an attorney creates an impression that the lawyer is in a position to influence the judge and when maintaining a blog is appropriate were analyzed. Ms. Gray also discussed the ethical issues surrounding several instances throughout the country in which judges and commissioners utilized technology (Facebook, websites, Google) to independently research parties, witnesses, or experts who were before the court.

As an issue that the public frequently raises, the judges and commissioners also engaged in a thorough review of the judicial disqualification landscape. In so doing, they looked at case law, statutes, and advisory opinions, both inside and outside of Delaware, to understand the developing law concerning when a judge’s impartiality might reasonably be questioned.

In wrapping up the day, the judges and commissioners reviewed recent, noteworthy opinions and considered how the fact-finder balanced judicial accountability and judicial independence.

For more information, please contact Addie Asay at addie.asay@state.de.us.

SUPERIOR COURT RULE 61 AMENDED

On June 4, 2014, Superior Court amended several provisions of its Criminal Rule 61, including section (a), which was amended to clarify that only movants who are currently in custody and are challenging the judgment for which they are in custody may file a motion under Criminal Rule 61. Criminal Rule 61(d) was also amended to provide that a second or subsequent post-conviction motion will be summarily dismissed unless the movant was convicted after a trial and the motion pleads with particularity either that new evidence exists to establish the movant’s actual innocence in fact, or that a new, retroactively applicable constitutional rule applies to the movant’s case which renders the conviction or death sentence invalid. Modifications to Criminal Rule 61(e) distinguished those cases in which counsel must be appointed to assist an indigent movant to pursue post-conviction relief from those cases in which appointment of counsel is discretionary. Amended Rule 61(e) provides that the court, upon request, shall appoint counsel for any timely first post-conviction motion if the underlying conviction was imposed during trial and is for a crime designated as a class A, B or C felony, or if the conviction resulted in a habitual offender’s life sentence or in a death sentence. The court has the discretion to appoint counsel for other timely filed first post-conviction motions if the underlying conviction resulted from a guilty plea or was imposed following a trial for a less serious crime. The amended Rules provide the specific criteria for those cases in which the court may exercise such discretion. In addition, amendments to Rule 61(e) provide that a judge may appoint counsel for an indigent movant’s second or subsequent post-conviction motion only if the motion meets the pleading requirements prescribed in new section (d)(2) of Rule 61. Finally, Criminal Rule 61(i) was amended to incorporate new pleading standards for second or subsequent post-conviction motions, and to state that procedural bars of Criminal Rule 61 (i)(1) – (4) do not apply to claims that satisfy the new pleading standards, and to clarify that exceptions to those procedural bars are limited to claims that the court lacked jurisdiction, or that satisfy the new pleading standards. Amended Superior Court Rule 61 can be found at http://courts.delaware.gov/Superior/pdf/criminal_rule_61_amend_2014.pdf.

For more information, please contact Maureen Frederick at maureen.frederick@state.de.us.
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT HOLDS ENHANCING PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS TRAINING

On March 26, 2014, the Justice of the Peace Court held a training for judges, managers, and police officer liaisons on the topic of procedural justice. Entitled “Enhancing Procedural Fairness,” the program consisted of a one-day training including curriculum developed as a part of the Bureau of Justice Assistance’s (BJA) Improving Courtroom Communication Project (the “Project”). As a part of the Project, the BJA, the Center for Court Innovation, and the National Judicial College sought proposals from courts interested in receiving the training to help judges and court personnel enhance communication practices in order to improve perceptions of fairness by litigants. Three sites were selected nationally for the training, including the Delaware Justice of the Peace Court.

In conjunction with being selected as a site, the Justice of the Peace Court participated in several pre-training meetings with faculty in order to craft a program designed to meet the specific needs of the Justice of the Peace Court. In addition, all participants viewed a brief online training regarding the basics of procedural fairness prior to the full day program. The faculty included the Honorable Alex Calabrese, an acting Supreme Court Justice of the State of New York and the Presiding Judge of the Red Hook Community Justice Center; the Honorable Jeffrey Kremers, Chief Judge of the Milwaukee County Circuit Court; Kelly Tait, a judicial branch communication consultant; and the Honorable Chad Schmucker, President of the National Judicial College. Emily Gold and Aubrey Fox from the Center for Court Innovation assisted in coordination, planning, and presentation.

The curriculum included training on both verbal and non-verbal communication, considering special populations, first-hand experiences from the bench and the development of an action plan moving forward. Participants engaged in group exercises as well as lively discussions as they were encouraged to look at their physical court buildings and their interaction with the public in new and different ways. Jody Huber, Justice of the Peace Court staff attorney and coordinator of the training, noted: “One of the most powerful exercises was making a video recording of one of our judges conducting an arraignment and then critiquing that judge’s performance based upon what we had learned throughout the day. Our judges conduct hundreds of arraignments every week and the process can become very routine, which is dangerous from a procedural justice perspective. This was intended to be a starting point in an ongoing series of training in the area of procedural fairness. It is a subject that impacts every single case we have and touches every litigant that walks through our doors. These skills have the potential to impact not just the way people perceive the court, but compliance and recidivism as well.”

Participants took a survey both before and several weeks after the training to gather data about the effect of the training upon their knowledge base and interactions with the public. In addition, the Justice of the Peace Court continues to work with the Center for Court Innovation on critiquing the training and making improvements for the other two sites that will receive the same curriculum. The Justice of the Peace Court is committed to having a procedural fairness component in every training for both judges and court staff so that work in this area continues.

For more information, please contact Jody Huber at jody.huber@state.de.us.

JIC STAFF UPGRADES JUDICIARY TO WINDOWS

JIC recently completed the upgrade of 1,189 judicial branch computers and laptops from Windows XP to Windows 7. The upgrade was necessitated by Microsoft’s announcement last spring that it would no longer support Windows XP. On April 8, 2014, Microsoft released their last “Patch Tuesday” for Windows XP and Office 2003, leaving computers that operate on those systems vulnerable to hackers and malicious software. Patch Tuesday is the second Tuesday of each month, when Microsoft releases the newest fixes for its Windows operating system and related software applications. Windows XP was one of Microsoft’s most popular operating systems for over 12 years, even as upgrades such as Windows 7 and Windows 8 became available. Microsoft’s announcement that it would discontinue its support for Windows XP, no longer providing security and software updates, leaves Microsoft users who still use Windows XP at risk.

Microsoft’s announcement presented a security dilemma for Delaware’s Department of Technology and Information. Of the State’s 20,000 computers, approximately 1,833 belong to the Courts. JIC helpdesk staff members physically worked on or replaced court computers that still utilized Windows XP. The Courts have now successfully completed the transition from XP Windows to Windows 7 and secured their databases.

For more information on this project, please contact Deb Lindell at deborah.lindell@state.de.us.
William Penn v. Lord Baltimore, a theatrical adaption of Justice Randy Holland’s historical book, Delaware’s Destiny as Determined by Lewes, was presented at the Terry Carey American Inn of Court in Milford on January 15, 2014 and again at the Melson-Arsht Inn of Court in Wilmington on April 8, 2014. The play, written by Justice Holland, traces the historical events that led to Delaware becoming a separate state and was well received by the audience.

Complete with costumes and musical interludes performed by Superior Court Judge Robert B. Young, Justice Holland narrated as members of the respective Inns reenacted scenes described in his book. “It was great fun participating in Justice Holland’s play and bringing a vital piece of Delaware’s history – how the legal battle between William Penn and Lord Baltimore gave Delaware its shape – to life for the members of the Terry Carey Inn,” remarked Shaun Kelly, a Supreme Court law clerk who performed at the Terry Carey Inn. Staci Pesin, a Family Court law clerk, concurred, “the play was a great opportunity for judges, attorneys, and law clerks to work together and get to know each other. We had a lot of fun rehearsing and performing.”

David A. Boswell, Esq., John F. Brady, Esq., Nicole M. Faries, Esq., Zach Greenberg (Supreme Court law clerk), Shaun Kelly (Supreme Court law clerk), David N. Rutt, Esq., Judge Paula T. Ryan, Lauren Sanders (Family Court law clerk), and Elizabeth L. Soucek, Esq., participated in the play at the Terry Carey Inn as members of the William Storey Pupilage Group.

The Crompton Pupilage Group, performing as the Crompton Colonial Criers, in the production at the Melson-Arsht Inn of Court included Bonnie E. Copeland, Esq., Edward (Mike) F. Eaton, Esq., Kathryn J. Laffey, Esq., Andrew Meyer (Family Court law clerk), Staci Pesin (Family Court law clerk), Shana A. Pinter, Esq., Phyllis R. Scully, Esq., and Judge Barbara Crowell.

For more information, please contact Judge Crowell at barbara.crowell@state.de.us.
SUPERIOR COURT MENTAL HEALTH COURT LAUNCHES PEER MENTOR PROGRAM

Superior Court Mental Health Court launched its Peer Mentor Program in January 2014. A collaboration between the Superior Court, the Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH), and the Mental Health Association in Delaware (MHA), this new initiative should significantly enhance the services provided by the Superior Court Mental Health Court team.

Evidence-based best practices indicate that peer mentor programs are a necessary component of the most successful mental health courts. Peer mentors provide valuable assistance to the participants by offering additional moral and practical support and helping participants navigate their way through probation or diversion programs. They can serve as a sounding board and a source of encouragement to participants as mentors are familiar with the myriad issues that beset participants. Mentors are selected based on their personal experience with mental health issues and are thus familiar with the struggles and challenges faced by Mental Health Court participants.

The Superior Court Mental Health Court Peer Support Coordinator is June Benson. The Peer Support Specialists are Michele Owens, Brittani Shells, and Jennifer Whitehead. This program would not have been possible without the support of President Judge Vaughn, who was receptive to this initiative, and the invaluable contributions provided by Director Kevin Huckshorn (DSAMH); Director James Lafferty (MHA); former Criminal Justice Council Executive Director Drewry Fennell; and Executive Director Dr. Joshua Thomas-Acker of the Delaware National Alliance on Mental Illness in Delaware.

"There are ten basic components of a successful mental health court – we now have all ten. I expect [the Peer Mentor Program] will further improve our ability to assist justice-involved individuals with severe and persistent mental illness, while reducing recidivism and improving public safety," remarked Superior Court Mental Health Court Judge Jan R. Jurden. She continued, “I am really excited about the Peer Mentor Program and expect the [Mental Health Court] participants will find the peer mentoring tremendously helpful.”
The New Castle County Courthouse is finally ready for its makeover. The long-awaited renovations to the front lobby of the courthouse began on May 27, 2014 and should be completed in August 2014. These renovations will not only repair the damages caused by the exchange of gunfire that occurred on February 11, 2013, but will also enhance traffic flow into and out of the courthouse and introduce new safety features.

Much thought was given as to how the lobby should be reconfigured to permit ease of ingress and egress while maintaining security. After consulting with the U.S. Marshals’ office and the Department of Homeland Security, former Chief Justice Myron T. Steele and the Presiding Judges of the affected courts created a strategic security action plan that identified areas of need. The renovations to the lobby were ranked as a top priority but work has been delayed due to the difficulty associated with acquiring custom made bullet proof material specifically manufactured for the lobby’s configuration.

The New Castle County Courthouse lobby will now have a dedicated entrance and exit doors physically separated from one another by a glass partition that will cut through the lobby. The side door that leads to the parking garage will be the sole means of egress. Employees, litigants, and visitors will continue to enter through the front doors, but a short divide will clearly demarcate the employee and jury services security screening lines from those used by all other visitors. Finally, an observation station from which Capitol Police will have the ability to survey the crowd will be built in the lobby.

Other measures called for under the Judicial Branch’s strategic security action plan have been instituted or are in process. The number of Capitol Police assigned to the judiciary has been substantially increased; additional cameras and intrusion devices have been installed at courthouses; new x-ray machines have been added in the Justice of the Peace Court; security personnel have received additional training; and office spaces open to the public have been fitted with enhanced safety equipment (ballistic and Kevlar materials). A statewide security committee has been formed to provide uniform security protections to all judicial branch employees. New policies have been adopted dealing with threats to judicial officers and staff as well as emergency closures and notification of closures.

For more information, please contact Sarah Lubin at sarah.lubin@state.de.us.