

**MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JUDGE RIDGELY
FISCAL YEAR 1995**

N. Maxson Terry, Jr. and William T. Quillen were sworn as Superior Court judges, replacing Myron T. Steele and Bernard Balick who were appointed to the Court of Chancery.

Michael Reynolds (NCC), Andrea Maybee (KC) and Alicia Howard (SC) were appointed to newly created commissioner positions.

The Court completed its first full year of operating an Expedited Drug Case Management (EDCM) program. EDCM was implemented to address the treatment needs of drug-involved defendants and reduce disposition time. The EDCM program is succeeding on both counts. The EDCM program was partially supported by a onetime grant from the State Justice Institute.

Part of the EDCM program, the Drug Court, has received national attention and recognition for its unique combination of tracks to deal with first-time drug offenders and offenders with more extensive histories of criminal activity and drug use.

Judge Richard S. Gebelein, Division Chief Judge of the Drug Court Division in New Castle County, addressed several national conferences on the subject of drug courts and testified before committees of the United States Senate and House of Representatives in behalf of drug court funding.

An administrative order establishing disposition standards for all appeals was established by the Court. The standards provide that 75% of all appeal cases shall be resolved within 290 days of filing, 95% within one year of filing and the remaining 5% as expeditiously as possible, given the length of the record, the complexity of the issues, or other circumstances. Administrative appeals arising from decisions of more than 50 boards and agencies, which are part of Superior Court's jurisdiction, are subject to this administrative order.

The Court created an individual assignment system for all civil cases and appeals. The system will be fully operational by January 1, 1996, when, for case management purposes, all pending civil cases will be assigned to a judge and all new civil cases will be assigned to a judge at the time of filing.

The Court continued to develop its capacity for alternative dispute resolution of civil cases. Another three day mediation training program was conducted for 40 attorneys. A total of 120 attorneys have now completed this program. During the Court's third Settlement Week, several hundred cases were assigned to trained attorneys for mediation. The Court also conducted arbitration seminars for members of the Bar in each county and sponsored another seminar which was attended by attorneys and members of the insurance industry.

The Court continued to refine its Complex Litigation Automated Docket (CLAD) Program. CLAD, established in 1991, provides for electronic filing of court documents and is still the most sophisticated application of electronic filing by a court in the U.S.

Judge Susan C. Del Pesco, the judge who leads CLAD's implementation, addressed 2500 judges and court managers at the Fourth National Court Technology Conference in Nashville, and she has also spoken to several other national conference about CLAD.

A one trial/one day jury reporting system was implemented in New Castle County. The term of jury service for citizens was reduced from two weeks to one day or the duration of the trial, if selected. The jury fee was increased to \$20 per day. By restructuring the payment plan so that citizens are not paid for the first day of service, the program was implemented without an increase in operating costs.

The Court continued to expand the integration of its accounting system for the receipt and posting of criminal receivables, with operations at the Probation and Parole Offices. Criminal receivables include assessments for the Victims' Compensation Fund, fines, court costs, restitution, and the Public Defender Assessment fee. The integration of accounting systems provides assistance to the Office of State Court Collections Enforcement in the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Courtroom #302 in Wilmington has become Superior Court's "Courtroom of the Future". The courtroom was redesigned to accommodate trials of multi-party, complex litigation cases and can accommodate 32 attorneys and an expanded panel of 20 jurors. The courtroom is equipped with the latest in presentation technologies and can deliver audio, video and data signals to all participants. The Court has conducted demonstrations of Courtroom 302's capabilities for

many groups, including a group of judges from Texas.

A pilot study of the feasibility of using court personnel to microfilm inactive court records at the Division of Archives was begun by the Court.

An Intake Office in the Kent County Courthouse was established by the Court in coordination with Probation and Parole (P&P). The Office expedites the referral of defendants sentenced to probation and eliminates the problems which occur when a defendant fails to report to P&P. This Office has also proved to be highly effective at detaining defendants who have outstanding warrants and capiases.

Some jury boxes were modified and the capability to use hearing assist devices was installed by the Court to improve its accessibility to disabled citizens.

“Excellence in Court Service”, the total quality management (TQM) program of the Court, has begun to be implemented.