

District of Columbia Courts

State of the Judiciary



2007

Open to All ♦ Trusted by All ♦ Justice for All

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Future location of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS

It is with pleasure that I transmit the District of Columbia Courts' annual publication in accordance with District of Columbia Code Sections 11-1701(c)(2) and 1745(a). The *2007 State of the Judiciary* reports on the Courts' overall accomplishments and outreach activities during the year and includes: a message from The Honorable Eric T. Washington, Chair of the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration and Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, and The Honorable Rufus G. King, III, Chief Judge of the Superior Court; an overview of the Courts' organizational structure; and highlights of accomplishments and activities. Many goals outlined in our Strategic Plan were achieved in 2007.

The D.C. Courts' Strategic Plan as well as detailed statistical information on court caseload activity, trends, and division activities can be found on the D.C. Courts' website at www.dccourts.gov.

In the future, the Courts will continue to work diligently to accomplish our mission to protect rights and liberties, uphold and interpret the law, and resolve disputes peacefully, fairly and effectively in the Nation's Capital.

Sincerely,



Anne B. Wicks
Executive Officer
District of Columbia Courts

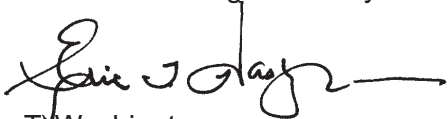
MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUDGES

During 2007, the District of Columbia Courts continued to make public service a priority through case management and operational improvements, as well as through infrastructure modifications designed to enhance public safety. The Courts have also strived to improve public access to our services, thereby enhancing the trust and confidence of the community.

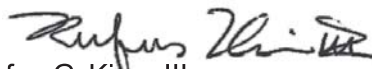
Over the past year, the Courts completed implementation of the first five-year Strategic Plan and developed the next Plan which will serve as a guidepost for years 2008-2012. As part of that planning process, the Courts reviewed their current practices to assess how well we served individuals seeking a legal remedy through the courts and what, if any, changes should be made. As a result, in 2007, the Courts established time standards for case processing and renewed efforts to resolve the oldest cases in our system. We also developed: specialized calendars to address the needs of mentally ill defendants in an effort to improve public safety; user-friendly information packets to assist *pro se* litigants in navigating through the justice system; and electronic access to court records in a wide array of court operations.

The Courts remain on track with space renovation projects, such as the restoration of the District's Old Courthouse, to serve as the future home of the D.C. Court of Appeals. Additional elements of the Family Court were consolidated with the completion of a new accessible entrance to the Family Court that is located on the John Marshall Level. The Courts continued to improve our technological capabilities making it easier to report on how well we are meeting courtwide performance standards, exchange pertinent case information with criminal justice agencies and facilitate payment to attorneys representing the indigent. Further, case docket sharing is now available with our justice partner agencies, and we have expanded the information which is viewable on the internet. Finally, the electronic filing of documents is available in a growing number of court divisions.

As we move forward with the implementation of a new Strategic Plan, the Courts' practices, programs and procedures will be reviewed, assessed and improved. The Courts will continue to work with elected officials, community leaders, and our justice partners to enhance services, reduce unnecessary delay in case processing and better serve the public. As always, the Courts' performance will be guided by our vision of being a court system that is: "Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All."



Eric T. Washington
Chief Judge
District of Columbia Court of Appeals



Rufus G. King, III
Chief Judge
Superior Court of the District of Columbia

ORGANIZATION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS

The Joint Committee on Judicial Administration was created as part of the District of Columbia Court Reform and Criminal Procedure Act of 1970 (the Act). The Joint Committee is the policymaking body of the District of Columbia Courts and is responsible for administrative and financial activities of the Courts, including capital projects to maintain safe and functional courthouse facilities; budget submissions; acquisition, spending and auditing; general personnel policies; information management; and performance monitoring and statistical reporting. Pursuant to the Act, five judges serve on the Joint Committee: the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, as Chair; the Chief Judge of the Superior Court; and three other judicial members, one elected by judges of the Court of Appeals and two elected by judges of the Superior Court. The Executive Officer, who is responsible for the administrative management of the District of Columbia Courts, serves as Secretary to the Joint Committee.

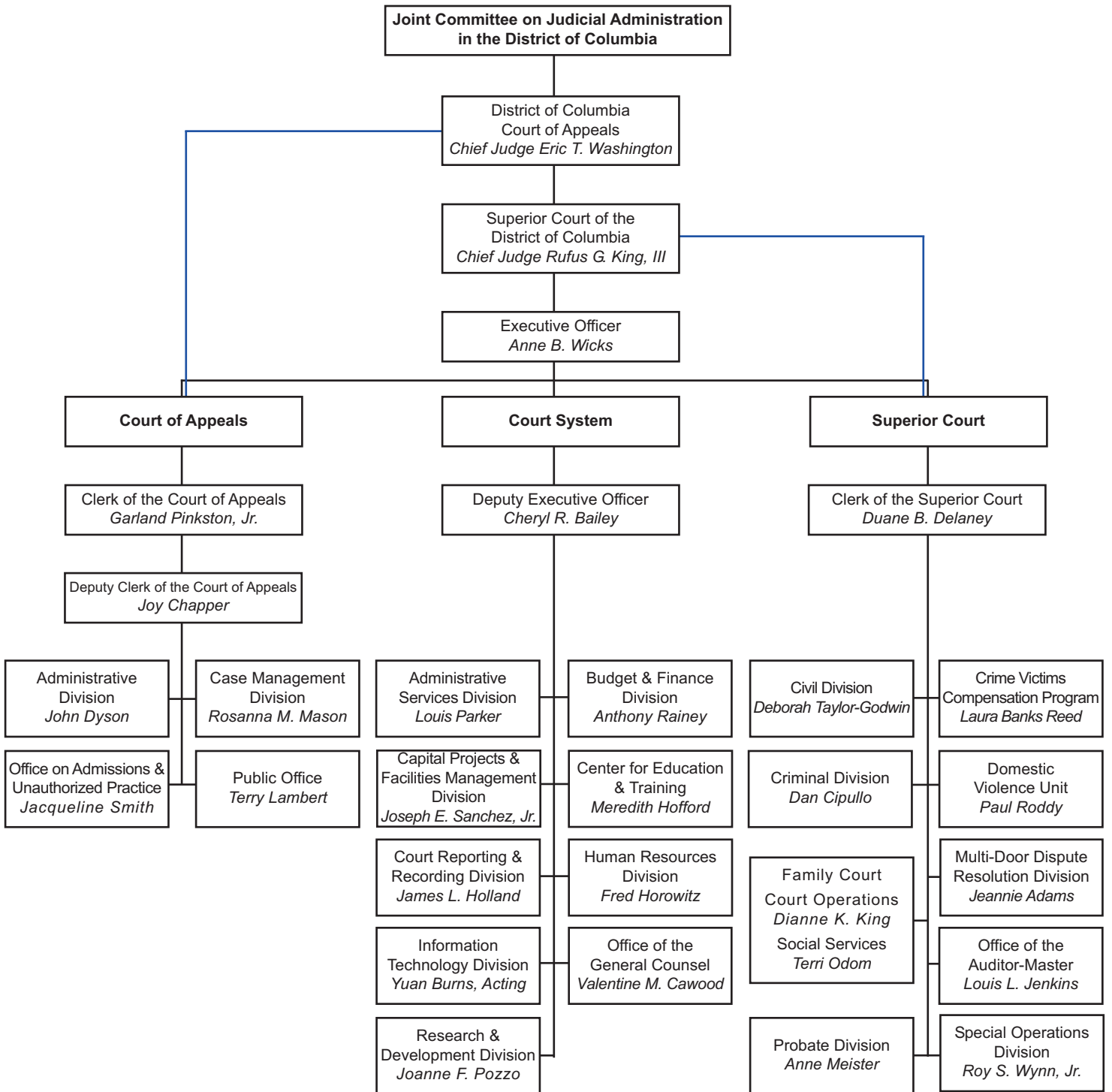
The District of Columbia Courts, the Judicial Branch of the District of Columbia Government, are comprised of the Court of Appeals, the Superior Court and the Court System. The organization and operation of the District of Columbia Courts, a completely unified court system, are described in the Act. Our judges are appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the United States Senate. As defined in the National Capital Revitalization and Self Government Improvement Act of 1997, the Courts receive direct funding from the federal government. As a result, the Courts' budget is submitted to the federal Office of Management and Budget which advances it to the United States Congress for final consideration.

The District of Columbia Court of Appeals, the highest court of the District of Columbia, is comprised of nine judges, who sit in three-judge panels and on rare occasions who sit *en banc*. The Court of Appeals reviews appeals from the trial court, as well as decisions and orders of D.C. government administrative agencies. Final judgments of the Court of Appeals are reviewable by the Supreme Court of the United States, in accordance with Section 1257 of Title 28 of the United States Code. The Court of Appeals also is responsible for managing admissions to the D.C. Bar, attorney discipline, and approval of Superior Court Rules that would modify the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure or the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.

The Superior Court of the District of Columbia is the trial court of general jurisdiction for local legal matters and is comprised of divisions which provide support for litigation functions including civil (small claims, landlord and tenant), criminal, family (juvenile, abuse and neglect, divorce, mental health/retardation), domestic violence, probate and tax. The Superior Court also fosters the settlement of disputes through alternative dispute resolution, such as mediation, early neutral evaluation and arbitration. The judges of the Superior Court and magistrate judges rotate for service in each division on a scheduled basis. The Court also is responsible for certifying cases for appeals, managing jurors and providing foreign language and sign interpreters for court proceedings. The Superior Court administers the District of Columbia's Crime Victims Compensation Program to assist victims of violent crimes and survivors of homicide victims with crime-related expenses. The Court also operates the District's juvenile probation department.

The Court System provides services to both the Court of Appeals and the Superior Court under the direction of the Executive Officer. The Court System consists of the Deputy Executive Officer and a variety of administrative divisions which provide technical and support services, including administration, budget and finance, capital projects, court reporting, education and training, facilities management, human resources, information technology, legal counsel, and research.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS





H. Carl Moultrie I Courthouse

Open to All ♦ Trusted by All ♦ Justice for All

STATE OF THE JUDICIARY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS, 2007

The D.C. Courts reached a significant milestone in 2007, completing implementation of our first five-year Strategic Plan and releasing a new Plan for 2008 to 2012. It was a year of taking stock of how far the Courts have come and looking to the future to consider the next steps in the implementation of courtwide performance measures that continue to improve case processing and service to the public, and increase public trust and confidence in the Courts. Judicial officers, senior managers, and staff reviewed best and evidence-based practices recommended by national organizations and courts in other jurisdictions and considered their potential use in the D.C. Courts. As an outcome of this work, a number of new initiatives were launched during the year including: an early intervention program for select civil appeals cases and other case processing reforms; advances in the assistance to *pro se* litigants; improved access, both physical and electronic, to the courthouse; a community-based drop-in center for youth under the court's supervision; and an expansion of our community court.

In January, the Courts' Strategic Planning



Criminal Division Director Dan Cipullo and Superior Court Chief Judge Rufus King, III greet court visitors during the survey event.

Leadership Council sought feedback through a one-day exit survey of all persons conducting business in the Courts. More than 60 employees and judicial officers volunteered to greet court users and invite them to participate in the "You Be The Judge" survey. 1,400 individuals provided their views on safety in the courthouse, access to court facilities, knowledge of court staff, treatment by judges and staff, fairness, and other issues. More than four out of five persons indicated satisfaction with their overall court experience.

Improvements since 2002, when the Courts conducted a similar survey, were shown in several areas, including: waiting time, court staff responsiveness, usefulness of the information provided by staff, and access to court services. These and other results, along with comments from focus groups, a survey of Bar members, and discussions with justice system agencies, informed the new Strategic Plan's emphasis on enhancing timeliness of case processing, staff training and service to court users.

The new plan, *Delivering Justice: Strategic*



Court of Appeals Chief Judge Eric Washington speaks to a citizen during the 2007 "You Be The Judge" survey event.

Plan of the District of Columbia Courts, 2008-2012, approved by the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration in August 2007, builds upon the Courts' 2003-2007 Strategic Plan and guides current and future activities of the Courts. In recognition of the D.C. Courts' successful execution of the strategic plan, the National Association for Court Management (NACM) invited the Co-Chairs of the Courts' Strategic Planning Leadership Council and the Director of the Office of Strategic Management to lead a session on strategic planning at the Association's annual conference held in Chicago in July 2007. A related article on the D.C. Courts' strategic plan implementation and emerging leadership role in strategic planning in the courts was published in *The Court Manager*, a national publication of NACM.

CASELOAD ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

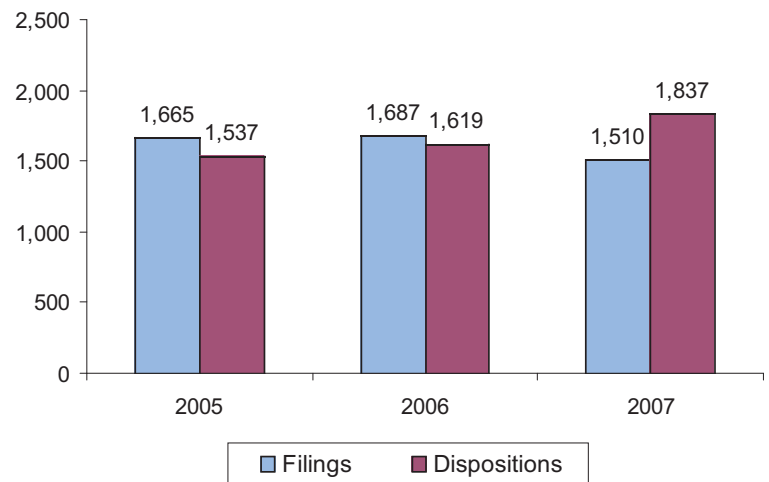
The District of Columbia Courts continued to be one of the busiest state-level jurisdictions in the nation. Case filings per capita in both the Court of Appeals and the Superior Court rank at or near the highest in most categories, as determined by the National Center for State Courts. During 2007, over 1,500 cases were filed in the Court of Appeals, predominately civil and criminal cases, and over 117,000 new cases were filed in the Superior Court, more than half of these were civil cases such as contracts, collections, automobile accidents, small claims and landlord and tenant matters. Criminal cases comprised the second largest category of filings (24% of all new filings), followed by family matters (11% of filings, including juvenile delinquency and abuse and neglect), domestic violence (6%), and probate (2%).

Case dispositions kept pace, and in some

instances, exceeded filings so that, for example, the Court of Appeals was able to resolve cases at the same rate of filings and also address case backlog. As a result, the Court of Appeals achieved a very efficient clearance rate of 122%, which means that for every case filed, 1.2 cases were resolved. In nearly three-quarters of appellate cases (70%), decisions were issued within 90 days or less of argument. The Superior Court also disposed of cases efficiently, experiencing nearly a 6% increase in dispositions from calendar year 2006 to 2007, resulting in a 24% decrease in the Court's pending caseload to 49,926 cases at the end of the year.

Detailed statistical information for calendar year 2007 for the District of Columbia Courts can be found on the D.C. Courts' website at www.dc-courts.gov.

Court of Appeals Case Activity, 2005-2007



Superior Court Caseload Activity, 2007				
Division	New Cases Files		Cases Disposed	Cases Pending December 31, 2007
	No.	#		
Civil	66,831	57.1	84,739	22,256
Criminal	27,903	23.8	27,049	7,735
Domestic Violence	6,743	5.8	7,248	1,045
Family Court	12,739	10.9	13,076	14,794
Probate	2,606	2.2	3,064	3,735
Tax	234	0.2	302	361
Total	117,056	100%	135,478	49,926

ENHANCING THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

The District of Columbia Courts are committed to ensuring that the time to case disposition and other operational procedures are consistent with best practices and national standards, while also providing judges an opportunity to thoughtfully consider each case. Towards this end, much was accomplished during 2007 to facilitate the case resolution process. For example, the Court of Appeals adopted a comprehensive revision of its rules of procedure, which streamlined the process for getting cases ready for appellate review. In addition, the Court revised its Internal Operating Procedures for the first time since 1991, and, in the process, reaffirmed its commitment to review and dispose of cases in a timely fashion.

The Court also made tremendous strides in resolving older cases on the docket, paying significant attention to cases in a “pending decision” category, in an effort to meet national standards for managing such cases. While the Court of Appeals’ focus on disposing older cases resulted in some increase in the “time on appeal” in calendar year 2007, improved case processing efficiencies and renewed commitment to resolving appeals in a

timely fashion undoubtedly will result in improvements in overall time on appeal in 2008 and beyond. All of this, of course, occurs in the context of the special circumstances of our jurisdiction, in which the workload of the highest court is 99% mandatory, as opposed to the substantial discretionary jurisdiction afforded most state supreme courts. Coupled with the high number of appeals filed each year, the D.C. Court of Appeals faces the challenge of balancing timely case disposition with the necessity of affording judges time to carefully deliberate the complex, constitutional, commercial and statutory issues that come before it. The Court strives to do its best to balance these sometimes competing priorities in a way that honors the public trust and confidence that the Court enjoys.

Superior Court also contributed to the goal of efficient and effective case processing. For example, the Office of the Auditor-Master ensured prompt and efficient processing for all cases by completing at least 40% within nine months of referral and 65% within a year. The Civil Division implemented mandatory electronic filing for civil actions cases. This was a major step in paperless filing for the Court, and has the benefit of eliminating numerous trips to the courthouse by the public and attorneys. The Criminal Division created time to disposition standards for its various case types and, as a first step, implemented them on misdemeanor calendars. The division also established a DUI/DWI Calendar involving special prosecutors to focus on the more serious cases filed each year. Additionally, the Criminal Division established staggered scheduling for its traffic citation cases in order to eliminate unnecessary waiting time for the public and to provide better calendar management for all parties.

The Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division made several changes to its Civil Mediation Program, in an effort to improve the rate of settlement in these cases and promote earlier case settle-

ments. One change involved modifying a civil rule to require that a representative with full settlement authority attend mediation, a critical factor in the success of mediation and case settlement. A second change altered the schedule for motor vehicle tort cases so that mediation occurs approximately one month, rather than 3 or 4 months, before the pretrial conference. Setting the mediation date closer to the pretrial conference helps ensure that mediation occurs when both sides have fully investigated the case and may be more amenable to settlement.

In February of 2007, the Family Court and the Multi-Door Division collaborated on a program to require parent education seminars for guardians and children (ages 7-14) involved in contested custody cases. The Program for Agreement and Cooperation in Contested Custody Cases (PAC) is designed to help parents learn about effective communication and the harm conflict causes to children, as well as to prepare for mediation. PAC includes an innovative focus on helping children understand their feelings as their parents navigate through separation and custody proceedings. The goals of the program are to promote better relationships between parents, encourage effective communication between parents and children, and reduce conflict.

The Domestic Violence Unit reorganized its caseload in 2007 to enhance efficient case management and, with partner agencies, instituted an after-hours Emergency Temporary Protection Order Pilot Program that makes it possible for victims of domestic violence to receive services and protection orders after normal business hours.

In November 2007, the District of Columbia Fathering Court was launched through the collaborative efforts of the Superior Court, the District government's Child Support Services Division, the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA), the Criminal Justice Coordinating Coun-

cil (CJCC) and other District community partners. The goal of the Fathering Court is to provide fathers recently released from incarceration with the skills needed to successfully reenter the workforce and become financially and emotionally responsible for their children.

The Tax Office enhanced case processing by transferring tax criminal cases to the Criminal Division for more consistent and expeditious processing. Information for defendants charged with tax fraud is now recorded with a Police Department Identification Number (PDID) and defendants who plead or are found guilty of tax fraud have a criminal record on file in the D.C. Superior Court.

A Realtime Pilot Program, which assists the Court in making quicker decisions by having immediate access to a record of proceedings, was implemented in 2007 by the Court Reporting and Recording Division. Realtime also expedites transcript production, which means less time spent retrieving case information from paper files, resulting in less delay in case processing.

In calendar year 2007, over \$7 million in grant funds to enhance existing court programs and launch new initiatives was secured by the Courts' Research and Development Division. These efforts resulted in, among other initiatives, the expansion of services to juvenile probationers, implementation of the Fathering Court, and the development of community-based aftercare for the Juvenile Drug Court to assist youth in making the transition from drug court supervision to a life without substance abuse.

BROADENING ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

The Courts continued efforts to ensure that justice is more readily available to the District of Columbia's increasingly diverse community. The

Standing Committee on Fairness and Access to the District of Columbia Courts, following on the work of the earlier Task Forces on Racial, Ethnic and Gender Bias in the District of Columbia Courts, seeks to improve community access to the Courts by monitoring compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and generally improving the quality of services provided to court users. Among the many activities undertaken by the Standing Committee in 2007 was an outreach forum with the African immigrant community, convened jointly with the D.C. Office on African Affairs, and several courthouse tours to determine the physical accessibility of court facilities. A draft set of access recommendations was produced which will be finalized in 2008.

To provide District-wide focus to the unmet civil legal needs of low and moderate income residents, the Court of Appeals established in 2005 the D.C. Access to Justice Commission. Completing its second full year in 2007, the Commission led efforts that resulted in the Council of the District of Columbia (the District's legislative body) appropriating \$3.2 million for civil legal services. The funding provides for additional legal services in underserved neighborhoods, adds lawyers to address housing issues, and establishes legal interpreter resources. Among other initiatives, the Commission worked closely with the Courts to ensure that electronic filing does not negatively impact the ability of low income individuals to litigate cases, and collaborated with the D.C. Bar to increase the *pro bono* panel of the largest law firms in the District.

The Court of Appeals used the D.C. Courts' award-winning website to publish opinions, rules, practice tips, and forms and instructions, as well as to enable the public to listen to oral arguments over the internet. In the Superior Court, the Probate Division launched a Resource Center to provide information and assistance to the public in processing

wills and managing estates. The Civil Division expanded its Landlord and Tenant Resource Center's operations and also established the Small Claims Resource Center, which provides free legal assistance to *pro se* litigants. The Civil Division also began a Tax Sale Resource Center to provide legal assistance to homeowners in jeopardy of losing their homes because of tax foreclosure sales. The Center has been particularly useful to elderly homeowners who may have been unaware of the legal implications of actions taken during the refinancing of their homes.

The Courts' Crime Victims Compensation Program continued to collaborate with domestic violence service providers to assist crime victims. Through a partnership with My Sister's Place, a shelter for female victims of domestic violence, the Program provided counseling and other services to victims located in temporary emergency housing in local hotels. During 2007, over 2,500 new claims were filed with the Program and awards totaling over \$8 million were made to victims of violent crime in the District of Columbia.

The Courts began a Mental Health Diversion Pilot Program to assist the increasing number of mentally ill individuals, as well as defendants with serious co-occurring substance abuse disorders who are involved in criminal matters. The goals of the program include improving the mental health of program participants by connecting them with appropriate services in the community, monitoring their progress, and reducing their criminal behavior. The Criminal Division also developed support services for defendants involved in the Community Court, by establishing a partnership with Unity Health Care to register individuals for health care services, the D.C. Department of Employment Services to provide employment counseling and placement, and the Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration to provide substance abuse treatment.

The Family Court's Self Help Center, which provides free walk-in services for unrepresented individuals seeking legal information on a variety of family law matters, served over 4,500 people, or approximately 375 individuals each month in 2007. During the year, the Center expanded its outreach efforts to the Latino community and, by year's end, began to experience an increase in the number of Spanish-speaking individuals served.

The Family Court of the Superior Court explored ways to overcome barriers to justice through its annual multi-disciplinary training entitled "Disproportionate Representation of Minorities in Family Court." At this event, participants examined the issue of racism and its influence on the number of minorities in both the neglect and juvenile systems. This was followed by a summit facilitated by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges at which District government agency heads and Court officials met to identify major issues and goals to pursue in 2008 to reduce the overrepresentation of minority youth.

The treatment and supervision of female adolescent probationers was enhanced through the innovative Leaders of Today in Solidarity Program, or LOTS. Female adolescents in LOTS participated in a variety of court-supervised activities, including field trips, social justice activities, conflict resolution seminars, gang mediation and community service. The effort was augmented by a unique third-party monitoring initiative managed by Peaceholics, a community-based organization working to eliminate youth violence in the District. LOTS was recognized in 2007 by the Annie E. Casey Foundation for its success in reducing the use of both pre-trial detention and shelter placement for adolescent girls.

The Social Services Division launched a Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Drop-In Center for youth under court supervision. The Center includes a large recreation room, a kitchen and



Activities in the learning room at the BARJ Drop-in Center.

an emergency courtroom in addition to office and meeting space. On weekdays, the Center operates a program for youth suspended from school for more than 3 days to assist them with keeping up with their school work, and an after-school enrichment program that provides tutoring and counseling. Structured programming on Saturdays permits youth the benefit of group intervention activities and enables youth to complete court-ordered community service under the supervision of probation officers. Information gathered so far shows very high levels of program attendance and declining rearrests for BARJ participants.

In an effort to better inform the public about services available at the Courts, the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division expanded its Community Program outreach by partnering with several local government agencies and community organizations. Through meetings with representatives from Neighborhood Legal Services, the Metropolitan Police Department and community relations coordinators representing various D.C. Council members, the Community Program was able to increase its visibility in some of the District's poorest communities and expand its client service base.

The Tax Office developed a Tax Opinions and Decisions area on the D.C. Courts' website, providing the public with electronic access to former and current tax opinions. This web presence diminishes the need for the public to physically visit the Tax Office or request information by phone.

Given the increasingly diverse, non-English speaking population residing in the District of Columbia, the need for competent and readily-available interpreters has grown exponentially in recent years. In 2007, the number of court events requiring Spanish language interpreters rose by 8% (to approximately 6,500 events) and those requiring other languages rose by 17%, to nearly 900 events per year. In addition to providing daily interpreters, the Office of Court Interpreting Services (OCIS) participated in judicial education workshops to brief judges on interpreter availability, appropriate instructions for a jury in trials where interpreting services are used, and how best to utilize interpreters in the courtroom to ensure high quality interpretation. OCIS also met with representatives from the D.C. Pretrial Services Agency, the United States Attorney's Office and the U.S. Marshals Service to better coordinate

cases needing interpreting services. Also, at a substantial savings to the Courts, telephonic interpreting services were expanded for use whenever emergency or very short matters required immediate interpretation.

PROMOTING COMPETENCE, PROFESSIONALISM AND CIVILITY

One of our strategic issues is to promote competence, professionalism and civility among the workforce and those doing business with the Courts. As an example of the Courts' commitment to this ideal, the Criminal Division sponsored its second Professionalism and Civility Forum in 2007, in conjunction with the Superior Court Trial Lawyers' Association, the Public Defenders Service, the United States Attorney's Office and the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia. The forum addressed problems with case scheduling, waiting time and respectful relationships. Recommendations emanating from the forum included the need to explore the use of staggered scheduling and to develop a means for attorneys, judges and courtroom clerks to communicate with each other on civility issues.

Throughout the year, the Courts were assisted by 50 student interns who provided over 11,000 volunteer hours to 14 different offices. This program, operated by the Human Resources Division, offers students interested in the fields of law, research, management and social services a unique opportunity to gain valuable experience in the field of judicial administration. Students are recruited from universities nationwide and placed in their desired area of interest where they gain hands-on experience while providing assistance to the Courts.

To ensure that staff are sensitive to diversity issues, the Courts conducted several educational and outreach activities, including a celebration of Black History Month in February 2007 with a program entitled "From Slavery to Freedom: The Story of Africans in the Americas." The multi-day program included a session on "The Historic African American Basketball League, the Black Fives;" a presentation by Lt. Commander Wesley Brown, the first African American graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy; a poetry reading by winners of the "D.C. Scores Poetry Slam;" and musical selections from various local elementary and senior high school choirs.

In the fall, the D.C. Courts observed Hispanic Heritage Month with the annual CORO Awards ceremony. The CORO Awards, standing for community, outreach, recognition, and opportunity, are given to honor outstanding service to the D.C. metropolitan Latino community. In 2007, CORO awards were presented to the District's Department of Mental Health Multicultural Services; the Gala Hispanic Theater; Ms. Nancy Matos, a D.C. Courts' employee; Ms. Maria Gomez, founder of Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care; and Mr. Carlos Vanegas of the Federal Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia. In November, the Courts celebrated American Indian Heritage Month with a presentation by Chief Billy Redwing Tayac, the 27th Hereditary Chief of the Piscataway Indian Nation.

In 2007, the Center for Education and Training offered 114 classes to court employees to develop skills in areas such as technology, customer service, staff supervision, project management and emotional intelligence. The judicial officers of the Court of Appeals and Superior Court participated in 17 court-sponsored training events on a wide range



Court employees participate in the Management Training Program.

of topics, including International Law, Self-Represented Litigants, Predicting Dangerousness, Changing D.C. Demographics and The Power of the American Prosecutor. The first-ever Courtwide Training Conference was held in May 2007 at which over 600 employees attended workshops and were inspired and motivated by internationally-known speaker Willie Jolley.

During 2007, the Courts graduated their first Management Training Program class of 22 students and, in September, welcomed a new class. The 12-month Program is a comprehensive course of study in professional development, human resource management, teambuilding and strategic planning, and is designed to create tomorrow's leaders. Employees are selected for the program on a competitive basis, and are taught by faculty comprised of the Courts' senior managers and national experts who facilitate monthly, two-day seminars on such topics as budgeting, evidence-based practices and court administration.

IMPROVING COURT FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY

To administer justice in our Nation's Capital effectively, the D.C. Courts' facilities must be both functional and emblematic of their public significance and character. The D.C. Courts, which occupy 1.1 million gross square feet of space in four buildings and some leased space in Judiciary Square, have completed significant planning to manage our facilities under the leadership of the Capital Projects and Facilities Management Division. The Master Plan for D.C. Court Facilities, incorporating research and analysis by experts in architecture, urban design and planning, delineates the Courts' space requirements and provides a blueprint for optimal space utilization, in the near- and long-term. The Judiciary Square Master Plan, an urban design plan necessary for regulatory approval of construction projects, lays out a framework for the preservation and revitalization of Judiciary Square as a green oasis for the public in a rapidly developing urban area.

With the support of the President and the Congress, the D.C. Courts have begun several construction projects to implement the recommendations contained in these two plans, including the complete restoration of the architecturally and historically significant 19th century Old Courthouse, the future location for the D.C. Court of Appeals. This restoration, scheduled to be completed in early 2009, will include a ceremonial courtroom and a functional courthouse that meets modern health and safety standards, and will help alleviate courtwide space shortages.

In the 1970's-era Moultrie Courthouse, a new, accessible Family Court entrance was completed and ongoing projects include construction of a new juvenile holding facility, as well as infrastruc-



Inside the Family Court entrance.

ture improvements. Renovation of office and courtroom space in Buildings A and B, which date from the 1930's, was completed in 2007. Planning continues for additional facilities improvement projects to begin in 2008.

It is essential that the D. C. Courts provide a safe and secure environment for persons who seek justice in the Nation's Capital. The citizens of the District of Columbia must have confidence that court facilities are safe and that the Courts will function in the event of an emergency to ensure that legal rights are protected. Given the heightened security risks in the District of Columbia, and the recent rash of violence in courthouses throughout the country, the enhancement of courthouse security remains a top priority.

The United States Marshals Service previously conducted a site security assessment which provided the blueprint for the Courts' security enhancement plan. A state-of-the-art fire alarm system upgrade was completed in the Moultrie

Courthouse, as were other security upgrades including the installation of access control systems in the judges' chambers, and additional monitoring equipment in secure corridors. Plans are underway to renovate offender holding areas and administrative space occupied by the United States Marshals Service to improve safety and security.

Attention also was focused on ensuring that the Courts continue to operate during an emergency. Lockdown procedures were developed to address situations where safety might require persons to remain in their locations rather than evacuate the courthouse. Procedures also were developed to address emergencies that might occur after-hours or on weekends.

The Courts continue to employ information technology to increase efficiency in operations and case management, as well as to more effectively and expeditiously serve the public. Enhancements to the Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS) were completed, which provide the Courts with the ability to generate case forms, easily manage the transfer of cases between judicial calendars, and produce performance reports to support the strategic management of the D.C. Courts.

Technology was used to enhance operations in several Court divisions. A new automated process enables the efficient collection and distribution of financial accounts in probate matters. This process eliminates the need to route paper documents to judicial chambers and provides real time monitoring of the status of case processing, thereby identifying potential bottlenecks.

Same day scanning of documents affecting the release or detention of prisoners was initiated for criminal cases. All court documents are now scanned within 24 hours and case review is now accomplished without handling paper files – all from scanned images and electronic records.

The Courts' first Public Access System was launched for civil cases, permitting case docket information to be viewed on the internet. Litigants can go online at www.dccourts.gov/pa to search civil actions, small claims and landlord and tenant matters by case caption and/or case number, thereby saving litigants and attorneys travel time to and from the courthouse to obtain case information.

The Information Technology and Budget and Finance Divisions collaborated to develop and provide user-based training on the Courts' Web Voucher System, an online voucher issuance and submission system for attorneys representing the indigent. The operational and customer service efficiencies realized from the use of this system resulted in the Budget and Finance Division's Defender Services Branch receiving the Courts' annual Public Service Award.

Major initiatives planned for 2008 include the installation of wireless access points to enable jurors, attorneys and the public to use the internet while waiting for court matters, and a new Jury Management System that will increase the effectiveness of juror summoning, selection and processing, and integrate seamlessly with IJIS.

BUILDING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

Trust and confidence in the Courts are essential to maintaining an orderly and democratic society. As a public institution, the Courts must be perceived by the people they serve as fair and independent, while being accountable for their performance and the use of public funds. The D.C. Courts have continued to work to enhance the public's trust and confidence through improved and effective fiscal monitoring, efficient application of information technology, and outreach to the public through surveys, focus groups and public forums.



Participants listen at a community “Town Hall” meeting conducted by the Strategic Planning Leadership Council.

As part of this effort, noted previously, the Courts administered surveys to assist in the development of the new five-year strategic plan. Feedback on court performance was sought from court participants (i.e., litigants, witnesses, family members, jurors, social workers, police officers, attorneys and others who are at the courthouse each day), judicial officers and court employees. In total, nearly 2,000 surveys were processed and results were provided on the internet, in court publications and presentations, and on the D.C. Bar website. Overall, the feedback was positive, and survey and focus group results helped define the Courts’ strategic objectives.

Judicial officers were in the community to speak about court functions and services in numerous forums at the invitation of local high schools, universities, community groups, neighborhood commissions, bar associations and other organizations. In addition, the Courts’ sponsored several meetings in the community at which judicial officers and staff gathered information about the need for and interest in court services, including the community court and other new initiatives.

Public accountability is another essential component of building trust and confidence in the courts. To further this goal, the Court of Appeals sponsored the Thirty-Second Annual Judicial Conference which, pursuant to D.C. Code Sec. 11-744, the Chief Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals is required to convene annually. The conference theme was “Violence in the District of Columbia: Can We Stop It?” The conference featured panel discussions on youth crime and prevention, mentoring, the impact of evidence-based sentencing, the co-existence of social science and the law, and an interactive audience survey on facts about the D.C. criminal justice system. Panelists included judicial officers and a number of prominent officials from private and public sector organizations.

Each year in March, the Courts join with the D.C. Bar to host a Youth Law Fair for high school students to encourage the discussion of legal issues relevant to their lives, enhance their knowledge of the courts, and educate them about careers in the law. Nearly 2,000 local students have participated since the inception of the event. In 2007, the eighth annual Youth Law Fair addressed “Internet Vulnerability – Teens and Risk.” Several hundred students from local high schools participated in mock trials, and role-playing as judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, civil litigators, witnesses and jurors. Superior Court judges, law clerks and members of the Bar assisted them in these roles, providing a learning experience about the criminal justice system and the law as it applies to the internet. This forum included “speak out sessions,” allowing discussion on the dangers posed by adult predators, the risks and benefits of social sites such as mySpace, and other internet-related concerns.

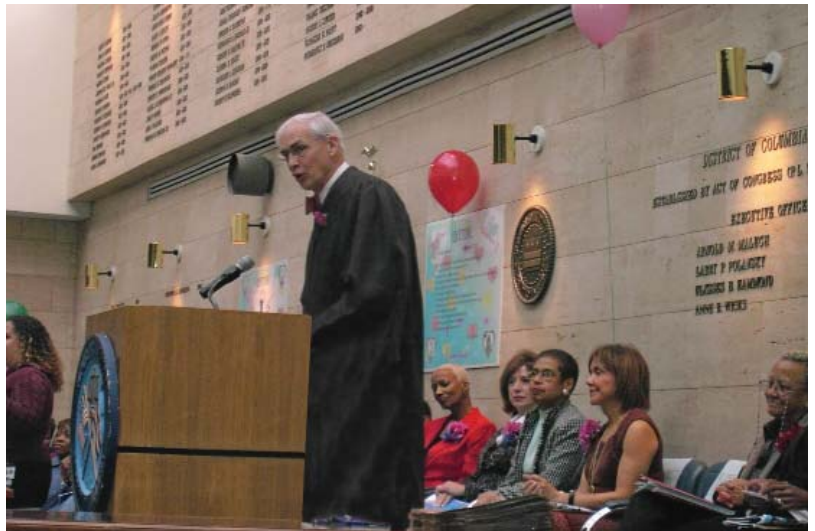
In April, the D.C. Courts hosted the third annual “Law School for Journalists” program for print,

radio and television reporters, editors and producers. Topics included: "From Arrest to Arraignment to Trial - Explaining the Criminal Justice Process;" "The Domestic Violence Intake Unit – A Comprehensive Approach;" "How Do Members of the Press Get Access to Juvenile and Neglect Hearings?" and "All About Community Court." Participants were most appreciative of the time spent by judges and the Courts' senior managers to address their questions about the Courts at this very popular seminar.

Law Day was commemorated in May with judges and senior court managers visiting local schools to talk with students about the law and how it affects their lives. The Law Day theme for 2007 (as set by the American Bar Association) was "Liberty Under Law: Empowering Youth, Assuring Democracy." Specific topics included school safety, freedom of speech and the First Amendment and its effects on students' speech, school newspaper, and expressive clothing.

In November 2007, the Superior Court participated with other criminal justice agencies in Fugitive Safe Surrender, an initiative that encouraged persons wanted for non-violent crimes to voluntarily surrender themselves at the Bible Way Church in Washington, D.C., a neutral and impartial setting. Over 500 persons surrendered in a two-day period.

Also in November, the Family Court hosted the 21st Annual Adoption Day in Court celebration, in collaboration with the Child and Family Services Agency. Guest speakers were author and poet Nikki Giovanni and motivational speaker Les Brown. The theme, "Providing Love, Giving Hope, Creating Families," produced a festive atmosphere as the audience witnessed the adoption of 34 children into 25 new and loving families. Ms. Barbara Harrison, a well-known local television news anchor, emceed the event.



Judge Rufus King, III addresses the Adoption Day audience.

To enhance public safety, the Social Services Division modified its intensive supervision services to more adequately address the complex needs of high risk and serious offending juveniles, and provide an alternative to post-disposition commitment. A Delinquency Prevention Unit was also created that uses Global Position System (GPS) electronic monitoring technology to supervise youth in the community without compromising public safety.

In order to highlight the importance of jury service and the vital role that jurors play in the administration of justice, the Courts participated in a public question and answer forum, sponsored by the Council for Court Excellence. Among the panel members were Superior Court Chief Judge Rufus G. King III, United States District Court Judge Emmett Sullivan, the chairman of *The Washington Post* and other journalists and officials. The Courts also sponsored its 2nd Annual Juror/Judge Dialogue, a forum for Superior Court judges and former jurors to discuss issues and recommend solutions regarding jury service. In conjunction with the U.S. Postal Service, the D.C. Courts un-



veiled a new first-class postage stamp commemorating jury duty in the United States. This event received both local and national media coverage promoting jury service.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the D.C. Courts are supported by members of the Bar and the public who generously give their time to assist in the admission of attorneys to the District of Columbia Bar, monitoring attorney discipline and unauthorized practice matters as well as administering the Clients' Security Trust Fund, which reimburses clients whose lawyers have dishonestly retained money, property or some other item of value that belongs to the client. During 2007, over 4,000 applicants filed for admission to the Bar and more than 75% of these (3,400) were certified for admission and administered the oath of admission in formal ceremonies before the Court of Appeals. The Board on Professional Responsibility, which manages the attorney discipline system, issued 23 disbarments, a reduction of over 33% from the previous year. The Office of Bar Counsel issued formal disciplinary proceedings in 30 complaints. The Committee on Unauthorized Practice of Law received 45 new complaints and monitored 540 motions of attorneys from other jurisdictions seeking appearances in the District of Columbia Courts. During the year, the Clients' Security Fund approved 42 claims and reimbursed individuals for losses totaling nearly \$300,000.



FINANCING THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

The Courts must have the necessary financial resources to administer justice fairly, promptly and efficiently. Fiscal year 2007, which began in October 2006, posed significant financial challenges to court operations. Through a series of continuing resolutions, Congress provided funding in FY 2007 at the same level as in FY 2006: \$136.8 million for court operations; \$79.9 million for capital projects; and \$43.5 million for defender services. Instituting hiring restrictions and other cost saving measures, the Courts were able to operate within budget and fulfill our mission despite unprecedented staffing shortages which threatened to undermine court operations.

In December 2007, the Courts' appropriation for FY 2008 was passed, including an increase in personal services funding to fill staff vacancies and an increase in the hourly rate paid to attorneys for the indigent. These restored and enhanced resources, coupled with improved budgetary monitoring and forecasting, will enable the Courts to continue to exercise control over appropriated resources and better execute the Courts' ambitious agenda of administering justice in the Nation's Capital.

While the District of Columbia Courts take on new challenges, the Courts' vision remains clear: "Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All." Each day, the Courts continue to strive to improve in executing our mission to protect rights and liberties, uphold and interpret the law, and resolve disputes peacefully, fairly and effectively in the Nation's Capital.