

# Full Court Press

Newsletter of the District of Columbia Courts  
*Open To All, Trusted By All, Justice For All*

March/April 2005  
Volume XXII Number 2

## ***D.C. COURTS ESTABLISH ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION***

### ***Commission to address crucial legal representation needs***

By Melissa P. Tanguay, Executive Office Intern

On Monday, March 7, 2005, Chief Judge Wagner of the D.C. Court of Appeals administered the oath of office to the 17 people appointed to the newly-created D.C. Access to Justice Commission. The D.C. Court of Appeals established the Commission to make civil legal representation more broadly available to low-income and poverty-level District residents. Peter Edelman, a distinguished professor at Georgetown University Law Center and long-time government and civic leader, will chair the panel. The Commission is comprised of judges, D.C. Bar leaders, lawyers who serve low-income people and other leaders in the community, including Court of Appeals Judges Inez Smith Reid and Eric T. Washington, and Superior Court Judges Stephanie Duncan-Peters and Hiram Puig-Lugo. Commission members intend to reach out to interested parties as they develop a plan to assure that all District residents who need a lawyer to protect their rights in civil cases can get one.



*Chief Judge Wagner*

Justice Commission was formed following an in-depth review by the D.C. Bar Foundation. The study found that only one in ten of the 110,000 District residents living in poverty actually obtains legal representation when necessary to keep a roof over their heads, to receive benefits to which they are entitled, to secure protection from domestic violence or to preserve their basic human rights. The review underscored how low-income African Americans as

well as Latino and Asian Pacific American immigrant communities are especially hard hit by the lack of legal representation. The report called for a bold approach and stressed the need for structural changes. The Commission was established after detailed discussions led by the Court of Appeals with the District of Columbia Bar, the District of Columbia Bar Foundation and the District of Columbia Consortium of Legal Service Providers.

“The Commission will focus on coming up with lasting solutions to assure delivery of quality civil legal services, on the broadest scale possible, to people who otherwise would not be able to afford them,” Chief Judge Wagner said. The wide range of issues the Commission will examine include: funding for legal services; language access and cultural sensitivity; the legal services network and its infrastructure, including technology, training, financial management, facilities, employee benefits, and coordination of planning functions; ease of participation in the work of legislative and administrative bodies; and systemic barriers including forms, scheduling practices, and rules governing filings in various courts.

The Commission will seek the views of residents throughout the city, including those living in poverty, persons who are language minorities and residents with disabilities. It will begin its work this spring. Commission members will serve three-year terms, and the Commission will file annual reports on its progress.

### ***Included in this issue:***

- 2 Judge Gregory Jackson Investiture
- 3 Terri Odom Joins the Court
- 3 New Employees at the Court
- 4 *Profile*: Information Center Staff
- 5 Youth Law Fair
- 6-7 Black History Month
- 8 New Criminal Courtroom Clerks
- 8 Human Resource Update
- 9 IJIS Update
- 10-11 Strategic Plan in Action
- 12 RAVE REVIEWS

“Equal justice is a fundamental principle in America. In spite of the continuing efforts of many in our legal community, we still have to work to make that principle a full reality in the District. The denial of equal justice adversely impacts individuals and our society as a whole and erodes confidence in our system of justice. We have to do more – and the Commission will lay out a path to get us there,” Chief Judge Wagner said.

The Access to

## JUDGE GREGORY JACKSON'S INVESTITURE HELD IN FEBRUARY

By Melissa P. Tanguay, Executive Office Intern

In a well-attended investiture ceremony, Judge Gregory E. Jackson was sworn in as an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia on Friday, February 11<sup>th</sup>. The atrium was “standing room only” as many of Judge Jackson’s family, friends and colleagues from the D.C. Department of Corrections and the U.S. Attorney’s Office came to witness the investiture.

Chief Judge Rufus G. King III, presided over the investiture and Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia administered the oath of office. Judge Jackson’s mother, Mary Jackson, held the Bible and his wife, Sheila Robinson, robed the newest judge of the D.C. Superior Court. Mr. Alfonso Carney, Vice President and Associate General Counsel for the Altria Group, and Judge Natalia Combs-Greene of the D.C. Superior Court shared their recollections and impressions of Judge Jackson. “Because he listens intently, because he seeks true fairness in the process, because he is always looking to find solutions to problems, I am confident that this native son of Washington, D.C., will bring the energy, even-handedness and dedication needed to serve the people of this city,” Judge Combs-Greene said.

Judge Jackson began his academic training in the D.C. Public Schools before receiving a scholarship to attend Sidwell Friends School. Judge Jackson graduated from Rutgers University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and Urban Planning. He enrolled in the Rutgers



Judge Gregory Jackson

University Newark School of Law, from which he graduated in 1978.

Judge Jackson’s legal career has spanned many different areas. He began at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission in its Honor Law Graduate Program. In 1986, he was sworn in as an Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) in the Office of the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia.

As an AUSA, he served as Deputy Chief of the Misdemeanor Trial Section, Chief of the

General Felony Section and Deputy Chief of the Superior Court Division. In 1999, Judge Jackson was appointed General Counsel for the D.C. Department of Corrections. He served as legal counsel to the department during one of the most unique events in correctional history in the United States, the closing of an entire prison system. In addition to his work in the legal community, Judge Jackson is active in community service and mentoring area youth. Welcome, Judge Jackson!



Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly gives the oath of office to Judge Jackson as his mother Mary Jackson holds the bible.

*The Full Court Press is published by the District of Columbia Courts to provide information about the D.C. Courts. Inquiries should be submitted to Room 1500.*

*Leah Gurowitz, Editor*

## TERRI ODOM – NEW SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR

By Melissa P. Tanguay, Executive Office Intern

Terri Odom joined the D.C. Courts on February 22<sup>nd</sup> as the new Director of the Social Services Division. Ms. Odom comes to the Courts with a national reputation as a passionate advocate for youth with a wealth of knowledge and experience. Originally from Newark, New Jersey, Ms. Odom earned a Master's degree at Lincoln University in Oxford, Pennsylvania. Her graduate thesis examined the increase in adolescent youth entering the District of Columbia's juvenile justice system with mental health and substance abuse issues. Ms. Odom has lived in the nation's capital for almost 20 years.



Terri Odom

Ms. Odom's most recent position was as the Deputy Administrator of the Division of Court and Community Programs for the District of Columbia's Youth Services Administration. In this capacity, Ms. Odom led a team of program managers responsible for developing rehabilitation programs for District youth involved in the juvenile justice system. She has also served as the Director of Mental Health Policy and Planning for the National Mental Health Association, where she led a national campaign designed to

assess the needs of state mental health, substance abuse, juvenile justice and child welfare agencies. Additionally, Ms. Odom has worked as an HIV/AIDS educator and outreach worker in the D.C. metropolitan area and as a community relations associate for two D.C. psychiatric hospitals.

Ms. Odom has made numerous public speaking and training presentations throughout the country and has written extensively on children's mental health issues, juvenile justice, Medicaid expansion, drug abuse treatment and HIV/AIDS education and prevention. She has also served as Chairperson of the District of Columbia Juvenile Justice Advisory Group. Ms. Odom says that she came to the Courts because of a "desire to work in a dynamic environment charged with making decisions that impact and shape the lives of both youth and their families throughout the District of Columbia."

Outside of work, Ms. Odom enjoys spending time family and friends, which includes her 13-year-old son. She says she is passionate about reading and working with grassroots organizers to "empower and uplift" communities. Welcome, Ms. Odom!

## NEW EMPLOYEES AT THE COURTS

By Melissa P. Tanguay, Executive Office Intern

**Billie Jo Garcia** joined the Courts in November 2004 as a Bilingual Case Manager for the Family Mediation Program of the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division. She grew up in North Carolina and received a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Latin American Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Ms. Garcia then received her Master's in Latin American Studies at Georgetown University. Before coming to the Courts, she was a Case Manager at the Community Dispute Resolution Center in Washington, D.C. and the Director of the Family Resource Center in Siler City, North Carolina. Ms. Garcia has also done research on mediation in South America. She says, "I came to the Courts because I like the association with an Alternative Resolution Dispute (ADR) program with a long history and a great track record of resolving disputes and upholding standards." When asked what she likes about her new job, Ms. Garcia says she enjoys working with her fellow employees and the opportunity to communicate with and support great volunteer mediators. In the future, Ms. Garcia would like to collaborate with other Court employees to enhance the user-friendly nature of the Courts' services that are offered to Latinos in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Welcome aboard, Ms. Garcia !



Billie Jo Garcia



Kamila Akilah Way

**Kamila Akilah Way** is a new Probation Officer in the Social Services Division's Northeast Field Unit. A native of Fort Washington, Maryland, Ms. Way received her undergraduate degree in Psychology from Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia, and a Master's in Social Work from Howard University. Prior to transitioning to the Courts, she worked for Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) as a Social Worker in the In-Home and Reunification Services Administration for three years. Before working for CFSA, she worked in the Child Abuse Unit for the Superior Court for a year. Ms. Way chose a job at the Courts because she felt she had learned a lot from working in the neglect system and was seeking a new experience in the field of social welfare. She says, "I desired to learn about the criminal justice system and how and why troubled youth act and behave in such a manner." As a Probation Officer, Ms. Way likes the direct contact she has with her clients and knowing that she can make a difference in a young person's life. At home, Ms. Way has a five-year-old daughter, A'mari Syncere, who is the "love of her life." Her life motto is "If you show me your friends, I will show you your future" because everyday she tries to surround herself with positive and supportive people.

## Profile -- STAFF OF THE INFORMATION CENTER

By Melissa P. Tanguay, Executive Office Intern

The six dedicated full-time Administrative Service Division employees of the Information Center and their numerous volunteers are often the public's first contact with the Courts. The Information Center was the 2002 recipient of the Courts' Public Service Award based on the employees' high level of expertise and passion for assisting people who interact with the Courts.

**Lisa Johnson** is the Information Center Supervisor and has worked in the Information Center for 20 years. She is a native of Washington, D.C. and held a number of jobs before coming to the Courts in 1984. She began working for TASCOS Answering Service, then worked for the law offices of former Congressman James Corman and finally, as a clerk for the Department of Employment Services. Lisa already knew many people at the Courts, so making the transition was not difficult. At the Information Center, she served as an Assistant Supervisor for 6 years and a Supervisor for the last 2 years. She is also in her tenth year as a notary. When asked what she likes best about her job, Lisa says "helping people." Outside of the Courts, Lisa is active in her church and serves on many church committees and has been the foster parent of three children. She also has a 25-year-old son who lives in the area. Lisa recently received very exciting news: her first grandchild will be born in September. Congratulations!

**Tony Savage** has filled many roles at the Courts in the

last 20 years and is currently Assistant Supervisor at the Information Center. Tony was born and raised in Washington, D.C., and is a true "jack of all trades," as he has received training in tailoring clothes, a degree in radiology from the University of District of Columbia and a degree in Business Administration from Montgomery College! Before working at the Courts, he was a security officer at a number of D.C. buildings, including the U.S. Tax Court, the Government Accountability Office and the Federal Trade Commission. Tony then entered the Courts first, as a Bailiff, then in the Supply Room as a Clerk, Technician and Supervisor, then as an Office Services Supervisor and now as a Records Manager on three-year detail to the Information Center. Like his co-workers, Tony loves to help people at the Courts. When he is not at work, he is a minister at Livelystone Worship Center in Landover, Maryland and loves to travel. He describes himself as very "family oriented" and spends lots of time with his wife and three children, ages 9, 12 and 18.

**Tyrone Lester** is an Archives Specialist at the Courts who has been on assignment to the Information Center for the past two years. Tyrone is originally from Washington, D.C., and attended the University of the District of Columbia, where he studied Business. He began his career in the music industry as a record producer, songwriter and performer! Tyrone has contributed to record companies such as CBS and Buddha and was a songwriter for the R & B group "The Persuaders" with

Atlantic Records in the 1970s and 1980s. After transitioning to sales, Tyrone decided to choose a more secure job at the Courts and has been here for the past 18 years. He began his employment with the Courts in the Administrative Services Division and has worked as an Archives Specialist ever since. He says that meeting and helping people is his "greatest concern and reward" and he describes himself as an outgoing person and a "total extrovert." When he is not at the Courts, Tyrone is still involved in the music industry as a songwriter. Watch out for the Courts' next superstar!

**Dorothy Henderson**, an Information Specialist at the Courts, is

*Continued on page 9.*



Tony Savage, Tyrone Lester, Dorothy Henderson, Brian Keith Price, Lisa Johnson, and Apollo Cameron.

# YOUTH LAW FAIR 2005 ATTRACTS HUNDREDS OF D.C. TEENS

By Melissa P. Tanguay, Executive Office Intern

On Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 300 students from D.C. public and charter schools attended the sixth annual Youth Law Fair, cosponsored by the D.C. Courts and the D.C. Bar Sections. This year's theme was "Risky Business: Reckless Driving." With a record number of attendees, the event was quite a success.

To begin the day, Superior Court judges lead the students in a half-hour tour of a courtroom, including the



Chief Judge King welcomes attendees.



Judge Long gives advice to a student judge.

judge's chambers and holding cells. Throughout the day, the teens had the opportunity to browse a number of law and education-related exhibits with information on teen law, summer jobs, scholarships, colleges and law-related careers. The favorite exhibits of the day included "Stump the Lawyer" with the Criminal Law Section of the D.C. Bar and "Law Jeopardy" with the Young Litigators Committee of the D.C. Bar.

Bill Tayler, Youth Law Fair 2005 Planning Committee Chair, and Chief Judge Rufus King, III, of the Superior Court opened the event and then turned the floor over to the dynamic emcee of the event, Curtis Etherly, Vice President for Public Affairs at Coca Cola, a member of the D.C. Bar and an alumnus of Ballou Senior High School. Etherly led the students in two "Youth Speak Outs" during the day – open forums for discussion among the students on the reality and consequences of reckless driving. With Etherly's encourage-

ment, the teens spoke about their views of the D.C. driving age, the most popular cars on the road, the dangers of various types of cars and types of behaviors, traffic accidents, car theft and the use of cell phones while driving.

Students participated in mock trials during the day. The criminal and civil trials both involved the same fact pattern, a hypothetical case of teens and drunk driving, car theft, drag racing and a fatal car accident. In each courtroom, students were selected to play the judge, members of the jury, prosecutors, defense attorneys and witnesses. With the help of "real life" judges and attorneys, the students held trials, deliberated, and rendered verdicts, which were read at the final Speak Out.

At the closing session, drawings were held for gifts provided by the D.C. Bar and others, such as tickets to the Washington Nationals and Washington Wizards games, a local concert and bookstore gift certificates. "With a record number of attendees, this year's Youth Law Fair was the most successful yet," Chief Judge Rufus King said. "Thank you to all the judges and lawyers who participated. This event allows D.C. students to gain an understanding of what actually happens



Master of Ceremonies Curtis Etherly solicits students' opinions.

in a courtroom and throughout the courthouse. The mock trials and discussions allow them to consider the very real consequences that can follow some risky behaviors that teens tend to engage in."

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION 2005

By Melissa P. Tanguay, Executive Office Intern

The Black History Month Committee presented another successful Black History Month celebration at the Courts. This year's series of events focused on black history firsts, personal recollections of the Civil Rights Movement, and an appreciation of the music, dance and literature of African American heritage. With notable speakers, guests and performances and interesting presentations, this year's Black History Month was definitely a fitting tribute and celebration.

To kick off the D.C. Courts' celebration of Black History Month 2005, Dr. Charlene Drew Jarvis was the featured speaker at the first program, entitled "African American Firsts." Dr. Jarvis is the daughter of Dr. Charles Drew, the noted blood bank pioneer who, in 1939, developed the first successful method of processing and preserving blood plasma for an extended period of time so that it could be stored and shipped. Dr. Jarvis spoke about the lessons that her father instilled in her, as well as her own experiences as a leader in Washington, D.C. Dr. Jarvis served 21 years on the D.C. Council and was named the first female president of Southeastern University in Washington, D.C., in 1996. Members of the Ballou Senior High School Marching Band also shared their experiences placing second in a national marching band competition in the fall.

At the following week's event, Mrs. Mary



Ballou Band Director Mr. Darrell Watson and dancer Armesha Hogue.

Bolling spoke about her late husband's experiences as the plaintiff in the landmark Washington, D.C. desegregation case, *Bolling v. Sharpe*. The NAACP filed *Bolling v. Sharpe* on Spottswood Bolling's behalf, and it was one of four cases consolidated before the U.S. Supreme Court, known collectively as *Brown v. Board of Education*. The Supreme Court's 1954 decision in these cases ruled unconstitutional the system of educational segregation in this country. Duane Delaney, the Clerk of the Superior Court, also spoke at this event, entitled "Personal Recollections of the Civil Rights Movement." Judge Frank Schwelb of the Court of Appeals shared his experiences as an attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice assigned to voting discrimination cases in Mississippi during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Then James Watts, a retired Juvenile Probation Officer, talked about his activism in the civil rights movement as a high school and college student. Both speakers captured the audience's attention and brought to life a crucial time in our nation's history.

In the final event of Black History Month 2005, area student groups shared their talents in a celebration of African American heritage through song, poetry and dance. Chief Judge King of the Superior Court opened the event, enti-



Chief Judge Wagner presents Community Service Award to members of the Ballou Senior High marching band.

Continued on page 7.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH, *continued*

*Cont. from page 6.*

tled "Passing the Torch: A Generational Journey." The Jefferson Junior High School Choir graced the audience with their beautiful voices; the D.C. Scores Poetry Slam Team from Burrville Elementary School impressed participants with their creative talent; and SistasX2 from D.C. Public Schools performed a liturgical dance to "What About the Children" by Yolanda Adams. Chief Judge Wagner closed the event thanking everyone for

another wonderful celebration of Black History Month.

Thank you to all participants in the Black History Month 2005 events: our fascinating and inspiring speakers as well as the performers who shared their extraordinary gifts with us! And a special thanks to the dedicated members of the Black History Month 2005 Committee for a great celebration!



*Mr. Duane Delaney emcees the second week's event and shares some of his thoughts on the legal history of the civil rights movement.*



*Ballou Band Drum Major Alexander Thomas shares his thoughts attending the national marching band competition.*



*Mrs. Mary Bolling speaks with Ms. Lula Raye of the Executive Office.*



*Judge Schwelb recalling his years in the civil rights movement.*

## THE CRIMINAL DIVISION'S NEWEST COURTROOM CLERKS

By Don Overholser, Courtroom Support Branch Chief

**Stefanie Royal** came to the D.C. Courts in June 2004. She has a B.S. degree in Journalism from the University of Wisconsin and a Master's in Communication from the University of Illinois. She has worked as a Communications Associate for the Executive Leadership Council, a contractor conducting research and marketing analysis and as a Litigation Assistant for a law firm. Ms. Royal has excellent written and oral communication skills, is very adept with the computer and highly professional.

**Joe Goings** began his employment with the Courts in October 2004. He received his B.A. degree in Political Science/English from Hobart College. He has excellent writing skills and worked for 18 months as a freelance writer for the *Washington Informer*. Mr. Goings also worked as a Legislative Analyst for Councilman Adrian Fenty. His duties included reading and interpreting legislation, dealing with constituent complaints and providing follow-ups.

**Eric Barreto** also joined at the Courts in October 2004. He has a B.A. degree in English from Old Dominion University, and over two years experience as a reporter for the *FDA News* covering regulatory issues and as a freelance writer for *The Daily Press* in Hampton, Virginia. Along with his oral and written communication skills, Mr. Barreto has many years of experience as an Emergency Medical Technician in Virginia Beach.



*New courtroom clerks - Kendell Quinan, Joe Goings, Eric Barreto, Stefanie Royal, Michelle Valenti, and Julio Delgado*

These experiences provided him with a unique background for dealing with the fast-paced work environment of the courtroom.

**Kendell Quinan** began her employment with the Courts in July 2004. She received her B.A. degree in Psychology from the University of Houston and is currently enrolled in a Paralegal Certificate program. Her previous work experiences include jobs as a recep-

tionist and office assistant. Ms. Quinan brings with her a variety of skills that include working with the computer, customer service, and organizational skills.

**Michelle Valenti** began her employment with the D.C. Courts in November 2004. She received a B.S. degree in Business from the University of Indiana and a J.D. from the University of Maryland School of Law. She has seven years experience as a Business Analyst/Software Consultant in the annuity and insurance field. Ms. Valenti was most recently a law clerk for the Office of the Public Defender in Baltimore, Maryland. She brings experience in the legal field and with computers.

**Julio Delgado** started work at the Courts in November 2004 and is the newest bilingual employee in the Criminal Division. He has a B.A. in Philosophy from St. Alphonsus College and a Master's degree in Canon Law from Catholic University. He has also received a Legal Assistant Certificate from Georgetown University. Mr. Delgado was a Parish Minister/School Director for 13 years in Puerto Rico and is fluent in Spanish, both oral and written. For the past four years, Mr. Delgado was a Canonical Specialist for the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.

### Human Resources Needs Your Input!

The first renewal of the Courts' Voluntary Dental and Vision program will be on June 1, 2005 and the Human Resources Division is asking for employee input in the form of an on-line survey. In appreciation for completing the survey, names will be entered into a raffle for a \$50.00 gift certificate to Legal Seafoods graciously provided by Ameritas. To enter the raffle please go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=88158843179> and complete the survey. You may pick-up paper copies of the survey through your Division Director or you may visit the Human Resources Division.

The survey will remain on the link listed above until April 10th. The Human Resources Division looks forward to employee participation in this important survey so that benefits are tailored to employee needs.

If you have questions concerning the survey or need additional information about the Courts' Dental and Vision Program, contact a Human Resources Representative at 202-879-4220 or 202-626-3289.

\* *The Dental/Vision Open Enrollment will begin April 11 and end on April 29.*



# IJIS Update: New Database Implementation on Schedule and Working Well

By Greg Hale, IJIS Project Manager, IT Division

Over the winter, the IJIS Project Team successfully completed the implementation of the CourtView integrated case management system in two other Superior Court operations -- the Small Claims, and Landlord Tenant branches of the Civil Division. Later this year, IJIS will be implemented in the remaining operations of the Civil Division and the in Criminal Division. When implementation is complete, close to one thousand judges and court staff members will have access to information contained in CourtView.

Due to the volume of filings in Small Claims and Landlord Tenant, particular focus was paid to the courtroom activities in each branch during implementation. The IJIS team further refined the capability of high-volume scanning as well as use of the InCourt module of the CourtView application to reduce the amount of data entry in these branches.

As part of the IJIS implementation effort, the



Courts have decided to transfer the financial receipting operations from the Budget and Finance Division to each court operations branch to encourage further integration of case management and financial information. Not only does this new business process eliminate the need for litigants filing cases to move from one location to another, but it also provides the Court with additional safeguards against fraud or theft.

Since the implementation of the remaining operations of the Civil Division is progressing well, a "Go Live" for late May is planned. Electronic filing promises to be a key component of the Civil Division implementation with plans underway to broaden the scope of e-filing throughout the division as well as in other operational areas of the Courts. With e-filing, the Courts will be able to further refine filing processes, cut down on the need for scanning and drastically reduce the physical traffic at the Court.

In addition, the IJIS team is moving forward with tasks for the Criminal Division implementation and expects to be complete in the fall.

---

*Cont. from page 4.*

originally from Wilson, North Carolina. After attending Hawkins Business College, she worked for Allied Accounting as an Auditor and Flash Auditor. She then entered the Courts 17 years ago as a Communications Assistant in the Information Branch of the Administrative Services Division. Dorothy received communication management training at a telecommunications school before advancing to her role as Information Specialist. She likes helping and assisting people through the Information Center. Family is very important to Dorothy and she loves to spend time with her four children and four grandchildren, in addition to doing water aerobics and playing tennis. She said, "What I like most is peace in my personal life, family and in the world."

**Apollo Cameron** has been an Information Specialist at the Courts for 12 years. He was born and raised in Washington, D.C., and loves to work with people. After working in sales, he came to the Courts to work in the mail room and soon took advantage of an opportunity to work at the Information Center, where he has worked since then. Apollo says he has been very happy working in information

because he enjoys helping and interacting with people. "Sometimes we get intense phone calls and need to calm people down in order to direct them to the appropriate person in the Courts," he says. "It is genuinely rewarding to help people." Known for his sense of humor, Apollo feels fortunate and blessed to enjoy the work that he does. When he is not working, he likes to spend time with family and church.

**Brian Keith Price** is the newest addition to the Information Center as a Bilingual Information Clerk. He is from Greensboro, North Carolina, and attended Mars Hill College in North Carolina, where he majored in International Studies and Spanish. He began working at the Courts seven months ago after serving as a Bilingual Administrative Assistant for Centennial One at Dulles Airport. At the Information Center, Brian handles all inquiries from Spanish-speaking persons, so he is able to keep up his Spanish skills while learning about the justice system. He has developed a relationship with the Office of Court Interpreting Services and he enjoys sitting in on court cases because it is a great learning experience. Brian is very close with his family, especially his grandmother, and really enjoys working in Washington, D.C.

# STRATEGIC PLAN IN ACTION

By David Bell, Program Analyst, Executive Office

*This is part of a continuing series updating and informing Court employees about the Strategic Plan.*

The Courts are halfway through the implementation of our 2003-2007 Strategic Plan. Much progress has been made to date. All divisions have developed Management Action Plans (MAPs) that translate the broad goals and strategies of the Strategic Plan into specific tasks and objectives to be accomplished. Division MAPs include the ongoing, day-to-day work being performed by all employees in a division, as well as new initiatives or special projects that may be temporary in nature. Many division MAP objectives have been transferred to individual employees' performance plans—linking the goals of the Courts' Strategic Plan to the Division MAP objectives and even more closely to employee responsibilities. Division MAPs will soon be posted on the Intranet so employees can review the important goals and objectives for each division and see how other divisions are contributing to the achievement of the Strategic Plan.

With this issue, the *Full Court Press* is launching a series of articles that will explore how divisions are addressing goals and strategies of the Plan and the successes they have achieved. We begin with Strategy 1.1.1., which calls for the Courts to "institute case management plans that utilize best practices and time standards to ensure prompt case processing appropriate to the type and complexity of the case."

As part of its response to this strategy, the Criminal Division changed how it processes mis-



*Judge Josey-Herring and Family Court staff developing their MAP.*

demeanor cases. Prior to 2004, the Court set all misdemeanor cases for trial directly from arraignment. In late 2003, the Court changed that practice and began setting all misdemeanor trials for status hearings before setting trial dates. The United States Attorney's Office began a concerted effort to provide discovery, plea offers, and determine diversion eligibility at arraignment. Status hearings have become more meaningful, and more defendants plea guilty at status hearings instead of waiting until the trial date. As a result, the Court is setting approximately 50% fewer misdemeanor trials per day than in previous years, which should

## Goal 1.1

The Courts will administer justice promptly and efficiently.

### Strategy 1.1.1

Institute case management plans that utilize best practices and time standards to ensure prompt case processing appropriate to the type and complexity of the case.

result in a significant reduction in police overtime costs associated with misdemeanor cases.

Also under this strategy, the Criminal Division spearheaded an effort to increase the efficien-

cy of the Arraignment Court. A committee of judges, court administrators, and representatives from other criminal justice agencies determined that, by opening Arraignment Court at 1:00 p.m. rather than 10:30 a.m., agencies could devote all of their resources to getting cases filed and ready for court during the morning hours. During the pilot program, the Court experienced an increased number of cases ready for Court, a significant reduction in waiting time for the public, and a decrease in the number of times that the Court was in session beyond 6:00 p.m. With such success, in December 2004, the Court permanently changed the hours and procedures of the Arraignment Court, and anticipates that greater efficiencies will be achieved in 2005.

One of the Family Court's objectives for Strategy 1.1.1 was to "ensure the timely processing of abuse and neglect cases in the Family Court by increasing compliance with the Federal and D.C. Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) by 10%, beginning December 31, 2004." The ASFA legislation established time standards for all aspects of case processing, including time to

trial, time to disposition, and time to first permanency hearing. To ensure compliance with ASFA, the Family Court MAP

implemented a case management protocol, which includes proactive monitoring by the Quality Control Office, the Juvenile Clerk's Office and the Office of the Attorney Advisor. All case events are set within statutory timelines at the initial hearing in each case. Various checks and balances assure that deviations

toring by the Quality Control Office, the Juvenile Clerk's Office and the Office of the Attorney Advisor. All case events are set within statutory timelines at the initial hearing in each case. Various checks and balances assure that deviations

from schedule are quickly determined and corrected. Additionally, CourtView entries and court orders are reviewed to ensure that all legally required findings are completed. Since implementation of these procedures, the Family Court has seen significant improvement in the quality of data entered into CourtView and compliance with statutory timelines.

An additional Family Court MAP is being implemented to “enhance the timely processing of detained juveniles by increasing compliance with statutory requirements for bringing detained juveniles to trial by 30% over 2004 levels.” With the



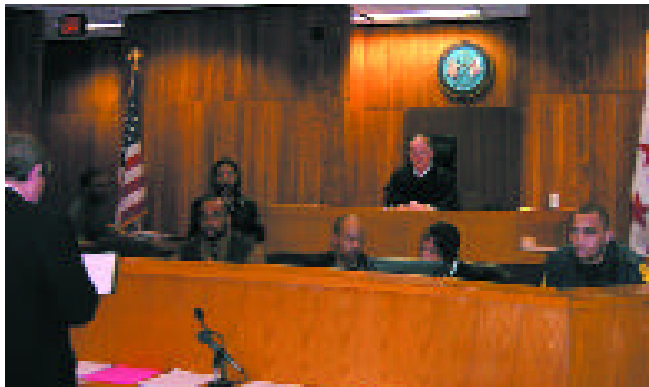
DV Unit working on a MAP strategy.

calendar for January 2005 reflected that only on one day in 19, did the number of hearings exceeded 25. This was caused by having two holidays (Martin Luther King and Inauguration Day) in the same week.

The Probate Division's objective for Strategy 1.1.1 is to update performance standards for all case types to

fully incorporate the functions of the new CourtView case management system and to monitor compliance. Examples of performance standards include: transmitting to judges petitions to open estates with recommendations for action within five business days of filing; docketing filings on the date of receipt by the clerk; issuing delinquency notices within 14 days of the delinquency; and auditing accounts within 75 days of filing and disposing of them within 90 days. The Division recently completed a revision of its performance standards and trained staff. It is monitoring operations to document improvements in case processing time that are anticipated.

The Tax Office of the Special Operations



Arraignment court in session.

results the Family Court has experienced to date, they expect to meet or exceed this goal in 2006.

As part of their plan to address Strategy 1.1.1, the Domestic Violence Unit revised procedures for the Control Courtroom, the courtroom handling most CPO hearings each day. Under the new procedures, each clerk monitors how many cases are set for each day — thereby controlling the number of hearings set. A maximum standard had been written stating, “no more than 25 hearings are to be set per day for 90% or more of court dates.” With this standard for number of cases to be set, the Domestic Violence Unit has improved customer service through less waiting time and firm hearing dates. Additionally, there is a better use of judicial bench time. A review of the Control Courtroom's



Family Court staff during a MAP training session.

Division has implemented time standards for case processing and is tracking compliance on a monthly basis. The Office expects to be able to make quicker adjustments to processes and correct problems that may occur, helping to administer justice promptly and efficiently.

\*\*\*\*\* Have Reviews \*\*\*\*\*

LAW OFFICE  
FRANK NIVERO-FERNANDEZ  
P.O. BOX 18520  
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22318  
TELEPHONE/FAX: (703) 413-2007  
E-MAIL: AFRUCANS@AOL.COM

March 7, 2005

Mr. Wallace S. Lewis III  
Defender Services Specialist  
Official Justice Act Office  
Finance Officer  
Superior Court of the District of Columbia  
500 Indiana Ave  
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Lewis:

A lot of times individuals always take time to write to complain about problems and almost never take time to applaud and commend when problems are solved. I want to take time to commend you and your entire office for simply making my work a lot better.

I want to take time and let you know how much I appreciate all of your work and that of your entire staff in the Finance Office. I appreciate all of your efforts in obtaining the "IT's" for me. The fact that you and your staff stayed until 9 p.m. on a Thursday and Friday night to assure "IT's" was outstanding! Your commitment to improve the system was a great idea! The printer system to track vouchers has increased my efficiency in the office. The fact that I can request vouchers through the internet simplifies things tremendously! I certainly have noticed all the changes you have implemented. I think they are for the better. The office seems to be more efficient now. Vouchers are issued quicker than before. I want to commend you and your entire staff for all your efforts. Also having vouchers accessible in the computer is very helpful in tracking them and knowing where they are.

Once again, good job and keep up the good work!!!

Sincerely,  
Frank Nivero-Fernandez, Esq.

February 4, 2005

Duane B. Delaney  
Clerk of the Superior Court  
500 Indiana Avenue, Suite 2500  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Nathaniel Speight

As a litigator, I make regular visits to the Small Claims Branch of the court. I have found the Courtroom Clerk, Nathaniel Speight to be courteous, knowledgeable and professional in every aspect of his conduct. In spite of the fact that he is by far the most voluminous docket of any that I have participated in, Mr. Speight comes out his duties with noticeable proficiency.

In case you are wondering why I am writing this letter, I just thought it worthwhile to highlight Mr. Speight's steadfast performance, especially during this time of transition for the Small Claims Branch.

Sincerely,  
Maxine Jagro-Shaw

*Handwritten note:*  
I can't begin to thank you except for your phone call regarding Vanessa v. Keating. All is so refreshing to know that there are still people who are willing to go the extra mile as opposed to just being nothing. Thank you, Jane Lockard

Date: 12/27/2004 1:52:36 PM  
To: maxine@dc.gov  
Subject: Document to Mayor from DC Homepage

Dear Mayor Williams:

I had earlier this year gone to the D.C. Superior Court (Hearl Division) for some information regarding my name change. Though the information was nearly 90 years old and difficult to ascertain, Mr. Wendell E. Wiggins, diligently pursued the task of finding this documentation and affording me the correct name to achieve my goal.

On top of this I had promised to write to his superior and with some note of his efforts. I failed to do so.

Today I had to return to his office and report that he had the information I needed again. Though he could have made several attempts he promptly returned the information again with no hesitation and gave it to me.

Now in the world that I know today is a rarity and I think that the least I can do in response to your office the fine job that you have done by having the staff to assist this type of public service representative.

Please be kind to forward this to any party that can recognize this great "citizen" effort and thank accordingly.

Thank you for your valuable time and consideration.

Dear Ms. Cheryl Ransom-Jones:

Thank you very much for preparing your portion of the trial transcript in this case in such a prompt manner. We know it is difficult to prepare these transcripts on an expedited basis. Your assistance was very helpful to us in preparing our post-trial motion, and provided a service to the Court as it considers the issues raised in that motion.

Sincerely yours,  
Alfred F. Belcuore  
ALFRED F. BELCUORE

From: [Redacted]  
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2005 4:11 PM  
To: Court Reporting and Recording Division  
Subject: [Redacted]

I just wanted to personally thank you for going above and beyond the call of duty to help out our chambers with the upcoming trial tomorrow. I know that we have placed several last minute requests on your office and you and your office should be complimented for the hard work you do for everyone.

[Law Clerk name omitted]

The purpose of this letter is to bring to your attention the terrific work of one of your auditors, Herbert Files. Though I have always been very pleased with the way in which he has audited my accounts, about a month ago he handled the audit of an account in special need of a quick turnaround.

You may recall the case, which was an assignment on behalf of creditors. I had spoken with you about the case a few times for various reasons. In order to avoid any additional head premium charges and to get the matter finally resolved, I needed Mr. Files to handle the audit of the account on a somewhat expeditious basis. Mr. Files was able to do so and this matter was finally able to be closed. His work was greatly appreciated and a credit to him and to your department.

Very truly yours,  
Steven Weinberg  
Steven Weinberg