

OFFICE OF THE

President Judge

PURPOSE

The Court of Common Pleas of the First Judicial District is headed by a President Judge who is elected for a five-year term by the judges of that Court.

RESPONSIBILITIES

In 1999, the President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas was Alex Bonavita, who is a member of the Judicial Council of Pennsylvania, and also the chair of the First Judicial District's Administrative Governing Board, the District's core management leadership group established by the Supreme Court.

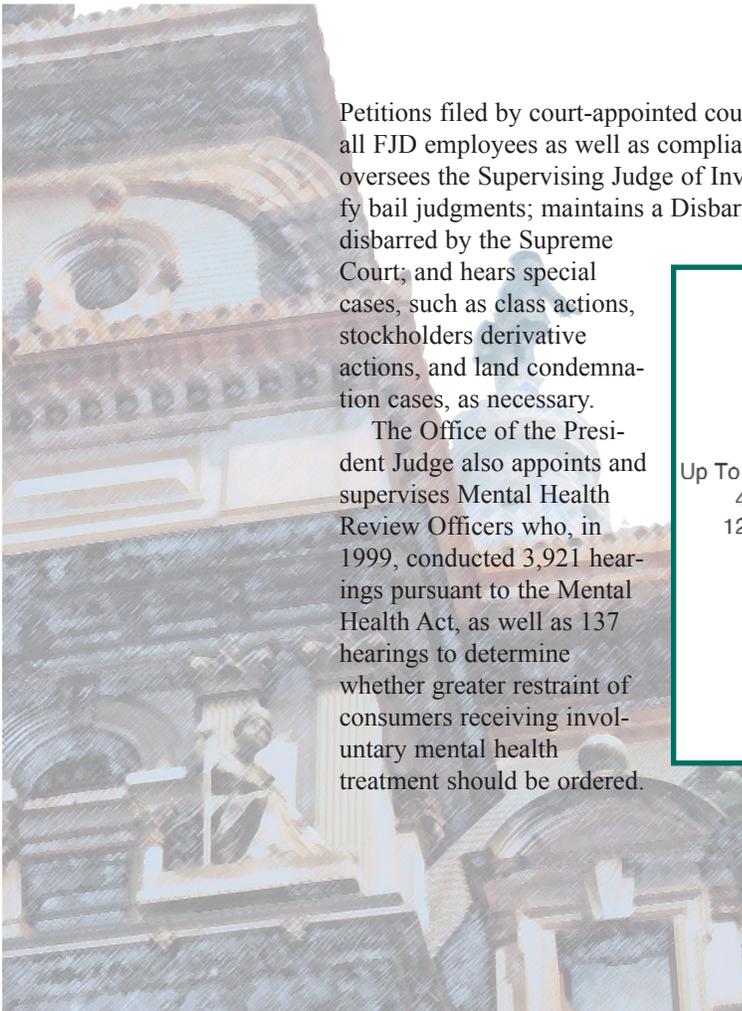
There are five major service centers under the auspices of the President Judge: 1) the Office of the Prothonotary, 2) the Law Library; 3) Court Reporter and Interpreter Services; 4) Messenger Service (Mail); and 5) the FJD Procurement Unit. Some of the 1999 accomplishments achieved through these service centers are summarized below. The Office of the President Judge is aided by its Director, and Coordinator of the Civil Mental Health Program, Dominic J. Rossi, Esquire.

The myriad duties and responsibilities of the President Judge include the following administrative duties: presides at meetings of the Board of Judges of the Court of Common Pleas and, as Chair of the Board of Judges, selects judges to serve on standing and special committees of the Board; serves as liaison between the City of Philadelphia and the First Judicial District; presents the budget of the entire FJD to City Council; administers the Judicial Education Fund; orders divisional assignment of judges; certifies the need for senior judges whose appointment is necessary for the prompt and proper disposition of the business of the Court, assigns them to divisions of the court as needed, and reviews their requests for payment; certifies the need for the assignment of out-of-county judges whenever the court as a whole needs to be recused; allocates space among the divisions of the Court of Common Pleas, and assigns judicial chambers; is responsible for the implementation of local rules, administrative orders, directives, and general court regulations, as well as for monitoring legislative proposals and enactments; and interacts with Bar Association and civic leaders and the news media.

The President Judge's responsibilities include: the assignment of emergency judges who entertain emergency requests that occur during non-court hours rendering the court accessible on a 24 hour/seven day per week basis; supervises the election process by assigning judges to preside at off-site facilities to entertain questions concerning potential voters' eligibility to cast votes, hears petitions requesting the appointment of vacant election board positions in the various election districts throughout the city, and petitions seeking the appointment of poll watchers; hears petitions for review of Mental Health commitments; determines petitions for the Sale of Abandoned Vehicles; reviews and signs all writs of execution and out-of-state arrest reports; reviews and decides Homicide Fee

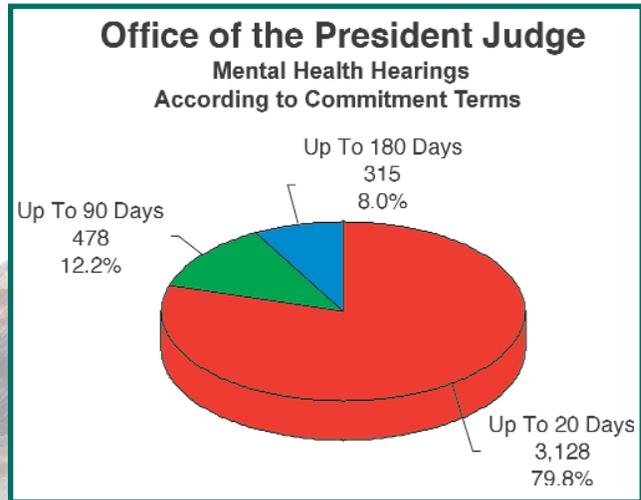
Common Pleas Court

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT JUDGE



Petitions filed by court-appointed counsel; enforces the Political Activity Prohibition of all FJD employees as well as compliance with the Residency requirement; appoints, and oversees the Supervising Judge of Investigating Grand Jury; determines petitions to modify bail judgments; maintains a Disbarment Docket of local attorneys suspended or disbarred by the Supreme Court; and hears special cases, such as class actions, stockholders derivative actions, and land condemnation cases, as necessary.

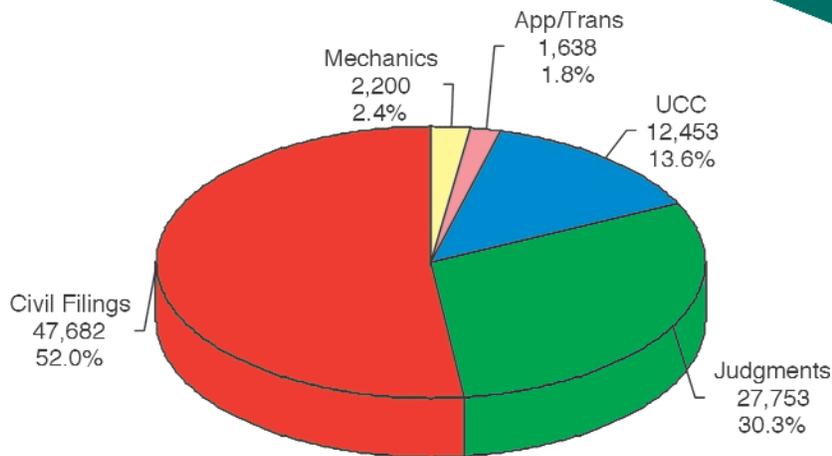
The Office of the President Judge also appoints and supervises Mental Health Review Officers who, in 1999, conducted 3,921 hearings pursuant to the Mental Health Act, as well as 137 hearings to determine whether greater restraint of consumers receiving involuntary mental health treatment should be ordered.



In 1999 ...

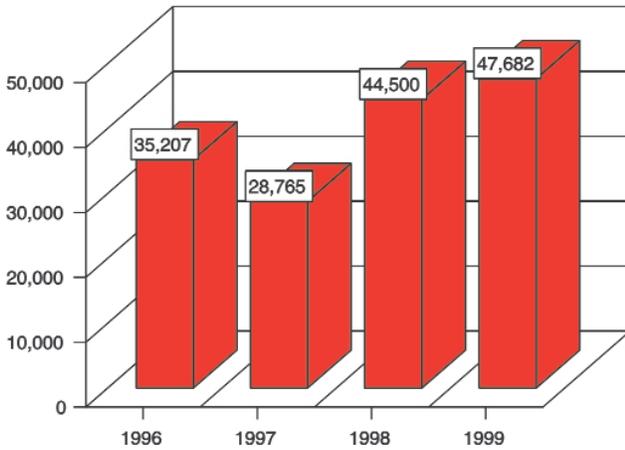
- ◆ The Judgment Index Unit was renovated, with the addition of 12 public access terminals.
- ◆ The tax lien docket was automated.
- ◆ More civil forms became available via the FJD web site.
- ◆ Customer service was improved by providing high-speed digital printers for public access.
- ◆ Finance Unit operations were enhanced with the addition of a new cashiering system.
- ◆ The Prothonotary's Office was named as a participating site in the Welfare To Work transition program.
- ◆ Clients of the Big Sisters Association for Physically Challenged Students were provided with work site employment experience.
- ◆ Prothonotary employees and others attended the Senior Citizen Consumer Protection Fair and provided information and demonstrated methods for accessing information through the Court's web site.
- ◆ Staff continued to participate in legal education forums; i.e., Legal Secretary's Association, local colleges and high schools, etc.

Office of the Prothonotary 1999 Filings



In 1999, a total of 91,726 filings were received and processed through the Office of the Prothonotary. Despite the incredible volume of cases, Prothonotary filings took a general downturn in 1999 as shown in the charts below.

Civil Filings



Judgments

