

FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF
PENNSYLVANIA

2004 ANNUAL REPORT

Pennsylvania Supreme Court

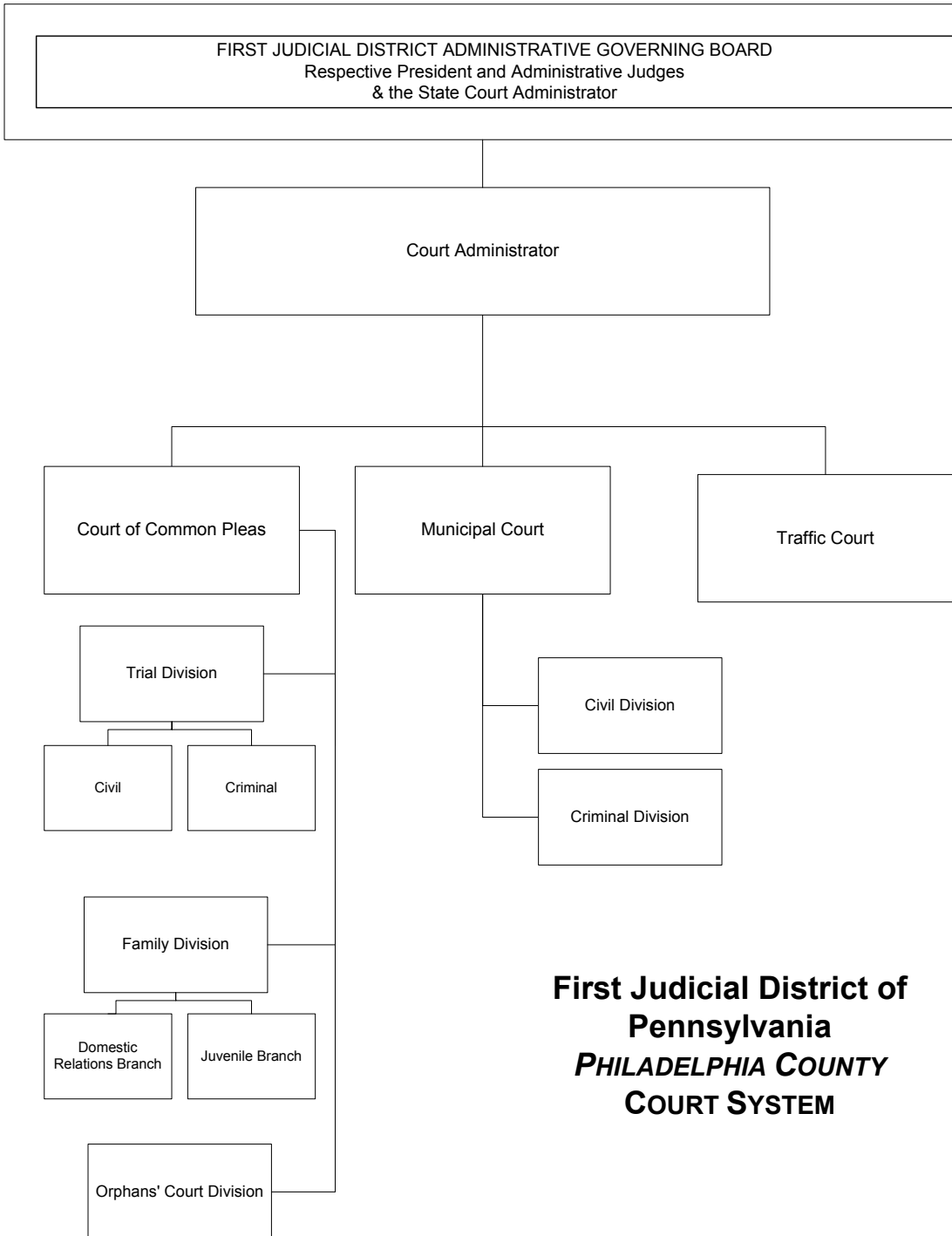


Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justices *Front Row (from left): Justice Ronald D. Castille, Chief Justice Ralph J. Cappy, and Justice Russell M. Nigro. Back Row (from left): Justice Max Baer, Justice J. Michael Eakin, Justice Thomas G. Saylor, and Justice Sandra Schultz Newman.*

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First Judicial District Organization



**First Judicial District of
Pennsylvania
PHILADELPHIA COUNTY
COURT SYSTEM**

Historical Note

A Brief History of Orphans' Court

Philadelphians can take pride in the fact that Orphans' Courts have been held in this city since 1683. They can further take pride in the able and distinguished jurists who have presided over those courts. The current judges of the Orphans' Court Division continue a long and illustrious tradition. Reportedly, William Penn presided over an Orphans' Court session in 1683.

King Charles II granted the Province of Pennsylvania to William Penn by Royal Charter dated March 4, 1681. William Penn came to Pennsylvania in October of 1682 and called a General Assembly.¹ Sitting at Chester, on December 7, 1682, the first General Assembly of the Province of Pennsylvania enacted the 77th Law which provided that the justices of each County Court should sit, "...to inspect and take care of the estates, usage, and employment of orphans, which shall be called the Orphans' Court. That care may be taken for those that are not able to take care for themselves."² "It is probable that both the name and jurisdiction of this court were borrowed from the Court of Orphans of the city of London, which had the care and guardianship of children of deceased citizens of London, in their minority, and could compel executors to file inventories, and give security for their estates."

On January 4, 1875, the Orphans' Court of Philadelphia County was organized as a separate court of record under the Constitution of 1874, and consisted of three judges. Three more judges were added, one each, in 1887, 1907, and 1927. Judges Allen M. Stearne and Grover C. Ladner rose to become Justices of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Judge Charles Klein was appointed to the Court on December 24,



Figure 1 "Penn The Law Giver" One of a series of panels contained in murals by Violet Oakley located in the Courtroom of the Supreme Court, Capitol Building, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

¹ See Section 1, pages 11-12 of The Pennsylvania Manual, Volume 112 (December, 1995)

² See Opinion by Trimble, P.J., in Harton's Estate (No. 2), 86 P.L.J. 18, at page 21 (1938)

1934, and, became President Judge on January 14, 1952. Judge Klein served as the last President Judge of the Orphans' Court of Philadelphia County, and, the first Administrative Judge of the Orphans' Court Division of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County. By constitutional amendment, effective January 1, 1969, the separate Orphans' Court of Philadelphia County was abolished and became the Orphans' Court Division of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County³



³See Opinion by Justice Sergeant in the matter of Wimmer's Appeal, 1 Wh. 95, 101 (1835).

Greetings from the Chair of the Administrative Governing Board

During 2004, the members of the First Judicial District Administrative Governing Board were pleased to initiate and support several important steps in furthering the causes of justice in Philadelphia and in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In times of concern about local and national security, we were called upon to strike a balance between issues of public safety while ensuring – to the greatest extent possible – our responsibility to safeguard and enhance access to justice. The Board recognized that the mainstay of our efforts, supporting the judiciary and the administrators, is the FJD workforce. The employees who get the job done remain as the greatest asset of the Philadelphia Courts and the administration of justice in Pennsylvania.

At the beginning of 2004, the FJD was at the forefront on issues of security when, through the Office of the Court Administrator, the FJD-Shelter-In-Place plans and equipment were installed in various court-occupied spaces to enable employees and the public to seek shelter when evacuation may be prevented by dangerous conditions out-of-doors. The District plans for continuity of services during emergencies were similarly established during 2004 when the first Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) was extensively researched, composed, and approved by the Board. Following several incidents involving violent attacks on the judiciary around the country, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Judicial Council Committee on Judicial Safety and Preparedness continued our work with renewed vigor in helping to develop a framework for security enhancements in the state court system. The plans will benefit the public, litigants, staff, and jurists throughout the Commonwealth.

At the same time, access to justice remained a major interest in all our work. The continuing expansion of the Court Reporter System for on-line transcripts reduces delay and promotes access through timelier disposition of cases. Additionally, streamlining court reporting procedures through the introduction of digital recording in appropriate courtrooms ensured high-quality audio reporting while also saving time and expenses. Bringing cases to a timely conclusion enables more cases to be heard and opens access to more and more citizens. Interpreter initiatives, including prudent increases of investments for interpreter services and training, allow more people with language and

hearing problems greater access to the court, and foster their meaningful participation in the process.

Later in the year, my work began in coordinating the Urban Courts Symposium scheduled for 2005. Our goal was to bring together urban jurisdiction experts from across the nation to Philadelphia to study and exchange ideas about diversity, media relations, court-community partnerships, and myriad issues confronting metropolitan jurisdictions today.

In times of dwindling resources available to the courts, these accomplishments were doubly beneficial. The projects were all brought in under budget utilizing a minimum of funding, and at the same time made the court's services more cost-efficient.

FJD employees are a diverse group of individuals with myriad interests, abilities, and backgrounds. Their job assignments too, are widely divergent: from administrators to probation officers, from secretaries to case workers. The employees of the court are not only one of the most important assets of the justice system, but their varied outlooks and ideas create an environment of creativity and camaraderie – an atmosphere where new ideas spawn improvements in the delivery of justice.

Our employees have one thing in common, and that is dedication. This is a group comprising a wide variety of individuals who nonetheless are able to concertedly pull together to serve a diverse population in a major metropolitan area, and to do it well. The safety of our customers is further guaranteed by our security measures and initiatives. Their rights and interests are protected by our everyday work: the administration of justice in the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania.

Greetings from the Court Administrator

I'm pleased to report that over the course of the last year, First Judicial District (FJD) judges, administrative leaders, and staff worked together and forged ahead on new projects and continued to refine and enhance existing programs. While the level of dedication has not changed, some areas of concentration have received new and re-invigorated attention. Very importantly, in 2004, FJD employees were successfully engaged in several new and stimulating ways to bring their talents and dedication to bear on the continuing mission to bring justice to the citizens of Philadelphia.

Moreover, the many accomplishments of 2004 were carried off within strict budgetary limits. While the Courts of Philadelphia have a long and venerable history, rich in service toward the high aims of justice, the FJD has continued in very modern ways to make its services more available to more people every day while at the same time, maintaining or reducing cost levels wherever possible.

For our external customers, those citizens who use the court's services, and for our internal customers – the judges, employees and justice partners who use each others' services to get the job done – 2004 was a banner year to help both groups achieve the aims of justice. 2004 was marked by important in-house (internal) customer developments like upgrades to the Court Reporter System (CRS) for on-line notes of testimony, and the introduction of the new and popular FJD Intranet. Enhancements and refinements to the CRS system have resulted in the inventory growing to over 39,000 case transcripts totaling nearly 1.4 million pages, all stored on the CRS database. Internal customers like judges, judicial staff, district attorneys and defenders access the system many times each day to review and download transcripts for their use. Lower costs for paper and storage are augmented by reductions in delay, driven by immediate access to notes of testimony.

The FJD Intranet provides a fresh and timely means for the exchange of information within the District. Early in 2004, the FJD Intranet was opened to much acclaim. The Intranet is a concept that establishes a local version of the Internet for use internally within the FJD network. When employees log on to their computers, the Intranet Home Page automatically appears. The "Homepage" as it has come to be

known, is a user friendly, colorful, and graphically rich site that provides lots of information for and about employees. The Homepage has, according to design, become a major means of communication for judges and employees throughout the District.

To help employees engaged in the Arbitration Program, they were moved to more comfortable, roomy, and modern facilities at 1880 JFK Boulevard. The move also produced savings on lease costs.

To further employees' professional development, the District has adopted a multi-faceted approach to foster management development. Courses are provided through open Lunchtime Roundtable Discussions, taped presentations, webinars, and other training events and evaluations to help the participants work to achieve their true potential. As the students learn, the court – and those who seek the help of the court in resolving their problems – benefit as a result. A complete curriculum of scheduled events also signals a commitment by judges and administrators to the future. It's a sign that employees are valued. The introduction of programs that enhance communication, and the provision of a means for staff to increase and hone their abilities mean that court leaders recognize the importance of our greatest asset: the FJD workforce.

For the litigants and attorneys and other external customers, FJD judicial officers and employees have, for several years now, concentrated on improving access to the courts and the legal process. After considerable study, detailed planning, and hard work cultivating ideas to make them a reality, impressive results have been achieved.

Yesterday's imaginative ideas have become today's standard in doing the court's business. Today, attorneys and self-represented (*pro se*) litigants can file their claims electronically from their homes and offices for small claims in Municipal Court and pleadings in Orphans' Court cases. The Orphans' Court E-filing Project is the latest development in one of the original courts in the Commonwealth. William Penn himself presided over Orphans' Court sessions as early as 1683. More than three hundred years later, Orphans' Court filings are handled over the Internet. Future roll-outs to other courts and divisions of the District are anticipated. In addition, motorists can pay their Traffic Court fines and fees using credit cards via the Internet. Interpreting services for court consumers with limited English proficiency were again bolstered through increased

spending for foreign language and sign interpreters for the deaf and hard of hearing populations. Real-time transcription of notes of testimony makes spoken testimony available instantaneously as text viewable on courtroom monitors.

Calendar Year 2004 was the first full year of operation for the new Criminal Case Management System (CCMS) introduced in 2003, that was designed in large part with employee guidance. All facets of criminal case management were automated to streamline criminal court operations. As a result, employees work better, faster, serving the judges who in turn, serve the public with swift, fair, and precise decisions.

To ensure that judges and employees may continue to conduct the business of the courts, and that customers might have uninterrupted access to justice, the District has also developed a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to be activated in case of extreme emergencies that shut down major court service centers like the CJC or 1801 Vine Street.

As always, the courts and divisions of the FJD are closely monitoring the budget to guarantee that only the necessary expenditures are made and made wisely, through the prudent investment of funds and effort in projects and people that have improved performance now, preparing the way for the future.

First Judicial District of Pennsylvania

The First Judicial District (FJD) of Pennsylvania comprises three courts: 1) the Court of Common Pleas; 2) Philadelphia Municipal Court; and 3) Philadelphia Traffic Court. The management of the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania is provided by the Administrative Governing Board (AGB). The AGB membership includes the President and Administrative Judges of the three courts and the State Court Administrator of Pennsylvania. The Chairperson of the Board is appointed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

The COURT OF COMMON PLEAS is a general trial jurisdiction court with a complement of ninety-three full-time judges assisted by senior judges. The court is headed by a President Judge elected by the collective CP Bench, and is organized into three divisions, each led by an Administrative Judge appointed by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. The Trial Division jurisdiction includes most felony criminal and major civil cases where the contested amount exceeds \$10,000. The Family Division is the judicial venue for Domestic Relations Branch cases (divorce, paternity, custody, child support and domestic violence) and Juvenile Branch cases (delinquency, dependency, truancy and adoptions). The Orphans' Court Division conducts proceedings involving estates, wills and trusts.

The twenty-five judge MUNICIPAL COURT is a limited jurisdiction court of record. The Municipal Court is led by a President Judge and is organized into Criminal and Civil Divisions. The Criminal Division has jurisdiction over adult criminal cases carrying maximum sentences of incarceration of five years or less. Municipal Court has initial jurisdiction in processing criminal arrests in Philadelphia by conducting misdemeanor trials and preliminary hearings for all felony cases. The Municipal Court Civil Division jurisdiction is limited to cases where the amount in controversy is \$10,000 or less. Landlord-tenant disputes, code enforcement cases, and real estate and school tax cases of \$15,000 or less are also heard here. Because defendants do not have the right to a jury trial in Municipal Court, cases may be appealed to the Court of Common Pleas for a trial *de novo*.

The seven judge TRAFFIC COURT is led by a President Judge and adjudicates all cases originating in Philadelphia involving moving traffic violations. Like Municipal Court, all adjudications in Traffic Court are directly appealable to the Court of Common Pleas.

Administrative Governing Board

2004 Administrative Governing Board

The First Judicial District (FJD) Administrative Governing Board (AGB) is the Philadelphia Courts' version of a Board of Directors. The membership comprises the President Judges of the three courts that constitute the District, and the three Administrative Judges that lead the divisions of the Common Pleas Court of Philadelphia: the Trial Division; the Family Division; and the Orphans' Court Division. The State Court Administrator is the only non-FJD member of the AGB. Together, they work with the FJD Court Administrator to conceive, develop, and carry out the operation of the First Judicial District.

Honorable Frederica A. Massiah-Jackson **Chair, Administrative Governing Board**

The Honorable Frederica A. Massiah-Jackson is the President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia. She was appointed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to serve as Chair of the Administrative Governing Board of the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania. Judge Massiah-Jackson was elected to the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas in 1983. She served in the Trial Division Civil Court and in the Major Felony Program of the Criminal Court. She was the Secretary of the Board of Common Pleas Judges for six years. A graduate of Chestnut Hill College (A.B. 1971) and the University of Pennsylvania Law School (J.D. 1974), she practiced corporate and civil litigation with the law firm of Blank, Rome, Comisky & McCauley before advancing to the bench. She also worked with the Pennsylvania Senate as Chief Counsel of the Senate Insurance and Business Committee. Judge Massiah-Jackson has been a Lecturer at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania since 1992. Judge Massiah-Jackson sits on the Board of the Center For Literacy. She is a member of the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges. She was appointed to the American Bar Association Special Committee on Youth Education from 1988-1991. Judge Massiah-Jackson has been a member of the American Inns of Court, the Board of Managers of the University of Pennsylvania Law Alumni Society, the Board of Directors of Chestnut Hill College, the Board of Governors of the Philadelphia Bar Association, and the National Catholic Educational Association. She has been active in the civic, educational, and professional communities and is the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions of service.



Honorable Louis J. Presentza
President Judge Philadelphia Municipal Court

Louis J. Presentza has been a Judge of the Philadelphia Municipal Court since 1982. He was retained for office in 1989, 1995, and 2001 with a better than ninety-five percent approval rating from plebiscites conducted by the Philadelphia Bar Association. In May 1996 and 1997, he was appointed by the then Municipal Court President Judge as the first Supervising Judge of the Criminal Division of Municipal Court. During his tenure, he formulated and chaired the Philadelphia Treatment Court Planning and Implementation Committee and in April 1997, established the first drug treatment court in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In January 1999, his colleagues elected him President Judge and he was unanimously re-elected to a second term in 2004.



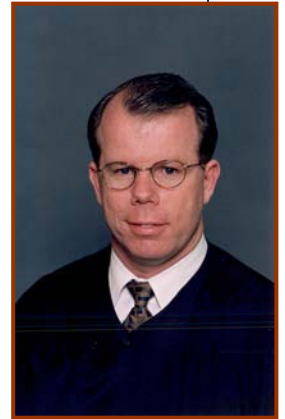
During his twenty-two years on the bench, Judge Presentza has chaired or co-chaired many committees, panels, commissions, and boards addressing issues such as preliminary arraignment, prison population management, pretrial release guidelines, and alternatives to incarceration. He has lectured on criminal justice topics to audiences at all academic levels and has participated in panel discussions on Driving under the Influence, Violation of the Uniform Firearms Act, and Domestic Violence. He has lectured at Continuing Legal Education seminars on Municipal Court practices and procedures and has been a guest speaker at many state and national symposiums addressing drug court policies and initiatives. Judge Presentza is a peer reviewer for the Bureau of Justice Assistance and is a past peer reviewer for the United States Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs and Caliber Associates. He is a faculty member for United States Department of Justice and National Drug Court Institute workshops and training programs for drug court professionals. Previously, he served as a faculty member for the Justice Management Institute and provided technical assistance for the American University Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project. Judge Presentza is Chair of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and is the two-term past President of the Pennsylvania Association of Drug Court Professionals.

Judge Presentza is the recipient of many awards from professional organizations that include the Philadelphia Coalition for Victim Advocacy, Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges, the Philadelphia Bar Association, the Justinian Society, and the Lawyers' Club of Philadelphia. He is a graduate of St. Joseph's University and Villanova University School of Law.

Honorable Francis E. Kelly
President Judge Philadelphia Traffic Court

Traffic Court President Judge Francis E. Kelly was born in June, 1962, the son of Edward and Eileen Kelly and one of ten children.

He is married to Michelle Kelly, and they have one child, Thomas. The judge is a graduate of North Catholic High School, where he achieved four years as an honor student. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Temple University with a degree in Criminal Justice, and was on the Dean's List. President Judge Kelly was previously employed as Chief of Staff for State Representative John Taylor, and served as liaison with Philadelphia Delegation and House Majority Leader John Perzel. He was appointed as Judge of Philadelphia Traffic Court by Governor Thomas Ridge in October, 1996, and successfully ran for city-wide election as Traffic Court Judge in May, 1997. He was appointed by Governor Ridge to serve as President Judge of the Philadelphia Traffic Court, in August, 2001, and as such is a Member of the FJD Administrative Governing Board. He was certified and trained at Wilson College, is a Member of the Special Court Judges Association of Pennsylvania, presently serving on the Association's Vehicle Code Committee, and a Member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. President Judge Kelly is an avid sports fan and golfer.



Honorable James J. Fitzgerald, III
Administrative Judge, Common Pleas Court Trial Division

James J. Fitzgerald, III was born June 4, 1939 in Boston, Massachusetts. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania (B.A.) in 1962, and from Villanova University School of Law (J.D.) in 1966. He was Executive Vice President of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce from 1986 to 1989, and Chief Counsel for the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board in 1980 and 1981. He was a City Controller candidate in 1979, and an Assistant District Attorney from 1967 to 1979. Administrative Judge Fitzgerald is a member of the Philadelphia Bar Association, the St. Thomas More Society, and the Brehon Law Society. He received the University of Pennsylvania Alumni Merit Award in 1989. He was elected judge of the Court of Common Pleas in November, 1989. The judge is married to Carol Fitzgerald; and they have three grown children — Melissa, James J., IV, and Craig, and one



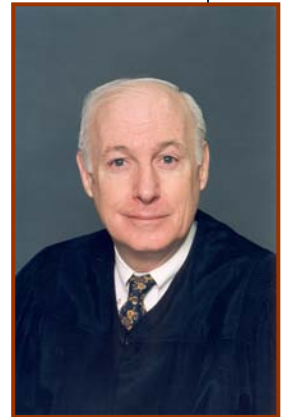
grandchild, James V. James J. Fitzgerald, III has been a judge for the past fifteen years. He has served seven years in the Major Criminal Trial Program, four of which were spent in the Homicide Division. He most recently served as supervisor of the Major Criminal Case Calendar Program. He was appointed Administrative Judge of the Common Pleas Court Trial Division by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in February, 2002.

Honorable Myrna Field
Administrative Judge, Common Pleas Court Family Division

The Honorable Myrna Field was appointed Administrative Judge of Family Court in February, 2002 by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Prior to that, she had been a judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County since January, 1992, with experience sitting in Criminal, Civil, and Family Court Divisions. The Administrative Judge has been a practitioner, lecturer and television commentator on issues of family law. She has additional experience as President of the Mid-Atlantic Legal Foundation and as the Founder and Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Consumer Services. She was District Counsel to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and an Assistant District Attorney. In addition, Administrative Judge Field counts among her notable professional associations: her membership in the Society Hill Historic Certification Task Force; her membership and Executive Committee standing with the Family Law Section of the Philadelphia Bar Association; and her role as the editor of the Executive Committee Newsletter. Additionally, the judge has experience as a Board Member of the Towne Pride Works; Treasurer of the Fairmount Park Advisory Council; Board Member of the Old Pine Community Center; President of the Society Hill Civic Association; and Co-Chair of the Court of Common Pleas Civil Conversations Committee. In addition, Administrative Judge Field is a member of the boards of Safe and Sound, and Bread of the University of Pennsylvania.



Honorable Joseph D. O’Keefe
Administrative Judge, Common Pleas Court Orphans’ Court Division



The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania appointed Judge Joseph D. O’Keefe as Administrative Judge of the Orphans’ Court Division in December, 2000. He was elected to the Court of Common Pleas in November, 1983 and re-elected for a second ten-year term in November, 1993 and a third ten-year term in 2003. Judge O’Keefe previously served as Supervising Judge of the Complex Litigation Center from January, 1999 to December, 2000 overseeing all Mass Tort programs, Asbestos, Major Non-Jury, Arbitration Appeals, Landlord Tenant Appeals and Penn-DOT Appeal cases. Judge O’Keefe was the Team Leader of the Day Forward 1995 Program from January, 1997 to December, 1998. Judge O’Keefe has also served as the Civil Motion Judge for a three year period and spent ten years in the Criminal Section of the Trial Division. As Administrative Judge of the Orphans’ Court Division, Judge O’Keefe worked to modernize court processes through technology and the Internet. He implemented a new case management and docketing system and improved access to the court through the addition of forms, materials and references to the Orphans’ Court website. The Judge has sought out the assistance of, and improved relations between, the Probate Bar and the court. Judge O’Keefe received his B.S. from St. Joseph’s University in 1966 and his J.D. from Duquesne University in 1973. The Judge currently sits on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Orphans’ Court Rules Committee and has been a regular participant in continuing legal education seminars.

Zygmunt A. Pines, Esquire
Court Administrator of Pennsylvania

Zygmunt A. Pines was appointed Court Administrator of Pennsylvania on October 18, 2000; Acting Court Administrator of Pennsylvania, January - October, 2000. Chief Legal Counsel, Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, 1991-99; Assistant Chief Attorney, Superior Court of Pennsylvania, 1978-91; Chief Legal Counsel to Governor’s Commission on Judicial Reform, 1987-88; Adjunct professor, University of Pennsylvania, 1986-91; Adjunct professor Villanova Law School, 1984-85; Private practice, 1975-78. Mr. Pines is the author of various publications on criminal justice, appellate procedures and ethics. Member: Judicial Council of Pennsylvania; Pennsylvania Commission on

Crime and Delinquency, Pennsylvania Association of Court Management, Administrative Governing Board of Pennsylvania's First Judicial District (Philadelphia), Pennsylvania's Investment Advisory Board, Department of Justice-Sponsored National Advisory Board/Judicial Education Project, Pennsylvania Judicial Council Committee on Court Security. Member of: Department of Justice-sponsored national advisory board on victims' rights; task force of a joint conference of state court administrators and chief justices on court security; Pennsylvania Judicial Council's committee on court security; and Unified Judicial System's Investment Advisory Board. Education: B.A., Wilkes College, 1970; J.D., Cleveland State University College of Law, 1974 (*cum laude*); LL.M., University of Pennsylvania Law School, 1978.

First Judicial District Summary of 2004 Accomplishments

- First Judicial District Intranet Home Page** – In 2004, the FJD introduced the Intranet Home Page that appears on employees' computers when they log on in the morning. The Intranet is an internal version of the Intranet for users of the FJD network. The Intranet includes a wealth of features including *HR NEWS* and access to the employees own Human Resources personnel files, *WHAT'S NEW* for special news and current events around the District, *QUIZ OF THE WEEK* including interesting and sometimes puzzling facts about Philadelphia and environs, and an FJD Bulletin Board for other postings of interest to employees. There are also links to other pages: *About the FJD*; *CRS Login*; *Judicial Education*; *Reports*; *Human Resources*; *Phonebook*; and *Court Schedules*.



Intranet Home Page

- First Judicial District Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)** – Even if a major disaster were to occur, the courts must continue to function. FJD leaders and staff worked hard to develop and draft the first FJD COOP. For the opening effort, detailed contingency plans were prepared in case a major disaster should require criminal trials and operations to be moved from the Criminal Justice Center (CJC).

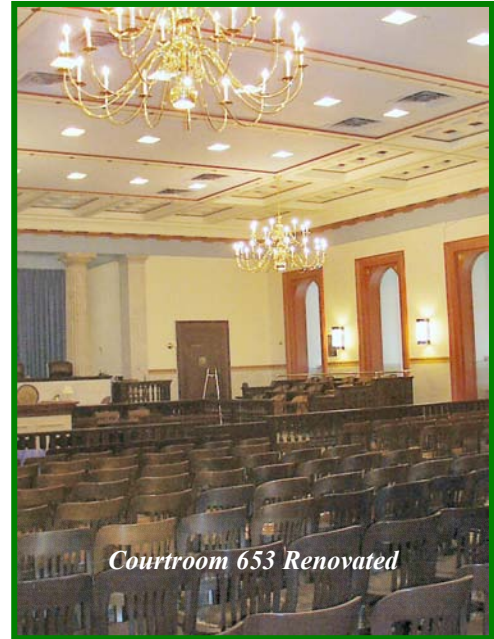
Roundtable Discussions

- Management Development Program** – The Management Development Program began operations in earnest to help employees better understand issues confronting court leaders today. A training program presentation by the Mid-Atlantic Association of Court Management (MAACM) was attended by about 40 FJD employees, who also participated in follow-up discussions to review the information and debrief their experiences. Roundtable Discussions were conducted and employees actively participated. "Webinars" are scheduled for 2005 in addition to the other program components.



- **Courtroom 653 Renovation** – Courtroom 653 was renovated top to bottom and restored to its former glory by the FJD Space and Facilities employees. The project required significant electrical work, lighting installation, painting, and refinishing.

- **Arbitration Center Relocation** – The FJD Arbitration Center moved to 1880 Market Street where employees, arbitrators, and litigants enjoy more space in a newly renovated and updated facility. The relocation of the Arbitration Center to 1880 JFK Boulevard resulted in voice and data cabling work along with telecommunications services. Assembly room chairs were also refinished and repaired in conjunction with this move.



- **Digital Recording** – In 2004, the Office of Court Reporting and Interpreter Services installed digital recording devices in 10 FJD courtrooms. In a move to more effectively employ court reporting resources, audio recorders were placed in the Common Pleas Court Family and Trial Divisions and in Municipal Court. The aim was to ensure continued quality through high-end computerized audio recording, while at the same time reducing costs normally associated with more expensive traditional Official Court Reporter services.
- **Court Reporter Transcript System (CRS)** – The CRS continues to grow. In 2004, the inventory reached 39,000 case transcripts totaling nearly 1.4 million pages stored on the CRS database
- **Criminal Case Management System (CCMS)** – The massive Criminal Case Management System (CCMS) was placed into operation in July, 2003 and required a few enhancements and improvements in 2004. The CCMS system was modified to send Bench Warrant information to the Pennsylvania State Police so the information would be accessible throughout the State. The FJD has cleared nearly 500 bench warrants in a matter of weeks after this function went into production.

Office of the Court Administrator 2004 Goals

- Budget Management - \$2.5 million savings goal
- Courtroom 653 Renovation
- CPCMS Planning
- Digital Recording Implementation and Expansion

- Prepare and Distribute Disaster Plan
- Family Court Facility – Short Term/Long Term
- Create and Implement FJD Desktop Homepage
- IT Strategic Planning
- Management Development Program
- Update Policies and Procedures
- *APPD Case Management Automation Project
- *DR Case Flow Management – ICM Implementation
- *Real Time Data Entry – Criminal Trial Division

**Recognized as divisional deliverables but are of highest priority to warrant Court Administrator's direct involvement.*

Administrative Services

Working through the Administrative Services Department, Maintenance Unit employees completed some major projects over the course of the last year. In 2004, one of the showcase projects was the complete renovation of ceremonial Courtroom 653 in City Hall. The project required significant electrical work, lighting installation, painting, and refinishing.

Demolition, custom counter construction, electrical, and cabling work were also required for the new electronic filing operation in the office of the Clerk of Orphans' Court (room 415, CH). The relocation of the Arbitration Center to 1880 JFK Boulevard resulted in voice and data cabling work along with telecommunications services.

Assembly room chairs were also refinished and repaired in conjunction with this move.

Carpentry work, moving, and telecommunications services were provided for the relocation of the Prothonotary's Certifications/Appeals Unit within City Hall. In addition, painting at 1801 Vine Street continues as part of the City Capital Programs project in that building. The Maintenance Unit continues to provide all voice and data cabling in



Procurement Unit Personnel

FJD occupied space. Telecommunications responsibilities include the maintenance of More than 2,200 voice mailboxes.

Procurement

Cost saving and economical protocol established by the Procurement Unit was once again relied upon during 2004 to fund on-going technology enhancements, training, and space relocations and improvements throughout the FJD. In addition, Procurement Unit staff served as active members of various project management teams for each of the following 2004 FJD projects:

- Completion of Municipal Court Electronic Filing Case Management system;
- Relocation of the Arbitration Center;
- Installation of wireless internet services within City Hall;
- Completion of the Municipal Court's Video Conferencing Project;
- Mental Health Electronic Filing System;
- Installation of a New sound system in Family Court;
- Web based system incorporated into the FJD training room in City Hall;
- Video door security systems installed in City Hall; and
- Major renovations to the Ceremonial Courtroom in 653 City Hall

Court Reporter and Interpreter Services

Scope

Court Reporters preserve the verbatim record of all proceedings in the First Judicial District (FJD) with the exception of those in the Philadelphia Traffic Court. Court reporter services are provided in the Common Pleas and Municipal Courts and their constituent divisions. Reporters also take verbatim records of other proceedings such as Grand Juries, important ceremonies, and certain administrative events where the preservation of the record is required. In the Court of Common Pleas, reporters serve in the Family, Orphans' Court, and Trial Divisions. Their jurisdiction includes actions in Juvenile Delinquency and Dependency, Adoptions; Domestic Relations, Criminal, Civil, and Probate cases. Reporters also record testimony in the Civil and Criminal Divisions of the Municipal Court.

Methods

Steno Type and Real Time

In 2004, Court Reporting Services employed 130 Official Court Reporters to provide stenographic services throughout the FJD. To do so, Court Reporters type on computer-aided stenographic machines. Real Time translation through an Official Court Reporter is also provided for litigants, defendants, attorneys and judges who are deaf or hard of hearing. In addition, major Civil cases, such as product liability cases and



Jury Box with monitors for viewing real-time testimony text and exhibits

medical malpractice suits also require the convenience of Real Time transcription on a daily basis.

A laptop computer was acquired that enables qualified court reporters to send Real-Time transcriptions of the proceedings to hearing-impaired persons who need Real Time translation during hearings and trials. Official Court Reporters regularly email transcripts to attorneys and judges immediately after a trial and overnight.

Digital Recording

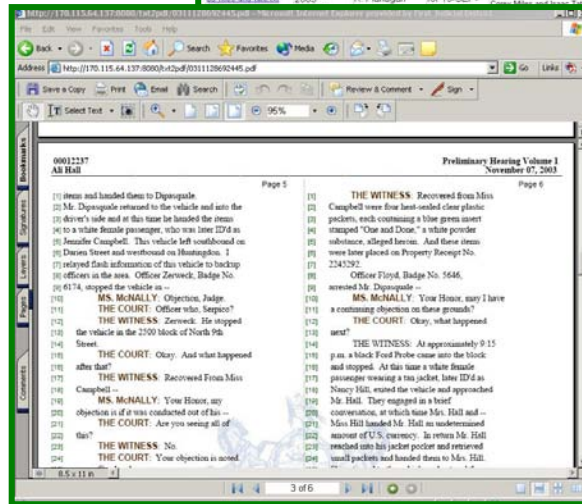
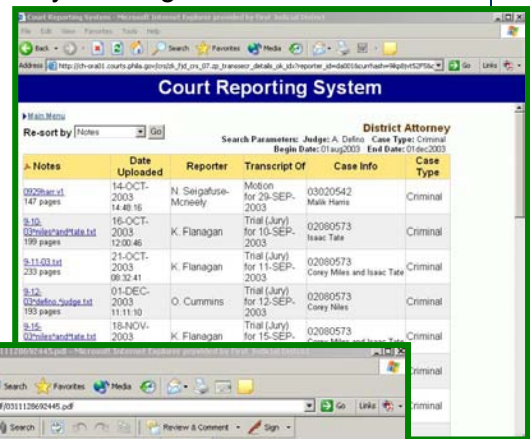
In 2004, the Office of Court Reporting and Interpreter Services installed digital recording devices in 10 FJD courtrooms. In a move to more effectively employ court reporting resources, audio recorders were placed in the Common Pleas Court Family and Trial Divisions and in Municipal Court. The aim was to ensure continued quality through high-end computerized audio recording, while at the same time reducing costs normally associated with more expensive Official Court Reporter services. In making the move, the courtrooms chosen were evaluated and found to produce few, if any, requests for transcribed notes of testimony. Because of the minimal demand for transcripts, it was decided that the technical skill and expertise of court reporters would be more effectively applied in other areas where transcribed notes of testimony are in greater demand. The move was especially practical considering the shortage of skilled court reporters.

Digital recordings are stored and archived electronically on an FJD server. Digital recorder operators monitor the courtroom computers allowing traditional Court Reporters to work in courtrooms where the full range of their skills and knowledge are required. This puts limited resources to better use.

Court Reporting Transcript System (CRS)

The Court Reporting Transcript System (CRS) is an electronic storage and archival database that stores all of the transcripts completed by Official Court Reporters. Presently there are almost 39,000 case transcripts totaling nearly 1.4 million pages stored on the CRS database. Judges, judicial staff, District Attorneys and Defenders access the system daily to receive and download transcripts for their use.

Among others, there are two major advantages of the CRS database. First, the FJD no longer must store at an enormous expense the paper copies of transcripts. In addition, the risk of loss is sharply reduced. Transcripts are no longer "lost." Additional copies can be printed within minutes for judges, attorneys, and the appellate courts. Efficiency is improved because judges and their staff log on to the system daily to retrieve transcripts for use in writing opinions.



CRS on-line notes of testimony

FJD employees have been trained to use the CRS system. Immediate access streamlines the process by reducing delay so that cases can move through the courts more efficiently.

Interpreting Services

The FJD is the Commonwealth leader with respect to training interpreters and providing services to litigants who need language assistance. To that end, Saturday training sessions for contract interpreters enhance the quality of justice by allowing interpreters to learn about legal terminology specifically related to each court, the main players in various courtroom settings, and what is expected and ethically should be provided to each person needing language services. In addition, court officers and judges, can learn about the special needs of the deaf, hard of hearing, and persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

The FJD has been lauded for its progressive attitude toward further guaranteeing justice for this population by ensuring due process and adhering to the rights preserved by the Fifth, Sixth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution.

To tighten up operations and reduce costs, new interpreter protocols have helped to eliminate unnecessary expenditures for interpreters when court hearings are continued or cancelled. As part of the initiative, an Excel database has been developed to track interpreter assignments and activities throughout the District, recording the length of the cases and the costs for interpreter services.

Record Reproduction Services

In 2004 the four employees in the Record Reproduction Center provided document reproduction services to court reporters, judges, judicial staff, administrators, and staff in all divisions and departments throughout the FJD, and for attorneys, and the public. Those services included printing and copying court reporter transcripts. Countless forms, booklets, binders, and reports were completed and delivered by the employees of the Copy Center.

Over 2 million transcripts were printed and distributed through the Record Reproduction Center in 2004. Using five state-of-the-art digital printers, the Record Reproduction Center employees provide all printing and copying services throughout the FJD. In 2004, more than 1.6 million pages were copied, printed, and distributed.

Jury Selection Commission

The Jury Commissioner and the Commission he leads were very proactively involved in enhancing the experience and the services of citizens called to participate in the administration of justice through the FJD. Some of their notable accomplishments for 2004 are:

- For the first time in several years, the Commissioner reinvigorated the practice of Jury Selection Commission Staff Meetings, including both administrative and jury assembly room employees.
- The Commission is in the process of cross-training jury employees between the two Jury Commission divisions (Administration & Jury Assembly Room).
- The Commissioner met with SEPTA regarding ongoing consideration of discounts for Philadelphia jurors.
- The daily jury pool was increased by 25% in order to meet large jury demands, including supplying jurors to the Civil Trial Division on days other than Fridays (which had been the assigned day of the week for Civil juries).
- Instituted a Thursday priority aimed at the backlog of 13,000 “Phen-phen” civil cases.
- Revised the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System (automated phone prompt system) to coincide with changes in business hours and to reiterate instructions on the juror questionnaire. The system is also set-up to address Spanish-speaking prospective jurors.
- Implemented “early call” of jury panels for homicide cases to relieve overcrowding and to allow for approximately 100 additional daily jury panels.
- Served on the Philadelphia Bar Association and Statewide Jury Task Forces in attempts to secure an increase in daily fees for jurors.

Data Processing

In 2004, the Data Processing Department was involved with the development of several projects, implementation of Internet and Intranet applications, and continued planning the future of information technology in the First Judicial District. The massive Criminal Case Management System (CCMS) was placed into operation in July, 2003 and required a few enhancements and improvements in 2004. The CCMS system was modified to send Bench Warrant information to the Pennsylvania State Police so the information would be accessible throughout the State. The FJD has cleared nearly 500 bench warrants in a matter of weeks after this function went into production.

The FJD has continued expanding access to information through the Internet and the FJD Intranet. FJD employees can access certain categories of their own personnel records stored in the Human Resources Database and contact HR staff to correct problems directly through the Intranet. The Intranet became a cost-effective and useful tool for distributing information to the employees of the FJD while reducing phone calls to HR.

Data Processing staff kept busy developing new systems throughout the year 2004. Orphans Court will benefit from the e-filing system developed and tested in 2004 and opened for use in 2005. Family Court will be using the system being developed for divorce, custody, and Protection From Abuse as soon as the fourth quarter of 2005.

Striving to meet the growing demand for Access to Justice, the Data Processing Unit and the staff of the Administrative Judge of Orphans' Court finalized plans for the Orphans' Court Electronic Filing System (OCEFS). The completed system allows attorneys and *pro se* parties to file Orphans' Court pleadings electronically from the filer's office or home. Completely designed by FJD employees, the Orphans' Court Electronic Filing System was finished in 2004, in time for implementation in January of 2005.

Management Information Services (MIS)

The final phases of the FJD network migration were completed in 2004. MIS also participated in a number of other projects and technology initiatives including Digital Audio Recording, Orphans' Court e-filing, Probation Case Management, JNET, Web-based e-mail, video arraignment, JACS, DNA testing, and a complete upgrade of all FJD network infrastructure software.

Human Resources

The Office of Human Resources administers personnel activities relating to the 2,313 full-time and 116 part-time employees of the First Judicial District. The Office of Human Resources has a great deal of contact with the public, and the work of this department is important in building and maintaining public trust and confidence. Even after hiring, the effort continues as employees evolve from external to internal customers whose needs must be met. Unit functions include: employee and labor relations; recruitment, applicant processing and testing; appointments, transfers, promotions and reclassifications; payroll administration; benefits coordination and processing; review and tracking of leave usage and service connected injuries; maintenance of personnel files; performance appraisal management; training and development; Title VII investigations; review of disciplinary appeals; monitoring compliance with employment laws; and maintenance of an automated Human Resource Information System.

Special 2004 Human Resource Projects

- Reaching out to the public through the expansion of recruitment efforts, including annual attendance at job fairs promoting job candidate diversity
- Improving employee relations through completion of a legal and procedural review of personnel policies and presentation of proposed policy revisions to the Administrative Governing Board

- Developing and implementing Management Development policies and initiatives to enhance employee knowledge of the courts and improve managerial and supervisory skills
- Providing training sessions for supervisors in the application of personnel policies
- Coordinating Supervisory Training for all supervisors
- Continuing coordination of welfare-to-work and work study programs
- Continuing coordination of CPR/AED certification
- Coordinating Sensitivity Training
- Assisting in the creation and maintenance of the FJD Intranet site

Senior Staff Advisors

The Court Administrator also has two Senior Staff Advisors whose responsibilities include the evaluation of statistics, programs, and large systems of the courts. Long term assignments include administration of the Emergency Notification System, the production of the Biennial and Annual Reports, and the FJD newsletter, the Courterly. They are also available for ad-hoc assignments as project managers and were involved in that capacity in 2003 for the Criminal Case Management System (CCMS) and the on-line provision of notes of testimony through the Court Reporter System (CRS).

FJD Internet

In 2004, the First Judicial District website continued to grow in size and popularity with 2.3 million visitors for the year. The Civil Docket on-line search application alone recorded a total of 8.2 Million pages viewed for 2004. Led by the Court Administrator and with the full support of the FJD Administrative Governing Board, the District's Internet presence and development of related systems like the internal employee communications network – the FJD Intranet – expanded dramatically to benefit the public and the FJD workforce.

Striving to meet the growing demand for Access to Justice, the Data Processing Unit and the staff of the Administrative Judge of Orphans' Court finalized plans for the Orphans' Court Electronic Filing System (OCEFS). Entirely developed by FJD employees, the system was designed to allow attorneys and *pro se* parties to file Orphans' Court pleadings electronically from the filer's office or home.

FJD Intranet

The First Judicial District internal website was completely reorganized and revamped with new graphics, a new site navigation structure, and improved applications. The Intranet is a protected section of the FJD network restricted to CityNet users only. This technology allows FJD employees to view important in-house content not available to the public.

For example, one of the first Intranet applications introduced made the ABRA human resource system more accessible and user friendly by putting a number of its functions on the Intranet. Employees can check on their own attendance, leave usage,

training, and benefits. The completed Web technology offers interactive features and a clearer presentation of information for the District's employees.

The Intranet also enhances communication between employees and court leaders and among employees themselves. As a result, they gain a better sense of their importance as members of a team with a common goal: the administration of justice.

Other site features:

- Employee News and Events
- Human Resources information
- Employee directory
- Time sheets
- Job listings
- Personnel Policies

Office of Financial Services

The Deputy Court Administrator (DCA) for Financial Services reports to, and collaborates with, the First Judicial District (FJD) Court Administrator and the members of the Administrative Governing Board. He helps to oversee, analyze, and develop financial policies and systems. Direct responsibilities include preparing, implementing, and monitoring the operating budget totaling \$140 million (general fund and grants) and preparation of regular macro-level and micro-level financial reports. Other duties include developing and implementing financial systems and gathering, analyzing and forecasting data for preparation of FJD financial requirements.



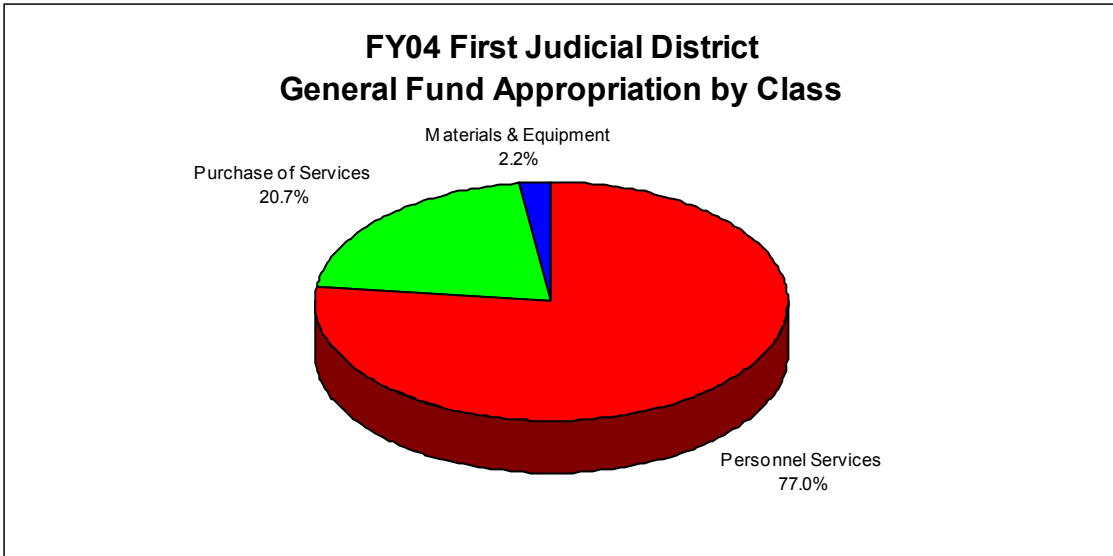
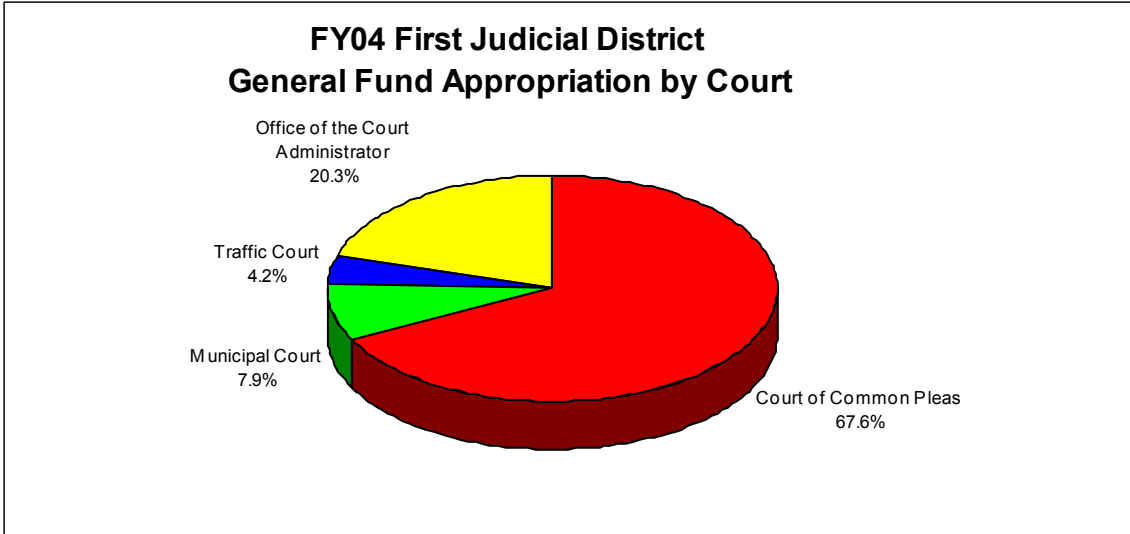
Financial Services Personnel

Through the use of various financial tools, the office prepares impact and variance analyses of staffing and procurement requests against operating resources. The office, comprising six staff and the DCA, interacts with: judicial leaders; the FJD Court Administrator and other Deputy Court Administrators; and the operating and functional units of the FJD. These include Human Resources, Data Processing, and Procurement; and the financial and administrative staff of the City of Philadelphia and the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC). The Office of Financial Services employs desktop and mainframe applications for the management and utilization of FJD financial resources. Mainframe applications connect with the FJD Data Processing and Human Resources offices, the City of Philadelphia, and the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts.

The Office of Financial Services also oversees counsel fees tracking and payments. Through the use of these various applications and the FJD network, the Office of Financial Services has developed the means for department heads to view budget balances and project the cost of proposed purchases against their respective

budgets. Responsibility for grants administration and FJD records management also falls under the auspices of the Office of Financial Services.

2004 Budget Appropriations



Court of Common Pleas

The Courts of Common Pleas are Pennsylvania's courts of general trial jurisdiction. They have existed since the colonial charter of Pennsylvania, and are incorporated in the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776. In 2004, the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County consisted of 93 full-time judges and 15 senior judges. Full-time judges were assigned to the Trial Division (68), Family Division (23), and Orphans' Court Division (2). Senior Judges were assigned as follows: Trial Division (11), Family Division (3), and Orphans' Court Division (1).

The Court of Common Pleas is supervised by a President Judge who is elected for a five year term by the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas.

Honorable Frederica A. Massiah-Jackson is the President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia. She has also been appointed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to serve as Chair of the Administrative Governing Board of the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania. The AGB is the coordinating board for the three courts of the First Judicial District with a total of 125 judges in the Court of Common Pleas, Municipal Court, and Traffic Court.

Judge Frederica A. Massiah-Jackson was elected President Judge for a term which commenced on January 10, 2001, and will expire on January 10, 2006.

Office of the President Judge

The President Judge:

- initially assigns all newly appointed or elected Judges to one of the divisions of the court, and may request from the Supreme Court the assignment of Senior Judges to help dispose of Philadelphia County's case-inventory, and the appointment of out-of-county judges to assist the Court in conflict cases
- directs space allocation within the Court of Common Pleas and assigns judicial chambers
- is responsible for the implementation of local rules as adopted by the Board of Judges, and for the initiation of administrative orders, directives, or general court regulations as may be mandated or authorized by various court rules and directives, as well as legislative enactments
- is responsible for preparing an Emergency Judge Schedule assigning a Court of Common Pleas Judge to act during off-Court hours on emergency matters, as well as ensuring that Election Court, with numerous satellite locations, is judicially staffed during the primary and general elections in order to enable all citizens to exercise their right to vote
- supervises the Office of the Prothonotary, the Court law libraries (in several locations), and the Court Messenger Service

- supervises all Official Court Reporters, assigning them as needed, and monitors the transcription of notes of testimony which are needed to complete the Court record
- supervises the Mental Health Review Officer(s) who act on behalf of the Court in hearings pursuant to the Mental Health Procedures Act of 1976, as amended
- entertains all petitions which seek to modify monetary judgments issued against defendants accused of criminal offences, and their sureties, when defendants violate the terms of their bail and fail to appear for court hearings
- maintains a Disbarment Docket of local attorneys who are suspended or disbarred by the Supreme Court

The President Judge's office is located at room 386 City Hall, and the President Judge may be reached by telephone at (215) 686-2523, or by FAX at (215) 567-7328.

Civil Mental Health Program

The Office of the Court of Common Pleas President Judge oversees the Civil Mental Health Program. State law requires the President Judge to appoint Mental Health Review Officers who hear civil petitions involving involuntary civil commitments. The hearings are held for the purpose of rendering mental health treatment to individuals determined to suffer from mental illness and who pose a clear and imminent danger to themselves or others. All Mental Health Review Officers are required to be lawyers with experience in Mental Health matters. President Judge Frederica A. Massiah-Jackson has appointed one Mental Health Review Officer (who is assisted by five Assistant Mental Health Review Officers) to conduct mental health hearings.

The Mental Health Procedures Act of 1973, as amended, provides that individuals who have been involuntarily committed (without court order) under Section 302 of the Act must be released within 120 hours unless a petition is filed with the Prothonotary and heard by a Mental Health Review Officer before the expiration of the 120 hour period. Ordinarily, petitions must be filed, scheduled, and heard within a 24 hour period.

The Office of the President Judge, with the support of the Prothonotary and the Court Administrator, developed and implemented the innovative FJD web-based **Civil Mental Health Electronic Filing Program** and Case Management System (which can be accessed through the FJD website at <http://courts.phila.gov>) to assist in the filing, scheduling and disposition of mental health petitions. Fully implemented in Calendar Year 2001, the Civil Mental Health Electronic Filing Program provides for the secure filing of all mental health petitions through the Internet by more than thirty mental health providers throughout the Philadelphia area, and a State Correction Institute at Waymart. To ensure that only authorized users can access the web-based system, a digital certificate must be installed on each computer that accesses the system. In addition, a FJD-issued user name and password must be utilized by every authorized user. Different user profiles have been created, and each profile has different access rights to system functionality and data stored within.

Counsel for the parties and the Mental Health Review Officers are now able to view petitions on-line, on a real-time basis. Moreover, Mental Health Review Officers can log-on and access their assigned daily lists, and the pleadings filed in each case. As each case is heard, an appropriate order is prepared on-line, submitted to the Prothonotary on-line and an e-mail is sent to the interested parties thereby complying with the notice requirements of Pa. R.C.P. No. 236. All parties are thus able to meet the time-sensitive requirements of the Mental Health Act and provide mental health services to the citizens of Philadelphia County as required. All Civil Mental Health participants have benefited from this very important initiative completed by the Offices of the President Judge and Court Administrator.

In Calendar Year 2004, the Office of the President Judge, again with the assistance of the Office of the Court Administrator, upgraded the technology utilized to record mental health hearings. New, state of the art digital systems meeting the strict requirements imposed by the Court, have been installed in each of the hearing sites. The digital audio files are stored as required by record retention policies, and are available for transcription as needed.

In Calendar Year 2004, a total of 4,948 mental health petitions were filed by thirty medical treatment facilities, and heard at seven hearing locations throughout Philadelphia County, and at SCI Waymart. A total of 3,750 cases involved involuntary treatment for up to 20 days; 555 cases involved involuntary treatment for up to 90 days; and 472 cases involved involuntary treatment for up to 180 days; one Petition for Review of a MHRO decision was filed; and the balance, 170 cases, involved hearings to determine whether the patient could be subjected to treatment involving greater restraint (i.e. from outpatient to inpatient treatment, or to a more restrictive facility).

Prothonotary

Background

The title "Prothonotary" has its origins in the Ecclesiastical Court during the Middle Ages and the English Court of the King's Bench. The Philadelphia Prothonotary's Office is reportedly the oldest continuously held legal office in the Western hemisphere. The Prothonotary is recognized as the clerk who keeps records and the great seal, issues process, enters judgment and certifies the record. The Office of the Prothonotary was created under the provisions of Article 9, Section 4, of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The duties, responsibilities, and other provisions of the office are set forth under Title 42, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure, Section 2737 of Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes. The Prothonotary of Philadelphia is appointed by the judges of the Court of Common Pleas (the Board of Judges).

Organization and Responsibilities

In May of 1995, Joseph H. Evers was appointed Prothonotary of Philadelphia, and he remains in that capacity to the present. He is assisted by two Deputy Prothonotaries, Stanley J. Chmielewski and Bonnie O'Kane, along with a support staff of 66 employees. The Prothonotary is, by law, responsible for all the civil business



Prothonotary Employee of the Year Marie Wodack poses with her award along with Prothonotary Joseph Evers and President Judge Frederica A. Massiah-Jackson

of the courts. The Prothonotary must maintain the Seal of the Court and has the power and duty to administer oaths and affirmations and affix and attest the Seal of the Court. In addition, the Prothonotary controls process and thereby establishes jurisdiction, certifies all pertinent documents and records and exemplifies the business of the court, while entering all civil judgments and satisfactions of civil judgments. The Prothonotary is an officer of the court; and has the authority to “exercise such other powers and perform such other duties as may now or hereafter be vested in or imposed upon the office by law...”. The word “Prothonotary” is a combination of the Greek word “Protos” meaning “first” and the Latin word “Notarius”, meaning “scribe or clerk”. The most famous Philadelphia Prothonotary was the lawyer Andrew Hamilton.

First Judicial District Information Center

Mission Statement of the First Judicial District Information Center:

“To provide correct and accurate Court information in a pleasant and professional manner”

During its second full year of operation, the First Judicial District (FJD) Information Center has continued to develop its base of knowledge and staff skills to better serve the Philadelphia Community. A stop at the Information Center is literally the first step for thousands of people in search of information about the services of the Courts of Philadelphia. If the courts are to bring the administration of justice into the open, the Information Center represents the open door to all the courts of the First Judicial District.

Trial Court Performance Standards and Access to Justice in the First Judicial District – The Trial Court Performance Standards are a well-known and widely publicized set of guidelines for best practices in model courts. The first group of standards, addressing Access to Justice, is presented first because it concerns litigants’ initial entry into the justice system. Without access, the rest of the courts’ work, the execution of our various and myriad duties, will not occur – justice would be denied. The wider the access, the more justice is served. The First Judicial District of Pennsylvania (FJD) is committed to guaranteeing Access to Justice to the greatest extent possible.

Origin, Goals, and Responsibilities

Mindful of our pledge make justice available to all, the First Judicial District Information Center was designed to be the front-line open door to people seeking access to justice in the Philadelphia Courts. Opening in 2002, under the aegis of the Office of the Common Pleas Court President Judge Frederica Massiah-Jackson, and, with the help of Prothonotary Joseph Evers, the FJD Information Center was conceived as a “triage” unit, where, after eliciting some basic information from their customers, staff assess the situation and help citizens to find out the *who, what, where, when, and how* of beginning court cases to settle their differences. After leaving the Center, people are better prepared to pursue their cases through



Boyd Taggart, Information Center Director

the appropriate court venue. Knowledgeable Center employees are able to direct people to where their filings should be made, help them learn how the cases should be initiated, what forms might be necessary, hours of operation, and related costs (if any). The idea is not only to proffer information, but to actually prepare citizens for their court experience. The Center enjoys the support of the Philadelphia Bar Association and the Philadelphia City Council.

The services rendered here aren't limited to people seeking access to the courts. The staff regularly provides guidance and direction to other branches of government and agencies seeking court information. This is true even when the situation is not suitable for court action in the First Judicial District; referrals to the Federal Courts are not uncommon.

Importantly, each of the inquiries – more than 700 per month – benefits not only the people seeking the services, but also the courts. Citizens gain a favorable perception of the courts, boosting public trust and confidence.

Overcoming Obstacles

For people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), the Information Center staff includes bi-lingual employees to help customers to proceed along their way. At the Center, they can also obtain various court forms and procedural information translated into different languages to help people to more meaningfully participate in the judicial process. For those not fortunate enough to have Internet access, the FJD Information Center makes computers available for on-line descriptions of the various courts and their respective case types, explanations of filing and other procedures, and downloads of the appropriate forms to commence their actions.

Pro Se Filers

A good part of the Center's work relates to helping the public help themselves. Many people file cases *pro-se* (literally "for self"). That is, they are filing actions without the benefit of counsel. Many Family Division cases, including Domestic Relations, Adoptions, Protection from Abuse, and Juvenile cases may have begun with the Information Center as the first step. Many custody cases began with a step through the open doors of the FJD Information Center. People filing *pro-se* may also include a number who are initiating civil actions, traffic court cases, and child support petitions. Informational literature, including pamphlets and instructions, help to familiarize citizens with the judicial system and allow them to begin to proceed through what is sometimes perceived as a daunting task in dealing with a large and venerable institution such as the courts.

While Information Center staff provides information – and a great deal of it, they do not provide legal advice. The employees will often direct people to obtain legal advice through Legal Aid, and the Lawyer Referral Service among other agencies. They can start the process by contacting those agencies by proceeding through links available on the FJD site using the Center's computers.

Growth and Dedication



Sherita Lewis Information Center Staff

All this means that the Information Center employees had to learn all about the various courts that make up the First Judicial District and the myriad cases that they process. The workers have literally become experts about everything in the FJD, and, what they don't know, they'll find out. These are dedicated employees with devoted leaders who are providing a real service to the citizens of Philadelphia. As they improve their knowledge base, so does the Center. Since its opening, services provided by the Information and its employees have continued to expand. The more they do, the more they know how to do, and the better they can serve the public.

During the first 11 months of 2004, FJD Information Center employees responded to more than 8,000 requests for information. Clearly, the demand for their services is growing. They receive requests in writing, over the telephone, and from walk-ins. And they respond quickly and by the most efficient means available. Plans for the future include statistical analyses to determine the major topics of inquiry and determine how to best meet those growing needs. In addition, statutory and other changes that occur regularly require Information Center Staff to maintain an up-to-date knowledge base with files and informational material that remains current.

The First Judicial District Information Center is a well-conceived and well-staffed venture that is expanding day-by-day in order to keep pace with the developments in the business of running the courts, and to ably answer the needs of a growing number of citizens. This is a microcosm of the Courts of Philadelphia – providing real aid; helping everyday people to solve their problems on a case by case basis – thousands of times over.



Rey Diaz, Information Center Staff

Trial Division of the Court of Common Pleas

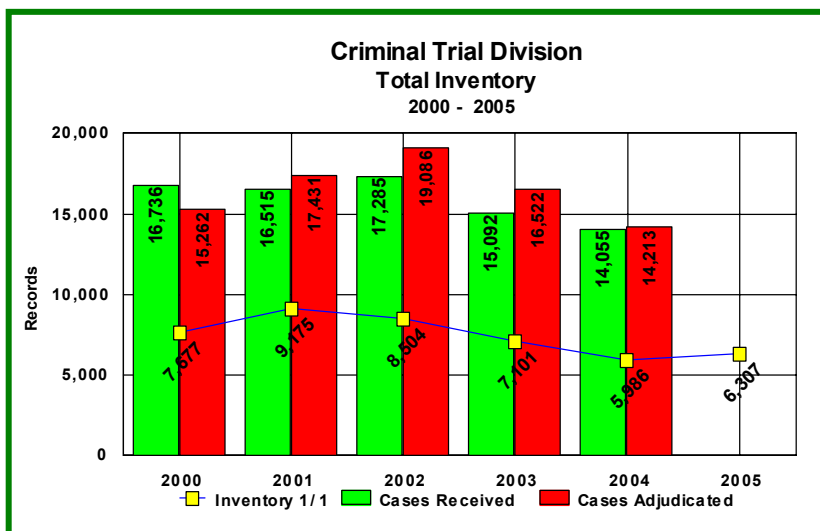
The Trial Division is one of three divisions of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. The Trial Division of the Court of Common Pleas has general jurisdiction in civil and criminal cases, excluding Family Division or Orphans' Court matters.

The Court of Common Pleas - Trial Division is composed of sixty-eight commissioned judges. The judges in commission are supplemented by the services of senior judges. The Division is divided into two sections - Civil and Criminal. Forty-one commissioned judges are assigned to the criminal programs and twenty-nine are assigned to civil programs. There are approximately one-thousand employees in the many separate departments throughout the Trial Division.

Office of the Administrative Judge

The Trial Division is led by an Administrative Judge, who is appointed by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania and serves at the pleasure of the Supreme Court. On February 12, 2002, Judge James J. Fitzgerald, III was appointed Administrative Judge for a three year term.

Trial Division Criminal Section



In 2004, the Criminal Section reengineered its business processes to improve the delivery of services, resulting in significant accomplishments. The Criminal Section is the largest division in the First Judicial District with 800 non-judicial employees, a budget of \$32.5 million and 47 courtrooms. The departments that make up the Criminal Section are Adult Probation and

Parole, Pretrial Services, Courtroom Operations, Active Criminal Records and Criminal Listings. The five departments work together to deliver services in two core areas - court services and community supervision. The overall strategy was to improve performance by cross training and decentralizing court services as well as restructuring staff to reduce caseloads, thereby improving offender supervision.

In the court services area, the Chiefs of Courtroom Operations, Active Criminal Records and Criminal Listings have coordinated efforts in several significant areas including case management, the AOPC Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS), and video conferencing.

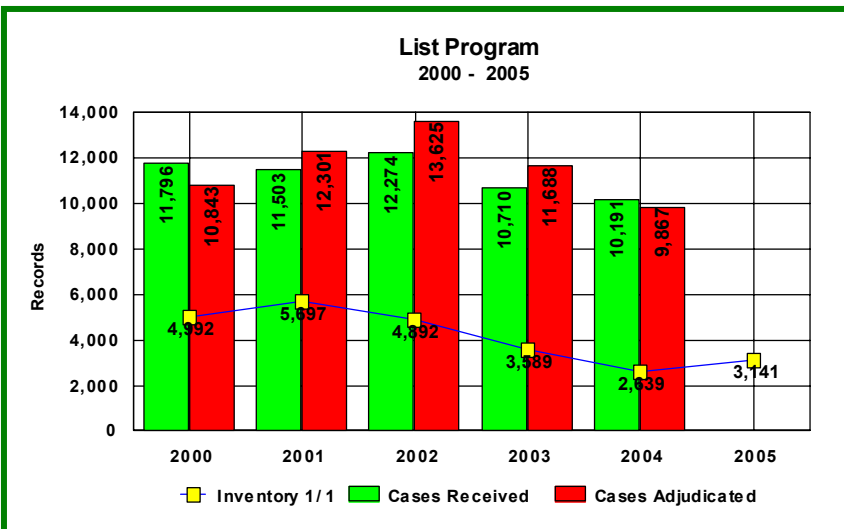
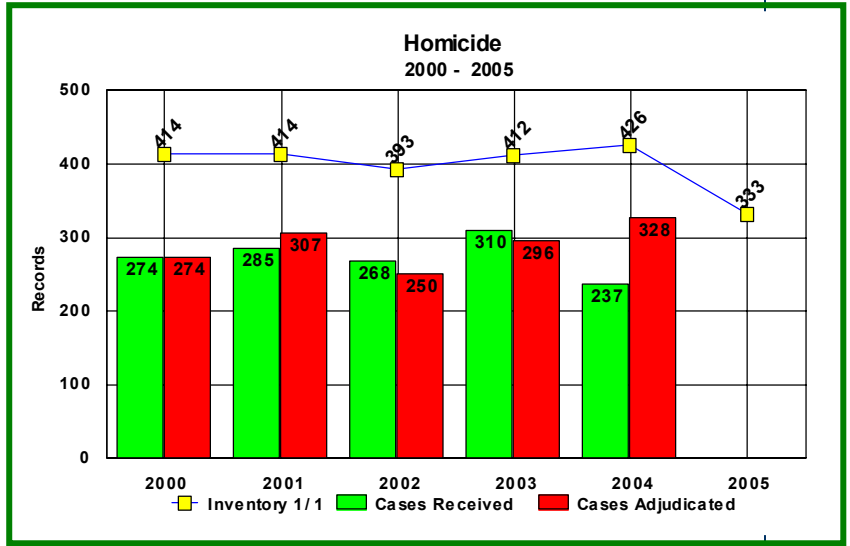
In the community supervision area, the Chiefs of Adult Probation and Parole and Pretrial Services have collaborated on several important initiatives including those involving State Standards, case management, and bench warrant services.

Court Services

Case Management

From the first filing in the Court of Common Pleas to the final disposition, emphasis is on case management. With a rolling active caseload of 6,000 felony trial matters, this is a challenging task. Under the direction of Administrative Judge James J. Fitzgerald III, and Supervising Judge D. Webster Keogh, the Criminal Section was able to reduce trial inventory for the fourth straight year. The Criminal Section was able to achieve this significant goal through the hard work of all the judges in the Criminal Section as well as a complete reengineering of the case management process from a centralized system to a decentralized system. Formerly, all information from the courtroom was written out by hand by the Clerk of Quarter Sessions, forwarded to the

judge for review and signature, delivered to the central data processing area and finally updated in the electronic case management system. This multi-step manual process was fraught with delay and the possibility of lost information. Through months of training, planning and visionary leadership, virtually all data entry for a case is completed "real time" in the courtroom at or near the actual time of the event/decision. This is significant in many respects. Delay and lost information have been essentially eliminated. This allows the Court as well as numerous justice agencies to rely on



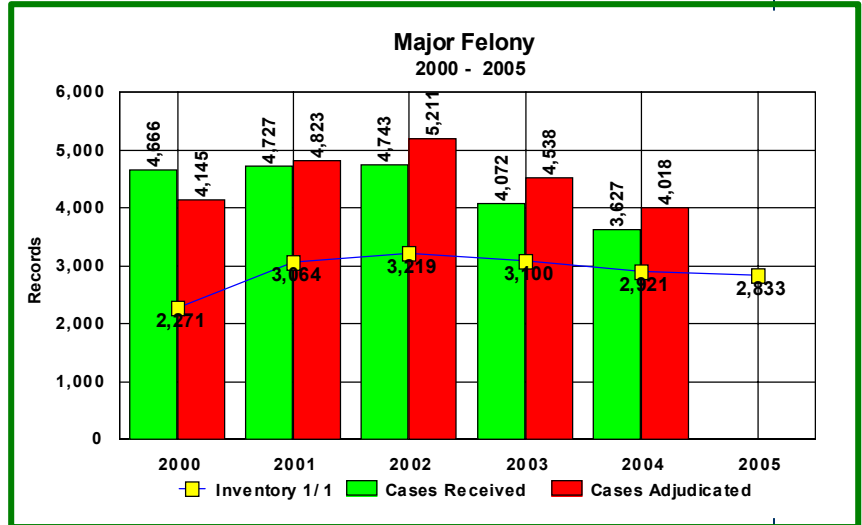
accurate and timely information in the performance of their missions.

The Criminal Section has been the leader in sharing data with other justice agencies. For the first time in the history of the District, every trial matter was updated in the case management system by the close of business on December 31, 2004,

thereby ending the year with total accountability.

Common Plea Case Management System (CPCMS)

The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania has directed that a single, statewide, unified criminal case management system should be implemented in every judicial district. This presented many challenges since different sets of business rules from each District, (many which have been in place for literally decades) needed to be consolidated into one set of business rules. A project management team was assembled to prepare a GAP analysis and to coordinate the rollout of CPCMS in the FJD. Rollout is currently scheduled for May 2006 with training to begin in February 2006. The Criminal Section is strategically positioned to fully comply with this mandate due, in part, to the above case management reengineering initiative. The Criminal Section will continue to review the functionality available in CPCMS to adjust, in advance, business rules where necessary. In additional, regular meetings have already begun with the associated Philadelphia justice agencies to prepare them for this change.



Video Conferencing

In 2004, video conferencing was used for 377 hearings, including out of town witnesses in trials, post trial matters, and guilty pleas. Connections have been established with federal, state and local facilities. Every video conferencing hearing saves thousands of dollars in costs, including transportation, prisoner housing and continuances. Estimated savings exceed \$175,000.

Public Information

The District deploys an award-winning website with more information being added every day. The criminal section has enhanced the information it provides to the public by increasing the number of reports, adding to the types of cases included in the interactive case listing, and improving search capabilities.

The "Graterford" Project

Coordinating prisoner transportation between the state correctional institutions and the District is a daunting task with over 600 matters listed daily. Numerous cases are continued because prisoners are not "brought down" to court due to transportation and housing limitations. By negotiating with the DOC, an agreement was reached, so that up to 100 state inmates would be temporarily transferred to Graterford SCI, Montgomery



Ceremony for slain Warrant Officer Joseph LeClaire

County, which is a same day round trip to Philadelphia. Housing, transportation, and continuance issues have been significantly reduced.

Local Prisoner Transportation

Another initiative to improve efficiencies was to set limits on the number of local prisoner transportation requests to 330 per day (due to insufficient Sheriff staffing). With decentralized case management, the courtrooms are able to remove prisoners from the transportation with a real-time, on-line transaction list when it is determined on short notice that defendants are not needed for court. On average 50 prisoners are removed from the transportation list in this manner.

Community Supervision

Standards of Excellence

Adult Probation and Parole (APPD) again received a 100% compliance certification for state standards during their annual audit. APPD collected \$7.1 million in restitution and supervision fees during the year (through November 2004).

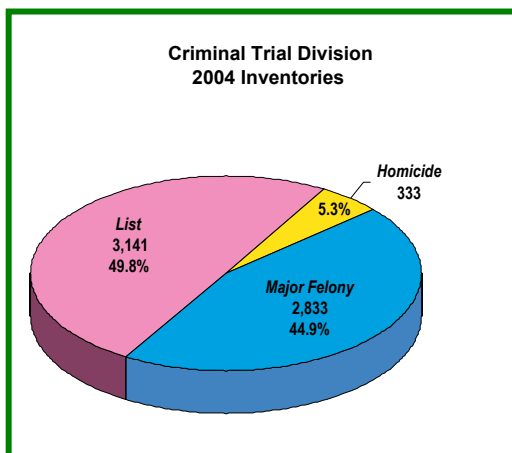
These caseloads also include "gun court" and will be monitored and reviewed by an independent researcher and APPD specialty supervisor.

Bench Warrant Services

Another significant strategic decision was to consolidate field services for bench warrants in the District to the Warrant Unit. Previously, Family Court and Traffic Court handled field services

Statewide Fugitive Project

In December of 2004, all misdemeanor and felony bench warrants (for failure to appear) were transmitted to the state police database called Commonwealth Law Enforcement Assistance Network (CLEAN), which now, for the first time ever, alerts non-Philadelphia County law enforcement if an individual in their custody is wanted by Philadelphia. This involved considerable coordination between the Warrant Unit, MIS, and other jurisdictions.



through private contractors. Phase 1 of this initiative was to assume field work for Family Court. Once fully implemented and through improved intelligence sharing, thousands of Family Court bench warrants will be cleared that were previously not

found. This will result in increased child support collections. Phase 2, Traffic Court, will begin sometime in early 2005.

Anti-Violence Caseloads

Besides the overall strategy to reduce officer caseloads, certain caseloads were further differentiated to include the most violent offenders or those most likely to commit violent acts or have a violent act committed upon them.

Caseload Management

With 60,000 active probation cases to manage, technology is a key force multiplier. In February 2005, a project management team was constituted to research, draft and oversee a Request for Proposal for a web-based case

management system. As December closed out, the RFP was released and vendor demonstrations were scheduled

for January 2005. The project remains on time and on budget due to the outstanding work of the team.

Miscellaneous

Gun Court

At the direction of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and the Administrative Governing Board, a first-of-its-kind Gun Court was convened in the District. The court hears felony cases where the most serious charge is a violation of the Uniform Firearms Act. If a defendant is convicted and receives a sentence of probation or parole, a specialized unit of the Adult Probation Department will supervise the defendant with emphasis in increased contacts, reduced caseloads, and offender education. Gun Court has received national attention.

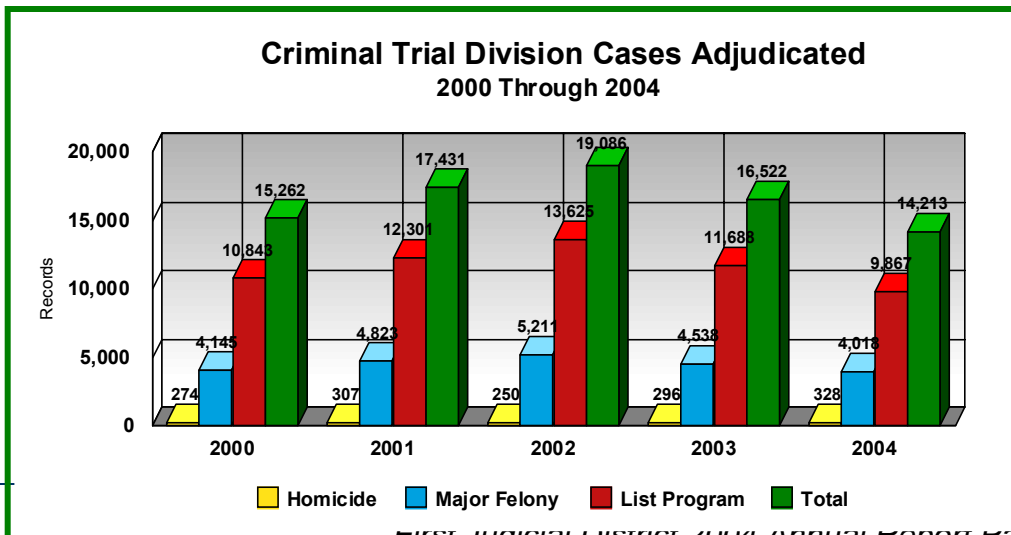
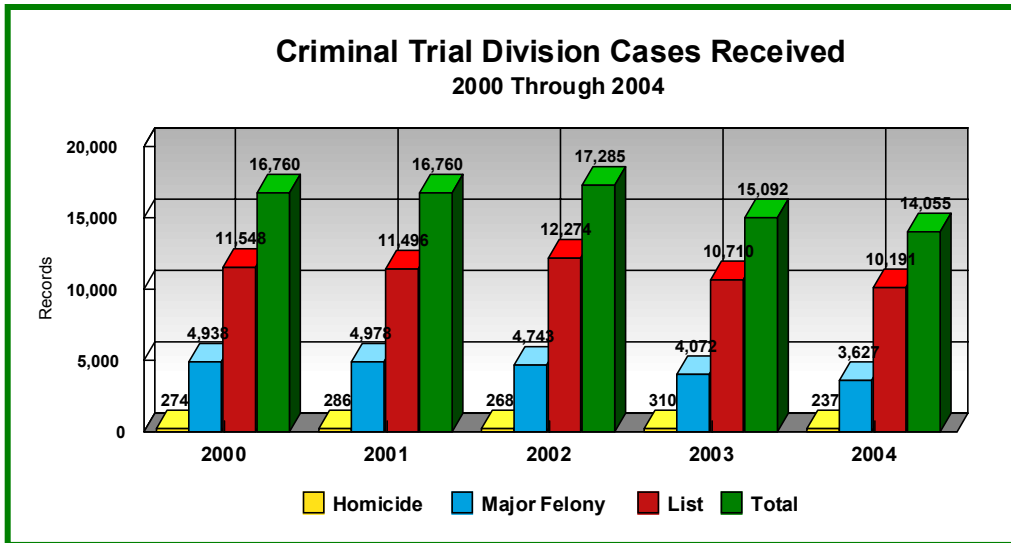
The following are additional Trial Division Criminal Section accomplishments.

- Reduced bench warrant inventory
- Reduced "wanted card" inventory
- Developed on-demand bench warrants and subpoenas in conjunction with real-time data entry and paperwork reduction goals
- Reduced past due Senior Judge opinions
- Reduced Probation Officer caseloads
- Negotiated with State Board for tuition reimbursement for master's degree courses for probation staff
- Implemented an assessment distribution schedule to conform to new Common Pleas Case Management System protocol
- Assisted with implementation of digital recording for post-trial matters
- Created database with List Room and Homicide Room statistics for easy retrieval and distribution
- Staggered court start times to help alleviate congestion in the CJC lobby and elevators
- Implemented judgment satisfaction protocol to increase collections of bail judgments
- Added all fugitives to the Pennsylvania Justice Network (JNET) notification system
- Held training sessions for judicial law clerks for the SGS web application (online sentencing guideline forms)
- Developed and distributed management quality control application for real-time data entry using MS Access
- Achieved FY04 budget savings
- On track for FY05 budget savings
- Participated in joint committee for police overtime
- Organized employee benefit committee for holiday events for employees
- Instituted coin operated copy machines to capture and return revenue to the City
- Monitored attorney appointment process to ensure that attorney inventories were in compliance with Local Rule 430 (Relating to limits on attorney caseloads)
- Implemented policy that expanded the judicial appointment process for counsel in homicide preliminary hearing cases

- Developed police liaison to work with anti-violence caseloads
- Reduced sick time usage
- Reduced overtime costs
- Initiated judicial review schedule of "aged" bench warrant cases for possible non-trial disposition

New Goals for 2005

- Right-sizing
- Reduce trial backlog (change emphasis from raw inventory to backlog)
- Improve quality control of data entry
- Increase miscellaneous revenue
- Eliminate errors from disposition uploads to State Police Central Repository
- Assume field services for Traffic Court bench warrants
- Increase probation supervision fee collections
- Reduce recidivism rate
- Reduce probation officer caseloads



Trial Division Civil Section

2004 Year in Review

During calendar year 2004, the Trial Division-Civil continued its quest to assure the administration of justice in Philadelphia in an efficient and economical manner by providing the highest standard of equality, fairness and integrity to the public. Some 2004 accomplishments and highlights are summarized below.

Study by the National Center for State Courts

To achieve the most effective and efficient civil court operation, improve the administration of justice, and better serve the public who use the civil courts, in January 2004, Administrative Judge James J. Fitzgerald, III and Supervising Judge William J. Manfredi engaged the National Center for State Courts - the leading authority in court management and administration from Williamsburg, Virginia – to conduct an evaluation of the Civil Section of the Court.

The Final Report issued by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) in September 2004, recognized the Trial Division – Civil as “arguably the best-managed large urban civil trial court operation in the nation.” The NCSC found that the Court “clearly has powerful reasons to be proud of how it has been able to reduce its civil backlog and has managed to stay current with its inventory of pending cases.” It also recognized that the Trial Division – Civil has all the elements of what is necessary for ongoing success in caseflow management – including strong and responsible leadership over time, time standards and other relevant goals, use of information for regular measurement of actual performance against those standards and goals, and a strong commitment of judges and court staff to continuing effectiveness in caseflow management. The NCSC also concluded that the Trial Division – Civil performance with civil jury cases is now better than that of any large urban trial court in the United States.

Access to Justice

The dedication of Trial Division-Civil judges, managers, and staff to providing access to justice is evidenced in the implementation of innovative and progressive caseflow management systems. They commonly feature continuous education for support staff, the creation of appropriate pre-trial forums, and the necessary advances in technology.

Case Management Programs

The key to the success of all civil programs is the intense management of the cases. Trial Division-Civil cases are categorized and placed into case management programs specifically tailored for effective handling and prompt and precise disposition. These include the Complex Litigation Center, Day Forward Major Jury Programs, the Commerce Case Management Program, Motions Program, Class Actions Program and the Arbitration Program (compulsory for cases where the amount in controversy is \$50,000 or less).

Including arbitration matters, the Trial Division – Civil received a total of 43,178 new filings during calendar year 2004. This represents a 22% increase in filings when compared with the 35,442 new filings received during calendar year 2003. There were a total of 36,576 dispositions for 2004.

During calendar year 2003, the court disposed of 18,441 civil cases, excluding

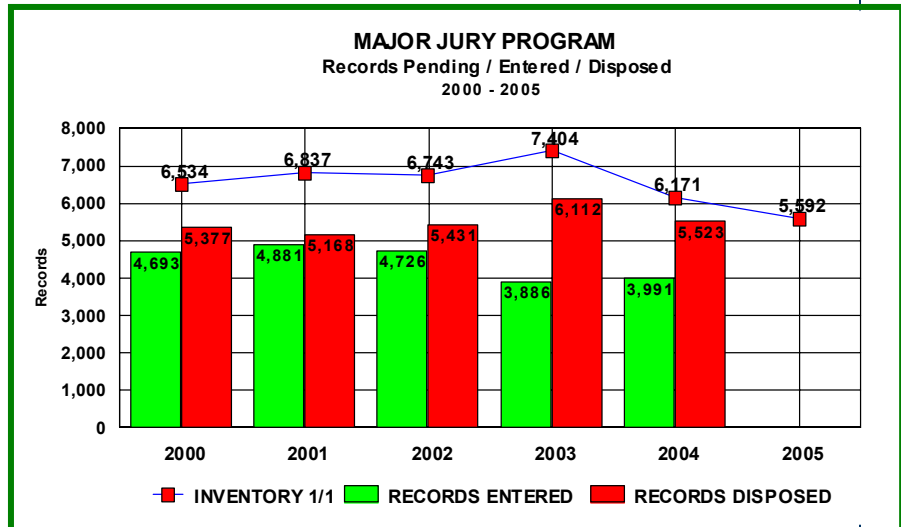
arbitration matters. During calendar year 2004, that figure was 19,521 cases, representing a 5.9% increase of nearly 1,100 dispositions.

The 35 judges (29 commissioned judges and 6 part-time senior judges) assigned to Trial Division – Civil courts during calendar year 2004 disposed of an average of 48 non-arbitration cases per month. These statistics are attributable to strong judicial leadership, a high level of judicial productivity, and the commitment of the judges to the goals of the various case management programs.

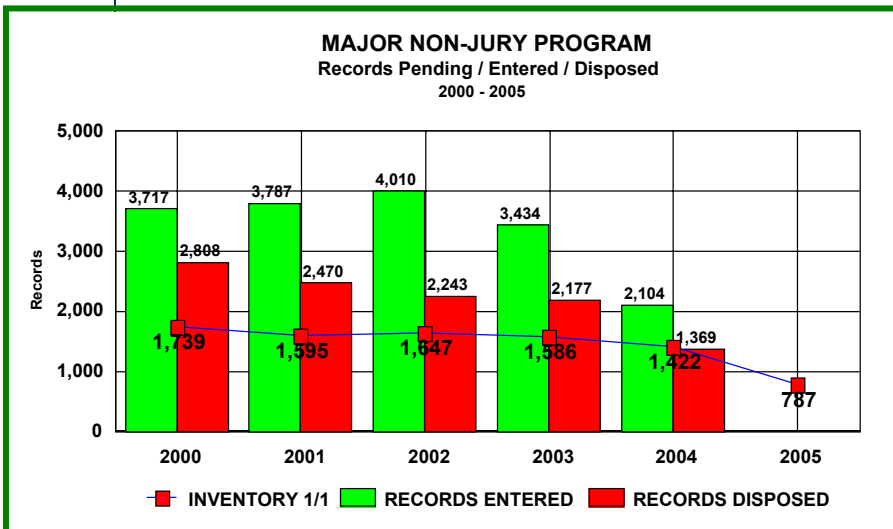
Day Forward Major Jury Program

The nationally-recognized Day Forward Major Jury Program encompasses all major civil jury cases with the exception of Commerce and Mass Tort cases.

Day Forward Case Management is a system that has been created to coordinate and schedule major jury cases for trial. It provides for early intervention and continuous control of major jury cases throughout the process.



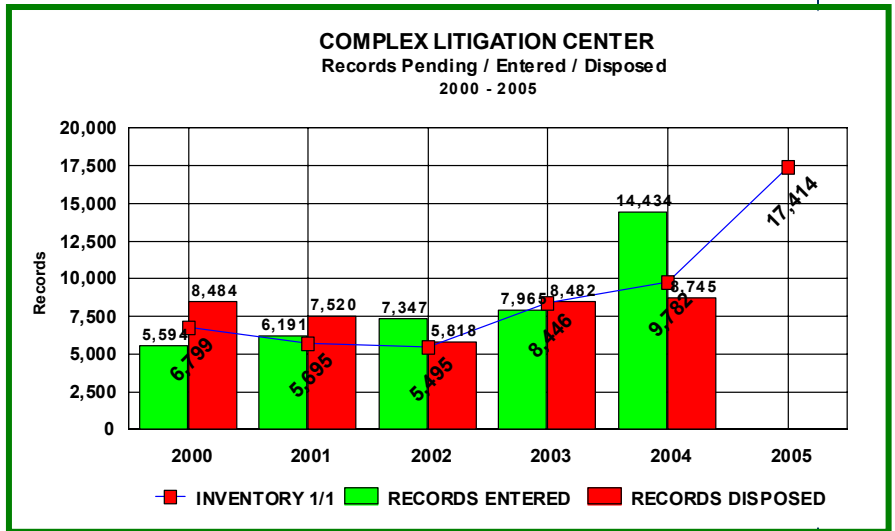
To manage these cases more effectively, judges assigned to this program are divided into teams. To maintain consistent oversight of each case, each team is led by a Judicial Team Leader. The Judicial Team Leader along with the assigned team of judges rule upon all motions (including discovery motions), conduct status conferences, settlement conferences, pretrial conferences and trials.



For effective case management, every case in the Day Forward Program is scheduled for a case management conference before a Civil Case Manager approximately 90 days after initial filing. The main objective of the Case Management Conference is to obtain early disclosure of basic information about each case so that it can be managed more effectively. Based on this information, the

Civil Case Manager prepares a Case Management Order that establishes the schedule for each case. The Case Management Order sets deadlines for discovery, the exchange of expert reports, and the filing of motions. Also, a presumptive month is set for a settlement conference, pretrial conference, and trial.

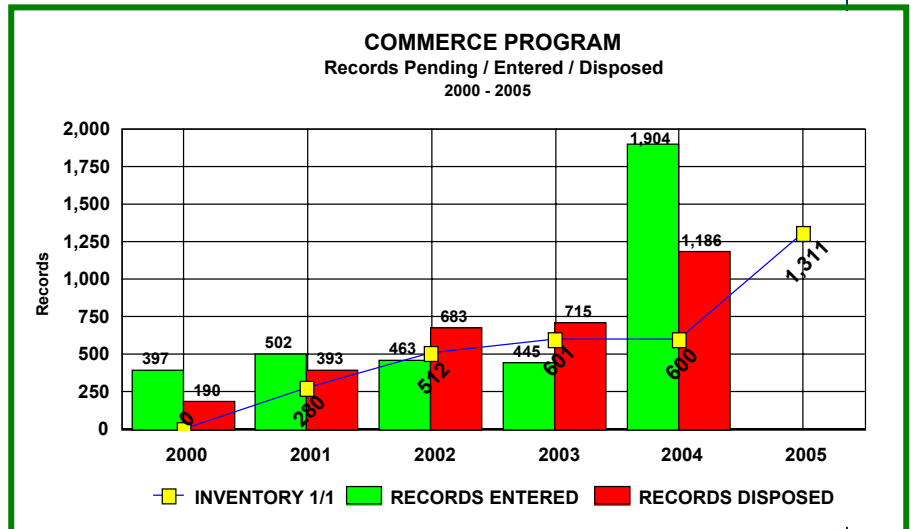
Another important task at the Case Management Conference is the assignment of all cases to an appropriate "track." At the Case Management Conference all cases are classified into one of three case management tracks: 1) expedited; 2) standard; and 3) complex. Expedited track cases are tried within 13 months of filing; standard track cases are tried within 19 months; and complex track cases are tried within 25 months.



During calendar year 2004, the court received 3,991 new cases in the Day Forward Major Jury Program and disposed of 5,523 cases.

Commerce Case Management Program

With the support of the Administrative Governing Board and the Philadelphia Bar Association's leadership, the Commerce Case Management Program was launched on January 1, 2000. The Commerce Program is an extension of the Day Forward Major Jury Program, adopting additional features and alternative dispute resolution provisions proven helpful in managing commercial litigation in other jurisdictions.



The Commerce Case Management Program has been extremely successful and well received by the Bar and litigants. This success can be attributed in part to early intervention, mediation measures, and the close monitoring of the cases by both volunteer Judges Pro Tempore and Commerce Program Judges.

During calendar year 2003, the court disposed of 715 Commerce cases. During calendar year 2004, the court disposed of 1,186 Commerce cases, which represent a 66% increase in dispositions.

Complex Litigation Center

The Mass Tort, Asbestos, Major Non-Jury, Class Action and Arbitration Appeals Programs are managed within the Complex Litigation Center.

As noted by the National Center for State Courts, “the creation and operation of the Complex Litigation Center is clearly one of the Court’s major achievements and a substantial service to the citizens of Philadelphia, the Bar, and the nation, given the scope of mass tort litigation and class actions.”



Judge Norman Ackerman (2nd from right) with Complex Litigation Center employees

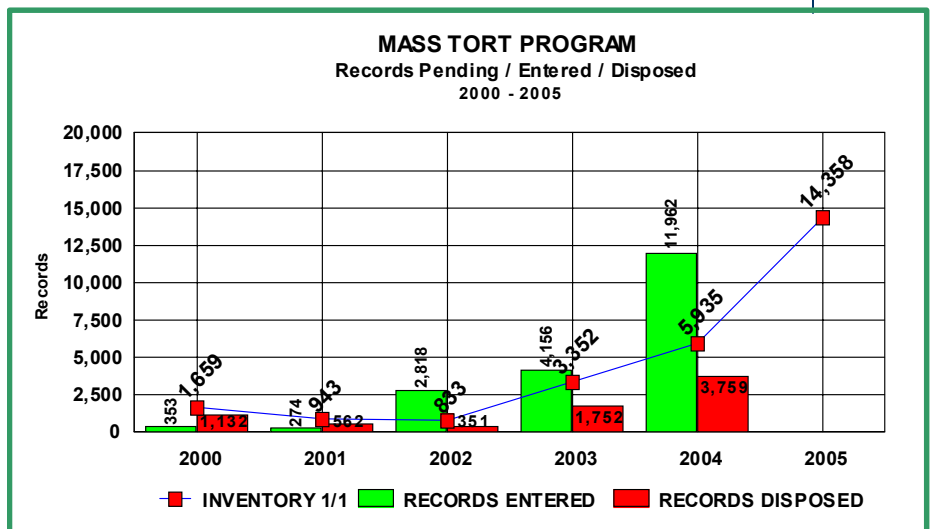
Complex Litigation Center Filings and Dispositions

During calendar year 2004, the Complex Litigation Center received a total of 14,434 new filings. This represented an 81% increase in filings when compared with the 7,965 new filings received during calendar year 2003. The fact that these inventories remained at manageable levels is confirmation of the success of the case management programs and the hard work and dedication of the judges and staff assigned to this department.

During calendar year 2003, the judges and staff assigned to the Complex Litigation Center disposed of 8,482 cases. During calendar year 2004, they disposed of 8,745 cases, which represent a 3% increase in dispositions.

Mass Tort Litigation

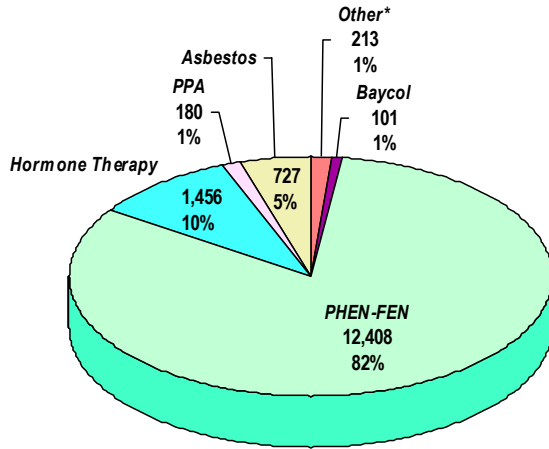
As reported last year, the Mass Tort section of the Complex Litigation Center has become the focal point of major drug company litigation. The National Center for State Courts noted that, “The attention given to these cases and the process that has been developed for considering them – providing both certainty and firm trial dates – are major reasons why Philadelphia has become a center for mass tort filings from all over the country.” The report recognized that the Trial Division – Civil “was able to dispose of mass tort cases far more expeditiously than the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania or any federal Multi-district Litigation (MDL) court.”



Phen – Fen Program

This year, the Trial Division – Civil experienced a major increase in filings in the Phen-Fen Mass Tort Program. During calendar year 2004, the court received 10,383 additional Phen-Fen filings, thereby increasing the total number of pending Phen-Fen cases to 12,408.

MASS TORT PROGRAM



Inventory Remaining 15,085 as of 1/03/05

Baycol Program

The court successfully disposed of 2,629 Baycol cases during calendar year 2004. The 101 cases remaining in the inventory are on track for disposition during calendar year 2005.

Breast Implant Program

The Breast Implant Program had been stayed in the jurisdiction for many years. The stay was lifted in September, 2003. During calendar year 2004, the court disposed of 316 Breast Implant cases, leaving only 6 cases in the inventory which are on track for disposition during calendar year 2005.

Completed Mass Tort Programs

Trial Division-Civil judges, leaders, and staff are proud to report that 19 Mass Tort Programs have been successfully completed since the date of the program's inception. During calendar year 2004, the following programs were completed within American Bar Association standards: Lead Paint, Rezulin, Propulcid and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

Compulsory Arbitration Program

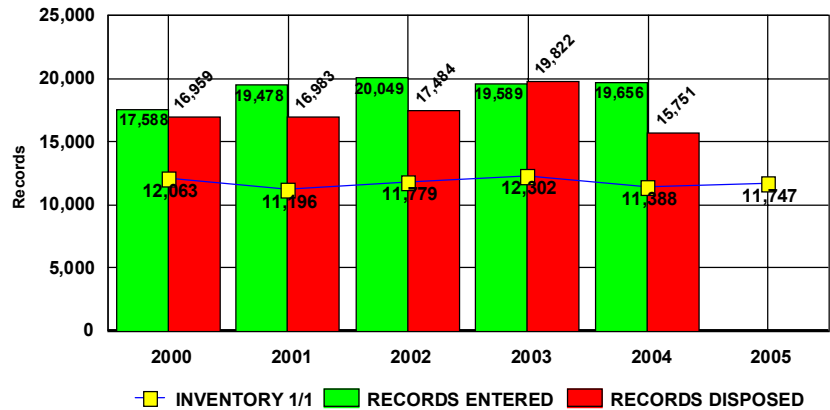
The Compulsory Arbitration Program in Philadelphia County is one of the most successful programs of its kind in the nation. All civil actions filed in the Court of Common Pleas with an amount in controversy of \$50,000 or less, excluding equitable actions and claims to real estate, must first proceed to a compulsory arbitration hearing before a panel of three attorneys who have been certified by the Court to serve as arbitrators. Arbitration cases are scheduled for hearings eight months from the date of commencement.

New Compulsory Arbitration Center: On May 2, 2004, the Compulsory Arbitration Center relocated

to a new facility at 1880 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, Philadelphia, PA. Savings have been realized through related reductions in leasing costs. The new facility is eleven percent larger than the previous location and will result in a net savings to the First Judicial District of approximately \$140,000 over ten years. Set forth below is a list of improved features that can be found at the new facility:

ARBITRATION INVENTORY

2000 - 2005



- Two additional attorney/client conference rooms;
- Larger hearing rooms;
- Larger and more efficient layout of the administrative work area;
- Wireless Internet access for the public;
- Computer work area for Arbitrators to undertake legal research using Lexis-Nexis.

The new facility has been well received by the Bar and public and will promote the effective administration of justice well into the future.

Ten to thirteen panels of Arbitrators hear approximately 30 cases per day at a cost of \$600 per panel. The compensation paid to Arbitrators for fiscal year 2004 was \$1,477,750 – a reduction of \$129,900 (8.2%) from the previous fiscal year (\$1,577,650). Savings can be attributed to more effective and cost efficient arbitrator scheduling.

During calendar year 2004, 19,656 cases were commenced at the Arbitration level and 17,055 were disposed.

Civil Motions Program/Office of Civil Administration

Over the past several years, the Civil Motions Program/Office of Civil Administration Program has, in essence, evolved into the hub of the FJD Common Pleas Civil Court. In addition to processing more than 50,000 motions and petitions on a yearly basis, the Office of Civil Administration manages several other Trial Division operations. Other programs administered by this department include the Motion Court Argument List, Lead Court Program, Code Enforcement Injunctions, Municipal Court Appeals, the Statutory Appeals Program, Civil Tax Petitions, Tax Court Trials, Name Change Petitions, and Preliminary Injunctions.



Motions Court Personnel

The assignment of motions and petitions is governed by a Civil Motion Assignment Matrix. The Motion Assignment Matrix provides for the assignment of motions and petitions to Team Leaders and Coordinating Judges of the respective programs. Motions and petitions filed in the Compulsory Arbitration, Arbitration Appeal, and the Non-Jury Programs are assigned to the two presiding Motions Judges. The Motions Judges also review and dispose of motions and petitions filed in a variety of other miscellaneous actions.

The filing and processing of Mass Tort Motions is a recent addition to the responsibilities of the Office of Civil Administration. With an ever-increasing influx of Mass Tort cases filed in 2004, the inventory of motion filings is expected to increase substantially. In an effort to efficiently manage the flow of Mass Tort motions, the Mass Tort Motion Practice was recently revamped to include the assignment of control

numbers to all Mass Tort motions. To facilitate this process, the Office of Civil Administration, in cooperation with the Complex Litigation Center, recently undertook the monumental task of accepting all Mass Tort motions for filing consistent with Civil Motion Practice and Mass Tort Motion Procedures.

A process known internally as “Letter Generation” is the method by which notices to appear for specific court events are generated. All parties are notified to appear for specific events in every program of the Trial Division—Civil. The Office of Civil Administration is responsible for the distribution of these notices. On average, over 100,000 notices are generated and distributed by this department each year.

Civil Administration underwent three major changes over the past year. These changes include the amendment of the local rules of civil procedure governing petitions and motions practice. The amendments were adopted by the Board of Judges on May 20, 2004, and went into effect on July 26, 2004. The second major change was the addition of the process for accepting and processing Mass Tort motions.

Finally, one more important change in 2004 was the relocation of the motion filing counter from the administrative offices of the Civil Motions Program to room 296 City Hall. Relocation of the motion filing counter resulted in more efficient management of the burgeoning number of motions at the “front end” of the disposition process. Over the course of the last year, more effective practices and protocols were implemented with the staff of the respective Motions Program judges and members of Civil Administration staff to increase the rate of disposition for outstanding motions. Tighter controls were put in place to better manage the work flow of the Motions Court clerk. These were augmented by quality assurance practices to promote consistency in motion handling. The combination enhanced the Motions Program work product and reputation.

Dispute Resolution Center

Located in room 691 City Hall, the Dispute Resolution Center provides a centralized location for mandatory settlement conferences. Centralization promotes uniform procedures for these conferences while offering litigants comfortable modernized surroundings for the disposition of civil cases in historic City Hall.

Mandatory settlement conferences are conducted in every major jury case after the close of discovery. The settlement conferences are scheduled in accordance with case management orders issued in all major jury cases approximately 90 days after commencement of the action. All counsel and *pro-se* parties are directed to file settlement memoranda at least ten days before mandatory settlement conferences and they must appear with full settlement authority.

Judges *Pro Tempore* (JPTs) are recruited to preside over mandatory conferences in the Trial Division – Civil Dispute Resolution Center. The JPTs are experienced representatives of the major jury Bar. In preparation for the conferences,



Frank Checkovage and Debbie Capuano organizing their day's work in the Dispute Resolution Center, City Hall

JPTs review case files to be able to more effectively discuss all issues with the parties. In the event a case does not settle at the conference, the JPT is available by telephone or for follow-up conferences. However, follow-up conferences and calls do not delay the court's schedule for the cases. At the conclusion of each settlement conference, the JPT must complete a settlement conference report. The reports are provided to the trial judges along with the case files in preparation for the next scheduled event – the final pretrial conference.

The First Judicial District has made a substantial investment of funds, physical space and personnel to establish the Dispute Resolution Center in order to complement this process.

High Technology Courtroom

Equipped with 21st century evidence presentation devices, High Technology Courtroom 625 is the flagship courtroom of “one of the finest and most successful urban trial courts in the country.” The close of its first full calendar year of operation provides an opportunity to gauge the effects of the Courtroom 625 Renovation Project.

It is interesting to examine the various cases tried in Courtroom 625 by type and program, as well as the results they have yielded. The largest portion of trials conducted in the high-tech courtroom was from the Day Forward 2001 program. In 2005, cases remaining in the Day Forward 2001 program are either the most extremely complex of cases or newly re-activated cases (e.g., cases recently removed from deferred status, remands from appeal, new trials, etc.). Therefore, Courtroom 625 features are being utilized to improve our ability to handle exceptionally complex matters where evidence may be difficult to obtain or present at trial. This suggests that the venue also provides an arena where just decisions on especially complex legal issues can be more readily reached. To further confirm this line of reasoning, Medical Malpractice suits make up the preponderance of cases listed in Courtroom 625, and these cases are often marked by voluminous quantities of very complex evidence.



High-Tech Courtroom 625

Despite having been reserved for 140% of 248 potential trial days, Courtroom 625 also served as the location of choice for a multitude of non-trial events. In addition to the Temple University and Villanova University Inns of Court, the room has served as the site for important meetings with several delegations of attorneys and judges from our sister city, Tianjin, China, in an effort to help re-structure their justice system. Courtroom 625 was also used as a laboratory for the ALA Technology Forum and Lexis-Nexis training for employees. The team responsible for developing the Orphans’ Court Electronic Filing system, utilized Courtroom 625 to present, test, and refine their software. Courtroom 625 is also being utilized for Trial Division – Civil employee education, training, and development.

To date, 29 Common Pleas judges have used Courtroom 625, including 13 that had not used the room prior to 2004. Eighty-five percent of the Trial Division—Civil judges are now at least somewhat familiar with the equipment in Courtroom 625.

Wireless Internet Access

The major technological advancement in the Trial Division – Civil of 2004 was the advent of wireless internet access throughout City Hall (note that this system was installed in City Hall at no cost to the Court). We have taken great strides in the past year and, with the ongoing support and commitment from the Bar, the Judiciary, and the Administration, will no doubt continue this trend in the coming year.

Drexel University Medical Malpractice Mediation Program

The Trial Division - Civil cooperates with the Mediation Program designed by Drexel University College of Medicine that was developed in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Medical Malpractice Mediation Task Force. In cases where the Court is advised that parties have agreed to participate, Case Management Orders are amended to delete mandatory conferences in favor of scheduled mediation. Like the mandatory conferences, the Drexel Mediation Program cannot be used as a device to alter or delay Case Management events. Their certainty is essential to successful program functionality. However, the court has established an excellent relationship with Drexel's Mediation Program to ensure that reasonable flexibility is built in to enable the Program to work effectively.

Goals and Challenges for 2005

- Complete workload, performance and statistical studies to ensure that resources and Trial Division - Civil staffing is sufficient to meet growing demand for the court's services
- Adopt Standard Interrogatories and Requests for Production of Documents in connection with Motor Vehicle and Premises Liability cases which fall within the jurisdiction of the Compulsory Arbitration Program
- Revisit and secure needed funding to create a safe and comfortable Civil Jury Assembly Room in City Hall
- Revisit Trial – Division Civil Electronic Filing possibilities
- Produce Information Packages, with required forms and written instructions for completing them, for self-represented litigants regarding the procedures used by the Arbitration, Motions and Statutory Appeals Programs
- Explore the possibility of E-mailing Trial Division – Civil court notices and letters to counsel of record
- Automate the Motion Program Cover Sheet
- Produce 2005 Edition of Civil Administration at a Glance
- Continue employee education, training and development programs

Family Division

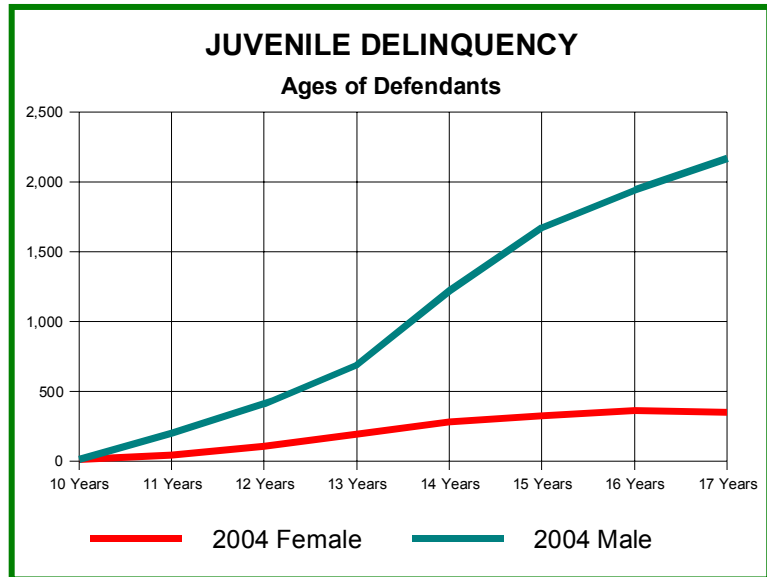
The Family Division, sometimes referred to as Family Court, is one of the three major divisions of the Court of Common Pleas. The Family Division is composed of two major divisions or branches: the Juvenile Division and the Domestic Relations Division. The Administrative Judge of the Family Division is the Honorable Myrna Field, (215) 683-7970, Fax (215) 683-7971.

Juvenile Branch

Juvenile Branch programs include Juvenile Court Operations, Juvenile Probation, and Children and Youth Services (Adoptions).

Mario D'Adamo, Esquire, and Glenn S. Bozzacco, Esquire are the Deputy Court Administrators for the Juvenile Branch. Their offices are located on the 3rd floor of 1801 Vine Street and the phone number is (215) 686-4100.

James Sharp, Room 214, 1801 Vine Street, (215) 686-4103, is the Chief of Juvenile Probation. The Juvenile Division deals with juvenile delinquency cases, juvenile dependency cases, and adoptions. Juvenile courtrooms, juvenile probation, and other juvenile court services are located at 1801 Vine Street. The general information telephone number is (215) 686-4000. Twelve of the 25 judges assigned to the Family Division serve in Juvenile Court, and most have chambers in the Juvenile Court Building at 1801 Vine Street.



2004 Juvenile Branch Accomplishments

BARJ - Balanced and Restorative Justice at Work

The probationers in Philadelphia completed over 72,000 hours of community service to the City of Philadelphia. At minimum wage scales, this correlates to over \$350,000 in services to Philadelphia neighborhoods and communities.

In 2004, the Juvenile Probation department collected \$277,517 in restitution.

Girls Intensive Supervision Unit

The Girls' Intensive Supervision Unit celebrated its first anniversary with very impressive results. Unit employees worked with over 120 young women this past year with a 95% success rate. They have instituted cutting edge programming that utilizes specific female treatment domains based on best practice research. It is a model program under the direction of Deputy Chief Denise Ray and Supervisor Christine Gibson.

Police Probation Partnership

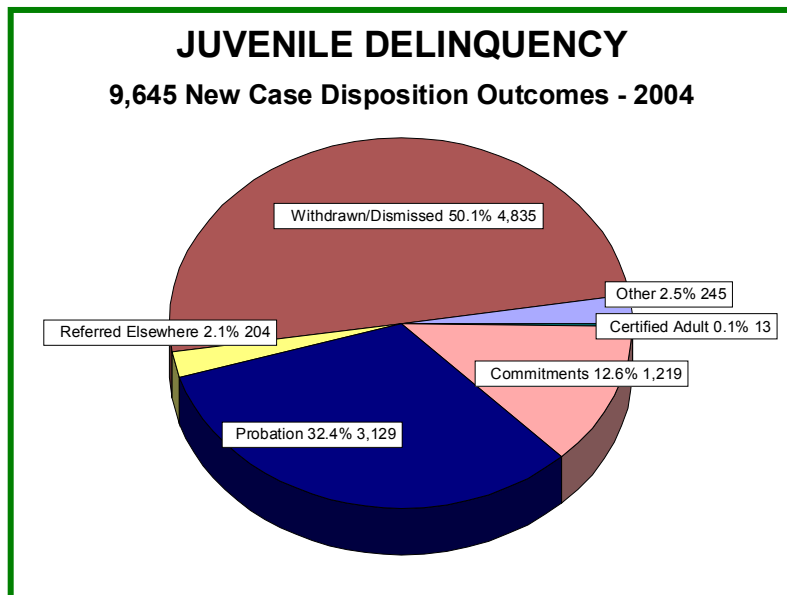
This unit has been revamped to improve collaboration with the Police Department in addressing juvenile crime. The Probation Department partnered with the Philadelphia Police Department on the "Safe Schools Initiative," "Youth Violence Reduction Partnership," Bench Warrant Protocol, "Priority Corner" enforcement effort, and the COMPSTAT forum to better serve our clients and focus on community safety issues.

Youth Violence Reduction Partnership (YVRP)

The Youth Violence Reduction Partnership continues to be one most progressive and successful collaborations in Philadelphia's effort to address the most violent Juvenile and Adult offenders. The partnership operates in the 12th, 24th and 25th Police Districts in the City, and the programs works with identified offenders between the ages of 14 and 24 years of age who are most likely to kill or be killed. The recent study titled "Alive at 25", as published by Public/Private Ventures, reports decreases in the homicide rates for and by these offenders in what are considered the most violent area's of the City.

Aftercare Initiative

In an unprecedented two-way effort between Juvenile Probation and the Department of Human Services (DHS), the new Aftercare Reintegration Program will begin on February 1, 2005. This venture is the result of a two year development project that will provide intensive aftercare services from the time youths are committed, up to their eventual discharge. The program will be initially piloted with the six largest residential providers. It will be a united effort to work with family and youth while they are in placement and to provide a wide range of vocational, educational, therapeutic, and community based services to juveniles after their discharge from placement facilities.



Macarthur Grant Award

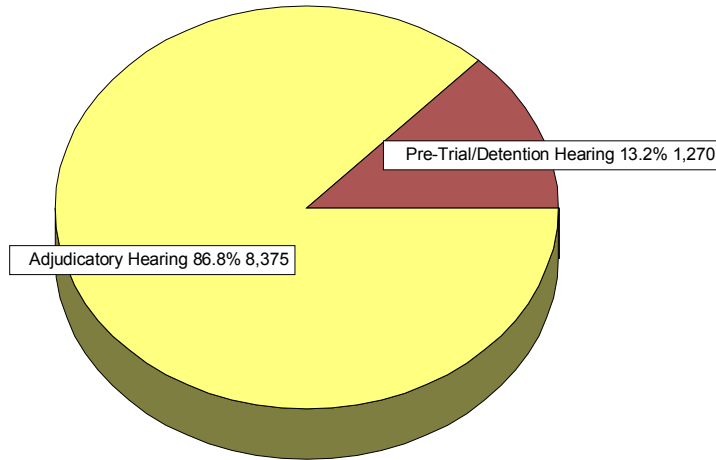
The Philadelphia Juvenile Probation Department has been awarded a prestigious Mac Arthur Grant for its proposed work in the new Aftercare Reintegration Initiative and Graduated Sanctions program. This three year grant will allow for concentrated efforts focused on the graduated sanctions protocol for youth in the aftercare program of Juvenile Probation. Philadelphia Family Court was awarded the grant beginning in 2005, through a very competitive selection process and will run through 2007.

Parent Project

Juvenile Probation has developed and adopted the Parent Project model for assisting parents and families in providing support and strategies for parents working with difficult youth. This program, which has been recognized nationwide, is under the direction of

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Dispositions by Proceeding Type - 2004



Deputy Director Lynn Roman and has served nearly 200 parents this year. The facilitators of the program include trained Probation Officers and it is offered at various sites across the City.

Parent Orientation to Probation Program

This program serves as an orientation to all parents whose children have been adjudicated

delinquent in the Family Court. The program provides protocol, standards and expectations of the youth and parent as it relates to probation, while strengthening the collaboration between our department and the family to accomplish successful probationary periods for their children.

Juvenile Drug Treatment Court

In September of 2004, the court started a drug treatment court for juveniles. There are approximately 20 participants in the program which is an alternative to detention. There is a treatment component organized by the West Philadelphia Mental Health Consortium which takes approximately nine months to complete. Thereafter, if juveniles remain drug free for one year, their delinquency records will be expunged.

Probation Organizational Restructuring

The year 2004 provided the opportunity for the Probation Department to look at organizational, operational, and programming aspects of providing quality supervision to the youth under our care. The result has been the ongoing development of a department and court that are progressive and responsive to the juvenile justice community through collaborative efforts with our partners, and a probation department with a renewed sense of commitment to the mission of helping youth.

In accordance with the direction of Administrative Judge Myrna Field and Deputy Court Administrator Glenn Bozzacco Esq., the Juvenile Probation Department created a restructured managerial scheme with the addition



Northeast Juvenile Probation District

of Deputy Directors. They provide detailed oversight to small Unit clusters. This process enabled the organization to provide a greater level of accountability for the provision of services to youth under our care and a higher level of responsiveness to day-to-day operations. In addition, this formed a core managerial group to assist the Chief in developing policy, protocol, and programming for probation.

Probation Department Strategic Planning

The Juvenile Probation department developed and implemented a Strategic Plan to address certain areas in order to provide a comprehensive roadmap for organizational matters. The strategic vision for year one includes initiatives in:

- Case Management
- Training
- Employee wellness
- Fair and Impartial personnel procedures
- Updated Policy and Procedures Manual

The strategy group's members include probation officers and supervisory staff. The Administrative Oversight Committee provides leadership and guidance.

Random Moment in Time Study

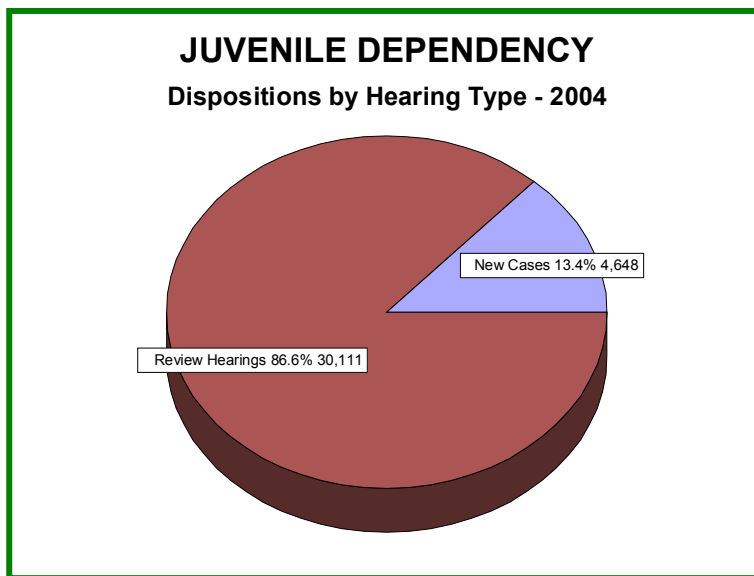
Since October 2003, the probation department has been involved in a state/federal program to research the operational functioning of probation departments across the country. Participation in this program yields entitlement to funds for services provided by the probation department. Income generated through participation will go to probation for program and departmental needs.

Juvenile Dependency Operations

Time Certain / Block Scheduling

Dependency Court has initiated Time Certain / Block Scheduling to promote more efficient operations. Dependent cases are divided among four time blocks, staggered throughout the day. Attorneys and social workers are expected to commit to only one courtroom during each time block, to assure their availability and reduce the number of continuances due to failure to appear.

The Court Listings Unit monitors individual judicial caseloads and caseflow. The assessment and oversight this provides allows for a distribution of cases in the dependency courtrooms which has significantly reduced judicial caseloads. It allows for judges to dedicate quality time on the specific issues of



each case in the adjudicatory, reunification, permanency, and termination of parental rights stages of dependency proceedings.

Pre-Hearing Conferences

To better serve all of the dependency courtrooms, Family Court utilizes two full-time Pre-Hearing Conference Rooms. In the Philadelphia Frontloaded Dependency Court Model, every court case begins with a Pre-Hearing Conference that involves all parties and is moderated by a facilitator. Problems leading to abuse or neglect are identified. Expectations of the court are explained and responsibilities delineated. A representative from Behavioral Health is present to assess MH/DA needs. In many cases, agreements are reached and facilitators submit recommendations to the court on placements, visitation, behavioral health evaluations, and services. Addressing these problems at the outset fosters family preservation or reunification.

The Pre-Hearing Conference Coordinator ensures that conferences are timely scheduled, that counsel is appointed for all relevant parties, and that conference cases are distributed evenly to the courtrooms. The Coordinator also notifies Behavioral Health of upcoming listings so that they are able to prepare for each case. Besides the parents, legal guardians and witnesses, conference participants include Department of Human Services representatives, the Office of the City Solicitor, the Defender Association Child Advocate Unit, (or Court Appointed Private Counsel for Child(ren), Private or Court Appointed Counsel for parents, legal guardians, Behavioral Health Professionals, and Good Shepherd Mediation Facilitators.

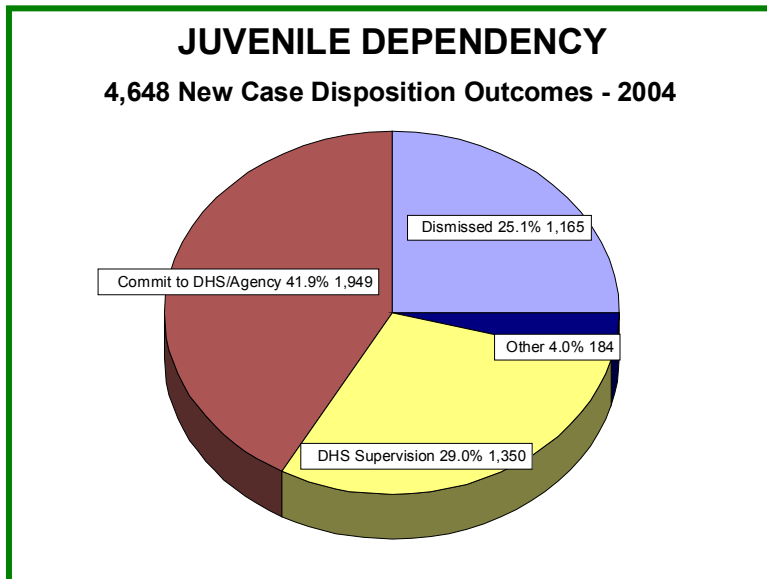
Frontloaded Dependency Court Process

Philadelphia's Dependency Court has successfully implemented elements of the Frontloaded Model of Case Processing. Prior to the initial hearings, all attorneys are appointed, all parties are provided with copies of petitions through timely notice, and the parents and children are contacted by their counsel. Immediately prior to the initial hearings, Pre-Hearing Conferences are conducted.

As a result, approximately 77% of dependency cases arrive at the first adjudicatory hearing with agreements in hand, cutting down on court time. Additionally, by front-loading services, children proceed towards permanency more quickly.

On-Site Dependency Behavioral Health Services

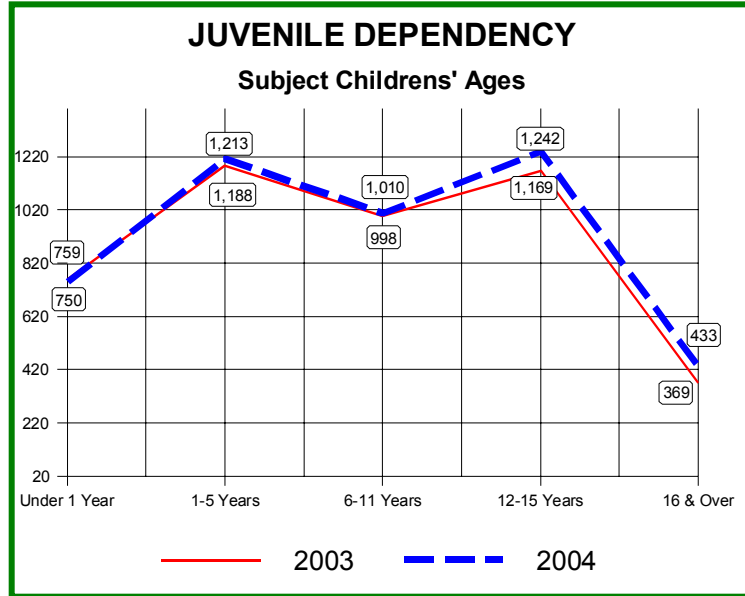
Behavioral Health and Drug and Alcohol services serve all dependency courtrooms. Master's level clinicians, from the Behavioral Health System Family Court Unit, staff Pre-Hearing Conferences. Prior to the conferences, they research the treatment histories of



family members named in dependent petitions. At the Pre-Hearing Conferences, they are then able to identify behavioral health needs, arrange for evaluations and treatment for family members, and make informed recommendations to the Court, avoiding unnecessary duplication of services. From the Pre-Hearing Conferences, clinicians arranged for 103 psychological, psychiatric and family evaluations. An additional 774 evaluations were ordered at court hearings, for a total of 877 for the year.

On-Site Clinical Evaluation Unit

Through the support of Philadelphia Health Management Corporation, Dependency Court has an on-site Clinical Evaluation Unit to assess family members for drug and alcohol problems, refer them to treatment, and provide the court with progress reports for subsequent hearings. In 2004, they conducted 1,020 substance abuse assessments. Currently they are managing the cases of 1,144 people in drug treatment. Although early intervention is preferable, judicial referrals for evaluation and treatment also occur later in the process and the Behavioral Health and Clinical Evaluation units respond accordingly.



The Philadelphia Court Model of providing early access to treatment services has drawn the praise of national child welfare experts as one of the most promising programs in the field.

Dependency Court Special Programs and Projects

The Court works closely with the Department of Human Services in developing programs to respond to identified needs. Through the Court Improvement Project, the Court also invites collaboration from provider social service agencies, legal service agencies and the private court-appointed attorneys in order to raise standards and practices for the representation of children and parents in Dependency Court. Additionally, best practices training is provided to other Dependency Courts in Pennsylvania under the Federal Court Improvement Project.



Juvenile Probation Southwest District

Two specialized review courtrooms are in operation. A judge has been designated to oversee cases in the Kinship/Long Term Care/Aging Out Review Courtroom. A Master in the Accelerated Adoption Review Courtroom works to expedite adoption finalization for children whose parental rights have been terminated. The court is also concentrating efforts to comply with guidelines set forth in the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA).

Juvenile Dependency Case Manager

The ASFA recommends that, for children who have been in placement for at least 15 of 22 months, there is a need to proceed expeditiously with either Termination of Parental Rights or Permanent Legal Custody. As a result of those guidelines, the position of Juvenile Dependency Case Manager was created. Case Managers are attorneys who preside over two different kinds of hearings: 1) Pre-Trial Conferences; and 2) Case Management Conferences.

Pre-Trial Conferences are held approximately 90 days before contested Termination of Parental Rights hearings, to ensure that judicial orders are being followed, that witnesses are prepared, that exhibits are ready, and that the cases are ready to go on.

Case Management Conferences are scheduled for all cases in which children with a goal of reunification have been in placement for 36 months or more. The purpose of the conference is to determine whether reunification is the proper goal, and if not, to change the goal and proceed accordingly.

Filings of Dependency Petitions

For 2004, 4,648 new petitions were filed and 30,111 review hearings took place.

Children and Youth Services

Adoption Branch

Adoption Branch staff are responsible for filing, processing, and listing termination of parental rights and adoption finalization matters. Final Adoption decrees are also issued by the Adoption Branch.

Adoption Branch staff process Registrations of Foreign Birth and Gestational Carrier cases. Searches are conducted for adoptees seeking to locate their biological parents. From January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2004, 581 Petitions for Adoption were granted; 586 children were adopted.

Accelerated Adoption Review Court (AARC)

AARC is a specialized courtroom dedicated to examining cases where parental rights have been terminated, but adoption has not yet been finalized. To further accelerate the adoption process, Adoption Branch personnel use a system of aggressive case management designed to assist in expediting these cases to finalization. By having all involved parties in attendance at the hearings, impediments to adoption finalization are addressed and resolved.

Court Nursery

In April, 2000, new procedures and regulations were implemented to enhance the reporting component of the Supervised Visitation initiative. Each family has a folder with their court-order, sign-in sheet and incident report. The Nursery Request Form was developed to ensure that the presiding judges receive nursery reports prior to the next scheduled court date. Feedback from those involved with the program indicates that they are pleased with this reporting mechanism.

An innovative component of Sunday visitation is the collaboration between Creative Arts Therapists, The Please Touch Museum, The Department of Human Services, and Family Court to provide art, music, and dance movement therapy to families involved in supervised visitation.

REAAP Unit (Reasonable Efforts in Assessment, Access and Prevention)

The Reasonable Efforts in Assessment, Access and Prevention Unit (REAAP) is a component of the Children and Youth Division of Family Court and serves as a prevention program which services families and children who voluntarily approach the court for assistance. Involvement in REAAP is initiated by contact from a parent or guardian requesting assistance for a child they are rearing.

Assessments of the causes for problematic behavior (i.e., truancy, incorrigibility) are conducted by REAAP Social Workers. Appropriate services are provided by programs funded by the Department of Human Services and are linked to the family and child. The agencies that provide services are: Big Sisters, CAACY, Crime Prevention Association, Congresso de Latino Unidos, Inc., CORA, and George Junior Republic.

Functional Family Therapy

In April, 2001, a dynamic new component was added to REAAP Unit intervention. Pursuant to the award of a Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) grant, the Blueprint for Violence Prevention program was implemented to augment REAAP intervention. Family Court collaborated with the Temple University School of Psychiatry to ensure the delivery of specific therapeutic intervention in the homes of REAAP clients.

Parent Project®

The court, in conjunction with the Department of Human Services, has initiated a 10 to 16-week parent training program designed specifically for parents of strong-willed or out-of-control adolescent children. The curriculum teaches concrete identification, prevention, and intervention strategies for the most destructive of adolescent behaviors (poor school attendance and performance, alcohol and other drug use, gangs, runaways, and violent teens). In a classroom setting, parents learn to manage teen behavior problems at home. An activity-based 180-page workbook, "A Parent's Guide to Destructive Adolescent Behavior," is available only to program participants. Parents meet once a week, two to three hours per session, for between 10 to 16 weeks. Parent support groups are formed using the UCLA self-help support group model. The program is oriented toward behavior modification.

This year, a new parent education initiative was effectuated. "Loving Solutions" is a parent education program also developed by Parent Project® that is geared specifically for those parents of children who are 5 to 10 years old.

Project START (Stop Truancy and Recommend Treatment) – Project START is a collaborative project delivered by the Family Court, the School District of Philadelphia, and the Department of Human Services. Truancy is a precursor of delinquency and it is imperative that its causes are identified early and addressed appropriately. Accordingly, Truancy Court is conducted in schools throughout the City presided over by Masters. Contracted representatives of the Department of Human Services make home visits and conduct assessments prior to hearings to assess the cause of truancy in each case. Interventions are recommended to combat juveniles’ truant behavior. Masters then order the commencement of the appropriate services.

Juvenile Automated Computer System

On November 3, 2002, the Philadelphia Family Court Division Juvenile Branch “went live” with a computerized record and case management system, known as the Juvenile Automated Computer System (JACS). JACS is a mainframe program with a Graphic User Interface (G.U.I. pronounced “Gooy”) overlay that gives JACS screens a clean, easy-to-understand appeal with user-friendly features: dropdown boxes, radio buttons, and tab key navigation capabilities. The system was created in-house by court programmers and is based on a system utilized in the Domestic Relations Branch (DR). JACS has, and continues to evolve from the DR system with many additions and improvements designed to meet the needs of the juvenile user groups.



Juvenile Probation Central District

Member numbers (Juvenile Numbers) for each family and child and Case (petition) numbers are generated through JACS. Victim information and alerts for Victim Notification and Impact Statements are stored in JACS. Once information is entered into JACS, the system can be searched according to name, case number, police photo number, or a variety of other criteria.

Both Delinquent and Dependent cases are initiated, scheduled, tracked, and recorded in JACS in real-time. Restitution and community service data along with costs and fines account information are processed through JACS. Placement histories and the juveniles’ detention status are available through the click of a button.

Court appointed attorneys are assigned through JACS and information tables are maintained for these categories: Probation Officers, Schools, Attorneys, Institutions, Police Districts, and other County Probation Offices. JACS has report capabilities and over one hundred different reports can be generated on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or *ad hoc* basis. JACS incorporates a program of document imaging that allows outside agency reports, police reports, victim impact statements, and protection orders to be attached to records via electronic scanning, making them retrievable by users through the (DOCD) Screen.

JACS allows for instant access to a centralized source of information which had previously been stored in a variety of mediums in different locations. JACS eliminates

redundant entry of information by user groups. It produces well-organized, accurate, and timely information that makes for a more efficient operation. In effect, this enhances public safety by allowing the police, district attorney, and probation departments to communicate more effectively. JACS opens instant access to Clerk of Quarter Sessions Orders that up to now could only be viewed by locating the paper files. JACS communicates electronically with the Department of Human Services and Police Department providing downloads of information such as open Bench Warrants and juveniles in placement. JACS goes far beyond a basic case management system.

Domestic Relations Branch

The Domestic Relations Division deals with paternity, support, custody, visitation, and divorce. Domestic violence cases are also assigned to the Domestic Relations Branch.

Mary Lou Baker is the Domestic Relations Branch Deputy Court Administrator. Her office is located in Suite 304, 34 S. 11th Street and her phone number is (215) 686-9307.

The Domestic Relations Court Building is located at 34 S. 11th Street. The general information telephone number is (215) 686-9300. For information on payments and other case information, the phone number is (215) 686-9300. Eleven judges are assigned to Domestic Relations Court and have chambers at 34 S. 11th Street or 27 S. 12th Street.

The Clerk of Courts is Mark Alleva, Room B-16, 34 S. 11th Street, (215) 686-3805 and petitions dealing with family court matters are filed here.



Domestic Relation Employee Appreciation Pizza Party

2004 Domestic Relations Accomplishments

- New Organizational Chart
- Implemented the Improved Case Management (ICM) Plan
- Received \$670,000 in Special IV-D Grant Funds
- Received State grant for 500 "Networking for Job" referrals
- Formed an ICM Team – 17 support staff
- Formed a Quality Assurance Team – 9 conference officers
- Established a Prison Liaison
- Reorganized Parent Locate Unit into 4 teams
- Consolidated Establishment Unit
- Created Establishment Quality Control officer
- Hired 101 new employees due to IV-D Grant (lost 52 staff to resignations & retirements)
- Developed Telephone Reminder Program – follow-up telephone calls for ENF conferences – increased show rates from 40% to +55%
- Increased Courtroom 12 Contempt list
- New Orders Enforcement – initiated immediate dunning for newly delinquent cases
- Expanded FIDM (Freeze & Seize Assets)
- Suspended over 4,115 PA Driver Licenses for payment non-compliance
- Completed an "Arrears Only" Project which resulted in over 625 dispositions
- Undistributed Collections (UDC) Team – Paid out over \$2.2 million in previously undistributed funds over a 16 month period

- Improved Performance Measures (federal fiscal year)
 - Cases with orders + 7.48%
 - Paternity + 5.92%
 - Current Collections + 1%
 - Arrears Collections + 4.27%
- Established Night Court – over responded to 2,106 walk-ins and 1,373 telephone calls
- FFY 2004 Collections \$191,550,458; an increase of \$1,482,183
- Co-Location Pilot established in Lehigh & Kent County Assistance Office (CAO)
- First DR Staff Training Day held July 23, 2004
- Established dedicated DR Training Center (library & computers)

Plans for Next Year

- Expansion of Courtroom 12
- New Courtroom
- Increase Collections
- Expand Co-locations to additional CAO offices
- Expand/reorganize 643 Welfare Lab
- Expand 3 year case review process
- Improve Bench Warrant process

Orphans' Court Division

The Purpose of the Orphans' Court is to protect the personal and property rights of all natural persons and entities that may not otherwise be capable of handling their own affairs. Included under this rubric are Minors, Incapacitated Persons, Decedents' Estates, Nonprofit Corporations, and Trusts, both *inter vivos* (between the living) and testamentary (having to do with a statement of a person's wishes concerning the disposition of their personal property after death). The Orphans' Court is also the arbiter of any dispute or issue that may arise in connection to the application for a marriage license through the Philadelphia Marriage License Bureau.



South Portico of City Hall

The Orphans' Court Division is responsible for adjudicating a wide range of matters and the name of the Court is derived from the more general definition of "orphan" as one who is lacking some protection or advantage, not the more common parlance of a child whose parents are deceased. It is the role of the Court, in any of these matters, to ensure that the best interests of the person or entity are not compromised. It has been a longstanding tenet of the Orphans' Court to provide access to the courts for those who may lack the ability to defend or represent themselves.

Specifically, but not limited to the following list, the Orphans' Court Division has the authority to appoint guardians for both minors and incapacitated persons, adjudicate disputes over the administration of decedent's estates including approving accounts of administrators/executors, resolve appeals from the Register of Wills ("will contests"), handle inheritance and estate tax disputes and approve civil settlements involving minor plaintiffs and/or estates.

From the Honorable Joseph D. O'Keefe, Administrative Judge of Orphans' Court:

"I want to start by thanking the Justices for expediting and amending Pennsylvania Orphans' Court Rule 2.3, and adopting Pennsylvania Orphans' Court Rule 3.7, thereby approving Electronic Filing in the Philadelphia Orphans' Court.

Effective January 3, 2005, the Philadelphia Orphans' Court went "live" with transformational "e-filing". Counsel and *pro se* litigants have begun to electronically commence new Orphans' Court cases. As of January 11, 2005, at the close of the second week of e-filing, the Orphans' Court had issued 90 attorney usernames and 22 *pro se* usernames, and had accepted 20 filings. Usernames were given to five attorneys with low bar identification numbers, indicating that some of the longer standing members of the Bar have recognized and are taking advantage of e-filing. Although e-filing is voluntary until July 1, 2005 (and mandatory thereafter, as it is in the federal court), it is the policy of the Clerk's office to encourage all attorneys who usually hand-deliver filings to instead apply for a user name now, learn the system functions, and e-file using the

public-access terminals in the Clerk's Office.

Planning meetings throughout 2004 with members of the Probate Section of the Philadelphia Bar Association led to a policy of redaction necessary to balance public access against privacy of sensitive data. This was particularly important to guard against potential identity fraud and other forms of abuse targeted against minors, incapacitated persons, and heirs of decedents whom we serve. The Clerk is to redact from all electronically-filed legal papers the following personal data identifiers: the name of the minors in minor's estate cases (only the initials of the minor are available for public access), social security numbers, and dates of birth, financial account numbers, and home addresses. Counsel are to redact the same data on exhibits to legal filings.

Procedures and policies developed throughout 2004 by Court Administrator Joseph Cairone, Deputy Court Administrator Dominic Rossi, Programmer Manager Harold Palmer and my Senior Law Clerk Joseph Campbell continue to produce new refinements to our "user-friendly" e-filing system. We anticipate that in early February the Clerk's office will have the capability to scan hand-delivered pleadings. We are all enthusiastic about the e-filing system, and have been able to quickly resolve the few unexpected glitches, once identified. With an eye on further innovation within the First Judicial District, Joseph Cairone is particularly excited over the success and ease of use of Orphans' Court e-filing, because the underlying protocol "Banner" – which enabled e-filing – is shared with Civil Administration.

Technological efficiencies will better support the increased number of filings expected in the Orphans' Court (and within the First Judicial District) due to the ongoing building boom in Philadelphia. Wealthy baby boomers returning from raising families in the suburbs and executives (Philadelphia is home to several "Forbes 2000" leading companies such as Comcast, Rohm and Hass and Cigna) continue to move to newly created center city residences in luxury condominiums and converted warehouses. It is not unusual to find condominiums selling in the one million dollar "plus" price range. We expect this trend will result in an increased volume of estate-related work in the Orphans' Court. Commercial development continues to revitalize the city. The new Comcast Center will transform a vacant center city lot into the tallest building in Philadelphia when completed in 2007.

In other matters, the three Judges of the Orphans' Court attended the 2004 Bench Bar Conference in Atlantic City. My colleagues and I participated in teaching different programs to Bar members.

Overall, the 2004 Orphans' Court experienced a similar volume and type of filing as it did in 2003. On an annual basis, we significantly reduced the carry-over in Petitions to Approve Minors Compromise, Petitions to Approve Wrongful Death and Survival Actions, and Petitions -to Appoint Guardians for Incapacitated Persons. The Court is most sensitive to the quality of service being provided to adjudicated persons, thus it regularly inquires into the number of guardianships each guardian has, thereby preventing a "guardianship mill" without adequate attention to and support for each adjudicated person. While total inheritance tax collections have slightly decreased for 2004, the Commonwealth doubled its filing in 2004 and the Orphans' Court processed 97 more filings in calendar year 2004 than it did in calendar year 2003. Thus we expect that inheritance tax collections will rise in the upcoming year."

The Orphans' Court Division processed the following during calendar year 2004:

Type of Filing	Carry-Over from 2003	New Filings in 2004	Total Disposed of in CY 2004	Total Open Matters as of 02-Jan-2005
Accounts (for all case types)	134	214	217	131
Exceptions to Adjudications	16	7	16	7
Schedule of Distribution	6	55	55	6
Appeal from Register of Wills	10	13	18	5
Petitions to Appoint Guardians: for Incapacitated Persons for Minors	63 4	317 90	308 84	72 10
Approvals: Minors Comp., WD/S Orphans' Court Civil Division	23 24	548 1,177	521 1,170	50 31
Petitions for Allowances: Minors & Incapacitated Persons	28	261	252	37
Other Decrees Signed	NA	3186	NA	NA
Inheritance Tax Matters	110	109	156	63
Citations	NA	712	NA	NA
"Other" Petitions	329	983	1048	264
Report of Exam of Trust Assets	NA	50	NA	NA
Notices of Appeal Filed	NA	11	NA	NA
Marriage License Matters	NA	174	174	NA
Opinions Filed	NA	1	NA	NA
Report of Cemetery Assets	NA	924	924	NA
Miscellaneous Matters	NA	1317	1317	NA
TOTAL	747	10,236	6,260	676

Total Inheritance Tax Collections

Fiscal Year	Collection Amount
2000	11,000,000
2001	18,000,000
2002	20,500,000
2003	14,387,734
2004	12,423,553

Philadelphia Municipal Court

The Philadelphia Municipal Court is a court of limited jurisdiction with 25 law-trained Judges, and as such is responsible for trying criminal offenses carrying maximum sentences of incarceration of five years or less, civil cases where the amount in controversy is \$10,000 or less for Small Claims; unlimited dollar amounts in Landlord and Tenant cases; and \$15,000 in real estate and school tax cases. Municipal Court has initial jurisdiction in processing every adult criminal arrest in Philadelphia, and conducts preliminary hearings for most adult felony cases. Because, by statute, an individual does not have the right to a jury trial in Municipal Court, cases may be appealed to the Court of Common Pleas for a trial de novo. The current appeal rate averages approximately 3% or less. The Philadelphia Municipal Court has

experienced many changes since its inception. The court continues its growth towards its goal of excellence in providing timely and equal justice to all persons who have contact with the court.



Bermudan drug court professionals visit President Judge Presentza to gain from his expertise

Overall Initiatives

Municipal Court continues to engage in an ongoing examination and analysis of the judicial and non-judicial operations of the Court. The primary focus has been to enhance access to justice. Municipal Court judges, leaders and staff have been successful in implementing numerous initiatives, which will continue to improve the operational efficiency of the court within the First Judicial District. Several other initiatives are still in the planning stages, both as short and long-term goals.

The below compilation summarizes court and divisional highlights from Municipal Court over calendar year 2004.

Municipal Court-Wide Initiatives

Strategic Management Plan – Under the President Judge, strategic planning was undertaken as incumbent upon the court's managers to see that activities and expenditures are carried out in a cohesive, responsible and well-thought-out manner. Plans were developed and designed to ensure that operating units are provided the functionality they require within the context of a broad organizational framework, while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Enhanced Emergency Protocols – Municipal Court contributed to the First Judicial District's initiative in updating various security, emergency, evacuation and Shelter-In-Place procedures. These plans will be utilized by all Municipal Court judges and employees to ensure that appropriate measures are utilized to further safeguard workers and customers. Drills for implementing emergency protocols are ongoing, as is the

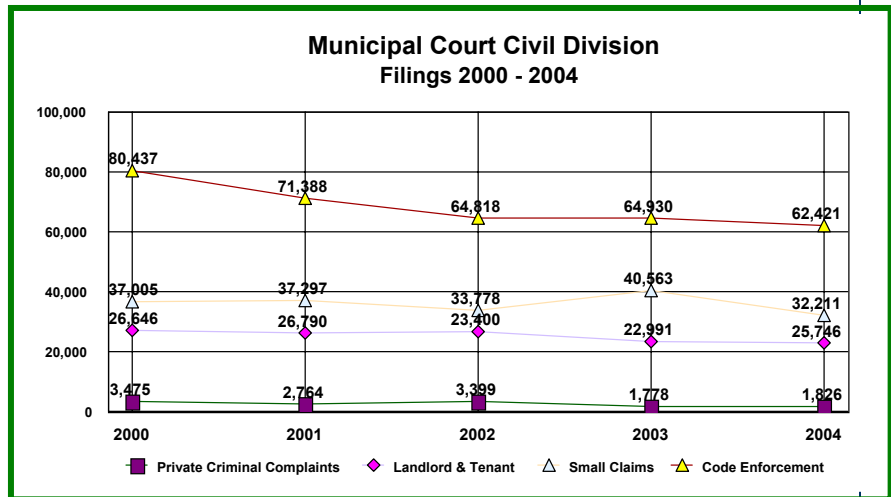
development of the FJD Continuity Of Operations Plan (COOP) in order to be prepared, should the need arise.

Digital Recording Devices– In 2004, digital recording devices were introduced into five civil and two criminal courtrooms. The use of this technology is a viable alternative as the FJD is faced with a lack of qualified court reporters to replace more senior stenographers as they retire. Transcription of notes is coordinated with the FJD court reporting office.

Municipal Court Civil Division

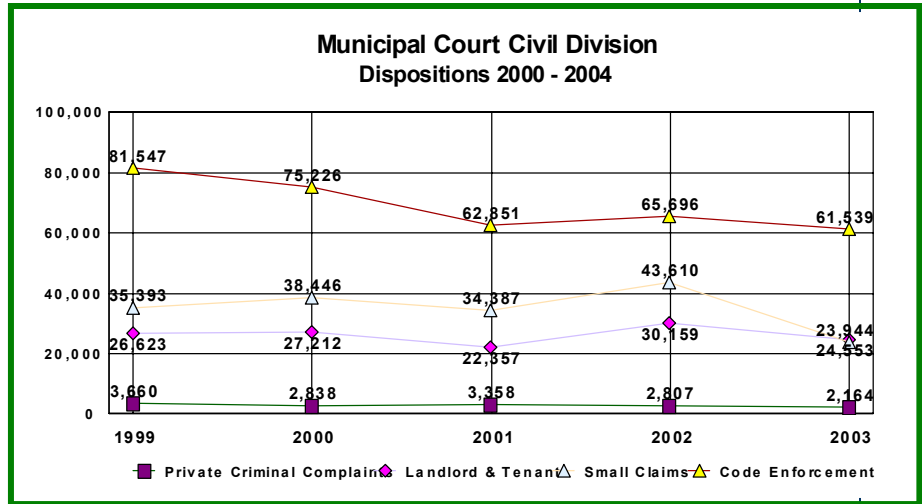
The Municipal Court Civil Division judges, administrators, and staff have diligently worked throughout 2004 and across their operations to bring the following projects to fruition:

- Wage Attachments in Landlord/Tenant Matters** – To enforce decisions in Landlord/Tenant matters, wage attachments are now allowed pursuant to an amendment to §8127 of Title 42. The court had to develop a process and implement this procedure. On April 1, 2003, the first wage attachment was filed and processed. Since then, the court has received approximately 154 *praecipes* filed by attorneys and *pro-se* litigants, resulting in collections and disbursements of \$141,051. Future plans call for the installation of a program that docket the payments and the dates payments are processed in the CLAIMS system. The projected date of completion was set for December 6, 2004.



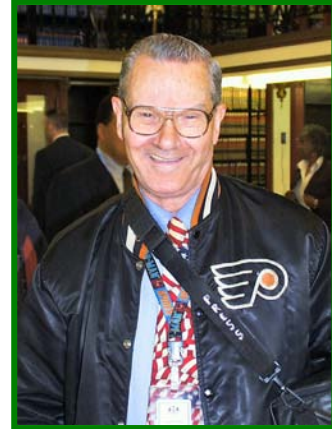
- Civil Fee Bill** – The Municipal Court Civil Division worked in conjunction with several representatives from Common Pleas Court to develop legislative proposals to replace the civil fee bill due to expire at the end of 2004. The proposed bill consolidates fees collected in both courts.
- Reinstatements** - In an effort to modernize and streamline the procedures for reinstating Municipal Court Civil Division claims, Court Administration and Central Legal Staff revamped the entire process. The court held meetings with bulk-filing attorneys and published the procedures in the Legal Intelligencer. The CLAIMS system includes this process in electronic format.
- Conference Center** – During 2004, a new conference center was utilized for in-house training for employees and law students from the University of Pennsylvania, Temple and Widener Law Schools engaged in the Dispute Resolution Program. The center also accommodates conferences, doubles as a visitor reception area, and provides ample room for large FJD functions like speaking engagements for the Bar Association and community groups. The facility is equipped with a drop-down screen and projector for training that requires Power Point or slide presentations.

- Video Library** – On March 31, 2004, the Municipal Court contracted with Center City Film and Video to produce an instructional video. The Orientation Video DVD showcases each office and their many functions. The video has been playing in the new centralized waiting area since September 7, 2004. Recently, the video was placed on the FJD Website for broader access through the Internet. The video library will also consist of approximately four procedural and informational DVD(s) and/or tapes. The library items will be used for training devices for new employees and can be shown in the litigant waiting area. These video titles include “How to File a Case”; “How To Prepare And Present Your Case In Court”; “Mediation As An Option”; and “How To Execute Your Judgment.”



- Form Management** – The civil division has taken on the daunting task of reviewing and updating all the forms currently used by the court. This project has helped to identify outdated forms and assisted in developing new forms that are consistent with the Pennsylvania Civil Rules of Procedure. All forms are stored in one area and each office can efficiently maintain their inventory.
- Policy Booklets** – The recent publication of a policy booklet for each MC Civil department has helped to alleviate confusion when a particular rule or procedural change takes place. The booklet has helped the court and its employees address questions or issues that may arise with attorneys and clients.
- Satellite Small Claims Court** – On January 1, 2004, the Court, in conjunction with the Mayor’s Office, started a night court pilot program at the 8th District court. Since then, litigants from the Northeast section of Philadelphia have been able to have their cases heard by Philadelphia Municipal Court Judges, or alternatively, to settle their disputes with the assistance of Certified Court Mediators, in a convenient and safe setting. MC leaders and employees are pleased with the success of this program. As of November 2004, more than 806 Small Claims Cases had been filed, and 698 had been disposed. This type of program fits well with the Municipal Court philosophy. Municipal Court is founded on the ideal of bringing court access to all litigants in the most stress-free and efficient manner.
- Digital Recording** – On April 29, 2004 the implementation of digital recording devices into five of civil courtrooms commenced. This helped upgrade the equipment from tape machine to CD’s and also streamlined the process for attorneys ordering notes of testimony. In addition, the clarity of the digital recordings far surpasses the quality from the tape recorders.

- **Shelter in Place** – The court designated two areas to be utilized as Shelter in Place locations for Municipal Court Civil: the 5th Floor Conference Center; and Courtroom #4-B, located on the 4th Floor of 34 S. 11th Street. On May 12th and 13th, 2004 a drill was conducted for both floors. Both drills were very successful and productive in assessing the time needed to secure the rooms and the materials still needed for effective Shelter in Place operations.



Frank Talent, recognized as one of the Municipal Court “Best of the FJD” award-winning employees.

- **Upgrade Customer Service** – The court designated two areas for customers and attorneys to access civil dockets in “view only” mode. These areas will help minimize clerk responsibilities for simple tasks such as checking hearing dates or case status. In addition, Municipal Court dockets are now available for access through the FJD Website.
 - Beginning January 1, 2004, Municipal Court initiated a tracking system at service counters to calculate the number of clients served. From January to November, 2004, the 5th floor counters serving the First Filing Unit; Civil Listings, and Judgment/Petitions, responded to 34,412 clients. This number does not include litigants that come to court on the 4th floor or the clients of the Dispute Resolution Program.
- **Civil Litigation Automated Information Management System (CLAIMS)** – The Electronic Filing Project underwent continuing enhancements during 2004. The system was upgraded for walk-in filings, attorney participation, and outside agency filings. A Back-up Mirror System was completed and has been active since March 1, 2004. All MC Civil Division employees have access to the system, and they have mastered all system functions. Presently, dockets are on the FJD Website for electronic view and search access to authorized case information via the Internet. Attorneys who were in the pilot program successfully migrated to the CLAIMS System as of March 1, 2004. The credit card online banking is being redesigned and was to be completed by the end of December, 2005.
 - In May, 2004, Verilaw Technologies, Inc. sold our Case Management System to Counsel Press, Inc. On June 2, 2004, a meeting was held with the FJD and Counsel Press to discuss this transition and the impact on our CLAIMS system. This transition has been extremely efficient. Remaining functionality issues were placed on a defined timeline and the process has been meeting all goals successfully. Project completion will include the reinstatement redesign; Wage Attachments; Petitions and various other items. The projected date of completion with Counsel Press, Inc. was December 6, 2004.

Municipal Court Criminal Division

Criminal Division 2004 Initiatives

JNET

The Justice Network (JNET) is a Commonwealth initiative tying in various databases for agency use. For example, JNET is the conduit between criminal history, court information, PennDot, and the Department of Corrections. JNET training has been conducted with varying degrees of security depending on user needs and certification levels. Municipal Court is a participant and also acts as the Philadelphia County JNET project director. First Judicial District registrars and staff are actively utilizing the system. Further roll-out is expected over the course of the coming calendar year.

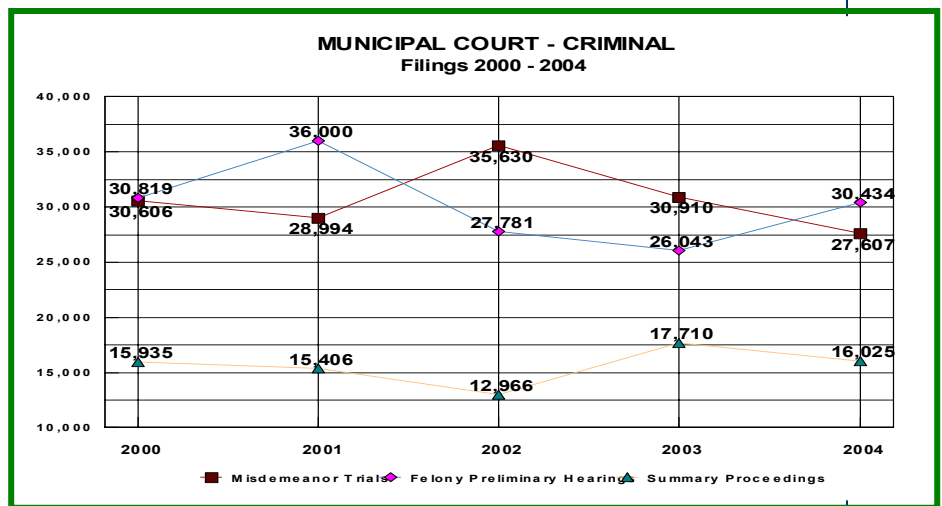
Preliminary Arraignment Reporting System (PARS) Expansion

PARS is a software application designed to electronically transmit data collected from arrest through preliminary arraignment. Relying on federal grant funds, criminal justice partners have, or are completing, upgrades to the application to allow for:

- The inclusion of pretrial services interviews to obtain demographic data and garner information about prior failures to appear (FTA) and risk factors as well as the preliminary arraignment process (completed in March, 2004).
- Design of a new docket number scheme to be utilized once the state criminal case management system is operational (production testing has been occasionally delayed). In addition, Warrants and Affidavits of Probable Cause will be contained within PARS. Detective Divisions of the Philadelphia Police Department began the electronic transmission of data for arrest warrants on a limited basis in September 2004 (projected completion 2005).

Treatment Court

Evidence supports the underlying theory of the Drug Court movement – that is, treating the underlying cause of criminal behavior (i.e. drug addiction) – not only protects society, but serves as an alternative to incarceration. Instead of recycling drug-addicted criminals, criminal behavior patterns are removed via intensive drug-counseling, along with vocational, employment, and life-

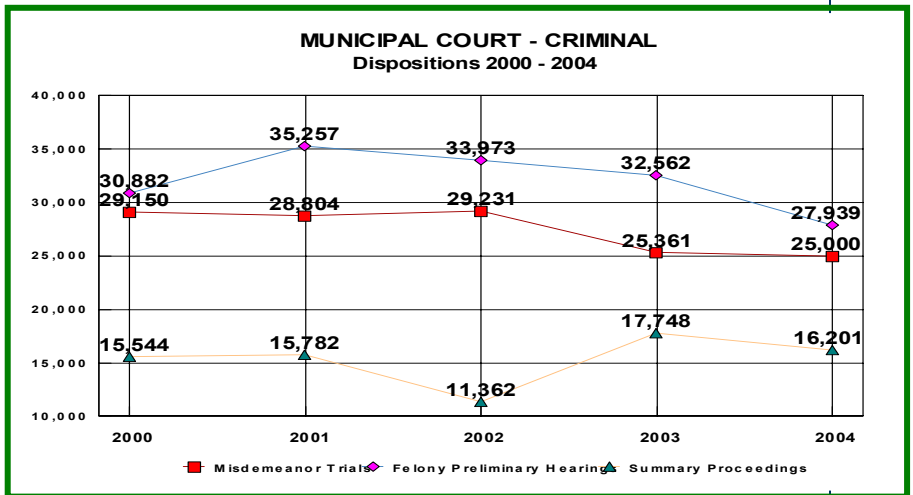


Entrepreneur Pat Croce addresses the 2005 Drug Court graduation class.

skills training programs. Individuals return to society as sober, productive, law-abiding citizens. Over 900 people have successfully completed the program since operations began in April, 1997.

In June 2004, President Judge Louis J. Presentza was unanimously elected as Chair of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals.

Treatment Court Contributes to Significant Savings in Court Related Overtime Costs - Between April, 1997 and January, 2005, the Treatment Court has accepted 1,660 participants in the program, representing the disposition of 1,928 cases. Thousands of court listings for Treatment Court cases have resulted in significant savings for the Philadelphia Police Department's budget, in that police officers are never required to appear in Treatment Court. Compared to normal case processing in Municipal Court, Treatment Court practices drive reductions in costs attributed to overnight subpoenas and overtime expenses for officers required to testify during non-traditional weekday tours of duty. Savings are also realized by keeping officers on the street. One goal for 2005 is to increase capacity to 400 clients, and all involved agencies are committed to handle the increase in caseloads.



Domestic Violence “DO IT” Program

The Municipal Court Criminal Division partnered with CODAAP (Coordinating Office of Drug and Alcohol Programs), the District Attorney, and Defenders Association to enhance its domestic violence court by providing immediate clinical assessments for misdemeanor domestic violence offenders. The “DO IT” (Diverting Offenders into Treatment) program includes recommendations and referrals for anger management, drug and alcohol treatment and other ancillary services. Designed exclusively to handle domestic violence cases, the use of diversionary alternatives and other non-criminal forms of sanctions assist in addressing the many unusual factors unique to domestic violence cases. Once approved for the program, cases are held under advisement while the defendants attend treatment programs. If defendants comply with treatment requirements and provided there are no further problems between the victims and the defendants, prosecution is withdrawn at the conclusion of the status term (three months to six months). Defendants who are unsuccessful will return for a trial before a judge. To date, few have been referred back for trial.

Non Traffic Summary Citation Ad Hoc Committee and Summary Diversion Programs

In response to the inclusion of Municipal Court non-traffic summary citations into the AOPC criminal Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS), Chief Justice Cappy formed an *ad hoc* committee charged with the development of proposed changes to the Rules of Criminal Procedure to match current practices in Philadelphia Municipal

Court. Philadelphia processes an average of 16,000 non-traffic summary citations each year. Many of these offenses are nuisance and quality of life offenses. Often considered nonviolent, minor offenses, they nonetheless undermine public safety in our communities and can lead to an escalation of more serious criminal behavior if left unchallenged. In the past, offenders often ignored the citations and enforcement of bench warrants was difficult at best. Now, many offenders opt to participate in the Summary Diversionary Program. Since June 2002, over \$857,965 in collections have been generated for the City of Philadelphia and Victims' Compensation Fund.

Community Court

Philadelphia Municipal Court continues to support the partnership created with the implementation of Community Court based on the Midtown model in New York City. The intent of Community Court is to provide alternative sentencing options with the objective of reducing quality of life crimes and associated recidivism.

Community Court continues to address the underlying behavioral problems associated with these types of crimes. Police estimate that approximately 80% of those offenders arrested for quality of life crimes suffer from either drug or alcohol addiction – or both. Another overlapping 20% portion of the offenders require mental health treatment.

The objectives of the Community Court are to: 1) reduce the number of petty crimes in defined geographic regions of Philadelphia; 2) develop a system of supervised community sentencing so those who are convicted can repay the communities they have harmed; 3) influence the nature and degree of recidivism among those who commit minor crimes by addressing their underlying behavioral problems; and 4) reduce the number of cases in the criminal justice system.

These objectives are met by providing a court where quality of life offenses are heard and disposed expeditiously. Toward that end, the court has established sentencing options that emphasize community service to be carried out immediately and these are actively monitored to increase the likelihood of completion. To further guarantee success, the court has placed social service assessment, treatment, and case management services within the Community Court. Since its inception in 2002, over 123,000 hours of community service have been completed by 4,014 clients. Over 16,700 summary and misdemeanor cases have been diverted from standard trial courtrooms and nearly \$600,000 has been collected in fines and court costs.

Police Overtime Subcommittee

A multi-agency review of court-related police overtime, chaired by the Managing Director's office, has resulted in a slight reduction in overtime costs (\$1.3 million in first 5 months of committee meetings); opened lines of communication, particularly with District Attorney and Philadelphia Police hierarchy; and completed an overhaul of police scheduling practices. The latter will enable the electronic transmission of data required for CPCMS as it relates to calendaring and scheduling. Refinements in police check-in protocols are currently under review with a vendor to streamline the process utilizing biometrics.

Emergency Protection from Abuse (PFA) – Annual Training Session

The annual training session was conducted with per diem masters and clerical support staff to discuss the PFA Act. The session included training for reinforcement of sensitivity and dealing with petitioners' procedural issues. Discussion with the CP

Supervising Judge of Domestic Relations about legal and procedural issues has been extremely beneficial to all participants.

Philadelphia Traffic Court

Philadelphia Traffic Court is a summary court of limited jurisdiction headed by a President Judge. Seven elected judges sit as the Traffic Court Board of Judges. In 2004, a vacancy existed as a result of the passing of Judge Joseph Howlett. The judges are specifically trained by the Commonwealth to preside over and adjudicate citations for moving violations issued within the City and County of Philadelphia as provided in Title 75 of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code. The original police officers that issue citations are not required to be present at Philadelphia Traffic Court trials. Liaison officers from the same police department or divisions represent the issuing officers and act as trial prosecutors. Upon appeal, the original officers are summoned to appear at appeal hearings.

One of the court's major responsibilities is the collection of fines resulting from the issuance of citations by the Philadelphia Police Department and other law-enforcement agencies. Through the dedicated efforts of the court's judges and employees, hearings are scheduled for cases that are timely, fairly, and precisely adjudicated. Traffic Court judges may issue warrants for unpaid citations and for the arrest of scofflaws with at least one outstanding violation on record. Individuals may appeal all Traffic Court cases and receive a trial *de novo* in the Court of Common Pleas.

Traffic Court 2004 Accomplishments

Calendar year 2004 was a busy one for the Traffic Court in its mission to ensure public safety. The court worked closely with the police to remove unlicensed, unregistered, and uninsured vehicles from the streets of Philadelphia. In fact, almost 300,000 citations were issued between January 1st and December 31st. From a budgetary perspective, the revenue collected as a result of enforcement programs was five times greater than operating expenditures. The Court's gross receipts for Fiscal Year 2004 were approximately \$30 million. The Philadelphia Traffic Court could be considered to be self-supporting in that total revenues exceeded operating expenses.

As the police were enforcing the laws of the Commonwealth, and defendants were responding to their citations, Traffic Court leaders embarked on a serious mission to further streamline operations and enhance computer capabilities while addressing some of the cosmetic frailties of the courthouse. In 2004, the following accomplishments were recorded:

Procedurally, the court accelerated the processing time of all DL-21 reports (relative to appeal verdicts) to 72 hours from the date of disposition. All DL-21 reports now generated by the Traffic Court are sent electronically to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT).

Court representatives have also been working diligently with Anne Panfil of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Rules Committee to develop local rules of procedure consistent with a unified judicial system. Guidelines were established and other efforts created specific sentencing and scheduling orders for use by the Traffic Court Judiciary. Rules of sentencing concerning defendants' rights were further defined.

As the court moved towards complete rule compliance, procedures were amended, consistent with Chapter 4 of the Pennsylvania Rules of Criminal Procedure, to require the posting of full collateral upon a plea of not guilty; to release a suspension for default upon the establishment of a payment plan; and to execute all Rule 1901 provisions.

The relationship that had been cultivated between the court and the Philadelphia Police and Parking Authority was significantly enhanced through the creation of a Task Force whose primary mission is to review public safety issues and live stop procedures. The resulting progress and improved communication have yielded new business forms and produced a better understanding of problems often encountered by enforcement agents. In fact, police input for the design of the 2005 motor vehicle citation included recommendations to block out the date of birth and social security number data elements on the defendant copies of the citations. With the Police input, an additional field was added to the 2005 ticket that will provide an indicator as to the *type* of identification offered to the issuing officer at the time of the stop. To combat identity theft, it is extremely important to know how the drivers of cited vehicles have identified themselves.



Traffic Court Computer Training Room

Working in conjunction with representatives from the Police Department, the court leaders were also successful in setting up systems for tracking and reporting all live stops; processing warrants to be served by the pre-trial services team; and continuing the “roll-out” of the use of hand-held devices that produce electronic citations.

Traffic Court continued to utilize, gratis, a vendor’s telephone calling system to dun defendants whose accounts are in arrears.

From a fiscal standpoint, the Court assumed the responsibility of collecting and remitting fees to the Clerk of Quarter Sessions and the Philadelphia Parking Authority. A new private sector accountant was retained to perform monthly reconciliation tasks and strengthen internal controls. Substantial savings in postal expenditures were achieved by transferring mailroom operations to the city-administered central processing center.

The inventory of motor vehicle citation books was reorganized. In doing so, the system of tracking citation books that are distributed throughout the city was augmented by the addition of an “out-of-service indicator” to more closely monitor the distribution and recall of all unused citations.

Record Retention and disposal are very important issues, and the Court devoted an entire unit to those purposes during calendar year 2004. The employees in this department developed a goal to dispose of records that are more than 15 years old.

From a technological standpoint, the court accomplished the following:

- Replaced all standing terminals with personal computers

- Replaced “tractor” printers with ink jet printers
- Upgraded our website capabilities to allow a defendant to review information pertaining to his or her trial date via the website.

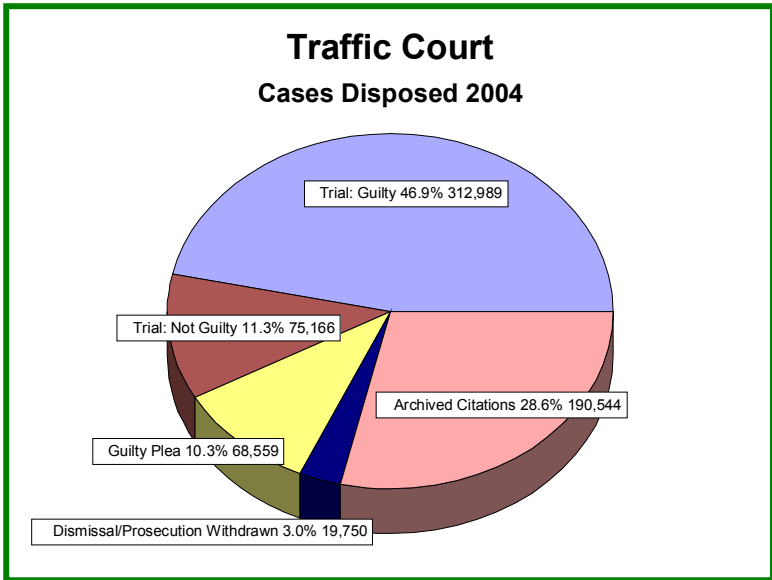
The Traffic Court administrative leaders will soon begin to submit reports via the web, eliminating paper waste and allowing readers to print specific portions of reports. The reports, including information about liens, are now electronically transferred to the Prothonotary.

The relationship between Traffic Court and PennDOT has been further strengthened by a schedule of monthly conference calls. Other improvements include the release of suspensions for failure to respond to terminated citations; cross-referencing files of both agencies for updated addresses, and modification of the DL-21 electronic process.

Several enhancements were made to the Traffic Court database to monitor mail returned for incorrect addresses, reducing the need to manually notate a “nixie” (bad address) in our system. Court employees also began to utilize new software called “Telematch” that matches addresses and telephone numbers for defendants who are attempting to elude enforcement efforts. Another software product called *Group One Postal Software* provides verification of addresses in the City of Philadelphia or zip code matches.

Finally, the Court embarked on a renewed effort to identify unit offices that required physical upgrades and renovation and to target those that required total renovation. As a result of these assessments, many Traffic Court offices were remodeled to include more modern work stations and cleaner surroundings. The exterior of the building was also given a face-lift. Leaders have found that remodeling the central lobby area facilitated defendant processing.

Security remained a high priority, and the court purchased a state-of-the-art X-ray machine, to be used in conjunction with a metal detector to step up building security while minimizing the need for manual searches of personal belongings. Moreover, with the installation of closed-circuit cameras, the entire exterior perimeter of the courthouse has been further secured.



Philadelphia Traffic Court remains focused and committed. There are several exciting projects planned for the coming year to assist the Traffic Court judges, administrators, and employees in their mission to provide access to justice and foster public safety.



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