



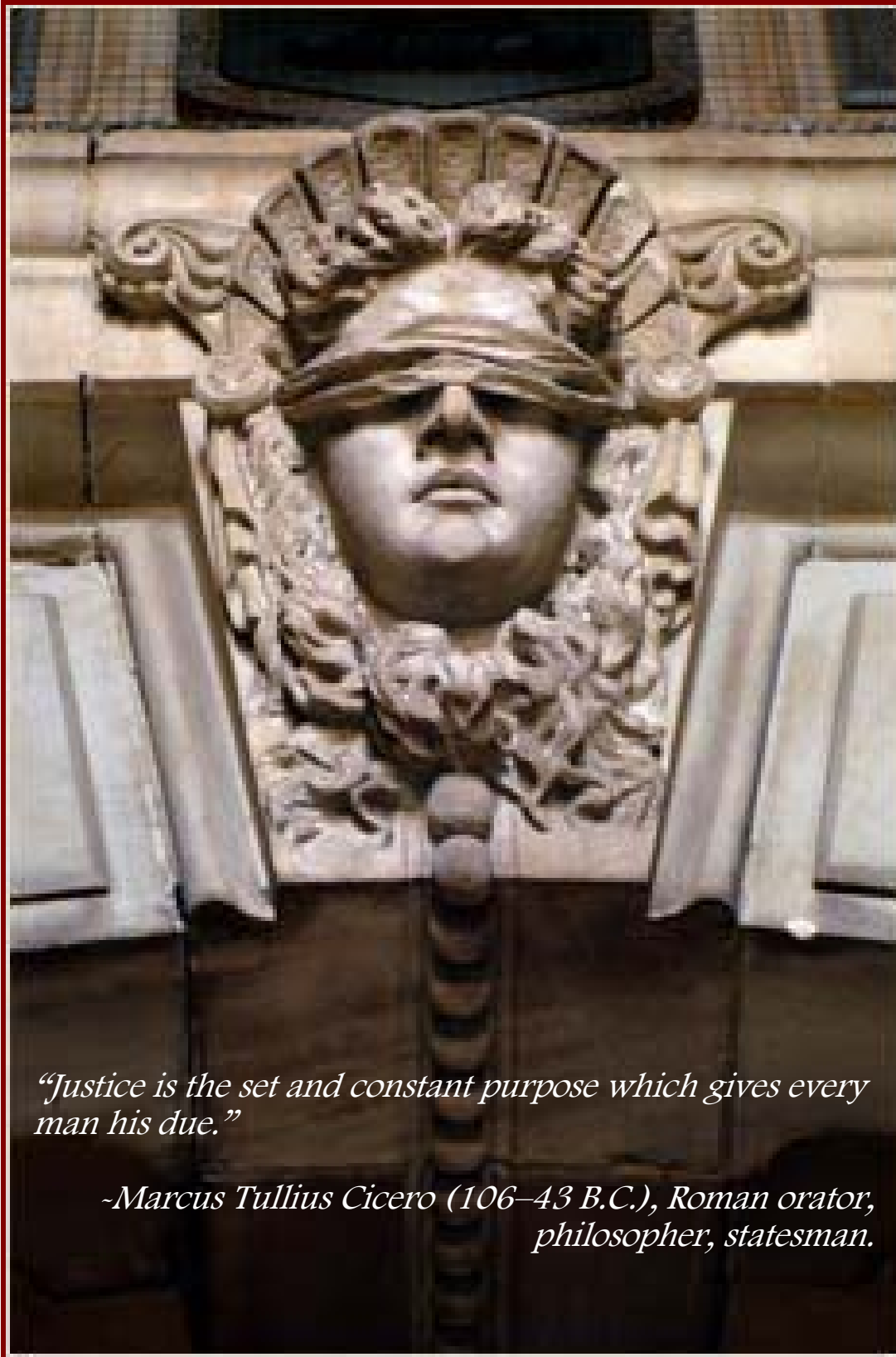
**FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF
PENNSYLVANIA**

2005 ANNUAL REPORT

2005 Supreme Court of Pennsylvania



2005 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.



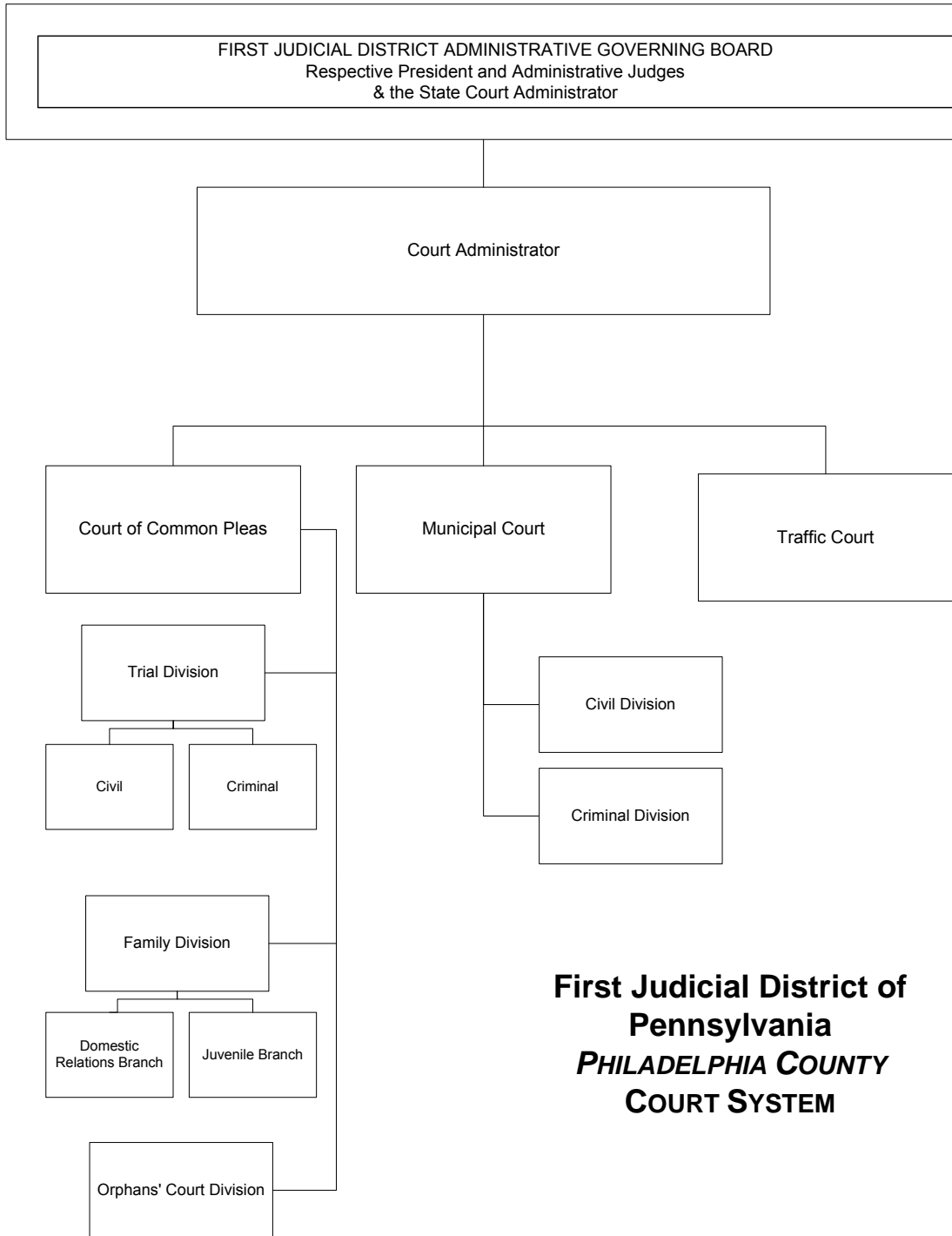
“Justice is the set and constant purpose which gives every man his due.”

-Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 B.C.), Roman orator, philosopher, statesman.

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First Judicial District Organization



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

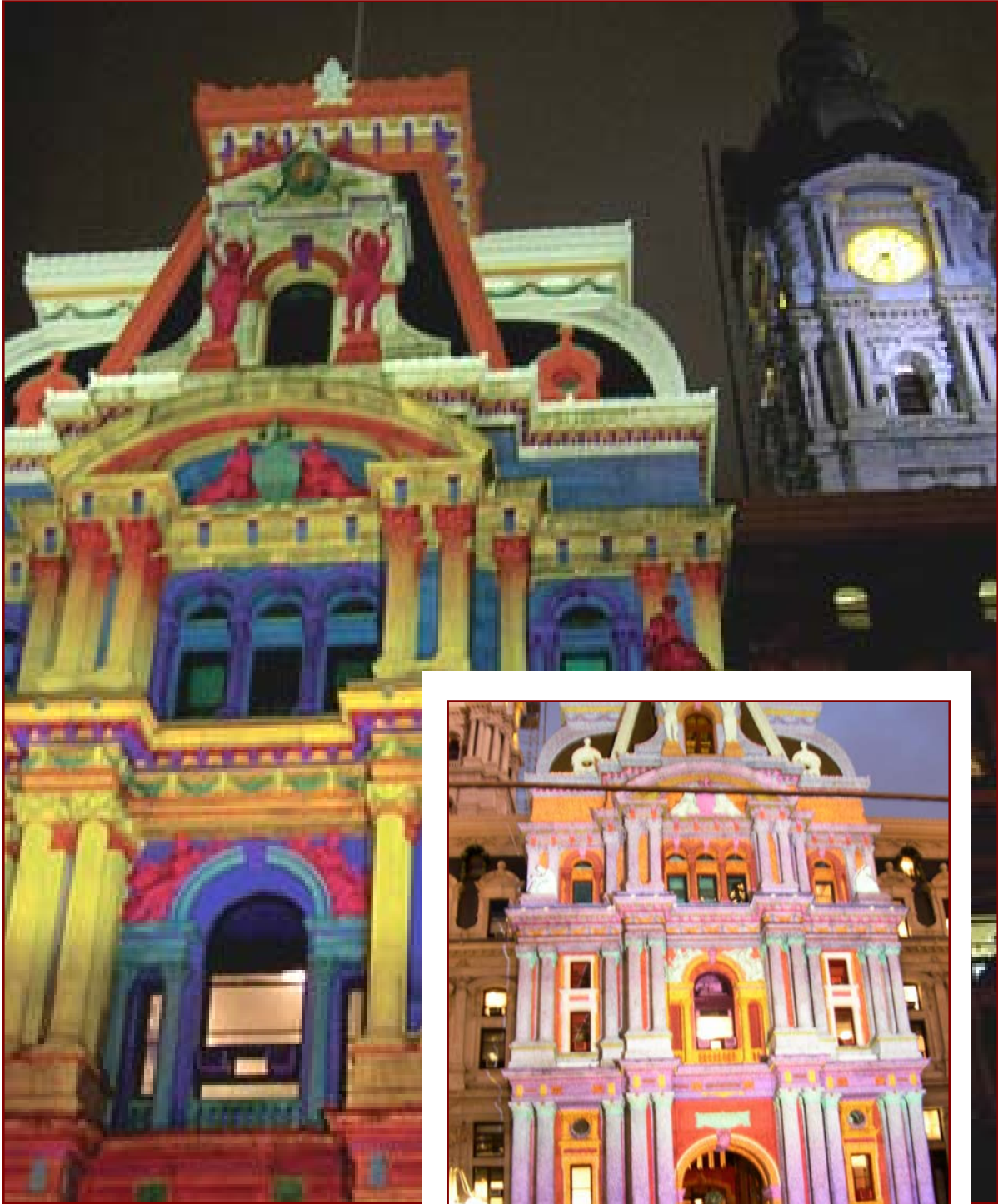
The First Judicial District of Pennsylvania

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.



In late 2005, Philadelphia City Hall was lit up with different color schemes using digital photos and computer projectors.

Greetings from the Chair of the Administrative Governing Board

Since 2001, we have experienced and benefited from systemic improvements brought on through the popularity and power of the Internet. The internal FJD Intranet Homepage, ongoing improvements in the Banner civil docketing system, Orphans' Court e-filing with plans for rollout to the civil courts, the soon to

be implemented CPCMS criminal docketing and case management system, notes of testimony on-line, automated jury management and response programs, and Traffic Court internet capabilities to pay tickets electronically – just to name a few! The growth of technology at the First Judicial District during the last six years has been staggering and far-reaching indeed.

Behind these myriad electronic enhancements and system improvements are several abiding principles that deserve our attention and commitment to their preservation. The first is the concept that justice, by its very nature, is universally applied. The term in the Pledge of Allegiance is “justice for all.” The courts are the great equalizers. They are the source of protection for our individual rights no matter who we are as individuals. The Courts of the First Judicial District have always held that everyone – yes, everyone – deserves their day in court. The judges, administrative leaders, and employees of the District have committed themselves and their energies toward upholding that basic tenet of American jurisprudence: justice for all.

The fact that FJD employees work hard to guarantee the rights of others underscores their dedication and their importance as integral members of a team. This is the second principle: that our employees are the Philadelphia Courts' greatest assets. During my tenure as the President Judge of the Common Pleas Court and as the Chair of the Administrative Governing Board, we have celebrated the wealth of talent, intelligence, dedication, and imagination that are represented by the more than 2,000 FJD employees. Without them, all of them, the job would not get done, and would not be done so well. Our celebrations of Volunteers Appreciation Day, the Best of the FJD, and



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

*President Judge
Court of Common Pleas*

Technology Day showed our employees that we care and that we want everyone to demonstrate their initiative.

Together, these principles also point out that the First Judicial District is representative of a jurisdiction that comprises courts which are functioning at optimum levels. The urban courts are often at the forefront of new issues that emerge in the field of justice delivery because of their diverse and voluminous populations of customers. We have seen many firsts at the First Judicial District during the last several years, and many of these have been geared toward issues of large urban jurisdictions: problem solving and Treatment Courts in Municipal Court, Gun Court in Common Pleas, and revolutions in civil case management hailed by the National Center for State Courts as one of the best systems in existence. In 2005, we were proud to initiate the effort to make the First Judicial District the Host of the Urban Courts Symposium. For three days we brought academics and practitioners together to discuss emerging issues in metropolitan jurisdictions and consider how to address those issues in the days ahead.

It is with great pride that I have had the opportunity to help guide the First Judicial District during the past five years, and I hope that the accomplishments that we have achieved together during that time will continue to help future FJD judges, administrators – and importantly employees – to truly provide, *Justice for All*.

Greetings from the Court Administrator

The story of the successes of the First Judicial District (FJD) was wrought by many individuals who, working together, have made the courts of Philadelphia a model for the administration of justice in trial court systems in general, and for large urban court systems in particular. The foundation for today's accomplishments were produced by the efforts and experiences of many people who have dedicated their lives to the cause of justice over many years. The courts of the First Judicial District today had their beginnings more than 200 years ago when the first five judicial districts of Pennsylvania were described in the Judicial Reorganization Act of 1791.



*Joseph A. Cairone
Court Administrator*

My part in this story begins much more recently, but having participated in this endeavor for most of my adult life, the First Judicial District and my career have become one and the same. My appointment as Court Administrator was made by the Supreme Court in 2002, but my affiliation with the FJD started more than 33 years ago. It is due to formally conclude through my retirement by the time that you read these words.

While my official standing with the District will be concluded when I retire on July 7, 2006, my heartfelt affinity for the Philadelphia Courts will not end there. The causes taken up by courts – all courts – to mete out justice, resolve problems civilly, protect and preserve families, safeguard the best interests of children, and ensure public safety, have become a part of my makeup, and that will not change.

Since I was given the opportunity to serve as Court Administrator, I am proud to say that the First Judicial District has made enormous strides in progress. The development of the first official systematic automated docketing system, the advent of the internal Internet application with the FJD Intranet Homepage, advances and implementation of e-filing, the reorganization of technology projects into a comprehensive strategy, a professional development program, and many other achievements have occurred while I have occupied the Court Administrator's Office.

However, my real source of pride is my relationships forged over more than three decades with judges and co-workers who have worked hard to do their best to make our court the best. There is no doubt that we have succeeded. And everyone has participated. From the highest position of judicial leadership to the newly-hired clerk, each member of the team has responsibilities that are critical for the success of many, and for the success of the court as an institution representative of perhaps the highest calling in government and our free society: the pursuit of justice.

Please accept my heartfelt thanks and appreciation for the opportunity to represent the First Judicial District.

Administrative Governing Board

2005 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.

Note: During 2005, the membership of the AGB changed when Traffic Court President Judge Francis Kelly left for the private sector and the Honorable Thomasine Tynes was appointed Traffic Court President Judge by Governor Rendell on March 9, 2005. Since she occupied that position for more than three-quarters of the year, President Judge Tynes' biography and photo are featured in this section. In addition, the Honorable Bernice A. DeAngelis was appointed as Traffic Court Administrative Judge on February 22, 2005. Just prior to that time, that position had been vacant, although Judge DeAngelis had also occupied that office in the past. Following Administrative Judge Myrna Field's attainment of senior status, the Honorable Kevin M. Dougherty was appointed as Administrative Judge of the Family Division by order of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court on October 3, 2005, effective December 31, 2005. Judge Dougherty's portrait and biographical information will appear in this section of the 2006 Annual Report.

Honorable Frederica A. Massiah-Jackson

Chair, Administrative Governing Board

The Honorable Frederica A. Massiah-Jackson was the 2005 President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia, having been elected to that post by her colleagues on the bench in December 2000. 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's 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. Prezenza

President Judge Philadelphia Municipal Court

Louis J. Prezenza 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 1996 he was appointed the first Supervising Judge of the Court's Criminal Division during which time he formulated and chaired the Philadelphia Treatment Court Planning and Implementation Committee, which established the first drug treatment court in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In 1999, his colleagues elected him President Judge and in 2004 he was unanimously re-elected to a second term.



During his twenty-four years on the bench, Judge Prezenza has chaired or co-chaired many committees, panels, commissions, and boards addressing issues such as preliminary arraignment, prison population management, and alternatives to incarceration. He 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 national symposiums lecturing on drug court policies and initiatives. Judge Prezenza has served as a peer reviewer for the United States

Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs and Caliber Associates. He has also served as a faculty member for the Justice Management Institute and provided technical assistance for The American University Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project. He serves as a faculty member for the United States Department of Justice and the National Drug Court Institute conducting workshops and training programs for drug court professionals. Judge Presentza is a founding member of the Pennsylvania Association of Drug Court Professionals and served consecutive two-year terms as its inaugural president. He is the immediate past Chair of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP).

Judge Presentza has received awards from the Philadelphia Coalition for Victim Advocacy, the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges, the Philadelphia Bar Association, the Justinian Society, the Lawyers' Club of Philadelphia and the Caron Foundation. He was recently inducted into the NADCP's Stanley M. Goldstein Drug Court Hall of Fame in recognition of his leadership, service, and preeminent contributions to the drug court field.

Honorable Thomasine Tynes

President Judge Philadelphia Traffic Court

Judge Thomasine Tynes was born and educated in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1989 she was appointed by Governor Robert Casey to serve as judiciary in the Philadelphia Traffic Court subsequently elected by the voters. In March of 2005, Governor Edward G. Rendell appointed her as President Judge of Traffic Court. Judge Tynes has sixteen years of distinguished service as the longest sitting judge of this Court. She also has the distinction of being the first African-American female ever to serve as traffic court Judge and subsequently the first President Judge of the Philadelphia Traffic Court, both unprecedented milestones. Her reputation as a fair and dedicated jurist has prevailed throughout her career.



She achieved a degree in Minor Judiciary Law from Wilson Law College and a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Roosevelt University.

Before serving in the judiciary, Judge Tynes was Director of the Congregate Housing Services Program from 1983 to 1989. This federal pilot program was funded through the Philadelphia Housing Authority and provided seniors with medical and legal services, along with homemaker skills to facilitate independent living within a controlled environment. She was controller of a multi-million dollar sportswear conglomerate in New York City. She was proprietor and CEO of a successful automobile retail business, and earned a single engine pilot's license. She is, as well, an accomplished real estate entrepreneur. She has been an honored host of WHAT-AM (1340) Radio-talk entitled "Rappin' With The Judge", with an informational format of the Traffic Court Process and the public's rights.

Memberships: As President Judge of the Philadelphia Traffic Court she is currently a member of the Administrative Governing Board of the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania. She was Treasurer and Assistant Secretary of the Clifford Scott Green Judicial Council (a chapter of the National Bar Association), a member of the American Bar Association, the Pennsylvania Bar Association and the Philadelphia Bar Association, Member of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women.

Following are Accommodations, Recognitions and Awards:

Berean Institute 107th Founders Celebration Honoree in Recognition of Being A Living American History Maker – February 2006; Featured in Jet Magazine - December 2005; Philadelphia Comprehensive Center for Fathers – Life Changing Moments "Making a Difference Award" – 2005; Madame C.J. Walker Award (from the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National American'sHeritage Society) – 2000; African American Movers and Shakers Award – 1998 and 2005; Recognition as one of Philadelphia's Most Influential Leaders by the Tribune Magazine – January 2002; Pennsylvania Breast Cancer Spokesperson "67 Women – 67 Counties: Facing Breast Cancer in Pennsylvania" exhibit, touring the Commonwealth – 1999; WDAS-FM's Women's History Month Honor – 1999; Inductee into the African American Legends Hall of Fame; A charming participant in Bill Cosby's Show "You Bet Your Life" – 1992; and many more prestigious Awards and Honorariums.

Judge Tynes resides in West Philadelphia and is active in the community. She was previously President and currently serves as Treasurer of the condominium council where she lives. She was also the 2004 president of the River Park House Chapter of Deborah Hospital. Judge Tynes has served the Philadelphia public since 1968 and will maintain her commitment and dedication to build a better environment, both communally and judicially.

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

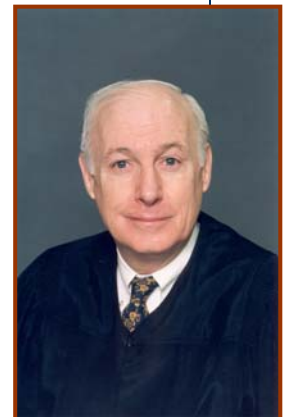
The Honorable Myrna Field was appointed Administrative Judge of Family Court in February, 2002 by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Prior to that, she had been a judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County since January, 1992, with experience sitting in Criminal, Civil, and Family Court Divisions. 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 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 Civil Conversations Committee of Court of Common Pleas. 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 the 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 sat on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Orphans' Court Rules Committee from 2002 to 2004 and has been a regular participant in continuing legal education seminars.

Honorable Bernice Ann DeAngelis

Administrative Judge, Traffic Court

Born February 17, 1940; daughter of Benjamin M. and Josephine (Zachwieja) Soban; of Polish ancestry, she was the third generation raised in the Fairmount section of Philadelphia (Art Museum area). The judge is the oldest of three children; Sister Jane; brother, Richard. Graduated John W. Hallahan Catholic Girl's High School a first honor student; attended Holy Family College on the Dean's List. Mother and grandmother.



Judge DeAngelis elected as a Committeeperson for 31 years in the 15th Ward-18th Division; (Fairmount). The judge was elected for three terms as Democratic Ward Leader of the 15th Ward (Fairmount, Spring Garden, & Francisville) after serving as the Ward's Secretary, Treasurer, and Ward Chairperson. She was also appointed a member of the Democratic State Committee as well as being a member and fund raiser for the Democratic Women of Philadelphia.

Formerly, Judge DeAngelis was employed for 18 years by a senator who served as Majority/Minority Chairman of the Transportation Committee. During this period she gained experience relative to motor vehicle law and drivers licensing.

In 1991 Judge Bernice DeAngelis was elected Judge of the Philadelphia Traffic Court and assumed office January 6, 1992. In May, 1996 she was appointed by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania as Administrative Judge of Traffic Court and Member of the Administrative Governing Board and served in this capacity until December, 2000. In February, 2005, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court again appointed Judge DeAngelis as Administrative Judge of the Philadelphia Traffic Court and Member of the Administrative Governing Board of Judges.

Judge DeAngelis studied and was certified as Judge of the Philadelphia Traffic Court at Wilson College, Chambersburg. In 1992 she attended the American Bar Association Seminar at Georgia State University of Law. In 1993 and 1999 she attended classes at the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada; also in 1999 she attended the American Bar Association seminar at Tulane University School of Law, New Orleans, Louisiana. In 2000 she attended the American Bar Association seminar at Northwestern University School of Law in Chicago, Illinois.

Zygmunt A. Pines, Esquire

Court Administrator of Pennsylvania

Zygmont 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. Author of various publications on criminal justice, appellate procedures, and ethics. Member: Judicial Council of Pennsylvania; Pennsylvania Judicial Council's security and strategic planning sub-committees; 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 on Victims' Rights; Co-chair of Conference of Chief Justices/Conference of State Court Administrators Joint Committee on Security and Emergency Preparedness; Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) Board of Directors; COSCA Regional Mid-Atlantic Committee; National Center for State Courts Board of Directors; National Association for Court Management; B.A., Wilkes College, 1970; J.D., Cleveland State University College of Law, 1974 (cum laude); LL.M., University of Pennsylvania Law School, 1978. Born July 15, 1948, Wilmington, Delaware.

First Judicial District Summary of 2005 Court Administration Highlights

Management Development Program

During 2005, the District continued to plan for future needs through its Management Development Program. The Management Development Program is designed to establish a pool of individuals who are able to fill vacancies in the ranks of management created through early retirement incentives and general demographic trends.

The program combines traditional training programs with lunch-time "Round Table Discussions," stretch assignments and managerial assessment tools to prepare talented employees for future leadership roles.

Expanded Intranet

Judges and employees continued to receive the benefits of technology through expansion of the District's Intranet system. Employees are able to check their available leave balances, receive their current pay stubs and review prior earnings statements in a secure on-line environment.

Reports from the various courts and divisions, court schedules and judicial education programs are features appearing regularly that are designed to enhance communication throughout the District.

IT Strategic Plan

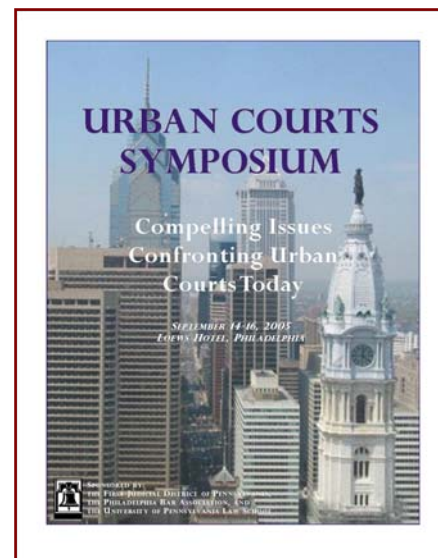
The advent of a statewide Criminal Case Management System has prompted the District to assess its long-term strategic plan and establish a goal of standardized computing platforms and architecture wherever possible. In 2005, the District began planning for the migration of its older Cobol based Domestic Relations case management system to the same platform, architecture and computing language as currently used to support the court's civil system. When complete, the new system will provide for consistency between two major case management systems, and enhanced reporting capability between the Philadelphia courts and the Pennsylvania State Police in matters concerning Domestic Violence.

Urban Courts Symposium

In September 2005 the First Judicial District, working in conjunction with the Philadelphia Bar Association and the Law School of the University of Pennsylvania, sponsored a symposium to examine issues facing urban courts.



Chief Deputy Court Administrator David C. Lawrence and Prothonotary Joseph Evers facilitated a Lunchtime Roundtable Discussion as part of the Management Development Program.



The urban courts of the Commonwealth, including the First Judicial District, and those across the nation have historically been at the forefront of new ideas and solutions. These have been driven by a greater volume of cases and a greater diversity of customers and needs - inherent characteristics of city courts.

The conference addressed issues of predatory lending and consumer protection; trial court performance accountability; media relations; and multicultural access to the courts. Presentations were made by national experts including: Erwin Chemerinsky of Duke University Law School; Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson, Chief Justice of Wisconsin and past Chair of the Board of Directors of the National Center for State Courts; Justice Sandra Schultz Newman of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court; and Philadelphia President Judges Frederica A. Massiah-Jackson and Louis J. Presentza.



Above, FJD employees enjoyed a night out at a 76ers game. Other “FJD Night-Out” trips brought judges, administrators and employees to several Phillies games over the summer of 2005. At right, FJD City Hall volunteer group helped our young people learn to enjoy themselves reading



Office of the Court Administrator

The Court Administrator is the highest non-judicial leadership position within the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania (FJD). When the Administrative Governing Board (AGB) was created by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in 1996, the Court Administrator position also was created to complement the AGB structure and manage the operations of the Philadelphia Courts. This is an office that responds to AGB direction and recommendations, proposes to the Board both solutions to problems as well as innovative new ideas for improvements, and oversees the day-to-day administrative operations of the entire FJD.

The services provided through the Court Administrator impact the entire Philadelphia Court System. For example, the FJD Office of Human Resources is within the umbrella authority of the Court Administrator because human resources services affect all the employees of the District. The other District-wide service centers are Financial Services, Legal Services, and Court Reporter and Interpreter Services. A Deputy Court Administrator (DCA) or a Director, who in-turn reports to the FJD Court Administrator, heads each. Directors also head the Data Processing Department, Management Information Services (MIS), and Administrative Services (including the Space and Facilities Unit).

The Court Administrator also oversees another group of Deputies assigned to administer Divisions of the courts that constitute the FJD. In the Trial Division of the Court of Common Pleas, one DCA is situated in the Trial Division Civil section and one oversees the Trial Division's Criminal section. In the Court of Common Pleas Family Division, two DCAs are located in the Juvenile Branch and one runs the Domestic Relations Branch. In Municipal Court, the Criminal and Civil Divisions are each served by a DCA. The DCA in Traffic Court rounds out the total complement of 12 Deputy Court Administrators.

One level up, the Chief Deputy Court Administrator works very closely with the Court Administrator in an office whose responsibilities also span the FJD. The Jury Commissioner reports to the Administrative Judge of the Common Pleas Court Trial Division where jury trial proceedings are conducted. The Jury Commissioner also works closely with the Court Administrator to coordinate operations that span both the Civil and Criminal Components of the Trial Division.

While the DCAs who are spread throughout the courts report to the Court Administrator, they also must



The FJD Internet won an award as one of the Top 10 Websites.

work very closely and respond to the direction of their respective President and Administrative Judges. This dual organizational scheme guarantees individual courts and divisions the benefits of the services of a Deputy Court Administrator and, at the same time, ensures that their operations are coordinated as key components of the centralized FJD management structure.

Finally, the FJD Court Administrator has two Senior Staff Advisors with responsibility for the evaluation of statistics, programs, and large systems of the courts. Assignments include management analysis, administration of the Emergency Notification System, publication 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 with aspects of the design and implementation of the Criminal Case Management System (CCMS) and the on-line provision of notes of testimony through the Court Reporter System (CRS).

Administrative Services

Administrative Services provides a variety of support services throughout the First Judicial District. A primary area of concentration is maintenance and facility management. Coordination is provided for maintenance, renovation, construction, and cleaning services. Complete electrical, carpentry, air conditioning, painting, mill shop and moving services are provided.

Administrative Services provides planning, requisition preparation, and liaison services with the City Communications Department for the telecommunications requirements of the FJD. In addition to the installation and maintenance of telephone equipment, administration is provided for the more than 2,000 telephone mail boxes now assigned to the FJD. Administrative Services also performs daily testing of the telephone hot buttons and monthly testing of the duress alarm system.



Administrative Services personnel

Under Administrative Services, the Microfilm Unit provides complete filming, developing, and computerized access for court records.

Administrative Services processes and provides routing documentation for purchase requisitions submitted by the Offices of the President Judge, Trial Division, and the units under the Court Administrator. Additional duties include arranging with garages for judicial parking and maintaining parking records, maintaining list of City vehicles assigned to the FJD, and performing minor repairs on courtroom sound systems.

During 2005, in addition to the listed services, FJD Maintenance continued to assist with Capital Programs renovation work at 1801 Vine Street, mill shop operations

relocated into City Hall, and a complete renovation of Courtroom 483 in City Hall was performed.

Procurement

The objectives of the Procurement Unit, located in 368 City Hall, are intended to ensure that quality goods and services are expeditiously delivered to judges and staff at reasonable prices. In the pursuit of those objectives, the Procurement Unit controls the purchase of supplies, equipment, and services. Procurement personnel monitor property management through its Inventory Control Division. The Unit is also responsible for contract and lease agreement negotiation, implementation, and administration. During 2005, the Procurement Unit routinely exercised its established cost saving measures, economic protocols, and expertise to fund on-going technology enhancements, training, and space improvements throughout the FJD. In addition, Procurement Unit staff served as active members of various project management teams for each of the following 2005 FJD projects:

- Adult Probation Case Management System;
- Video door security systems installed in City Hall;
- Additional enhancements to the Municipal Court Electronic Filing Case Management system;
- Janitorial Services for Court space in City Hall; and
- Various Communications Enhancements.

Court Reporter and Interpreter Services

Overview

The Office of Court Reporter and Interpreter Services comprises four service centers, each of which provides myriad services to the public, legal community, and internal customers within the court system.

The four service centers are: 1) Court Reporting Services; 2) Interpreter Services; 3) the Record Reproduction Center; and 4) the Digital Recording Program.

Court Reporting Services

Court reporters are highly trained and skilled professionals who, through the use of stenographic machines, preserve the verbatim record of all proceedings in the First Judicial District (FJD) with the exception of those in the Philadelphia Traffic Court and those preserved through the use of Digital (audio) Recording. Court reporting services are provided in the Common Pleas and Municipal Courts and their constituent divisions.

In the Court of Common Pleas, reporters serve in Family Court, Orphans' Court, and Trial Divisions. These divisions handle a wide range of matters including Juvenile Delinquency and Dependency, Adoptions, Domestic Relations, Criminal, Civil and Probate cases. Grand jury matters, official ceremonies and various administrative events also fall into the purview of court reporters' duties where the preservation of a record is required. Reporters also record testimony in the Civil and Criminal Divisions of the Municipal Court.

Court Reporter Statistics/Real-time Transcription

The Court Reporter Division employs a staff of 110 court reporters, whose numbers include Registered Merit Reporters (RMR) and Registered Professional Reporters (RPR) who have achieved excellence in writing proficiency. Also among them are Court Reporter Trainees, who have varied levels of experience and have attained part of, or are working to attain, their full certification. Per Diem court reporters, those reporters who have either retired or are free-lance writers who work on a per diem basis, are also included. Court Reporters provide services to every FJD courtroom in each of the divisions outlined above on a daily basis. In 2005, over two million pages of trial transcripts were produced by Court Reporters. Approximately one-fifth of the staff of court reporters are Real-time writers and one out of every ten court reporters is a Certified Real-time Reporter.



Court Reporter Doug Zweizig (with medal and plaque awards), Judge Teresa M. Sarmina, and courtroom staff after Doug won a contest by typing four words per second with 99% accuracy.

Real-time transcription involves the simultaneous translation and display of live proceedings utilizing computer-aided transcription. Certified Real-time Reporters are Registered Merit Reporters or Registered Professional Reporters who possess the knowledge, skill, and ability to accurately translate spoken testimony into the written word that is simultaneously displayed on computer monitors during live proceedings. Real-time Reporters are extremely helpful for hard-of-hearing or deaf people to participate in the judicial process in the courtrooms. In those instances, the deaf or hard of hearing persons utilize computer monitors situated in the courtroom so that they can read

an accurate written version of live oral testimony as it occurs. Those real-time writers who are not certified, continue to work towards their certification while honing their skills in the courtroom setting.

Summary

The Court Reporter Division of the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania employs court reporters who are considered the most proficient in their field of study and work.

Interpreter Services

The Interpreter Division remains in the forefront of the field by ensuring – to the greatest extent possible – equal justice to those individuals who are deaf or of Limited English Proficiency (LEP). To that end, a database is maintained to record and track interpreter assignments, and to monitor costs for each. Accordingly, controls are in place to avoid unnecessary expenses and provide greater scheduling efficiency.

The FJD is also acclaimed for its progressive attitude towards ensuring due process to those persons with language challenges. To further enhance the quality of

services rendered, Saturday training seminars are held for interpreters so that they may learn legal terminology specific to each court, and to receive instruction about professional and ethical standards to which they should adhere.

In addition, informational sessions have been held for the judges to heighten their awareness and provide insight into the process of interpretation in the courtroom. Courtroom personnel are also exposed to similar protocols to increase their proficiency in providing assistance to Judges and interpreters.

The Supreme Court Task Force on Racial and Gender Fairness proclaimed in its 900-page Final report "Pennsylvania's First Judicial District of Pennsylvania has taken a lead role...by initiating a formal court interpreter system. Although Philadelphia County has not yet established certification procedures, it has developed a model that may prove helpful elsewhere in the Commonwealth."

In 2005 the Court Reporter and Interpreter Division provided services to litigants in over 50 languages. By the end of Calendar Year 2006, it is estimated that over \$1,000,000 will have been paid to contract interpreters for sign and language interpretation services.

Record Reproduction Center

The Record Reproduction Center serves many purposes for Court Reporter Administration and for the varied divisions of the court system as well. Its primary function, as it relates to Court Reporter Administration, is to ensure the smooth reproduction of all transcripts produced by court reporters and digital recording transcribers. The Record Reproduction Center also prints notes for court-appointed counsel and other private parties who do not have access to the CRS system.

In addition to the Record Reproduction Center's duties as they relate to court reporting services, the Center also services the court system as follows:

- Provides printing services to all departments in the Common Pleas, Municipal, and Traffic Court systems, including the various divisions of each.
- Archives and retrieves raw steno notes and other court-related materials from the Iron Mountain Storage Facility.
- Assists judges, attorneys and private citizens regarding matters pertaining to the court system.

Court Reporting System (CRS)

The CRS provides electronic archival and retrieval services for transcripts produced by court reporters. ASCII disks, which contain completed transcripts, are brought to the Record Reproduction Center, date-stamped by the staff, and given to the CRS Technicians. The CRS Technicians place the notes of testimony on the CRS system, which is a central transcript storage server. This server is accessible by judges, assistant district attorneys and public defenders, who enjoy the ease of printing completed transcripts from their own offices.

Digital Recording Program

The Court Reporter and Interpreter Division instituted the Digital Recording Program in 2003 in response to a need to staff courtrooms due to a shortage of court reporters. Digital Recording Technicians (DRTs) monitor the recording of court proceedings through the use of FTR Gold Reporting software. In addition, Digital Recording Technicians create detailed log notes which are utilized by digital recording transcriptionists to ensure accurate transcription of audio files.

The Digital Recording Program employs a staff of 21 Digital Recording Technicians. Digital Recording Technicians staff courtrooms within the Domestic Relations Branch and the Juvenile Branch Dependency Court. DRTs also staff Violation of Probation hearings.

Mission Statement

The Court Reporter, Digital Recording and Interpreter Division is charged with providing the legal community and the public at large with service of the highest quality in the areas of court reporting, interpreter services, recording reproduction and digital recording. We accept this charge and pledge to perform our duty with courtesy, cooperation, and professionalism.

Jury Selection Commission

The First Judicial District had over 75,000 citizens report for jury duty in 2005. With an eye towards continuous improvement of the juror experience, during calendar year 2005, the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Jury Commission introduced some changes to the usual practices.



Jury Selection Commission employees with Commissioner Roger Gordon (back row center)

- With the assistance of Courtroom Operations, two rooms on the second floor of the Criminal Justice Center were made available to sitting jurors. As a result, jurors on trial always have a private lounge for eating, reading and relaxation, away from court witnesses and parties.
- Congestion in the Criminal Justice Center is a constant. The program creating waiting areas for sitting jurors included allowing a court officer to utilize elevators previously designated for use by court personnel only, to transport jurors to appropriate floors.
- In response to the many suggestions received from jurors throughout the year regarding the continental breakfast provided each morning, the Jury Commission introduced healthier choices, including juice and fruit.

- During tax season, all federal income tax forms are made available to jurors in the jury assembly room.
- More jurors are scheduled to appear on Mondays and Tuesdays, in order to provide jurors for the Civil Section earlier in the week. In the past, Civil was scheduled for jury selection on Thursdays and Fridays.
- Another successful Juror Appreciation Day was held during Law Week. The 2005 theme was "Jury Duty – You Make the Call." Jurors were treated to a pep talk by Villanova men's basketball Coach Jay Wright and an array of dignitaries led by Mayor John Street. The event was carried live on Pennsylvania Cable Network.

Data Processing

In 2005, the Data Processing Department was involved with the development of several projects, implementation of new Internet and Intranet applications, and continued planning for the future of information technology in the First Judicial District.

The Criminal Case Management System (CCMS) had its beginnings in 1968 and was modified many times over the years to assist the court in managing caseloads. The system was locked-down in November 2005 by restricting changes while staff developed data migration scripts and tools to effectively move more than 2.2 million criminal cases to the statewide Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS). The CPCMS is scheduled to become the case management system for the First Judicial District sometime in 2006.

The FJD mainframe computer systems continued supporting Juror Selection, Juvenile Dependent and Delinquency Applications (JACS), Family Court Custody, Divorce, and Domestic Violence Applications (PARENTS) throughout the year. Data Processing was actively engaged in designing and developing a new supporting application for the Domestic Relations Branch to replace PARENTS. This was a major effort to migrate data and functionality to new server-type hardware and software platforms.

Orphans Court electronic filing and document management with scanning and fax server technology went live without serious problems early in 2005. This system provided a mechanism to utilize electronic documents to expedite case processing. Data Processing worked hard throughout 2004 to make this system ready to serve Orphans' Court beginning in 2005.

Data Processing continued expanding access to information through the Internet and the FJD Intranet. FJD employees have been able to access their own records stored in the Human Resources Database for a few years but they now have an electronic pay stub and history available to them through the intranet. The Intranet was also used to distribute employees Health Benefits Flex Forms.

Management Information Services

MIS participated in and provided technical support for all of the current technology projects including Digital Recording, Civil e-Filing, Probation Case Management (PCMS), the Statewide Common Pleas Criminal Case Management System (CPCMS), the Orphans' Court Electronic Filing System (OCEFS), the new web-based Traffic Court System (e-TIMs), and other continuing projects to upgrade the FJD network infrastructure. MIS continued to provide 24 x 7 coverage and support for all FJD locations and responded to approximately 22,000 calls for service and support in 2005.

Office of Human Resources

The Office of Human Resources administers personnel activities relating to the 2,485 full-time and 179 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. After hiring, efforts continue 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; and appointments, transfers, promotions and reclassifications. Employees also see to: payroll administration; benefits coordination and processing; review and tracking leave usage and service connected injuries; maintenance of personnel files; performance appraisal management; and training and development. Other responsibilities include: Title VII investigations; review of disciplinary appeals; monitoring compliance with employment laws; and maintenance of an automated Human Resources Information System (Abra).

Office of Human Resources Additional Training and Development Services

- Reaching out to the public through 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
- Providing District-wide Supervisory training for supervisors
- Continuing coordination of welfare-to-work and work study programs
- Continuing coordination of CPR/AED certification
- Coordinating Sensitivity Training
- Assisting in the adapting and maintaining the FJD Intranet site

Special 2005 Human Resources Projects

- Institution of online pay stubs
- Institution of online Flex Open Enrollment forms and information
- Coordination with the City for online appointments and separations
- Coordination with the City for online identification cards
- Development of Abra training for timekeepers
- Research, recruitment and implementation of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Senior Staff Advisors

Working out of the Office of the Court Administrator, the Senior Staff Advisors are two widely-experienced employees who, along with an administrative officer, are responsible for project management, research and evaluation of statistics and programs, reporting, and the production of FJD publications. Carl Divens, Len Hacking, and Lee Swiacki have, at one time or another, worked on projects in all three of the FJD constituent courts. Long term assignments include administration of the Emergency Notification System, production of Annual Reports, and publication of the FJD newsletter, the *Courterly*. They are available for ad-hoc assignments when new systems are proposed for the courts, and as project managers are involved in the development and implementation of the Common Pleas Criminal Case Management System (CPCMS) and the on-line provision of notes of testimony through the Court Reporter System (CRS). Other projects involving the Senior Staff Advisors include: E-Filing for Orphans' Court and the FJD Civil Courts, the FJD Intranet Home Page, various position papers and other writing assignments, Emergency Response Procedures, strike contingency plans, and the FJD Management Development Program.



Senior Staff Advisors: (l-r) Senior Staff Advisor Carl Divens, Administrative Officer Lee Swiacki, Senior Staff Advisor Len Hacking

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. The Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County presently consists of 93 full-time judges and 15 senior judges. Full-time judges are currently assigned to the Trial Division (68), Family Division (23), and Orphans' Court Division (2). Senior Judges are 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. The Honorable Frederica A. Massiah-Jackson was the 2005 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. 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 expired on January 10, 2006. The new President Judge is C. Darnell Jones, III.

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 library of the Court (all 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 seeks 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

Civil Mental Health Program

The Office of the President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas 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 authorizing involuntary mental health treatment to individuals who suffer from mental illness and pose a clear and imminent danger to themselves or others. Mental Health Review Officers are required to be lawyers with experience in Mental Health matters. One Mental Health Review Officer and seven Assistant Mental Health Review Officers were appointed to conduct mental health hearings in Calendar Year 2005.

The Mental Health Procedures Act of 1973, as amended, provides that individuals who have been involuntarily committed under Section 302 of the Act (which does **not** require a court order) must be released within 120 hours unless a petition is filed with the Prothonotary, heard by a Mental Health Review Officer before the expiration of the 120 hour period, and additional treatment is authorized by a Mental Health Review Officer. Ordinarily, when Section 303 petitions are filed, they must be scheduled, heard and decided within a 24 hour period.

To assist in the filing, scheduling and disposition of mental health petitions, the Office of the President Judge, with the support of the Prothonotary and the Office of the FJD Court Administrator, developed and implemented an innovative FJD web-based **Civil Mental Health Electronic Filing Program and Case Management System** that is accessible through the FJD website: <http://courts.phila.gov>. 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. All communication with the Mental Health Electronic Filing website occurs over a secure encrypted communications channel (SSL), equipped with a firewall. To log on, a First Judicial District-issued user name and password must be utilized by every authorized user. Different user profiles have been created, and each profile has differing access rights to the system functionality and the data stored within the system.

Counsel for the parties, the Mental Health Review Officers and treatment facilities are able to view petitions on-line, on a real-time basis. Moreover, each of the

Mental Health Review Officers is able to log-on and access their assigned daily lists and pleadings filed in each case. As each case is heard, the applicable orders are prepared and filed with the Prothonotary on-line. Service of the pleading and orders issued is accomplished via an e-mail which is sent to the interested parties in an automated basis in compliance with the notice requirements of Pa. R.C.P. No. 236. All parties are able to comply with the time-sensitive requirements of the Mental Health Act and provide the required mental health services to the citizens of Philadelphia County. 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 2005, 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 2005, a total of 5,091 mental health petitions were filed by 30 medical treatment facilities, and heard at six hearing locations throughout Philadelphia County, and also at the State Correctional Institute at Waymart, Pennsylvania. A total of 3,977 cases involved involuntary treatment for up to 20 days; 511 cases involved involuntary treatment for up to 90 days; and 458 cases involved involuntary treatment for up to 180 days; three Petitions for Review of a MHRO decision were filed; and the balance, 142 cases, involved hearings to determine whether patient could be subjected to treatment involving greater restraint (i.e. from outpatient to inpatient treatment, or to a more restrictive facility).

Office of the Prothonotary

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 said to be the oldest continuously held legal office in the Western hemisphere. 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 Prothonotary was the lawyer Andrew Hamilton.

The Prothonotary is recognized as the clerk who keeps records and the Great Seal of the Commonwealth, 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



Deputy Prothonotary Bonnie O’Kane volunteering with the READS program which she helped to organize.

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 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 or Courts. In addition, the Prothonotary controls process and thereby establishes jurisdiction, certifies all pertinent documents and records and acts as the representative 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...”

During the 2005, the Office of the Prothonotary received, recorded and processed hundreds of thousands of civil filings.

Initiatives

During the tenure of Joseph H. Evers, the Office of the Prothonotary has undertaken numerous initiatives to better serve the public.



Prothonotary Joseph Evers (second from left) and the administrative personnel of the Prothonotary’s Office

First Judicial District of Pennsylvania Information Center

Mission Statement

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

During its 3rd 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 the appropriate court venues. 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.



*Boyd Taggart, Director First
Judicial District Information
Center*

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 800 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 stop. 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 like 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

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



*Sherita Lewis Information
Center Staff*

Center 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 2005, FJD Information Center employees responded to more than **10,000** 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 identify 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.



Rey Diaz, Information Center Staff

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.

The First judicial district information center, continues its tradition of being accommodating and informative while striving to meet the needs of those we serve. The FJD Information Center would like to extend a welcome to all. Ever growing, ever changing, always improving and looking forward to serving you. Information Center employees take their open door policy very seriously. They may be

contacted by calling (215) 686 – 2525 or by writing to the First Judicial District Information Center, room 127 City Hall, Philadelphia, Pa. 19107.

Let us be your doorway to justice

Trial Division of the Court of Common Pleas

The First Judicial District of Pennsylvania faced another challenging year, with a budget reduction of three million dollars, but the Trial Division was still able to experiment with new programs and confirm the need for old ones.

As for the new, the Trial Division began the year by convening the First Judicial District's Gun Court on January 10, 2005, the first court of its kind in the State of Pennsylvania. Gun Court, which was modeled after similar courts in Rhode Island, Detroit and New York, was created to address the growing problem of gun violence in the City of Philadelphia. Gun Court is designed to deter the use of firearms and to protect law-abiding citizens through swift disposition of gun-related cases and intense supervision of defendants in the community who have been charged with violation of the uniform firearms act as the most serious charge in a case.



Gun Court personnel group around Judge Jeffrey P. Minehart, who presided in Gun Court during its inaugural year.

Gun Court involves educating the defendant about gun safety, while at the same time providing the infrastructure for direct and immediate response to defendants who violate court orders.

As for the old, in April of 2001 the First Judicial District participated in a program that provided a select number of employees with training and equipment to handle an emergency medical situation during which an individual's heart stops beating. Although such programs are often taken for granted, in 2005 Joseph L. Hassett, Esquire, Director of the Arbitration Center, used his training and the court's equipment to save someone's life.



Joseph Hassett, Director of the Arbitration Center who saved a life using an AED Unit and training.

On July 5, 2005, during an arbitration hearing, the pro se defendant slumped over the table and lowered to the floor. Arbitration staff was alerted and the Philadelphia Rescue Squad was called. In the interim, Joseph Hassett arrived with an AED Kit containing a defibrillator. Mr. Hassett found the pro se litigant unconscious, with a weak pulse, and breathing erratically. Over the next minute, the litigant appeared to stop breathing and no pulse could be found. Mr. Hassett activated the AED Unit and administered an electric shock to the litigant, which temporarily restored breathing and pulse. Second and third shocks were administered by Mr. Hassett before the litigant regained consciousness and was transported to Jefferson Hospital. Mr. Hassett saved the man's life.

During a ceremony on February 1, 2006, Mr. Hassett will be presented with the American Red Cross's prestigious and rarely presented Certificate of Merit, signed by the President of the United States of America.

Administrative Challenges for 2005

The perhaps the biggest challenge faced by the Trial Division in 2006 is lack of resources. Although the Court has been able to maintain the necessary level of productivity, many other departments that comprise the interdependent parts of the criminal justice system have had more difficulty adjusting to smaller budgets, and this is having a negative impact on the functioning of the courts.

Homicide Inventory

We are concerned with the dramatic increase in the numbers of homicides in Philadelphia over the past two years, which has resulted in an increased number of pending homicide trials. We are working to make better use of the ten (10) homicide judges assigned to the Homicide Program by reaching out to the District Attorney's Office and the Bar, urging them to have more cases ready for trial earlier.



Gun Court probation personnel.

The Defender Association represents 20% of indigent homicide defendants. With the decrease in the number of private attorneys accepting indigent homicide defendant appointments, the Court is soliciting the Public Defender to more than double that percentage to 40% or 50% in order to meet demands. This has met resistance from the leadership of the Defender Association. The court feels this resistance can be overcome with the involvement of the Bar's leadership as well as added funding. The court is also looking for other alternatives. Most recently, we have begun to explore the establishment of a firm of attorneys to handle indigent homicide defendant cases.

Prisoner Transport

Another concern is the Sheriff's inability, due to staff reductions, to transport prisoners in a timely manner for court events and to have the Sheriff staff all criminal courtrooms when the court is ready to proceed in the morning. As noted in the earlier discussion of the Criminal Section, we are trying alternative remedies, such as working with the DOC for alternative housing of prisoners, but the staffing problem in the Sheriff's Department continues to be a concern and an impediment.

Zone Courts

The idea of establishing criminal zone courts is still under discussion and is part of the pending civil filing fee bill which is presently before the State Legislature. The Court has misgivings regarding the implementation of such a program. We are concerned a Zone Court Program would have a detrimental affect on the differentiated case management system that has worked so well in Philadelphia. Furthermore, there are grave concerns

regarding the ability of judges to maintain judicial independence, how rotation of judges would work in this program, our ability to accurately predict geographic crime rates, and more.

Arbitration Fees

The Arbitration Center disposed of approximately 18,000 cases in 2005 and the arbitration appeal rate dropped significantly, from 53% to 43% over the last two years. This would not have been possible without the hard work of our lawyer arbitrators. For the past 20 years, arbitrators have been paid \$200 per day. Although it may put a financial strain on an already strained system, an increase to \$225 or \$250 per day is long overdue. The Trial Division will advocate for such an increase.

Pro Bono Services

There is a growing need in Philadelphia for more pro bono services from members of the Bar. The Court has partnered with Chancellor Alan Feldman in his effort to arrange for continuing legal education (CLE) credits for attorneys who perform pro bono work. In August 2005, as Administrative Judge of the Trial Division, I appointed a committee chaired by Judge Anne Lazarus, to examine ways the Court may promote an increased level of pro bono activities by attorneys in Philadelphia. The committee will be presenting this blueprint at the annual meeting of the National Pro Bono Committee of the American Bar Association, which will be held in Philadelphia in March.



We will also explore the idea of establishing a program for awarding CLE credits to our judges pro tempore, without whom our Dispute Resolution Center would cease to be effective.

FJD volunteers from the CJC with their students.

A discussion of the 2005 highlights and accomplishments of the specific sections of the First Judicial District, Court of Common Pleas Trial Division continues in the following pages.



Trial Division Criminal Section

The Criminal Section of the Trial Division, which is the largest section in the First Judicial District, employs 656 full-time non-judicial staff employees and has a General Fund Appropriation budget of \$33.7 million. Sitting in 43 courtrooms, the Section judicial complement comprises 37 commissioned judges, and 5 senior judges. The departments that make up the Criminal Section are Adult Probation and Parole, Pretrial Services, Courtroom Operations, Active Criminal Records, and Criminal Listings. The executive administration consists of the Supervising Judge and the Deputy Court Administrator. The five departments of the section work together to deliver services in two core areas: court services and community supervision.



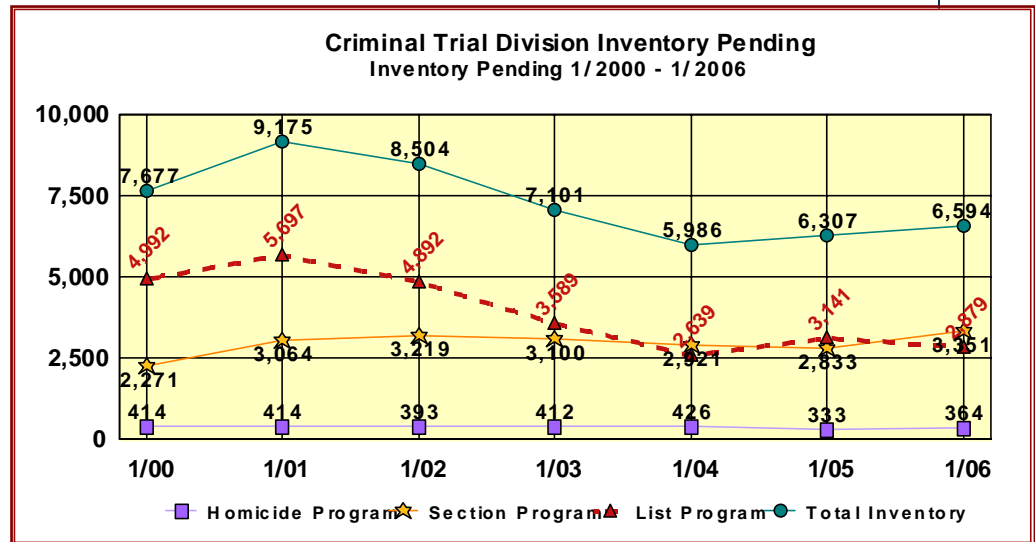
Some of the employees from the Criminal Listings Unit of the Trial Division Criminal Section

In 2005, 14,652 new cases were filed in the Criminal Section and 14,996 cases were disposed, of which 691 were jury trials. This inventory was "turned-over" at a remarkable rate of 155 days per case, which is significant, since the section hears primarily felony cases.

In 2005, the focus was on preparation for the 2006 delivery of two new state-of-the-art case management systems: the statewide Common Pleas Case Management

System (CPCMS) and the local Probation Case Management System (PCMS). The section continued to cross train staff and decentralize court services, in addition to increasing the number of probation officers to reduce caseloads, thereby improving offender supervision.

In the court services area, the Chiefs of Courtroom Operations, Active Criminal Records and Criminal Listings coordinated efforts in several significant areas, including case management and video conferencing.

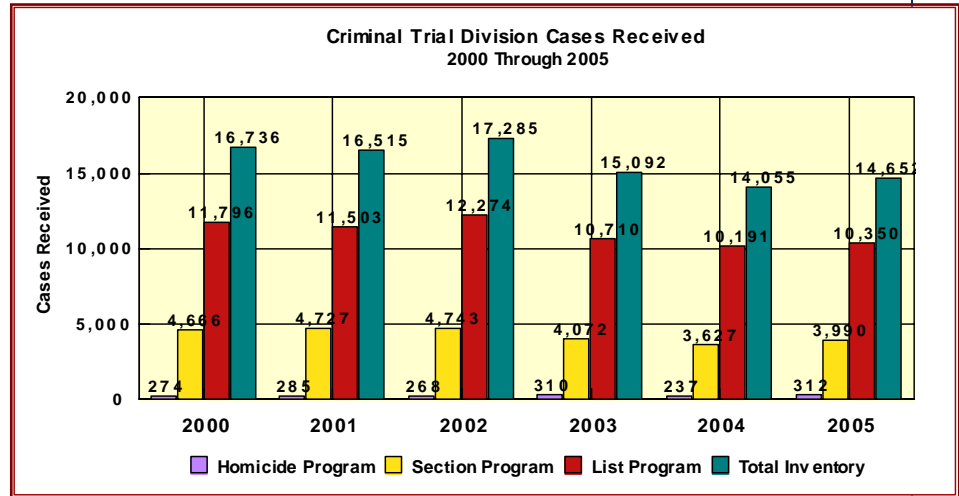


In the community supervision area, the Chiefs of Adult Probation and Parole and Pretrial Services coordinated efforts in several significant areas, including supervision improvements and fugitive apprehension.

Court Services

Case Management

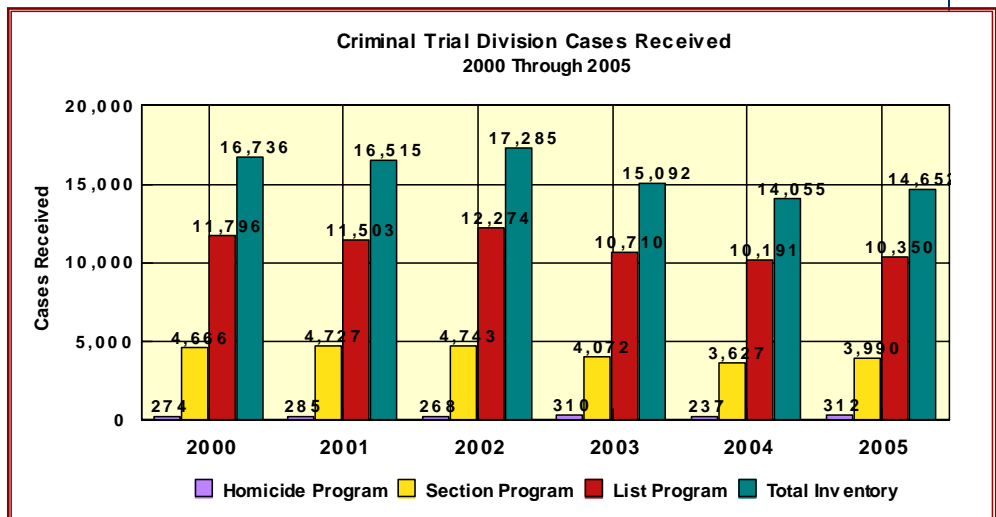
As noted above, on average the judges of the Criminal Section disposed of cases within 155 days of filing, on average. Considering that the section hears primarily felony cases, this was truly a remarkable accomplishment. This was achieved through the hard work of the judges in the section and the diligent application of our nationally recognized differentiated case management protocols by court administration staff. Through years of work with the AOPC CPCMS staff, many of these protocols will be incorporated into CPCMS and made available to all of the districts in the Commonwealth, when Philadelphia is brought into the statewide system in 2006.



The real time data entry protocols have enabled the section to provide real time, accurate case information to a variety of criminal justice users, thus improving coordination of work throughout the criminal justice community. The infrastructure is in place to expand the capture and distribution of criminal case data to even more users.

Video Conferencing

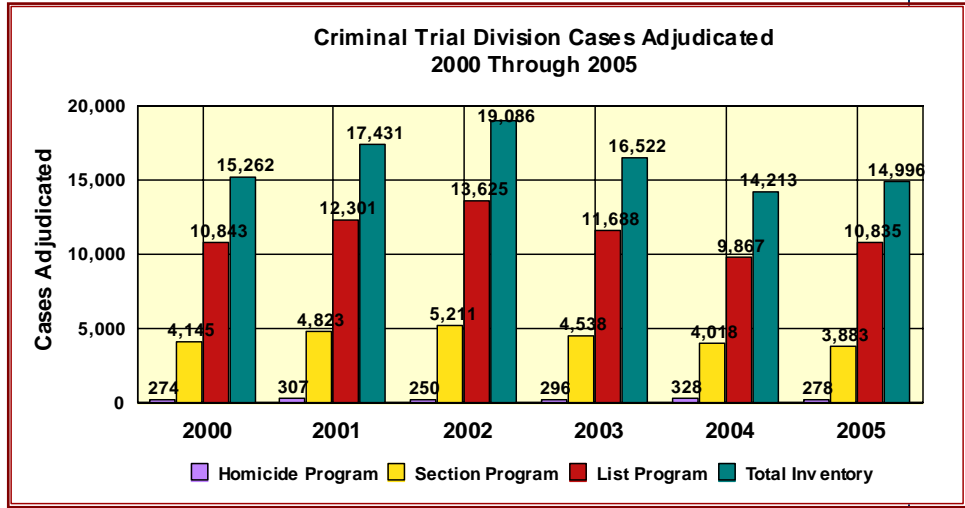
In 2005, video conferencing was used for 367 hearings, including out-of-town witnesses in trials, post trial matters and guilty pleas, where permitted by Rule. Connections have been established with federal, state, and local facilities. Every video conferencing hearing saves thousands of



dollars in costs through savings in transportation, prisoner housing and continuances. Estimated savings exceed \$138,820.

Also, the infrastructure was deployed to permit video conferencing capabilities between the Criminal Justice Center, which houses the Criminal

Section of the Trial Division, and the Philadelphia prison system. With a daily court transportation list of four hundred inmates, this expansion will permit many types of hearings to take place between the courtroom and the prison, without requiring the transportation of defendants. This initiative will also permit, for the first time, video conferencing between the Philadelphia prisons and other prisons and courthouses.



Relationship with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC)

The District enjoys a close relationship with the DOC, which has helped the section address several complex issues. The "Graterford Project" reserves one-hundred beds at Graterford for DOC inmates with open Philadelphia cases. This program allows transfer of DOC inmates to SCI Graterford, pending disposition of their Philadelphia matter. SCI Graterford is a same day delivery trip, thereby negating the need to house the prisoner overnight in the Philadelphia prisons. This accounts for one-third of the DOC inmates with open Philadelphia cases. The other two-thirds are handled by writ for overnight delivery to the Philadelphia system. The DOC has agreed to notify the court whenever a DOC inmate is transferred to another SCI, which will eliminate the need to cancel a writ, causing a trial to be continued.

Community Supervision

Standards of Excellence

Adult Probation and Parole (APPD) again received a 100% compliance certification for state standards during the annual audit in 2005. For the first time ever, APPD collected over eight million dollars in restitution and one million dollars in supervision fees.

Statewide Fugitive Project

All Philadelphia fugitives with an identification number are uploaded on a daily basis to the state police database (Commonwealth Law Enforcement Assistance Network



A new class of Adult Probation Officers is sworn in.

[CLEAN]). This resulted in the apprehension of over one thousand fugitives through new arrests, car stops, permit checks, and others. The business model for this project is being incorporated into CPCMS, where all Pennsylvania fugitives will be uploaded daily to CLEAN, thereby increasing the apprehension of those fugitives.

Anti-violence Caseloads

Whenever possible we are hiring probation officers in place of other positions, as employees retire or leave our employ. In doing so, we will reduce caseloads, which will increase the number of contacts between the officer and the offender, and thereby improve the chance of successfully completing the term of court supervision. Additionally, grants have been obtained from Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to enhance our efforts in Gun Court and the Youth Violence Reduction Project.

Miscellaneous

Gun Court

Gun Court has completed its first year of operation. The model of a single judge and unit of probation officers with a reduced caseload, increased contacts, and offender education and intense counseling, has presented promising results with regard to reducing recidivism.

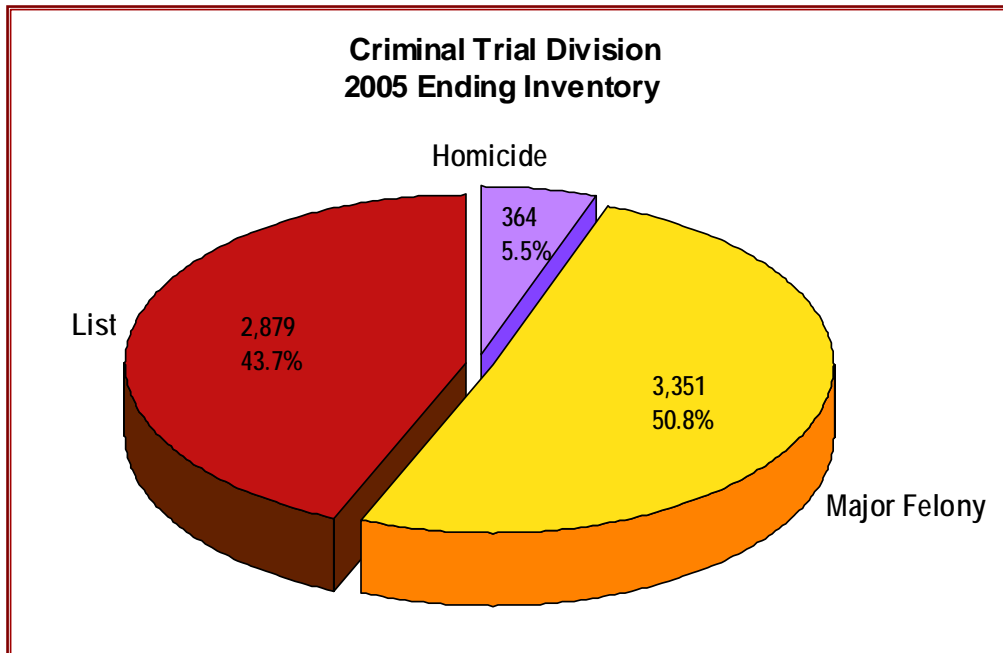
Additional Accomplishments

- Reduced bench warrant inventory
- Reduced wanted card inventory
- Reduced past due Senior Judge opinions
- Reduced Probation Officer caseloads
- Achieved FY05 budget savings
- On track for FY06 budget savings
- Participated in joint committee for police overtime which saved \$3.5 million
- Participated with countywide Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee
- Employee benefit committee held several events including a holiday luncheon for over eight hundred (800) employees
- Reduced the number of attorneys not in compliance with Local Rule 430 to two (2) attorneys from over ten (10) attorneys one year ago
- Continued judicial review of "old" bench warrant cases for possible non-trial disposition
- Established a committee to review the violation of probation process in the District

Criminal Section - Goals for 2006

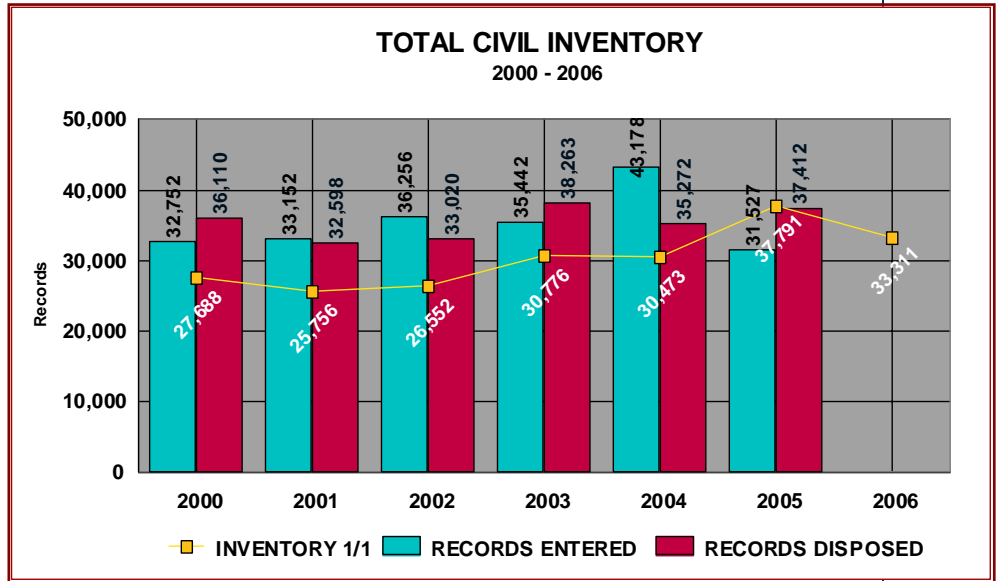
- Improve accuracy and accountability of real time data entry to less than 1% error rate
- Reduce criminal case turnover rate
- Increase collections of court ordered assessments
- Increase the number of probation officers
- Transform the VOP process

- Create additional 24/7 units to improve case management and reduce overhead costs
- Achieve FY06 budget savings
- Finalize right sizing initiatives
- Discontinue non-critical operations
- Implement video conferencing with the Philadelphia prisons
- Improve security in the Criminal Justice Center
- Expand video conferencing to all CP courtrooms



Trial Division Civil Section

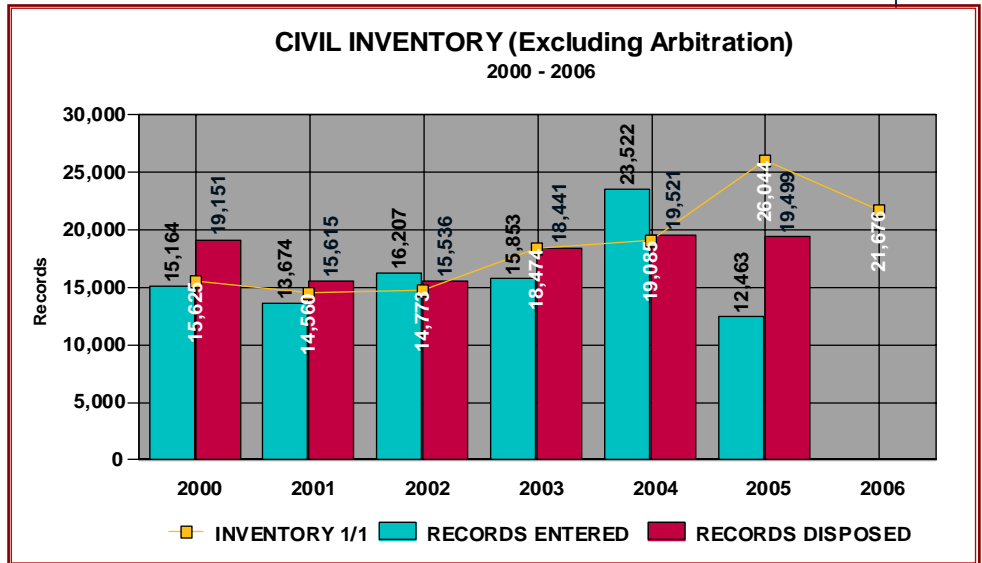
During calendar year 2005, the Trial Division-Civil continued its quest to administer justice in Philadelphia in an efficient and economical manner. Including arbitration matters, the Trial Division-Civil received 31,527 new filings during calendar year 2005. Civil dispositions totaled 37,412 cases; or 19,499 when arbitration matters are excluded.



There were 389 jury trials and 318 non-jury trials conducted in the Civil Section of the Trial Division during calendar year 2005.

Note: Re-Opened, Net Deferred, and Net Transferred cases are included in the final inventory.

Considering the fact that there were twenty-nine (29) commissioned judges and six (6) part-time senior judges assigned to the Trial Division-Civil during calendar year 2005, it is fair to say that on average, each judge disposed of approximately forty-six (46) non-arbitration cases per month. This statistical analysis supports and confirms the strong judicial leadership, the high level of judicial productivity and the commitment of the judges to the goals of the various case management programs.



Note: Re-Opened, Net Deferred, and Net Transferred cases are included in the final inventory.

During 2005, the focus was on two key projects. First, a committee was convened to review and consider implementation of the recommendations contained in the 2004 study conducted by the National Center for State Courts. Second, the court embarked on a project to bring electronic filing, or e-filing, to the Trial Division-Civil.

Report of the Committee on the National Center for State Courts Report

As reported last year, in December 2003, the Court of Common Pleas, Trial Division contracted with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to conduct a review and analysis of the programs, practices and procedures currently in place in the Trial Division-Civil. The final report, which was issued by the NCSC in November, 2004, recognized the First Judicial District's Trial Division-Civil as "arguably the best-managed large urban civil trial court operation in the nation."

Upon receipt and review of the report, which contained forty-four suggested refinements, a committee was appointed by Trial Division Administrative Judge James J. Fitzgerald, III, to review and address each of the recommendations. The committee was chaired by the Honorable William J. Manfredi, Supervising Judge, Civil, and included judges and senior administrators, as well as a representative of the Philadelphia Bar Association.

The committee met bi-weekly, over a six-month period, to consider each of the recommendations. Many of the recommendations were ministerial in nature and could be implemented through senior administrative staff. These actions included:

- Enhancing communication channels to ensure that decisions made by the judicial leadership were documented and conveyed to staff of the Trial Division-Civil and the Prothonotary.
- Materials designed to provide lawyers and members of the public with a comprehensive overview of the civil process were made available through the Court Public Information Center.
- Arbitration Center staff and others who have substantial contact with the public will receive training in defusing potentially volatile situations.
- A survey measuring customer satisfaction is now in use at the Arbitration Center.
- Materials designed to assist pro se litigants have been developed and distributed to key contact points throughout the system.
- Work flow analyses are being conducted in both Civil Administration and Complex Litigation to determine if modifications in processes, based on volume and complexity, are warranted.



Norma Monte holds her 2005 Trial Division Civil Section Employee of the Year Award.

Other recommendations dealt with the more substantive issues of case flow management and legal processes. These issues met with thoughtful and spirited debate among the committee members and resulted in the following actions:

- The implementation of standard interrogatories in arbitration cases involving motor vehicle accidents and premises liability claims. After experience with the use of standard interrogatories is gathered in this portion of the inventory, the feasibility of expanding their use to additional programs will be explored.
- Increasing the significance of the case management conference by encouraging counsel to prepare a mutually agreed upon case management plan to be presented at the initial case management conference. Where counsel is unable or unwilling to present such a plan, the case manager will enter an Order on behalf of the Judicial Team Leader imposing a case management plan. Additionally, Judicial Team Leaders are personally observing case management and judge pro tem conferences to convey to the Bar the significance attached to these events.
- Assignments of non-jury cases have been modified to more appropriately deal with the nature and subject matter at issue.

The court recognizes that it must remain open to further suggestions for improvement and will continue to seek input from the Bar and other appropriate groups to keep Philadelphia at the forefront of civil case management.

Case Management

The key to the success of all civil programs is the intense management of cases. Civil cases are categorized and placed into case management programs specially tailored for effective handling and prompt and precise disposition of different cases. These programs include Complex Litigation, Day Forward Major Jury, Commerce Case Management, Motions, Class Actions, Arbitration, Discovery, Case Management and Dispute Resolution.

Commerce Court to Provide New ADR Procedure

Beginning in January, 2006, the Commerce Court will provide Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) procedure to litigants. The procedure combines the use of a three judge panel, ruling on the questions of law that will control the case, with arbitration, where the final factual determinations will be made in light of the three judge panel opinion.

During calendar year 2005, the court disposed of 1,539 Commerce Program cases, which represents a 30% increase in dispositions over 2004.

Complex Litigation Center

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

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.

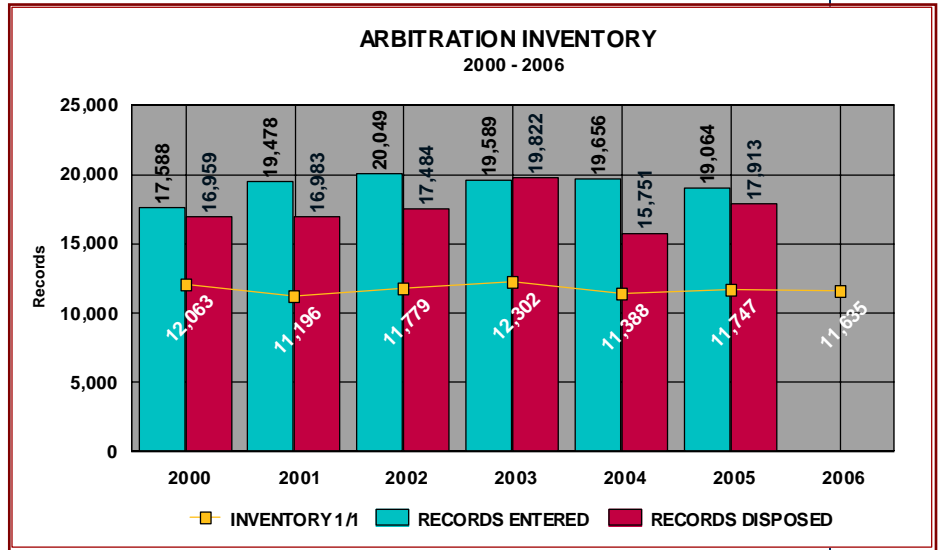
The Trial Division-Civil is proud to report that twenty-three (23) Mass Tort Programs have been successfully completed since the Program's inception. During calendar year 2005, the following programs were completed: Pier 34 Litigation; Breast Implant; Ortho Bone Screw; and the Lotronex Litigation. All programs were completed within the American Bar Association guidelines for time to disposition.

At the beginning of calendar year 2005, the court had 12,408 Phen-Fen filings in its inventory. Throughout the year, the court disposed of 4,887 Phen-Fen cases and the remaining 7,578 cases are on track for timely disposition.

During calendar year 2005, judges assigned to the Complex Litigation Center disposed of 9,657 cases, which represent a 10% increase in dispositions over 2004.

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.



Note: Re-Opened, Net Deferred and Net Transferred cases are included in the final inventory.

The program highlight for 2005 was the adoption of standardized, self propounding, interrogatories, and production of document requests in motor vehicle and premises liability cases. This major change in our arbitration discovery process should ultimately reduce the number of discovery disputes between counsel and result in more cost efficient, meaningful arbitration hearings.

During calendar year 2005, exactly 19,064 cases were commenced at the arbitration level and 17,913 cases were disposed.

Office of Civil Administration

Civil Motions Program

In excess of 70,000 filings of motions and petitions pass through the Office of Civil Administration each year. The inventory of motion filings in 2005 substantially increased, as a direct result of the influx of mass tort cases filed in Philadelphia in 2004 and 2005. Changes to the mass tort motions procedures have, essentially, created a unified system for motions practice and procedure in Philadelphia.

A more daunting task, yet critically important to the operation of the Trial Division—Civil, is the distribution of more than 100,000 notices yearly to the litigants advising them to appear for scheduled court events.

The relocation of the motion filing counter to the administrative office of the Civil Motions Program facilitated a more efficient flow of the ever-increasing number of motions from the beginning through the disposition process.

Electronic Filing

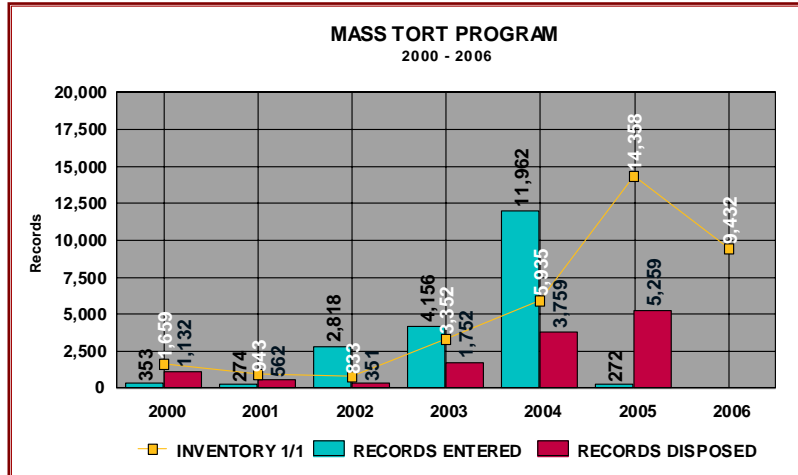
Today, technology is perceived as the single most potent force transforming the justice system landscape. Technology, in its many facets, impacts the types of disputes brought to court; the manner in which trials can be conducted and evidence presented; how court and trial papers are filed, stored and accessed; and how decisions are distributed.

The success of our civil court automation efforts has encouraged us to explore better ways to conduct the court's business through the use of technology and the Internet. In March 2005, the Trial Division—Civil embarked on a project to implement electronic filing (e-filing), the process of transmitting documents and other court information to the court through an electronic medium, rather than paper. With e-filing, the public will be able to send and receive documents, pay filing fees, notify other parties, receive court notices, and retrieve court information. All parties will save time and the costs of transporting materials to the courthouse. In addition, they will have greater access to court materials stored in electronic format. E-filing promises greater productivity and effectiveness, along with dramatic savings and improvements in the work of the courts and the practice of law. The projected date for completion of this project is July 2007.

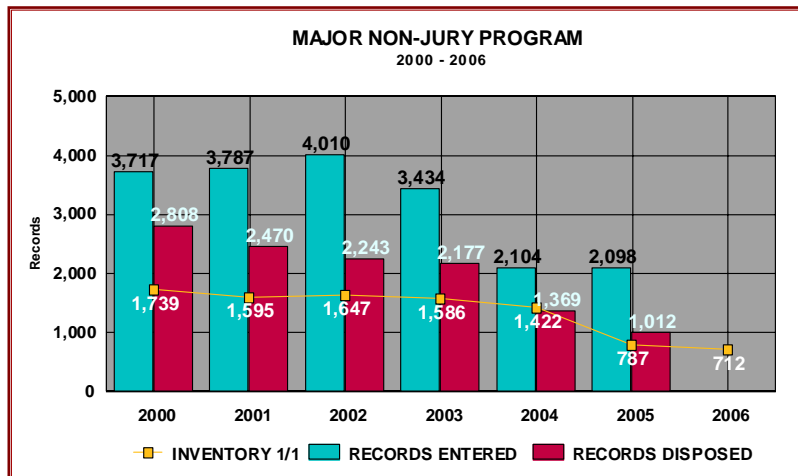
Civil Section - Challenges for 2006

- Explore the possibility of including with the E-Filing Project e-mailing of all Trial Division—Civil notices and letters to counsel of record; automating the Motion Program Cover Sheet; and automating the Discovery Program's Hearing Request Form.
- Automate the process to status the deferred inventory in all civil cases.
- Devise and implement a more efficient system for producing and submitting Civil Case Management Conference Reports in order to improve timeliness.
- Enhance employee accountability and docketing abilities within the Office of Civil Administration (Motions Program) by implementing new management strategies, such as the "numbering system."

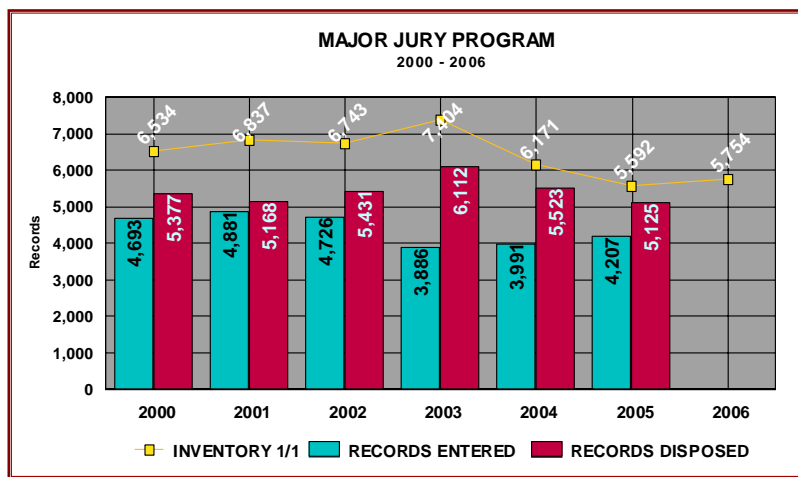
- Ensure that resources and staffing for the Trial Division-Civil are sufficient to meet the growing demand for the Court's services.
- Continue employee education, training and development programs.
- Continue to educate the public about their civil courts.



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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: Juvenile and Domestic Relations. During 2005, the Administrative Judge of the Family Division was the Honorable Myrna P. Field.



2005 Family Division Administrative Judge Myrna Field, right; and her successor in that position, Honorable Kevin M. Dougherty,

Juvenile Branch

The Juvenile Branch of the Family Court Division of the Common Pleas Court of the First Judicial District processes cases involving juvenile delinquency where minors have been accused of crimes, dependency cases arising from allegations of neglect or abuse, truancy petitions and those alleging incorrigibility, and adoptions. Several means are used to provide services to youth and their families.

Juvenile Delinquency Operations

Summarized 2005 Delinquency Case Activity and Outcomes

Dispositions by Proceeding Type

Adjudicatory Hearings	8,229
Pretrial Hearings	1,134
Total	9,363

New Case Disposition Outcomes

Referred Elsewhere	172
Dismissed / Withdrawn	4,383
Probation	2,924
Committed	1,459
Certified to Adult Court	14
Other	411
Total	9,363

Juvenile Probation Department records indicate that the recidivism rate for cases closed out of the system continued to show positive outcomes. Of the youth involved in 3,003

closed-out delinquency cases, 85% successfully completed probation supervision without a new arrest.

- The median length of supervision terms decreased from 16 months in 2004 to 13.5 months in 2005.
- The length of time children spent away from home in placement decreased from 12 months in 2004 to 11 months in 2005.

Probationers in Philadelphia completed over 20,000 hours of community service to the City of Philadelphia. They contributed over \$100,000 in services to the neighborhoods and communities. The Juvenile Probation department collected \$234,000 in restitution dispersed to victims of juvenile crime in 2005; an 85% increase over 2004 collections. In addition, Juvenile Probation also nearly doubled the collection of court costs and fines this year to total \$74,000.

Juvenile Drug Treatment Court

A drug treatment court for juveniles opened in September of 2004. In 2005, 50 participants benefited from the program that provides an alternative to delinquency adjudications for felony drug arrests in the Southwest section of Philadelphia. The treatment component, organized by the West Philadelphia Mental Health Consortium, takes approximately nine months to complete. Thereafter, if juveniles remain drug-free for one year, their delinquency records are expunged. In 2005, 49 of the 60 youth referred to the program opted to participate. Of those, 11 have successfully graduated from the program and the rest remain active participants.

Girls Intensive Supervision Unit

The Girls' Intensive Supervision Unit celebrated its second year in operation and the results continue to be impressive. They worked with over 120 young people this past year and had a 95% success rate with these clients. They instituted cutting-edge programming geared toward specific female treatment based on best practice research. This model program is under the direction of Deputy Chief Denise Ray and Supervisor Christine Gibson.

Police Probation Partnership

The unit has been revamped to bolster the cooperative effort with the Police Department in addressing juvenile crime. Juvenile Court partners with the Philadelphia Police Department through the "Safe Schools Initiative", Youth Violence Reduction Partnership, Bench Warrant protocol, Priority Corner enforcement, and the COMPSTAT (computerized statistical analysis of reported crimes) forum to better serve clients and enforce community safety.

YVRP

The Youth Violence Reduction Partnership continues to be the one of the most progressive and successful collaborations in Philadelphia's mission to address the most violent offenders in the Juvenile and Adult system. The motto "Alive at 25" and statistical reporting and



Mimi Prioleau, Supervisor of Community-Based Probation West, including a YVRP Unit shows her award for exceptional service

analysis helped to yield effective results in addressing this population's re-arrest rate and focusing on the safety of the clients and their communities. As part of the State and Federal Blue Print for Violence Program the YVRP initiative has expanded to two additional Police Districts, the 19th and 22nd.

Aftercare Initiative

In an unprecedented collaboration between Juvenile Probation and the Department of Human Services, the new Aftercare Reintegration Program began in February, 2005. This venture is the result of a two-year development project that provides intensive aftercare services from the time juveniles are committed until their eventual discharge. The program began as a pilot project using the six largest residential providers. It represents a concerted effort to work with youth in placement and their families to provide a wide range of vocational, educational, therapeutic, and community-based services to youth after their discharge from placement facilities.

First-year outcomes have been dramatic. In 2005, the program worked with over 1,000 youth. The re-arrest rate decreased to 10% from the previous years' rate of nearly 25% for aftercare supervision clients. Court Probation Violation Motions also decreased.

MacArthur Grant Award

The Philadelphia Juvenile Probation Department was awarded the prestigious Mac Arthur Grant in 2005 for its proposed work in the new Aftercare Reintegration Initiative and Graduated Sanctions program. This three-year grant allows for concentrated efforts in the area of graduated sanction protocols for youth in the Juvenile Probation aftercare program. Through a very competitive selection process, Philadelphia Family Court was awarded the grant beginning in 2005. It will run through 2007. As a lead partner in the MacArthur Model Systems for Change Initiative, the Philadelphia Juvenile Probation Department continues to provide leadership in state-wide initiatives on aftercare reform.

Parent Orientation to Probation Program

This program orients parents whose children have been adjudicated delinquent in the Family Court. It sets protocols, standards, and expectations for juveniles and their parents with respect to probation, and promotes cooperation between the Probation Department and the families to further ensure successful probationary periods for children.

Probation Department Strategic Planning

The Juvenile Probation department convened a working group that developed and implemented a Strategic Plan for probation to provide a comprehensive organizational roadmap. Strategic visions for year one include:

- Case Management;
- Training;
- Employee wellness;
- Fair and Impartial personnel procedures; and
- Updated Policies and a Procedures Manual.

The strategy group members include Probation Officers (PO) and supervisory staff who are led and guided by an Administrative Oversight Committee. Each of the vision

initiatives have been completed with the exception of the revised Probation Policy and Procedures Manual scheduled for completion in March 2006.

The Management Team and Probation Department begins the second phase of work on the Strategic Plan in 2006.

Case Management and Supervision Standards

As part of the Strategic Plan, the Juvenile Probation Department developed new and comprehensive standards for all probation units. The manual clearly defines operational procedures and staff accountability expectations. The standards became effective August 1, 2005.

Probation Officer (PO) Accountability

Through the JACS system, the Department developed a monthly Probation Officer Supervision Report that details client contacts made by line/field POs. The report outlines with whom and where visits occur and ensures effective and efficient probation supervision. This report has become a critical tool in PO audit and accountability procedures.

Random Moment in Time Study

Since October 2003, the Probation Department has been involved in a State/Federal program supporting research about probation department operations across the country. Program participation yields entitlement to funds for services provided by the probation departments involved, and the income generated will be used by the Probation Department for program and departmental needs. Last year, this program generated over \$5 million for the City of Philadelphia and probation services.

Juvenile Dependency Operations

Time Certain / Block Scheduling

Dependent Court uses Time Certain Block Scheduling to improve operations. Cases are divided among four time blocks 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 continuances.

Dependent Court subscribes to One Family – One Judge assignment and scheduling practices. Accordingly, the City Solicitor and the Defender Child Advocate formed attorney teams for each dependency courtroom. Because they follow each child's case from initial filing through final discharge, judges and attorneys gain a greater depth of understanding and commitment ultimately improving the quality of justice.

The Court Listings Unit monitors individual judicial caseloads and caseflow. Their assessment and oversight allows for equitable distribution and tracking of cases throughout the courtrooms. It also helps 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 dependent courtrooms, Family Court utilizes two full-time Pre-Hearing Conference Rooms. In the Philadelphia Frontloaded Dependency Court Model, most new court cases begin with Pre-Hearing Conferences involving all parties and moderated by a facilitator. An assessment of the problems causing allegations of child abuse or neglect is made. Expectations of the court are explained and responsibilities are delineated. A representative from the Behavioral Health Unit is present to assess MH/DA needs. Of the 1,437 Pre-Hearing Conferences held in 2005, 1,101 resulted in full agreements that addressed placements, visitation, behavioral health evaluations, and services. Resolving these issues through early intervention helps to foster family preservation or reunification. As an added benefit, Pre-Hearing Conference agreements preserve judicial resources.

The Pre-Hearing Conference Coordinator works to ensure that conferences are scheduled in a timely manner, that counsel is appointed for all relevant parties, and that conference cases are distributed evenly among the courtrooms. The Coordinator also notifies the Behavioral Health Unit of upcoming listings so that they are able to prepare for each case. Along with parents, legal guardians, and witnesses, other conference participants include representatives from the Department of Human Services, the Office of the City Solicitor, and the Defender Association Child Advocate Unit or court appointed private counsel for children. When warranted, private or court appointed counsel for parents and legal guardians, behavioral health professionals, and a Good Shepherd Mediation Facilitator participate.

Frontloaded Dependent Court Process

Philadelphia's Dependent Court successfully employs elements of the Frontloaded Model of Case Processing. By the time of the initial hearings, all attorneys have been appointed, all parties have been provided with copies of petitions through timely notice, and the parents and children have been contacted by their counsel. Immediately prior to the initial hearings, Pre-Hearing Conferences are conducted. As a result, approximately 77% of cases arrive at the first adjudicatory hearing as agreements, cutting down on court time. Additionally, by front-loading services, children proceed towards permanency at a faster rate.

On-Site Behavioral Health Services

The Behavioral Health and Drug and Alcohol services support all dependency courtrooms. Master's level clinicians from the Behavioral Health System Family Court Unit staff Pre-Hearing Conferences. Before the conferences, they research the treatment histories of family members named in dependent petitions. Later at the Pre-Hearing Conferences, they can identify behavioral health needs and arrange for evaluations and treatment for family members and make informed recommendations to the Court. The process prevents unnecessary duplication of services, minimizing delay. From the Pre-Hearing Conferences, clinicians arranged for 514 psychological, psychiatric and family evaluations. An additional 815 evaluations were ordered at court hearings, for a total of 1,329 assessments in 2005.

On-Site Clinical Evaluation Unit

Through the support of Philadelphia Health Management Corporation, Dependent Court has an on-site Clinical Evaluation Unit that assesses family members for drug and

alcohol problems, refers them for treatment, and provides progress reports for ensuing hearings. In 2005, they conducted 927 substance abuse assessments. At the conclusion of 2005, they were managing the cases of 1,124 people in drug treatment. Although frontloading is always preferable, referrals for evaluation and treatment also come from judges in later stages of the proceedings, and the Behavioral Health and Clinical Evaluation units respond accordingly.

National child welfare experts have praised the Philadelphia Court Model of providing early access to treatment as one of the most promising programs in the field.

Dependent Court Special Programs and Projects

The court works closely with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop programs in response to identified needs. Through the Court Improvement Project, the court also invites collaboration from provider social service agencies, legal service agencies, and private court-appointed attorneys to raise standards and practices for representation of children and parents in Dependent Court. Additionally, best practices training has been provided to other Dependent Courts in Pennsylvania under the auspices of the Federal Court Improvement Project.

Two special review courtrooms operate. 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 the children of parents whose parental rights have been terminated.

Permanency

Judges, administrators and employees have been concentrating their efforts to comply with guidelines set forth in the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). ASFA recommends that for children who have been in placement for at least 15 of 22 months, there is a need to proceed expeditiously toward either Termination of Parental Rights or Permanent Legal Custody. Permanency is the ultimate goal and if children cannot be returned to their parents, an alternative permanent home should be sought. Permanency reports are distributed to inform judges of whether children appearing before them have achieved permanency within the previous month.

In addition to permanency reports distributed to the judges, the Juvenile Dependency Case Manager, an attorney, conducts two different kinds of conferences to ensure that permanency is achieved in a timely manner. Pretrial Conferences are held approximately 90 days before contested Termination of Parental Rights hearings to make certain that judicial orders are being followed, that witnesses are prepared, and that exhibits are ready and the cases are ready to proceed.

Additionally, Case Management Conferences are scheduled for cases in which a child who has a goal of Reunification has been in placement for 36 months or more. The purpose of the conferences is to determine whether Reunification is the proper goal, and if not, to change the goal and proceed accordingly. This prevents cases from languishing in the system.

Filings of Dependency Petitions

For calendar year 2005, nearly 4,500 new petitions were filed and over 26,500 review hearings took place.

Children and Youth Services

Adoption Branch

The Adoption Branch staff is responsible for filing, processing, and listing all termination of parental rights and adoption finalization matters. Final Adoption decrees are also issued by the Adoption Branch. Adoption Branch staff processes Registrations of Foreign Birth and Gestational Carrier cases, and searches on behalf of adoptees seeking to locate their biological parents. From January 1, to December 31, 2005, 509 Petitions for Adoption were granted and 518 children were adopted.

Accelerated Adoption Review Court (AARC)

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

Court Nursery

Each Sunday, court-ordered supervised visitation is conducted in the Court nursery. Orders originate in the Domestic Relations and Juvenile Branches. Three sessions are held; 9:30-11:30 AM; 12:00-2:00 PM and 2:30-4:30 PM. Families are screened through a metal detector and a security guard and deputy sheriff are in attendance. Two nursery aides facilitate sign-in and monitor visitations.

In April, 2000, new procedures and regulations were put in place to enhance reporting for Supervised Visitation. Each family has a folder that contains court-orders, sign-in sheets, and any incident reports. A Nursery Request Form helps staff to ensure that 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 visitations is the partnership between Creative Arts therapists, the Please Touch Museum, the Department of Human Services and Family Court. Together, they engage the families in art, music, and dance movement therapy. In addition, student interns assist and participate in Creative Arts modalities.

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

The REAAP Unit seeks to prevent placements in the dependent or delinquent systems. It is a valuable resource in the probation services continuum. REAAP facilitates service delivery to those parents who directly contact the Family Court to notify authorities that their children are truant, incorrigible, involved with drugs, or exhibiting similar behaviors. Parents will often advise court employees that the only alternative method of obtaining

services for their children is through Police arrest. They state that REAAP is their only answer, and last resort short of having their children arrested.

The REAAP Unit also services juveniles who are placed on deferred adjudication or interim probation status. Through a new referral process for immediate access to services, judges can rely on REAAP when adjudication is deferred to determine how juveniles may respond to intervention before adjudications of delinquency are formalized.

REAAP cases commence with assessments conducted by Family Court social workers. Upon completion of the assessments, parents and children are linked with the agencies that will best address their particular problems. The agencies that provide services to our clients are: Girls, Inc., Community Advocates' Association for Children and Youth (CAACY), Caring People's Alliance (CPA), Congresso de Latino Unidos, Inc., Counseling or Referral Assistance (CORA), George Junior Republic, Philadelphia Youth Advocacy Programs (PYAP). In addition, Functional Family Therapy and the Parent Project are offered through this Unit. Act 53 cases and under-ten (years of age) petitions are handled by REAAP staff for children in that age group.

Functional Family Therapy

In April, 2001, a dynamic new component was added to the REAAP Unit array of intervention services through a grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) implementing the Blueprint for Violence Prevention program. Family Court collaborates with the Temple University School of Psychiatry to deliver specific therapeutic intervention in the homes of REAAP clients.

Parent Project®

The Parent Project® is a ten to sixteen-week parent training program specifically designed for parents of strong-willed or out-of-control adolescent children. The curriculum teaches concrete identification, prevention, and intervention strategies for some of the most destructive of adolescent behaviors: poor school attendance and performance, alcohol and other substance abuse, gang activity, running away, and violence.



Entertainment at Parent Appreciation Day

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 utilized.

The Parent Project has a proven track record. Over 150,000 families have attended Parent Project® nationwide. It's the largest court-mandated diversion program of its kind in the nation. Statistics show that it reduced juvenile crime by one third, while significantly increasing school attendance and performance. The Parent Project® was recognized by the American Bar Association as the strongest parent involvement program in the nation for adjudicated youth.

Family Court Probation employees and Department of Human Services staff were jointly trained in this model. The founders of this initiative came to Philadelphia for a week and trained 60 people to deliver these services. For the past three years, various sessions have been held throughout the City; including sites at the Court, churches, community centers, and others. Facilitators are dedicated and the participating parents enjoy and benefit from this meaningful program.

Project START (Stop Truancy and Recommend Treatment)

Project START (Stop Truancy And Recommend Treatment) targets juveniles aged 13 to 14 years with 8 or more unexcused absences from school. Court hearings are conducted at eight different sites throughout the city by hearing officers. The rooms where the hearings take place are designed as courtrooms. Hearing officers seek to determine the cause of truants' behavior and they order a Department of Human Services-contracted agency specializing in the delivery of truancy/delinquency prevention services to be involved. Cases are given 60-day dates for review to confirm that the juveniles have been engaged in treatment and returned to school. If they have not returned to school, their cases are referred to the court at 1801 Vine Street, where sanctions are imposed accordingly. These sanctions might include fines assessed on the parents and community service.

From September of 2004 to January of 2006, 13,450 hearings were conducted. Project START helped a total of 5,941 families with 6,250 students.

Juvenile Automated Computer System (JACS)

On November 3, 2002, Philadelphia Family Division Juvenile Branch started a computerized record system, known as JACS (Juvenile Automated Computer System). JACS is a mainframe program with a G.U.I. overlay that gives JACS screens a clean, easy-to-understand appeal with dropdown boxes, radio buttons and tab key navigation capabilities. This system was created in-house by court programmers. JACS continues to evolve from that system with many additions and improvements tailored to meet the needs of user groups and as requested by staff.

Member numbers (Juvenile Numbers) and Case (petition) numbers are generated through JACS. Victim information as well as alerts for Victim Notification and Impact Statements are stored in JACS. Once information is entered into JACS, users can easily search the system by name, case number, Police Photo number or a variety of other criteria. Delinquent and Dependent cases are initiated, scheduled, tracked, and recorded in JACS in real time. Restitution and community service and costs and fines account information are also processed through JACS. Placement histories and detention status of juveniles are immediately available. Court-appointed attorneys are assigned through JACS and information tables are kept on Probation Officers, Schools, Attorneys, Institutions, Police Districts, and other County Probation Offices. These are updated accordingly. JACS has reporting capabilities and over one hundred types "pf" reports are generated on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or *ad hoc* basis. JACS incorporates an imaging program that allows documents from outside agencies, including police reports, victim impact statements, and protection orders, to be attached to records via scanning. These can also be retrieved electronically by users. Furthermore, probation staff can also fill out and electronically prints forms (Jetforms) or store them for future reference.

JACS provides instant access to information that was formerly stored in a variety of media in different locations. JACS eliminates the repetitive entry of information by user groups providing access to well-organized, accurate, up-to-date information. This makes for more efficient operations and better communication between agencies. JACS provides instant access to Clerk of Quarter sessions Orders that were previously available only on paper. JACS communicates electronically with Department of Human Services and Police Department systems providing data about Bench Warrants and Juveniles in placement.

Domestic Relations Branch

Mission Statement

The mission of the Domestic Relations Branch of the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania Common Pleas Court is to efficiently administer cases involving paternity establishment, child and spousal support, divorce, child custody, and domestic violence. The (DRB) utilizes modern case management principles to: enhance timely case processing; increase performance measures; collect child support; establish paternity; and secure medical support for children. Most importantly, the Domestic Relations Division DRB is devoted to bringing justice to the public it serves.

Responsibilities

The Domestic Relations Division has varied responsibilities in responding to complaints and petitions that can be broadly categorized under: Child and Spousal Support, Divorce, Child Custody, and Domestic Violence.

Support: Child and spousal support cases have three components: 1) establishment of paternity; 2) determination of the support obligation; and 3) enforcement.

Paternity: For children born out of wedlock, establishment of paternity is the first step toward determining the child support obligation. Paternity can be established in one of four ways: 1) voluntary acknowledgement of paternity; 2) genetic testing; 3) default paternity establishment; and 4) in-hospital voluntary paternity establishment.

Obligation: In determining support obligations the amount of support – child support, spousal support, or alimony *pendente lite* (suspended by the lawsuit, or in effect until the outcome of the case is determined) – is awarded pursuant to procedures under the Rules of Civil Procedure and determined in accordance with support guidelines.

Support Compliance: The main function of the Support Compliance Unit is to monitor and track all child support orders to ensure compliance. Support orders are electronically monitored through the Pennsylvania Automated Child Support Enforcement System (PACSES) for payments. Efforts are taken to encourage compliance as soon as the order is entered. If necessary, progressive enforcement remedies are taken. When accounts become delinquent, payors may be scheduled for Enforcement Conferences, Contempt Conferences, or Judicial Contempt Hearings, depending on the circumstances or the severity of the delinquency. The underlying objective of the enforcement process is to compel payment, and encourage ongoing compliance.

Automated Enforcement: Cases that meet certain criteria for automated enforcement are selected for one or more of the following enforcement remedies: IRS intercepts, Credit Bureau Reports, Driver's License Suspensions, Professional License Suspensions, Financial Institution Data Matches, Passport Denials, Property Liens, and Lottery Interceptions.

Divorce: The Domestic Relations Division also has jurisdiction over all facets of divorce proceedings. These include the entry of divorce decrees and annulments and economic claims arising from divorce actions – including equitable distribution, the division of marital property, and alimony issues.

Child Custody: Resolution of child custody disputes is one of the more sensitive and emotionally charged functions of the Domestic Relations Division. Custody complaints are referred to the Custody Unit and conducted by Custody Masters who are attorneys. The Custody Masters enter proposed orders governing custody, partial custody, and visitation of children.

Domestic Violence: The Domestic Violence Unit is a *pro se* (without legal representation; literally “for self”) filing unit designed to provide assistance to victims of domestic violence who have no lawyer in the preparation of Protection from Abuse Petitions. Domestic Relations Division Judges hear cases involving domestic violence between family members, or between parties who have had an intimate relationship.

Innovations

In 2005, there were several important developments and improvements in the Domestic Relations Division. These were chiefly designed to improve performance, but were also tailored specifically to improve the administration of the functions described above, and to broaden public access.

ICM Plan

To improve performance, a multi-phased Improved Case Management (ICM) Plan was developed and implemented in November of 2003. The ICM Plan outlined dramatic changes to Domestic Relations organization and case processing. Units were organized into teams. Weekly management meetings were initiated. The Domestic Relations Division received a special IV-D grant allowing an increase in the workforce, and all new employees participated in comprehensive training provided by DR Training Staff and the Pennsylvania Child Support Training Institute (PACSETI).

Other Highlights

Other highlights included the implementation of Night Court and Amnesty Programs. The Domestic Relations Division received a State Grant for 500 networking for jobs referrals through Educational Data System Incorporated (EDSI) for unemployed defendants. The DRB expanded Customer Service, and Customer Service staff received cross-training in Custody and Domestic Violence. The Automated Voice Response System menus were also improved to make it easier to obtain information.

The Writ Servers Unit incorporated non-traditional work hours. Writ service now takes place seven days a week improving their success rate. In addition, a Special Employment Review Master and an Enforcement Master were assigned to expedite cases where defendants who are delinquent in payment have income that may not be subject to automatic wage withholding or similar remedies to intercept their funds, or in cases where earning capacity may be an issue.



The new Domestic Relations Support Compliance Unit was officially opened March 17, 2005 when the ceremonial ribbon was cut by Family Court Administrative Judge Myrna Field and Daniel Richard, Director of the Bureau Child Support Enforcement.

Several new units were created: the Case Closure, Quality Assurance, Support Compliance, Undistributed Collections, and the Electronic Data Control Units. The Training Unit was also expanded to include an on-site fully-equipped resource center and training facility. All DR staff benefit from annual division-wide training days and ongoing training focused on specific topics.

In a move to improve case initiation processes, DR staff were placed in District Welfare Offices. In addition, a partnership with Pretrial Services was formed for service of Domestic Relations Bench Warrants. The Domestic Relations Division also opened an additional courtroom to enhance case processing.

Achievements in Custody – Divorce – Domestic Violence

Improvements were also made in the Custody, Divorce Master, and Domestic Violence Units. The two-tier system of Custody Masters and Judicial hearings accommodated 9,410 custody hearings in 2005. Custody Mediation is also available two days every week. Mediators from Temple University and University of Pennsylvania participate. In 2005, 1,791 divorces were granted through the effective use of two Permanent Divorce Masters and *de novo* hearings held by Domestic Relations Judges.

There were 13,481 Protection from Abuse Petitions filed in 2005. Improvements in the Domestic Violence Unit include a remodeled waiting area where an instructional video is viewed. Domestic Violence Informational pamphlets are available in all Domestic Relations waiting areas. Heightened security for the Domestic Violence Unit includes a security camera in the Domestic Violence waiting area and separate waiting areas for parties scheduled for court.

Child Support Establishment

2005 Support Filings

New Complaints	24,282
Modifications	15,493
Contempt	29,176
Exceptions	1,006
Motions	2,205
Total	72,162

At the conclusion of 2005, the Child Support Enforcement program had 120,698 open child support cases. Of those, 89,562, or 74.20% had child support orders. There were almost 102,000 children who were born out of wedlock and involved in the DRB court process. Through diligence and hard work, paternity has been established for 82,540, or 80.98% of the total.

Approximately 45% of the cases with support orders have monthly obligations of less than \$250. Interestingly, support obligation compliance increases as the obligation increases. Cases that have an obligation of less than \$250 per month result in only a 43% compliance rate, but those that have an obligation above \$250 per month result in a 65% compliance ratio.

Child Support Enforcement

Current Support Enforcement Remedies include:

- Wage attachments
- Enforcement and Contempt Conferences
- Contempt Hearings (Judicial)
- Driver's License Suspensions
- Asset Seizures
- Federal & State / Tax Interceptions
- Passport Denial & Seizures
- Professional License Suspensions
- Child Support Lien Network, CSLN
- Credit Bureau Reporting

Total support collections during calendar year 2005 totaled \$201,315,933. IV-D Child Support collections during 2005 totaled \$195,513,813. There are 92,519 cases with arrears due, and of those cases 60,655 (65.56%) have payments being made towards arrears.

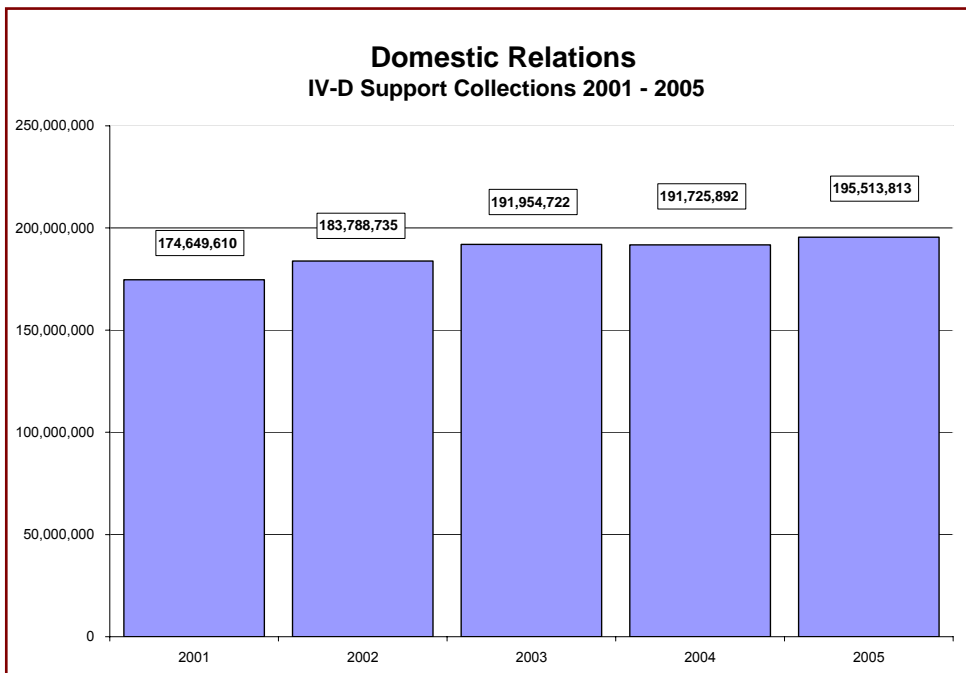
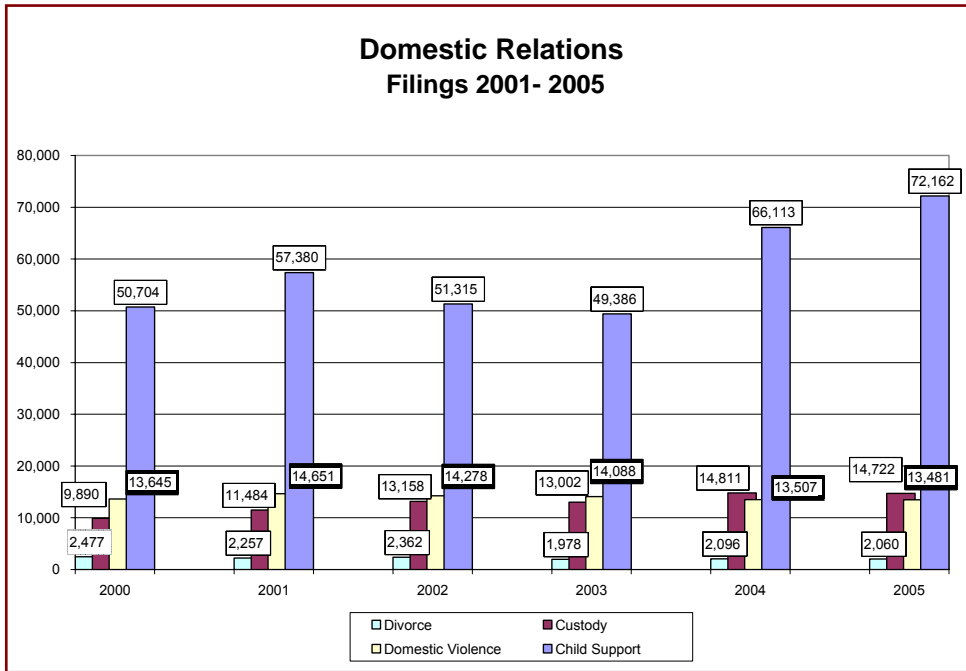
Bench Warrant Improvement Plan / Special Projects Team

A Bench Warrant Special Projects Team was formed along with an administrative process to vacate bench warrants. The Special Projects Team works from computer reports to identify bench warrants that could be administratively vacated. In addition, the team works proactively by contacting cooperative parties who are adversely affected by bench warrants to obtain relevant information. The Special Projects Team also receives information from a Tip Line (215-686-2977). Valid information is updated and submitted for distribution to the Pre-Trial Services or the Case Management Team.

Child Support Amnesty Program

The Child Support Amnesty Program operated for one week beginning Monday, June 13, 2005 to Friday, June 17, 2005. This program focused on giving Defendants an opportunity to surrender to the Court; resolve their paternity establishment, support order

establishment, and delinquency matters in good faith without judicial intervention. Unemployed Defendants were invited to participate in a jobs program. Defendants who maintained that they had no earning capacity or were otherwise unemployable were referred to a Support Master who held earning capacity hearings to confirm or refute those statements. The Amnesty Program was publicized via local news stations, newspapers, flyers, the First Judicial District Domestic Relations Division website, OCSE, BCSE, Fatherhood Network, and other media venues including notices spelled out in lights at the top of the PECO Tower building.



Writ Service Unit

The writ service process was improved by writ servers performing preliminary “administrative locate” investigations by checking all available official records and data sources before attempting personal service to home addresses in the field. As a result, 948 Defendants were located in prisons, 50 confirmed deceased, and 4,159 incorrect addresses were identified, avoiding 5,157 unnecessary home visits.

In addition, writ service during non-traditional hours boosted the success rate increased by an average of 6%. The combined upgrades increased the monthly overall unit success rate by an average of 13% in 2005.

Networking for Jobs Unit Expanded

The Networking for Jobs Unit was expanded to include two Conference Officers and a Master in Support. Conference Officers conduct support establishment and support compliance conferences in both local and Interstate Responding Cases after a Defendant completes the Jobs Program. The Master in Support conducts hearings of record for employment review. The hearing schedule frequency is intended to foil defendants who claim that they can't pay support because they're unemployed. Many have been found to have been self employed or to have “under-the table” or other unreported income. These hearings also target defendants who may be eligible for referral to the job program but are not actively participating in good faith; including those who refuse to participate or those who drop out.

Employment Review Masters will prepare Seek Work Agreements when appropriate. If there are existing support obligations but it appears that defendants are intentionally unemployed, or underemployed, or might otherwise have the ability to pay, the Employment Review Master will generate Petitions for contempt and schedule judicial hearings when appropriate. If unemployed defendants demonstrate an inability to earn, they will be escorted to, or scheduled before, a Special Master who will conduct “earning capacity” hearings. The hearings are also intended to reduce the number of scheduled judicial employment reviews and allow for more timely judicial hearing dates.



These DR security personnel were recognized for discovering and confiscating drugs that someone was carrying into the courthouse

Security Enhancements

Some of the new security enhancements for 2005 included:

- Sheriff located in lobby
- Increased security staff
- Upgraded metal detectors
- Security cameras located in lobby, courtroom level, and DV waiting room
- Patrolling Security Guard monitoring entire building
- Security mirrors in hallways

- Security desks located on each floor
- All visitors must register and be issued visitor's passes
- Door "scope viewer" installed in all courtroom doors
- WAVE security alert system installed throughout building
- On-going and upgraded training for all security personnel
- Security-awareness training provided to all employees.

Funding

Federal Title IV-D Child Support Enforcement program funding is based on five (5) performance measures: paternity establishment, support order establishment, collections on current support, case collections on arrears, and program cost effectiveness. The pool of Federal incentive funds are disbursed to the states based on performance measures, as is Pennsylvania's portion when it is disbursed among the 67 counties. The Domestic Relations Division is consistently working to improve performance and meet challenges that may arise. Some of the current challenges include the possible reduction of Federal Funding to Title IV-D Child Support Program and the difficulties associated with collecting money from chronically unemployed defendants. In addition, the FJD Domestic Relations Court is situated in Philadelphia's large urban area where, according to the United States Census Bureau, 20% of the population live in poverty. Other challenges include locating absent parents and effectuating wage attachments.

DRB statistics show that only 45% of all orders are collected via wage attachment and many defendants have "under-the-table" income. Faced with these challenges, the Domestic Relations Division leaders have augmented reorganization efforts with new procedures to improve performance and they've set goals to ensure the continuation of that process.

Overall Organizational Goals for 2006

- Increase support collections
- Continue to improve Performance Levels to maintain and enhance IV-D funding
- Move to a consolidated Family Court building
- Assist with planning for New PACSES modernization
- Finish conversion of PARENTS to BANNER system
- Re-organization of Interstate Unit
- Continue working toward completion of the ICM Plan
- Expand the scope of Night Court
- Expand Networking for Jobs

- Implement Outreach Program
- Expand DR Training
- Foster ongoing partnership with BCSE
- Pursue “One Family – One Judge”
- Expand Custody Mediation
- Develop Parenting Classes

Orphans' Court Division

The purpose of the Orphans' Court is to protect the personal and property rights of persons and entities that may not be otherwise capable doing so themselves. Minors, incapacitated persons, decedents' estates, nonprofit corporations and trusts fall under the jurisdiction of the Orphans' Court. The Orphans' Court is the arbiter of any dispute or issue that may arise in connection to applications for marriage licenses through the Philadelphia Marriage License Bureau. 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. The name of the Court is derived from the more general definition of "orphan" as one lacking protection, not the more common association of a child deprived by death of his parents.

There are currently three judges assigned to the Orphans' Court Division of the Court of Common Pleas: Administrative Judge Joseph D. O'Keefe, Judge Anne E. Lazarus, and Judge John W. Herron. Among their duties, these Judges adjudicate disputes over the administration of decedents' estates including approving accounts of administrators/executors; appointing guardians for both minors and incapacitated persons; resolving appeals from the Register of Wills, including will contests; handling inheritance and estate tax disputes, and approving civil settlements involving minor plaintiffs and/or estates.

The year 2005 was a landmark year for the Orphans' Court division because on January 1st the court launched the Orphans' Court Electronic Filing System that allows for the electronic filing of legal papers and pleadings. The electronic filing system was optional for the first six months following its implementation, but as of July 1, 2005 electronic filing became mandatory and all pleadings must now be filed electronically.

Lawyers and *pro se* parties are able to apply through the Court's website for a username, password and pin to access the electronic filing system, and are then able to commence new cases or file pleadings in existing Orphans' Court cases. Lawyers and *pro se* parties are also able to review dockets for the cases they've initiated, and attorneys may review the dockets of any cases in which they are the attorney of record. The system also allows for the payment of filing fees by credit card.

The general public is able to electronically access filed documents through computer terminals in the clerk's office; however, the following data fields are redacted as required by local rule: the name of the minor (in cases of a minor's estate), social security numbers, dates of birth, financial account numbers, and home addresses. Unredacted documents are accessible to attorneys of record and *pro se* parties who filed the cases.

To further assist users, 18 training sessions were held and attended by more than 188 lawyers, paralegals and *pro se* parties between June and August 2005. A comprehensive training video is also available online at the court website.

In 2005, a total of 1,252 usernames and passwords were assigned, most (663) to attorneys, but a substantial number (589) were assigned to *pro se* parties. At the end of 2005, the system contains 13,437 electronic documents. The Orphans' Court Electronic Filing System is a state-of-the-art electronic filing system but additional functionality will

be added this year. E-service of all pleadings and orders and expanded clerk and judicial functionality will add even more system value.

Members of the Probate and Trust Law Section of the Philadelphia Bar Association have consistently expressed high levels of satisfaction with the new Electronic Filing System. Throughout 2005, Orphans' Court leaders and staff met with members of the Probate and Trust Law Section to elicit their responses to the system and to learn if the system's efficiency or user-friendliness could be improved.

In September, 2005, the three Judges of the Orphans' Court attended the 2005 Bench Bar Conference, held in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Throughout 2005, the three Orphans' Court judges also attended CLE courses as guests of the Probate and Trust Section of the Philadelphia Bar Association.

The Orphans' Court Division processed the following during calendar year 2005:

Type of Filing	Carry-Over from 2004	New Filings in 2005	Total Disposed of in CY 2005	Total Open Matters as of 01-Jan-2006
Accounts (for all case types)	131	199	198	132
Exceptions to Adjudications	7	19	15	11
Schedule of Distribution	6	55	56	5
Appeal from Register of Wills	5	15	7	13
Petitions to Appoint Guardians:				
for Incapacitated Persons	72	318	331	59
for Minors	10	76	73	13
Approvals: Minors Comp., WD/S Orphans' Court	50	561	532	79
+Civil Division	31	1018	1039	10
Petitions for Allowances: Minors & Incapacitated Persons	37	251	257	31
Scheduling Orders	NA	3313	NA	NA
Inheritance Tax Matters	63	88	107	44
Citations	NA	675	NA	NA
"Other" Petitions*	264	1,078	944	398
Report of Exam of Trust Assets	NA	76	76	0
Marriage License Matters	NA	164	164	0
Report of Cemetery Assets	NA	924	924	0
Miscellaneous Matters	NA	1,546	1,546	0
TOTAL	676	10,376	6,269	795

*Other Petitions include petitions for sale of real estate, approval to act as corporate fiduciary, letters after 21 years, and non-profits.

Total Inheritance Tax Collections

Fiscal Year	Collection Amount
2004	\$12,423,553
2005	\$12,848,922

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.

Overall Initiatives

Municipal Court administrative leaders and staff continue to engage in an ongoing examination and analysis of the judicial and non-judicial operations of the court. The primary focus is access to justice for the public. Judges, administrators, and employees have been successful in implementing numerous initiatives that should continue to improve the operational efficiency of Municipal Court within the First Judicial District. Several other initiatives are still in the planning stages as both short and long-term goals. Municipal Court calendar year 2005 highlights are summarized below.

Strategic Management Plan

Pursuant to directives of the President Judge, strategic planning continues to be incumbent upon the Court's managers to ensure that activities and expenditures are carried out in a cohesive, responsible and concise manner. Plans were developed and designed to insure that operating units are provided the functionality they require within the context of a broad organizational framework, while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

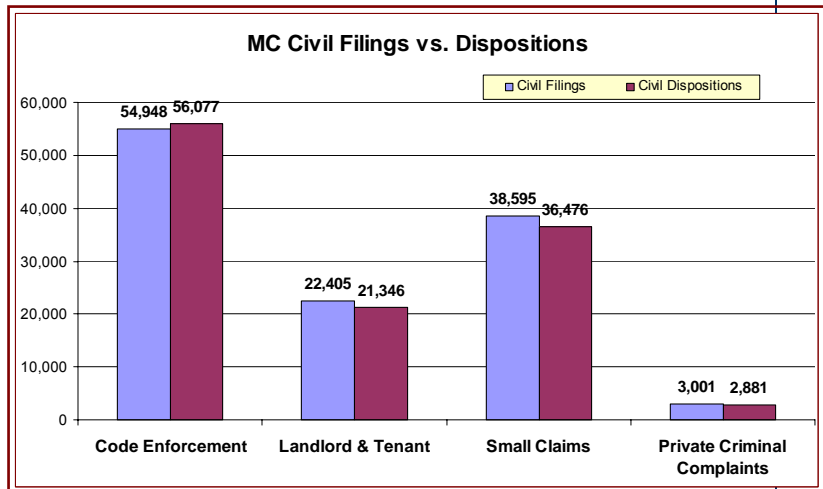
In 2005, judicial and administrative leaders continued to work with initiatives to control expenditures while efficiently processing caseloads in both the civil and criminal divisions. Through a concerted effort, Municipal Court achieved its attrition goal with the First Judicial District ahead of schedule. Judges, administrators and staff remain cognizant of our fiscal responsibilities while striving to ensure access to justice for all consumers.

Municipal Court Civil Division

Civil Litigation Automated Internet Information Municipal Court System (CLAIMS) Update

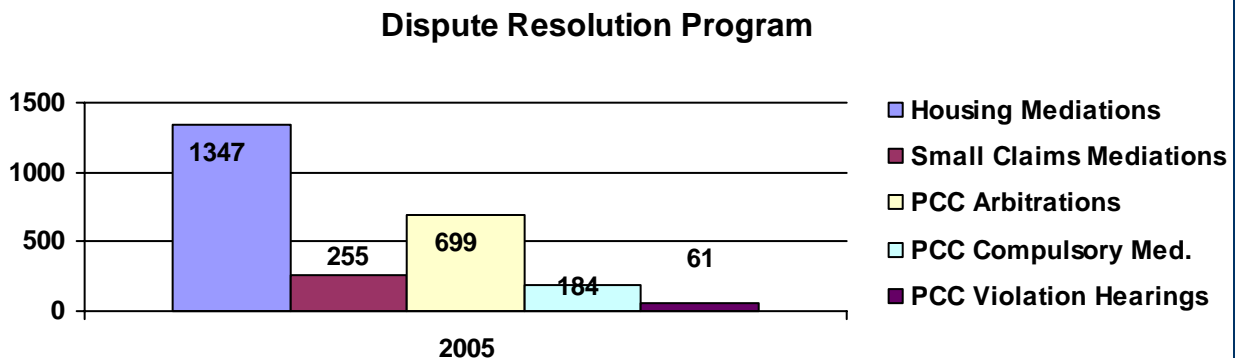
CLAIMS is an integrated, web-based electronic filing, document and case management system encompassing all Municipal Court civil cases. CLAIMS provides access to electronic documents, e-commerce, online docketing, scheduling, and online forms. The system also transmits documents to writ servers, and manages cases. Real-time data entry is occurring in all civil courtrooms. We continue to enhance the system as new technology warrants.

During 2005, system training was conducted for over 260 private attorneys. In-house trainers continue to expand services for new users, attorneys, and Judges on the system application. An electronic format training manual should make for further efficiency.



Dispute Resolution Program

The program recently extended training curricula to include the Villanova University School of Law. Now, third year law students from the University of Pennsylvania, Villanova, Temple and Widener University Law Schools receive credit for completing the mediation skills training program and actively participating as mediators for Landlord/Tenant, Small Claims and private criminal complaints scheduled for compulsory mediation. The program also provides mediation service to parties involved with the program when it is conducted off-site in a satellite small claims courtroom. The Dispute Resolution Program processed a total of 2,546 cases during 2005. The Case Breakdown is shown in the chart below:



Satellite Small Claims Court

Philadelphia Municipal Court continues to provide access to justice through the Satellite Small Claims Court. In 2004, the Mayor's Office requested the Municipal Court establish a satellite courtroom in a geographic area outside of Center City to provide litigants with the ability to have their cases heard by a Philadelphia Municipal Court Judge, or settled with the assistance of a Certified Court Mediator, in a convenient and safe setting. Since the program's inception, over 650 litigants have used the services available one evening per week.

Civil Fee Bill

The Municipal Court Civil Division worked in conjunction with several representatives from the FJD Common Pleas Court to develop proposed legislation that would replace the current civil fee bill. The proposed bill consolidates fees collected in both courts and is currently waiting legislative approval.

Digital Recording

During 2005, Municipal Court staff operated digital recording devices in all civil judicial courtrooms. They also archive records in-house. The 2006 goal is to have the ability to archive the recordings directly onto the First Judicial District Network Server for easier access.

Utilization of the FJD Record Retention Schedule

Municipal Court Civil Records have been in the City Archives since 1969. The FJD record retention schedule allowed the court to destroy records from 1969 through 1987. During 2006, the court will authorize destruction of some of the records from 1988. In addition, the court prepared 310 boxes of transcripts (representing approximately 73,780 transcripts) for transfer to the City Archives. With the implementation of the CLAIMS system more and more records are taking electronic format and eventually no paper transcripts will be boxed and stored off-site. This will have a favorable budget impact and make accessing transcripts easier.

Customer Service

The court has designated two on-site areas for customers and attorneys to access civil dockets in "view only" mode. Access is provided through the FJD website for civil case search capability via CLAIMS. The court initiated a tracking system at the civil information counters on the 5th floor of 34 S. 11th Street which recorded 38,598 "walk-in" customers in 2005.

Internship Programs

This past year the civil division gave work to students on work study from various school and city internship programs. The students have successfully contributed to civil division efforts while gaining valuable work experience.

Municipal Court Criminal Division

Criminal Division Initiatives

Criminal Summit & Initiatives

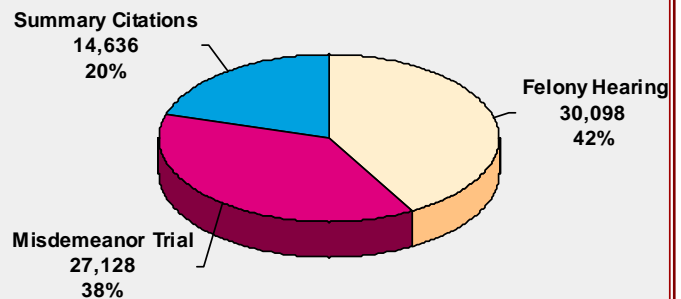
President Judge Louis J. Prezenza held a criminal case flow management summit with judges and representatives of criminal justice partners in Philadelphia in response to issues raised at a previous judicial conference concerning myriad issues affecting Philadelphia Municipal Court caseload trends. The underlying theme for bringing everyone to one table was that shared problems required each member of the team to commit to be a part of the solution. Thus far, the success has, and will continue to be monumental. The bullet points below include some immediate and long-term issues raised for resolution:



Judge Alfred DiBona (right) is presented with the first Thomas M. Foglietta Service Award for extraordinary service to the public, by Municipal Court President Judge Louis J. Prezenza.

- *Expert Witness Protocols* for felony narcotics cases were refined with assistance from command staff within the Philadelphia Police Department Narcotics Division and the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office. Ensuring the availability of expert witnesses in police divisional courtrooms will reduce continuances.
- *Police Liaison Services* – Protracted Courtroom Programs – judges identified scheduling challenges with police officers in courtrooms designated for protracted cases. Mindful of Police Department and prosecutor's office budgetary and resource issues, assistant district attorneys assigned to the courtrooms were given access to a police scheduling database instead of requiring actual police liaison officers to appear in court to coordinate scheduling. The practice is now used in other First Judicial District courtrooms.

Municipal Court Criminal Cases Filed 2005

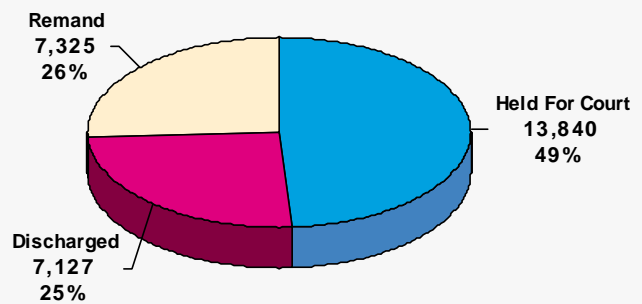


- *Protracted Program Protocol Refinements* – As a result of some inefficiencies arising from scheduling trends in protracted courtrooms, compounded by lengthy continuance dates, revisions were initiated to ensure efficient management of

“ready” pools of trials and hearings. The President Judge informed all judges that certain criteria and judicial approval were mandatory to continue cases into protracted courtrooms. Dramatic improvements resulted in increased dispositions and shorter continuance dates.

- *Protocols for Negotiated Guilty Pleas* – With improved levels of communication and greater cooperation from the District Attorney and Defender Association of Philadelphia, non-trial dispositions in criminal cases have been increasing.
- *Fugitive Misdemeanor Custody Cases* – In a continuing effort to increase operational efficiency, the DA and Defender agreed to a pilot program to examine all fugitive status misdemeanor cases – excluding DUI and domestic violence cases – in where defendants are confined in other jurisdictions, with the goal of withdrawing prosecution by the Commonwealth where appropriate.
- *Revised Preliminary Hearing Scheduling* – Providing efficient case management in felony preliminary hearing courtrooms presents challenges as arrest trends fluctuate across the region. An annual review resulted in changes to the new judicial schedule in January 2006.

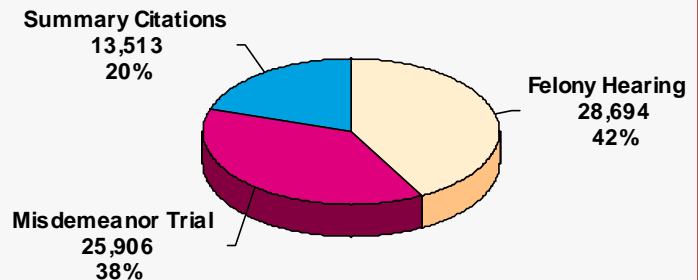
Total Felony Hearing Disposition Breakdown 2005



CPCMS

With the anticipated roll out of CPCMS in 2006, Municipal Court is poised to dedicate the resources necessary to ensure the success of the application in Philadelphia, the final county slated for installation. Municipal Court representatives have been involved with the project in various capacities since 2001. A marked improvement to criminal caseload management is expected. Leaders and staff continue to participate in JAD sessions and look forward to training. Through involvement in numerous application changes, advice and assistance have helped in the preparation of a recovery plan for CPCMS especially as it relates to MC Criminal Listings. While a smooth and positive transition is anticipated, staff here will be most affected and will need to prepare for the changes which should be captured in CPCMS installation and operations.

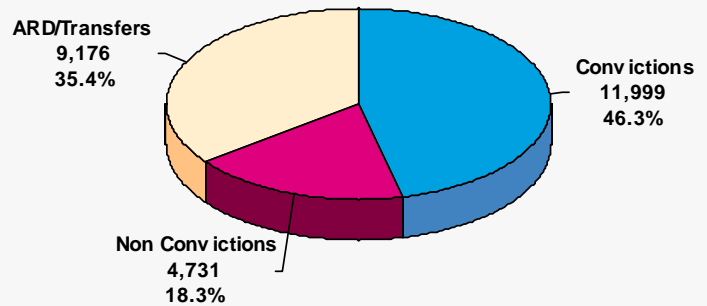
Disposition According to Category



DUI Treatment Court

Building on the success of the Philadelphia Treatment Court, MC employees participated in planning activities previously and benefited from the experiences of many other jurisdictions that have embarked on a similar path. Staff spent the better part of 2005 with criminal justice partners exploring the feasibility of a DUI Treatment Court for Philadelphia. A DUI court may commence operations in Mid-2006, relying on the support from the Philadelphia District Attorney, Defender Association of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Health Management Corporation (PHMC), City of Philadelphia Coordinating Office of Drug and Alcohol Programs (CODAAP), and the First Judicial District.

Total Misdemeanor Trial Disposition Breakdown 2005



Philadelphia District Attorney, Defender Association of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Health Management Corporation (PHMC), City of Philadelphia Coordinating Office of Drug and Alcohol Programs (CODAAP), and the First Judicial District.

PARS Expansion

PARS is a software application through which data captured from the arrest through preliminary arraignment stages is transmitted electronically. Through federal grant funds, the criminal justice partners completed two projects:

- Design of a new docket number scheme to be utilized once the state criminal case management system is operational.
- All Arrest Warrants and Affidavits of Probable Cause are contained within PARS. Detective Divisions within the Philadelphia Police Department completed the project in the spring of 2005. Search warrants will not be part of the application.

Treatment Court

- Through the Treatment Court 87 graduation ceremonies since its inception in April 1997, more than 1,000 graduates have been recognized. Pat Croce (former President of the Philadelphia 76ers) and Karen Freeman Wilson, (Judge ret.) Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, provided commencement speeches at the latest commencement ceremony.
- The Supreme Court commissioned a working group of justice partners who examined all facets of "Problem Solving" courts in the Commonwealth.
- One goal for 2005 was to increase Treatment Court capacity to 400 actively participating clients. All agencies were committed to handle the increase in caseload and the goal was met in 2005.



Pat Croce addressing the Drug Court graduation ceremony

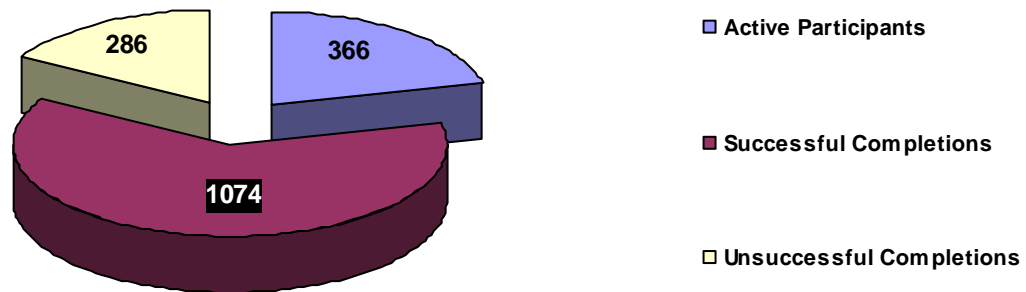
Police Overtime Subcommittee

Participation in a multi-agency review of court-related police overtime, chaired by the Managing Directors office, helped to reduce overtime costs (\$3.5 million in the first year of committee meetings). In addition, new lines of communication were opened, particularly with the District Attorney and Philadelphia Police hierarchies; and police scheduling system was overhauled. The latter will enable the electronic transmission of data required for CPCMS especially as it relates to calendaring and scheduling police witnesses. Refinements in police check-in protocols are expected to be implemented in early 2006 as a pilot program in the criminal divisions of the First Judicial District (Common Pleas and Municipal Court).

Sustainability of Summary Diversion Program

In addition to grants, funding was secured from the City of Philadelphia for the summary diversion program that addresses quality of life crimes in Philadelphia. Recent amendments by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's Criminal Procedural Rules Committee will help the effort to continue and build upon recent gains in processing non traffic summary citations. More successes are expected as behavioral classes reduce recidivism.

Treatment Court Capacities



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 division 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.

2005 Year-End Report

2005 was a year of transition for the Philadelphia Traffic Court. In January, 2005, President Judge Francis E. Kelly announced his retirement. On February 22, 2005, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court appointed the Honorable Bernice DeAngelis to serve as the Administrative Judge of the Philadelphia Traffic Court. Administrative Judge DeAngelis assumed her second term in this role and she is once again responsible for the overall operations of the Traffic Court.

In March, Governor Edward G. Rendell appointed the Honorable Thomasine Tynes to serve as the President Judge of the Philadelphia Traffic Court. With President Judge Tynes and Administrative Judge DeAngelis at the helm, accompanied by Deputy Court Administrator Robert T. DeEmilio, the court moved forward to new frontiers, including the acquisition of a new ticket processing system, known as "*E-Tims*" and the promulgation of new Local Rules of Court adopted by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

It is important to know that the Traffic Court Board of Judges complement comprises seven judges who were elected by the populace to preside over and adjudicate moving vehicle citations issued within the County and City of Philadelphia, as provided in Title 75 of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code. With one vacancy and one judge on extended medical leave, the court relied heavily on out-of-county magisterial district judges assigned by the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts to preside at Traffic Court proceedings to compensate for the shortage of judicial resources.

Moreover, the employee complement was reduced to 110 full-time employees, with more cuts in personnel anticipated in 2006, because of budgetary constraints

imposed by agreements with the City of Philadelphia. Despite the burden placed on the court due to loss of personnel, and an increasing need for employee resources to support ambitious new initiatives that are explored in depth throughout this report, Traffic Court leaders and staff worked harder and smarter to produce another successful year in 2005.

Dispositions

The Philadelphia Police Department issued over 289,000 motor vehicle citations in the year 2005, while Traffic Court disposed of 438,351 citations (representing newly issued and some inventoried citations). These dispositions were the result of trials (guilty and not guilty verdicts rendered) and guilty pleas from defendants.

Collections

Although the City Administration reduced the court's appropriation, judges and employees worked diligently and managed to collect almost \$30 million dollars (an amount equal to six times greater than the Traffic Court budget) in 2005. The funds were then disbursed to the City of Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and other entities.

Successful collection efforts are attributable to many factors. Under the new leadership, the court began to work extensively with Pretrial Services Department of the Court of Common Pleas Trial Division Criminal Section to establish procedures for warrant officers to be assigned 24 hours per day, seven days a week, to serve warrants on Traffic Court defendants in bench-warrant status. These included cases classified as non response cases; default cases; or those defendants convicted and facing mandatory sentencing. The project will be funded solely through additional costs to be borne by defendants in bench-warrant status. This new initiative, in conjunction with "Autoview"¹ and the ongoing Boot & Tow Program, will be the foundation for the Traffic Court enforcement program. In 2005, 29,289 vehicles were impounded. Of that number, 17,462 vehicles were released after fines totaling \$5.8 million were collected. Most of the rest, 11,827 vehicles, were abandoned by their owners and auctioned at a profit to the city. These were eventually returned to the street with valid registration and insurance. Remaining vehicles that were unfit for auction were scrapped for junk, again at a profit to the city, and effectively removed from the streets of Philadelphia permanently.

Technology

The Court has worked closely with its ticket-processing vendor, ACS, to develop a new software program; "*E-Tims*" that more closely meets the court's needs while enhancing system operations. Of particular value is a new sentencing subsystem that allows the court to track information pertaining to defendants who are in scofflaw status (i.e., those who have failed to respond; failed to make payments; or missed their surrender dates). This will further ensure compliance with new local rules. *E-Tims* is a web-based application that uses "drop down" menus, radio buttons, check boxes, and hypertext

¹ Autoview is a device that is mounted on a car, and when driven down a street, can capture an image of each license plate and check tag numbers against a data base of license plates with pending action at Traffic Court. An entire block of parked cars can be checked in minutes.

links. *E-Tims* allows for real-time production of documents (payment plans and motion court and impoundment forms) and for imaging pleas, correspondence, checks, and citations that correspond to specific citations. Another advantage of *E-Tims* is monitoring. The system provides computerized assessments of cases whose dispositions have not been timely recorded and entered on court computers within 48 hours of their trial dates. Current controls require manual intervention which can prove time consuming especially considering lower staffing levels. The system and every Traffic Court employee endured an extensive testing phase during 2005. Implementation is slated for 2006.

Real-Time Scheduling

In December, 2005, after months of working with the Rules Committee of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, the Traffic Court filed and published new Local Rules that govern local procedures including the use of sentencing and scheduling orders, bail acceptance, and appointment of counsel. These Rules drastically change the logistics of the Traffic Court case flow management by improving the court's ability to schedule and conduct trials, and collect any amounts owed. Moreover, the passage of another rule (1035) will allow police officers to assign trial dates to defendants at the time of ticket issuance. Plans are underway to implement the rule, and considerable energy was focused at the end of the year on this endeavor that will also increase yearly listings and dispositions. In 2006, 120,000 additional citations are expected to be scheduled. Past experience indicates that about half of those citations will be issued to people who will NOT respond to citations. Those 60,000 citations will be scheduled along with any previously issued citations related to the same drivers to which no response was generated. They will be listed for dates within eight weeks of the traffic stops, to move the cases forward in the court process. Should non-compliance persist, enforcement measures can be implemented to address the problems. This process may eventually eliminate non-respondent citations and an inventory of inactive citations.

In 2004, the police department enthusiastically accepted the rollout program with electronic citations in the Highway Patrol Unit. The Court expanded the program with the police in 2005 by issuing additional handheld units to the Highway Patrol division. An expansion of the program to various police districts throughout the City of Philadelphia is planned for 2006.

Red Light Camera Program

In February, 2005, an Act of the State Legislature amended Title 75 of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code giving the Philadelphia Parking Authority (PPA) the responsibility to implement a "red light camera program." Pursuant to the legislation, and acting in conjunction with a local ordinance, the Philadelphia Parking Authority began to issue violations for disregarding steady red-light indicators in key areas throughout the city. The Act Cameras were installed at intersections where frequent accidents had resulted from drivers "running" red lights. The citations issued carry no points. Under the program, photographs are taken of the license plates of vehicles as they pass through red lights, and the owners of the vehicles are sent citations through the mail. The violations may be contested through the Office of Administrative Review. In turn, challenges to *those* verdicts are heard at Philadelphia Traffic Court. This is a promising

joint venture shared with the Parking Authority, and the first appeal hearings were scheduled for 2006 at the Philadelphia Traffic Court.

New Appeals Procedure

Appeals to regular Traffic Court convictions (other than Parking Authority red light violations) are now filed at the Traffic Court but still heard by judges of the Court of Common Pleas. In 2005, one Traffic Court employee was transferred to the Court of Common Pleas on a daily, part-time, basis to serve as an informational officer at the appellate hearings, to provide additional resources for the presiding judge.

Traffic Court Administration remains committed to exploring technology, as is evident from the bar codes that are printed on all computer-generated notices sent to defendants. Barcodes allow mail that is returned for incomplete or inaccurate addresses to be entered into a database without opening the envelopes or physically re-entering the information. This is accomplished with special bar code readers that have been installed throughout the courthouse significantly reducing manual tasks. Along these same lines, the policy to accept credit card payments via mail or in person has been reinstated. The website has been systematically enhanced to allow not-guilty pleas; collateral payments; payments directed towards tickets that are not yet on file; and display of defendants' complete file of open cases and scheduled hearing records.

The Philadelphia Traffic Court looks toward the coming year with enthusiasm as judges, administrators and employees explore other ventures that will continue to propel the forward court towards excellence.

Acknowledgements

The editor extends his appreciation to the following groups and individuals for their dedication to the causes of justice and judicial administration, for their support of the concepts presented in this Annual Report, and assistance in its preparation. The success story told here is one of their making.



To the Administrative Governing Board of the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania

Common Pleas Court President Judge Frederica A. Massiah-Jackson
Municipal Court President Judge Louis J. Presentza
Traffic Court President Judge Thomasine Tynes
Common Pleas Trial Division Administrative Judge James J. Fitzgerald, III
Common Pleas Family Division Administrative Judge Myrna Field
Common Pleas Orphans' Court Division Administrative Judge Joseph D. O'Keefe
Traffic Court Administrative Judge Bernice A. DeAngelis
Zygmunt A. Pines, Esq., Court Administrator of Pennsylvania



To Joseph A. Cairone, Court Administrator of the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania, our thanks for his leadership, support, guidance, and dedication of time and resources without which, the production of this report would not have been possible.

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