

Full Court Press

Newsletter of the District of Columbia Courts

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June 2005

Volume XXII Number 3

GROUNDBREAKING FOR THE RENOVATION OF THE HISTORIC OLD D.C. COURTHOUSE

By Debra Swingon-Stokes, Executive Office

A groundbreaking ceremony was held on Tuesday, May 10, 2005 for the expansion and renovation of the Old D.C. Courthouse which, upon completion, will house the D.C. Court of Appeals. The event took place on a delightful sunny spring afternoon under a canopy on the steps of the Old Courthouse at 451 Indiana Avenue, N.W. Congressional staff members, judges, city officials, and court employees were present for this special affair.

Chief Judge Annice Wagner of the Court of Appeals reflected on the historic events that took place in the Old Courthouse such as Daniel Webster's and Francis Scott Key's law practices, and the conspiracy trial of John Surratt for his involvement in President Lincoln's assassination. She also recognized and thanked individuals for making this project a reality. Accolades were given to Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton and other Members of Congress; the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration; Anne Wicks, Executive Officer; Cheryl Bailey, Deputy Executive Officer; Garland Pinkston, Clerk of the Court for the Court of Appeals; Marie Robertson, Senior Court Manager; Joseph Sanchez, Administrative Officer; and the Capital Projects Team members: Zsolt Szalay, Mary Ann Satterthwaite, Marvin King, Stan Morel and Marka Joyner. Recognition was also given to John Belle, founding partner of Beyer Blinder Belle Architects, and Hany Hassan, architect of record for the project.

Chief Judge Rufus King of the Superior Court spoke of the critical steps being taken to complete this project and noted that when the Court of Appeals vacates the Moultrie Building to occupy the Old Courthouse, approximately 37,000 square feet of space will be made available for use by the Superior Court. He

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Mr. John Belle, Mayor Anthony Williams, Chief Judge Rufus G. King, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, Chief Judge Annice M. Wagner, and Mr. Hany Hassan break ground for the expansion and renovation of the Old D.C. Courthouse.

thanked all who are involved in this major project for their hard work and creativity.

Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton stated that this renovation will bring life back to the Old D.C. Courthouse and the Judiciary Square area, noting that the President's budget has recommended \$51 million for this project for Fiscal Year 2006, which would essentially complete the renovation. She noted that the project is expensive because historic preservation is expensive...but worth the cost to preserve our city's history. The Congresswoman concluded by praising Chief Judge Wagner for her perseverance in keeping the renovation of the Old Courthouse "on the viewing screen" and working diligently to make it a reality.

The Courts were honored to have the Jefferson Junior High School Choir perform, opening the ceremony with an exclusive rendition of the National Anthem. As part of the program they also sang a beautiful song entitled "Save the World." The choir, under the leadership of Choir Director Robin Williams, inspired the audience, as always.

Chief Judge Wagner, Chief Judge King, Congresswoman Norton, Mayor Williams, John Belle and Hany Hassan officially 'broke' the ground at the conclusion of the ceremony. A reception followed across the street at the John Marshall plaza.



Chief Judge Annice M. Wagner addresses the audience during the groundbreaking ceremony as Mr. Hany Hassan listens.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The historic Old D.C. Courthouse renovation is now underway with a completion date set for December 2007.*

MEET THE WEBMASTER – JED MILLER

By Melissa P. Tanguay, Executive Office Intern

Do you know the man behind the Courts' webpage and intranet? It's Webmaster Jed Miller from the Information Technology Division. Mr. Miller is a native of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, but grew up in Maryland. After receiving a B.A. in Film Studies at the University of Maryland, Mr. Miller decided to remain in the

D.C. area. He spent two years as an Audiovisual Technician, but was discouraged by the tough film industry and was looking for more intellectually stimulating work.

So during the "dot com boom" of the new millennium, Mr. Miller took training classes to become a Sun Certified Java Programmer and became a Java Programmer for the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) Computer Society. From there, he was recruited by his current supervisor, Yuan Burns in the IT Division, to become the Courts' new Webmaster. Mr. Miller saw his new job as a "great progression" in his career. He says, "My favorite parts of my job are the



Jed Miller displaying one of the new court kiosks.

exciting new technologies that I work with and the challenges of developing applications in an up and coming technological environment."

Mr. Miller's main responsibilities are maintaining and updating the Courts' webpage and intranet. Since the website's debut last July, Mr. Miller has designed additional sections and added several new applications. He worked on a "Juror Services" page that allows jurors to check their last and future dates of service, complete a juror questionnaire and even select deferment options from the webpage. Another new project that Mr. Miller is contributing to is the implementation of "computer kiosks" through-

out the Courts that will offer visitors to the Courts access to the D.C. Government and D.C. Courts' web pages.

In the near future, employees of the Courts can look forward to a new and improved intranet that will have a "nicer look and feel," Mr. Miller said. He is working to integrate the intranet into a portal where Court employees can update functions themselves, such as giving the H.R. Division the ability to update its own job listings. Mr. Miller hopes to be able to "empower divisions to post their own content when necessary." He is planning to take a course in web development so that he can use graphics to improve the intranet.

Although technology is his main interest, Mr. Miller has a number of hobbies and interests outside of his job. He is a self-described "audiophile" in that he likes listening to music and improving his stereo system. Mr. Miller is also an avid reader and enjoys the philosophical works of authors such as Eckhart Tolle and Pema Chodron. On the weekends, he enjoys hiking, as well as salsa and swing dancing with his girlfriend.

New! Juror Services Webpage

D.C. residents summoned for jury duty can now complete the juror registration form and defer date of service on-line! Check out the Juror Services link on the Superior Court homepage of www.dccourts.gov or go to <https://www.dccourts.gov/secure/jurorservices/juror/index.jsp>.

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

Leah Gurowitz, Editor

Susan Abney is a new secretary in the Court Reporting and Recording Division. She is a native of Washington, D.C., and has worked as a legal secretary in the past. Ms. Abney came to the Courts to gain more experience in a legal environment after working in the private sector. She says that the best part of her job is the people with whom she works. Outside of the Courts, Ms. Abney enjoys spending time with her family, especially her parents.



Lilian Jose is the new secretary to Magistrate Judge Joan Goldfrank. She is originally from the Philippines and came to United States in 1980. Ms. Jose went to The Washington School for Secretaries in Washington, D.C., in 1981 and then moved to New England to work for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Administrative Office of the Superior Court in Boston, Massachusetts. When she learned of a job opportunity with the Courts, she thought it would be a “great new experience” and she decided to move back to Washington, D.C. Ms. Jose is enjoying living in the nation’s Capital again and being closer to her family in Arlington, Virginia.



Avi Sickel recently joined the Courts as the director of the Family Court Self Help Center. He grew up in Bethesda, Maryland, and graduated from Walt Whitman High School. Mr. Sickel then studied at George Mason University as an undergraduate and the University of Baltimore Law School. Most recently, he was



the supervising attorney of the Montgomery County *Pro Se* Project, which assists individuals who want to represent themselves in family matters in the Maryland courts. He has also worked for a few small law firms in the area. Mr. Sickel says he chose a job at the D.C. Courts because, “I wanted to stay in the public sector in a job that made a difference in people’s lives.” He enjoys working with the Center’s staff and likes helping others solve problems. In his free time, he likes to play basketball and find “cheap and good” places to eat.

Elizabeth Smith is a new Calendar Coordinator with the Quality Assurance Branch of the Criminal Division. Ms. Smith has lived in Baltimore, Maryland, all her life and graduated from Morgan State University with a degree in Political Science. She has previously worked for the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Maryland District Court for Baltimore City. Ms. Smith enjoys working with her “wonderful” colleagues and plans to attend law school in Washington, D.C. in fall 2006. She describes herself as “a lover of theatre, museums, politics and fashion” and a local activist.



Jacqueline Matthews is a new Case Manager for the Central Recording and Reporting Division, where she is responsible for coordinating transcripts for the appeals process. Ms. Matthews is a native Washingtonian and graduated from Ballou Senior High School. She received her Bachelor’s degree from the University of Pittsburgh and

has taken paralegal studies courses at The George Washington University. Prior to working at the Courts, she spent ten years in the accounting field and, most recently, she was the Accounts Payable Supervisor for Montgomery County Public Schools. Ms. Matthews has also worked in accounting for the law firms Dow, Lohnes and Albertson, and Covington & Burling. Ms. Matthews said, “I have always had a strong interest in working with a court system. I chose at job with the D.C. Courts because it gave me the opportunity to change my career path into something more in line with my degree and aspirations.” She says she likes working in a division at the Courts that is “full of professionals who care about what they do and show an unwavering commitment to their jobs every day.” Outside of the Courts, Ms. Matthews loves spending quality time with her family and is also an avid reader.

Congratulations on another successful “go-live” of IJIS! The May 23 “go live” in the Civil Actions Branch marks the final step in the installation of the new database system, Courtview, in all Civil Division branches. Kudos to the IJIS implementation team and all its Civil and IT Division members!

NEW RECORDING TECHNICIANS By Melissa P. Tanguay, Executive Office Intern

Jerome Leake is a new Recording Technician in the Court Reporting and Recording Division. As a Recording Technician, he monitors courtrooms and burns audio CDs of court proceedings. Mr. Leake grew up in the Washington, D.C. area and graduated from Suitland Senior High School in Forestville, Maryland. His previous jobs include working as a Special Police Officer for Eagle Technologies for seven years and as a Job Developer for Inner Thoughts, a non-profit faith-based organization, for two years assisting individuals in obtaining employment. Mr. Leake sees his new job as an opportunity for growth and he enjoys the team atmosphere of his division. At home, he has a family of eight, which includes himself and his wife, their four children and his two younger brothers. He loves spending time with his family, motorcycles and sports.

Tamara Marsh is also a new Recording Technician in the Court Reporting and Recording Division. A native of Washington, D.C., Ms. Marsh most recently worked as a secretary for the D.C. Department of Health in the Environmental Health Administration's Bureau of Food, Drug and Radiation Protection. She applied to work for the Courts as "change of pace" and Ms. Marsh says she likes her fellow colleagues here. In her free time, she enjoys styling hair.

Sabrina Tolbert is another new Recording Technician with the Court Reporting and Recording Division. Ms. Tolbert grew up in Washington, D.C., and graduated from Ballou Senior High School. For the past seven years, she has worked as a Legal Administrative Assistant with two law firms in the District. Ms. Tolbert is enjoying her new job because it allows her to "see and hear the law from a different perspective," and she also likes her co-workers. Outside of work, she has a ten-year-old son who loves sports, and she is also engaged to be married in September. Her hobbies include going to parties, shopping and hanging out with her family and girlfriends.



Jerome Leake, Sabrina Tolbert and Tamara Marsh.

BILINGUAL EMPLOYEE PROFILES By Melissa P. Tanguay, Executive Office Intern

Anna Roque is a Paralegal Facilitator at the Family Court Self-Help Center. Originally from El Salvador, Ms. Roque lived in Mexico and California before relocating to the Washington area. She received an Associate's degree in Paralegal Studies at Montgomery County College and a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Maryland University College. Ms. Roque is also certified by the State of Maryland as an Interpreter and Translator. Before coming to the Courts, she worked for the Family Division of the Montgomery County Circuit Court for six years and the Domestic Violence Unit of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office for two years. She said, "My main purpose in entering the legal field was to provide assistance directly to the customers and this position provides me the opportunity to assist customers in better understanding our legal system and court procedures." Ms. Roque also enjoys spending time with her family, which includes her husband, two daughters and a dog; sports; and volunteering, especially interpreting and translating.



Montserrat Fernandez is a new Bilingual Clerk in the Civil Division. Although she was born in Bethesda, Maryland, Ms. Fernandez's family is from Spain. She moved to Spain with her parents after eighth grade and completed high school and college abroad. Five years ago, Ms. Fernandez decided to move back to the U.S. and went to work for a law firm in Silver Spring, Maryland. She chose a job at the Courts because she wanted a position that offers growth. "I enjoy working in a team and felt that the Courts offered a wonderful working environment, as well as diversity within its employees," she said. Ms. Fernandez likes the opportunity to help and assist Spanish-speaking individuals in need of assistance in her role as a bilingual employee. Outside of her job, she has many hobbies, including snowboarding and watching European soccer.



D.C. COURTS' TOTAL WELLNESS FAIR

By Rhonda Sanes-Pearson, Benefits Specialist/Program Analyst, Human Resources Division

On April 28, 2005, the Human Resources Division and the Courts' Health Unit held the 9th Annual Wellness Fair. As court employees may know from previous years, this event is a venue for them to get an abundance of health related screenings and information.

Among the options available: Dr. Robert Rifkin of the White Flint Medical and Natural Healing Center provided neck adjustments and massages; representatives from Alase provided consultations on hair removal; Mr. Thurman Watson from Metro Cardiovascular instructed attendees on how to combat illnesses utilizing natural alternative therapies; the D.C. Courts' Health Unit staff provided diabetes and blood pressure screenings; representatives from Washington Sports Club demonstrated exercises on a Swiss exercise ball and provided seated massages; a representative from MidAtlantic Medical Services analyzed skin indicating problem areas and how to fix them; members of the Fitness Intelligence Tank, courtesy of David Rachel III, provided a full body analysis workup that included body fat analysis, body mass index, and total body measurements; consultants from Arbonne International gave employees demonstrations of how their aromatherapy products work; and Great Harvest Bakery made an appearance with samples to show the skeptics how good multi-grain bread can be.

The Fair was a big success, with 15 exhibitors covering a broad range of health topics. Over 300 court employees attended the event and were enthusiastic about it. If you missed this year's fair, fear not, there is always next year!



Ms. Barbara Bah takes advantage of one of the health screenings during the fair.



Reginald Ramdat's son Ryan gets instructions prior to participating.

EMERGENCY CHILD CARE AVAILABLE FOR COURT EMPLOYEES

The D.C. Courts' Child Care Center is available as a resource for court employees who have a sudden need for child care. The Courts recognize that, on occasion, an employee's routine childcare arrangements can fall through. The D.C. Courts' Child Care Center is available to employees with emergency childcare needs on a drop-in basis. Please keep in mind that these childcare services are for emergencies only. Employees should view the Center as their last resort when all other efforts to find childcare have failed.

The cost per child is \$10 per day, and employees can use the Center up to 12 days per calendar year. All employees who may need to use the Center on an emergency basis should pre-register their children. A Registration Form and all required health certificates are required before an employee can use the Center. These forms can be obtained from Dorothy Coleman, the Center Director, in Room C-185.

STRATEGIC PLAN IN ACTION: STRATEGIES 5.2.1, 5.2.2 AND 5.2.3

By David Bell, Strategic Program Analyst, Executive Office

This article continues the series we began in a previous issue of the *Full Court Press*, exploring how the Courts are implementing different goals and strategies of the Strategic Plan. This article will focus on Strategies 5.2.1., 5.2.2 and 5.2.3, which call for the Courts to adopt performance standards and to measure our progress in achieving them.

Government institutions across the country are increasingly setting performance goals and measuring their success in achieving them. Just as private companies set performance targets, such as sales revenue or profit margin, government agencies can set goals and report their progress to their “stakeholders,” who are the residents of the community they serve.

Setting performance goals is challenging for courts due to their unique purpose – delivering justice. How does one assess whether justice is served? Perceptions usually depend on which side one is on, due to the adversarial nature of the legal process. Even though it is difficult to measure justice, it is vital that courts, as public institutions, set standards and publicly communicate their performance in meeting those standards.

The Joint Committee on Judicial Administration recently approved a set of courtwide performance measures for use in the D.C. Courts. The measures address different components of our operations and, collectively, offer a balanced picture of the Courts’ overall performance as an organization.

District of Columbia Courts’ Performance Measures

Accessibility and convenience of court facilities and services	Reliability and integrity of case records
Access to case information and court proceedings	Enforcement of court orders
Courtesy and responsiveness of court personnel	Access for indigent and <i>pro se</i> persons
Courtroom treatment of litigants	Public education/community outreach
Case processing time	Strategic use of human resources, technology and capital
Equality and fairness in decisions	Fiscal accountability
Use of juries	

The measures were identified following an extensive study by the Courts’ Strategic Planning Leadership Council (SPLC) of national court performance standards developed by the National Center for State Courts, the American Bar Association, and the Appellate Court Performance Standards Commission. The SPLC also sought input from Presiding and Deputy Presiding Judges and Division Directors. The measures will be useful as they: (1) focus on outcomes of interest to the public; (2) link to the Courts’ Strategic Plan; (3) provide a balanced view of court outcomes; (4) are measurable over time to show improvement or change; and (5) will allow external customers to assess our performance.

Performance data will be collected from automated computer systems such as IJIS, surveys of court participants and employees, and other methods such as training community volunteers to simulate requests for court services or information and record their experiences. These data will be analyzed and reported both within the court community and to the public, to fulfill the Courts’ goal of being accountable to the public.

The development of an effective performance measurement system takes time. While the entire set of courtwide performance measures will likely take several years to implement fully, over the coming months Presiding Judges and Division Directors, assisted by the Strategic Planning Leadership Council, will begin this process. Additional information on the performance measurement process will be posted on the Intranet and in future *Full Court Press* articles.

The adoption and implementation of courtwide performance measures will enable the Courts to assess our progress in achieving strategic goals and, by reporting this information publicly, to maintain public trust and confidence in the D.C. Courts.

WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION NAMES JUDGE KRAMER 'WOMAN LAWYER OF THE YEAR'

At its annual awards dinner the evening of May 17, 2005, the Washington, D.C., Women's Bar Association (WBA) bestowed its highest honor on Judge Noël Anketell Kramer of the D.C. Superior Court. At the awards dinner, attended by several hundred WBA members, numerous judges and other supporters, Judge Kramer received the award and gave brief remarks thanking the organization for an award which she said she was both honored and humbled to receive. In her remarks, the judge said she felt compelled to tell the audience of her gratitude toward those women who had shaped her life, supported her and showed true courage, independence and determination in their lives. She spoke of her mother, her godmother and other caretakers and supporters from her youth who did not even think of questioning her choice of a career in law in a day when female law students were a rarity. She also thanked her family – her husband of 35 years, Frank Kramer, and their children Katherine and Christopher who attended the dinner as well – for their love...and their patience!

The keynote speaker was Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) who spoke of the significance of the U.S. role in spreading democracy throughout the world, and highlighted the importance of women voting – some for the first time in their lives – in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Senator spoke of the importance of a truly independent judiciary, as we have here in the United States, and the equal importance of making sure women were represented in all branches of government.

The evening closed with remarks by the newly-installed WBA president, Karen Lockwood, urging women to stay with law practice and echoing a theme mentioned by virtually every speaker: the importance of mentors. The WBA and the WBA Foundation, headed by Magistrate Judge Diane Brenneman, cosponsored the event.



Judge Noël Anketell Kramer addresses the audience at the awards dinner.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Judge Kramer has been nominated to fill a vacancy in the D.C. Court of Appeals. A Senate hearing on her nomination is scheduled for June 15.

FAMILY COURT QUOTE CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Our thanks to all who participated in the Family Court Art Inscription Contest. We received over 300 submissions. Congratulations to the contest winners:

Christina Brito
Denise Coates-Williams
Ruddy Elly

Candida Harty
Meredith Hofford
Vaidehi Koppolu
Betsy Marvin

Andrew Moore
Vanessa Searles
Tiffany Winters

Selected quotes:

Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see. Neil Postman

The family is link to our past, bridge to our future. Alex Haley

The bond that links your true family is not one of blood, but of respect and joy in each other's life. Richard Bach

The question is not whether we can afford to invest in every child; it is whether we can afford not to. Marian Wright Edelman

The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home. Confucius

A child is a person who is going to carry on what you have started. Abraham Lincoln

The family unit plays a critical role in our society and in the training of the generation to come. Sandra Day O'Connor

Children are one third of our population and all of our future. Select Panel for the Promotion of Child Health, 1981

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams. Franklin D. Roosevelt

***** Rave Reviews *****

The purpose of this letter is to bring to your attention the terrific work of one of your auditors, **Julieta D. Diamante**. I have been fortunate enough to have had her assigned the audit of several accounts which I have filed over the years. Though I have always been very pleased with the way in which she has audited my accounts assigned to her, last month she handled the audit of a probate estate and intervention matter with such accuracy and speed that I wanted to bring it to your attention. Both matters were in special need of a quick turnaround, which Ms. Diamante was able to accomplish without any prompting on my part. Her work is not only a credit to her but to your department as well.

Very truly yours,



Steven Weinberg

WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS, JR.
ATTORNEY AT LAW



March 14, 2005

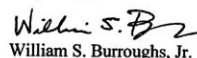
Re: Commendation of Cynthia Girtley, Deputy Clerk

I am writing to commend the excellent performance of **Ms. Girtley** in processing a case I filed recently in your court. Although I have practiced law since 1967, I had occasion to file for the first time an application to have an arbitration award vacated, and I was unfamiliar with the details of its correct presentation to the court. To further complicate the matter, I had recently moved to Florida, although I continue to practice in D.C. and Virginia, as well as in Florida.

Ms. Girtley not only was very pleasant and professional in carrying out the usual processing, but she also exerted great extra effort, over a period of several days, to resolve a complication that arose. She went well out of her way to assist my long-distance efforts, and it was her knowledge and diligence that resolved the problem.

She is truly a credit to your organization. I congratulate you on the quality of your staff's performance, and I ask that you make this commendation a part of Ms. Girtley's personnel file..

Very truly yours,


William S. Burroughs, Jr.

-----Original Message-----
Sent: Friday, November 05, 2004 11:34 AM
To: Pozzo, Joanne F.
Cc: **Bickicioglu, Harika**
Subject: Harika's Terrific Performance

Hi Joanne-

I want to take a minute to thank you and Harika for your good work on the Probate Bench-Bar Conference. I think it went very well and generated a well focused set of issues for the Task Force to discuss. In particular, I want to commend to you the work Harika did in preparing and conducting the OptionFinder part of the conference. She worked long and hard to create the right format and content for us. She has obviously mastered all the nuances of the system and directed a flawless performance during the workshop.

As you know, I am at the mercy of the person operating the system. As they go, so goes the outcome. I was very comfortable with Harika at the helm. You have a real expert there who can ensure that your investment in OptionFinder produces significant returns to the court in the future.

It was a pleasure working with you both. I'm looking forward to the next time.

Regards to everyone there. Thanks for everything.

Dan

Original Message-----

From: Reed, Banks Laura
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2005 12:17 PM
To: Pozzo, Joanne F.
Subject: Margaret has been great

Joanne:

As you know, my staff and I have been working with **Margaret [Summers]** on the Outreach to Underserved Communities Grant application, and I wanted to share with you the wonderful job that she has done. She worked with my staff...and provided guidance to them on the process. When we learned that the U.S. Attorney's Office was applying for the same grant and decided to partner with them, Margaret was flexible and stepped in to make sure that all went well, and I have worked closely with her on the edits of the drafts of the application. She has made the process go smoothly.