

# Full Court Press

Newsletter of the District of Columbia Courts

Open To All, Trusted By All, Justice For All

January 2008

Volume XXIV Number 1

## SECOND D.C. COURTS STRATEGIC PLAN UNVEILED AT COURT-WIDE KICK-OFF EVENTS

By Margaret Summers, Research and Development Division



A full house for the D.C. Courts' second Strategic Plan kick-off.

Two special lunchtime gatherings for judges and court employees were held on Friday, October 19, 2007, in the Moultrie Courthouse Jurors' Lounge, to kick-off the D.C. Courts' new five-year Strategic Plan, which will cover years 2008 to 2012.

"We are excited to have this kick-off event, and to have you here with us," said Anne B. Wicks, Executive Officer. "Those of you who participated in the court-wide spring training conference may remember keynote speaker Willie Jolley's slogan, 'Wake up and dream'. The new Strategic Plan represents the dream, the vision, for the D.C. Courts. The second Willie Jolley slogan was 'Show up.' Because you attended today's event, you will all receive special D.C. Courts tote bags with a copy of the Strategic Plan inside."

Ms. Wicks said the tote bags were a way for the Courts' judges and administrators to demonstrate their appreciation for the employees' work in implementing the first five-year Strategic Plan for 2003 to 2007 and helping to develop the new one. "Willie Jolley also told the court-wide spring training audience to 'Stand up, step up, and think up,'

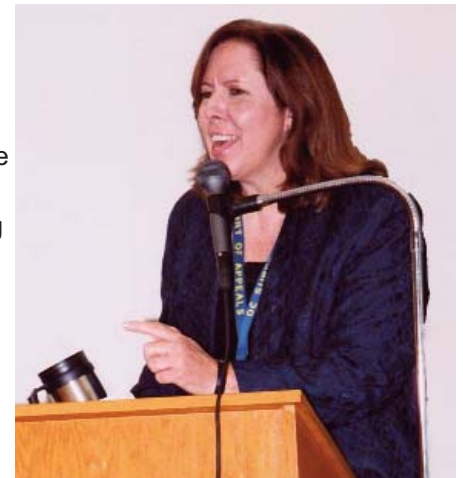
### Included in this issue:

- 2 New Employee Profiles
- 4 Adoption Day at the Court
- 6 Professionalism and Civility Forum
- 6 American Indian Heritage
- 7 Safe Surrender Program
- 8 Rave Reviews

she recalled. "And that's what you did to help make the Strategic Plan a success." She thanked all employees who completed surveys and participated in focus groups, as their input was used in developing the new Strategic Plan.

Chief Judge Eric T. Washington of the Court of Appeals joined Ms. Wicks in expressing gratitude to court employees. "We are proud of the extraordinary work that all of you put into implementing the Strategic Plan over the past five years," he said. "As everyone knows, we have faced challenges and staffing shortages in recent years, but there has been no shortage of cases and no shortage of work – and you all have been called upon to adapt and find ways to deliver high quality services with fewer resources.

"The National Center for State Courts says the D.C. Courts have among the largest caseloads of any court system in the country, and there is every reason to expect that we will continue to be in this position in the future. At the same time, we are competing with much larger federal agencies for resources, and must constantly exceed others' expectations and demonstrate the highest levels of efficiency in serving our community."



Anne Wicks, Executive Officer, greets the audience.

Chief Judge Washington said employees are the "lynchpin" of the Courts' success in making the Courts' vision and mission a reality. "Whether you are a judge, a manager, a JAA, a courtroom clerk or a file clerk, as you go about your daily job here at the Courts, you are performing a 'mission critical' function which helps us excel as a court system delivering justice in our community."

Superior Court Associate Judge Ann O'Regan Keary, who has stepped down from her position as the Co-Chair of the Strategic Planning Leadership Council (SPLC) in order to focus on her responsibilities as Presiding Judge of the Criminal Division, thanked employees who partici-

See *Strategic Plan* - Continued on page 3.

## New Employee Profiles

By Antonio Kizzie – Executive Office Intern

### Tai Prather

One of the newest additions to the Criminal Division is Ms. Tai Prather. A native of Silver Spring, Maryland, Ms. Prather was hired this past summer as a temporary employee in the closed files section of the Criminal Division. Ms. Prather's excellent performance led her to land a permanent position with the Criminal Division — she was recently hired as a Deputy Clerk for the Special Proceedings Branch. "I enjoy working with the Criminal Division staff, and look forward to my time here at the Courts," remarked Ms. Prather. Prior to joining the Court, she worked as a legal secretary for two attorneys. Ms. Prather has pursued Paralegal Studies at Prince George Community College. In her free time she enjoys shopping, watching movies, and listening to music. Welcome!



about three years. Prior to joining the Criminal Division she was a paralegal with several law firms in the area. Ms. Wilson has volunteered as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for abused and neglected children. When asked about her time at the Courts, Ms. Wilson happily responded by saying, "My experience thus far has been thrilling! I wanted something that would keep me busy, and that would test me everyday. This job does, and I really like it." In her free time Ms. Wilson enjoys reading, concerts, and music. Additionally, Ms. Wilson is a huge tennis fan. We're pleased to have her on our team!

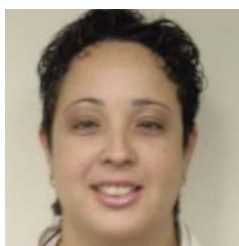
### Janelle Leid

Let us also welcome Ms. Janelle Leid to the Courts. Recently hired to fill the position of Courtroom Clerk with the Criminal Division, Ms. Leid received her Bachelors of Arts from Vassar College. Previously, Ms. Leid worked as a counselor for At-Risk Youth with Eckerd Youth Alternatives. Her responsibilities included teaching youth about conflict management, planning educational activities, and facilitating group therapy. Prior to working with Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Ms. Leid worked with USPTO-First Choice and Exxon Mobil. There she negotiated claims, organized conferences, and provided administrative support. Ms. Leid is trained in conflict resolution and crisis management. Her wide-ranging experience will certainly help her with the challenges of the courtroom!



### Brisa Valentin

Ms. Brisa Valentin hails from San Francisco, California, but finished high school



in Puerto Rico and graduated with a degree in English from the University of Puerto Rico. Ms. Valentin worked in the non-profit sector for 10 years and then for a period of time she served as a Fire and EMS Dispatcher with the Metropolitan Police Department. The State Department has certified Ms. Valentin in Spanish. She joined the Superior Court in 2006 in the Civil Division. Ms. Valentin has now become a Deputy Clerk with the Criminal Division's Case Management Branch. "This is a great opportunity, and I am learning a lot. With the experience I have dispatching police officers it is interesting to see what happens afterwards." To Ms. Valentin, a bilingual employee, we say: "Bienvenidos a la familia de los tribunales del Distrito de Columbia!" [Welcome to the D.C. Courts family.]

### Carla Cipolari

Everyone knows that courtroom clerks do a great deal of work to help keep the dozens of courtrooms running smoothly. So if you are ever in C-10 please take time to welcome Ms. Carla Cipolari to the D.C. Courts. She has lived in the D.C. Metropolitan area her whole life. In coming to the Courts, she felt it would be an exciting learning opportunity to serve as a courtroom clerk, and would provide real-world experience to supplement her classes as she obtains her bachelors degree in Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland. Before joining the Courts, she worked for Howard Community College in the Public Relations and Marketing Department. "I have had a very positive experience working in the D.C. Courts and everyone has made me feel very welcomed," remarked Ms. Cipolari. She certainly is!



### Antoinette Wilson

If you've noticed a new face in a courtroom at the Superior Court, it may be that of Ms. Antoinette Wilson. She was hired as a new Courtroom Clerk last summer. Ms. Wilson, a native of Fresno, California, grew up in Nashville, Tennessee, and received her Bachelors of Arts in Political Science from Williams College in Massachusetts. Ms. Wilson has been a resident of the D.C. area for



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

*Leah Gurowitz, Editor  
Dennis Shipley, Creative Director*

*Strategic Plan, continued from page 1.*

pated in surveys and focus groups, and those who assisted with administering and distributing the January 2007 Court User Survey. "Your feedback was invaluable in helping us figure out what worked well in the previous Strategic Plan, and what needed to be addressed in the new Plan," she said. The January Court Users Survey Day "made a big impression on the public, many of whom stopped our Chief Judges in the hallway to say how much they appreciated the Court taking the time to ask about their experiences and views about the quality of the Courts' services."

In her summary of the surveys' results, Judge Keary noted that 76% of court users said they did not have to wait a long time for assistance from court staff; 84% said court staff treated them with courtesy and respect; and 78% said court staff knew the answers to their questions. Eighty-two percent of employees surveyed said they feel positive about the D.C. Courts as an employer; 90% said they enjoy their jobs; and 92% said they communicate well with their supervisor.

D.C. Court of Appeals Associate Judge Noël Kramer, SPLC Co-Chair, next described the new Strategic Plan, and how it was similar to, and different from, the previous Plan. "The new Plan builds on the previous Plan. Our mission, vision, and values are the same," she said. The strategic goals and issues are essentially the same, although some of their titles were changed slightly, and a new issue, "Security and Disaster Preparedness," was added with the goal of ensuring continuity of operations in a safe and secure environment in the event of an emergency or disaster.

Judge Kramer said the new Strategic Plan contains nine goals and 35 strategies, compared to 18 goals and 67 strategies in the old Plan, which should make it easier to meas-

ure the Courts' progress. She said that some titles of strategic issues were changed to focus more on the core mission. For example, "Enhancing the



*Chief Judge Eric Washington, Superior Court Judge Ann O'Regan Keary, Court of Appeals Noël Anketell Kramer, and Strategic Plan Director Lisa VanDeVeer at the kick-off.*

Administration of Justice" in the previous Plan is now called "Fair and Timely Case Resolution" in the new Plan.

Judge Kramer said the new Plan will enhance the "Access to Justice" strategic issue (formerly called "Broadening Access to Justice and Service to the Public") by placing special emphasis on court users who are *pro se* litigants, and persons who do not speak English, or have physical and mental disabilities. The Courts will address the "Public Trust and Confidence" strategic issue ("Building Trust and Confidence" in the previous Plan) by participating in town hall meetings and community forums, developing a formalized Judicial Speakers Bureau and hosting a court-wide Open House to inform the public about the Courts.

Under a new strategy called "A Strong Judiciary and Workforce" ("Promoting Competence, Professionalism and Civility" under the first Plan), Judge Kramer said an organizational culture will be developed that fosters open communication and information-sharing among judges, managers and staff to enhance decision-making and teamwork. She said the Courts will

also develop and implement a workforce planning initiative to address the fact that up to 40% of employees are eligible to retire in the next three to five years and will have to be replaced by individuals who will not have the same level of specialized knowledge and expertise. The initiative will also address new and different skill sets for which employees will have to be trained, and the need for more promotional opportunities for them.

Judge Kramer asked employees to become familiar with the new Strategic Plan, and think about how they can contribute to its successful implementation. Divisions will update their Management Action Plans (MAPs) to reflect the new Plan, she said, and the SPLC will work with the Presiding Judges, the Executive Officer, and the Clerks of Court to implement the Plan's 21 Priority Actions. Some Priority Actions are already underway, she said, such as a Court Greeters Program and an expanded Employee Orientation Program, thanks to the efforts of the D.C. Courts' 2007 Management Training Program graduates.

Superior Court Chief Judge Rufus G. King, III told the kick-off audience that the new Strategic Plan "organizes our efforts, it doesn't reinvent the wheel. It brings focus and direction to what we do. We are here for a purpose."

Chief Judge King said that performance measures will be critical to the success of the new Plan, an issue Chief Judge Washington also discussed. Performance measures will be used to determine such matters as whether cases are being resolved as quickly as possible, whether members of the public are treated courteously when they visit the court, and whether the public can readily obtain accurate and time-

*See Strategic Plan - Continued on Page 7.*

## ADOPTION DAY BRINGS SMILES TO D.C. SUPERIOR COURT By Antonio Kizzie, Executive Office Intern

Love was provided, hope was given, and families were created at the H. Carl Moultrie Courthouse Saturday, November 17, 2007 at the 21<sup>st</sup> Adoption Day event. This annual ceremony is designed to celebrate the joy of adoption and encourage area residents to consider adopting or fostering a child. Parents cried with joy and children giggled with excitement as over 30 adoptions were finalized at the ceremony. The Superior Court and the D.C. Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) hosted this joyous occasion. A number of notable figures were present at the event as the third floor atrium, as well as the fourth and fifth floor balconies, were filled with families, children and prospective adoptive parents. Candy and decorations greeted visitors to

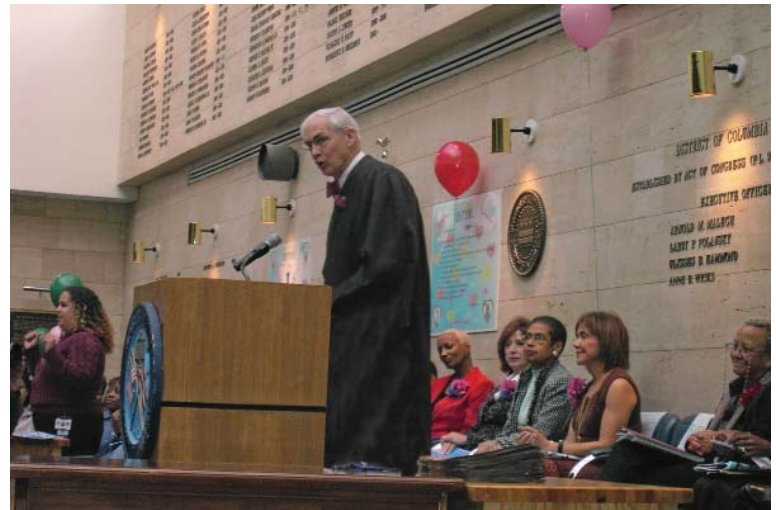


*Judge Kaye K. Christian congratulates a new family.*

the Courts as the Oxon Hill Young Marines did the presentation of the colors calling the ceremony to order.

The ceremony began with a stirring and patriotic rendition of the national anthem by Family Court employee Michael Chamberlain, who received a resounding round of applause. Judge Anita Josey-Herring, presiding judge of the Family Court and Chair of the Adoption Day Committee, welcomed the families and distinguished guests. Next, Judge Josey-Herring introduced a brave poet and adoptee, nine-year-old D'Juantez Brown, who gave a beautiful reading of a poem he wrote for his adoptive mother. Chief Judge Rufus G. King, III also welcomed the crowd and introduced Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton who spoke of the importance of home and family in children's lives.

Mayor Adrian Fenty came to the podium and praised the dedication of the Courts, CFSA, and individuals who work hard to make sure children have a home. "This [ceremony] represents the District of Columbia's commitment to enriching the lives of children," exclaimed Mayor Fenty. Councilmember Carol Schwartz further elaborated by



*Chief Judge King addresses the Adoption Day crowd.*

saying "No better thing can any of us do that give a loving home to a child who needs it."

Then-Acting Director of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), Sharlynn E. Bobo Ph.D. was next to come to the stage. Subsequently, Renette Oklewicz, of the Freddie Mac Foundation, spoke on the plight of many children without homes. "There are too many...115,000 children awaiting a home...every single child deserves a family to call their own," said Oklewicz. Judge Kaye K. Christian, who presided over the adoption calendar this past year and who is a recent recipient of an *Angels in Adoption* award, gave a moving introduction of the first guest speaker, Dr. Yolande Cornelia "Nikki" Giovanni. The author of over 30 books for both adults and children, Nikki Giovanni is a University Distinguished Professor at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia.

Dr. Giovanni is a world-renowned poet, writer, commentator, activist, and educator. For over 30 years her outspokenness, in her writing and lectures, has earned her the status of a "living legend" in the world of poetry and civil rights. The number of the awards Dr. Giovanni has received during her career is almost as endless as the depth of her poems. Known for her wisdom and charisma, the audience listened intently as Dr. Giovanni read a poem addressing the power of love, family, women's empowerment, and their importance in our lives. "Today we celebrate the coming together of parent and child," exclaimed Dr. Giovanni. She spoke of the various parts of our lives from which we draw strength as a quilt...strong once melded together. The aura surrounding Dr. Giovanni was inspiring and she received a standing ovation upon approaching and leaving the podium.

The introduction of the second guest speaker was done by attorney Jeffrey Markowicz, who was adopted as a young

*See Adoption Day - Continued on Page 5.*

child and is now senior partner of a D.C. law firm. Mr. Markowicz began with thanking Dr. Giovanni for her attendance at the ceremony, and continued with his brief biography. He was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, and adopted and raised in Montreal, Quebec. "When considering what could have happened to me, I feel like the luckiest man in the world," said Attorney Markowicz, as he reflected on life with his adopted family. Afterwards, he introduced the second keynote speaker for the event, world-famous motivational speaker, best-selling author, and former adoptee, Mr. Les Brown.

Les Brown was born in Miami, Florida. Mrs. Mamie Brown adopted Les and his twin brother, Wes, when they were six weeks old. As a child, Les' inattention to schoolwork and restless energy resulted in his being mislabeled as a slow learner. Les Brown's passion to learn and his hunger to realize greatness in himself and others helped him to achieve greatness. He rose from a smooth-talking morning DJ (his self-description) to a world-renowned keynote speaker with his own motivational tools company, Les Brown Enterprises. Les Brown was selected one of the World's Top Five Speakers for 1992 by Toastmasters International.

An extremely charismatic individual, Les Brown immediately grabbed the audience's attention with his friendly demeanor. He began by addressing the fears of couples thinking about adoption by saying, "It is truly possible

and it is necessary." He spoke to the necessity of adoption by noting that according to the National Center for Youth Law study, in 2006 one-third of foster-care "graduates" became homeless within a year of leaving state custody, fewer than 10 % enroll in college and only 1 % graduate, and about one-



Barbara Harrison greets a new family.

fourth end up in jail within two years. Mr. Brown pointed out that adoption was a necessity because children are "100% of our future." He encouraged attendees to think about children's need for love and hope, and what they could do to help. "What we do for ourselves we take with us. What we do for others we leave behind and it endures. It is because of a mother's love that I am who I am today," exclaimed Mr. Brown. His speech was met with a resounding applause as the Child and Family Services Agency Ensemble performed a soul-stirring gospel song titled "Thank You." Following the selection, Judge William Jackson, Deputy Presiding Judge of the Family Court, introduced the mistress of ceremonies, local news anchor Barbara Harrison.

Ms. Harrison, who has emceed Adoption Day for several years now,

hosts a weekly segment called "Wednesday's Child" during which she conducts interviews with a foster child who is available for adoption. Well-known for her devotion to the community and children, she introduced each child – along with his or her family – as they came up to have their adoption decrees finalized and signed by their judge. The children smiled, as they officially became part of their new families. Two hundred thirty-four children were adopted in the District of Columbia this past fiscal year. Judge Josey-Herring led the celebration of the new adopted children as vocalist Ms. Megan Williams sang a beautiful selection by Destiny's Child "Stand Up for Love."

The ceremony ended with a special presentation of thanks by Chief Judge King to the Adoption Day Committee for the smooth execution of the ceremony. Chief Judge King specifically praised the strong leadership of Judge Anita Josey-Herring, the devotion to children and attention to detail of Judge Kaye K. Christian, and the dedication of Dianne King, Director of the Family Court. "True leaders are not those who strive to be first, but those who are first to strive and who give all for the success of the team," quoted Chief Judge King. The ceremony adjourned to a reception featuring live music. The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Adoption Day ceremony turned out to be a great success and enjoyable event. As each speaker mentioned, anyone considering adopting or fostering a child can get information by calling 202-671-LOVE.

# CRIMINAL DIVISION SPONSORS PROFESSIONALISM/CIVILITY FORUM

By Criminal Division Deputy Director Yvonne Martinez-Vega and Executive Office Intern Antonio Kizzie

The D.C. Courts community is a family of sorts. Officials, employees, and court participants should feel appreciated and respected at all times. To meet Strategic Issue 3: Promoting Competence, Professionalism and Civility, the Criminal Division strives to promote adherence to codes of professional conduct, ethical practice and civility standards for all judges, court personnel and members of the bar. One strategy employed to achieve this goal is to conduct annual educational seminars for attorneys, judicial officers and Criminal Division staff to improve civility and professional conduct, using the standards established by the District of Columbia Bar.

In September 2005, the Division sponsored its first Professionalism/Civility Forum. The forum included use of an interactive survey, using Option Finder technology, to enable the Courts to get feedback from participants. In 2007, in conjunction with the Superior Court Trial Lawyer's Association, the Public Defender Service, the D.C. United States' Attorney's Office and the Office of D.C. Attorney General, the Criminal Division sponsored a second Professionalism and Civility Forum. The forum began with a brief address by Chief Judge King regarding the importance of civility and dignity in all courtroom proceedings. This was followed by a presentation by Dan Cipullo, Director of the Criminal Division, who shared and discussed responses the audience provided to a pre-conference survey regarding judges' duties to lawyers, defense attorneys' duties to the court, prosecutors' duties to the court, lawyers' duties to each other, and courtroom clerks' duties to the court, prosecutors, and defense attorneys. A total of 188 persons participated in the survey.

After the presentation, a panel discussed civility in the courtroom and problems that contribute to a sense that civility is lessening. The Forum was moderated by John Payton, Esq., at the time a partner at WilmerHale and formerly D.C. Corporation Counsel and President of D.C. Bar. Mr. Payton was recently named Director - Counsel and President of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. The panel consisted of: Betty Ballester, Esq., President of the Superior Court Trial Lawyer's Association; Mr. Steven Bradford, Courtroom Clerk; Michelle Jackson, Esq., U.S. Attorney's Office Deputy Chief for the Sixth District, Felony Major Crimes Section; Judge Ann O'Regan Keary, Presiding Judge of the Criminal Division; Zol. D. Rainey, Esq., Assistant Chief, Criminal Section, D.C. Office of the Attorney General; and Renee Raymond, Esq., Training Director with the Public Defender Service. Both the survey results and the panel discussion focused on the difficulties caused by the Court's heavy caseload and its impact on scheduling. As a result of the feedback received, the Criminal Division is now working towards implementing some of the recommendations discussed in order to ensure that the climate at the Superior Court remains positive and conducive to the fulfillment of its mission.

---

## CHIEF BILLY REDWING TAYAC SPEAKS AT COURTS' AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH PROGRAM

By Michael Brown, Case Manager, Criminal Division

On Wednesday, November 14, 2007, the Courts commemorated American Indian Heritage Month with a program held in the Board of Judges conference room. Chief Billy Redwing Tayac, the 27<sup>th</sup> Hereditary Chief of the Piscataway Indian Nation, was the guest speaker. The Piscataway Indian Nation was the original tribe in this area, along the Potomac River. They were known as the People of the Chesapeake. Since time immemorial their traditional sacred burial ground (Moyaone) has been located in what is now called Accokeek, Md., across the river from George Washington's home in Mount Vernon.

Chief Tayac described and explained traditional ways of life, religious practices and customs. He also discussed the 15,000 years his people have inhabited this region. The National Park Service has control of the land their sacred burial ground is located on and he argued that — in a country based on religious freedom — they are denied free access and have to acquire permits to practice the religious rites that he believes are guaranteed through the Freedom of Native American Religion Act. The Piscataway Nation has a 120-acre ceremonial ground (Tayac Territory) in Port Tobacco, Md., and that, along with Moyaone, are the only sites within a 500-mile

radius, he argued, where thousands of Native Americans in the Mid-Atlantic region can openly practice their traditions. Therefore Tayac Territory is the headquarters for the East Coast American Indian Movement and the League of Indigenous Nations. They firmly believe that all Native American nations have the right to self-determination and sovereignty.



Chief Billy Redwing Tayac

The audience was very interested in the discussion and asked numerous questions. Chief Tayac utilized the questions to broaden the range of the presentation. Afterwards the participants were treated to traditional Native American foods from the National Museum of the American Indian and some special treats provided by this writer.

Chief Tayac and the Piscataway Nation welcome all cultures attending their ceremonies and this writer has participated in numerous ceremonies over the last fifteen years. We invite all to attend the next American Indian Heritage Month Program in November 2008.

## FUGITIVE SAFE SURRENDER PROGRAM A GREAT SUCCESS By Antonio Kizzie, Executive Office Intern

The D.C. Superior Court showed grace – and some would say mercy — Thursday through Saturday November 1-3, 2007 to people with outstanding warrants for non-violent crimes. This event, known as “Fugitive Safe Surrender,” took place at Bible Way Church on New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Fugitive Safe Surrender is a national program administered by the United States Marshals Service. The program is designed to take place in a church setting to encourage non-violent offenders with warrants to feel “safe” when surrendering. The program allows defendants to surrender and in most cases be released back to the community having either disposed of the case or re-connected with the Court for future court hearings.

Fugitive Safe Surrender is meant to reduce the risk to law enforcement officers who pursue fugitives, to the communities in which they hide, and to the fugitives themselves. Living in fear of apprehension and the inability to obtain health-care benefits, stable employment, and peace of mind create a sense of desperation and hopelessness for thousands of non-violent offenders. This program is meant to relieve the feeling of hopelessness and desperation by offering participating fugitives the opportunity to have their cases adjudicated in a safe environment. The United States Marshals Service has taken the lead with the program, partnering with state and local agencies to encourage non-violent fugitives to take the first step towards becoming responsible for themselves, holding themselves accountable, paying their dues to society and moving for-



*Fugitive Safe Surrender is a national program administered by the United States Marshals Service.*

ward with their lives. Although the program does not grant amnesty, most offenders are allowed to return home as long as they promise to attend their upcoming court hearing and are told that turning themselves in will bring favorable consideration by the prosecutors.

Arrivals were welcomed by church members and offered refreshments. Afterwards, they were given wristbands and escorted to the lower levels of the church where judges were waiting to hear their cases in makeshift courtrooms. Over 500 offenders young and old from all parts of the D.C. metro area, with a wide range of charges, came to address their outstanding warrants. The oldest warrant handled this November was 24 years old...which is older than many of the defendants who showed up! Most people left the church with smiles and returned to their families with a feeling of

hope and a sense of peace for having taken responsibility.

Partners in the program in Washington, D.C. included CSOSA, the U.S. Marshals Service, the D.C. U.S. Attorney's office, Superior Court, the D.C. Department of Corrections, New Bethel Baptist Church, Bible Way Church, and Scripture Cathedral. Judges, lawyers, probation officials, and about 100 volunteers from local churches were on hand for the 3-day program. This was the first time the program – which has seen incredible success across the nation – was offered in the District of Columbia.

Participant feedback concerning the program was very positive.

---

*Strategic Plan, continued from page 3.*

ly case information by telephone or, eventually, through the Internet.

“Performance measures will be the next hot topic,” said Chief Judge King. “There’s always room for improvement, and performance measures ensure that we do better. Employees have always worked hard. As we have to do more work with slimmer resources, we not only have to work harder, but smarter.”

In closing the Kick-Off, Chief Judge King congratulated employees for a job well done under the previous Strategic Plan and announced that Superior Court Associate Judge Herbert Dixon is the new SPLC Co-chair, replacing Judge Keary. He also thanked Dr. Daniel Straub, the consultant who has assisted the Courts in implementing a strategic planning and management process since 2001. “Dr. Straub says that our courts are farther along in implementing a strategic plan than any others,” Chief Judge King told the audience. “I’m confident that with your continued hard work, we’ll be here again celebrating the success of this Strategic Plan in 2013.”

# Rave Reviews

October 6, 2007

The Hon., Duane De Laney,  
Clerk of the Court The Superior Court of the District of  
Columbia  
500 Indiana Avenue, N.W., Room: 2500  
Washington, District of Columbia 20001

Letter of Appreciation

Dear Mr. Clerk,

I wish to acknowledge the extraordinary assistance that was afforded me during this past week by **Mr. Vondell Wiggins**, Lead File Clerk, the John Marshal Information and Records Branch.

I was given an urgent assignment to copy a very large file that consisted of two jackets, similar in size to that of the Washington, DC telephone book. To make matters worse, I am Quite old and this new Computer Age still baffles me.

During the course of his hectic day, Mr. Wiggins, was never to busy to assist me with my downloading entries and never complained when I frequently bumped myself off-line and shut down your system. I observed his pleasant temperament and personable manner as he assisted other similarly situated. In these troubling Times, I would like you to know that his refreshing disposition made me feel most welcomed. My experience with the Superior Court was truly positive. Kindly extend to Mr. Wiggins my sincerest gratitude for a job well done ...

T0: Chief Judge Rufus King,

I am writing this letter because good work ethics should not go unrecognized. While waiting to be assisted, I observed **Ms Squirewell** respectfully and diligently assisting an attorney who was asking for special assistance and even though that attorney persistently tried to get Ms. Squirewell to give him preferential treatment, she respectfully stated to him the correct procedure to handle his request and assisted him in the proper manner, exhibiting true professionalism.

Months later, when I returned to the District, **Ms. Squirewell** went above and beyond her duties and utilizing the training and experience she had received, undoubtedly from her department , patiently listened to my particular situation, took the appropriate actions and directed me to the proper authorities to further resolve my child support situation.

Upon returning the next day as instructed by Ms Squirewell, I arrived at a time when she was about to attend a staff meeting. Before leaving for the meeting, Ms. Squirewell informed one of her Co-workers to further assist me in her absence, **Ms. Marva Jones**. Once again, Good Customer Service continued on. Ms. Jones, also exhibiting true professionalism, not only saved me time, also some money. Thru her diligence, the proper authorities were contacted and my paperwork was handled in a timely manner. With the proper paperwork now sitting on the Judge's desk, I was able to relax and travel back to Raleigh, North Carolina, Knowing that I had accomplished my mission.

Ms, Darlene Squirewell and Ms. Marva Jones should be commended for their Outstanding Ability To Exhibit Good Customer Service, Good People Skills And True Professionalism while working in the District Of Columbia.

P. S. MY HAT GOES OFF TO THE TWO YOU !!!!!

**DON'T MISS IT!!**

**April is -**

**“Court Security and Emergency  
Preparedness Awareness Month”**

**Check the Courts' Intranet page and your  
e-mail for event and activity schedules.**