

# Full Court Press

Newsletter of the District of Columbia Courts

March 2009

*Open To All, Trusted By All, Justice For All*

Volume XXV Number 1

## FATHERING COURT HOLDS FIRST GRADUATION

By Eddie Holiday, Executive Office Intern

Friday, January 23, 2009, the D.C. Superior Court hosted its first Fathering Court Graduation. Crowds of people heard remarks from Chief Judge Lee F. Satterfield and Magistrate Judge Milton Lee. Although the judges present were impressive, all eyes were on two men: Willie Ellis and Reginal Watson. Ellis and Watson were the first two men to graduate from Fathering Court. These two fathers completed all requirements of the program and gained many skills. But clearly what they gained most was an improved relationship with their children

The Fathering Court Initiative began when then-Chief Judge Rufus G. King, III and Judge Josey-Herring (then Presiding Judge of the Family Court) embarked on a collaboration with the Office of Attorney General (OAG) to address the problem of substantial child support arrears by providing fathers with social services and skills needed to enable them



Photo by Marie Robertson

to contribute to the financial support and well-being of their children. The Superior Court and OAG realized that in many child support cases, the non-custodial parent (the one who has to pay child support to the custodial parent) had trouble obtaining employment. Punishing them for non-payment by sending them to jail did not result in their paying the child support they owed, and certainly hindered their relationships with their children. In order to combat this, the Family Court created a program to help parents re-acquaint themselves with their children, the community and the workplace. Magistrate Judge Lee currently presides over the Fathering Court and sees it as a critical program. "Initially we are focusing on those parents who are returning from prison. It's a crucial first step to get them back into the workforce," Magistrate Judge Lee said.

The Fathering Court, however, is not only an initiative that provides services for parents who have just been released from prison, it also has a grander goal: reconnect-

ing the parents with their children. The main focus of the Fathering Court program is to make sure that the participants can co-parent with the custodial parent, see their children regularly, and ultimately become a closer family.

In order to select participants for the program, every quarter the Fathering Court staff reviews a report generated by the Court Services and Offenders Supervision Agency of individuals with child support cases who are scheduled for

release from prison. Currently the program has 35 participants, 34 men and 1 woman. Their ages range from 21 to 44 years old.

Once in the program, the training starts. Fathering Court offers a wide range of services. The participants must take part in parenting classes, which are based on a curriculum created by the Healthy Lives and Thriving Communities Collaboration, and round table discussions sponsored by the Concerned Black Men organization. In addition, through the Superior Court's partnership with Capital Area Asset Builders of America, a non-profit that promotes financial education and wealth building, the participants learn important financial skills, from how to open a bank account to consolidating debt.

Magistrate Judge Lee takes a personal interest in all the parents of Fathering Court. "I meet with the participants regularly. If the parents are doing well, they only meet with me every other month; but if they are struggling then they may have

### *Included in this issue:*

- 2 Jury Management System
- 2 Mainframe Unplugging
- 3 Inauguration: One View of the Ceremony
- 4 Thanksgiving Food Drive
- 5 Access Enhanced: New Technology Translated
- 5 Education & Training Update
- 6 New Family Court Employees
- 7 Gloria Trotman-Human Resources
- 8 A Fond Farewell
- 9-12 Rave Reviews

*Fathering Court, Continued on Page 5.*

## THE NEW JURY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

By Eddie Holiday, Executive Office Intern

Jury duty is often the only experience D.C. residents have with the courts. That is why the courts work hard to make that experience a positive one. Since October 2008, the Superior Court has been using the ACS Jury Management System (JMS). JMS manages jury processes easily and efficiently. This new system offers key features such as document production, bar-code scanning, random panel creation and much more.

Although the previous system served the Superior Court and D.C residents for many years, it was due an upgrade. Yuan Burns, Chief Information Officer, created a "Risk Assessment" and presented it to the Information Technology Steering Committee (ITSC) for their approval—which they gave within a month.

Yuan explained that the project has been effective, "I measure a project's effectiveness in three ways. First—the project's cost efficiency, second—the time it takes to complete the project, and third—the quality of the product." The JMS is cost-effective, was quick to install, and the quality of JMS is far superior to the legacy system. JMS has more reporting capabilities and is easier for the staff to use.

JMS is a successful project because there was an agreement among the project stakeholders about what goals were realistic; there was a clear plan to meet all of the goals; there was a constant and effective line of communication among everyone involved in the project; and there was a controlled scope of the project, to ensure that everyone knew exactly what could and should be accomplished. Yuan adds that there was another element to JMS' success: "We had a good project manager [Gale Woodland] who was able to apply project management principles and the industry's best practices to this project and made it successful."

Congratulations to all involved!

*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*

## MAJOR PROGRESS WITH THE MAINFRAME

By Yuan Burns, Chief Information Officer

Over the past three decades, the Superior Court used mainframe technology to run its 15 case management, jury management and transcript tracking systems. The useful life of mainframe database management systems has come to an end because of a diminishing application and skills base, and increasing costs.

From August 2003 to January 2006, the Superior Court successfully took 15 case management systems off the mainframe to convert the data to our integrated case management system, CourtView. In September

2008, the IT Division successfully converted jury data from the mainframe application to the new Jury Management System. Finally, in October 2008, the Information Technology Division successfully launched its Web Transcript Tracking System and converted the last piece of transcript data from the mainframe to the new web system.



upgrades, and Judge Brook Hedge, chair of the Judicial Technology Committee, officially switched off the mainframe. At the moment it was switched off, the entire team broke into applause and then celebrated with cake and refreshments.



*Former Chief Judge Rufus King and Judge Hedge at the "unplugging" ceremony.*

*Photos by Eddie Holiday*



## INAUGURATION AT THE D.C. COURTHOUSE (AT LEAST IN ONE CHAMBERS SUITE)

By Senior Judge Peter H. Wolf

In case you hadn't noticed, the H. Carl Moultrie I Courthouse is one block north of Pennsylvania Avenue — prime real estate for an inauguration and parade. Yes, the view is blocked, now, by the Newseum and the Canadian Embassy, but the courthouse is still quite proximate to history.

That proximity was not lost on my family, who all supported (and some had worked for) Barack Obama. After his momentous victory in November, someone said, "Dad, we're coming no matter what! What if we slept in your chambers to get an early jump on the Inauguration Day festivities?"

That idea took on more and more concreteness as the very enormity of the impending event grew. The final guests were two daughters and their families (husband and two kids each) from New Jersey; my brother and his wife and one son from Tucson, Arizona; and a guest who flew in from London "just to be there."

My wife, Frances, and I coordinated the logistics, which included seeing to it everyone entered the "security ring" in time on January 19, their dropping off all but a driver at the courthouse, parking cars with a friend in far northwest D.C., a Metro ride back to the courthouse, supper nearby, snacks, light breakfast on January 20, and my countless trips from chambers to the Indiana Avenue entrance to OK the entering and re-entering folks, cameras, and equipment for what became known to the most amiable guards as "the sleep-in."

With the permission of my senior judge suite-mates Eilperin and Shuker, and with a heads-up to other relevant folks, what resulted was 14 people sleeping on the floors in sleeping bags overnight on January 19. They all (except Frances and I — we "slept in"! ) left at 7 a.m. on January 20 seeking prime spots on Pennsylvania Avenue. It was either the Avenue or the Mall, and my grandkids (ages 13 to 10) opted for the parade — "Why just watch a Jumbotron? We can see TV anytime."

They were early enough to be in the very front, "on the rail" at 7th and Pennsylvania — but ended up waiting about eight hours! It was biting cold, and they couldn't leave or their spots would be taken. They finally saw President Obama's limo go by, only to see



Judge Wolf with his family and friends as they ready for the big event.

Photos courtesy of Judge Wolf

him and Michelle exit the limo and start to walk a block past them! By then the chill was too deep: they came back to the courthouse to thaw and watch the parade on one of the two tiny 4½-inch black and white TVs in the chambers suite.

Then the whole process of getting into the courthouse had to be reversed. It took over an hour to drive myself and eight others and all their stuff (in a seven-seat van) back to their parked autos

through the street closures for all the inaugural balls. The two families had to drive home to New Jersey for school and work the next day. Then it was the same maze (and time) to get back to the courthouse. Frances and I, and the Tucson contingent, finally returned home to Queenstown, Md. by about 11 p.m. I worked the next day too!

There were no regrets — we were *there*. Frances and I, however, had watched it all on the tiny TVs, warm and comfortable. All day out of the windows on Indiana Avenue, we saw people, people, people, walking, walking, walking — an amazingly inspiring sight. When it was all over, there were three big bags of trash stacked neatly outside the chambers door, and every stick of furniture had been placed back in its exact spot (we hope!). An adventure never to be forgotten.



Smiling family members along the parade route.

# THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE A SUCCESS!

By Brenda Clarke, Deputy Clerk, Family Court Intake Center

In the middle of October the Executive Office sent out a request for a few good people to come together in the spirit of giving to organize the D.C. Courts' Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive. Several employees responded – 19 to be exact.

The first meeting day arrived – October 24<sup>th</sup>. It's 2 p.m. and only six people are present. We wait, making small talk and the clock ticks away. It's now 2:40 and only three more people have arrived. With so little time, so much to do, and so few in attendance, the question became "Would we be able to accomplish the task that was before us?" We pondered, we talked, we weighed the pros and cons. Finally, it was decided. Yes! We would move forward and have a food drive.

The Committee was down to seven consistent, determined employees – Verna Smith, Vanessa Searles, Rozlind Mann, Beverly Gibbs, Sebrina Williams, Carol Barnes and yours truly, Brenda Clarke, Chairperson. Me??? Chair??? I had only been working here for two months. What did I know? The other Committee members, not wanting to be in my shoes, convinced me that they were with me every step of the way and it was a great opportunity for me to learn my way around the Courts. We forge ahead, committing to feeding 150 families who, without assistance, would not be able to enjoy Thanksgiving.

The Executive Office sent out a global email requesting all those who could to bring in monetary and/or food donations. Posters and boxes were placed throughout the divisions. The Annual Food Drive had officially begun.

Meanwhile, seven women got together each week to chart our progress. Where would we store the donations? Do we have boxes? Who will the families be? Who's going to sell us 150 turkeys in the middle of November? Who's going to **pick up** 150 turkeys???



Committee members – Brenda Clarke, Verna Smith, Vanessa Searles, Beverly Gibbs, Rozlind Mann, Sebrina Williams, and Vivian Smith.



Volunteers help stage the food drive boxes.

Were we over zealous in thinking that we could pull this off with Thanksgiving getting closer? "It will work out. It always does." At each gathering these were the reassuring words of Verna Smith.

With five days left before the scheduled distribution date, we shopped, organized donations, picked up donations, boxed food, we shopped again. Finally, on Tuesday, November 25<sup>th</sup> after Committee members and some dedicated volunteers worked until 9pm the night before, we were

ready. One hundred fifty boxes were filled with sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, peas, beans, rolls, cake mix and icing. A truckload of turkeys was sitting outside. From 11:00 am until 3:00 pm we stood outside Building A waiting for food boxes to be picked up. At last, with red, runny noses, frozen ears and numb fingers and toes, it was over. We had experienced the real meaning of giving and provided Thanksgiving dinner for over 800 people with families ranging in size from 2 to 15 members. Verna was right! It all worked out.

The Committee would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of you who participated in the Food Drive through donations and/or your time. We collected more than \$2,900. Special thanks are extended to Andre Randall, Sarah Minkin, Karen Leichtnam, Victor Volo and Leo Pomerie from Multi-Door, and to Vivian Smith, Judge Bartnoff's JAA for staying after hours and putting food boxes together. We

salute Dr. Cheryl Bailey for her excellent negotiating skills. Last but not least, we recognize that none of this could have been completed without the assistance of the Administrative Services Division.

I would like to personally thank those six phenomenal ladies who pushed me into this venture. I was once told that when you do something difficult, it makes you learn and you grow. I learned a lot. Same time next year, ladies?



## ACCESS ENHANCED: NEW TECHNOLOGY TRANSLATED TO SUPERIOR COURT

By Alvin Milton, Senior Audio Technician,  
Courtroom Technology Branch, IT Division

On Tuesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, the Courtroom Technology Branch of the Information Technology Division had an opportunity to test the newly installed Assistive Listening/Interpreter Systems installed in all of the courtrooms in the Superior Court. On that day, the new systems allowed 20 Spanish-speaking individuals to listen to an English-to-Spanish translation of the proceedings being held in courtroom 100. Each person was given a wireless headset that received a signal from a small device in the courtroom. The same system is used for hearing impaired individuals. The system is infrared and does not allow for anyone outside of the courtroom to "listen in." In this case, the interpreter plugged his wireless transmitter into a jack that is located next to the podium. His translation was sent via cabling to the emitter located above the judge's bench. The emitter broadcast the interpretation to the courtroom, where individuals wearing "receivers" (headsets) could listen to the interpretation. The hearing lasted approximately an hour, and everyone seemed impressed with this new technology which will greatly improve access for parties in court who do not speak English.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CENTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

Since launching the E-Learning Tutorials last month, the Center for Education and Training has received many helpful comments and really appreciates the suggestions. The staff are reading and listening to your remarks and requests about the online tutorials, and many of the suggestions are being implemented. The Basic Spanish Tutorials will be updated with more terms and an aid for easier pronunciation. It will be on-line in March. Please continue to provide us with your feedback. Send comments, questions and suggestions to Lou Shack at [Louis.Shack@dcsc.gov](mailto:Louis.Shack@dcsc.gov) or 879-0497 (x2-0497). Thank you/Gracias!

*And for anyone who has not yet see the e-tutorials, here are the intranet links:*

### Computer Tutorials

[http://dccweb.dcsc.gov/opencms/export/courtsystem/cetd/online\\_training/index.html](http://dccweb.dcsc.gov/opencms/export/courtsystem/cetd/online_training/index.html)

### Spanish Tutorials

<http://dccweb.dcsc.gov/opencms/export/courtsystem/cetd/spanish/index.html>

---

*Fathering Court, Continued from page 1.*

to meet with me on a more regular basis," Judge Lee said. Thanks to his counseling, the parenting classes, financial counseling sessions and substance abuse treatment programs, the first two men have successfully completed Fathering Court. When asked what the graduating class would do after Fathering Court, Judge Lee said, "Now, it's pay back time." After graduation, those who complete Fathering Court are expected to act as mentors for those still in program and help the other parents graduate. What the crowd may not have realized when Mr. Ellis and Mr. Watson received their certificates was how much of an inspiration they provided to their classmates who have not yet completed the program, but were in attendance at the graduation.

At the end of the day, Magistrate Judge Lee would like to "extend the benefits of Fathering Court to every child support case where there is a demonstrated need for services." Ideally he would like to see the program extended to anyone who needs it, whether it be custodial parent or non-custodial parent. The program has distinct positive results for the children involved, but clearly the parents—both custodial and non-custodial—experience significant benefits as well.

# NEW FAMILY COURT EMPLOYEES

By Eddie Holiday, Executive Office Intern

## Lisa Bailey

Lisa Bailey is a Control Section Deputy Clerk for the Family Court. Lisa's parents were in the military, and, like most military families, they have lived all over the United States. However, Lisa finally settled when she moved to the District of Columbia in 1994. Lisa earned her Masters of Arts in Christian Education from the NHL Institute located in Capitol Heights, Maryland. Before joining the Courts, Lisa worked as a Supervisor of the Child Support Unit in Prince George's County's Department of Social Services and previously as an Office Coordinator with a staffing agency in Alexandria, Virginia. When asked why she came to the Courts she responded, "I came here to try something new." When Lisa is not in the Courts, she enjoys singing and directing the New Hope & Life Church of God's choir. The D.C. Courts are thankful for her service.



Photos by Eddie Holiday

asked why, she responded, "I was looking for a change from retail; I wanted to work with and for my community." When Kizzy is not working for the Courts, she goes home to her other full-time job: "Mom." She has three children and enjoys watching them excel in their activities. We look forward to seeing great work from Kizzy and we welcome this new member of the Court family.

## Margaret O'Toole

Margaret O'Toole is one of the newest employees at the Courts and has a real passion for her profession.



Margaret is a Coding Section Deputy Clerk for Family Court. A native of Virginia, Margaret received her Bachelors degree from the University of Mary Washington where she double majored in Spanish and Psychology in 2008. A few months after her graduation, she moved to the nation's Capital and started working for the Courts. When asked why she decided to work for the D.C. Courts she explained, "Both of my parents are attorneys; and it only seemed natural that I would work in a similar field." In her free time, Margaret enjoys traveling and writing short stories. Her most notable short story is called "The Promised Land," for which she received a prize for winning the Tom Howard Short Story Contest.

## Nikkia Sellers

Nikkia Sellers is a Deputy Clerk in Family Court, working with custody orders and the Washington Area Law Enforcement System (WALEs). Nikkia was born and raised in Washington, D.C.,



attended Eastern Senior High School and went on to attend George Washington University, where she majored in Criminal Justice. Nikkia has always worked in the Criminal Justice System. Before she came to the Superior Court's Family Court, Nikkia worked in the Arlington Police Department as an Emergency Communication Technician. After that, Nikkia worked as a Criminal Case Coordinator in the Prince George's County Circuit Court. Nikkia decided to work for the court system because, "It allows me to take advantage of all the opportunities the D.C. Courts have to offer." In her free time, Nikkia is shopping, reading, exercising or playing with her West Highland Terrier, Jojo.

## Stephanie Janifer

Stephanie Janifer is a Deputy Clerk working in the Calendars and Records Section of the Family Court. Stephanie was born in Cleveland, Ohio, but moved to the District at the age of three and has lived here every since. Currently, she is pursuing her Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice. Before working in the Courts, Stephanie was employed as a Records Specialist at the Greenbelt Police Department. Before that, she worked as an Administrator for the Prince George's County Public School System. Stephanie came to the Family Court because, "After working with Greenbelt Police Department, I had a strong interest in Criminal Justice, especially concerning juveniles." One thing that many might not know about Stephanie is that she is a mother of five children and grandmother of two.



## Kizzy Gardner

The Family Court is proud to introduce one of its newest Control Section Deputy Clerks, Kizzy Gardner. Kizzy was born and raised in Jacksonville, Florida and received her Bachelors degree from Bethune-Cookman University where she majored in Business Administration, with a concentration in marketing. After graduating, Kizzy was starting to take over the retail market by running her own clothing store (Aeropostale). Kizzy moved to the District in 2007, and instead of looking for work in the retail sector, she instead came to the Courts. When



# A RESOURCEFUL VETERAN TAKES THE HELM IN HUMAN RESOURCES

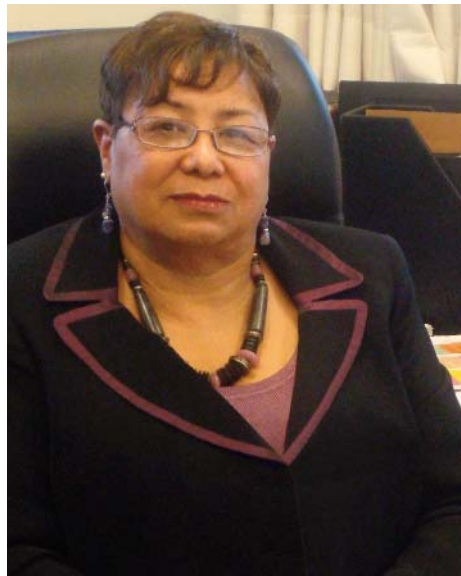
By Leah Gurowitz, Executive Office

Gloria Trotman, a 28-year court veteran, was recently named the new Director of the Human Resources Division. Gloria may not be the loudest person in the room, but she may well be the most knowledgeable. Over the years she has worked in Human Resources or “HR” at the Courts, in the D.C. government and in the private sector, and she has earned a Master’s Degree in Human Resources Management.

Gloria was born in Marion, Alabama and raised in Elba, Alabama. She attended Tuskegee Institute and received her BS degree in social work. Her late husband, whom she met in high school, attended Morehouse College. Travel to and from Atlanta must have been fated for Gloria, as her first job out of college was as a flight attendant for Delta Airlines based in Atlanta. She enjoyed the work, but – as was the practice in those days – was let go when she became pregnant with her son Michael.

Undeterred, Gloria found work in an industrial psychologist’s office and then in the HR office of a printing company. When her husband was transferred to D.C. in the 1970s, Gloria went to work for American Express and then for the D.C. government, working in the Office of Personnel as a training assistant and then a classification specialist. It was that work which gave her the experience needed to apply for a Classification Specialist position that opened up at the D.C. Courts in 1981. She was later promoted to Personnel Management Specialist, then to Supervisory Personnel Management Specialist, then to Deputy Director of the HR Division.

Over the years, Gloria has seen many changes (not the least of which was son Michael, born in Atlanta, who grew up, joined the US Air Force, and now works for Comcast, and her daughter Adria, receiving her PhD in Psychology and becoming a counselor and researcher for the SOARING project at George Mason University). She says she has seen great changes in court operations. There is more planning, more systems are in place, and in many new programs the Courts take on more responsibility and/or work to assist D.C. residents, in addition to processing cases. She cited examples such as the com-



Gloria Trotman

Photo by David Chang

munity courts, Greater Southeast Domestic Violence Intake Center, Crime Victims Compensation Program, and Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division. She likes to see the court not only handle cases, but also provide services to the community.

Gloria has seen a similar change in her division. Over the years, there has been a switch from “Personnel” to “Human Resources,” a shift which is not just a matter of words, but of outlook. Gloria sees this as not just looking at operations, but working to provide more benefits to employees and trying to assist

directors, managers and judges accomplish their tasks. HR is doing a better job of outreach in recruitment, trying to get as many applicants and as diverse a group as they can. In sum, Gloria says “we are focusing on the people part [of our job], not just the paper part.”

Her toughest challenge while here was the 1997 Revitalization Act and the switch to federal benefits for all D.C. Court employees. In the long run it was good for the employees, but “we did have to do a lot of work to get information to Congress, educating employees about the new benefits, and making sure they received the benefits on the switch-over date,” Gloria stated.

When asked about something that had surprised and pleased her while at the Courts, Gloria named something more recent: performances by the 7-judge band *Deaf Dog and the Indictments*. “I’m a rhythm and blues fan, so when they did that, I thought it was just great!”

Gloria has really enjoyed her time at the Courts and takes great pride in her work. “I feel like I am not only providing services to Court employees, but providing a service to the residents of D.C. as well. Since I moved up here I’ve always worked in D.C. and so I like the feeling of providing a public service to the community,” she explained.

Of her new role, Gloria said, “I hope I am able to continue to provide enhanced services and benefits to employees and to contribute to the Courts. I think the D.C. Courts are a great place to work and I’d like to improve on that. If there is anything that I can do toward that goal, that’s what I’m going to do.”



## A FOND FAREWELL

By Nichole Anderson, Assistant Director, and Dorothy Coleman, Director, Child Care Center

In case you have been missing a few familiar faces from the Child Care Center, we want you to know we are missing them too.

The staff of the D.C. Courts' Child Care Center would like to formally thank Mrs. Clara Mitchell and Mrs. Thelma Mason for their valuable

Both women provided the children and their families with care, love and understanding. It is with mixed emotions that we say goodbye to these phenomenal women. Both will be missed greatly — Mrs. Mason for her warm smile, sense of humor and her friendly greetings, and Mrs. Mitchell for her quiet strength, kind words and gentle spirit. All of these wonderful attributes have endeared others to them.

Roy S. Wynn Jr., Director, Special Operations Division, applauds their years of commitment and contribution to the operation of the Child Care Center.

The staff of the Child Care Center (Director Dorothy Coleman, Assistant Director Nichole Anderson, and Senior Aides Mary Faxio, Dorothy



Mrs. Clara Mitchell

Photos by Nichole Anderson

service and dedication to the Center. These “grandmothers” touched the lives of many children with their warmth, sensitivity, and love. Many court employees have fond memories of seeing them in the halls on their way to the Child Care Center; some even stopped in for a brief visit.

Mrs. Mitchell and Mrs. Mason have worked as Senior Aides in the Child Care Center for more than 12 years. They were originally placed with the Child Care Center by the National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc. (NCBA).



Mrs. Thelma Mason

Johnson, and Mildred Palm) and the entire D.C. Courts family wish Mrs. Mason and Mrs. Mitchell a healthy and happy retirement!

**Congratulations to the Courtwide Toy Drive Committee** for another very successful toy drive! This past holiday season the Committee was able to collect and distribute 375 toys and 119 gift cards to the children under the Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect, Crime Victims Compensation Program, and the Family Court's Social Services Division. Many thanks to all who supported the drive and to the members of the Committee for all the hard work!



# Rave Reviews

## EXCEPTIONAL WORK

By Senior Judge Henry Greene

I want to bring to your attention the exceptional work of Ms. Gale Woodland, an IT Applications Programming employee of our court system, whose imaginative and creative thinking (along with that of an outside contractor) to solve a problem involving the summoning of jurors for a multi-month trial in Superior Court has saved the District of Columbia Courts and other government agencies, particularly including the United States Marshals Service, tens of thousands of dollars and countless hours and days of work for many court and court-related employees.



Presently I am about three months into a lengthy, complex criminal trial involving six defendants who stand charged with serious felony offenses. The original estimate was that this case would take four to six months to try, and I expect that it will live up to that estimate.

What was anticipated to be one of the most time-consuming aspects of the trial was the jury selection process, and there was talk early on of the need to summons as many as 6,000 additional jurors in order to enable us to select a jury of 12 regular jurors and 8 alternates who would be available to serve on such a long trial. Indeed, another judge reported to me anecdotally that in a case of similar length, with similar charges, that he tried within the past several years, it took nine weeks to pick a jury. Consequently, I had every expectation that I might need between one and two months to select the jury in my case.

However, several months before trial was to begin I was alerted that a court employee (who I subsequently learned was Ms. Woodland) had occasion to discuss the prospective jury selection process in my case with some other employees, and suggested that, inasmuch as we summons large numbers of jurors to the Courthouse Monday through Thursday of every week, perhaps we might develop a procedure whereby, for several weeks, we would alert all jurors who arrive every day of the advent of my trial and offer each juror the opportunity to volunteer to be available for service in this lengthy case, with the understanding that the juror then would be excused from service on the day the juror had appeared, and would be compensated for that day in the event the juror ultimately was selected to serve in my case. Jurors were told little about the case, other than (1) that it would consume four to six months to try, (2) what days the jury would be in recess during vacation periods, and (3) that volunteering to serve would be a significant act of public service to the Court and the District of Columbia.

With the agreement of counsel in the case, we asked the Jury Office to institute this process, and with that office's typical efficiency and cooperation, over 100 jurors volunteered over a period of some six to eight weeks. While only 70 to 80 jurors from our volunteer group actually appeared when jury selection began, we were able to select twelve regular jurors and seven of eight alternates from that group in a period of about two days. Subsequently, it took us almost another two days and two separate panels of regularly summonsed jurors to select the remaining alternate juror.

It is evident from these two closely connected experiences that, had it been necessary to select all twenty of our jurors in accord with the procedures we traditionally use in our court, it would have taken at least 20 trial days – and probably more – to impanel the jury in this case. Given only the compensation required for the five CJA attorneys representing five of the six defendants in the case, using the procedure devised by Ms. Woodland saved the Court tens of thousands of dollars in attorney fees. Additionally, of course, very substantial expenditures for court reporters, possible transcripts, court supervision officers and court clerical personnel were saved, along with significant funds from other agencies such as the United States Department of Justice (which pays not only the two Assistant United States Attorneys who have prepared and are trying the case, but the numerous Deputy United States Marshals who are assigned to the trial) and the District of Columbia Public Defender Service (which has two senior attorneys – and probably, investigative personnel – assigned to the case).

I believe that Ms. Woodland merits significant public recognition for devising a procedure that not only has demonstrably saved our court system a substantial amount of funds in a time of very tight budgets, but which can repeatedly be utilized in future jury selection procedures for lengthy trials to accomplish further substantial savings. Her imagination, creativity, thoughtfulness and dedication to the D. C. Courts warrant our admiration and our gratitude.

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2009  
**Subject:** a court user's comments

I was not selected to hear a case, but the whole ordeal went over smoothly and all personnel I came in contact with were very professional and attentive to my physical condition – not that I needed it but it was good to know it was available. You and the Court system are doing a great job including people with disabilities into the judicial process without complicating our situations. Examples when the judge noticed that I was in a mobile chair, he just smoothly told me where to park and then called the next person and told him where to sit without explaining the situation. When I was called to the jury box the same scenario was played out. The processing clerk was also very professional and helpful coming around the counter to assist me with my juror's badge though I told her I could handle it myself. Thank you for the early processing and I also thank your colleagues very much as well.

**From:** Woodland, Gale A.  
**Sent:** Friday, January 30, 2009  
**To:** Meacham, Sara  
Research & Development  
Division  
**Subject:** Thank You!!!!  
**Importance:** High



Greetings Sara,

I wanted to take time out to thank you for your extensive corrections and documentation cleanup. Without all your hard-work and dedication toward this effort, I fear to think of where we would be. You have done a tremendous job all while under pressure of producing annual statistics and the like.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!! Your hard work is very much appreciated.

30 December 2008  
Mr. Derrick Monroe Branch Chief  
Civil Action Branch  
500 Indiana Avenue NW Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Monroe:

It is my pleasure to report the courteous, profession, pursuit of a Judgment rendered in my case by **Mr. Vondell E. Wiggins**. My first call occurred on 09 July 2008, and I was transferred about three times before I was connected to Mr. Wiggins who listened and researched through documents and located the requested case at the Federal Records Center, in Suitland, MD.



Photos by Eddie Holiday

Mr. Wiggins expands Customer Service in his job and I recommend him to you with great appreciation for his continued assistance until I received my request.

My wishes for all in your employment Happy and prosperous New Year.

Dear Ms. Taylor,

My sister and I were in the L&T courtroom today.

I just wanted to follow-up on our brief conversation today to state that **Ms. [Laurena] Young**, one of your staff members in the courtroom, is by far one of the most pleasant efficient and professional people we have met.



Being in the L&T Court is sometimes a very stressful situation for most people and the 2 times my sister and I have been in there in the last 10 days has been made less stressful due to her.

Please thank her on our behalf. She is truly an asset.

Thank you

P.S. Everything for my sister and I went even better than we anticipated and helping us to stay in a positive frame of mind was a big factor for us today.



September 4, 2008

Deborah Taylor-Godwin  
Director, Civil Division  
Superior Court of the District of  
Columbia 500 Indiana Ave., NW,  
Room 2500 Washington, DC 20001



Re: Natalie E. Byrd

Dear Ms. Taylor-Godwin:

Thank you for your letter of August 26, 2008, acknowledging mine about the fine work of Deputy Clerk Crystal Kelley. But I would be truly remiss if I did not also praise the service and assistance I received from the clerk of the Judge-in-Chambers, **Natalie E. Byrd**, who handled the subsequent TRO proceedings. As you know, TRO proceedings are hectic affairs. I am admittedly a novice at it and approached the task with some trepidation. Ms. Byrd was exceedingly patient with me, helping me correct my errors and expediting the proceedings with utmost professionalism, courtesy and efficiency. I am truly grateful to her and the staff.

Of necessity I spent a good deal of time in Room 4220 and was able to observe Ms. Byrd and the entire staff interact with the many citizens with more mundane business before the Judge-in-Chambers. I was highly impressed by the helpful and respectful way in which Ms. Byrd and the staff assisted those who came to the office, making a legal system which sometimes bewilders lawyers understandable to laypersons. The Court belongs to the people, not the bureaucracy, and I witnessed that principle in action at the office of the Judge-in-Chambers. Please convey my thanks to Ms. Byrd and the staff of the office of Judge-in-Chambers.

December 18, 2008

Ms. Lori Edley  
Supervisor  
Court Reporting  
Administration  
Superior Court  
of the District of  
Columbia 500 Indiana  
Avenue, NW  
Washington, D. C. 20001



Dear Ms. Edley:

I have needed on a somewhat urgent basis a number of transcripts in several dockets going back several years. These transcripts were prepared by Court Reporters and through tape transcription.

My point of contact for this action has been **Ms. Tamera Mottley** of your staff. I want to take this moment to let you know of her outstanding service that brings credit to your branch of the Superior Court. She has been unfailingly diligent, polite, resourceful, patient and always helpful in successfully meeting my needs as an attorney practicing at the Court.

Her service reflects very well on your direction as Supervisor. Please share this letter with Ms. Mottley.

Thank you so kindly.

Sent: Tuesday, December 16, 2008

To: **Davis-Logan, Cynthia D.**

Subject: Thank You for making it happen for us today!

Cynthia,

I'm writing to personally thank you for the service you and your support staff provided Judge Fisher's staff during our move today. Your [staff members] are professional, pleasant, highly skilled and efficient. The move was seamless because of the level of service provided to us.

Thanks again for making our move stress free.

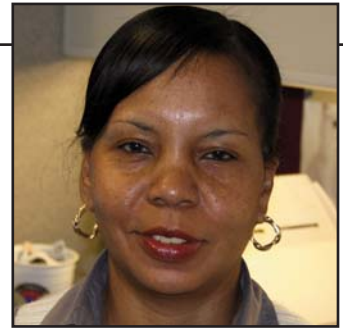
Sincerely,  
Sheila Campbell, JAA



December 20, 2008

**Ms. Elizabeth Proctor**

Superior Court of the District of Columbia Civil Division  
Small Claims and Conciliation Branch  
Washington, D.C. 20001



Dear Ms Elizabeth Proctor:

I am writing this letter to express my heartfelt appreciation for all of the concern, understanding and assistance that you provided to me recently during an extremely difficult time of my life. As you know my dear wife was terminally ill with cancer. We knew her death was imminent. The concern and respect for my situation that you demonstrated were well above the call of duty and I wanted to let you know that I am so very grateful for the extra effort you put forth on my behalf. I was preoccupied and very stressed over the situation with my wife and you were able to relieve me of any additional stress involving this civil matter.

My wife passed on December 5, 2008. Thanks to all of the assistance you provided me, I was able to be by her side in her time of need and to be fully focused on her. THANK YOU SO MUCH for providing me with this opportunity.

From: Friend, Dana A.

Sent: Wednesday, December 17, 2008 3:51 PM

To: Shack, Louis

Cc: Hofford, Meredith; Syed, Bilal; Gurowitz, Leah; Young, Brenda J.

Subject: RE: Thanks for your dedication

Lou:

Thank you for taking the time to offer your perspective on Ms. Young's training classes. We will note your assessment as part of her performance evaluation. We are very proud of Brenda and believe she well represents the mission of the Budget and Finance Division.

Dana

From: Shack, Louis

Sent: Wednesday, December 17, 2008 3:42 PM

To: **Young, Brenda J.**

Cc: Hofford, Meredith; Friend, Dana A.

Subject: Thanks for your dedication



Hello Ms. Young,

I want to use this season as an opportunity to thank you for the monthly work that you perform with a smile. I have noticed the vigor that you put into the monthly ETAMS classes. I will assure you that the labor you express in these monthly classes do not go unnoticed.

You are a gigantic credit to us and I am excited about the coming New Year. Thank You.