

# Full Court Press

Newsletter of the District of Columbia Courts

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Open To All, Trusted By All, Justice For All

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## INVESTITURE OF JUDGE TODD EDELMAN

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office

On October 8, 2010, the Superior Court hosted the investiture of Associate Judge Todd E. Edelman. Surrounded by friends, family, and colleagues that helped fill the Atrium Level of the Moultrie Courthouse, Judge Edelman was sworn in by Senior Judge Truman Morrison and congratulated by resounding applause from the three floors of attendees. And while the ceremony was a novel experience for the judge, the surroundings were certainly not: "This is the courthouse that I grew up in," Judge Edelman said, referring to the Moultrie Courthouse.

Judge Edelman moved to the District of Columbia in 1994 to clerk for the Honorable William B. Bryant on the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. His original intention was to stay for one year, then move back to New York, where he had graduated from New York University Law. But following his clerkship, Judge Edelman was awarded a fellowship at the Georgetown University Law Center. In this capacity, he spent the next two years representing indigent defendants in the Superior Court, as well as supervising law students in Georgetown's Criminal Justice Clinic. This early experience cemented Edelman's desire to have a career public service, which in turn kept him involved in cases before the Superior Court.

"Pretty much everything I know about being a lawyer I learned in this courthouse," Edelman said. "I

learned how to be a lawyer in the courtroom, I learned about winning and losing, I learned how to deal with clients, opposing counsel, judges, all right here in this building." Now



Senior Judge Truman A. Morrison swears in Judge Edelman, accompanied by his wife Marisa.

Photo by Tom Feeney, Jr.

Judge Edelman says he will learn to be a judge at the Superior Court. "The people I have been appearing in front of for the past 15 years are now my colleagues, so I'm looking forward to getting to know them from this new perspective," said Judge Edelman.

Judge Edelman has had a distinguished career in public service. From 1997 to 2005, he represented impoverished men and women in criminal cases as an attorney

at the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia. In 2003, Harvard Law School awarded Judge Edelman its Wasserstein Public Interest Fellowship. Judge Edelman credits Judge Bryant for instilling in him a sense of the meaning of public service. "Judge Bryant taught me a lot about how the legal system should work and how to be a caring judge," Judge Edelman said. He also said that Judge Bryant always recognized that the people in front of him were individuals, and that they weren't cases. "Despite the pressures and volumes, Judge Bryant was always able to keep that in mind," Judge Edelman said. Judge Bryant was a criminal defense lawyer in D.C. before the public service options that are available today. "He would accept payments in chickens, IOUs and groceries. He really pushed me to work with those in need," Judge Edelman said.

Judge Bryant wasn't the only influential figure in Judge Edelman's life. Born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri, Judge Edelman's parents were both doctors and provided a vision for him that he followed. His father was a radiologist who loved his job. "He went to work every day excited to go there. I really did grow up thinking of work as something you do that makes you fulfilled and happy, and so I always wanted to have a career where I had the same sense of fulfillment that he felt," Edelman said.

Judge Edelman's distinguished achievements and unwavering dedication to the District's public has brought him to the place he stands today. "As a judge I hope to continue serving the public, and to become the type of judge who remembers that cases are about individuals," he said.

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# MANAGEMENT TRAINING PROGRAM CELEBRATES FOURTH GRADUATING CLASS

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office

On September 24, 2010, 23 D.C. Court employees graduated in the fourth class of the Management Training Program sponsored by the D.C. Courts' Center for Education and Training and the Management Training Committee. The Class of 2010 graduation ceremony was held in the D.C. Court of Appeals ceremonial courtroom, and for the graduating class, the successful ceremony symbolized a year in which the participating employees prepared themselves for a future of professional leadership.

The Management Training Program groups four to five court employees into separate teams, and pairs them each with a mentor. For a year the five teams research, work, and create projects that can improve court operations. At the same time, they develop critical leadership skills that cultivate teamwork and proper management.

The graduation ceremony began with speeches of praise and admiration from D.C. Court of Appeals Chief Judge Eric T. Washington and Executive Officer Anne Wicks. Then the graduates received certificates and had the opportunity to reflect on their experience. The most resounding speech came from Class Spokesperson Herb Rouson, Jr. of the Budget and Finance Division. Rouson recited inspirational anecdotes of individuals in the class,



Team 5 members (from left) Yousuf Jaleel, Donald Younger, Sandra Arrington, and Julie Klier cheer their win.

Photos by Lou Shack

which in whole, revealed the character of the graduating class. "Everyone is looking at us differently and expecting more, so let's move forward," Rouson said to his fellow graduates. "The best is yet to come," Rouson said. Superior Court Chief Judge Lee Satterfield then concluded the ceremony, congratulating the graduates and commending them for their diligence and inspiration.

While the graduation ceremony was a festive occasion for the graduates, the Team Presentations

just two weeks earlier proved to be a pressure-cooker. The Center for Education and Training hosted the Management Training Program's team project presentations at Gallery Place on September 8th. The teams presented their projects to an audience that included many of the Courts' top managers. The product of a year's-worth of effort, the presentations were impressive. The winning team was Team 5, and the title of the presentation was "Understanding Your Civic Duty: Jury Duty in the D.C.

Courts, Jury Outreach to High School Juniors & Seniors." Mentored by Civil Division Director Deborah Taylor-Goodwin, the team of Sandra Arrington, Yousuf Jaleel, Julie Klier, and Donald Younger presented solutions to improve juror yield. Their model for success focused on invigorating youth to appreciate the honor in serving by creating mock trials in which students would participate and come to understand the trial process and the importance of jury duty.

The other four teams also had creative and thorough project presentations. Court employees Oscar Claros, Toshia Jackson, Toni King, Patricia McMillan and Angela McMurray presented "Chatting it Up: 'LIVE' with D.C. Courts Experts." Mentored by Crime Victims Compensation Program Director Laura Banks Reed, the team focused on creating an online chat option in which court employees can provide information to the public via the website. The system would improve customer service and efficiency. For the month of May, the project went through a pilot test in the Probate Division, and was a great success, with very positive comments from the public who utilized the service.



Herb Rouson, Jr. of the Budget and Finance Division recited inspirational anecdotes of individuals in the class.

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*Leah Gurowitz, Editor  
Dennis Shipley, Creative Director  
Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant*

MTP, continued on Page 3.



Team 4 members (L to R) are Mark Coble, Joyce Jenkins, Bonita Lilly, Jonita Lindsay, and Herb Rouson, Jr..



Team 3 members (L to R) are Michael Harrison, Rozlind Mann, LaKesha Williams, and Barbara Cain.



Team 1 members (top row L to R) are Patria McMillan, Oscar Claros, and Angela McMurray. (Seated) Toshia Jackson and Toni King.



Team 2 members (L to R) are Margary Rogers, Lisa McCants, David Chang, Lashon Brown-Woodman, and Charlene Gamble.

Photos by Lou Shack

Mentored by Administrative Services Division Director Louis Parker, teammates Lashon Brown-Woodman, David Chang, Charlene Gamble, Lisa McCants, and Margary Rogers proposed the project: "Healthy Employees are Productive Employees." The theme of the presentation was the improvement of employee energy and effectiveness through the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Their initiatives included installing vending machines in court buildings that dispense healthy snacks, as well as scheduling workout boot camps, and a "health buddy system" that promotes bike riding and regular doctor visits.

"D.C. Courts Succession Planning: Passing the Baton & Leaving a Legacy of Success" was the title of the project mentored by Deputy Executive Officer Dr. Cheryl Bailey. The team of Mark Coble, Joyce Jenkins, Bonita Lilly, Jonita Lindsay, and Herb Rouson used the metaphor of passing the baton in a race on the track to emphasize the importance of transitioning leadership when court employees retire.

Team members Barbara Cain, Michael Harrison, Rozlind Mann, and LaKesha Williams focused on creating a program that increased court employees' skill sets beyond the typical job description. Mentored by Lisa VanDeVeer, Director of Strategic Management, the team presented a project entitled "WIN-WIN Training: Building Bridges Through Cross-Training." In creating "cross-trained employees," the D.C. Courts could better handle employee absence and improve customer service. Improving leadership skills, boosting morale, and promoting teamwork are some other benefits of "cross-training" presented by the winning team.

The class of 2010 not only exceeded the expectations of fellow court employees, but provided an exemplary model of success for future classes to come.

# FAMILY TREATMENT COURT GRADUATION

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office

On September 28, 2010, the D.C. Superior Court hosted the 11th Family Treatment Court Graduation Program. The ceremony was moving and highlighted a program that provides comprehensive drug treatment while helping to keep families together. Developed in 2003, Family Treatment Court is a voluntary, 15-month substance abuse treatment program for mothers or female guardians whose children are the subject of a child neglect case. Participants spend the first six months of the rehabilitation in a residential facility, and up to nine months in community-based continuing care. For those who stay on the program's track, the thorough rehabilitation process can lead to a second chance at family life.

The 2010 ceremony began with a procession from the graduating class. Proud graduates Lakisha Allen-Brown, Erica Brown, Joanne Cheadle, Aisha Lawson, and Vivian Swales marched down the aisle in the JM-8 courtroom and took their seats front and center. Graduate Martina Brown could not attend, but was still honored at the ceremony. Superior Court Chief Judge Lee Satterfield then offered his praise for the graduates, honoring their perseverance. A panel of community leaders followed by offering similar praises to the graduates, all echoing the importance of family. Debra Swigon Stokes of the Executive Office sang her version of "Look to the Rainbow," a performance so inspiring that several of the graduates wept.

The keynote speaker was Carla Evans, a 2003 graduate of the Family Treatment Court Program. Seven years after her graduation, Carla has earned an undergraduate degree in criminal justice, and is pursuing her graduate degree in mental health while also working full-time. Her success was exemplary for the graduates, and her words were equally inspiring. Carla



Magistrate Judge Pamela Gray with grad Lakisha.

Photos by Tom Feeney, Jr.

said "I didn't like myself," recalling her life prior to 2003. "But I educated myself, and learned why I like myself," discovering that "these treatment programs work," said Carla. She also warned about the dangers of relapse, and how staying true to the values learned in the program was essential to continuing success.

The graduates also got a chance to take the podium. Honor Graduate Lakisha Allen-Brown said: "When I look back to where this all started, I see now where my life was unmanageable, to say the least. Truth is I didn't think I could do it, I didn't believe my life could be changed!" Graduate Vivian Swales, now over two years clean and a proud new homeowner, thanked everyone who helped her along the way. Graduate Erica Brown recited a poem she wrote, exemplifying her growth when she said, "I live my life to the fullest trying not to think would've, should've, and could've."

Deputy Family Court Presiding Judge Zoe Bush wrapped up the ceremony with words of wisdom and experience. Her speech gave credence to the difficulties of being a parent, and how each day of family life presents a new challenge, whether it is subtle or significant. While the future hurdles of parenthood will be unpredictable for the 2010 graduates, it can be assured they are properly equipped to face these challenges with a clean and positive attitude cultivated by their experience in the Family Treatment Court.



Family Court Deputy Presiding Judge Zoe Bush addresses the graduates in her closing speech.

## D.C. SUPERIOR COURT'S FATHERING COURT HONORED BY HARVARD UNIVERSITY

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office

On September 29, 2010, the D.C. Fathering Court was recognized as a "Bright Idea" by Harvard University, honoring the program for its continuing success and growth. Bright Ideas is an initiative that recognizes creative and promising government programs and partnerships and spotlights exemplary models of government innovation to address the nation's most pressing public concerns. The D.C. Fathering Court Program was launched two years ago and has assisted fathers reentering the work force from incarceration, enabling them to pay child support and re-establish emotional bonds with their children. Program services include job skills training, resume writing, job interview training, parenting skills, and time management. Led by Judge Milton Lee, the program currently assists 45-50 fathers.

"The Fathering Court is one of our problem-solving courts, in which judges don't look at just guilt or liability, but try to help people put their lives back together," said Chief Judge Lee Satterfield. "I commend Judge Lee on his dedication to this program; his commitment and strength of personality are responsible for its success. We at the Court are proud of him and honored by being recognized by Harvard University for our 'bright idea.'"



Judge Milton Lee and recent graduates of the Fathering Court Program.

Photo by Tom Feeney, Jr.

## HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION AWARDS GO TO YVONNE MARTINEZ-VEGA AND JUDGE RUFUS G. KING III.

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office

On November 4, 2010, the Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia hosted the 33rd annual "Equal Justice Awards," which give recognition to honorable Hispanic leaders in the District of Columbia. The D.C. Superior Court's very own Yvonne Martinez-Vega, Deputy Director of the Criminal Division, received the Hugh A. Johnson, Jr. Memorial Award for her unwavering commitment and achievement in public service.

The Honorable Rufus G. King III received the 2010 Judge Ricardo M. Urbina Lifetime Achievement Award. "We are honored to celebrate the significant contributions of Hispanic judges to the District's legal community. We are also humbled by the impressive achievements of this year's awardees, whose passion and tireless dedication to justice and opportunity should inspire us all," said HBA-DC President Kenia Seoane Lopez.



Criminal Division Deputy Director Yvonne Martinez-Vega with Judge Hiram Puig-Lugo.

Photo by Tom Feeney, Jr.



Senior Judge Rufus G. King III

Photo by Henry Greene

# HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH 2010

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office

Each year from September 15th to October 15th, the United States celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month by highlighting the culture and traditions of the Latino residents of the country. At the D.C. Courts, the month is spent honoring Latino residents of the District and employees of the Courts for their contributions to our community and our culture.

Hispanic Heritage Month begins on September 15th, the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days just a few days later, on September 16th and 18th, respectively. At the Courts, Hispanic Heritage Month 2010 began with a "Celebracion Cultural Latina," or Latino cultural celebration. This event was a huge success, as representatives from Venezuela, Guatemala, Panama, Puerto Rico, Peru, and Nicaragua provided information and colorful presentations on their respective countries. Latino court employees were present, representing their countries of origin and heritage: Wilfredo Gaitán for Nicaragua and James Plunkett for Peru. Superior Court Chief Judge Lee Satterfield opened the celebration by welcoming guests and thanking the Hispanic Heritage Committee for their organization of the month's festivities. Soon after the Chief Judge concluded, an array of traditional Latin American dishes was offered, though the empanadas, meatballs, rice, and beans went quickly!

On October 15, 2010, the D.C. Courts concluded their celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month with the Community Outreach Recognition Opportunity, or CORO, awards ceremony. These awards honor those who assist the Latino residents of the District and thereby enrich our community. D.C. Court of Appeals Chief Judge Eric T. Washington began the ceremony with an opening speech that honored the



Judge Marisa Demeo (right) and the Allen Klein Award winner Eliana D. Labarca.

Photos by Tom Feeney, Jr.



Judge Hiram Puig-Lugo (right) presented the Community Agency Award to Rosalia Miller representing the Latino Student Fund

spirit of Hispanic Heritage Month, reminding those in attendance "of the gifts we have from all the cultures that come together in this country to make us what we are."

The presentation of the awards followed. Associate Judge Marisa Demeo presented the Allen Klein Award to Ms. Eliana D. Labarca, an 87-year-old clinical social worker and abuse counselor who still works a full caseload in her tireless effort to help the less fortunate. Judge Hiram Puig-Lugo presented the Community Agency Award to the Latino Student Fund, whose mission is to provide opportunities for a strong academic foundation for students of Hispanic descent and to promote higher education and professional leadership. Finally, Judge José López presented Ms. Kathryn Dolan, representing the CAIR Coalition, with the Legal Community Award. CAIR, or the Capital Area Immigrants Rights Coalition is a non-profit organization with a legal services program focused exclusively on assisting immigrants detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in local jails in Virginia and the western part of Maryland.

After the presentation of HHM, continued on Page 7.



Employees follow the lead of the "D.C. Casineros," a salsa dance group.

the awards, "DC Casineros" stole the show with their salsa dance routine. Highlighted by the participation of court employee William Sanchez, the six dancers broke into three pairs and impressed the crowd with their fast-paced and synchronized performance. Following the act, the salsa group taught volunteers from the audience the basics of the salsa dance. After some preliminary tripping of the feet, the volunteers were able to nail down the steps and even move to some music. Hispanic Heritage Committee Chair Wilfredo Gaitan presented DC Casineros a well-deserved certificate of recognition for their performance.

Judge Laura Cordero gave closing remarks, ending both the ceremony and the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month at the D.C. Courts. Judge Cordero began by pointing out the incredible talents and dedication of the award recipients, and also praised the members of the Hispanic Heritage Month Committee for their passion as advocates of Hispanic Heritage Month, not only inside the Courts but outside as well. As reflected in Judge Cordero's speech and from the energy of those who were presented awards, as well as those who presented them, this year's celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month was not only a huge achievement, but an example for future celebrations to come!



Judge José López presents Kathryn Dolan the Legal Community award.



Attendees of the opening ceremony lineup for a taste of the featured Hispanic food.



Committee Chair Wilfredo Gaitán greets an attendee during the opening ceremony.



The 2010 Hispanic Heritage Celebration Committee (L to R) William Augusto, Doris Chávez, Darryl Lesesne, Nancy Matos, Jorge Nava, Lula Raye, Wilfredo Gaitán, Yoscaisa Ramirez, Jessica Aparicio, and William Sanchez.

Photos by Tom Feeney, Jr.

## 2010 THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE

By Debra Swingon-Stokes, Administrative Assistant, Executive Office

The District of Columbia Courts' Thanksgiving Food Drive donated holiday food boxes to 132 needy families. Approximately \$3,500 was collected for this effort. Our dedicated committee members, led by Brenda Clarke, Chair, and Verna Smith, Co-Chair, worked endlessly to organize people, collect money, purchase turkeys, sort food and distribute boxes.



Donald Younger and fellow Thanksgiving Food Drive committee member get ready to start.



Committee members help unload turkeys for area families.

Photos by Tom Feeney, Jr.

Families within our community were elated and grateful for the contributions and donations provided by our court family. This combination of giving and receiving characterizes the true meaning of Thanksgiving.

Thanks to all who contributed to this valuable and worthy cause!

## DOWNTOWN D.C. BID HONORS D.C. MISDEMEANOR AND TRAFFIC COMMUNITY COURT

By Anntinette D. Williams and Edward L. Rhodes

The Downtown D.C. Business Improvement District (BID) held its 2010 Momentum Awards on November 9, 2010 at the Akridge LEED building located in downtown D.C. Councilmembers Jack Evans (Ward 2) and Marion Barry (Ward 8) were among the 200 guests assembled for the ceremony. The Momentum Awards recognize "outstanding individual and organizational achievements in Downtown D.C." The awards honored seven business owners, developers and/or city officials who are considered visionaries for their contribution to creating the remarkable urban experience that is Downtown D.C.

Magistrate Judge Richard Ringell received the Downtown Partnership/Program award on behalf of the D.C. Misdemeanor and Traffic Community Court (DCMTCC). The award to the DCMTCC was in recognition of the Court's usage of problem-solving approaches, collaboration, and partnerships with several agencies and organizations to hold defendants who commit low-level and quality of life crimes accountable for their actions and also to address social services needs that may be contributing to their criminal behavior.

The Downtown D.C. BID has been a valued partner in providing community service opportunities for the defendants in the DCMTCC. As of October 2010, defendants in the DCMTCC have completed over 7,630 hours of community service work- the equivalent of approximately \$62,947.50 worth of labor.

We are proud of the accomplishments of the DCMTCC and the work of Magistrate Judge Ringell, Community Court Coordinator Michael Francis, and the staff of the D.C. Misdemeanor and Traffic Community Court. Congratulations!



Magistrate Judge Richard Ringell (left) receives the Downtown Partnership/Program award.



# MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK EVENT

By Dr. Yolanda Segal, Mental Health Diversion Court Coordinator

In 1990, Congress established the first week of October as Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) "in recognition of the importance of improving the delivery of mental illness services and of educating the American public about the needs of individuals with mental illness." Since then, mental health advocates across the country have joined together during the first full week of October to spread awareness. This year, the D.C. Superior Court (DCSC) and the D.C. Pretrial Services Agency (PSA) recognized those with mental illness and hoped to help reduce the stigma they face daily by hosting two events to educate the public about Co-Occurring Disorders (COD). DCSC and PSA chose to highlight COD this year because many individuals who experience a mental illness also experience a co-occurring disorder. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (SAMHSA), clients said to have COD have one or more substance-related disorders as well as one or more simultaneous mental disorders.

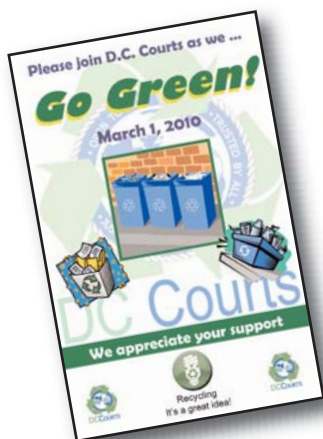
This year DCSC and PSA chose 'Bring Change 2 Mind' as the theme for the week of awareness. BringChange2Mind.org is a not-for-profit organization created by actress Glenn Close, the Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation (CABF), Fountain House, and the International Mental Health Research Organization (IMHRO). Glenn Close founded Bring Change 2 Mind to bring awareness to mental illness and to help reduce the stigma of mental illness, which both her sister and nephew experience. Bring Change 2 Mind is a public service campaign; the purpose is two-fold: to challenge misconceptions about people with mental illness and to encourage people who may have a mental disorder to seek treatment.

Marking the second annual event honoring MIAW at the Superior Court, Ms. Nike Hamilton, Program Director of Second Genesis, spoke at a seminar at PSA on October 7, 2010 and discussed co-occurring

disorders. Second Genesis is a therapeutic residential and outpatient treatment center for drug addiction. The following day Dr. Robert Keisling, Medical Director of Pathways to Housing, gave a presentation at the Moultrie Courthouse on co-occurring disorders and the "Housing First" model. Pathways to Housing provides transitional case management and assistance for homeless individuals living with major mental illness. The Housing First model arranges independent housing, and then assists with case management and referrals to promote community integration for its consumers.

In addition to honoring Mental Illness Awareness Week for the past two years, DCSC is committed to bringing awareness to the treatment of mental illness and to reducing the criminal justice involvement of individuals with severe mental illness. In late 2007, the Court established the Mental Health Diversion Court (MHDC) to address the needs of an increasing number of mentally ill defendants charged with misdemeanors. The main objective of MHDC has been to identify defendants experiencing a mental illness or a co-occurring disorder and to connect defendants with appropriate mental health and drug treatment services. If compliance with these services is maintained, the criminal charges may be dismissed or reduced. Since the MHDC's inception in 2007 over 63% of misdemeanor defendants who entered a diversion agreement have successfully completed the program and had their charges dismissed.

The MHDC hears misdemeanor cases in Courtroom 211, Tuesday through Thursday afternoons. In October 2010, MHDC was expanded to include defendants with nonviolent felony charges. Defendants who are successful in the program can have their charges reduced to a specified misdemeanor charge. The MHDC hears non-violent felony cases on Monday afternoons. Judge Linda K. Davis presides over the Mental Health Diversion Court.



Don't forget  
to  
**RECYCLE!**



# THE WORK/LIFE BALANCE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

by Jeannie M. Adams and Marie Robertson

Do you remember an article last spring about the overall great results of the 2009 Human Capital Survey? One thing we learned from the survey is that D.C. Courts' employees could use some help balancing personal and job-related demands. The Work Life Balance (WLB) Committee has been looking at a number of ways for the D.C. Courts to support employees in finding that balance. The WLB Committee's goals are to learn about best practices in work/life balance from other employers in both government and the private sector, to gather more detailed information from D.C. Courts' employees about our needs, and, using the best practices, to recommend initiatives the Courts could put in place to help meet employees' needs.

As we move forward in our careers, the demands on our time change. The WLB Committee is analyzing employee work/life balance needs in three career phases: entering the workforce, career and family transition, and legacy and retirement planning. Early in our careers, we may concentrate on learning and establishing social and organization ties, continuing our education, and furthering our professional development. Later, demands may include starting a family and purchasing a home, and still later, the focus may be on planning for retirement, caring for elderly parents, and preparing for second careers.

Employers in the public and private sectors offer a variety of options to employees to help with work/life balance. The WLB Committee's research finds that these work/life balance programs lead to more engaged and productive employees and better recruitment and retention. Some of these options, like back-up child care, are already available at the D.C. Courts, and the WLB Committee is looking at steps the Courts can take to expand them.



We thank the many employees who participated this past summer in a survey and focus groups! A cross-section of court employees explored not only work/life balance challenges unique to the D.C. Courts but also possible solutions. We discussed two primary areas to help employees meet life's demands: flexible work arrangements, such as compressed work schedules, flexible schedules, telework, part-time work, and job sharing, and educational opportunities provided by the Courts. One of the biggest challenges, particularly with flexible work arrangements, is the intensely public nature of court functions. Many, many employees at the D.C. Courts have direct contact every day with the public we serve, whether in a courtroom or at a counter.

As a first step, the WLB Committee is pleased to announce two initiatives to address concerns raised by employees (in all three career phases) during the survey and focus groups: part time work and dependent care. The WLB Committee is working on part-time schedules for employees who would like to work fewer hours due to changing life circumstances, such as a return to school, maternity leave, or caring for an elderly parent. The WLB Committee is also working on onsite services and dependent care to ease the hectic schedules many employees face each day. A contractor can arrange child care, elder care for a parent (in the Washington area or elsewhere), and care for an individual employee as well as college coaching for both dependents and employees.

Work in other areas is ongoing, and the WLB Committee will provide information as more work/life programs develop. Your comments and suggestions are welcomed and can be provided to Michelle Kuamoo at [kuamoom@dcsc.gov](mailto:kuamoom@dcsc.gov).

## Kabe Reviews

Sent: Friday, September 17, 2010  
Subject: Commendation Letter for Patricia Edwards

Dear Ms. Edley,

I would like to take the time to email you about one of your employees, Ms. **Patricia Edwards** who works in the D.C. Superior Courthouse.

Yesterday I went to receive information regarding my request for taped transcripts. Operating *pro se* had been a very daunting task during my "legal journeying" here in the nation's capitol; but upon walking into the office I was met with a welcoming and helpful hello by Ms. Edwards-despite the fact that I walked into her office at 4:59 p.m. with only one minute to the stated closing time.

Ms. Edwards not only accommodated my litany of requests for transcripts, but she kindly walked me through the process and explained in detail what her office provided and outlined for me what I needed to do on my own.

Ms. Edwards went above and beyond the definition of quality of service and devotion to customer service, and in her doing so she restored my faith in the legal justice system.

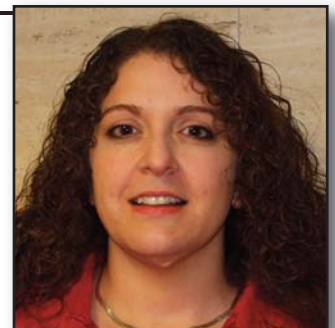


Photo by Tom Feeney, Jr.

# Kabe Reviews, cont.

Sent: September 13, 2010  
To: Robinson, Aaron  
Subject: The excellent service received today

Mr. Robinson,

I received excellent service today from one of your supervisees, **Oliver [Hignett]**. ... I was doing some research on the final outcome of a case that I participated in many years ago. I am not a lawyer and my inexperience was more than evident in my interactions with Oliver. In spite of my lack of experience, he was able to work with me in an efficient and polite manner. He stayed with me on the line while I negotiated the instructions he gave me for obtaining the information I needed. You are well served by having him on your staff as he exemplifies the admirable attributes of people in public service. Thank you for your time and thank him once again for me.



Sent: September 02, 2010  
Subject: Excellent Customer Service

Good morning Ms. Anne Wicks,

I just wanted to take a minute to acknowledge to most excellent experience I encountered with one of your employees. On August 31, 2010 I came into 500 Indiana Ave NW, in need of assistance, there I was assisted by Ms. **Lisa R. Johnson**, who was pleasant, professional, and very sincere in assisting me. Ms. Johnson is an example of the professionalism that should be duplicated throughout your administration. I can now actual see my tax dollars at work, good job.



September 3, 2010

Good Afternoon Ms. Burns and Mr. Kerrick,

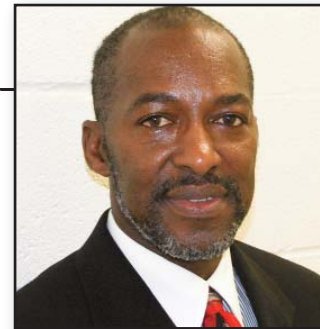
I was extremely pleased yesterday afternoon to witness the pride in Mr. **Arlington Sellers** eyes as he presented the final versions of eight Judgment and Commitment Orders that will be used by Criminal Division Courtroom Support Staff. This developmental process for the Judgment and Commitment has been long and included others along the way; however, Mr. Arlington Sellers saw the project into fruition and I am forever grateful for his efforts. It has truly been a challenging endeavor.

I have witnessed many questions and recommendations for change from the committee and judges and I also witnessed Mr. Seller's receptive and positive responses. Mr. Sellers always left our meetings with a positive attitude ready to take on the changes and challenges requested. These requests were not made just one time or two times, or even three times, but so many times that I lost count. At one point, I had my doubts if we could ever get everyone to agree, but I never saw doubt or displeasure from Mr. Sellers. Mr. Sellers is a true professional and he always exhibited those qualities that were needed to accomplish this task.

Yesterday, he came to the training session armed with a PowerPoint presentation and samples of the new Court View version of the Judgment and Commitment Orders. In other words, "he came prepared".

It is with an overwhelming amount of satisfaction and appreciation that I write to you to say "Thank You" for allowing Mr. Arlington Sellers the opportunity to work on and complete the Judgment and Commitments Orders in Court View for our use in the Criminal Division. These forms will help us to create documents that are accurate and will improve efficiency for our Courtroom Clerks. The Judgment and Commitment Order is the document that reflects the convictions on all defendants and is what we use to communicate information to the Department of Corrections, Bureau of Prisons and other jurisdictions. This form will have an impact on the work created by the Criminal Division for many years to come. Several months ago we started using this form in Judge Canan and Judge Morin's courtroom on a trial basis and all the feedback received has been positive.

Sincerely, Cheryl Dixon- Wheeler



# Kabe Reviews, cont.



*Bottom row: Monique Walters, Erica Hartsfield, Barbara Cain and Kiah Dixon. Second Row: Norman Barrett, Carolyn Charles, Jesse Stevens II, Yoscaisa Ramirez, Judge Michael J McCarthy, Deborah Johnson, Kiyana Rayfield and Lori Gunn. Top Row: Anthony Jackson, Damaris Arroyo-Brown, Tachera Tomes, Angel Alston, Victory Hill, Andre Jefferson and Chemere Dolberry. Not in picture: Wilfredo Gaitan and Claytronna Rogers*

Photo by Tom Feeney, Jr.

Superior Court of the District of Columbia

## **Small Claims**

Bldg. B, 409 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

September 23, 2010

I have felt compelled to write to you for the past few months. I feel like the things I have to say don't get communicated often enough. I could make this a very short letter and just "good job" to the clerk's office staff and Magistrate Judge Michael McCarthy, but that would not do you justice.

I would like to begin by stating the obvious. No one enjoys going through small claims court, be it the person filing or being filed on, no one is going to enjoy this experience. I have always felt that it is a personal failure to have a business relationship degrade to such a level that legal intervention becomes the last option.

### **TO THE CLERK'S OFFICE STAFF:**

I would like to thank on a number of levels:

- 1, Thank you for your guidance in helping me to follow procedures.
2. Thank you for your patience with me.
3. Thank you for feeling free to give your words of wisdom.
- 4, Thank you for your support. (This means that you realized that a novice now involved in a Small Claims case must go through the required procedures) Each time I had to fill out or file another item every member of your office offered their own form of encouragement. Those few innocent words offered more strength to my ability to continue than you will ever know.

I would also like to thank you for your tolerance. On occasion, I found myself having to wait in your office. While I was waiting, I thought it wise to watch and observe the lawyers present their filings and such. I thought it was very interesting that the lawyers presumed to know more about your office procedures than you yet; every word was kind and professional. I applaud you.

I have had occasion to witness many other areas of the judicial system in several other jurisdictions due to my affiliations and I would like to extend my most heartfelt appreciation for having the opportunity to have known you, thank you so very much.

### **MAGISTRATE JUDGE MICHAEL MCCARTHY**

Your Honor, from the first day I sat in your courtroom and listened to your opening statements, I knew I would be satisfied with whatever the outcome of my case would be. You made no false promises. You expressed a rigid observance of the law and procedure. You laid out the boundaries of what you expected from the courtroom and what the courtroom could expect from you. In the process, I came to know a man that must have forged his life from the heat of his integrity.

You are a man that can be to any situation where the truth is at the root. A man that exercises "0" tolerance for anything less than the truth because you know that any one that stands before you not being truthful, is trying to harm someone else with your blessings. That, you could never do.

Honesty, Integrity, Compassion and the ability to make hard and just decisions are noble traits to find in a man, but they are absolutely essential to find in a Judge and I am honored to have had the privilege to experience your court.

I stood before you on four occasions attempting to get the defendant into court. After you ordered and retracted the order for a Bench Warrant the defendant had the case moved back to Fairfax County to have a trial.

The judgment was upheld and the defendant paid their debt.

I am explaining all of this so you will know that there is no prejudice involved in my letter to you and the clerk's, office. Simply put, it was a great experience that never should have happened and I and I and gratefully for every bit of it.