



# Full Court Press

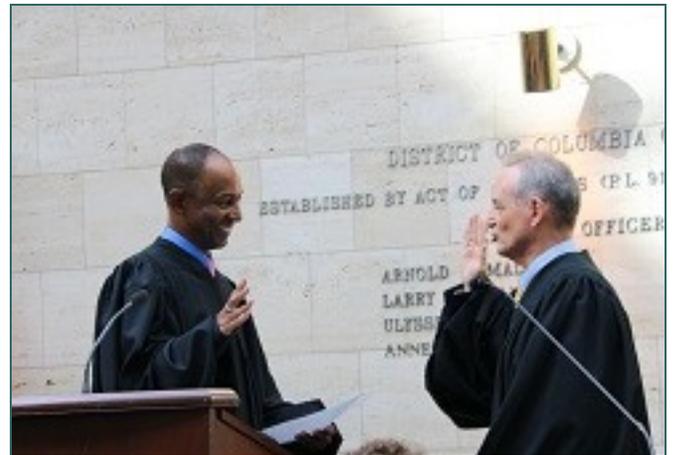


Newsletter of the District of Columbia Courts

October 2016

## Investiture of DC Superior Court Chief Judge Robert Morin Takes Place October 7

Outgoing Chief Judge Lee F. Satterfield (left) gave the oath of office to Robert Morin (right), who becomes the seventh Chief Judge of the DC Superior Court. The judges were joined by their family members, for a celebration of past accomplishments and look toward the future. Among those paying tribute to the outgoing chief were DC Court of Appeals Chief Judge Eric T. Washington, DC Mayor Muriel Bowser, DC Council Chairman Phil Mendelson and Councilmember and Judiciary Committee Chair Kenyan McDuffie, DC Bar President Annamarie Steward, and former Washington Bar Association President Ron Jessamy.



## DC Courts Team, C-Nats, Wins Citywide Softball Championship

This summer the Courthouse Nationals (C-Nat's) were CHAMPIONS of the DC Parks and Recreation CO-ED 5 & 5 slow pitch Citywide Tournament! Riding a wave of confidence, the C-Nats are currently playing fall ball and at press time, they have won their first 6 games. Playoffs start in early November, and they are looking to be champions yet again!

At the beginning of the summer season, the team was extremely optimistic about their chances this year and their ability to make it into the playoffs. It would be challenging because they were in a strong division that had three other teams with just as much talent. The division included the two-time defending champions: Team Authority.

Ironically, the first game was against the two-time defending champions; a hard-fought game that ended in a 16 – 16 tie. The C-Nats would go on to win the next five games before losing in a heartbreaker: After leading by seven runs going into the bottom of the final inning, their defense would give up eight runs to Cold Spring Eagles (State Department) allowing the opponent to lead the division. The C-Nats were able to rebound after that and win the next three games – including wins against the top competitors mentioned above, Authority and Cold Spring Eagles. Those wins earned them the division title and a number one seed in the playoffs!

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

# 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Employee Awards Ceremony



The DC Courts Employee Awards Ceremony recognizes outstanding employees who exemplify the DC Courts values of Excellence, Accountability, Respect, Fairness, Integrity and Transparency in their daily work. This year marked the 35<sup>th</sup> annual celebration to acknowledge all court employees for their dedication and commitment to serving the District of Columbia. In addition, the ceremony is a prime opportunity to credit specific employees for special recognition awards including, public service, management achievement, and an “unsung hero.”

The event was held on Thursday, September 22 and featured the Courts’ own “Just Us” band.



**Congratulations to all 2016  
award recipients!**

*See below and on the next page  
who the awardees are.*

## **Public Service Award - Group Family Court Social Services Division, Special Activities Committee**

The DC Courts have a multitude of ad hoc committees that rise to the occasion when the moment calls for action. The Court Social Services Special Activities Committee is such a group. These dedicated individuals came together to plan and coordinate positive year-round, city-wide social activities for juvenile probationers under the watchful, but caring eye, of the Family Court Social Services Division.



*Pictured from left to right:*

*Aaron Tinch, Family Court Social Services Division; Darlene Reynolds, Administrative Services Division; Ronald Williams, Family Court Social Services Division; Kathy Holiday-Crawford, Family Court Social Services Division; Wesley Holmes, Family Court Social Services Division; Cheryl Rogers-Brown, Family Court Social Services Division, and Makisha Wiley, Budget & Finance Division (not pictured).*

## *Congratulations to the Employee Awards Ceremony Awardees*



### **Unsung Hero Award**

Damani Givens works as a PC Technician in the DC Court of Appeals. Mr. Givens exemplifies the Courts' values of Excellence, Respect, Integrity and Accountability. He is always available to provide assistance when employees are having problems with their computers and is extremely patient, providing excellent and prompt service to everyone.

### **Management Achievement Award**

Lorenious "Rex" McDonald is a Supervisory Probation Officer in the Southeast Satellite Office of the DC Superior Court Family Court Social Services Division. By all accounts, from many of the employees that he supervises and those he works with, Rex exemplifies each and every one of the Court's values and is widely known to be fair but firm. He is always professional, transparent, respectful, extremely dependable and reliable.



### **Technical Specialist Achievement Award**



Samer Salama serves as a Systems Administrator in the DC Courts IT Division. Mr. Salama is known for developing collaborative relationships with judicial staff, senior management, supervisors, and peers to actively promote two-way open communication. He provides the highest level of customer service and his technical expertise is beyond reproach.

### **Public Service Award - Individual**

Tachera Jones is the senior courtroom clerk in the DC Superior Court Civil Division's Small Claims courtroom. She has earned senior status because of the quality of her work, her work ethic, and the respect and helpfulness she shows to the citizens who appear in her courtroom. The Small Claims Branch averages up to 10,000 initial hearings a year and approximately 90% of the litigants are not represented by counsel. Every day, Mrs. Jones greets litigants with a smile and a helpful attitude that is welcoming and reassuring.



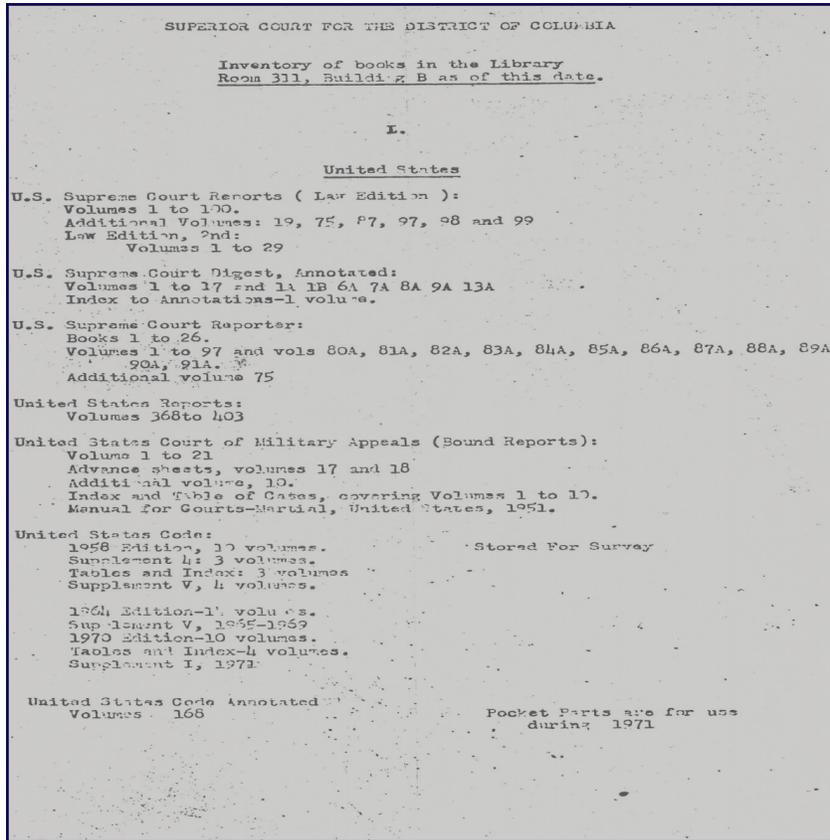
# Our Law Library is a Valuable Depository of Legal Information

By Anita A. Alexander, Special Operations Division

The Superior Court Law Library was established to provide a high quality collection focused exclusively on the laws of the District of Columbia. Today, the library has an extensive collection of District of Columbia legal materials including current and past editions of the DC Code and Rules. While these resources can be used freely while in the library, they are not available for check-out. Online resources such as LexisNexis are also available.

There are several volumes of books about the District of Columbia's legal matters that date back to the 1880s. This includes the DC Reporters, which are the decisions issued by the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia. The law library is a unique place that provides legal services to our judges, judicial staff, court employees, attorneys and to the public.

Every effort is made to provide current legal materials, services and related information for the customers. Excellent customer service is the staff's number one goal. Yousuf Jaleel, the law librarian has worked at the Courts for 12 years. He has two masters in library science. Both he and his wife Atika are from India. Coincidentally, she is a librarian as well. They enjoy libraries so much that they visit libraries on weekends. Janice Reid, the library technician, who has worked there for many years, is an invaluable resource to



court staff and other customers. She is very knowledgeable about the collections and patiently responds to customer's questions. Her smiling face is the first contact most patrons have with the library.

Roughly, 95% of the collection consists of law-related items published on the jurisdiction of the District of Columbia. Federal law that possibly has some bearing on matters before the Superior Court is also collected.

The library was originally located in Building B, Room 311 in 1971. An inventory of the books was completed this same year (see picture).

While the previous library held about 25,000 books and materials, the current collection holds a smaller collection because many of the books and other resources are available online.

The library uses the Library of Congress Classification System and its subject headings. It was designed with the needs of its customers in mind. The library also participates in an inter-library loan system with the Library of Congress and other area college libraries. It also exchanges and requests materials from other local libraries for the benefit of the judicial staff and for the public's convenience.



# DC Superior Court Welcomes New Judges

## *Three investitures in three weeks*



DC Native and former Magistrate Judge Elizabeth Carroll Wingo had her investiture on Friday, August 26th. (pictured with spouse) Judge

Wingo took her oath of office surrounded by family, friends, former and current colleagues. Catherine Motz, Executive Director of the CollegeBound Foundation, gave endearing remarks about Judge Wingo, beginning her talk with the judge serving as her 'big sister' for her first year at Yale Law School, and remarking on how she always knew Judge Wingo would eventually become a judge. Chief Judge Lee Satterfield administered the oath of office and the judge then took her seat amongst her colleagues. Judge Robert Salerno then escorted his new junior colleague to her rightful place amongst the judges.



Steven Berk's investiture was the following Friday, September 2 (pictured with spouse). Luke Albee, who has known the judge since they studied together in London during college, and Bruce Spiva, a former law partner with the judge, both made remarks. The speakers commented on the judge's respect for all people, his even-handed treatment of people, his

commitment to positivity and uplifting others...and his artistic talent! Mr. Albee mentioned Judge Berk's father's significant role in his life – his father was a Holocaust survivor - and the family's commitment to public service. Mr. Spiva spoke about working with Judge Berk on a large pro bono case in which he saw an incredible level of dedication and commitment. DC Court of Appeals Judge John Fisher administered the oath of office and Judge Wingo then escorted the newest judge to his rightful place amongst his colleagues.

And on the third Friday in a row, September 9, Julie Becker had her investiture (pictured with spouse). She was accompa-



nied by her husband and twin daughters. Chief Judge Lee Satterfield read the judge's biography and noted her keen legal mind. Eric Angel, Executive Director of Legal Aid Society of DC, spoke about the judge, praising her long-term commitment to people who often are overlooked in our society, helping low-income tenants and tenant associations in their efforts to secure and maintain affordable housing. Judge Becker clerked for Justice Sonia Sotomayor, then a US Circuit Court of Appeals judge, and from there went to the Legal Aid Society of DC, where she served until joining the DC Superior Court as a judge. Judge Neal Kravitz administered the oath of office and Judge Berk then escorted the judge to her seat amongst her colleagues, as the newest member of the DC Superior Court bench.

## **C-Nats—from front cover**

The playoffs are a one-day tournament, single elimination, with the top two teams from each division playing for the chance to be champions. The C-Nats record of eight wins, one loss, and one tie, earned the team the division title, and also earned them a first round bye. In the second round, they faced Steptoe Red (Law Firm) – a team that seems to make the playoffs every year. The C-Nats beat them 16 – 1, riding good defense and great pitching.

The C-Nats knew the third round would be against a tough team, Washington Post. Washington Post took an early 5 – 2 lead but the C-Nats endured, beating them 11 – 8, again with good defense and great pitching. The win meant that the C-Nats would play in the championship game against the two-time defending champs, Authority. The championship game was hard-fought between two great hitting teams. The game was back and forth between both teams and was played in over 100 degree heat, which ultimately took its toll on a few players. Going into the final inning, the game was tied 16 – 16. In the top of the last inning, Authority's first batter hit



a homerun giving them a one-run lead. However, three outs would follow.

The C-Nat's needed one run to tie and two runs to win. A hit line-drive past the pitcher helped the team score the winning run, as the C-Nat's beat the two-time defending champions 17 - 16! The Courthouse Nationals are City-Wide Tournament Champions!

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## **DC Safe Surrender Took Place Three Saturdays in September**

*An Opportunity for those with Bench Warrants to Get Back on Track*

The Safe Surrender program is an opportunity for persons who have outstanding parole, pre-trial release or probation bench warrants for non-violent felonies or misdemeanors in DC to surrender voluntarily at the Moultrie Courthouse. The program recognizes that many persons have bench warrants because they failed to appear for a court hearing or violated conditions of probation or parole, and they now want to resolve the matter and move forward with their lives. The goal of the Safe Surrender program is to reduce the number of outstanding bench and parole warrants in the District. Safe surrender also provides people with a way to turn themselves in, without the risk of being arrested at home, in front of their family and children, or during a routine traffic stop. An attorney is

appointed to represent each participant when he or she appears before a judge. During similar programs in 2007 and 2011, 98% of those who turned themselves in went home that same day.

Saturday, September 10<sup>th</sup> kicked off DC Safe Surrender 2016, with eight people in line at the Moultrie Courthouse by 8:00am, and more than two dozen when the doors officially opened at 9:00am. The mood was relaxed and those surrendering encountered staff members from a number of agencies (DC Superior Court, Public Defender Services, US Marshals Service, US Attorney's Office, DC Government's Office of the Attorney General, Pretrial Ser-

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## Congratulations to the 2016 Management Training Program

### Project Team Winner

As part of the Management Training Program, participants develop and present team projects that support the mission and vision of the DC Courts. This year's winning team project, "The Electronic Courtroom Registration System," was developed by team members (from left to right) Tyvonda Downing, Alina Gómez, Lisa Bailey, and Ian Schlie. The winners were recognized at the 2016 Employee Awards Ceremony.



### Safe Surrender—from page 6

vices Agency and Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency), all there to make the process as smooth and comfortable as possible. Willie Jones, the first DC Safe Surrender 2007 participant, was at the courthouse to encourage people in their decision to surrender. Nearly 70 people turned themselves in that day.

Safe Surrender carried on for the next two Saturdays in September, the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 24<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00am to 4:00pm - and the three Saturdays combined, yielded a total of 344 participants. These 344 surrenders represented 383 cases. Of those that surrendered, 13 were arrested or detained and 336 or 98% were able to resolve their open bench warrant and leave the Courthouse that same day. While the distribution of surrenders across weeks varied, every week saw an increase in the number of surrenders, culminating in the final week, which saw a 132% increase in surrenders when compared to the second week.

"DC Safe Surrender is an initiative focused on increasing public safety, and we hope to build on the success of the 2007 and 2011 programs," Chief Judge Satterfield said. "By taking responsibility for their actions, participants of Safe Surrender will demonstrate they are taking the appropriate steps towards becoming responsible members of the community. They will end the risk of being arrested at a traffic stop or on the job or in front of colleagues or family members. I en-



*Judge Lynn Leibovitz at the Safe Surrender event.*

courage everyone with an outstanding bench warrant for parole, supervised release or probation to turn themselves in; Safe Surrender is an excellent opportunity."

Safe Surrendered received a great deal of press, informing the public of the truths and purpose of the program. To hear the WTOP radio stories, click on these links: <https://clyp.it/j4fsishk> and <https://clyp.it/ym1sexmj> Click [here](#) to read the Washington Post article and [here](#) to read the Hill Rag article. [Click here](#) to listen to Judge Lynn Leibovitz and Willie Jones talk with Harold Fisher on WHUR. More information, is available at: [www.dccourts.gov/safesurrender](http://www.dccourts.gov/safesurrender)—or in the Safe Surrender Facebook page.

# 2016 OPEN SEASON



**November 14<sup>th</sup> — December 12<sup>th</sup>**

This Open Season plant the S.E.E.D's of good health and take the opportunity to review your health plan choices and make the changes for the following year. Open Season also allows employees who are not currently enrolled in a health plan to participate in the programs.

**S**witch carriers  
**E**nroll in a health benefit plan  
**E**nhance your current plan  
**D**ecrease your coverage

## OPEN SEASON OPPORTUNITIES

During the annual Open Season, employees can take the actions listed below for the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS), Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program, and the Ameritas Dental and Vision Program.

- Enroll in, change, or cancel an existing enrollment in a **dental and/or vision plan** under the FEDVIP and the Ameritas Program.
- Enroll in, change, or cancel an existing enrollment in a **health plan** under the FEHB program.
- Enroll in a **flexible spending account** – a health care and/or dependent care account, under the FSAFEDS Program. Unlike with other programs, employees **MUST** reenroll in FSAFEDS each year to participate. Enrollments **DO NOT** carry over from year to year.
- New this year! You will be able to enroll, change, or cancel an existing enrollment under the Flexible Disability Insurance program that was introduced to the DC Courts last year. The Flexible Disability Insurance program pays you a weekly benefit amount if you cannot work because of a disabling illness or injury. It is designed to help protect an employee's paycheck for a short period of time (up to 1 year) if he or she becomes sick or injured outside of the workplace. It can help fund expenses like your mortgage or rent, and pay bills – all while you recover.
- Donate to the charitable organization of your choice through convenient payroll deductions via the DC One Fund Campaign.

***The DC Courts' Open Season Fair will take place Friday, December 2, 2016, in the Moultrie Courthouse Atrium from 10:00 am to 1:30 pm.***