

District of Columbia Courts

Annual Report

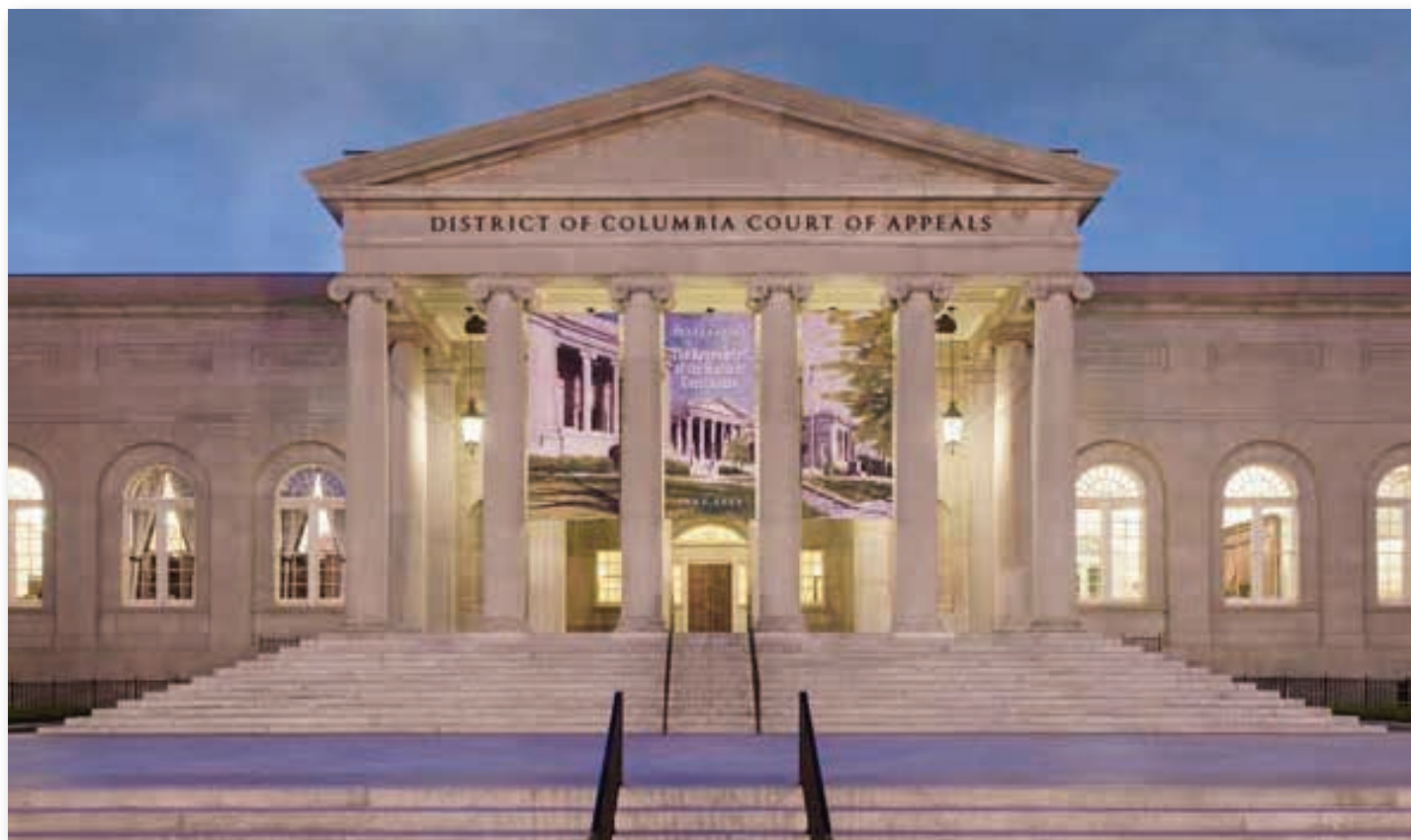


2012

Open to All ♦ Trusted by All ♦ Justice for All

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**FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS**

On behalf of the D.C. Courts, I am pleased to transmit the *2012 Annual Report*, highlighting our achievements over the past year. 2012 marks the final year of implementation of the Courts' 2008 – 2012 strategic plan: *Delivering Justice*, which informs the initiatives we undertake to serve the public and enhance the administration of justice for our community.

As the Judicial Branch of the District of Columbia government, the D.C. Courts are entrusted to protect rights and liberties, uphold and interpret the law, and resolve disputes peacefully, fairly, and effectively. To carry out this mission, this year the Courts implemented new practices, changed business processes, and increased our use of technology. I am particularly proud of our new website, www.dccourts.gov, that makes it easier to find information you need to access the justice system and learn more about the D.C. Courts and the services we provide.

The D.C. Courts take great pride in serving the people of the District of Columbia and work each day to realize our vision:

Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All.

Sincerely,



Anne B. Wicks
Executive Officer
District of Columbia Courts

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUDGES

The District of Columbia Courts work diligently to meet the legal needs of our community. We listen to our justice system partners, the local Bar and the public we serve and strive to share information to facilitate knowledge about and use of court services. This report highlights outreach activities, such as meetings with ANC Commissioners and public input to our new strategic plan, as well as initiatives such as technology enhancements and problem-solving courts that improve access to the Courts and help us administer justice more efficiently and effectively.

The D.C. Courts are grateful for the enthusiastic collaboration of our justice system partners and the invaluable services of local attorneys and other volunteers who help us serve the public. We thank our colleagues in the judiciary and the professional staff of the D.C. Courts who carry out the day-to-day work of administering justice, and without whose leadership, dedication, and passion, the initiatives in this report would not exist.



Eric T. Washington
Chief Judge
District of Columbia Court of Appeals



Lee F. Satterfield
Chief Judge
Superior Court of the District of Columbia

REPORT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS, 2012

The District of Columbia Courts make up the Judicial Branch of the District of Columbia Government. The Courts serve the public in the District of Columbia: those who live, work, and visit the Nation's Capital.

Delivering Justice: Strategic Plan of the District of Columbia Courts, 2008 – 2012, guides the work of the District of Columbia Courts by identifying six issues that give direction to the Courts' activities as we carry out our mission to protect rights and liberties, uphold and interpret the law, and resolve disputes peacefully, fairly and effectively in the Nation's Capital and strive to achieve our vision: "Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All." This report discusses activities that the D.C. Courts have undertaken in 2012 to enhance service to the public in each of the areas below.

Strategic Issue 1: Fair and Timely Case Resolution focuses on deciding cases on their merits, in accordance with the law, and in a timely manner. This strategic issue involves ensuring that the jury pool is a reflection of the community and that the poor have quality legal representation, as well as efforts to keep bias and discrimination out of the courthouse. The Courts must balance fairness with timeliness and use sound management techniques, alternative dispute resolution, and good communication to process cases efficiently.

Strategic Issue 2: Access to Justice compels the Courts to make it as easy as we can for people in the community to come to court, seek redress, and use the services available to them. Opening satellite offices and juvenile drop-in centers in the community, providing services in multiple languages, and assisting litigants without lawyers help further the community's access to justice.

Strategic Issue 3: A Strong Judiciary and Workforce reflects the Courts' commitment to having highly skilled judges and court staff serve the public and drive the administration of justice in our community. The Courts support training programs to maintain and improve skills, sponsor diversity programs, require accountability, and recognize performance as we strive to foster employee engagement and high achievement.

Strategic Issue 4: A Sound Infrastructure requires the Courts' facilities and technology to be modern and up-to-date to ensure that they support efficiency and make it easy for the public to access court buildings, information, and services.

Strategic Issue 5: Security and Disaster Preparedness commands a safe and secure environment for the administration of justice and continued service to the public in the event of an emergency. The Courts must not only address day-to-day security risks, but also plan with other criminal justice agencies for potential crises.

Strategic Issue 6: Public Trust and Confidence is the foundation of the administration of justice in a democratic society. Through transparency, communication, and accountability to the public, we strive to ensure that the community trusts the Courts to resolve its disputes in an unbiased manner.



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Strategic Issue 1: FAIR AND TIMELY CASE RESOLUTION

The D.C. Courts place a high value on ensuring due process and equal protection for all parties who seek justice from the Courts. At the same time, the Courts recognize that “justice delayed is justice denied” and are committed to resolving cases expeditiously. We strive at all times to balance the dual goals of fairness and timeliness while ensuring that every case receives individual attention and that all cases are handled as efficiently as possible, in keeping with our duty to use public funds responsibly and promote public safety and confidence in the Courts.

IMPROVING TIMELINESS TO RESOLVE CASES

In addressing the first strategic issue, fair and timely case resolution, the D.C. Courts must balance fairness and timeliness, utilizing best practices in case management. Each case that comes before the court must be decided based on its facts and the law, recognizing each party’s right to due process and equal protection under the law. Each case must also be decided in a timely

manner without unnecessary delay.



Historic Courthouse

Court of Appeals. In 2012, over 2,000 new cases were filed in the D.C. Court of Appeals, an 18% increase over 2011, and the court disposed of (or completed) 1,845 cases. A common measure of court efficiency is the clearance rate, a comparison of cases completed to cases initiated (filed or reopened). At a clearance rate of 100% a court is keeping pace with its workload by resolving one pending case for each new case filed. With the sharp increase in new cases, the Court of Appeals had a clearance rate of 85% in 2012. Nonetheless, the

Court continued to reduce the time required to appeal a case. The median time on appeal was 352 days in 2012, a 30% reduction from 2007.

Court of Appeals Caseload Activity, 2012

Category	New Cases Filed		Cases Reopened	Cases Disposed		Cases Pending December 31, 2012		Clearance Rate
Mandatory Appeal & Bar Cases	2,042	96%	37	1,765	96%	2,182	99.6%	85%
Original Jurisdiction Matters	50	2%	0	50	3%	4	0.2%	100%
Discretionary Jurisdiction Matters	34	2%	0	30	1%	5	0.2%	88%
Total	2,126	100%	37	1,845	100%	2,176	100%	85%

Superior Court. In 2012, 96,692 new cases were filed in the Superior Court. Slightly more than half of the new caseload (55%) was civil matters. The remainder of the new filings was: 21% criminal, 13% family, 8% domestic violence matters, and 3% probate. In 2012, the Superior Court achieved a clearance rate of 98%.

Superior Court Caseload Activity, 2012

Division	New Cases Filed		Cases Reopened	Cases Disposed		Cases Pending December 31, 2012		Clearance Rate
Civil Division	53,728	55%	1,026	55,365	54%	15,326	43%	101%
Criminal Division	20,308	21%	5,462	22,283	22%	7,036	20%	106%
Domestic Violence Unit	7,415	8%	324	7,717	8%	889	3%	100%
Family Court Operations	12,338	13%	308	13,836	14%	4,500	13%	109%
Probate Division	2,604	3%	477	3,124	3%	6,880	19%	101%
Tax Division	299	<1%	2	263	<1%	1,459	4%	87%
Total	96,692	100%	7,599	102,588	100%	36,090	100%	98%

Additional statistical information is available at www.dccourts.gov.

Tracking Court Performance. Performance measures reports for all operating divisions for Time to Disposition, Trial Date Certainty, and Age of Active Pre-Disposition Caseload allow the chief judge, presiding and deputy presiding judges, and division directors to monitor each division's performance routinely. Armed with this information, decision-makers can evaluate established business practices, determine where opportunities for improvement exist, and modify goals to encourage enhanced performance. Each operating division provides a status report twice a year to court leadership on its performance in each of these categories.

ENHANCING FAIR CASE RESOLUTION

Skilled Family Court Attorneys. Attorneys who practice in the Superior Court Family Court had several training opportunities this year. In March, the annual two-day Neglect and Delinquency Practice Institute (NDPI) was held for current Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect (CCAN), Guardian ad

Litem (GAL), juvenile delinquency, and special education panel attorneys. Also in March, the Family Court offered a two-day training program for new CCAN and GAL Panel attorneys. Fifteen brown bag lunch trainings were offered throughout the year for panel attorneys and other interested persons on post-adoption contract agreements, education decision makers and services for children, the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), and other topics.

Child Welfare Legal Clinic. To provide quality legal representation to families and to encourage law students to practice child welfare law, a child welfare legal clinic is operated in the Family Court by the David A. Clarke School of Law at the University of the District of Columbia and, beginning in October 2012, by the Howard University School of Law.

INNOVATIONS IN CASE PROCESSING AND MANAGEMENT

children in foster care. Since its inception in 2003, more than 110 women have successfully completed the program, gained sobriety, and been reunified with their children. The Family Treatment Court not only keeps families together, but also saves money for the District by reducing the number of children in foster care.

Fathering Court. The fourth graduation of the Superior Court's Fathering Court in January recognized 12 men for successful completion of

Family Treatment Court. In May, the Superior Court's Family Treatment Court recognized 11 women who completed a residential substance abuse treatment program which allows mothers to keep their children with them during treatment, rather than

placing the



Family Treatment Court graduates with Drug Czar Gil Kerlikowske and Magistrate Judge Pamela Gray.



Judge Milton Lee congratulates a Fathering Court graduate.

one year of employment and meaningful participation in the lives of their children. Started in 2007, the Fathering Court serves fathers with child support cases who are exiting the penal system and works to equip them with the skills to become emotionally and financially responsible for their children.

Community Court. In January, the Superior Court expanded its community court model city-wide, following an independent evaluation study that showed a 60% reduction in recidivism among defendants in the East of the River Community Court. Community courts address the underlying issues that lead to criminal behavior and apply a problem-solving approach to criminal justice, part-

nering with local organizations to help offenders give back to the community through community service, to hold them accountable, and to address quality-of-life crimes.

Housing Conditions Calendar. In its second year, the Housing Conditions Calendar, which expedites actions to enforce housing code regulations, is expanding rapidly. The judge, assisted by a D.C. Government housing inspector, hears cases filed by tenants against landlords for alleged violations of the housing code. Mediators help landlords and tenants reach agreement on repairs.



The East of the River Community Court is honored during the 2nd International Conference of Community Courts.

Parenting Services. The Program for Agreement and Cooperation in Contested Custody Cases (PAC) educates parents on the impact of custody disputes on their children to reduce conflict and the adverse effects of such disagreements. PAC helps prepare parents for mediation, which is scheduled following participation in the classes. Twenty-four education seminars, in English and Spanish, throughout the year helped 850 parents understand the impact of custody disputes on their children.

Safe and Sound Children Project. The Safe and Sound Project was initiated in 2011 to reduce the number of children in the child welfare system. It works with families whose children remain in the

home, providing preventative services to address early signs of child neglect. A judge meets informally with the families, even without a court case, to help them resolve problems. The project also addresses the cases of children who are subsequently removed from home because the neglect becomes more serious, requiring court intervention to ensure the children's safety. The project gathers data about what caused these cases to escalate, to develop best practices to serve this vulnerable population. A collaborative effort with the D.C. Child and Family Services Agency, the D.C. Office of the Attorney General, and other stakeholders, the Safe and Sound project has served 23 families, 10 of whom have resolved underlying problems and avoided court intervention.



Family Court Entrance to the Moultrie Courthouse

Moving Toward Paperless. A courtwide goal is to move away from a heavy reliance on paper. This year, the Court Reporting and Recording Division made great strides in meeting this goal. Requests for and delivery of transcripts of court proceedings went paperless for the United States Attorney's Office, the Public Defender Service, and court-appointed attorneys representing indigent defendants (who account for approximately 10,500 transcript requests each year), increasing efficiency and saving resources formerly required to reproduce and disseminate paper transcripts.

Juror Enhancements. A new online chat capability, that served over 1,000 jurors in its first year, provides an additional, more accessible way for the Court to communicate with jurors by providing real-time, online responses to questions.

Identity Consolidation. With the advent of an integrated case management system, eliminating duplicate identities in the system for the same individual became necessary to provide accurate and comprehensive information to judicial officers, particularly in Family Court. The identifying information in case filings is analyzed to find any duplicates, assure correct personal information, and consolidate the identities in the case management system. In 2012, more than 25,000 identities were consolidated.

Strategic Issue 2: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Ensuring that all District residents have access to justice is an increasing challenge for the D.C. Courts for many reasons. The number of non-English speaking residents continues to grow in the metropolitan area. In addition to language barriers, many of these residents, from Spanish speaking countries, the Middle East, and Asia, have very different expectations of courts based on their native cultural experiences. Low-income residents can face legal problems due to urban development and the lack of affordable housing. Low-income residents may also be less able than higher-income residents to leave their jobs to attend a court hearing or serve as a juror. Educational differences also affect people's ability to access court services. There are also a number of District residents who are illiterate or have very limited reading skills, which severely hampers their ability to read and understand court orders or fill out court forms correctly. In addition there are potential barriers to justice based on race, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disabilities, and the like. Since 1996, the Courts' Standing Committee on Fairness and Access has maintained a steady focus on identifying and reducing such barriers to justice.



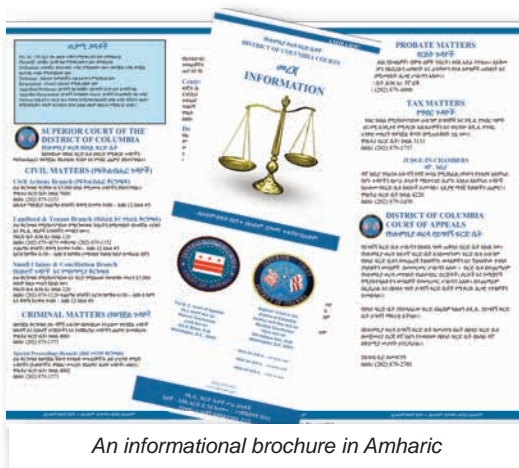
Main Entrance to Moultrie Courthouse

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR COURT PARTICIPANTS

ilitating self-represented litigants' right to be heard. Under the new comment, "judges should make reasonable accommodations" to help these litigants understand court proceedings so they can be heard. For example, the judge in a case may consider providing information about the proceedings, asking neutral questions, or explaining the basis for a ruling. Judges were trained this year on presiding over cases with self-represented litigants.

Language Access. The D.C. Courts devoted significant attention to this issue in 2012. A Language Access Program Coordinator was appointed and a written Language Access Plan was developed to assure meaningful access to court proceedings and activities for limited English proficient (LEP) persons. Interpreters were provided for nearly 9,000 events this year, mostly for Spanish speakers, and, for the second year, the Courts hosted sign language interpreters preparing for legal certification. Judges, law clerks, courtroom clerks, and mediators were trained on court interpreting and related procedures. Interpreters were trained on courtroom procedures. The Courts continued to translate and disseminate informational brochures into Spanish and other languages and to reach out to immigrant communities, informing them of court services. The Courts began evaluating the panel of court-appointed attorneys to identify and potentially increase the number of bilingual

Role of the Judge. Effective January 1, 2012, the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration approved new standards for the ethical conduct of judges. The revised Code of Judicial Conduct includes a comment on the judge's role in facil-



An informational brochure in Amharic

attorneys available to assist indigent, Spanish-speaking defendants with limited English proficiency. These steps build on existing courtwide interpreter services—in person and by telephone, signage in both English and Spanish, and forms in multiple languages.

Real-Time Court Reporting. Real-time court reporting continued to be provided in key courtrooms. Real-time instantaneously translates the court reporter's stenographic notes to English during court proceedings and facilitates participation in court proceedings by hearing-impaired litigants. Enhanced access to court proceedings, the immediate availability of a transcript for the judge, the ability to quickly

research rulings and testimony, and the expedited production of transcripts continue to enhance the administration of justice.

Crime Victims Compensation Program (CVCP). In 2012, victims of violent crime received \$8.7 million in compensation for financial losses related to the crime, in compliance with federal standards. Claims for compensation increased by 14%, to 3,618. To enhance services to these victims, particularly to victims of domestic violence, the CVCP collaborates with My Sister's Place, D.C. SAFE, and other community groups to provide case management, counseling, and temporary emergency shelter (even after-hours).



Protection of incapacitated adults is discussed at a court-sponsored Summit.

Protecting Incapacitated Persons who are Wards of the Court. As the population ages, more incapacitated adults require court intervention to ensure their safety and the quality of the care and services they receive. New filings in these guardianship cases increased by 13% in 2012. The Court expanded the Guardianship Assistance Program to meet the

increasing need. Under this program, social work students at local universities meet with and review the needs of and services provided to wards under court supervision. During 2012, 150 adult guardianship cases were selected for in-depth visitor reports, 352 cases received some assistance, and 3,164 semi-annual reports were reviewed.

HELP FOR LITIGANTS WITHOUT LAWYERS

Domestic Violence Legal Assistance. The Court is collaborating with AARP, the Legal Aid Society, and law schools to provide legal services to victims of domestic violence. In August and September, a new cohort of students from George Washington University was trained to provide legal assistance—writing pleadings and answering

questions—to parties with domestic violence cases. In addition, by collaborating across different operational areas, the Court is providing more comprehensive services, such as guardianships for elderly victims of domestic violence.

Family Law Help. Demand for assistance at the Family Court Self Help Center, a free walk-in service that provides legal information in a variety of family law matters, continued to grow. In August alone, the Center served 855 people, the most in a single month since it opened 10 years ago. In all of 2012, the Center assisted 8,039 people, a 7% increase over the previous year.

Legal Assistance in Civil Matters. Four centers provide legal and procedural information to litigants without lawyers in civil cases. These self-help centers are open part-time in collaboration with the D.C. Bar, law schools, and volunteer attorneys.

- The Consumer Law Resource Center assisted 733 individuals with debt collection, contractor disputes, automotive repair disputes, utility disputes, and issues involving violations of the Consumer Protection Procedures Act. Starting in November, free single-day legal representation became available to low-income litigants without lawyers in consumer debt collection cases.

- The Landlord Tenant Resource Center, which assists both landlords and tenants, served 5,545 individuals.

- The Small Claims Resource Center assisted 436 people, both petitioners and respondents, with legal assistance and information. The Center is staffed by attorneys from the Neighborhood Legal Services Program and law students supervised by attorneys from the George Washington University Law School and the Columbus School of Law at Catholic University.

- The Tax Sale Resource Center, which assists litigants with tax foreclosure cases, served 115 litigants.

Probate Assistance. In December, the Probate Resource Center expanded its services to include adult guardianship cases in addition to decedent estate cases. The Center served 215 people in 2012. Operated with the D.C. Bar, the Center assists unrepresented parties with estate administration, helps parties gather information needed to proceed with the probate process, prepares documents, and helps parties understand how property should be distributed to beneficiaries. In adult guardianship cases, the Center assists members of the public with court filings and in bringing matters to the attention of the court. For the self-represented public filing small estates, the Court provides Small Estates Specialists who walk litigants through the process. In addition, the Probate Division continued live chats on the D.C. Courts' website to provide the public real-time, online responses to questions regarding probate matters.

Strategic Issue 3: A STRONG JUDICIARY AND WORKFORCE

A strong judiciary and workforce are essential to the Courts' ability to administer justice effectively. The D.C. Courts' judiciary is recognized as one of the most distinguished in the country, and our administrators and staff are highly talented and experienced public servants. The Courts have made substantial investments in training for all judges and staff. We also seek out shared training opportunities with justice system partners to enhance our mutual understanding of the challenges faced in delivering justice effectively and to develop collaborative solutions.

The D.C. Courts employ 1,300 judges and court staff who directly serve the public, process the cases, and provide support—in short, who carry out the work of administering justice in the District of Columbia. Each of these individuals must possess up-to-date skills and a commitment to public service. The Courts must encourage them to strive for excellence, embrace diversity, and engage fully and enthusiastically in their work.

AN ENGAGED AND INVOLVED JUDICIARY

engagement and public service by making the D.C. Courts “A Great Place to Work.” The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey administered last year, to which 72% of court employees responded (compared to 49% of Federal employees), reflected significant improvements, particularly in areas where the Courts had focused attention in response to the 2009 survey findings. Two initiatives arising from the 2009 survey, the Courts’ Health and Wellness Program, “Working on Wellness (WOW),” and the Work Life Balance Program, rolled out new offerings in 2012. Efforts were also underway this year to enhance internal communications, with the hiring of an internal communications specialist and new features in the court newsletter.

Building a Great Place to Work.

The D.C. Courts continued a multi-year initiative to enhance employee



Executive Officer Anne Wicks addresses the employee town hall meeting.



Hundreds of employees attend the town hall meeting.

Reaching Out to Employees. To build a culture of communication and to support the Courts’ new value of transparency, the Executive Team (comprised of Anne B. Wicks, the Executive Officer, Cheryl R. Bailey, the Deputy Executive Officer, Julio A. Castillo, the Clerk of the D.C. Court of Appeals, and Duane B. Delaney, the Clerk of the D.C. Superior Court) led an employee town hall meeting in December. Topics discussed during the

meeting included the Great Place to Work Initiative, flexible work, performance management, and cross training.



A Management Training Program team presents their Smart phone Application project.

Training and Professional Development.

Court of Appeals and Superior Court judges and magistrate judges participated in over 2,000 hours of continuing judicial education during 2012 to remain current on emerging legal issues such as privacy, self-represented litigants, judicial ethics and social media, international law, healthcare law, and numerous complex issues they must understand in order to make good judicial decisions. Court staff participated in nearly 14,000 hours of professional development on topics including technology, leadership and management, effective

oral and written communication, customer service, implicit bias, and personnel policies. Senior managers took part in several training sessions on employee engagement and values-based leadership. The Annual Judicial Conference celebrated 40 years of the D.C. Bar and included discussions on the future of the legal profession.

The Courts continued ongoing efforts to offer educational opportunities to our partners in the District's justice system. The Fourth Annual Guardianship Conference was held by the Probate Division to inform the over 100 participating attorney and family-member guardians about best practices in the care of incapacitated adults; more than 25 organizations participated in the associated Information Fair. At the first ever Guardianship Summit more than 40 participants representing 25 public, private, and non-profit agencies, shared ideas and discussed adult guardianships in the District of Columbia. The Eleventh Annual Family Court Training Institute was titled "Opening Minds...Opening Doors for LGBTQ Youth in Family Court." The Third Annual Criminal Justice Conference in November focused on evolving treatment of mental illness.

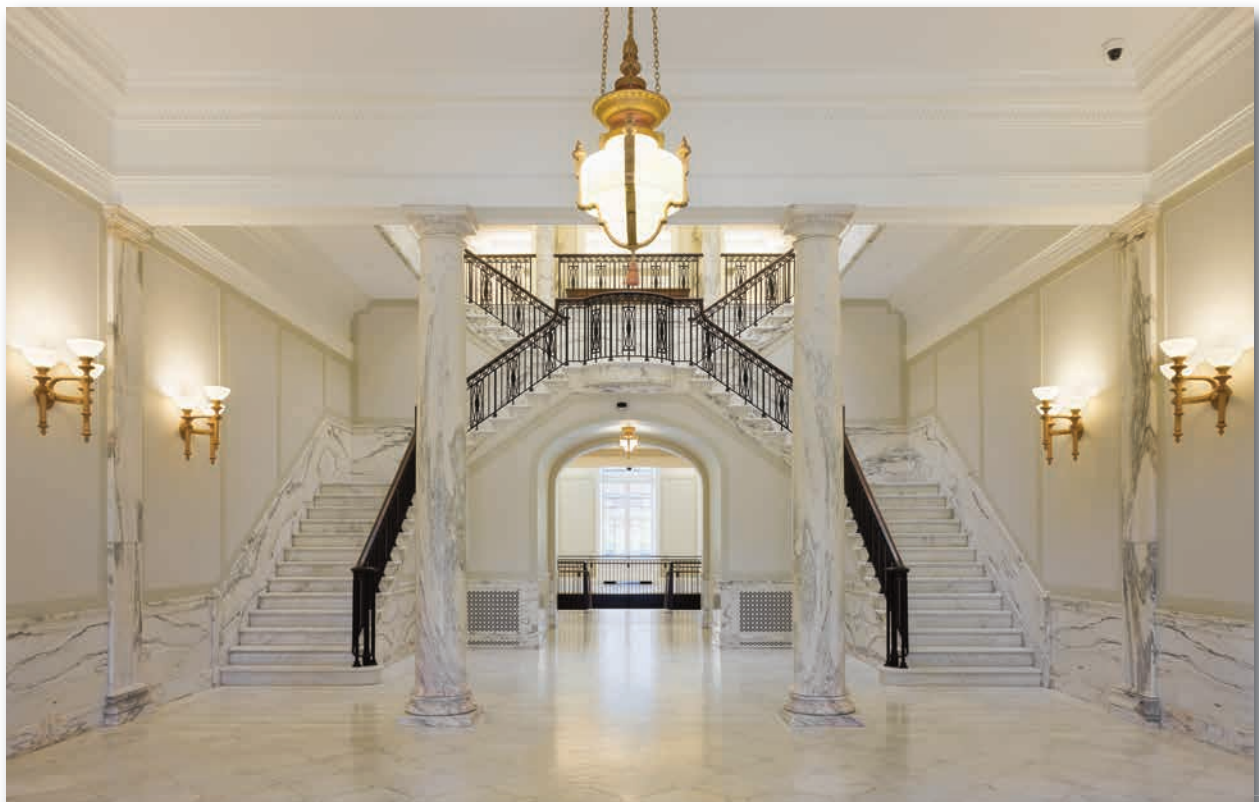
Management Training Program. Development of court staff is another key ingredient in "A Great Place to Work." The sixth Management Training Program class graduated this year, following 24 days of informative classes taught throughout the year by national experts and senior court officials and completion of a group project designed to strengthen and develop their professional and personal skills. Projects covered such topics as professional development, a court smartphone application, and use of technology to expedite cases.



The Management Training Program class of 2012

Training for Visitors. This year, the D.C. Courts provided individually tailored educational programs to more than 40 groups of visitors. International delegations included judges and lawyers from South Korea, Denmark, China, Argentina, Egypt, Spain, Vietnam, the Philippines, Uganda, Brazil, France, the United Kingdom, Tajikistan, Korea, Pakistan, India, and Serbia. More than 900 visitors participated in the programs, including several focused on the Domestic Violence Unit.

Strategic Human Resources. In support of the Courts' Strategic Human Resources initiative to transform the Human Resources Division from a transaction-based operation to a strategic partner in establishing court goals, determining the future workforce, and assuring mission delivery, initiatives this year promoted employee access through technology and employee engagement, with an emphasis on openness and accountability. A new five-year Human Resources Strategic Plan is comprised of five strategic themes: leading through strategic human resources management; employee engagement and workplace culture; talent acquisition and development; performance management and accountability; and human resources competence and compliance management. A new comprehensive Human Resources Information System was initiated, the Electronic Official Personnel Folder was implemented, and a web-based, on-line talent acquisition and applicant tracking system is underway.



Historic Courthouse Foyer

Celebrating Diversity. The D.C. Courts honor the traditions and contributions of various cultures to our society and the local community. The Courts' Black History Month ceremonies highlighted African American traditions, showcased the talents of local high school students, and celebrated the D.C. Courts' own staff. The Hispanic Heritage Month Community Outreach Recognition Opportunity, or CORO, Awards, recognized individuals and organizations that provide exceptional services to the local Latino community.

Recognizing Excellence. At the 31st Annual Employee Recognition and Awards Ceremony, the D.C. Courts recognized employees for exceptional job performance. Employees were honored for improving electronic human resources records, enhancing e-filing, taking on additional responsibilities to ensure seamless service, and planning and executing the ceremony itself. At the end of the ceremony, Chief Judge Lee F. Satterfield officially began his second term as Chief Judge of the Superior



The employee talent show is a highlight of the D.C. Courts' Black History Month celebration.



Chief Judge Satterfield takes the oath of office, administered by Chief Judge Washington, as Mrs. Satterfield holds the Bible.

Court of the District of Columbia.

Chief Judge Eric T. Washington, of the Court of Appeals, administered the oath of office in front of the court family.

National Leadership. The chief judge of the D.C. Court of Appeals and Chair of the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration, Chief Judge Eric T. Washington, completed his term as president of the Conference of Chief Justices, the professional association of the highest judicial officer of the 50 states, the District, and U.S. Territories. Chief Judge Washington also served as chair of the Board of Directors of the National Center for State Courts.



Employees honored at the 31st Annual Awards Ceremony.

Strategic Issue 4: A SOUND INFRASTRUCTURE

The D.C. Courts must maintain functional and accessible physical facilities in order to operate efficiently. The Courts occupy several historic buildings in the Judiciary Square complex which must be preserved and protected for the public and future generations. A major effort to restore, renovate, and upgrade the Courts' physical facilities has been underway since 2002 to ensure that court facilities and services meet public needs and effectively support court operations. Additionally, the Courts are making a substantial investment in technology to enhance operations.



Aerial View of D.C.'s Judiciary Square

The D.C. Courts' physical and technological infrastructure is the foundation for the administration of justice and efforts to foster strong employee engagement. Court buildings not only must facilitate efficient operations and make it easier for the public to access the court but also must lend dignity to the important public business conducted within their walls. Court technology supports staff productivity and provides new avenues to share information with judges, employees, and the public.

COURTHOUSE RESTORATION

The D.C. Courts occupy and maintain 1.2 million square feet of space for the administration of justice in the District. Maintenance and modernization of these facilities to support public access, safety, sus-

tainability, and efficient operations are guided by a comprehensive Facilities Master Plan as well as an urban design plan for Judiciary Square.

Building C Renovation. In February 2012, the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution and Information Technology Divisions moved into Building C, which was built in the late 1930's and formerly housed the juvenile court. The newly restored building provides modern office space that complies with current building codes while preserving key historic elements of the building. Building C also serves as a pilot site for a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone system, which transmits voice traffic more reliably and efficiently over a data network, reducing capital costs, simplifying administration, and enhancing mobility. To ensure energy efficiency, emissions reduction, and indoor environmental quality, the building is designed to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) "Gold" standards, and the design was submitted to the U.S. Green Building Council for certification.



Building C at 410 E Street

New Domestic Violence Space. In March, the Domestic Violence Unit and the Domestic Violence Intake Center moved to a new location on the Fourth Floor of the Moultrie Courthouse. The new office suite provides more space and privacy to interview petitioners, a conference room, and a new filing system.

Adult Holding. A multi-year project to modernize the Moultrie Courthouse cellblock and adult holding areas and to enhance safety and security for the U.S. Marshals Service continued in 2012. This project has been carefully phased to accommodate court operations, which cannot be suspended during construction. Seven holding areas adjacent to 14 courtrooms were renovated this year. In addition, two segments of work in the central cellblock were completed, and the sally port, where prisoners enter the courthouse, was renovated.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES

New Website. In March 2012, the D.C. Courts launched a new user-friendly public website that provides ready access to case docket and calendar information and assists the public in accessing other court informa-

tion through live chats, video presentations, and other means. The new Internet site uses a powerful index and search engine and centralizes court rules, forms, and frequently asked questions. It also integrates a map function to make it easier for the public to get directions to the courthouse.

E-Filing. The Courts implemented a new electronic filing program that will facilitate expansion of e-filing to more case types. In June, e-filing expanded to more civil filings. In September, electronic filing of cases and service of documents was implemented in child neglect and abuse, juvenile, and domestic relations cases. The new technology enhances community access to the court so filings can be transmitted electronically by the public and legal community and documents and data received into the case management system more efficiently. In May, the Courts expanded the capacity for the District's Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) to initiate child welfare cases and file information such as case worker reports electronically. The new bi-directional electronic interface will also allow the Court to send CFSA information, such as court orders, electronically. A new interface with the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council facilitates criminal justice agency electronic access to court data. In the Court of Appeals, development of electronic filing was initiated this year, following implementation of a new case management system in 2011. Electronic transmission enhances efficiency by eliminating the time and cost associated with hand delivery of documents and increases the quality of court data by reducing manual and duplicative data entry.



Courthouse technology helps share information with the public.

Web Conferencing. In February, the Courts implemented the next phase of web conferencing in courtrooms. Judges can use web-based video conferencing in domestic relations hearings when one parent is out of the District and judges can see minors in distant locations, rather than just speak to them over the phone.

Strategic Issue 5: SECURITY AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Courts and other public institutions across the country face security risks not contemplated a dozen years ago. The D.C. Courts' location in the Nation's Capital presents additional, distinct security risks which require constant monitoring. With one of the highest case filing rates in the nation and thousands of people visiting the courthouse each day, the Courts face a significant challenge in ensuring safety. At the same time, the Courts must remain accessible. The citizens of the District of Columbia must have confidence that the Courts can continue to function in the event of an emergency.

Heightened concern for security at courthouses and public buildings nationally is magnified in the Nation's Capital. Here, with approximately 10,000 people coming to the court complex each day, the D.C. Courts must provide a safe and secure environment not only for judges and court staff, but also for the public. This secure environment is critical to the fair and unbiased administration of justice for the community. The public relies on the Courts to continue to provide judicial branch services in the event of an emergency; in turn, the Courts must be prepared.



National Counterterrorism Center Director Matthew G. Olsen speaks during Court Security Month.

Security Enhancements. To strengthen control over persons entering court buildings, procedures were updated to require additional authentication for use of employee entrances and the security screening process was modified to expedite entry into the main courthouse while maintaining security. Emergency evacuation procedures were updated to ensure safety of the public, court staff, and judges, and the Emergency Notification System was expanded to include text alerts and telephone messages to court employees in the event of an emergency. An annual security assessment was also conducted.

Court Security Month. In April, the Fifth Annual Court Security Month featured: a presentation by Matthew G. Olsen, Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, on the investigation of tips about potential terrorism; an information fair; a seminar on information technology security; training on evacuating the disabled; Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) classes; and a range of daily security tips on the Courts' intranet page.

Continuity of Operations. To ensure that the D.C. Courts can function effectively in an emergency, the Courtwide Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) was updated and the Courts participated in a tabletop exercise with District and Federal criminal justice agencies.

Keeping Court Data Secure. The Courts have taken several steps this year to enhance cyber security. A comprehensive Information Security Directive issued in May conforms to current best practices and risk mitigation standards. An information security awareness and training program for all employees, contractors, and others with access to the Courts' information systems was completed in June.

Strategic Issue 6: PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

The people of the District of Columbia must have confidence that the D.C. Courts are accessible, fair, impartial and independent in dispensing justice and resolving disputes. We continually strive to earn the trust and confidence of our community by understanding the diverse and changing needs of its residents, and by being responsive and accountable. Cultivating and earning public trust and confidence is essential to fulfilling the Courts' mission in serving the public.

As institutions, courts hear cases brought to them by the public and other branches of government. Without confidence that their courts will resolve their disputes fairly and independently, the community would not avail itself of judicial branch services, jeopardizing the rule of law and civil society. The D.C. Courts strive to cultivate and earn the trust of the public in the District of Columbia through community information and public accountability.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Law Day. In observance of Law Day, Chief Judge Eric T. Washington, of the D.C. Court of Appeals, and Chief Judge Lee F. Satterfield, of the D.C. Superior Court, hosted a Twitter chat, answering questions from the public through the court's Twitter account, @DC-CourtsInfo. This chat highlighted the Courts' efforts to increase accessibility through social media, like Twitter and Facebook.

Reaching out to ANC Members. Chief Judge Satterfield continued to host meetings with ANC Commissioners from various wards of the City. These small, informal gatherings offer an important opportunity for an open dialogue. The Commissioners share comments and concerns from the community, and judges and court officials listen and provide information on Superior Court services.



Court employees provide information to the community during the Adams Morgan Day Festival.

D.C. Courts and the Community. Participation in events and festivals in the community provides additional avenues for the public to learn about the D.C. Courts. For example, during 2012, the Courts had a booth at the Adams Morgan Day Festival, where employees—including at least one Spanish-speaker at all times—distributed information on a range of court services. At Ethiopian Day, the Courts provided information targeted to the Ethiopian immigrant community, including court resource center materials translated into Amharic and other languages. The Criminal Community Court, the Domestic Violence Unit, Housing Conditions Calendar, and the Court's juvenile probation function (Social Services Division) routinely participated in and sponsored community meetings to enhance communication and collaboration and to educate the public on the role of the court and on court services.

Celebrating Family Reunification. In June, the second celebration of National Reunification Day paid tribute to families once divided by foster care and helped to raise awareness about the importance of family reunification to children in foster care. The Superior Court and the District’s Child and Family Services Agency brought together families, judges, and other officials to honor the accomplishments of more than 30 local families who overcame numerous challenges to reunify safely and successfully with their children.



Magistrate Judge Fentress congratulates a new adoptee.

Adoption Day. In November, the Superior Court co-hosted the Annual Adoption Day ceremony with the D.C. Child and Family Services Agency, celebrating adoptions in the District and educating the community about the need for adoptive parents. During the ceremony, 34 children were adopted into 26 families. Local newswoman Barbara Harrison served as mistress of ceremonies, and Olympic bronze medalist and adoptee Reese Hoffa was the keynote speaker.

iCivics. Students from the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington visited the Court of Appeals to participate in the iCivics curriculum, which teaches students about government and the responsibilities of citizenship. This national educational program, founded by Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, includes interesting teaching materials and numerous video games to help young people understand and respect government and to inspire them to become knowledgeable and participating citizens. The students also used “Justice Case Files,” a series of graphic novels developed by the National Center for State Courts to learn about how courts work and the critical role courts play

in our democratic society.

Reaching Out to Teens. Two initiatives this year focused on teens. Hundreds of young people participated in the 2012 Youth Law Fair in D.C. Superior Court, which focused on “Privacy Awareness: Managing Social Media Networks.” Youth, assisted by judges and attorneys, played all the roles—judge, defense attorney, prosecutor, witnesses, and jurors—in mock trials about Internet privacy. During “speakout” sessions, they discussed the impact of posting information on social media. In addition, in the Courts’ first Community Service Learning (CSL) Program high school students volunteered at the Courts during the summer, learning about the functions of the judicial system and earning community service credits required for high school graduation.



A teen speaks out during the Youth Law Fair.

PUBLIC TRUST

Tracking Court Performance. The Superior Court continued to implement and refine the courtwide performance measures approved by the Joint Committee. This year, the focus was on more efficient use of jurors who report for service, or juror utilization. By ensuring that more jurors reporting for duty are sent to courtrooms, the court could reduce the frequency of summonses for jury service. Work continued on tracking the Court's post-disposition workload, which is the judicial monitoring of cases after initial disposition. Examples of this varied work include post-trial motions, such as the ineffective assistance of counsel; hearings to determine whether probation should be revoked, child support should be modified, or Civil Protection Orders should be extended; and the long-term supervision of cases such as guardianships or interventions, which last many years.

Independent Program Evaluation. In addition to the implementation of performance measures for each division, formal program evaluations are conducted on an ongoing basis to insure effective services for the public and inform evidence-based decision-making. A study of the East of the River Community Court found recidivism reduced by 60% for community court participants, leading the court to adopt the community court model throughout the city. A study of juvenile recidivism found that 30% of juveniles in the study reoffended while on probation, which is comparable to similar jurisdictions. The D.C. Courts remain committed to using information gathered in these independent evaluations and in other assessments to guide decision making.

Performance Reporting. The Courts continued phased implementation of a multi-year Business Intelligence initiative designed to analyze and integrate court data from various information systems (e.g., case management, human resources, budget and finance) to enhance performance analysis, reporting, and public accountability. This software will capture data and create public score card reports on how the D.C. Courts are performing, as well as internal reports to guide management decisions. Benefits of the new system include faster and easier analysis of information through reports that can be generated by senior court officials, faster and more frequent data updates, and customized dashboards that display near real-time information. This year, the data warehouse was set up, reports were designed and some produced, and several dashboards were designed.

Strategic Management. To keep strategic management integrated in core business processes, new employees participate in very well-received orientation classes that give the big picture view of how their jobs enhance the administration of justice. Management Action Plans provide a roadmap for each division's implementation of the Strategic Plan, and elements of the Plan are incorporated in individual employees' performance plans.

In 2012 the Courts continued outreach to inform the next Strategic Plan (2013 – 2017). Half of the Courts' workforce (or approximately 500 employees) participated in "Many Voices, One Court: Strategic Planning Forums" in February. The sessions generated numerous ideas for improving service to the public and making the D.C. Courts a "Great Place to Work" and led to several efforts already underway to enhance internal communication and employee engagement. The Superior Court Board of Judges participated in a strategic planning session, and, in April, the Court of Appeals Board of Judges discussed judicial and attorney survey results pertaining to the appellate court.

Externally, from January through April, nearly 100 justice system and public service agencies provided in-depth comments on the Courts' role in addressing public safety and justice issues and the Courts' progress in meeting the goals of the 2008-2012 Strategic Plan. Finally, the Courts' Strategic Planning Leadership Council reviewed the input as well as demographic, economic, public safety, criminal justice, and other relevant information to draft the next plan.

Services for Juveniles. To ensure public safety and address the needs of District young people under probation supervision, the Superior Court's Social Services Division augmented existing services with new innovations. The Court's third Balanced and Restorative Justice Drop-in Center opened in Southwest D.C. in September. These centers provide tutoring, mentoring, recreation, vocational training, and other activities after school and on Saturdays for youth who might otherwise have to be detained.

Building on the success of last year's program, the Court hosted a "Summer Crime Prevention Call-In" session for high-risk youth under supervision. In collaboration with other juvenile justice agencies (such as the USAO, MPD, CFSA) the Superior Court's judges and probation officers spoke with juveniles to encourage them to comply with court-ordered conditions of probation and obey the law.

In June, the Superior Court, working with juvenile justice partners, successfully executed "Operation Safe Return," which was based on the adult "Safe Surrender" program that encourages persons with outstanding arrest warrants to turn themselves in to authorities. The initiative resulted in the safe return of 47 juveniles, or 41% of youth under custody orders.



(left to right) Councilmember Tommy Wells, Chief Judge Lee Satterfield, Social Services Director Terri Odom, and Judge Hiram Puig-Lugo cut the ribbon to open the Southwest Balanced and Restorative Justice Drop-in Center.

Cross-Jurisdiction Cooperation. In September, the Maryland/District of Columbia Juvenile Data Exchange Project was launched. As a result of the project, juvenile justice system officials in Maryland and the District of Columbia can view, in their own computer systems, information on youth charged in the other jurisdiction. Such data sharing will enhance public safety and judicial decision-making and promote greater public trust and confidence in the justice system.

Hooked on Books. Hooked on Books, an educational initiative in the Family Court, promotes literacy and encourages reading among the more than 2,000 children who are under court supervision each year. By providing this opportunity to get “hooked on books,” the Court hopes to instill in these children a lifelong passion for reading. To date nearly a thousand books have been distributed to children and families.

Fiscal Responsibility. The D.C. Courts are committed to responsible stewardship of public resources for the administration of justice in the District of Columbia. Thirteen consecutive years of unqualified audits (FY 2000 – 2012) reflect the Courts’ sound fiscal management.

This year, the Courts strengthened internal controls within the Budget and Finance Division, increased audits of purchase and fleet cards, expanded training in the oversight and monitoring of government contracts, and adopted Personal Property Guidelines to account for fixed assets maintained by the Courts.

The Courts receive federal funding to carry out our mission of protecting rights and liberties, upholding and interpreting the law, and resolving disputes in accordance with our strategic goals. For FY 2012, which ended September 30, Congress appropriated \$193 million for court operations, \$39 million for capital projects, and \$55 million for indigent representation. For FY 2013, the Courts began the year under a continuing resolution which provided the same funding level. In keeping with austere economic times, these appropriations reflect significant cuts in the Courts’ capital budget, delaying work required to maintain and modernize court facilities.

In addition to federal appropriations, the Courts receive \$4 million in grants that finance a variety of court functions, including compensation for victims of crime, a satellite intake center for victims of domestic violence, continuing improvements to the processing of abuse and neglect cases to secure permanency for abused and neglected children, employment counseling and parenting skill training for Fathering Court participants, and access and visitation services.

Regulation of the Bar. Among the responsibilities of the D.C. Court of Appeals is regulation of the attorneys licensed to practice law and represent members of the public in court and in other legal matters. The Court of Appeals is assisted in this function by committees of attorneys and the public who generously volunteer their time. The Clients’ Security Trust Fund reimburses clients for losses caused by dishonest conduct of their lawyers. The Committee on Admissions reviewed nearly 4,000 applications for admission to the D.C. Bar to ensure that licensed attorneys are qualified to serve the community. The Committee on Unauthorized Practice of Law investigated 107 new complaints against unauthorized persons allegedly practicing law in the District, a 500% increase over last year.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

On the Bench

The distinguished judicial officers of the D.C. Court of Appeals and Superior Court strive to live up to the highest ideals of justice. They work publicly in the courtroom and behind the scenes, providing leadership to the Courts and the legal community.

Farewell. We would like to express our gratitude for their many years of service to the people of the District of Columbia to judicial officers who retired or took senior status in 2012:

Superior Court

- Judge Zinora Mitchell Rankin
- Judge Linda Kay Davis
- Magistrate Judge Dennis Doyle
- Magistrate Judge Joan Goldfrank

Welcome. New judicial officers installed in 2012 will be called upon to continue the tradition of excellence in the administration of justice. We welcome to the District of Columbia Courts:

Court of Appeals

- Judge Roy McLeese, III

Superior Court

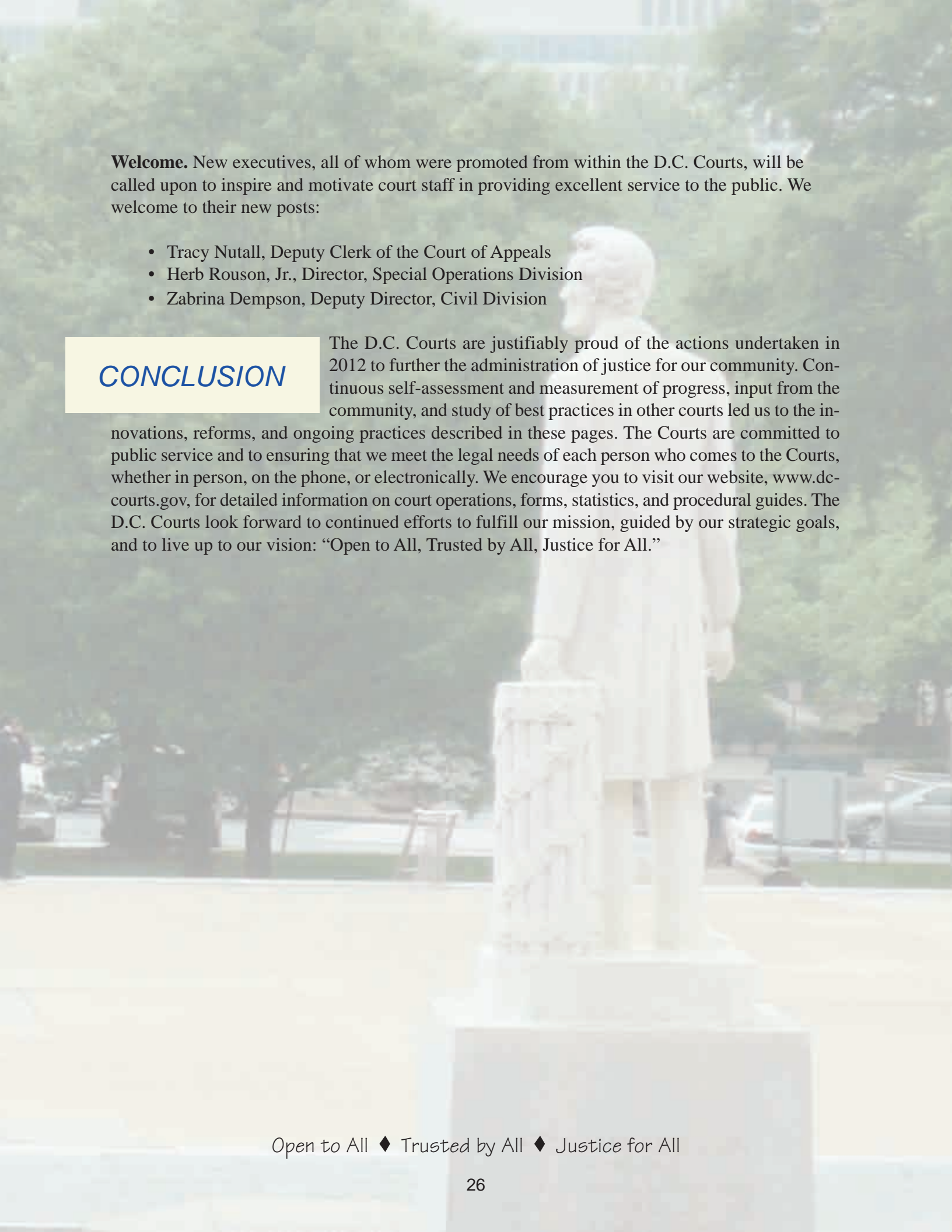
- Judge Kimberley Knowles
- Magistrate Judge Elizabeth Mullin
- Magistrate Judge Kenia Seoane Lopez
- Magistrate Judge Rainey Ransom Brandt

Administrative Leaders

The Courts' executives strive to lead court staff in administering justice and meeting the legal needs of the community through effective and innovative policies and practices. Court Executive Service members and the deputy director in each division provide the leadership and vision to guide the Courts' staff in serving the community and carrying out our mission.

Farewell. We appreciate the many years of service dedicated to the public in the District of Columbia of a court executive who retired in 2012:

- Wanda Johnson Starke, Acting Director, Special Operations Division



Welcome. New executives, all of whom were promoted from within the D.C. Courts, will be called upon to inspire and motivate court staff in providing excellent service to the public. We welcome to their new posts:

- Tracy Nutall, Deputy Clerk of the Court of Appeals
- Herb Rouson, Jr., Director, Special Operations Division
- Zabrina Dempson, Deputy Director, Civil Division

CONCLUSION

The D.C. Courts are justifiably proud of the actions undertaken in 2012 to further the administration of justice for our community. Continuous self-assessment and measurement of progress, input from the community, and study of best practices in other courts led us to the innovations, reforms, and ongoing practices described in these pages. The Courts are committed to public service and to ensuring that we meet the legal needs of each person who comes to the Courts, whether in person, on the phone, or electronically. We encourage you to visit our website, www.dccourts.gov, for detailed information on court operations, forms, statistics, and procedural guides. The D.C. Courts look forward to continued efforts to fulfill our mission, guided by our strategic goals, and to live up to our vision: “Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All.”

GOVERNANCE OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS

The Joint Committee on Judicial Administration governs the District of Columbia Courts, as designated in the District of Columbia Court Reform and Criminal Procedure Act of 1970. The Joint Committee sets policy for the Courts and is responsible for administrative and financial activities, including capital projects to maintain safe and functional courthouse facilities; budget submissions; acquisition, spending and auditing; grant administration; general personnel policies; information management; statistical reporting; and performance monitoring. Five judges serve on the Joint Committee: the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, as Chair; the Chief Judge of the Superior Court; and three other judicial members, one elected by judges of the Court of Appeals and two elected by judges of the Superior Court. The Executive Officer, who is responsible for the administrative management of the District of Columbia Courts, serves as Secretary to the Joint Committee.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS

The District of Columbia Courts comprise the Judicial Branch of the District of Columbia Government. The Court of Appeals, the appellate court of last resort; the Superior Court, the trial court; and the Court System, the administrative offices, make up the D.C. Courts. Uniquely for a state-level court, the District of Columbia Courts' Judges are nominated by the President of the United States and confirmed by the United States Senate. They serve 15-year terms and are eligible to be re-appointed. The D.C. Courts are a unified court system, which means that there is one level of trial court in which all cases are filed. Magistrate Judges are appointed by the Chief Judge of the Superior Court with the approval of the Board of Judges. The D.C. Courts are financed by the Federal Government. The Courts' budget is submitted to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget for the President's recommendation and then forwarded to the United States Congress for final consideration.

The **Court of Appeals** is the District of Columbia's highest court. There is no intermediate appellate court in the District, as in many states, so the Court of Appeals hears appeals directly from the Superior Court. The Court of Appeals also reviews decisions and orders of D.C. government administrative agencies. Final judgments of the Court of Appeals are reviewable by the United States Supreme Court. The Court of Appeals also manages the admission of attorneys to the District of Columbia Bar which, at over 95,000 members, is the second largest unified bar in the United States. The Court of Appeals also handles attorney disciplinary matters through the Board on Professional Responsibility.

In addition to the Chief Judge, eight Associate Judges serve on the Court of Appeals. Senior Judges, who are retired, also serve the Court on a part-time basis. Most cases are heard in three-judge panels, and on rare occasions the entire court sits to hear a case (called an *en banc* hearing).

The **Superior Court** is the trial court of general jurisdiction, which means that the Superior Court hears virtually all local legal matters, other than administrative adjudications. The Superior Court is comprised of divisions and offices that handle civil, criminal, domestic violence, family, probate, and tax cases; juvenile pretrial and probation supervision; alternative dispute resolution services; and crime victim's compensation. In addition to the Chief Judge, 61 Associate Judges serve on the Superior Court. Senior Judges serve on a part time basis. Twenty-five Magistrate Judges also serve in Superior Court, hearing criminal arraignments and presentments; child welfare, child support, and new juvenile cases; D.C. misdemeanor and traffic cases; small claims, temporary protection order, and other cases. The Associate Judges of the Superior Court rotate assignments in all divisions based on assignments by the Chief Judge.

The **Court System** provides services to both the Court of Appeals and the Superior Court under the direction of the Executive Officer. The Court System consists of a variety of administrative divisions which provide technical and support services, including contracting and procurement, legal counsel, capital projects, facilities management, budget and finance, human resources, training, research, information technology, and court reporting.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS

