

Full Court Press

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JUDICIAL AND BAR CONFERENCE EMPHASIZES FUTURE OF LEGAL PROFESSION

By Katherine Hockey, Executive Office Intern

The District of Columbia Court of Appeals and the D.C. Bar hosted their biennial joint conference on Thursday, April 10 and Friday, April 11 in the modern, streamlined Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. The conference was focused on the future of the legal profession, a theme reflected in the modern architecture of the building.

The event opened early Thursday afternoon with a call to order from D.C. Court of Appeals Chief



Conference Co-Chair Judge John Fisher and Chief Judge Eric T. Washington .

Photo by Ricardo Green

Judge Eric T. Washington, followed by State of the Judiciary reports from Chief Judge Washington and Superior Court Chief Judge Rufus G. King, III. Melvin White, the current president of the D.C. Bar, presented the Bar's yearly report.

After a short break, a plenary panel was held. Presenters during the session included Judges Craig Iscoe and Ann O'Regan Keary from the D.C. Superior Court, Judge Juanita Bing Newton from the New York State Court, Professor Tamar M. Meekins of Howard University School of Law, and Christopher Watler, a project director from the Harlem Community Justice Center. This panel's focus was on the need for judges and lawyers alike to develop and apply new skills

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CHIEF JUDGE KING TO STEP DOWN IN SEPTEMBER

By Nicole Chapman, Executive Office Intern

Chief Judge Rufus King, III announced that at the end of his second term as Chief Judge he will retire. Known for his tall stature, baritone voice, and seemingly endless bow tie collection, Chief Judge King has been a noticeable presence at the courthouse for years and will be remembered for his hard

work and unending dedication to improving the structure and functions of the Court.

Chief Judge King grew up in the suburbs of Maryland, but moved to D.C. in 1967. After graduating from Landon High School, he attended



Chief Judge King, in chambers.

Photo by Nicole Chapman

Princeton University. After graduation Chief Judge King took his first job at the Moultrie Courthouse. He worked during the day as a bailiff while attending the night program at Georgetown Law School. He recalled his time as bailiff fondly, noting that there are still people at the courthouse today who were here when he first came.

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when appearing in treatment courts.

Another panel, centering on the theme of impact litigation, met later in the afternoon. Former Bar Counsel Len Becker served as moderator while several notable speakers – including Peter J. Nickles, the Interim Attorney General for the District of Columbia – offered their perspectives.

Friday morning opened with a plenary panel on the changes and challenges that arise when older lawyers retire and new generations of lawyers with different goals, values and work habits, replace them. After the panel drew to a close, attendees filed into the ballroom for a luncheon.

During the meal, Melvin White, president of the D.C. Bar, presented the Beatrice Rosenberg Award for Excellence in Government Service to Charlotte Brookins-Hudson, an attorney who has dedicated upwards of 30 years to the local and federal government. Ms. Brookins-Hudson enjoyed a long and varied career until her retirement in the winter of last year. Though she held the position of general counsel for the Council of the District of Columbia for over 12 years (and served as deputy general counsel for four years prior to that), she has held a variety of other positions, including assistant corporation counsel at what is now the Office of the Attorney General, and U.S. Department of Labor attorney. The award was bestowed upon her in recognition of the outstanding judgment she demonstrated over the course of her illustrious government career, her work serving as a mentor to younger government lawyers, and her devotion to service, both to the public at large and within her own community.

In his luncheon address, keynote speaker Chief Judge Thomas F. Hogan of the U.S. District Court urged his audience to adapt to the changes technology “push[ed] upon” the legal system. He cited various innovations, including alternative dispute resolution and new courtroom technology, as

well as DNA and e-filing. The greatest challenge, he went on to say, would be to incorporate new advances while remaining steadfast to the greatest legal traditions of all: public service and high ethical standards.

Friday afternoon was dominated by seminars, running the gamut from electronic communications to increasing diversity on the bench to the use of DNA to exonerate those wrongfully accused of a crime. A musical presentation on “Embraceable Ethics: The Ballads of the Virtuous Lawyer” was a very enjoyable way for the attendees to receive CLE credit. The diverse range of panels, seminars, and lectures shared a sole defining characteristic: whether they sought to reconcile judicial neutrality with fairness to *pro se* litigants or to increase the amount of technology in the workplace, all were looking toward the future.

At an evening reception Sandra Bernstein received the Scoutt Award. This honor is sponsored by the firm of Zucker, Scoutt & Rasenberger, L.L.P. to honor founding partner Jerrold Scoutt, Jr. for his ongoing support of legal services that assisted those in greatest need. The award was conceived to honor those who provide direct legal assistance to the poor or otherwise disadvantaged. Ms. Bernstein is the current legal director of the University Legal Services’ Protection and Advocacy Program for the District of Columbia, where she has worked for more than a decade. The agency is charged with protecting and advocating the rights of people with disabilities within D.C. Ms. Bernstein has had several notable successes, including the relocation of the deaf services program at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital – a victory which kept the hearing-impaired from remaining institutionalized at the hospital – and the recovery of upwards of a million dollars designated for the care of mentally disabled clients of the District of Columbia Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Administration.

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*Leah Gurowitz, Editor
Dennis Shipley, Creative Director*



Chief Judge King -- a glimpse of what his future may hold.

Chief Judge King did not start with a goal of becoming a lawyer. He explored other options first, but when he made the decision to take that step he had a lot of support. He stated that his father, an attorney himself, influenced him on what kind of lawyer he would be. Chief Judge King described how his father instilled in him a standard of excellence and a commitment to helping people. This encouraged him to always be a part of small, people-oriented law practices. After completing law school, Chief Judge King had the opportunity to clerk for Judge William Pryor. He studied how Judge Pryor preformed his duties. This sparked his interest in becoming a judge. "As soon as I saw that angle, how Judge Pryor worked and conducted his tasks of judging, I knew this was something I wanted to do."

On October 2, 1984, President Ronald Reagan appointed Chief Judge King to the Superior Court. During his tenure as judge he served in all divisions except probate and tax. In 2000, he was appointed Chief

Judge of the Superior Court. Chief Judge King assumed his new position with certain goals in mind. He knew that there would be a number of challenges and issues that would need to be addressed. His goals as Chief Judge included improving the computer systems, getting them to function in such a way that anyone can go online and look up a case or other related information. The Courts were

starting a new strategic plan process with a court-wide, comprehensive approach. Lastly but certainly one of the biggest challenges, Chief Judge King knew going into his new position that the Family Division was going to need some attention, but the level of congressional involvement surprised him. He stated that Congress pushed the issue along in a good way. Both entities worked together and the outcome was in everyone's best interests.

As far as his accomplishments during his two terms, Chief Judge King takes credit for very little. He attributes all the progress to his staff and colleagues who, he said, did the bulk of the work. Along with the accomplishments of his aforementioned goals, the Court also developed a more positive reputation. It has strengthened its credibility with members of Congress and enhanced communications with other city and federal agencies.

When asked how he would like to be remembered, Chief Judge King hoped everyone felt that everything he did was for

the benefit of the Court, that there were no personal ambitions, and that he tried to be a fair administrator who encouraged the best in his colleagues on the bench and in management.

When asked his fondest memories, Chief Judge King said that the majority of his most positive memories of the past 24 years with the Superior Court have come from being in the courtroom. "I love trying cases. I never had an assignment I disliked. People are interesting, I think about what brought the parties here and how I can intervene helpfully." He also referenced his ability to help on a larger scale once he was appointed Chief Judge. The position has been challenging but it has allowed him to work with many different people to produce satisfying outcomes. On any task, he said he could reach out in 50 different directions and find an informed capable staff member that could get the job done. "It has been a real pleasure to have this opportunity of leadership with a staff that can do their job so well." Chief Judge King does not yet have any specific plans for retirement. There will be some traveling and time off, but he plans on applying for senior status so that he can continue to hear cases. "I believe this to be the right time for the Court, and for me personally, to step down. I do so with profound gratitude for the opportunity to serve this great Court. From my first day on the bench in 1984, there has not been a day that I would trade for working anywhere else. I leave confident in the Court's future growth as a leader among the nation's urban trial courts."

A FAMILIAR FACE, A NEW OPPORTUNITY

By Nicole Chapman, Executive Office Intern

On April 28, 2008, Ms. Carolyn Sargent-Burns became the new supervisor of court reporters. For 30 years, Carolyn has served the D.C. Courts tirelessly and she plans to continue her service in her new position.

Originally from Oxford, Mississippi, Carolyn was interested in a career in the courts from a very early age. Her father was an attorney and worked for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms while her mother served as secretary to a judge. Her parents' occupations exposed her to how courts operated and her interest was sparked in courtroom procedures. Carolyn graduated from the University of Alabama with a degree in social services, attended business school, and also obtained her Masters degree from Catholic University.

While in business school, Carolyn participated in a training program that led to her working for the District Attorney's office in



Carolyn Sargent-Burns
Photo by Nicole Chapman

Baton Rouge, Louisiana. There she helped get cases ready for trial and got a real sense of the workings of a courthouse. At that point Carolyn knew that she wanted a career working in the judicial system, but that she did not want to be a lawyer.

In 1978, Carolyn joined the D.C. Courts as a court reporter. She took the job despite being told that it was not a good career because it was "very hard and time consuming." But that did not deter Carolyn from following her dream. "It was a challenge, and I like chal-

lenges, so I wanted to do it."

Carolyn says that being a court reporter is really two jobs: the first is sitting in the courtroom during a trial and transcribing court proceedings; the second is the time spent out of courtroom producing transcripts. She believes it takes an organized and hardworking person to do the job...or rather, the two jobs. Good court reporters are dedicated, willing to keep up with technology, and effectively handle different situations and challenges. Clearly Carolyn meets those qualifications and inspires others to do so.

Carolyn says that she enjoys working with all the court reporters and other staff at the D.C. Courts and looks forward to her new position in management. Reflecting on her years of service and the challenges of her new position, she said, "I'm one of those people who loves what they do." Congratulations to Carolyn Sargent-Burns.

D.C. COURTS RACE TO THE FINISH IN CAPITAL CHALLENGE

By Nicole Chapman, Executive Office Intern

On April 30, 2008, the ACLI Capital Challenge race took place in Anacostia Park. Members from the three branches of government – and the Fourth Estate – participated. The D.C. Courts fielded several teams, with a few members winning awards and others running 'personal best' times. Two Superior Court judges won the first judge competition - Judge Craig Iscoe finished in 23:35 as the first male judge, and Judge Juliet McKenna was the fastest female judge in the race, turning in a time of 25:41.

The *Rocket Dockets*, the fastest of the Superior Court team, took second place in the judicial category. The *Rocket Dockets* members were: Judge Juliet McKenna, Magistrate Judge John McCabe, Robin Dull, Malcolm Drewery and Maria Fehretdinov. The rosters for the other D.C. Courts teams were as follows: *Expedited Motions* – Judge Craig Iscoe. Laura Tolan, Kimberly LeBlanc, Maura Polli, and Margarita Ortiz; *Superior to What?* – Judge Russell Canan, Kevin Dexter, Magistrate Judge Alfred Irving, William Lynch, and Caroline Onyango; and *Running Objections* – Chief Judge Eric Washington, along with Nicholas Lewis, Randy McDonald, Karen Woody and Jamie Renner. Congratulations to all who participated!



DCSC Runners - Front row: Laura Tolan, Judge McKenna, Margarita Ortiz. Second row: Maura Polli, Caroline Onyango, Kimberly LeBlanc, Judge Iscoe. Back row: Kevin Dexter, William (Billy) Lynch, Magistrate Judge McCabe.

Photo by Scott Applewhite

NEW EMPLOYEE PROFILES

By Nicole Chapman – Executive Office Intern

Benita Payne

The Budget and Finance Division's newest employee is



Benita Payne. Born and raised in Washington, D.C., Benita graduated from Hampton University. She joins the Courts

as an accounting compliance officer after having worked for the Department of Treasury's Numismatic Division. She spends most of her free time engaged in church functions and outdoor activities with her son. Benita feels that it is a blessing to work with her wonderful new colleagues and truly an honor to work with the Courts.

ation. She was formerly the program coordinator for the Bright Horizons program. In her spare time Benita enjoys shopping, singing in her church choir, and karaoke. She says that the best part of her job is being able to "meet the needs of the families that come to the courthouse and getting to meet all of the children."

Allen. Nathaniel, better known as Kenny, was hired as a deputy clerk. He was born in Washington, D.C. and graduated from Prince George's Community College. He previously worked as a computer technician at Clinton Christian School. When not at work Kenny enjoys music, computer video games, and reading.



Adolfo Loeri

One of the most recent additions to the Superior Court family is Adolfo Loeri. He joins the Criminal Division as a

deputy clerk. A Philadelphia native, Adolfo was raised in Washington, D.C. He formerly worked for the American Planning Association as an administrative assistant. He loves to read and listen to music in his spare time. He appreciates his new job as a "great opportunity to learn."



Margaret Lima

Margaret Lima recently joined the Domestic Violence Unit as a deputy clerk. Margaret was born in Rhode Island and gradu-

ated from Roger Williams University. Before joining the Domestic Violence Unit, she worked as a legal secretary and as a court interpreter for people who spoke Spanish or Portuguese in the Rhode Island courts. For fun, Margaret enjoys running and other physical sports like basketball. She says that "it is very enriching to be a part of an office that helps so many people in need who have nowhere else to go."



Nichole Anderson

Children dropped off at the childcare center will have a new friend in Nichole

Anderson. Nichole was hired as assistant director of the Courts' Childcare Center. A Washington native, she went to Southeastern University where she studied edu-

Nathaniel Allen

The Criminal Division gained another new employee after hiring Nathaniel



Welcome to all!

Photos by Nicole Chapman

FIREHOOK IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS!

Employees of the Court and visitors alike can now enjoy delicious food in the Firehook Café. Opened in early May, they serve everything from soups, salads, and sandwiches, to baked goods for snacks or dessert. Enjoy!



Firehook staff Margaret Applewhite and Lucia Thornton always greet you with a smile.

COURT IS NOW IN SESSION: YOUTH LAW FAIR 2008

By Nicole Chapman, Executive Office Intern

On Saturday March 8th, the Moultrie Courthouse was filled with lawyers, judges, witnesses, and jurors. Trials were being conducted in four courtrooms on the third floor. However, very few people over the age of 18 were present. These were not regular trials but mock trials run by teens participating in the 9th annual Youth Law Fair, cosponsored by the D.C. Courts and the D.C. Bar's Sections Office. Teens came to the courthouse on a rainy Saturday to learn about the judicial process, not from lectures, but from real hands-on experience in courtrooms.

The day began with a tour of the Moultrie Courthouse. Judges took the attendees throughout the courthouse so they could see courtrooms, court offices, the jurors' lounge, and the most talked about area: holding cells. After the tour, many parents and volunteers took the opportunity to take their children's pictures not only sitting on the judge's bench but with an actual judge: Chief Judge Rufus King.

In the jurors' lounge Chief Judge King introduced Curtis Etherly. Well-known to those who had attended more than one Youth Law Fair, Curtis is a graduate of Ballou High School and Georgetown Law School who is now a vice president at Coca Cola MidAtlantic. Curtis is also a dynamic speaker whose style and approach worked well with high schoolers. Curtis introduced the theme of the day, Internet Issues: Dangers of Social Networking and Blogs. He questioned the youth about sites like MySpace and Facebook and asked them to talk about what they had on their pages and how they felt about adult concerns that such sites were dangerous. There were plenty of opinions, especially when some of the parents in attendance jumped into the discussion.

Soon the teens were released from the discussion and split up into four courtrooms.

"All rise! The court is now in session! The Honorable Judge Irving now presiding," boomed throughout courtroom 311 as a seventeen-year-old bailiff brought the court to order and officially began the trial. The case facts involved some students

teasing another via a social networking site and the teasing resulted in the victim committing suicide. It was up to the teens, specifically those who were jurors in the mock trials, to assign blame and to determine guilt. They assessed whether a person could be held responsible for the impact of their actions and words online. The trials followed the usual courtroom procedures, with an interesting twist here and there. Judges advised the students on a rotating basis and occasionally even loaned a robe, when needed. The lawyers made all kinds of objections, saying "irrelevant" and "asked and answered" which drew laughter from opposing counsel. Both sides had at least three teens portraying lawyers, so opening and closing statements were made in several parts.

Jurors took notes, conferred, and verbally made their positions known when they did not believe a witness. After an hour and a half, the judges (guided by D.C. Superior Court judges) called for a recess for lunch. It was during this time that many of the teens took the opportunity to talk one-on-one with Curtis Etherly and some of the judges about their experi-

ences and views about the Internet and social networking sites. Some tried out their new legal vocabulary citing First Amendment law and privacy rights when defending their use of social sites. Others used this time and their cunning to try and get Curtis to divulge information about the prizes that would be handed out at the end of the day, valuable information such as whose concert tickets they might win.

After lunch, everyone returned to their courtrooms in order to finish the remainder of the trials. After closing arguments were presented, the jury went into the next room and deliberated with the aid of an attorney, while the rest of the students in the courtroom acted like a second, or alternate, jury and discussed which way they would vote and why. Once the jury returned, the foreperson read the decision.

At the end of the day, all of the kids returned to the jurors' lounge and waited to hear the results of the other courtrooms, but more importantly to see if



Chief Judge King poses with Youth Law Fair participants.

Photo by Nicole Chapman

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they won a prize in the raffle. Before prizes were distributed, Curtis engaged the participants in a discussion to see if any had changed their minds about using social networking websites. There were a few who said that they would take off their personal information and even a couple who said they now wanted to shut them down entirely. Even though the vast majority vowed to continue their use of social networking sites, they all received information about the dangers these sites present, and ways that they could use them more safely. Judge Mel Wright assisted Curtis in drawing out tickets and passing out prizes. They gave away gift cards, Wizards tickets, and four tickets to the Mary J. Blige and Jay-Z concert.

Overall the event was a big success, with a good turnout of students who were engaged in the topic and learned a lot both about the court system and about the Internet. Thanks to our partners at the D.C. Bar Sections Office who sponsor the event with the D.C. Courts each year, especially to Don Daughetee who serves as overall coordinator, and to Judge Mel Wright who again coordinated the Superior Court's participation and recruited the many

judicial and lawyer volunteers. The teens got a lot out of it because of all the work that everyone put into it.



Youth Law Fair participants in a mock trial.

Photo by Nicole Chapman

DC COURTS' NEW VOLUNTARY LIFE AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE

By Meghan Aberle, Program Analyst, HR Division

The Human Resources Division is pleased to announce two new voluntary benefits. The Universal LifeEvent program provides participants with a death benefit and a long term care benefit. During the working years, the participant's death benefit provides maximum protection. When the insured person reaches age 70 and financial needs may be lower, the death benefit is reduced, but the living benefit (i.e. long term care) remains at the full level. The focus of this new policy is to provide employees with the most coverage at the time it is most needed.

The Accident Insurance program will help participants pay for unexpected, out-of-pocket, healthcare expenses due to an accident. Accident insurance coverage is available to all members of your immediate family. Open enrollment for these new programs ends *July 7, 2008*. For more information or to enroll please contact a benefits specialist at 2-0496.

Program Highlights

Universal LifeEvents Plan

- Guaranteed coverage for first time enrollees during this period
- Affordable premiums
- Convenience of payroll deduction
- Coverage includes living benefits, such as Long Term Care, Home Health Care, or Assisted Living

Accident Insurance Program

- Affordable rates
- Wellness benefit
- Easy enrollment process
- Family coverage available and 100% portable

JUDGES SPEAKS WITH STUDENTS ON LAW DAY

By Nicole Chapman, Executive Office Intern

Thursday morning, May 1, 2008, school bells rang as usual, but this day was a little different. For some students in history, civics, and street law classes throughout the city, this period would not be just another class. It was Law Day. Eight judges and the Clerk of the Court of Appeals spent time teaching students from eight high schools and one middle school about the rule of law, criminal justice, the structure of the D.C. Courts, and their own legal careers.

Chief Judge King, Judges Canan, Iscoe, Leibovitz, Hamilton, Ross, Satterfield, and Garland Pinkston went, respectively, to the hospitality program at Roosevelt High School, Duke Ellington Senior High, Eastern High School, School Without Walls, Luke C. Moore Academy, Cardozo Senior High School, Banneker Academic Senior High School and Calvin Coolidge Senior High School. In addition, Judge Cordero hosted mock trials in her courtroom for 5th graders from Blessed Sacrament Elementary School.

This reporter was able to observe two of these appearances. First – Cardozo. After introducing himself, and having each student do the same, Judge Maurice Ross wove the rule of law, D.C.'s criminal justice system, and his own life experiences into his presentation. He spoke to 16 students in a street law class at Cardozo Senior High School. He began by talking about the history of Law Day: Every year in May the Soviet Union would put on a parade where they would march the military and weapons through Red Square. The purpose was to showcase their military might for the rest of the world to see. President Eisenhower's response was to create Law Day in celebration of the United States' peaceful power and demonstrate that it is a nation ruled by laws.

Judge Ross insisted on an interactive approach, asking students what they wanted to be when they graduated. Taking some of their responses, he explained how each career connects to the judicial system. "The judicial system touches just about every area of life in the District." He then asked the students what they knew or liked about the court system. After one mentioned how he liked lawyers arguing, Judge Ross took the opportunity to dispel the myths about trial and courtroom procedures promoted by court television shows.

The highlight of the presentation came after the teacher asked Judge Ross to describe some of his most exciting or memorable cases. The cases ranged from a woman suing Metro for the loss of toes,

to another involving medical malpractice, to a man high on PCP shooting his friend in the back of the head (the friend lived), to a story about how a robber (unfamiliar with D.C. streets) was caught because he got lost. The judge concluded by telling the class about a man who came into his courtroom late using the excuse he couldn't find a parking spot. Unfortunately, the man was appearing before the judge on charges that he was operating after suspension of his driver's license! Many of the students stated that they would never be that foolish. Judge Ross was quick to warn the children against thinking

that they were smart enough to break the law and not get caught.

Jury duty took center stage towards the end of the class. Many of the students present would soon be eligible to be summoned for jury duty. Judge Ross wanted to make it very clear why everyone must take his or her duty to serve as a juror seriously. "How would you feel if you or your family member was injured and the judge told you that the trial could not go forward because there are no jurors?" Judge Ross continued to stress the necessity of citizens' participation because the criminal justice system depends on them and it would "come to a halt without jurors."

Before the final bell, Judge Ross took a moment to give the students some quick advice on how to succeed. He told them that they must show up on time, be ready to work, and dedicate themselves completely to all that they do. He specifically mentioned the need to stay away from drugs because they can ruin your life quickly. There was also a message specifically tailored to the young men in the room. They were charged with the challenge of discarding the "gangster lifestyle" that glorifies violence, drugs, and taking the easy road.

Just a couple of streets over and five days later Judge Satterfield spoke to a group of students at Banneker Academic Senior High School. (Banneker had standardized testing on Law Day) Judge Satterfield's lecture started with a round of applause:



Judge Ross talks to students at Cardozo Senior High School.

Photo by Nicole Chapman

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congratulations for the students in the class, all of whom were graduating and going to college. The main focus was on leadership and how each and every one of the students in the room had the potential to be leaders.

“Who am I talking to?”

Judge Satterfield rhetorically asked. “In this room there are future doctors, teachers, dentists, and child psychiatrists. Leaders who could someday come back and help D.C. progress.” He stressed the importance of everyone’s participation in bettering the city. “Everyone in here is part of this puzzle we call a community.” He acknowledged the difficulties that they might have to face in order to reach their goals. Some of the difficulties included loss, family strife, distracters, and detractors. He advised them to not succumb to “self-inflicting wounds” when dealing with difficulties.

“Self-inflicted wounds bleed, they make you weak.” These can include anything from drugs, gangs, turning to crime, or simply allowing oneself to stop reaching for one’s goals. Judge Satterfield acknowledged that the road to success is not an easy one but that leaders were up for the challenge, and then he told



Judge Satterfield rhetorically asks students at Banneker, “Who am I talking to?” Photo by Nicole Chapman

the students that he believed that he was in a room full of leaders. It wasn’t long before Judge Satterfield announced that the lecture was over. He wanted to hear from them. Students began asking him about his life, influences, and trials he has faced as a judge.

He told them how some of his hardest decisions came in Family Court. Separating a child from his or her family, even when it is in the child’s best interest, is never an easy thing to do. Even though some of his toughest decisions dealt with families, one of his favorite parts of the courthouse is the Family Court level. Judge Satterfield talked about how the artwork on the JM level was made by the children of the District. He said he loves to go and look at all of the drawings; they have an uplifting effect on him. At the end of his time at the school, Judge Satterfield wrote his number on the board for any student that wanted to visit the courthouse. He told

them they were all welcome and could call on him if they wished because they would be his personal guests.

We thank all of the judges who participated in Law Day 2008. It was an excellent learning and mentoring opportunity and one that the students clearly will remember for years.

NEW DENTAL & VISION BENEFITS FROM AMERITAS

By Meghan Aberle, Program Analyst, HR Division

As a part of the D.C. Courts’ continual effort to provide employees with comprehensive benefits, the Human Resources Division announces that Ameritas will have its fourth open enrollment this month (June 16 to July 16, 2008). Ameritas offers employees affordable dental and vision coverage to meet their specific needs. With the implementation of the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), D.C. Courts’ employees now have increased flexibility in their choice of dental and vision plans.

Last year the Courts’ dental plan added a Dental Rewards program, which is a bonus program that rewards participants for getting regular checkup and maintaining proper dental hygiene. By submitting at least one claim per plan year, participants can carry over the unused portion of their annual maximum. Each year the amount accumulates and the monies can be applied towards expensive procedures. Participants are eligible to carry over the remainder of their unused maximum, if they submit at least one claim and incur expenses of less than \$500.

This year the Courts have added Lasik Advantage to the vision plan. Lasik Advantage provides coverage for LASIK related procedures for adult plan members. Throughout a four-year period, members earn lifetime benefits for each eye. Benefits earned for each eye cannot be combined to pay for a procedure on one eye. For more information about Lasik Advantage, Dental Rewards, and the D.C. Courts’ voluntary dental and vision plans, please contact a benefits specialist at extension 2-0496.

SPRING TRAINING 2008

By Crystal L. Banks, Deputy Director of the Center for Education and Training

Typically, spring is a time for change, renewal and rejuvenation. Things are no different for us here at the District of Columbia Courts where we look forward to learning new things and trying new innovations that we hope will keep us on the cutting edge of court management innovations. As most are aware, the judicial officers of the Courts generally have a training session every spring. This is an opportunity for each of them to put down the gavel, take off the black robe, leave the Moultrie Courthouse, and interact with one another in a group setting. Every other year, the judicial officers and senior managers train together to plan fresh strategies for the future of the entire court community.

This year, on May 7-9, we all headed to the mountains of Pennsylvania for our annual brainstorming session. Going off-site sometimes lends itself to a flow of new ideas that one is not easily afforded with the distractions and duties of the familiar. This year was one such year. The judges chose "Science and the Law" as their educational topic, while the senior managers focused on "Building a Great Place to Work." Both groups enjoyed a series of plenary speakers who challenged them as individuals and as working groups to tunnel within to make certain they are giving the best of themselves. Some of the plenary topics included "Overcoming Obstacles" and "Embracing Change: You Don't Know Me Until You Know Me." Since the community generally served in the District is quite diverse, this seemed like a particularly appropriate topic. It was a chance for the judicial officers and the management staff to interact not only with one another, but also to reflect on how they deal with their staffs, court employees and the public in general. Two of the guest faculty, Ken Kunken, Esq. and Michael Fowlin, Ph.D. did not disappoint and really got to the heart of the matter of both topics. The court attendees, managers and judges, were transformed by each of the presentations. It was clear that the topics and the unique presentations had evoked thought and emotion.

The judges then heard from a number of speakers who discussed such specialized and highly technical information as PET scans, neuroscience, the admission of expert evidence, creative aging, and the teenaged addicted brain. The senior managers discussed how to make the D.C. Courts a better place to work at all levels and — as you can imagine — were only able to scratch the surface of this very interesting and complex subject. One thing



Senior managers building a better workplace.

was clear: they were definitely committed to creating the best possible work environment for themselves and, more importantly, their staffs. These topics will clearly help both groups interact more, enhance their job satisfaction and performance, and better interact with their colleagues and the public.

While the judges and senior managers are off-site, there is an opportunity for the rest of the employees to gain valuable training themselves, particularly those who have jobs that require them to be in a courtroom whenever a judge is on the bench. The Center for Education and Training arranged for a wide range of training in computer technology, as well as classes to assist new employees in fulfilling their mandatory class requirements in Ethics, Court Security, Sexual Harassment, and Equal Employment Opportunity policies. Classes were also offered to assist employees in topics such as "Improving Your Performance for Optimal Results" and "Communicate with Impact." This time when judges and senior managers were off-site was also a chance for individual divisions to catch up on their workloads or offer in-house training opportunities that were division-specific.

Additionally, the Center for Education and Training has plans to repeat last year's successful Courtwide Training Conference, that Willie Jolley helped us launch. Stay tuned for news about our second Courtwide Training Conference next spring.

In conclusion, training affords us all an opportunity to see things from alternative perspectives and to solve problems in a different way utilizing some of the tools that we have just learned how to use. It is an occasion when we can all feel reborn in a sense and awakened to new possibilities. In the end, isn't that what makes life interesting?

Rave Reviews

From:
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2008 10:11 PM
To: WebMaster
Subject: praise for **jury duty system...**

I was called for jury duty awhile ago and many friends (inside DC and outside) have complained about jury service. I was prepared for a long wait and lots of bureaucracy but I was very pleasantly surprised at how well-organized the website was and how helpful the [**Jurors' Office**] staff was. I was very impressed.

- 1) I deferred very late at night on the website, and the next morning I received an email from a real person acknowledging my deferral!
- 2) While there was some waiting in hallways, the system for organizing prospective jurors seemed to go smoothly. Maybe having the jury questionnaires online will also speed up the process?
- 3) During the trial, our clerk was very helpful, provided her phone number in case we were late arriving in the morning, etc.
- 4) I received a thank you letter from the judge. It was a pleasant surprise and I was glad to know that DC really does appreciate its jurors!

Keep up the great work!

Editor's note: *Jury duty registration and deferral may be done on-line.*

March 31, 2008
Ms. Jeannie Adams, Director
Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division

Dear Ms. Adams:

I know how busy your office can be. I wish to take this opportunity to thank one of your employees, Ms. **Linda Sharp**. I am not sure how my case will turn out, but Ms. Sharp went way beyond the call of duty to help me. I wish to express my sincere "THANK YOU".



From:
Sent: Friday, June 13, 2008 2:22 PM
To:
Subject: RE: HELP

Mr. [**Jed**] Miller,

Your expertise and assistance were invaluable during a very difficult experience for a lay person as I am. Because of the easy access to court records through the website, with your assistance, I was able to keep abreast of the calendar entries in my case. The DC [Courts are] to be complimented for having a competent professional like you on board.

Many Thanks



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
Office of Justice Programs
Office for Victims of Crime

Certificate of Appreciation


Presented to

Donald William Younger

*In recognition of your dedication and
work on behalf of America's victims of crime.
National Crime Victims' Rights Week 2008
Justice for Victims. Justice for All.*

April 2008
Date




John W. Gillis
Director
Office for Victims of Crime

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Office for Victims of Crime

Donald William Younger
Legal Claims Examiner
Crime Victims Compensation
Program
515 5th Street NW, Suite 109
Washington, DC 20001



Dear Mr. **Donald Younger**:

Each year during National Crime Victims' Rights Week, the Attorney General honors extraordinary individuals or programs that provide services to victims of crime with the National Crime Victim Service Award, the Special Courage Award, the Volunteer for Victims Award, the Award for Professional Innovation in Victim Services, the Crime Victims Fund Award, and the Federal Service Award. I am pleased to inform you that you were among those nominated. On behalf of your colleagues, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), and the crime victims you serve, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) would like to thank you for your dedication and hard work.

OVC received letters nominating many exceptional victim advocates from across the Nation. Of the more than 121 nominations received, only nine advocates were selected to receive the awards. Choosing such a small number of recipients from such an outstanding group has been a difficult challenge. Although you were not selected as a finalist, we recognize the significance of your contributions. Accordingly, we are sending you a Department of Justice certificate of appreciation.

Learning firsthand of your efforts inspires those of us at the federal level to strive for excellence in fulfilling our own responsibilities to crime victims. OVC staff and I salute you for your ongoing efforts that ensure victims' rights and services are not only celebrated annually, but practiced daily. Please keep up the good work and continue to make a difference!

Sincerely,

John W. Gillis
Director

Mr. **Jorge Nava**
Probation Officer

Dear Mr. Nava:

Please accept this letter as a testament of our appreciation for the work you do and the many ways in which it benefits our school. The Next Step Public Charter School has had the privilege of working with you for several years now. During this time, your dedication and professionalism have been essential in helping us maintain a safe, positive and productive learning environment. You have always been accessible and ready to go the extra mile to support the youth as well as the school. Your availability to attend meetings on short notice and to offer your input has often helped us to better understand and address the full set of needs of our students. We offer you our deepest gratitude for the attention and commitment you have demonstrated towards the youth in our school and the community.

Sincerely,

Juan Carlos Martinez

