

Full Court Press

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THE INVESTITURE OF JUDGE STUART NASH

By Morgan Block, Executive Office Intern

On Friday, June 4th 2010, the D.C. Superior Court hosted the investiture of Judge Stuart Nash. The cast iron bust of H. Carl Moultrie looked on, along with three floors of attendees as the newest associate judge of the D.C. Superior Court was sworn in amidst a procession of his black-robed peers. Judge Nash was appointed by President Barack Obama on June 8th 2009, while serving as Director of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces Program at the U.S. Department of Justice. Almost a full year later, Judge Nash sat for his ceremony in the center of the third floor atrium surrounded by friends, family, colleagues and inspired onlookers. Those on the dais included Senior United States District Court Judge T.S. Ellis, III, Chief Judge Lee Satterfield, the judges of the D.C. Superior Court, Executive Officer Anne Wicks, and D.C. Supe-



Chief Judge Lee Satterfield administers the oath of office to Judge Nash as Ms. Nash holds the Bible.

Photos by Morgan Block

rior Court Clerk Duane Delaney. Judge Ellis was the special guest speaker for the investiture and he, in turn, recognized a final honored guest whose presence could only be felt in spirit, the late Fourth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Sam Ervin III. Judge Nash clerked for both federal judges early in his career.

Chief Judge Satterfield offered a biographical sketch that detailed the impressive background and accomplishments of Judge Nash. The sketch took note of such achievements as his graduation from Harvard Law School *magna cum laude*, his clerkship for Judges Ervin and Ellis, his tenure as

an Assistant United States Attorney, his time spent as Counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee, Counselor to the U.S. Attorney General, and his most recent role as Director of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces Program. Judge Ellis spoke not only of Judge Nash's intellect, but underscored his strength of character. While recounting the new title Stuart Nash had obtained, Judge Ellis lightly took note of a most significant title he had overheard Judge

Nash's young children use, "Judge Daddy."

Throughout his life, Judge Nash has nurtured and cared for the law as a father would care for his children. One example Judge Ellis pointed to was when Judge Nash was working on a complicated communications case. He had been in his office for hours and



Judge Nash is robed by his father, Gordon Nash.

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INDIAN DELEGATION VISITS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT IMPRESSED WITH ARRAY OF SERVICES

By Morgan Block, Executive Office Intern

On May 28, 2010, D.C. Superior Court Judge Heidi Pasichow, Domestic Violence Unit Director William Agosto and the Executive Director of D.C. Safe, Elizabeth Olds met with a delegation from India to discuss the handling of domestic violence cases from intake to prosecution to disposition. Judge Pasichow underscored the importance of exchanging information about comparative approaches to handling domestic violence cases.

The Superior Court's Domestic Violence (DV) Unit was modeled on Dade County, Florida's DV unit which has become a blueprint for many progressive courts' domestic violence units around the country.

The Indian delegation's primary interest was the resources available at the Domestic Violence Intake Centers that encourage victims of domestic violence to leave their abusers and pursue legal remedies. The Indian delegation voiced enthusiasm for those agencies and organizations that partner with the Unit to provide needed services for domestic violence victims. The delegation was most impressed with the emergency and transitional housing options that are available to victims of domestic violence. The Crime Victims Compensation Program, for example, is able to offer temporary emergency housing to victims directly affected by domestic violence. Victims placed into the emergency housing program are provided shelter, as well as being eligible for weekly metro/bus passes, and up to \$100 a week in food vouchers, for 30 days. A number of the domestic violence advocacy groups strive to offer additional transitional housing for victims in dire straits who are suffering from emotional and financial trauma as a result of domestic violence. Transitional housing may be available to victims of domestic violence for up to two years, during which time both shelter and on-site services are provided.

The two Domestic Violence Intake Centers and their stakeholders provide an impressive array of serv-



The Indian delegation is pictured with Elizabeth Olds (back row, far right), DV Unit Director William Agosto (back row, second from left) and Judge Pasichow.
Photo by Morgan Block

ices. The challenge is to reach out to those who don't yet have the courage to come to one of the Court's intake centers and begin the recovery process. For all of the instances of domestic violence that are reported, it is estimated that seven times that number go unreported, many of which occur with women in their teens or early twenties. The sobering reality that was identified at the

meeting is that victims are often too fearful to proceed as witnesses and remain with their abusers instead, and oftentimes the perpetrator succeeds in making them feel responsible for the abuse. When asked about this phenomena, a member of the Indian delegation stated it plainly, "The ONLY person responsible for the abuse is the abuser." There are cultural differences that may make some of the approaches utilized by courts in the United States inappropriate or not feasible in India; but after seeing the Superior Court's DV Intake Centers and the services available, the delegation was convinced that our system was one they wanted to emulate. All in attendance at the meeting at the Moultrie Courthouse discussing the Superior Court's response to domestic violence resoundingly agree that it is important to establish court programs that encourage victims of crime to come forward with the knowledge that there are adequate resources to meet their safety concerns.

D.C. Superior Court's Domestic Violence Intake Centers:

Moultrie Courthouse, Room 4200
500 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001 (202) 879-0152

United Medical Center/Greater Southeast Hospital
1328 Southern Avenue, S.E., Room 311
Washington, D.C. 20032 (202) 561-3000

National DV Hotline: 800/ 799-SAFE (7233)

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*Leah Gurowitz, Editor
Dennis Shipley, Creative Director*

MEET RON BERRY, NEW DATABASE AND WEB DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

By Morgan Block, Executive Office Intern

The D.C. Courts proudly welcome Ron Berry, the new Database and Web Development Manager. Ron spent his youth in Newark, New Jersey where he attended North Plainfield High School. After he left high school, Ron made the decision to serve his country through enrolling in the Air Force, where he achieved the rank of Senior Master Sergeant (fewer than 10% of Master Sergeants are promoted to this position, which is reserved for those with exceptional technical and leadership abilities). While in the military, Ron obtained a degree in information systems management from the University of Maryland. Before coming to the D.C. Courts, Ron gained important experience in the field, working for Oracle as a technology consultant. After leaving Oracle, Ron had a number of options for employment, but the Courts had a special appeal to him as an “opportunity for a challenge.” We welcome Ron as a member of the Information Technology team, as well as a proud addition to the D.C. Courts community.



Photo by Morgan Block

Judge Nash, *continued from Page 1.*



Judge Nash's daughter, Retta, responded with a big round of bows.

Judge Ellis went to check on him and found Judge Nash laid out on the floor of his office pouring over a pile law books. Judge Ellis laughed calling it, “Not the typical lying down on the job situation.”

In another instance, Judge Ellis spoke of Judge Nash's tenacity both as a legal professional and as a sportsman. When he was still a law clerk, Judge Nash was recommended by Judge Ellis to a group of marshals who were looking for someone to play basketball with. “He's a big guy and he can play,” Judge Ellis recounted. The next day the marshals limped into the office and reported back to Judge Ellis, “He can sure throw a good elbow.”

Judge Ellis concluded his insightful, personal and occasionally emotional tribute to Judge Nash and Judge Ervin with a strong and simple message to all, “It is a wonderful day for all of us in the judiciary to have someone like Stuart who is so supremely qualified...congratulations to the Court and congratulations to you, Stuart.”

The presentation continued with the reading of the

commission by Mr. Delaney, the administration of the oath of office by Chief Judge Satterfield, and finally the robing of Judge Nash by his father, Gordon Nash. The crowd responded with a big round of applause and Judge Nash's five-year-old daughter, Loretta, responded with a big round of bows of her own.

Chief Judge Lee Satterfield retook the podium to offer some concluding advice for Judge Nash. “Judging can be an isolating job” the Chief Judge cautioned, “You work very long and intense hours for very little recognition. But the rewards are great.” Clearly Judge Nash agrees.



Following tradition, Judge Nash is escorted to his chair by Judge Florence Pan the previous newest judge on the bench.

NEW CRIMINAL DIVISION EMPLOYEES

By Morgan Block, Executive Office Intern

Svetlana Polonchuk

Svetlana Polonchuk is a new courtroom clerk in the Criminal Division. Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, 'Lana' moved with her mother to Maryland looking for opportunity. Lana was an academic standout in high school, recognized in 2004 in the *Washington Post* for her outstanding academic achievements. After completing high school, Lana attended the University of Maryland at College Park, while working part time as a customer service clerk with Magruder's in Silver Spring. Lana has only been with Superior Court for a short time, but she has already been impressed by the people, professionalism and the opportunities that the D.C. Courts offer. Lana has travelled quite a bit to get to where she is today, and we are happy she did!



Traffic Assistant with WHUR-FM. Brigitte is happy with her move to the D.C. Courts both because she finds it rewarding and because it's a little less cramped than the radio studio! Besides working hard at the Courts, Brigitte is also currently pursuing her bachelor's degree online at Walden University.

Leigh Gaskins

The D.C. Courts are happy to welcome Leigh Gaskins, a recently hired Criminal Division deputy clerk. Leigh grew up the daughter of a soldier in the armed forces and lived in many locations as the family followed her father around the country. Although Leigh was always on the move, she considers Augusta, Georgia her home town. That's where she went to Saint Thomas Aquinas High School. Prior to joining the D.C. Courts, Ms. Gaskins was employed with the Augusta Richmond County Civil Magistrate Court. On the side, Leigh simultaneously worked to obtain her associate's degree in Paralegal Studies from Augusta Technical College. Leigh is currently continuing her pursuit of higher education on-line at Troy State while working at the D.C. Courts. Someday Leigh hopes to go to law school but today she is the proud mother of two daughters and a happy employee here at the Courts.



LaToya Rhodes

LaToya Rhodes is a new deputy clerk in the Case Management Branch of the Criminal Division. A Maryland native, LaToya grew up in Suitland, attending Central High School. LaToya worked hard in her pursuit of academic achievement as a student and spreading school spirit as a member of the cheerleading squad. After graduating from Central High School, LaToya stayed close to home, attending Bowie State where she studied elementary education. After graduating college, LaToya went back to Suitland to work at Andrews Air Force Base as an administrative assistant. Today she is happily employed at the D.C. Courts where she has quickly found her niche.



Grace Jimenez

Grace Jimenez is a recently hired deputy clerk in the Criminal Division. Born in sunny Los Angeles, California, Grace is a first generation American who has used her experiences and cultural competencies to help new immigrants adjust to living in the United States. After graduating from UCLA as a history major, Grace worked advising legal immigrants on the process of applying for citizenship. Grace also spent time as an English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor with Forest View Educational Center. Grace has brought all her talents and experience to the D.C. Courts where she has found a nice "change of pace." Grace is the loving mother of a two year old son, Nicholas.



Brigitte Dunn

Brigitte Dunn was recently hired by the Criminal Division as a deputy clerk. A Washington, D.C. native, Brigitte went to Archbishop Carroll High School where she was very involved in extracurricular activities. Brigitte was part of the ski club as well as a member of the modeling club where she would help put on fashion shows. Prior to joining the D.C. Courts, Brigitte was employed as a



Photos by Morgan Block

Names & Faces in the News:

On May 10, 2010, **Kimberly Knowles** joined the Superior Court as a Magistrate Judge.

On June 22, 2010, the U.S. Senate confirmed Magistrate Judges **Milton (Tony) Lee** and **Judith Smith**, along with Professor **Todd Edelman** to be associate judges on the Superior Court.

And on July 23, 2010, Judge **Marisa Demeo's** investiture will take place in the atrium of the Moultrie Courthouse.

HOUSING CONDITIONS CALENDAR

By Morgan Block, Executive Office Intern

On Monday May 24th, Judge Mel Wright heard the first cases on the new Housing Conditions Calendar. Judge Wright, working with representatives of landlords and tenants, area legal aid providers and his colleagues in the Civil Division, created the new calendar, which is a comprehensive tool that allows tenants the opportunity to sue landlords for D.C. Housing Code violations on an expedited basis for only a \$15 filing fee.



Judge Melvin Wright and Brian Donovan, Attorney Advisor, Landlord Tenant Branch.

Photo by Morgan Block

Standard housing code violations can range from improper ventilation to inadequate fire prevention. These violations can cause D.C. residents much suffering with no easy, immediate solutions. In the past, tenants had only two alternatives to address such problems: filing a civil suit, which costs \$120 and takes months for all filing deadlines to be completed and a hearing scheduled, or withholding rent. Each “solution” came with its own serious risks, inconvenient wait times for the former and eviction in the case of the latter.

The Housing Conditions Calendar (HCC) offers solutions that will hold landlords accountable for the condition of their rental property, and give tenants more options in protecting their living conditions. Judge Wright says that the Housing Conditions Calendar was created using a “common sense approach” to address allegations of housing code violations. The calendar is based on the idea of “get[ting] people together to resolve the issue” cooperatively, rather than through lengthier, more combative litigation. With the HCC, the D.C. Superior Court has enabled tenants to access straightforward instruction and complaint forms that can be filed with the Court for a small processing fee. The HCC allows them to get onto an expedited calendar with a hearing date in less than 30 days.

The only remaining obstacle to full implementation of the HCC is making the public is aware of its existence. Judge Wright is working hard to resolve this problem through community outreach. Over the next few months the judge will be speaking at events across the city to inform people of this new program and answer questions about it. On June 16, the judge spoke to members of the D.C. Bar at an event at the Historic Courthouse; on June 18, he spoke to the Apartment and Office Building Association (AOBA); and on June 29, he visited with the Housing and Regulation Administration at the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development. Those who were unable to make it to the meetings can find more information at www.dccourts.gov/housingconditions or visit the Landlord/Tenant Resource Center in Court Building B, 510 4th Street, NW, room 115.

Judge Wright will hear Housing Conditions Calendar cases each Monday. Tenants must file a complaint with the Civil Actions Branch Clerk’s Office in room 5000 of the Moultrie Courthouse. The tenant/plaintiff is responsible for serving the landlord with copies of both the complaint and summons at least eight days prior to the hearing date. For those who have questions about the process, or want legal advice, information is available at the Landlord/Tenant Resource Center, AARP (202-434-7700), or Bread for the City (NW- 202-265-2400, SE- 202-587-0537). Judge Wright described the hearings as similar to a small claims case but on a regular civil calendar, designed so that parties need not have legal counsel.

Renters in D.C. who believe their rental unit does not meet code requirements are encouraged to take advantage of this new court process and let others know about the possibility of a relatively quick, low-cost approach to enforcing their rights.

**SAVE
THE
DATE!!**

**The 29th Annual Employee Recognition
and Awards Ceremony
will be held on
Thursday, September 16, 2010.**

**DON'T
MISS
IT.**

PLAY BALL!

By Morgan Block, Executive Office Intern

For ten weeks during the summer months, the D.C. Court's Courthouse Nationals or "C-Nats" get together each week for a highly competitive game of softball. Every Monday and Tuesday night at 7 o'clock, a co-ed group of D.C. Courts employees put on their C-Nats jerseys and take the field. June 14th and 15th, the C-Nats braved D.C.'s brutal heat and humidity to play a little softball on "field 6," between the looming Washington Monument and the western side of the Potomac River.

Sherman Bunch, a C-Nat veteran, is very proud of how far the team has come since they first joined the "Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Slow Pitch Softball League" three years ago. A two-time high school baseball champion at Eastern High, Sherman has seen the team steadily transform itself into a contender. The team reached an unprecedented level of play last fall and brought home the second place trophy in DPR's co-ed, seven men, three women league. The C-Nats are hoping to build on that success and bring home the highly coveted first place trophy for the D.C. Courts this season. This summer there was so much interest in the team that the C-Nats had to be divided into two different squads, the C-Nats Blue (who play on Mondays) and the C-Nats Gray (who play on Tuesdays).

On Monday June 14th, the Blue team took the field against the State Department's Cold Spring Eagles. Although bad weather and even worse luck had dampened the C-Nats' season thus far, their players were far from blue. "We're like the dream team," says C-Nat's catcher Blanche Richardson, "We're the best!" A three-loss start (all by one run) and three rain cancellations has kept the C-Nats from being "the best" on paper; but their ability and their confident demeanor shows on the field. For those watching, pre-game batting practice seemed less like a warm up and more like a home run derby. Aluminum bats "clanged" time and time again as softballs rocketed over the pitcher's head deep into the outfield.

"You get a home run in the game and we're all going to Capital Grille" one player joked as another ball soared into a darkening sky.

The weather worsened. Wind started to gust from over the Potomac and players and coaches hid under trees and behind stop signs to protect themselves from the expected rain. Rain mercifully came, cooling off the players just in time for the game. A rainbow appeared from behind the monument and a couple of youngsters bounded after it. "Where are they going?" asked a perplexed onlooker. "They're just going after that pot of gold" came a response.

The rules of co-ed slow-pitch softball are quite similar to regular softball. But for the DPR Slow Pitch Softball League, there are a few major differences: three balls to a walk, women take one base on a walk, men take two, there must be arch on the pitch, sliding of any kind results in an out, and games last one hour or seven innings, whichever comes first.

Once the game started two things were immediately apparent: the C-Nats are extremely supportive of each other and they REALLY want to win. Fold-out chairs were set up along the edge of the diamond and behind home plate but they stayed empty, as everyone was on their feet for the whole game. "Take a deep breath and find your rhythm," a C-Nat would call to the pitcher when he started to struggle. "Take it down Freddie Brown," cried another.

The game remained close and hard-fought throughout all seven innings thanks to strong play and great teamwork. But in the end it came down to one player. In the bottom of the 7th inning, two outs, a man on second base, and the C-Nats down by one run, the pitcher, Dwayne Segar, came up to bat. Taking the first two pitches for two balls and two strikes, Dwayne then laced the third pitch past the short stop for a game-tying double. That would be the final run of the day as a second dose of rain forced the umpire to call the game.

Play Ball!, continued on page 7.



Sherman Bunch is ready to score.

Photos by Morgan Block



Dwayne Segar displays perfect form as he releases his pitch as Donna Smith gets set for the play.



The Gray team celebrates after their game.

The C-Nats and the Cold Spring Eagles exchanged handshakes and pleasantries before gathering separately for a post game huddle. The C-Nats grouped in a circle for some private statements from Coach Derrick Monroe and a "1,2,3 Team!" and raised their hands in unison.

The following night, the C-Nats's Gray team met on "field 6" to take on "Bingham" of the Bingham and McCutchen law firm. The C-Nats Gray came into the night's game with a 3-2 record, having beaten two of the teams by double digits. Friends, family, and many familiar faces from the C-Nat's Blue came to root on the home team. The rain showers forecast throughout the night held off as the two teams took the field under a cool, cloudy, evening sky.

A strong collective offense and the dependable defense got the C-Nats Gray off to an early lead, 3 - 0. However some costly fielding errors and a bloop single had the game tied 7-7 heading into the bottom of the seventh. With players on 2nd and 3rd bases and one out, a C-Nat line drive by Darron Guide brought the lead runner, Jeremie Johnson coasting easily into home, his hand pointed towards the heavens. He was greeted by a contingent of joyful C-Nats at the plate.

As the team got together after the game, wise words were spoken by 3rd basewoman and the game's most valuable player, Dionne "Ryan Zimmerman" Braxton: "Teamwork and team spirit are what keep us winning." With an infectious enthusiasm and a humble team attitude, it looks like Washington finally has a winning sports team in the C-Nats!



Courtenaye Nelson gets ready at second base as Tiffany Williams looks on.



Emmanuel Stinney delivers a strike as shortstop Ron Williams and left fielder Daron Guide look on.



Nothing gets by Zabrina "the glove" Dempson.

The C-Nats Blue Team

Player

Aaron Manzo
Amanda Matey
Aubrey Clare
Blanche Richardson
Bryan Thomas
Carolina Medina
Donna Smith
Dwayne Segar
Esmaralda Ayala
Francis Strong
Herbert Files
Jakeila Barnes
Jeffrey Banks
Joan Burrell
Lynn Long
Michael Stewart
Sherman Bunch
Stephen Bradford
Terrell Thomas
W.L. Stokes



Position
left field
third base
pitcher
catcher
left center field
catcher
second base
pitcher
third base
left center field
shortstop
right field
center field
right field
shortstop
coach
first base
shortstop
center field
third base

TEAM ROSTERS



The C-Nats Gray Team

Player

Calvin Bellamy
Courtenaye Nelson
Daron Guide
David Roman
Dionne Braxton
Emmanuel Stinney
Erica Harts
Fernando Bendana
Jeremie Johnson
Jerome Leake
Justin Roman
Marlena Otlans
Michael Stewart
Phillip Brown
Ronald Williams
Tami Komiya
Tiffany Williams
Tonya Coleman-Lee
Yvonne Judd
Zabrina Dempson



Position
first base
second base
left field
third base
third base
pitcher
field statistician
shortstop
right center field
right center field
left field
pitcher
coach
left field
shortstop
left center
right field
catcher
catcher
second base

THE THINNEST WINNER --

D.C. COURTS' HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAM SUCCESSES

By Morgan Block, Executive Office Intern

In June 2009, the D.C. Courts welcomed Weight Watchers into its doors as part of an initiative to promote healthier lifestyles. Twelve months and 406 fewer pounds later, the program has been a resounding success. Due in large part to the participants' commitment to themselves and others in the program, a number of participants have seen real improvements in their health, as they have watched the numbers go down on the scale.



Mark before (left) and after (right). Congratulations!

The group meets every Thursday at 11:30 a.m. for a half an hour to “weigh in,” acknowledge individual achievements, and discuss the weekly topic. Participants are provided relevant literature and weight loss journals. They also have access to Weight Watchers’ “E-tools” website which provides a wealth of information, including recipes, meal ideas, and workout demonstrations, as well as interactive features that allow members to view progress as they move toward their goal.

Mark Heagy, an Advocate Case Monitor in the Mental Health/ Mental Retardation Office, is one of the program’s great success stories. Mark became an official Weight Watchers lifetime member after he successfully lost more than 10% of his weight and kept it off for six weeks. Mark joined Weight Watchers in October 2009 and in the first 17 weeks was able to shed 42 lbs! When asked what the secret was to Mark’s success, his group attributed it to his “consistency.” “Mark was able to really follow and maintain the program,” one member recalled. “He was ready to lose the weight.” Mark believes his success comes from his conscious commitment to a lifestyle change, “I feel 100% better now than when I did before I started the program.” Besides making healthier food choices, Mark incorporated ex-

ercise into his weight loss plan. “The exercising was difficult during the first week while I was getting a routine down,” he admitted, “But it’s a necessary part of the program.” When asked about the Weight Watchers program as a whole Mark emphasized, “It is NOT a diet, it merely teaches moderation. Once you get it down it’s easy to keep up with.”

Still, for all the group’s personal successes, much credit is given to their team leader’s guidance. Group members were very pleased with their leader Linda, as facilitator and motivator, mentioning her “genuine interest” in the success of everyone in the group.

The current Weight Watchers session ends July 15th and the new 17-week session will begin the following week, on July 22nd. For those interested in participating in the next session, there will be an open house on July 15th. While some would say that Weight Watchers has already made a positive impact on the lives of many D.C. Courts employees, what’s clear is that D.C. Courts employees have already made many positive changes as a result of their commitment to the Weight Watchers program. As member Sarah Minkin points out, “Weight Watchers can only help you find positive change if you are ready to make an investment in yourself.”



In the back from left to right: Yvonne Martinez Vega, Meredith Hofford, Joyce Jenkins, Brenda Page-Murphy, Karen Stephenson, Sara Minkin, Magistrate Judge Julie Breslow, Kenia Seoane Lopez, Seated in front: from left to right: Sharon Banks, team leader Linda Eisel and Linda’s mother.

Photos by Morgan Block

PROBATE DIVISION HOLDS 2010 GUARDIANSHIP CONFERENCE

By Nana Perry, Program Manager, Guardianship Assistance Program

On March 12, 2010, the Superior Court's Probate Division hosted the second annual Guardianship Conference at Catholic University's Columbus School of Law. Approximately 120 family members and attorneys serving as court-appointed guardians of incapacitated adults attended the half-day event. These guardians make various personal care and medical decisions on behalf of individuals who are unable to make such decisions for themselves due to cognitive impairment. The conference is one of the ways the Probate Division helps them make good quality of life decisions for those they serve.

Conference speakers were recognized experts on current issues related to guardianship, and presentations included topics such as end of life care and medical decision making, nursing home resident rights, and mental illness challenges. An additional focus this year was merging the educational experience with networking. The conference provided an opportunity for participants to make informal contacts with fellow guardians and featured an information fair at which several local community agencies staffed resource tables and answered questions.

Participants were near unanimous in their positive assessment of the conference, with more than two-thirds giving it the highest ranking and a full 96% indicating overall approval. This success would not have been possible without the contributions of seven volunteer student visitors (pictured below). For the second year, the Guardianship Assistance Program partnered with local universities to have master's level social work students serve as volunteer student visitors. In addition to developing their interviewing and assessment skills by visiting wards and guardians, these aspiring social workers broadened their planning, outreach, and negotiation skills by helping organize the conference. The conference was a collaborative effort and the Probate Division would like to thank key staff persons, the volunteer students visitors, judges, speakers, organization representatives, and the Catholic University Columbus School of Law for their contributions.



Pictured from L to R: Program Manager – Nana Perry; Student Visitors – William Hayden (Virginia Commonwealth University), Amanda Bisset (Howard University), Jemima Anglade (Howard University), Jeneve Silverberg (University of Maryland), Justin Roman (Catholic University), and Ingrid Denis (University of Maryland). Not pictured: Sonya Roundtree (Catholic University)

Photo by Nana Perry



Don't forget
to
RECYCLE!



PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

Public trust and confidence is one of the most important goals of any public institution, none more so than court systems. Without the public's trust, courts cannot function. The criminal justice system, and to some extent our entire three branch system of government, relies on compliance with laws and consensus on the court's role in applying and interpreting the law. Public trust and confidence in courts should stem from the direct experience the public has with the courts, which is most often with their local trial court. This is a relationship that is predicated on transparency. As Lord Gordon Hewart first said, "Justice should not only be done, but should be seen to be done!" This is as true today as it has been in the past.

The D.C. Courts pursue this goal in many ways. In "Strategic Issue 6" of the D.C. Court's Strategic Plan, we commit ourselves to being accountable to the public. Since many D.C. residents' only interaction with the courts is serving on jury duty in Superior Court, that service provides the Court with an opportunity to promote confidence in the courts. Jury duty allows the public the ability not only to observe but to participate in the judicial process. The work of a juror can be difficult but it is essential, and no one appreciates their service, and at times their sacrifice, more than judges themselves. October is officially Juror Appreciation Month in the United States, but the participation of the public is valued all year round. The previous Superior Court Chief Judge, Judge Rufus King, and current Chief Judge Lee Satterfield have had meetings annually with 15-20 people who have served on jury duty to get their thoughts on what works and what can be improved. Many Superior Court judges send letters to jurors after a trial concludes, thanking them for their service. See the letter below from Judge Dixon to a man who served as a juror on a case before him, and the letter Judge Dixon received in response (next page). This demonstrates how jury duty can help the public understand the work of the justice system, and how judges can effectively convey their appreciation for the service that jurors provide to the courts and to our community.

May 14, 2010

Dear [Juror]

Thank you for your time and effort while on jury service in my courtroom. We understand that jury service can be difficult and inconvenient, but it is one of the most important responsibilities you can fulfill as a member of our community. We greatly appreciate the sacrifices and dedicated efforts by citizens like you.

Additionally, this is to especially thank you for valiant service in an extended trial that lasted several weeks. We are deeply appreciative of your jury service. We hope that some aspects of jury service were rewarding to you and that you will positively describe the experience to your neighbors and other residents of the District of Columbia. It is important that the virtues of jury service be made well known throughout our community.

Please remember that our Superior Court welcomes feedback from its jurors in order to enhance jury service in the future. If you would like to submit comments stemming from your jury experience, please reply to me at the address noted above.

Sincerely,
Herbert B. Dixon, Jr.



See one juror's response, page 11.

The Health and Wellness and Worklife Balance Teams want to thank those who participated in the survey. Over 500 people completed the survey and the Courts will use the results in making this a Great Place to Work.



The Honorable Herbert Dixon, Jr.
Superior Court of the District of Columbia

Dear Judge Dixon:

First of all let me thank you so much for your letter of May 14 conveying your appreciation for my service as a juror. It was very much appreciated.

Second and most importantly, I am writing to convey my sincerest thanks for having the opportunity to serve in your courtroom. This is my second jury trial at the Superior Court. My first was with Judge Wright in a civil proceeding. As with that experience, I was again completely impressed with the professionalism, commitment, and concern for the law with which you and Judge Wright conducted your courts. Your interaction with this jury, explaining matters, seeing to our needs and your clear and helpful instructions were outstanding.

I was particularly impressed with the dignified and efficient manner in which you presided over this trial. It is a tribute to you and your obvious long experience that you take the administration of justice seriously and are dedicated to ensuring fairness and impartiality prevail. You tolerated no grandstanding by any of the counsels and kept all parties focused on the business at hand despite the often depressing and difficult nature of the charges under adjudication. The manner in which you kept to the schedule was completely impressive. Your ability to continually focus our attention over such a long proceeding to the presentation of evidence that would permit us to come to a verdict was exemplary.

You may rest assured I have shared the particulars of my experience with all my friends and neighbors. It gives me great pride as a District of Columbia resident of over 30 years to find justice so well and ably served here. It is a tribute to you in particular and to your colleagues that even despite expectations of those who are uninformed, that here in the District justice can be sought and obtained in an atmosphere of restraint, sense, and dignity.

Please accept my thanks and sincere admiration.

P.S.

I also extend my thanks and special appreciation to the Deputy Clerk, **Sabrina Belt**. She was simply amazing. Her professionalism, efficiency and sparkling personality contributed in no small part to this good experience.



Kabe Reviews

I recently acted as a "Child's Best Interest" lawyer in a case before the Superior Court of DC. While this was a challenging case, it was facilitated by the efforts of two individuals working for the DC government. Those two individuals are **Courtney Hall** (Supervised Visitation Center) and **Gary Dixon** (Family Court-Social Services Division).

Ms. Hall and Mr. Dixon are both meticulous records keepers. Both are highly professional, returned calls promptly, were responsive to my requests and otherwise very helpful. Both are insightful, intelligent and deeply committed to the important work they do. Please consider this to be a request that each be formally recognized for their good work by your office. Additional contact information for each of these individuals is provided below.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Best regards,
Michael D. Tinyk, Esq.



Photos by Morgan Block

From: Miranda, Sonya
Sent: Wednesday, May 19, 2010
Subject: A compliment from a customer in the lobby yesterday afternoon

[This morning a man named] Mr. Johnson initiated a conversation with me regarding the OUTSTANDING customer service he received while waiting for his complaint to be processed. He was here a little after 5pm and wanted to share how this was his first visit to the clerk's office in almost 3 years. He states that he observed two important things upon his visit:

The first thing was the exceptional customer service he received from Deputy Clerk **Rosa Peralta** in the processing of his complaint.

The second was the frame with the recognition of **Natasha Kaliski** for outstanding customer service in the Clerk's office.

I would like to commend Ms. Peralta for consistently demonstrating exceptional customer service. She has proven that she is a leader when the time comes for her to meet the needs and challenges of the public.

If you think the public doesn't recognize what we are doing well, think again.

This was a wonderful testimony to what we are doing well .

Great Job!



Note of Appreciation

March 12, 2010

Re: **Mrs Kelly, DC**
Court Clerk.

Unfortunately I had ~~the~~ Plaintiff in a case that caused me great hardship, together with fact that Rules & procedures are often difficult to understand; **Mrs Kelly** has been tremendously helpful in walking me through this arduous process. The individual attention I feel she has given me has made me in general, hopeful that other issues in my case will work out for the best.

I sincerely hope you value the competency, professionalism, and respectful attitude Mrs Kelly has shown a litigant and I imagine to many & everyone she serves.

Please thank Mrs Kelly for me and let her know that she has made a stressful process tolerable.



Sharron Kelly

Sent: Tuesday, June 08, 2010 11:44 AM
Subject: Re: DC statute governing DUI

Thank you **Tenisha [Jiggetts]**



Your assistance is very much appreciated. Thank you for taking the time to send the DUI statute and for highlighting the provisions so that I could understand what I was reading. You would make a great teacher/professor. Thanks also for being the nicest person I have spoken to in months. It is always nice to hear a friendly voice at the other end of the line when one cold calls without knowing exactly what he is looking to find. Thank you for your kindness and patience.