

Full Court Press

Newsletter of the District of Columbia Courts

July 2011

Open To All, Trusted By All, Justice For All

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FAMILY CELEBRATION DAY 2011

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office

June 4th 2011 marked the first ever Family Celebration Day in the District of Columbia, an event held at Turkey Thicket Recreational Center to honor families who successfully reunited with their children after they were temporarily placed in foster homes or with relatives.

Present were Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton and Mayor Vincent Gray, who both expressed how much they value the accomplishments of the reunited families, and how these families now reflect positively on the community. This sentiment was echoed by Chief Judge Lee Satterfield, Family Court Presiding Judge Zoe Bush, and Child and Family Services Agency Director Debra Porchia-Usher, rounding out the list of dignitaries who spent their Saturday honoring the reunited families.

Family Celebration Day was a joint effort between the DC Superior Court's Family Court and the DC Child and Family Services Agency. Last year, over 220 children were reunified with their parents or guardians. The celebration honored the parents who worked hard to get their lives in order and make sure they could take care of their children.

While both parents and volunteers enjoyed the sentiments of the speak-



Family Court Judges Puig-Lugo, Lee, McCabe, Bush, Gray, Parker, Breslow, Fentress, and Nooter at Family Celebration Day.

Photo By Tom Feeney Jr.

ers, as well as the spread of barbeque food, it was the children and teenagers who may have had the best time at Family Celebration Day. Michael Smith, a former NBA player and Washington Wizard, ran a basketball clinic and played pick-up games with the boys and girls inside the Turkey Thicket gymnasium. The younger crowd enjoyed the moon bounce, carnival games, music played by a DJ, and entertainment from a clown. Many of the children went home with

basketballs or Wizards practice jerseys.

Judge Bush was the voice of the ceremony, introducing the guests and speaking highly of the families present. "You are proof that men and women from all walks of life are capable of turning things around, no matter how difficult the situation," said Judge Bush. "Thank you for inspiring me, and for inspiring the people around you."

Chief Judge Satterfield thanked not only the families, but the social workers, judges, and everyone else who participated in the reunification process. "Families are so important to our community, and without strong families our community would not be able to grow," Chief Judge Satterfield said. Every Family Court judge attended Family Celebration Day to echo the Chief Judge's message, although some may not have recognized them without their customary robes.

DC Family Celebration Day is an idea born out of the American Bar Association's National Family Reunification Day, which is a nationwide effort to host events that promote the reunification of families after a child has been placed in foster care. This year's event makes DC the 17th jurisdiction to host a reunification event.

See more photos at www.facebook.com/dccs.

Included in this issue:

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COURT-WIDE EMPLOYEE TRAINING DAY 2011

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office

On June 3rd the DC Courts hosted the court-wide employee training conference, a day-long event held on the John Marshall Plaza near the Family Court entrance to the Moultrie Courthouse. The theme of this year's conference was "More than a great place to work: A great place to grow," as employees from all divisions of the DC Courts came to the event in their business casual attire to listen to guest speakers, eat great food, and participate in wellness activities.

Executive Officer Anne Wicks kicked off the day by thanking everyone for attending, and encouraged employees to engage in the day's events. The first guest speaker was Theresa Robinson, who spoke about personal energy management, providing anecdotes of her own life failures and successes. Rick Bradley, now a familiar face at the DC Courts because of his popularity at Working on Wellness sessions, followed Theresa with some motivational speaking of his own. Both Theresa and Rick emphasized the need for balance between life inside and outside the courthouse buildings, and focused their advice on maintaining a routine of exercise, healthy eating, and adequate sleep. Lunch was provided, and employees, who were feeling energetic in the afternoon, wrapped up the day with Zumba.

The day's events reflected the on-going efforts made by the DC Courts to create a greater sense of awareness of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle and of finding greater work-life balance. This health-driven energy has already made a positive impact on the DC Courts while building a foundation for healthier living for court employees.



Theresa Robinson speaks to employees about work-life balance at Employee Training Day.
Photo By Tom Feeney Jr.

FAMILY TREATMENT COURT RECOGNITION CEREMONY

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office



Keynote Speaker Yvette Smith(right) congratulates the honorees on completing the program, and inspires them towards better futures.

Photo By Tom Feeney Jr.

On Friday, May 13th, the Family Treatment Court held its 12th Recognition Ceremony at the Moultrie Courthouse, honoring nine mothers for completing the 15-month-long substance abuse treatment program. Chief Judge Lee Satterfield, Family Court Presiding Judge Zoe Bush, and Deputy Presiding Judge Hiram Puig-Lugo offered congratulations to the honorees. In addressing the women, Judge Puig-Lugo said "the fact that you have made it this far is proof you can do anything in the future."

Keynote speaker Yvette Smith, a 2003 graduate of the Family Treatment Court program, spoke to the honorees about the great foundation built by the completion of the program, and recalled the jubilation of reuniting with her children. Magistrate Judge Pamela Gray followed by presenting certificates of

achievement to each proud honoree.

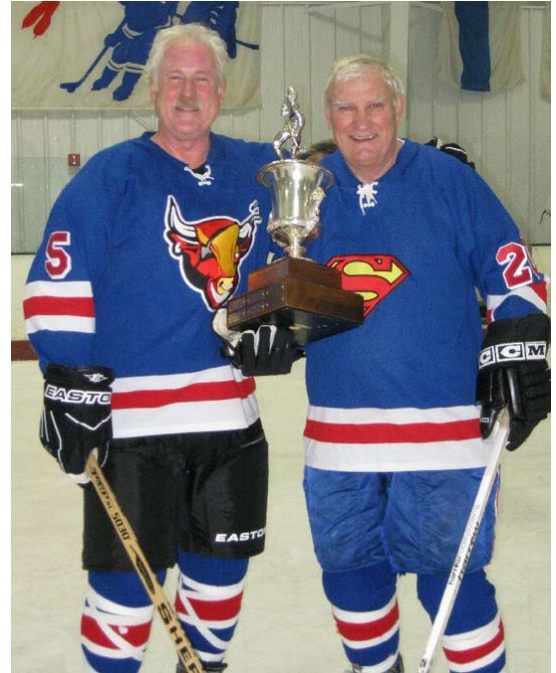
All participants in the program stipulate to allegations of neglect, and then move to a treatment facility to receive substance abuse education and treatment, relapse prevention, parenting classes, counseling, and guidance on childcare. The program allows children to remain in the care of their mothers during treatment.

JUDGES RAISE THE CUP IN HOCKEY LEAGUE

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office

Senior Judge Stephen Milliken and Magistrate Judge Frederick Sullivan took home hardware this spring, as both judges helped secure a 1-0 championship victory for their ice hockey team in a Beltsville, MD league. Judge Sullivan, a left wing, was a +1 in the championship game, contributing to the game-clinching goal. Judge Milliken, a defenseman, held down the lead and helped secure the shutout.

The judges have been teammates on the ice for over 20 years. Judge Sullivan is a longtime Boston Bruins fan and just recently watched his favorite professional club win the Stanley Cup during a season where he also won it all. Judge Milliken, who hasn't been as lucky with his professional team, the hometown Washington Capitals, had nothing but great things to say about his teammate. "Judge Sullivan is the star," Milliken said.



Judge Milliken (left) and Judge Sullivan (right) celebrate the championship victory.

CRIME VICTIMS COMPENSATION PROGRAM WINS "STRENGTHENING FAMILY" AWARD

By Laura Banks Reed, Director-Crime Victims Compensation Fund

On May 19, 2011, the D.C. Superior Court Crime Victims Compensation Program (CVCP) received the 7th Annual Violet Collins "Strengthening Families" Award from the Edgewood/Brookland Family Support Collaborative for its assistance and outreach in the community for victims of crime. Laura Banks Reed, Director of the CVCP, accepted the award for the program. Ward 6 Councilmember Tommy Wells received an award for his support of children in the community. A special posthumous award was given to the family members of the late ANC Commissioner William Myers for his dedication and support in the community.

CVCP has partnered with the Edgewood/Brookland Family Support Collaborative to identify and assist residents of the community who have been victims of violent crime seek additional services. CVCP continues to enhance services to victims by establishing close partnerships with community service providers.



CVCP Director Laura Banks Reed (right) accepts "Strengthening Program" award on behalf of program.

THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES TEAM, DR. R. TYRONE JACKSON AND MERCEDES JOHNSON

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office

Meet Dr. R Tyrone Jackson, the new Deputy Director of the Human Resources Division for the District of Columbia Courts. As Deputy Director, Tyrone will be responsible for assisting HR Director Gloria Trotman with managing personnel recruitment and retention, the performance management program, employee benefits and relations, and HR administration. He will play a key role in Ms. Trotman's initiative to create a more strategic human resources capacity from the DC Courts.

Tyrone's story begins at 17-years old, where upon graduation from Long Island City High School, Tyrone left Queens, New York to join the military. He served for 20 years, and over that time span Tyrone grew both as a professional and as an individual. He began his military career as a Personnel Records Specialist, where he was responsible for collecting and storing information about military personnel. This data helped the military easily organize and maintain personnel files, assign qualified personnel to positions, determine manpower requirements, and provide career guidance to soldiers. At that time, Tyrone was using the earliest brands of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS), the forerunner technology to today's electronic databases.

While in the military, Tyrone earned both his bachelor's degree in Business and Management from University of Maryland, and his master's degree in Human Resources Management and Development from National-Louis University. He later went on to



Dr. R Tyrone Jackson, new Deputy Director of HR.

Photo By Lou Shack

earn his Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University after completion of his military service. Tyrone's military career also allowed him to travel all over the world and particularly throughout Europe, an opportunity for which he is most grateful.

Tyrone's experience goes well beyond his military foundation. Prior to joining the DC Courts in March, Tyrone served as the Human Resources Director for the City of Richmond, Virginia. While there he helped the city streamline their standard operating procedures, as well as implement the all-encompassing strategic goals of city management. Tyrone will bring this earned and extensive HR experience to his new post, an opportunity he describes as a "unique and challenging endeavor."

In his brief time at the DC Courts so far, Tyrone said he has enjoyed working with his fellow Division Directors, calling them a "unique blend of talents." He believes that the DC Courts management provides a "collegial environment" where the employees feel empowered." He believes that HR needs to be "a partner at the table," saying that "the most valuable resource in any organization is the human resource." Tyrone said that the DC Courts leadership has embraced the importance of a well-run Human Resources Division. He envisions the division becoming a critical partner in the continuous implementation of the Courts' Strategic Plan, and a leader in aligning talent with organizational goals.

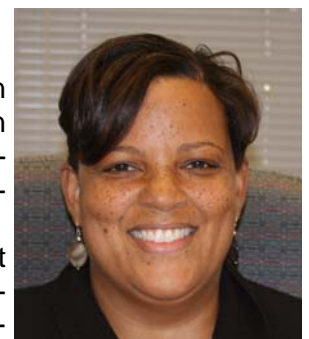
Mercedes Johnson

By Gloria Trotman, Human Resources Director

It is with great pleasure that I announce the appointment of Ms. Mercedes Johnson as the Human Resources Benefits Officer. Mercedes is returning to the DC Courts after an 11 year break where she was the Judicial Retirement/Benefits Specialist for the federal Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). While there she primarily worked with federal judiciary benefits. Her clientele ranged from Magistrate Judges to Supreme Court Justices.

Along with her extensive knowledge of judiciary benefits, Mercedes is also an expert on federal benefit programs for non-judicial employees. She was instrumental in the development, implementation, and as an instructor for the Human Resources Academy. The Academy is conducted twice yearly for AOC HR Specialists from across the nation.

I am sure that those of you who knew Mercedes in her early years at the DC Courts remember her exuberant personality and excellent customer service skills. Please join the Human Resources Division in welcoming Mercedes back home.



Mercedes Johnson, HR Benefits Officer

Photo By Brittany Williams

NEW EMPLOYEES

By Brittany Williams, Executive Office Intern

Melissa Hilario

Melissa is a recent addition to the DC Courts team as of June 2011, working as the **Webmaster** in the Information Technology Division. Melissa recently moved to Northern Virginia from Salt Lake City, Utah where she lived most her life.

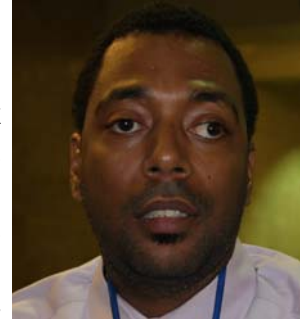


In Utah, she spent 11 years working for Fidelity National Information Services. There, Melissa eventually took on the webmaster role in addition to her regular responsibilities because she loved the work and the impact she had on the staff and clients. Melissa enjoyed being a webmaster so much, she decided to leave her job and return to school to pursue a technology degree.

Life events led her family to Northern Virginia where Melissa met the Resolvit team, and they brought her on board as a contractor to work on the internet redesign project with the DC Courts. During her time as a contractor, the Webmaster position became available and it was exactly the position Melissa was hoping to find. Melissa is excited to have the opportunity to work for a great organization in the DC Courts, and to assist the court in reaching its goals while fulfilling her career goals as well.

Eric Robinson

Eric joins the DC Courts as a **Deputy Clerk** for the Family Court. Eric is a Washington, DC native who attended Woodrow Wilson High School. He is currently pursuing a degree at the University of the District of Columbia, majoring in Finance. After the completion of his degree, Eric hopes to advance his career in the Budget and Finance Division, where he believes he can assist and excel.



Eric is a man who wears many hats. He has a diverse and distinctive list of talents, hobbies, and interests. A few of those include graphic design, composing music, golfing, and snowboarding. Since 1997 he has been pursuing the development of his own clothing line specializing in athletic apparel for both men and women. Eric sends encouragement and well wishes to all his fellow court employees.

Giselle Alba

Giselle joins the DC Courts as an **Accounting Officer** in the Budget and Finance Division. She is a native of Kansas City, KS where she received an accounting degree from the University of Kansas.



Giselle enjoys cooking, but her newfound, fast-paced lifestyle sometimes prevents her from cooking as much as she would like. She also enjoys traveling and, in the future, Giselle foresees a great and prosperous career here at the DC Courts. We are happy to have her on board!

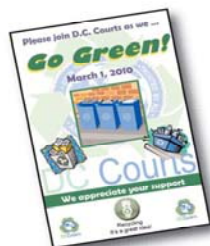
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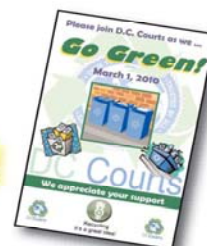
Leah Gurowitz, Editor

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Tom Feeney, Jr., Communications Assistant



Don't forget
to
RECYCLE!



SPECIAL SECURITY OFFICERS RECOGNITION CEREMONY

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office

It didn't take long on Friday, June 24, for the Special Security Officers of the DC Courts to realize that their usual 6:00am roll call was not going to be an ordinary one. When the SSO's walked into Courtroom 104, they were greeted by Chief Judge Eric T. Washington, Chief Judge Lee Satterfield, Executive Officer Anne Wicks, and Deputy Executive Officer Cheryl Bailey – not their usual welcoming committee! In the first ceremony of its kind, the D.C. Courts' leadership came to acknowledge the SSO's for their exceptional performance of duty throughout the year.

Site Supervisor Lois Epps opened the morning ceremony by honoring Special Security Officer Tyrone Cotton and Lead Special Security Officer Marvin Kyle for their leadership at the Balanced and Restorative Justice Center in Southeast and at the Social Services' probation offices in the Northeast and Northwest quadrants of the city. Chief Judge Washington presented Cotton and Kyle with certificates of appreciation.

Ms. Epps then spoke highly of seven officers for their response to a test performed by the U.S. Marshals Service. LSSO Aubrey Clare, SSO Robert Montgillion, LSSO Wendell Barnes, SSO Vonnie Claytor, LSSO James Clinton, SSO Robert Ribbon, and SSO Tillmon Shaw responded swiftly when a suspect left a backpack with simulated explosives near the entrance of each of the four court buildings by the x-ray machines. Chief Judge Satterfield rewarded the officers with certificates for their timely and coordinated responses to the test, which occurred during a busy time of the day.

The final two awards of the morning went to SSO George Gamble for detaining 3 subjects in the last month who were attempting to bring drugs into the



Chief Judge Eric T. Washington (right) presents award to SSO Tyrone Cotton (right) for his leadership.

Photo by Tom Feeney Jr.

courthouse, and SSO Stanley Booker for his ability to handle disorderly subjects in hearings at the Judge-in-Chambers offices. Ms. Wicks presented the two SSOs with certificates for their diligence and poise.

A second ceremony was held later in the day, where Acting U.S. Marshal Thomas Hedgepeth joined his colleagues from the morning ceremony in celebrating other SSOs for their accomplishments. Chief Judge Washington pre-

sented appreciation awards to LSSO Stephen Harvey, LSSO Tommie Crump, SSO Ira Christian, SSO Bennie Washington, SSO David Gladden, and SSO Angelita Johnson for their work at the BARJ and Probation offices in throughout the city.

Chief Judge Satterfield presented awards to LSSO Vernon Richardson, SSO Anthony Zavosky, SSO Leon Sharp for their performance in the simulated explosives test mentioned above. Soon after, Ms. Wicks presented a special award to SSO Hilton F. Ferebee for going well beyond the call of duty in assisting a judge from US District Court who was having untimely car issues outside the courthouse. His actions were graceful and exemplified the humility that the Special Security Officers strive to maintain.

Before wrapping up the ceremony, Chief Security Officer Rich Parris presented the Certificate of Excellence for Exemplary Security Service to the DC Courts to Ms. Epps. Rich described Ms. Epps as "a consummate professional who keeps the security boat on the water and on course, and does it quietly, efficiently and without fanfare." Ms. Epps was given a standing ovation by her colleagues, and was humbled by the acknowledgement and award.

Each day we see the SSOs as we enter and leave the building. This ceremony was a reminder of all they do that we don't see, and how important it is to thank them for their dedication.

COMMUNITY COURT HOLDS TOWN HALL MEETING IN WARD 7

By Michael Brown, Community Court Case Manager , Criminal Division

On Thursday, May 26, 2011, D.C. Superior Court, Councilmember Yvette Alexander, the Metropolitan Police Department's Sixth District, and its Citizens Advisory Council hosted their 4th Annual Town Hall Meeting at the Kelly Miller Middle School, in northeast Washington, D.C.

The purpose of the event was to give Ward 7 residents an opportunity to find out what their government is doing to prevent crime in their communities, provide programs and services, and enhance the quality of life in their neighborhoods. In addition, community members were given the opportunity to ask questions, express their views on different issues relating to crime, criminal justice and other community concerns.

The welcome and opening remarks were extended by Councilmember Alexander, Community Court Coordinator Michael Francis, and Andre Glosson, an 8th grader at Kelly Miller Middle School.

Linda Jo Smith, Sixth District Citizens Advisory Council chair, was the moderator for the panel presentation. The panel included Judge Bush, Judge Lopez, Judge Rigsby, who presides over the East of the River Community Court, Councilmember Alexander, Commander Contee of MPD's 6th District, and US Attorney Ron Machen.

Councilmember Alexander's presentation focused on community safety. She gave accolades to the Sixth District and emphasized how the MPD 6D notifies her office of crime trends and its officers' efforts to combat crime. She stressed the importance of victim impact statements and how they send a clear message about the community's perspective on crime and punishment. Councilmember Alexander spoke about a bill that Councilmember Catania had introduced to address issues of truancy and juvenile mental health concerns.

Commander Contee spoke next, saying he knew about 90% of the meeting attendees and most of them have his cell phone number, which speaks to the teamwork that exists in Ward 7. He said he doesn't believe in relying on statistics, because one homicide is one too many and if your car is stolen, the fact



(Left to right) Judge Jose' Lopez, Commander Robert Contee, Judge Zoe Bush, Councilmember Yvette Alexander, and Judge Robert Rigsby fill out the Ward 7 panel.

Photo by Michael Brown

that many fewer cars are being stolen is little consolation. However, in 2010, MPD's Sixth District was recognized as the best performing district in MPD, and in 2009, it was recognized for having the most significant crime reduction rate. This year in Ward 7, crime is down 2% and car theft is down by 20%.

J u d g e

Bush spoke about the commitment of Family Court judges to seeing that families have what they need to be successful. Judge Bush described a new juvenile behavioral diversion program the court has put into place. She said that juveniles experiencing depression, ADD, bipolar disorders or other behavioral and mental health issues can be referred to this new program for help. In addition, the juveniles meet with their probation officers, and therapists go to the homes to learn what factors may be driving the negative behavior and delinquency of the juveniles. Judge Bush talked about the abuse/neglect calendar where the Family Court works with the D.C. Child and Family Services Agency to see that families receive the social services they need. She emphasized that the Family Court tries, if at all possible, to work with the family and keep the child in their home if at all possible. However, a child's safety is always a priority.

Next Judge Lopez described how domestic violence has become a public health issue just like HIV, AIDS and drug addiction. Domestic violence impacts housing, employment, productivity at work, and children's ability to perform in school. The police receive about 89 domestic violence calls per day and these are from the people that are able to get to a phone. At the Court's Domestic Violence Intake Centers (one at the Moultrie Courthouse, the other at Greater Southeast Hospital), as soon as the person arrives, they can file a request for a restraining order with the court, talk to police and prosecutors, speak to a representative from the Court's Crime Victim's Compensation Program, and talk with an advocate with a nonprofit group who informs them of the services that are available.

US Attorney Ron Machen focused on the role of

WORK-LIFE BALANCE COMMITTEE WORKING FOR YOU

By Jeannie Adams, Chair, Work Life Balance Committee

The Work Life Balance (WLB) Committee has been hard at work over the past year researching work/life initiatives to assist employees in balancing the demands of home and work. Through employee participation in surveys and focus groups, we gathered detailed information about our needs here at the D.C. Courts.

One big need employees identified is emergency back-up care for dependents. We are pleased to announce a new service starting this month that provides emergency care for court employees and their dependents, including children, adults and elders. You can use back-up care for children when your primary day care provider is not available. Adult care is emergency back-up home care for adults (meaning you the employee) after illness or injury that requires temporary support. Elder care services assist the employee with emergency temporary support for senior dependents—either here locally or in another state where the senior lives. Look for more details and information on registration on the intranet.

In addition, the WLB Committee recently formed subcommittees to focus on the areas of alternative work schedules (AWS), social networking, marketing, and the unique needs of courtroom clerks and court reporters. We thank everyone who volunteered for a subcommittee!

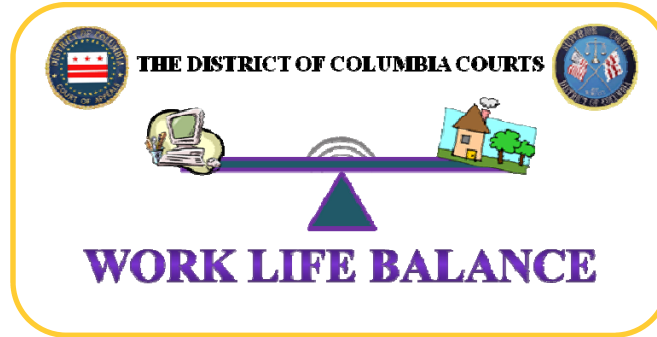
The AWS subcommittee is expanding on the research begun by the WLB Committee, which researched public and private sector telework programs

with similar job functions and the policies that support them. The Courtroom Clerks and Court Reporters' Subcommittee discussions are focused on how to create more flexibility in their schedules, particularly during judicial training days, and creating more opportunities for both groups to participate in court-sponsored wellness programs and educational seminars. The Social Networking Subcommittee is exploring activities that appeal to court employees across generations. Some ideas that have surfaced are a

book club, court choir, billiards, bowling, investment group, theater and concerts nights, sport nights, game nights, education seminars, community service opportunities, socials, and other recreational activities.

The Marketing Subcommittee has been busy creating the logo you see with this article so you can easily find information to help with your work life balance. Look for the WLB Committee home page on the intranet where you will be able to sign up to join the social networking groups, learn more about the teleworking program research and WorkLife4You.com resources, and find links to work/life balance articles, and online concierge services such as purchasing event tickets, pet sitting, home repair, floral arrangements, transportation and travel arrangements, house-sitting, car repair, etc.

Special thanks to the members of the WLB committee, Marie Robertson, Michelle Kuamoo, Wanda Starke Johnson, Jon Peterson, Karla Saguil, Rhonda Sanes Pearson, Angela Thomas, Terry Lambert, Tyrone Jackson and the subcommittees for their work on these initiatives!



Ward 7 meeting, continued from page 7

the prosecutor in combating crime. He emphasized that the US Attorney's Office cannot make a case without witnesses, so having witnesses and people willing to speak up is a vital link in the chain of addressing crime in the community. He then introduced nine of his prosecutors and highlighted the ones who prosecute only 6th District cases. There are 140 attorneys that focus only on crime in DC. They work with cases ranging from misdemeanors to homicides to rapes and other offenses as well. USAO Machen emphasized how DC's problem solving courts – such as the community court, mental health court- are quite unique in their approach and outreach to the community. Finally, he stated that his office is going out to wards to educate residents as to the importance of victim impact statements.

Judge Rigsby spoke last. As the judge who presides over the East of the River Community Court, he said he likes being in the community and meeting and talking with residents and learning from them. Judge Rigsby emphasized that in his courtroom rendering social services is a focus, as is holding individuals accountable.

SENIOR JUDGE GREGORY E. MIZE DELIVERS KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT INTERNATIONAL JURY TRIAL SEMINAR IN CHINA

By Judge Gregory E. Mize

We are proud to report to our readers that our court family is making a contribution to the improvement of justice far beyond the 69 square miles that comprise the District of Columbia. The Peoples' Republic of China recently asked one of our senior judges to assist in the improvement of that country's criminal and civil trial systems. To put this statement into context, we start with a short statement of current history.

After the fall of Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s, China slowly returned to an old idea for conducting court trials – the lay assessor system. In an effort to move away from a system of “verdict first trial second” [xianding houshen] and to battle real and perceived problems of corruption and untrustworthiness in its judicial system, the Supreme Peoples' Court of China in 1999 adopted a “Five-year Programme of the People's Courts.” Soon thereafter the National Peoples' Congress adopted the current-day lay assessor system in which thousands of lay citizens participate on judicial panels rendering verdicts in criminal, civil and administrative cases.

In a country of vast population, landscape, and millennia of history, it will take a while before China will fully refine its system for citizen participation in the administration of justice. Toward that end, the Supreme Peoples' Court of China invited D.C. Superior Court Senior Judge Gregory Mize to deliver a keynote speech at the “International Seminar on the Jury System” in Suzhou on May 12, 2011. Drawing upon his own experience as a trial judge and a judicial fellow at the National Center for State Courts, Judge Mize provided an overview of the American jury trial system to more than 100 conference delegates. His presentation included a description of how citizens are summoned for duty, selected to sit in a particular trial, and instructed on how to reach a final verdict. He summarized several current views about the strengths and shortcomings of jury trials in America. With respect to the latter topic, he described the ongoing efforts by American bench and bar leaders to improve how



Judge Mize (middle) shakes hands with two participants from the International Seminar on the Jury System.

jury trials are conducted and managed in our country (including reference to CCE's privately funded D.C. Jury Project).

The two-day International Seminar brought together Chinese judges, judicial administrators, lawyers, and law professors as well as other foreign experts from Germany, Japan and the European Union. The purpose of the seminar was to assist Chinese leaders in their efforts to further improve their lay assessor practices by means of discussing key features of the American, German and Japanese systems for involving laypersons in the administration of justice.

After many hours of seminar discussions and numerous Q & A sessions, here is how Judge Mize summed up his experience, “I believe significant segments of Chinese society see the need for their judicial system to be more independent and transparent. If for no other reason, an intelligent and unbiased lay assessor process is a basic way to bolster China's participation in global commerce where the fair enforcement of contract obligations is essential in business investment calculations. I heard several Chinese judges candidly say that China must do more to make their fellow citizens trust the judiciary. As I look back on this trip, I think I ended my keynote speech on the right note. After telling the delegates about major features of America's jury trial innovation movement, I said:

“I deeply believe that when judges and lawyers work together to improve jury trial management, when government and private sector leaders collaborate to promote those improvements, and when well planned empirical research about jury performance is conducted and widely published, then great advances can be made in the participation of lay persons in our courts.

Measurable results can include: smart use of new trial practices by judges, reduced “burden” upon jurors, fewer instances of citizen non-response to jury summonses, and a greater proportion of the population actually serving on juries. Trial jurors will also be better informed about their legal responsibilities. In other words, juror decision-making and satisfaction will be enhanced. Importantly, there is likely to be greater public trust and confidence in verdicts and the courts.”

FAMILY COURT HOLDS FIRST ALL DAY OFF-SITE STAFF TRAINING CONFERENCE

By Despina Bell-Isle, Family Court

The Family Court held its first all day off-site staff training conference on May 19. Ninety Family Court staff members and managers attended the program. The relaxed setting successfully conveyed the Family Court's message to staff: "Your contribution to the work of the Family Court is important and appreciated."

The primary purpose of the training was to give staff a clear understanding of how each person's contribution is essential to ensuring that the Court meets its many obligations, both to the children and families it serves, as well as to Congress under the Family Court Act (FCA) of 2001. The FCA, the Adoption and Safe Families Act, as well as other federal and District statutes impose specific requirements on the Court. The Court must report annually to Congress on how it meets those statutory requirements, and our ability to meet the requirements shows how successfully the Court is in meeting the needs of children and families in the District.

Various speakers presented information on many topics including discussions of particular statutes, the Court's reporting obligations, procedures

in the various branches, CourtView processes and data entry. Speakers emphasized the methods by which employees' work product goes into the formulation of the statistical reports that make up the Family Court's annual report and court-wide performance reports, as well as how that information is used to ensure that the Court is adhering to various federal statutory requirements.

Afterwards, attendees' reactions to the training were collected through an online survey. Employees stated that the training made them more aware of the impact of their work on how Congress views the Court's performance. They reported that gaining a better understanding of that relationship will encourage them to improve the quality of their work. Comments and ratings were overwhelmingly positive, with an almost unanimous response that the training met employees' needs. Participants agreed that the topics covered were relevant to their jobs, that the information would be useful in daily practice and would help them do their jobs better.

Attendees indicated that they look forward to more in-depth information in subsequent sessions on all the topics covered. Overall, the consensus graded the Family Court training an "A"!

Rave Reviews

To: Bailey-Jones, Suzanne M.
Subject: Letter of Commendation
Importance: High

Dear Ms. Bailey-Jones:

Too often, outstanding work is unnoticed. When processes are in place, and a diligent worker goes far and beyond your expectations, the tendency is to forget the dedication of your staff. With the multitude of tasks required to schedule and track ongoing, concurrent juries, it is simply a huge responsibility.

If it were not for **Ms. Antoinette Sweeney's** ability to multi-task well, her willingness to listen to jurors' concerns, and maintain her "can-do" attitude, the agency would be at a loss for one of your many professionals. I am a member of a Grand Jury and have and continue to appreciate her hard work and reliability to greatly contribute to the success of your organization.

It is my hope that these comments are factored into her next assessment and/or appropriately rewarded for an outstanding job.



Rave Reviews cont.



Dear **Mr. Stephens and Ms. Ellis,**

Thank you so much for your leadership in the Working on Wellness project/campaign for the Court. I am taking advantage of the yoga and zumba classes that have been offered this month and will continue to take advantage of this opportunity for so long as they are offered.

The teachers are excellent, the morale of the employees who are taking the courses are clearly boosted to higher levels every time we meet. Although I have only worked at the court for seven years, I dare say this is one of the best series of self-improvement trainings that has ever been offered the “rank and file” front line workers. It is simply is terrific.

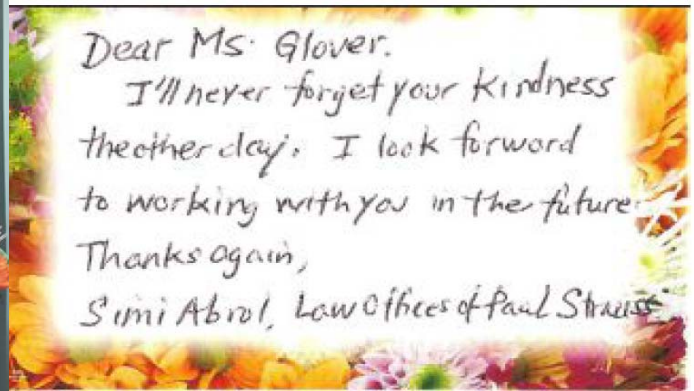


Keep up the good work as it benefits so many!

Diane Brenneman



*Patricia Glover
Clerical Section Supervisor
Landlord and Tenant Branch*



To: White, LaShaye P.
Subject: **Rosa Peralta**

Good Afternoon Ms. White.

Yesterday afternoon I dropped by the Superior Court for the District of Columbia to file a complaint I was assisted by Ms. Peralta. She was extremely accommodating and helpful. I was pleasantly surprised...



I was greeted right away upon entering room 5000. Ms. Peralta was very polite. She was very thorough and diligent when reviewing my package. When I disagreed about the need to have a summons in the package, she went back to speak to her supervisor and came back willing to explain several things to me – with a positive attitude. I was frustrated, not at her, but at having an incomplete package. She quickly explained that I could complete the forms right there (I was relieved that after such a lengthy process on our end, I didn't have to start from scratch). When she took my documents to the back for the Initial Order and Addendum to be completed, I did not have to wait long at all – the office apparently works very well together and is able to turn things around in a timely manner – at least that was my impression.

I was more than happy to complete the customer service survey because I realize how important it is to recognize someone for a job well done – offices typically only get feedback when there is a complaint or issue. I recall giving Ms. Peralta 5s across the board, because she was efficient, knowledgeable, helpful, pleasant, and professional. I also noticed that she was kind with everyone that walked in and spoke to her, even her coworkers.

I appreciated the service from Ms. Peralta yesterday, because as I explained to her, this process can sometimes be challenging, and it is always nice to have someone assist, but a positive attitude and friendly demeanor makes the difference. She is a great asset the Civil Division.

Rave Reviews cont.

To Whom it May Concern,

I would like to thank **Geneva Murphy** for the amazing effort she put in to help me with obtaining my divorce decree. I was thrilled to hear from someone and she went above and beyond to get an amended decree for me before my right to appeal expires! I would

also like to thank **Melissa Hilario** for her quick response to my initial email.



We spoke this morning and she walked me through divorce hearing processes and how the fault lies with me and my lawyer. The lawyer I obtained through a work benefit was just trying to help by providing a decree; I didn't read the decree and he didn't explain it to me so I didn't know to ask the judge to waive the right to appeal at the time. I just wanted someone there to hold my hand that day and get the hearing over as quickly as possible. After our time with the judge, my husband pointed out that we had already waived the right to an appeal. The lawyer misguided me somewhat at that time, saying I just needed to file another waiver. That is the beginning of my misunderstanding.

I really appreciate the extra effort; dealing with the DC government can be a struggle and it is nice to notice major efforts to improve that reputation in the last decade. I still believe mailing out certified copies after the divorce hearing and paperwork is finalized should be standard operating procedure; I would be willing (and assume others would be too) to pay a little extra when filing to have that happen. It could be an additional box to check on the filing forms or something, like requesting a former name to become effective. I now understand it is judge by judge, but it seems to me that it would get some people out of the system quickly.

Thanks so much for the opportunity to have this dialogue. It goes a long way.

Sincerely,
Mary T. Palmer



June 5, 2011
Dear Mr. Delgado:

I am writing to you about Ms. **Tyrene Wilson Sweetney**, who is the courtroom clerk in 120. I want you to know that she is a very hard working clerk, and she is very efficient in performing her job. Her conduct and demeanor in dealing with the attorneys, defendants and members of the public is exceptional and exemplary. In my view and experience in dealing with her, she is the best courtroom clerk.

I am requesting that a copy of this letter be placed in her personnel file.

Thanks.
Sincerely



Re: Court Reporter **Sherry Lindsay**

Dear Mr. Holland:

I would like to express my profound appreciation for court reporter Sherry Lindsay's excellent work and responsiveness in providing me with trial transcripts Ms. Lindsay served as court reporter for over half of our two-week trial. To meet my deadlines, I needed certain specific testimony to cite in post-trial motions. Ms. Lindsay took my phone calls immediately, or returned them at her earliest opportunity, regardless of the hour of the day. She knew where to find the testimony I needed and provided me with all relevant transcripts in a timely fashion.

Ms. Lindsay's flexibility, professionalism, and dedication area credit to her and the District of Columbia Superior Court. I look forward to seeing Ms. Lindsay at the court reporter's station in as many of my future trials as possible.