



Full Court Press



Newsletter of the District of Columbia Courts

October 2013

Celebrating the DC Courts 32nd Employee Recognition and Awards Ceremony

By Brandie Hancock

Staff Assistant, Committee on Admissions/Unauthorized Practice of Law

The 32nd annual Employee Recognition and Awards Ceremony was held on Thursday, September 26, 2013 in the 3rd floor atrium of the Moultrie Courthouse. Executive Officer Anne Wicks, welcomed employees and introduced Debra Swingon-Stokes, Administrative Assistant in the Executive Office, who sang a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem. Speaking for the court's Executive Team as well as personally, Ms. Wicks emphasized their shared commitment to building a strong workplace and thanked all court employees for the hard work they do every day.

It was then time to celebrate with The

Band! The Band consisted of members from across the court system including: Jonathan Hopkins, José Idler, Anthony Jackson Terry Lambert, Marion Swingler, Debra Swingon-Stokes and Brenda Young. Their first number was "Celebrate," by Kool and the Gang, which instantly put all in attendance in a festive mood.

Court of Appeals Chief Judge Eric Washington took the podium and emphasized in his remarks that it was a day to say thanks and honor employees for their service. He spoke of how impressed he is every day with the professionalism of court staff and encouraged

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October update from the DC Courts Executive Team: Government shutdown and thanking our employees

Government shutdown

We are relieved that the government shutdown has ended and are glad to have everyone back at work. As you know, we receive our funding from Congress and were thus directly affected by the lapse in appropriations.

We would like to thank our employees who worked so hard to continue the Courts' services to the public during the shutdown, putting in the extra effort required due to staff shortages to maintain, to the degree possible, the same level of high quality services to our community.

A question we have received is why some employees were furloughed whereas others were not. Given that we are funded by Congress, when there is a lapse in our appro-

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Happening at the Courts

Thanksgiving Food Drive
October 25-November 22

Adoption Day
November 23

Benefits Open Season
November 11- December 9

Rotational Training
December 5-6

Open Season Fair
December 5

Employee Town Hall
December 6

Michael O'Keefe sworn in to the Superior Court bench

On Friday, September 6, 2013, Michael Kenny O'Keefe officially became Judge Michael K. O'Keefe in a ceremony attended by numerous former colleagues, clients and any number of O'Keefes (we counted 17).

Childhood friend Miriam Buhl, Pro Bono Counsel at Weil, Gotshal & Manges made brief remarks, saying that Judge O'Keefe exhibited a judicial temperament and a sense of fairness naturally and that he was a perfect fit for his new role.

White House Assistant Counsel Paige Herwig read the official commission, signed by President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry, and then Judge John Mott – before whom Judge O'Keefe had appeared many times – swore him in. Judge O'Keefe's wife Susan held the Bible while he took the oath and his brother, Dr. Robert O'Keefe, then helped him don his robe. Judge Kimberly Knowles, who had been the most junior judge, then happily relinquished that role as she escorted Judge O'Keefe to his rightful place amongst his colleagues on the Superior Court bench.

A bit of background: Judge O'Keefe is the eighth of nine children born to the late Francis and Mary O'Keefe. Due to their father's job, the O'Keefe family traveled around the world, living in Hong Kong, Paris, and Rome. After college, Judge

O'Keefe chose to settle in Washington, D.C. and worked for Senator Christopher Dodd. While working in the Senate, Judge O'Keefe attended American University's Washington College of Law.

Judge O'Keefe began his legal career as a law clerk for the Washington, D.C. firm O'Connor & Hannan (now Nossaman LLP). In 1998, Mr. O'Keefe started his solo practice handling criminal, family, and civil cases. Judge O'Keefe handled thousands of cases in D.C. Superior Court, so his face is familiar to many in the Moultrie Courthouse.



Judge Michael O'Keefe sworn in by Judge John Mott, while his wife holds the Bible.

OPEN SEASON 2013 November 11th-December 9th

The annual Benefits Open Season gives court employees an opportunity to review their health plan choices and make changes for the following year. It also allows employees who are not currently enrolled in a health plan to participate in the programs.

The following programs will be participating: 1) Federal Employees' Health Benefits (FEHB) Program; 2) Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) Program; 3) Federal Employees' Dental & Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP); and Ameritas Dental and Vision.

The DC Courts' Open Season Fair is scheduled for Thursday, December 5, 2013, in the Moultrie Courthouse Atrium from 10:00 am to 1:30 pm.

See the article on what to consider during the open season on page 7.

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Inquiries should be submitted to
Room 6680

For article submissions, please
contact José Idler

AND THE AWARD GOES TO....

Getting to know the awardees from the 32nd Annual Employee Awards Ceremony

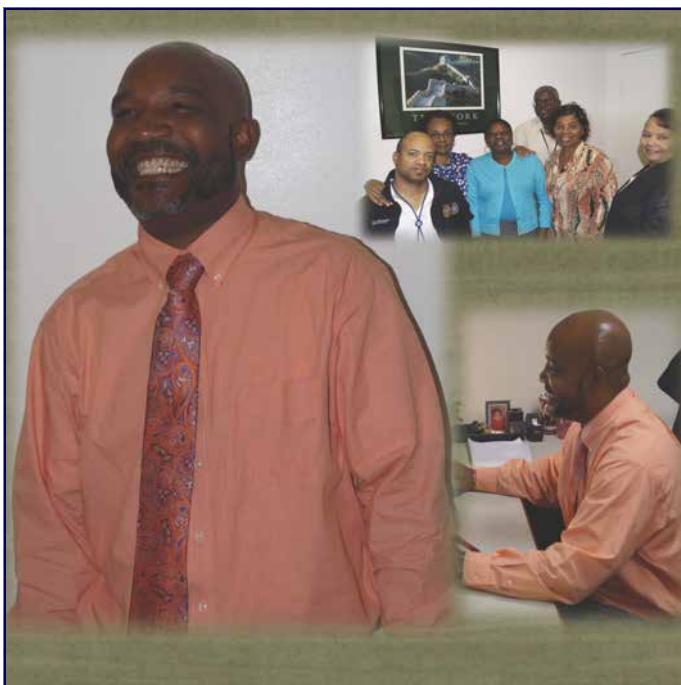
By Helena Moore, Courtroom Clerk, Criminal Division

“Great vision without great people is irrelevant,” says Jim Collins in *Good to Great*. Each year, the DC Courts recognize employees whose contributions surpass what is required or expected of them. At the recent Employee Recognition and Awards Ceremony, the Courts presented individual awards to three employees whose dedication and performance exemplify the very spirit of our mission, vision and core values. The categories were public service, management achievement and being an “unsung hero.”

SHAWN WILKINS — PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

On any given day at the Moultrie Courthouse, visitors and employees alike are greeted by the signature smile of Shawn Wilkins, stationed in the Information Center. For Shawn, exceeding expectations is routine. Whether it is devising better ways to process phone calls, collaborating with the Family Court to offer informational assistance at the main desk, or supervising summer youth interns, as the Information Center Supervisor Shawn genuinely enjoys every aspect of his job and finds occasions to practice what his grandmother taught him about how to treat others. Each visitor is greeted warmly and, if need be, the extra mile is traveled to ensure that all of their informational needs are met.

Recently, it came to Shawn’s attention that a visitor who ar-



*Shawn Wilkins and the Information Center staff
(photo by Vic Simon)*

rived at Moultrie needed to be at another DC Court building. Instead of simply giving him directions and pointing him away, Shawn discerned that the gentleman was unfamiliar with the area and opted to walk him to the proper place to make sure he got there on time. This type of service is typical for him because according to Shawn, the concept of “over and beyond” is part of his professional demeanor, which he displays every time he walks through the doors of the courthouse.

Part of what keeps him motivated to offer such excellent service is the appreciation that he receives from visitors, his staff and colleagues. Also, knowing that people can count on him is fulfilling. Shawn insists on including his awesome staff in his formula for success. He expects the best from them but “leads by example” and to that end, he offers no less.

RON BERRY – MANAGEMENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Some things we take for granted and others are a given. Each day, thousands of users depend heavily on the Information Technology (IT) systems we use, and we rely on them to function as they should. Ron Berry knows all too well how critical his job as Production Control Manager is to the DC Courts. He is directly responsible for managing, implementing and maintaining many of the IT systems that are critical to the Courts’ ongoing business operations.



Ron Berry

He not only understands his impact on operations but also the impact of his team. Knowing that few successes happen in a vacuum and that it takes team synchronization to power the effort, Ron has demonstrated his commitment to developing and encouraging his team to remain mission focused especially during projects such as the Data Center Migration, currently underway. Tight deadlines, demanding users and critical necessity define his day, but as a consummate team player these conditions do not shake him. For Ron, being excellent involves daily discipline and commitment to promoting a positive “can do” atmosphere for both himself and the team. Kudos to Ron!

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Celebrating the DC Courts 32nd Employee

Continued from front cover



Pablo Pineda receives his award from Chief Judge Eric Washington.



Ron Berry with Chief Judge Eric Washington (left) and Acting Chief Judge Frederick Weisberg (right).



The Community Service Program staff receive their award.

his colleagues on the bench to say thank you. Chief Judge Washington then presented the Unsung Hero Award to Pablo Pineda, the Courts' Access Control Manager, calling him a one-man army who provides exceptional customer service. The next award, the Management Achievement Award, went to Ronald Berry, Production Support Manager for the Information Technology Division. The Chief Judge commended Mr. Berry for his exemplary technological skills and being a consummate team player.

Judge Frederick Weisberg from the Superior Court stood in for Chief Judge Lee Satterfield to present the team Public Service Achievement Award. Although the Chief Judge wasn't in attendance, he asked that Judge Weisberg express his gratitude and appreciation for the hard work and dedication of all court employees. Judge Weisberg then presented the Community Service Program of the Community Court Office, Criminal Division, their award for exhibiting outstanding public service.

Executive Officer Wicks then presented the individual Public Service Achievement Award to Shawn Wilkins, Supervisor in the Courts' Information Office. She expressed her deep pride in his contributions and stated that he embodies the Courts' core values of accountability, excellence and integrity. She then surprised the audience by honoring Willard Stephens, chair of the Employee Recognition and Awards Ceremony Committee. Mr. Stephens, Senior Court Manager, will be retiring next spring after 42 years of service. He thanked all employees for their participation in the ceremonies but especially the committee members, whose friendship, spirit, cooperation and teamwork he said he will miss. Mr. Stephens publicly passed the baton to Darlene Ellis, Deputy Director of the Court Reporting and Recording Division, who will be chairing next year's awards ceremony.

The Band came back for another energizing number, performing "We Are Family" by Sister Sledge. They were followed by the Clerk of the Court of Appeals, Julio Castillo, who presented length of service awards to those who have dedicated 30 years to the Courts. He jokingly stated that these employees came to work straight from the crib! Clerk of the Superior Court, Duane Delaney, then honored those employees with 10 and 20 years of service. The Band's next song was a rendition of "Ain't No Stopping Us Now," by McFadden & Whitehead, which got the crowd on their feet and was the perfect ending to the ceremony. Ms. Wicks concluded by thanking Vic Simon, Eleanor Nazareno, Lou Shack, Anita Jarman, the Administra-

Recognition and Awards Ceremony

tive Services Division and the planning committee for their contributions in making the ceremony successful. From beginning to end the ceremony was engaging and encouraging, filling those in attendance with a sense of pride for being employees of the DC Courts!

*The members of the 32nd Annual Employee Recognition & Awards Ceremony Committee are: Willard Stephens, Suzanne Bailey-Jones, Crystal Banks, Fannie Barksdale, Beverly Barber, Ernest Brooks, Johnny Brown, Janice Butts, Edith Clipper, Cynthia Davis-Logan, Darlene Ellis, Kathy Holiday-Crawford, José Idler, Jeremie Johnson, Julie Klier, Alvin Milton, Eleanor Nazareno, Donna Richardson, Rhonda Sanes-Pearson, Lou Shack, Billie Smith and Debra Swingon-Stokes.



The Band!



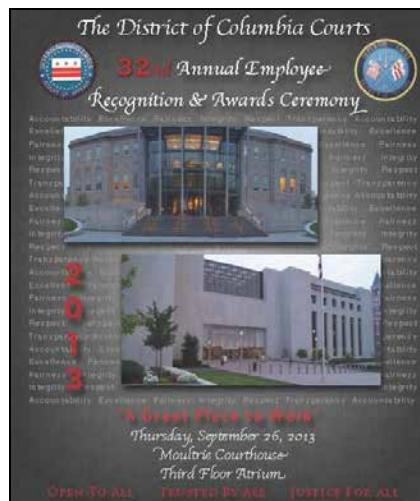
The Employee Recognition and Awards Ceremony Committee.



Willard Stephens is recognized.



Shawn Wilkins receives award from Executive Officer Anne Wicks.



Cover design by Vic Simon.

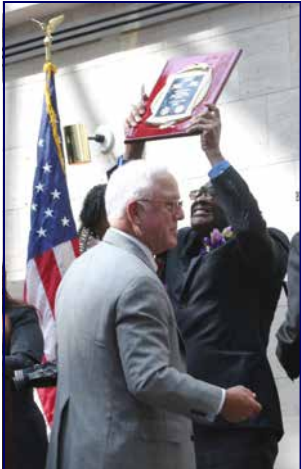


The Band closes the ceremony.

Getting to know the Community Service Program

Recipient of the Public Service Achievement Award at the 32nd Employee Awards Ceremony

In early 2012, the DC Superior Court was restructured to create six community-focused courts, each with a dedicated judge, to hear US misdemeanor cases in police districts. The new initiative called the Superior Court Citywide Community Courts followed in the wake of a positive evaluation of the city's East of the River Community Court (ERCC), which had been in operation for a decade in police districts 6 and 7. The evaluation found that the program helped reduce recidivism.



The Community Service Program (CSP) for the US Misdemeanor Community Courts was also established in early 2012 to assign community service to defendants who enter into a Deferred Prosecution Agreement (DPA) or Deferred Sentencing Agreement (DSA) in one of the Community Courts. CSP operates under the Criminal Division's Community Court Office at the Superior Court.

Receiving the award. Community Courts are neighborhood-focused problem-solving courts that seek to hold defendants accountable, address the issues and problems of defendants that may be contributing to their criminal behavior, develop creative partnerships, collaborate with a number of entities, and harness the power of the justice system to address local problems.

The US Misdemeanor Community Courts handle cases where the defendants are charged with misdemeanor offenses such as soliciting for prostitution, simple drug possession, low-level drug distribution, simple assault, unlawful entry, illegal dumping, theft in the 2nd degree, and destruction of property under \$200.

The six Community Courts, which include the 1D Community Court, 2/4D Community Court, 3D Community Court, 5D Community Court, 6D Community Court, and 7D Community Court, are based on the geographic regions marked by the City's seven police districts.

Under a DPA or DSA, the criminal defendant enters into an agreement with the United States Attorney's Office (USAO) for the District of Columbia. As part of that agreement, the defendant must perform community service and comply with

other conditions (e.g., no re-arrests, restitution, stay away order). Upon successful completion of the DSA or DPA, the USAO requests that the judge dismiss the defendant's case.

A DPA requires 32 hours of community service to be completed within a 4-month period and a DSA requires 48 hours of community service to be completed within a 6 month period. Where a defendant performs community service is usually based on the Police District area in which the offense was committed. Community service is to provide restitution or "payback" to the individual or neighborhood being harmed. Defendants perform community service through non-profit organizations and government agencies in DC that serve DC residents in various ways. Defendants, for instance, may be involved in preparing and serving meals; stocking, packing, and delivering food items; distributing clothing or performing maintenance work at shelters; clerical or administrative duties, cleaning up after special events, landscaping duties, and community clean-up.

CSP has developed well thought-out and detailed plans and processes to assign defendants to community service and see that community service is performed. Staff take their work seriously, continuously develop ideas to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the program, and are dedicated to seeing that the program helps the community, defendants, and the criminal justice system.

The CSP staff have demonstrated their wholehearted commitment to the task and they are truly deserving of receiving the team Public Service Achievement Award for their outstanding service.



From left to right: Anntinette Williams, Naquasha Moreland, Edward Rhodes, Tonia O'Bryant, Brisa Valentin and Michael Francis.

What to consider during Benefits Open Season

November 11-December 9

Even if you are completely satisfied with your current FEHB, Ameritas or FEDVIP plan, please review your 2014 plan brochure and make sure you are aware of all changes made within your plan, including changes in premiums, coverage offered, and participating providers. Please note that there is an average 3.7% increase in premiums for next year. **If you take no action, your current FEDVIP and/or FEHB will continue automatically for 2014. You will be subject to any changes in premiums and benefits.**

We have listed some basic questions to ask yourself. All are equally important and should be considered carefully.

1. What are my and/or my family's expected health care needs for 2014?

Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS)

What are my out-of-pocket expenses going to be (e.g., deductibles, copays, coinsurances, day care and elder care expenses, over-the-counter drugs and medicines [prescription required except for insulin] and other over-the-counter products)? Does my child need braces or use acne treatments? Will I send my children (under age 13) to a non-overnight summer camp next year?

Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) and Ameritas

Do I only need routine dental care? Will I need a crown or a root canal? Does my child need braces? Do I need glasses and/or contact lenses? Am I considering Lasik surgery?

Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program

Am I expecting a new baby? Do I need surgery? Will my medication needs change?



2. What benefits are available in 2014?

Now that you have an idea of what services you may need, the next step is to determine what benefits the plans provide in 2014.

FSAFEDS

Should I enroll in a dependent care account and/or a health care account? How much should I contribute to my FSAFEDS account(s)?

FEDVIP/FEHB/Ameritas

Are there plan limitations (i.e., number of visits or dollar maximums) which will result in out-of-pocket expenses? Are any services I may need (such as chiropractic care or Lasik surgery) not covered? What is my share of the cost of prescription drugs? (FEHB only) What deductibles, copays, and coinsurances must I pay? Do I have enough coverage for extensive dental work? Do I have enough coverage for glasses, exams, contact lenses, or other vision services?

3. How much will it cost?

Now that you have an idea of what services you may need and what types of benefits are provided by FSAFEDS, FEDVIP, and/or FEHB plans, the third consideration is cost. Enrolling in FSAFEDS is free to you. You just have to decide how much (from a minimum of \$250 to a maximum of \$2500 annually) to contribute from your salary, which you'll get back when you incur eligible expenses. **Look at the 2014 premiums** for the FEDVIP and/or FEHB plan you are already enrolled in or considering enrolling in. You can find the premiums in the 2014 FEDVIP and FEHB brochures, the *2014 Guide to Federal Benefits*, and visit the OPM website at www.opm.gov/insure.

For questions contact the Human Resources Division.

Appeals Coordinator's Office Closing Announcement

For over 25 years, the Appeals Coordinator's Office served as the liaison between the Superior Court and the Court of Appeals. Staff reviewed, processed and certified Criminal, Civil, Probate, and Tax, Family and Domestic Violence Unit appeals, case documents, transcripts and exhibits. With the expansion of electronic information systems and interfaces, and the Court's movement towards paperless processing, the staff functions performed were no longer necessary. On September 30, 2013, this office was closed. If you have questions about an appeal, please contact the branch office where the case started.

Herbert Rouson, Jr., Director, Special Operations Division
Anita A. Alexander, Appeals Officer, Special Operations Division

priations we can only perform those activities and functions that are “excepted” under the Antideficiency Act. Based on guidance from the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Personnel Management, the Courts’ excepted work functions are those needed in furtherance of the processing of cases and activities to protect life and property. On the other hand, “non-excepted” activities must cease, and employees who perform those functions must be furloughed.

We want to stress that all our employees are essential and, although some were furloughed because their functions legally could not be performed during the lapse in appropriations, we could not continue to operate in the long term, delivering the same high level of service to the public, without all our staff. This was a difficult time for all of us and we are glad that we have fully resumed our operations to serve the public.

Recognizing our employees

We do not want to lose sight of an important event that we recently celebrated at the Courts: the 32nd Annual Employee Recognition and Awards Ceremony. We are so proud of our employees and remain strongly committed as an organization

to maintaining a strong workforce. This is, in fact, one of the priorities in our Strategic Plan.

Thanking and recognizing everyone, in formal and informal ways, is essential to creating a strong organization. We are working under significant budgetary constraints

and one of the ways that we will continue to build a Great Place to Work is by appreciating what each of us does and recognizing a job well done, continually and repeatedly.

Finally, as we plan ahead, please join us at our next townhall scheduled for

December the 6th. This will be a great opportunity to interact with court leadership, receive updates and raise your questions. Information with the logistical details will be forthcoming.

Thanks again for everything you do.

DC Courts Executive Team

*Anne B. Wicks, Executive Officer
Cheryl Bailey, Deputy Executive Officer
Julio Castillo, Clerk of the Court of Appeals
Duane Delaney, Clerk of the Superior Court*



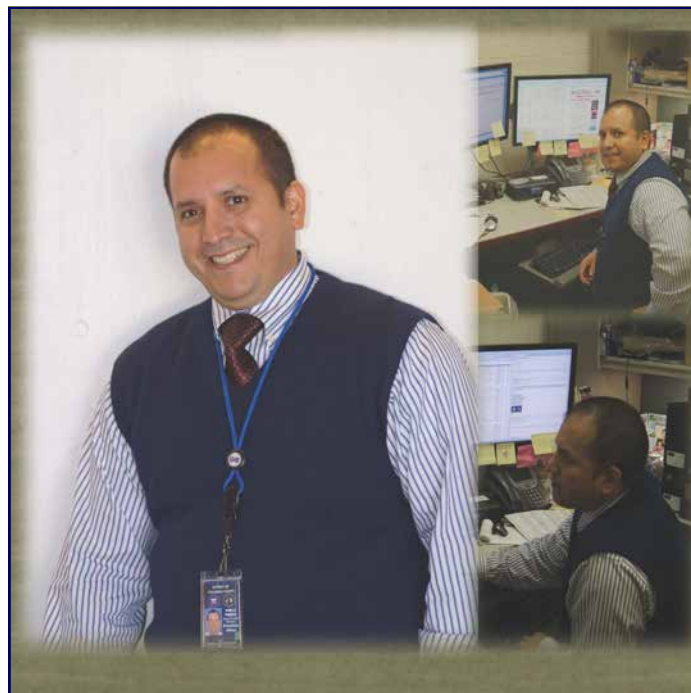
DC Courts Executive Team (from left to right): Court of Appeals Clerk Julio Castillo, Executive Officer Anne Wicks, Deputy Executive Officer Cheryl Bailey and Superior Court Clerk Duane Delaney.

Employee awards article continued from page 3

PABLO PINEDA – UNSUNG HERO

This year’s recipient of the Unsung Hero Award is Pablo Pineda, Access Control Manager. Pablo is responsible for a myriad of critical, daily behind-the-scenes security functions which impact all employees who enter the DC Courts buildings each day. As an army of one, he has seen each and every employee, contractor and vendor up close and can be called upon by various agencies to track any of the 10,000 -15,000 daily visitors to the six court buildings. This is no small feat.

Pablo’s dedication to his job and ultimately those impacted by his function is deeply-rooted in a work ethic that was cultivated from a very young age. Pablo credits his strong work ethic to his father who modeled hard work and perseverance for him as a youngster. A lesson well learned! Today Pablo maintains that same motivation, and he is further inspired to do his very best to make his daughter proud. In Pablo’s own words, “excellence is something you can strive to achieve but it is unattainable – there’s always room for improvement.” With that in mind, Pablo doesn’t necessarily think of excellence as an end in itself: the goal is to always do your best and continue growing. His inspirational advice to others is “try to enjoy whatever you do and always take pride in it.” Pablo is truly one of DC Courts’ Unsung Heroes!



Pablo Pineda (photo by Vic Simon)