



Full Court Press



Newsletter of the District of Columbia Courts

December 2017

31st Annual DC Adoption Day Ceremony

Twenty-Six Children Join their New Families on Adoption Day

The DC Superior Court and the DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) hosted the 31st Annual DC Adoption Day ceremony on Saturday, November 18, 2017. The ceremony is designed to celebrate the joys of adoption and encourage area residents to consider adopting or fostering a child in the District's child welfare system. Twenty-six children were adopted, creating 23 new families at this year's ceremony.



NBC4's Barbara Harrison emceed the event, sharing with everyone how Adoption Day is one of her favorite days of the year. As the host of the Wednesday's Child segment on NBC4, she has a passion for children and their need to have a stable and loving home environment. Many dignitaries and VIPs attended this year's event including Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, DC Deputy Mayor HyeSook Chung, Ward 4 Councilman

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DC Court of Appeals Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby Honored by Washingtonian Magazine and National Association of Women Judges



DC Court of Appeals Chief Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby was honored twice in one week—by Washingtonian Magazine and also the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ). She

was chosen as one of *Washingtonian's* Most Powerful Women in the October issue and was also presented

the bi-annual Edna G. Parker Award by NAWJ's District Four. Washingtonian Magazine stated they chose Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby to be a part of the list because "she uses her positions on the bench and in legal associations to promote equal access to justice."

The NAWJ Edna G. Parker Award honors the late judge who was a champion for justice. According to the description of the award, "awardees are se-

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Open To All Trusted By All Justice For All

DC Superior Court Family Court Conference Addresses Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

By Kimberley Cruz

On Friday, October 27, the DC Superior Court Family Court held its 15th annual Interdisciplinary Conference. This year's topic was "The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Recognizing, Understanding, and Addressing the Problem." Superior Court Chief Judge Robert Morin and Family Court Presiding Judge

Carol Dalton opened the conference by welcoming attendees and stressing the importance of this year's topic. Attendees from across several disciplines, including judges, attorneys, social workers, and representatives from local social service agencies, enjoyed a day full of seminars and workshops dedicated to not only recognizing sexual exploitation of children, but finding solutions to address and eradicate such exploitation.



Frundt reminded attendees not to forget about the prevalent victimization of boys, despite the widely-held misconception that only girls are victims.

Following Ms. Frundt's riveting presentation, Seattle journalist and filmmaker Tim

Matsui presented an excerpt from his film, "The Long Night." The film documents one family's journey as their young teen daughter falls victim to sex trafficking. The film features interviews and firsthand accounts, both from the survivor and from her parents. The film presented a powerful example of the effect of commercial sex trafficking on the family, documenting how pervasive this problem really is. For more information on the film, visit: <http://www.thelongnightmovie.com/>.



Keynote speaker Tina Frundt, founder and Executive Director of Court-

ney's House, a local organization dedicated to helping survivors of childhood sexual exploitation, detailed her own experiences growing up as a victim of sexual exploitation, and educated the audience about the paradigms of control often involved. Ms. Frundt outlined Pimp Control, Gang Control, Male Control, and Family Control. In Ms. Frundt's experience, Family Control is beginning to emerge on a more frequent basis as children may be exploited by their own parents for financial gain. Additionally, Ms.

Following the screening, Mr. Matsui led a panel discussion that included three survivors of sexual exploitation. The panelists recounted their own experiences of becoming advocates, and emphasized the importance of not exploiting survivors' stories to bring attention to trafficking.

The conference continued throughout the day, featuring a one-act play written and performed by the youth performing arts program City at Peace. Afternoon workshops featured a variety of speakers, including attorneys, social workers, flight attendants, and doctors, all of whom are on the front lines of identifying and working with trafficking survivors. The conference concluded with an introduction to HOPE Court, the new Family Court program aimed at treating and supporting childhood victims of sexual exploitation.

DC Court of Appeals Swearing-In Ceremony

By Herbert Rouson, Jr.

Monday, December 4, 2017 marked a historic day at the DC Court of Appeals (DCCA). The DCCA admitted in excess of 600 new lawyers to the DC Bar – the most ever in a single day. Since the DCCA's adoption of the Uniform Bar Exam format in March 2016, applications for membership to the DC Bar have grown exponentially. In July 2017, nearly 1,200 candidates sat for the bar exam. With an overall pass rate of 72%, the DCCA's Committee on Admissions & Unauthorized Practice of Law staff, under the leadership of its new Director, Ms. Shela O. Shanks, quickly mobilized to begin the herculean task of certifying in excess of 800 successful examinees to be sworn-in. The December 4th ceremonies marked the culmination of those efforts, as Court of Appeals judges, including Associate Judge Gerald Fisher, Associate Judge Phyllis Thompson, and Senior Judge John Steadman, welcomed the newest members to the DC Bar. In her welcoming remarks, Judge Thompson gave a brief history of how the DCCA was established, and reminded the new attorneys to revel in

this "significant and momentous occasion." Moreover, she encouraged the new admittees to protect what they had achieved, to be mindful of the need for lawyers to serve the residents of DC through pro bono service, and to take advantage of the many training opportunities that the DC Bar provides. As attendance swelled beyond the ceremonial courtroom's capacity, family members and friends watched with great pride as the ceremonies were streamed live in two standing-room-only overflow rooms. Congratulations to the newest members of the DC Bar!



eOPF Link Update

Have you checked your eOPF lately? The eOPF is an electronic version of employee's Official Personnel Folder and contains all the official records required to document your government career.

What is in my eOPF?

- Personnel actions throughout your government career
- Beneficiary forms
- Enrollment forms
- Past Performance Evaluations
- Assures continuity of operations and disaster recovery

See more on page 6

Thrift Savings Plan 2018 Contribution Information

Please review the important information below regarding employee contributions to the Thrift Savings Plan for 2018.



2018, are allowed to make additional "Age 50+ Catch-Up" contributions over the \$18,500 limit. The IRS annual limit on these catch-up contributions

Regular Contributions

The annual contribution limit is increasing from \$18,000 to \$18,500 per year to your Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) in 2018. Your regular contributions from 2017 will automatically carry over into 2018, unless adjusted. If you are already participating in TSP, you should review your current election and make changes to your 2018 contribution, if necessary. For the 2018 calendar year, there will be 27 pay periods (PPs). The limit applies to the combined total of your tax-deferred traditional and Roth contributions. If you wish to maximize your contributions in 2018, please see the instructions below.

TSP provides a "planning tool" on its website at www.tsp.gov to help calculate the amount to contribute each pay period. This tool is especially useful to help employees, under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), maximize the contributions they receive from the Courts. You may elect to increase, decrease, or stop your contributions to your TSP account at any time. Deduction changes for PP 1801, pay period ending December 23, 2017, can be made now through [Employee Express](#) by entering "12/10/2017" in the Future Effective Date field. EEX allows changes to the Effective Date up to 90 days in advance. You may also make a contribution election, by completing the [Form TSP-1, Election Form](#), and faxing it to the Human Resources Division at (202) 879-2889.

Catch-up Contributions

Employees, who are age 50 or older, including employees who will turn 50 during the calendar year

remains at \$6,000 for tax year 2018. This means that you can make catch-up contributions as long as you contribute the maximum IRS elective limit by the end of the calendar year. Therefore, if you are age 50 and over, you can contribute as much as \$24,500. Your catch-up contributions will **NOT** automatically carry over into the new year. **Very Important - If you desire to make catch-up contributions for 2018, you will need to proactively make an election change as the contributions from 2017 will not carry over into 2018.** To make catch-up contributions, complete the [Form TSP-1C, Catch-up Contribution Election Form](#), and fax it to 202-879-2889. Again, you are encouraged to make changes to your TSP catch-up contributions online using Employee Express (EEX).

Maximizing Your Contributions

If you wanted your new contribution election to begin with the first paycheck in 2018 the TSP election change (EEX or hard copy form) should have been completed and submitted by December 8, 2017. The effective date in that case was December 10, 2017, and the first withholding at the new level will be on the December 29, 2017 salary check, which is pay period #1 in the 2018 tax year. **You can, however, make changes to your contribution at any time.** To discuss options and learn how you can take advantage of the increased contribution limit for 2018, please see the contact information below.

Please also note that you now have two options for making contributions to your TSP. You can make contributions on a *Pre-tax contributions* which would reduce your taxable income for the year. These contributions and all associated earnings are then not sub-

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The DC Courts Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month takes place between September 15th and October 15th each year. The purpose of the celebration is to cherish the history, culture and contributions of American citizens whose roots are in Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.



retiree. The panelists discussed the complex dynamics of Afro-Latino culture and identity by sharing historical information as well as personal experiences.

On Friday, October 13th, the DC Courts

culminated the celebration with the CORO Awards ceremony. "Coro" means "choir" in Spanish, but the acronym has meaning as well, standing for "Community, Outreach, Recognition, Opportunity." The annual awards recognize groups and individuals who have dedicated their work to Latino residents in and around the DC community. Three awards were given as part of the CORO ceremony: the Allan Klein Award, the Community Award, and the Legal Award.

Dr. Jorge Delgado was the recipient of the Allan Klein Award. He has served the Hispanic community as an educator and community activist for the past 25 years. The Community Award was granted to the University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law's Immigration and Human Rights Clinic. The clinic was founded in 2010 and since then, Kristina Campbell, co-director and founding faculty member, has been working with students to represent indigent immigrants in the DC community, many of whom are survivors of domestic violence. In 2016, Professor Lindsay M. Harris joined the faculty and now co-directs the clinic, bringing her expertise in representing survivors of gender-based violence. The Legal Award was granted to Anne Schaufele for her work as an immigration attorney and leadership in Ayuda's Project END (Eradicating Notario Deceit).



With such a rich array of history and culture, what started out as a week-long recognition in 1968, under President Lyndon B. Johnson was expanded to 30 days under President Ronald

Reagan. The timing of the celebration is quite purposeful, since several Latin American countries celebrate their independence on September 15th; Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence on the 16th and 17th; and Columbus Day (Dia de la Raza) is observed on October 12th.

To kick off the Hispanic Heritage Month celebration, DC Courts' employees gathered in the Juror's Lounge for a salsa dancing lesson on Friday, September 15. Then on Friday, October 9th, court employees and friends gathered in the Juror's Lounge for a panel discussion on Afro-Latino culture with Dr. Ariana Curtis, Curator at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Ms. Francina Osoria from George Mason University and Mr. Roland Roebuck, a Department of Human Services

Thrift Savings Plan 2018 Contribution Information—Continued from page 4

ject to tax until you withdraw them. You can also make *Post-Tax, Roth contributions* which allow for potentially *tax-free* earnings. Also, you should remember that a TSP election to contribute a percentage of pay each pay period means a percentage of gross pay, not a percentage of net pay.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding regular or “catch-up” TSP contributions or elections, please contact Mr. Octave Ellis, Human Resources Specialist, at octave.ellis@dcsc.gov or 202-879-7584, or Mr. Dominique Davis, Human Resources Assistant, at dominique.davis@dcsc.gov or 202-879-0474.

eOPF Link Update—Continued from page 3

How do I login to eOPF?

Log-in to eOPF: <https://eopf.opm.gov/dccourts/> (New Link)

1. From the **eOPF logon** screen, click the **Request your eOPF ID**
2. Enter the last 5 digits of your SSN, last name and your date of birth
3. Click **Submit** *You will receive an email in your DC Courts email inbox with your eOPF ID*
4. Once you have received your eOPF ID via email, return to the eOPF logon screen
5. From the **eOPF logon** screen, click the **Request a New Password**
6. Enter your eOPF ID, and the last 5 digits of your SSN, last name
7. Click **Submit** *(You will receive an email with a temporary password)*

Where can I find additional information related to eOPF?

Check the eOPF [intranet announcement](#) to click on the demo - or you can access the demo directly in the link below:

http://10.4.180.139/opencms/export/emergency_information/eOPF_Demo_BasicUser.wmv

Who should I contact if I have questions?

For questions related to the DC Courts implementation, or if you have any problems using the application, please contact the eOPF Help Desk at 866-275-8518 or eopf_hd@telesishq.com.



31st Annual DC Adoption Day Ceremony—

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Brandon Todd and Principal Deputy Director of DC Child and Family Services, Heather Stowe. Family Court Presiding Judge Carol Dalton delivered remarks about the joys of creating forever families while Adoption Judge, Craig Iscoe introduced emcee, Barbara Harrison. Ms. Harrison introduced the families and delivered fun facts about the children to the audience and then announced the signing of their decrees by the judge who handled their case. This year's Adoption Day Magistrate Judges included Janet Albert, Tanya Jones-Bosier, Rahkel Bouchet, Julie Breslow, Tara Fentress and Noel Johnson. The program featured some entertainment, including musical selections and poems, and concluded with a reception for all of the families to celebrate this exciting day in their lives.

For more information about fostering or adopting in DC, call (202)-671-LOVE.

DC Courts of Appeals Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby Recognized—

Continued from front cover

lected on the basis of their outstanding achievements and accomplishments that reflect the ideals embodied in the spirit and legacy of Edna G. Parker, including honoring the notion of service performed in the District Four's region of Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia demonstrating leadership and commitment to improving or demonstrating to others the significance of leadership in furthering the cause of justice." Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby's fellow women judges, work colleagues, and supporters gathered to honor her at the awards ceremony. Also in attendance was Supreme Court Justice Sonya Sotomayor who delivered warm remarks about the Chief Judge's tenacity, grace, and dedication.

To see the full list of women in Washingtonian Magazine: <https://www.washingtonian.com/2017/10/02/the-most-powerful-women-in-washington/>

For more information about the Edna G.Parker Award: <https://www.nawj.org/blog/newsroom/post/nawj-district-four-announces-the-honorable-anna-blackburne-rigsby-as-2017-edna-g-parker-award-recipient>

Sign up for the DC Courts Alert System

The DC Courts Alert system automatically sends notifications by e-mail, cellular phone, text message, and/or land line to all registered users.

Make sure you stay tuned and receive emergency alerts on building closures, weather conditions, and network and power outages by signing up or updating your information using the link below.

<https://dccourts.onthealert.com>

CONVERSATIONS @THE CORE



2018 COURSE OFFERING

DC Courts' Center for Education and Training invites you to enrich and change your conversations and your results. We invite you to step into the unknown and discover a new way of dialogue. Join us and engage in the conversation.

ABOUT THE TRAINING

In this session, participants will learn tools and techniques to support values adoption through building better relationships at all levels by engaging in conversations focused on sharing diverse perspectives and improving outcomes. We will practice conversations through role-play to improve capability and comfort in sharing perspective, giving and receiving effective feedback, and reduce stress associated with having difficult conversations.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

All non-managerial / non-supervisor staff

DATE & WHERE TO REGISTER

REGISTER TODAY. Go to CET's online registration calendar on the intranet.

See the upcoming
dates in 2018

February 15 and 28, 2018
March 13 and 27, 2018
April 5 and 6, 2018
May 17 and 18, 2018