



Full Court Press



Newsletter of the District of Columbia Courts

June 2018

DC Courts Celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month takes place in the month of May to celebrate the rich heritage and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders living in the United States. The descendants of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders come from a broad area



that advance the cultural understanding of a diverse workforce and the appreciation for an inclusive work environment. During the AAPI month, the DC Courts hosted a variety of events to celebrate this rich heritage.

of the world, including the continent of Asia and the Pacific Islands of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. These regions include more than 50 countries and territories and hundreds of languages and ethnicities. As a court system that strives to be Open to All, the DC Courts emphasize programs and observances

'AAPIs in Public Service' Panel

To kick off the month, the DC Courts hosted an informative panel discussion entitled 'Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Public Service.' David Guo, Special Counsel to Chief Judge Anna Black-

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DC Court of Appeals Appellate Mediation Program: One Year Later

In 2017 the DC Court of Appeals introduced a new mediation program for appeals. Appellate mediation offers the opportunity for parties to resolve appeals early in the appellate process—thus saving them the time, expense and stress of an appeal—and eliminates the risk in proceeding with litigation.

Appellate mediation has had a positive impact on the Court of Appeals' caseload of civil, family, probate and administrative appeals. Any case that settles in mediation results in savings to the Court in terms of the time on appeal for that case, and the time for judges, clerks

and administrative staff to process the full appeal to decision.

Since the program began in late January of 2017, approximately 350 civil, family, probate and administrative appeals in which all parties are represented by counsel have been reviewed to determine whether they are appropriate for mediation. Cases are selected for mediation early in the appellate process in order for the parties to save the expense of transcripts, briefing and argument. Cases are mediated by experienced volun-

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May Drug Court Graduation Highlights Achievements and Welcomes Visitors

Courtroom C-10 at the DC Superior Court was completely filled for the May Drug Court graduation, which included visitors from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, local police department cadets, National Air and Space Administration employees, and members from a Bolivian delegation. Each graduation ceremony highlights the success of the most recent program gradu-



Drug Court Presiding Judge Wendell Gardner speaking to the graduates.

ates. DC's Drug Court was established in 1993 with the goal of providing participants with immediate access to substance-use treatment and the ability to receive specialized care - which includes gender-specific groups and individual and group therapy. Successful completion of the four-phase Drug Court requires group and individual counseling sessions, as well as a minimum of 12 consecutive weeks of negative drug tests.

The May Drug Court graduation was particularly exciting because May is National Drug Court Month. During the month of May, the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and its participating programs promote and educate the public on the impact that Drug Courts have in various communities across the country. With over 3,000 programs found in every state, four territories and over 20 countries, Drug Courts are changing lives all around the world.

DC's Drug Court has become a model program, attracting observers from around the world. The Bolivian delegation that attended the May Drug Court graduation had an opportunity to meet with former Drug Court Presiding Judge Gregory Jackson, as

well as current Drug Court Presiding Judge Wendell Gardner and members of the Pretrial Services Agency, to learn about the program.

During the graduation ceremony, Judge Wendell Gardner gave a warm address reminding graduates that although they made it to graduation, the battle is not

over. He reminded them of the impact of substance abuse on their lives, as well as the lives of others, and encouraged them to keep moving forward, even when they make mistakes. "Those of us who work with you don't just do this because it is our job, we do it because we care about you and want you to be successful even after you leave the program," he said.

For more information about Drug Court visit:

www.dccourts.gov/drugcourt

Employee Awards Ceremony Save the Date

Please join us at the 37th Annual Employee Awards Ceremony on:

Thursday, September 13, 2018

3:00pm

3rd Fl. Atrium (Moultrie Courthouse)

Submit a Nomination and Help Recognize a DC Courts Employee



Nominations are currently being accepted for the “Special Achievement Awards” in the upcoming 37th Annual Employee Awards Ceremony on September 13. All court employees are eligible for Special Achievement Awards, which are given in the categories of public service, management achievement, unsung hero, and technical specialist. Special Achievement Awards are an honor, as they reflect the opinion of the court community at large.

Please nominate a coworker or colleague who you believe has demonstrated exceptional public service, exhibited dependability, ability to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of court operations, and a commitment to our values of **Accountability Excellence, Fairness, Integrity, Respect and Transparency**. Similarly, think about the office that consistently provides the best public service to court customers and submit a nomination.

The deadline for submission is June 29, 2018. The nomination form is now automated so that you can easily complete the form and submit it electronically.

Please check the full description of each Special Achievement Award, the nomination form and submission instructions on the Intranet.



ACCOUNTABILITY

We take responsibility for our conduct and are answerable for our performance.

EXCELLENCE

We provide the highest quality of service in everything we do.

FAIRNESS

We are impartial in our actions, decisions and treatment of others.

INTEGRITY

We demonstrate the highest standards of ethical behavior.

RESPECT

We treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and understanding.

TRANSPARENCY

We are open in our processes and communicate our actions and decisions clearly.

DC Courts Celebrate AAPI Heritage Month

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burne-Rigsby, moderated the panel of DC Courts' judges and employees, including Superior Court Associate Judges Florence Pan and Maribeth Raffinan, as well as Special Operations Director Karla Saguil and IT Business Analysis Manager Vaidehi Koppolu.

The event opened with a short video that provided background information on the history of AAPI people in America and the cultural and professional backgrounds of the panelists. The panelists' families are from several different countries but are all considered Asian American or Pacific Islanders. They represented diverse career backgrounds that included the following areas: defense and trial attorney, prosecutor with the US Attorney's Office, and court management. Panelists gave detailed accounts of each of their career paths, including: law school preparations, parental expectations, career changes and more.

Panelists shared their advice for those starting out in public service and what factors they believe to be keys to success. They mentioned the importance of working hard and staying focused as well as taking on extra projects and volunteering.

Attendees watched a news segment that focused on societal expectations for Asian Americans, which was referred to as the 'bamboo ceiling and the sticky floor.' Panelists expounded upon the concepts discussed in the segment, including the myth of the 'model minority' which is the stereotype of a well behaved person of Asian American or Pacific Islander descent who is ex-

pected to be quiet, and make minimal waves within the spaces they occupy. A consequence of this mindset can be that AAPI people are overlooked and can experience barriers when trying to cross into the highest positions in a workplace. "I was thinking about model minority and my career, promotion of one's own achievements is something that Filipinos don't do. If you're recognized, that's great, but you don't put it out there. Although I'm American, I did fall into aspects of the roll of the 'model minority,'" Special Operations Division Director Karla Saguil acknowledged.



Panelists from left to right: Judge Florence Pan, Karla Saguil, Judge Maribeth Raffinan, and Vaidehi Koppolu.

Judge Raffinan shared how she believed there was great power and ability to overcome the myth of the model minority. "As I sit on a panel of all Asian women, I think of those who have gone before me, it helps me to think about those people. You have to figure out how to create your own person, because if you try to be anyone else or do it any other way, it's not really going to work. Soft voice or loud voice... figure out what works for you so that your voice is heard. It's certainly a challenge in every setting but with practice and confidence, we are slowly getting there."

Celebration Closes with an Asian Night Market

The final event took place on Friday, May 11 with a showcase of an Asian night market. The Jurors'



Lounge was beautifully adorned with fabrics, clothing, and other cultural representations from a myriad of AAPI countries, including China, Taiwan, India, Korea and Vietnam. A spread of delicious foods from each country completed the cultural aesthetic, giving attendees an opportunity to satisfy their taste buds with new aromas and flavors. Those who attended the event were greeted by members of the AAPI Committee who provided them with passports for their quick trip 'around the world.' At the end of their journey, they submitted their passports for an opportunity to win a prize.



DC Court of Appeals Chief Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby gave opening remarks, highlighting the importance of celebrating the different cultures that are represented within the court family. She also took the time to recognize the Committee co-chairs, Tiffany Adams-Moore (EEO Officer) and Yuan Burns (IT Director), and all the AAPI Committee members for their teamwork, dedication, and commitment in producing the AAPI events. Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby's opening statements were followed by Magistrate Judge Errol Arthur who acknowledged that events like the replica night market were an opportunity for him to

honor his own ancestors who came from India as indentured servants. The event featured Filipino and Bollywood dances, as well as an Asian American Pacific Islander version of Jeopardy.

Eleanor Nazareno recognized with the 2018 AAPI Public Service Award



Yuan Burns (left) presents the 2018 AAPI Public Service Award to Eleanor Nazareno (right).

As part of the final event, the Executive Office's Eleanor Nazareno, who recently retired from the Courts, was presented with the 2018 AAPI Public Service Award. A photo slideshow of Mrs. Nazareno's years at the Courts played in the background while committee co-chair Yuan Burns gave a summary of Eleanor's 29 years of work. She noted Eleanor's commitment to getting things done with a smile on her face and her dedication to volunteering both in and outside of the Courts. Her famous decorating ability was mentioned, a talent that was shared with many committees and events through the years. "She has set a high standard for professionalism and teamwork," Ms. Burns stated.

Executive Officer Anne Wicks gave remarks thanking the committee again as well as her own personal thoughts around Ms. Nazareno's exit. 'It's a real loss for me personally, Eleanor is the heartbeat of our office.' Closing remarks were delivered by Superior Court Chief Judge Robert Morin who shared his appreciation for learning about other people's families and history. "We are many cultures, but one Court."



DC Court of Appeals Appellate Mediation Program: One Year Later

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teer mediators who are key to the success of the program. Mediators who volunteer for the program are able to mediate challenging cases that enable them to grow as mediators, while also experiencing the personal satisfaction from assisting litigants to resolve often contentious disputes in a collaborative manner.

Surveys completed by the parties and counsel at the close of every mediation session have been overwhelmingly positive regarding the quality of the mediation process offered by the program. Parties appreciate having the opportunity to participate in a dialogue, so that they feel they have a voice in the resolution. Counsel value the flexibility offered by the program to fit the mediation process to meet the needs of the particular case. The first year of the program has more than met expectations and the second year promises even more success.



Appellate Mediation program brown bag at the DC Court of Appeals.

For more information about the Appellate Mediation program, see the DC Courts website at: <https://www.dccourts.gov/court-of-appeals/appellate-mediation>.

New eJuror System on the DC Courts Website

The DC Superior Court's new eJuror system has many helpful features designed to make the online page more user-friendly. The system now enables jurors to qualify themselves for service, defer service and/or submit requests to be excused from service (by uploading PDFs that document the need to be excused).

In addition, if jurors choose to provide their contact information, the Court can send text messages and/or emails with reminders of upcoming jury service date, notice if there is a last-minute court closure, and other important information.

The new eJuror system also allows prospective jurors to check their reporting status for the next day (to see if they need to appear or if the court calendar changed such that their service is no longer required). In addition, the system will automatically select a new date of jury service for any juror who fails to appear and will send him or her a summons indicating the new date.

The DC Superior Court constantly strives to make jury service as convenient as possible, and see that it is as infrequent as possible, for all DC residents. See the new online system on the DC Courts website at: <https://ejuror.dccourts.gov/ejuror/>

Congratulations to DC Courts Employee Who Becomes Institute for Court Management Fellow

Dr. Keith Edward Robinson, Senior Education Specialist with the DC Courts' Center for Education and Training, recently became a fellow in the Institute for Court Management's Fellows Program (ICM Fellow Program). Dr. Robinson and 28



other court professionals from across the United States and Canada took part in graduation ceremonies conducted at the Supreme Court of the United States in Washington, DC.

Asked why he chose the opportunity to take on such a rigorous challenge, Dr. Robinson said he saw the opportunity to participate in a nationally-recognized, first-rate program. According to Dr. Robinson, "the growth opportunity that the program provides is what motivated me, and the opportunity to contribute more to the courts. The program took me to a whole new level of learning about court operations, court and judicial administration, the constitution, the judicial branch of our government and the critical interplay it has with the other branches."

Achievements of this kind can equip employees to better serve the courts and the public. Dr. Robinson said he cherishes the experience and highly recommends the program, which allows employees to position themselves to succeed; and when they succeed, the Courts succeed. The principle applies not only to the ICM Fellows Program, but also to a broad range of training opportunities to equip court employees and future leaders.

The ICM Fellows Program is the only program of its kind in the United States. This professional certification program was established more than 45 years ago, in part by Chief Justice Warren Burger, in an effort to improve the management of state court administration. The intensive four-

phase educational program prepares court professionals for management and leadership positions. To progress through the program, the student must become a Certified Court Manager and Certified Court Executive, complete a Court Project Phase involving innovative research, and complete a Presentation Phase in which they lay out their findings.

Congratulations to Dr. Robinson on this achievement and for joining a unique group of 1200 court employees across the country who have attained the ICM Fellow status.



Dr. Robinson (third from left) receiving his ICM Fellow Certification awarded by Mary McQueen, President of the National Center for State Courts, Also pictured is Mr. John Meeks, Vice President of the National Center for State Courts (right), and Major General William K. Suter, Keynote Speaker, Former Clerk of the U.S. Supreme Court (Ret) (far left).

DC Courts Budget Update

As you may have noticed, we have been tightening our belts recently. This fiscal year (October 2017 – September 2018), the Courts' budget was reduced, as were budgets of many Federal agencies, and the Courts received \$9.2 million less than in the previous fiscal year.

The Courts' budget is comprised of two separate components – an operating budget and a capital budget. The operating budget funds personnel costs (salaries and benefits) and non-personnel costs such as contractual services (security, housekeeping), supplies, rent and utilities.

The capital budget is used to maintain the infrastructure (electrical upgrades, restroom improvements, general repairs) and to fund renovation/improvement projects such as the Moultrie Courthouse Addition and the new roof on the Historic Courthouse. The operating and capital budgets are separate from each other, and the Courts can't simply use funds from one account to cover expenses in the other.

Nearly three-quarters of the Courts' operating budget is for salaries and benefits; so, with lower funding this year, staff reductions were necessary to stay on budget. A hiring freeze has been in place for most of the year; contractual services have also been reduced.

For next fiscal year (October 2018 – September 2019), the President has made a similar budget recommendation, which requires freezing most of the existing vacant positions. The Courts' budget request, including additional resources to help us finance critical functions, is pending before Congress. Congress typically enacts funding laws in the fall or winter.

The Courts' leadership appreciates employees' flexibility and perseverance as we strive to cover operating expenses, maintain operations, and provide the highest level of service to our community, with fewer staff. Especially in these difficult circumstances, the public is counting on us to fulfill our mission of administering justice and to live up to our vision: Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All.

Business Casual Friday

During the summer (Memorial Day to Labor Day), some court personnel have the option to wear business casual attire on Fridays. Business casual dress is crisp, neat, and should look appropriate for work. Allowable attire for business casual day is to be determined by the Division Director, but shall be aligned with the published dress code guidelines. Because not all business casual clothing is suitable for the DC Courts' work environment, see the guidelines on the intranet to determine what is appropriate to wear on a designated business casual day.

Business Casual Friday does not apply to courtroom personnel as courtroom personnel must adhere to the highest standards of business attire. An employee assigned to work in a courtroom should wear a business suit or blazer (with a blouse or collared shirt and tie) or business appropriate dress, skirt or slacks.