New Jersey Courts

Annual Report

court year 2005-2006

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THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY JUDICIARY
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

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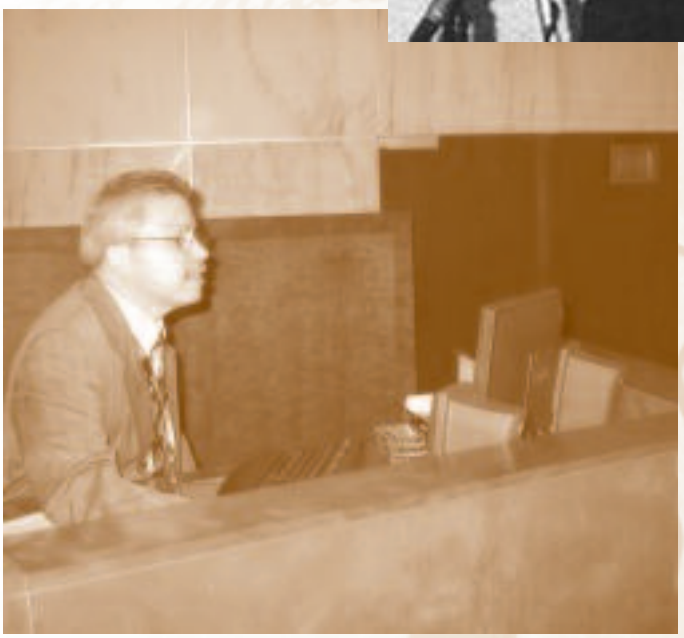

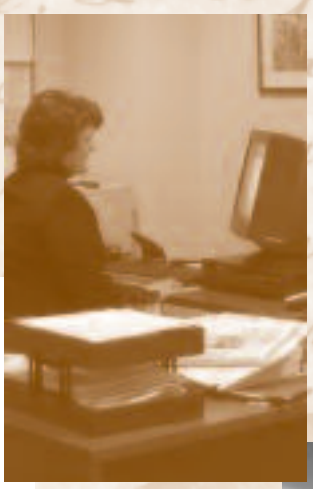

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A Letter from
Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz

I have told this story before: When I became Chief Justice, I met for the first time with all of the Assignment Judges in the conference center at the Justice Complex. As I looked across the room, I could not help but notice that I was the only woman there. I wondered then, how the "men" would react to the new "woman" Chief Justice. What I learned was that gender was not an issue, did not matter. As we worked together, as we planned and implemented court integration, as we discussed our priorities for the years ahead, I understood that those men—and later, there were women—would be both colleagues and friends, and that I would treasure our relationships and our time together.

Today we have greater diversity at every level of management throughout the Judiciary and that is good. Diversity expands the perspectives and experiences we rely on to find creative solutions to the problems that confront us and to arrive at well-reasoned, thoughtful decisions. Indeed, we have become stronger and wiser because we are more diverse and because we reflect the perspectives and experiences of the public we serve.

I am proud of all that we have accomplished in the past ten years. Judges, managers and staff, together, we have worked toward a common goal — providing a fair and efficient justice system for the people of New Jersey. I thank all of you, my judicial colleagues, the staff in the vicinages and in the Administrative Office, for your hard work and dedication. Your commitment does make a difference.

A Letter from

Acting Administrative Director Philip S. Carchman, J.A.D.

This is the final annual report we have prepared under the leadership of our Chief Justice, Deborah T. Poritz. In addition to providing an overview of our accomplishments during the past court year, this report highlights some of the longer-term goals that we have attained during her term in office.

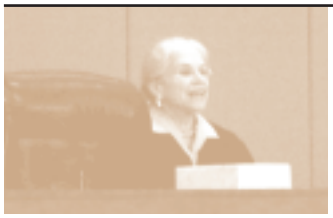
I have had the pleasure of working with Chief Justice Poritz not only as the acting administrative director of the courts, but as a judge of the Appellate Division and, before that, as the assignment judge in Mercer Vicinage. Since her first day in office, I have admired her wisdom, her intellect, and her equanimity. She joined the Judiciary just as statewide unification had begun in earnest, and she approached every challenge and every hurdle with a steady hand and a clear vision of the true goal of unification: fairness. Fairness so that no matter where in the state a court was located, its judges and staff had adequate funding to ensure a just resolution to every dispute. Fairness so that no matter in which vicinage court personnel worked, they each received equitable compensation for their contribution. Fairness so that no matter where a case was filed, the case would be resolved according to a standard set of practices and procedures.

As a jurist, Chief Justice Poritz has earned respect from the legal community for her thoughtful and well-reasoned opinions. Her commitment to upholding the law, regardless of the issue or political implications of the decision, has brought justice to thousands of litigants and maintained the tradition of judicial excellence for which New Jersey is well known.

In addition to thanking the Chief Justice for the pleasure of working with her, I want to, once again, thank our hard-working judges, Judiciary employees and staff for their commitment and dedication during the past year. One of the highlights of my past two years as acting administrative director has been my meeting and working directly with so many of the people who move the Judiciary forward toward new goals of excellence and service. As I complete the second year of my work as acting administrative director, I become more and more aware of just how fortunate I have been to work with a wide variety of talented, enthusiastic and capable people.

I invite you to read this report and to share in our sense of accomplishment.

Retirement of Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz



Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz was sworn into office on July 10, 1996. She is the first woman to serve as Chief Justice in New Jersey. Born in New York on October 26, 1936, she graduated magna cum laude from Brooklyn College. She was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow in English and American Literature at Columbia University before attending graduate school at Brandeis University. From 1967 to 1970, she taught English composition and British literature courses at Ursinus College in Collegeville, Pa.

Photo by Carmen Natale

Chief Justice Poritz received her law degree from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1977. She began her legal career in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, where she held numerous positions including deputy attorney general and assistant chief in the Environmental Protection Section. In 1982 she was named deputy attorney general in charge of appeals. From 1984 to 1986, she also served as chief of the Banking, Insurance and Public Securities Section. In 1986 she was named assistant attorney general and director of the Division of Law. She served in those positions until 1989, when she became chief counsel to Governor Thomas H. Kean.

Chief Justice Poritz left public service in 1990 and worked in private practice until 1994, when she was named attorney general by Governor Christine Todd Whitman. She was appointed Chief Justice by Governor Whitman in 1996 and reappointed by Governor James E. McGreevey in 2004 .

Landmark Opinions

The New Jersey Supreme Court has a long-established reputation for progressive thinking and individuals' rights, a tradition upheld by the "Poritz Court." Here is a brief review of some of the most notable decisions authored by Chief Justice Poritz on behalf of the Court:

Justice

State in the Interest of J.G., N.S. and J.T. 151 N.J. 565 (1997)

The Supreme Court ruled that a convicted sex offender may be required to submit to HIV testing at the victim's request. Although the defendant argued that the testing would violate the Fourth Amendment prohibition against unreasonable searches and the Fourteenth Amendment right to due process, the Court ruled that, given probable cause that the offender may have exposed the victim to HIV, the compelling interest in protecting the health of the victim outweighs the defendant's right to privacy.

N.J. Transit PBA Local 304 v. N.J. Transit Corp. 151 N.J. 531 (1997)

Defendant, New Jersey Transit Corporation, adopted a drug and alcohol testing policy that included random testing of employees responsible for safety-sensitive functions in order to comply with regulations promulgated by the Federal Transit Administration. Plaintiff New Jersey Transit PBA Local 304 challenged the constitutionality of the random testing policy. The Court held that random drug testing of Transit police officers did not violate the state or federal constitutions. As employees of a highly regulated industry responsible for safety-sensitive functions, transit union's members were subject to suspicionless drug testing when the policy was carefully drawn to protect plaintiff's members' privacy rights. In this context, the state has a compelling interest in public safety.

Planned Parenthood of Central New Jersey v. Farmer 165 N.J. 609 (2000)

The Court ruled that New Jersey's Parental Notification for Abortion Act (N.J.S.A. 9:17A-a.a to –1.12) unfairly restricted the fundamental right of a woman to choose whether to have an abortion. Because the state did not offer adequate justification for distinguishing between minors seeking an abortion (when parental notification was required) and minors seeking medical and surgical care relating to their pregnancies (when parental notification was not required), the Court held that the Act violated equal protection principles set forth in Article I, paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution.

Dale v. Boy Scouts of America 160 N.J. 562 (1999)

Plaintiff had been a member of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) since the age of eight, and had attained the position of assistant scoutmaster. The BSA revoked plaintiff's membership after a newspaper article identified him as the co-president of the Rutgers Universty Lesbian/Gay Alliance. Because the BSA is a public accommodation under the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), N.J.S.A. 10:5-51, and because BSA revoked plaintiff's membership based on his avowed homosexuality, BSA violated the LAD. Plaintiff's membership did not violate BSA's First Amendment Rights of Association because plaintiff's presence in the organization did not constitute BSA's endorsement of homosexuality. On review by the U.S. Supreme Court, this ruling was overturned.

Equally important, uniformity and standardization have helped the courts to achieve unprecedented reductions in case backlog in every practice area. Backlog refers to cases that remain open beyond the self-imposed time goals that the Judiciary has established for each case type. The reduction in the Judiciary's backlog reflects an increase in the number of cases that are resolved in a timely manner by the courts.



Retirement of Chief Justice Poritz

J.B. v. M.B.
170 N.J. 9 (2001)
A divorced couple disagreed over whether preembryos held in storage from a previous in vitro fertilization attempt could be used by the ex-husband to produce children with another woman. The court ruled that the husband's right to procreate was not lost if he was denied the opportunity to use or donate the preembryos, and that the wife could not be required to become a biological parent, with all its attendant consequences, against her will. The husband could choose to keep the preembryos in storage, or they were to be destroyed.

Toll Brothers Inc. v. Township of West Windsor
173 N.J. 502 (2002)
New Jersey's Mount Laurel line of cases obligates New Jersey municipalities to provide for low and moderate income housing in their land use planning. The Court provided a builder's remedy as an enforcement mechanism for its ruling. The Legislature enacted the New Jersey Fair Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301 to –329, which established a means for allocations of a municipality's fair share of low and moderate income housing and protection from the builders' remedy by way of certification from the Fair Housing Council. After resolution of its original Mount Laurel lawsuit, West Windsor Township let its certification lapse without building the required units of affordable housing. The developer sued the town, again seeking a builder's remedy. The Court granted a builder's remedy after finding that the Township of West Windsor had violated the New Jersey Constitution and the Fair Housing Act by preventing a realistic opportunity for development of affordable housing through its ordinances, regulations and site requirements in respect of the development of property.

New Jersey Democratic Party v. Samson
175 N.J. 178 (2002)
Thirty-five days before the general election, Senator Robert Torricelli withdrew his name as the Democratic Party's candidate for the United States Senate after having won a place on the ballot in the primary election. Plaintiffs sought to replace the Senator on the ballot with another candidate named by the Party. N.J.S.A. 19:13-20 provides an absolute right, when a candidate withdraws up until 51 days before an election, for the candidate's party to replace him or her, provided it does so 48 days before the election. The Democratic Party was permitted to place another candidate on the ballot after the deadline in order to provide the voters with a choice on Election Day. The Court determined that in the limited time remaining election officials would be able to prepare and mail absentee ballots.

Sojourner v. New Jersey Department of Human Services
177 N.J. 318 (2003)
The plaintiffs in this case asked the Court to find the Work First New Jersey Act (WFNJ), N.J.S.A. 44:10-61(a), unconstitutional because it "caps" the amount of cash assistance given to families receiving welfare, regardless of any additional children they may have. The Court found that the government cannot be required to provide additional support to families who have chosen to have additional children after entering the State welfare system.

State v. Fuller
182 N.J. 174 (2004)
A prosecutor exercised peremptory challenges to excuse two potential jurors, a minister and a Muslim (based on the individual's dress and name). The prosecutor claimed that he took exhibitions of religious devotion as an indication of lenient tendencies toward the defense, which, he argued, was a permissible basis for exclusion. The Court held that the two potential jurors were members of a cognizable group and that the prosecutor had failed to present sufficient evidence of situation-specific bias to justify the peremptory challenges.

A critical first step in building a statewide Judiciary was the equalization of funding around the state.

Raleigh Avenue Beach Association v. Atlantic Beach Club, Inc.
185 N.J. 40 (2005)
Under public trust doctrine, a private beach club could not limit the public's access to its dry sand beach area. Under the doctrine, the public must be permitted to enjoy recreational activities on the beach. The Court based its ruling on a prior long-standing public access to and use of the beach, a Coastal Area Facility Review Act (CAFRA), N.J.S.A. 13:19-1 to –21, permit issued to a condominium project that required public access to the beach, the lack of publicly owned beaches in the township, and the club's use of the beach as a business enterprise. The club was permitted to charge a reasonable fee to cover expenses for lifeguards, trash removal, and shower facilities.

Pet. For Auth. To Conduct Referendum on Withdrawal of N. Haledon Sch. Dist. v. Passaic County Manchester Reg'l High School Dist.
181 N.J.161 (2004)

The constitutional imperative to prevent segregation in New Jersey's public schools provided by Article I, paragraph 5 of the New Jersey Constitution applies to the Board of Review in the exercise of it is responsibilities under N.J.S.A. 18A:13-56(b)(4), which requires the Board to deny schools the ability to withdraw from regional districts for any reason the Board deems sufficient. In this case, withdrawal from the Manchester Regional School District by the municipality of North Haledon denied to both students remaining at the Regional District and the students from North Haledon the benefits of the educational opportunity offered by a diverse student body. The Board of Review's decision permitting a referendum on the question was erroneous as a matter of law.

Gerety v. Atlantic City Hilton Casino Resort 184 N.J. 391, 407-415 (2005)

The Court ruled that the employer's medical leave policy did not violate the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 to -49 by not providing more than 26 weeks of leave to the mother because the policy applies equally to men and women, regardless of the medical condition that necessitated the leave.

Chief Justice Poritz dissented, stating that the employer's facially neutral leave policy in this case resulted in a disparate impact on women such that gender discrimination must be found. She would hold that an employer must reasonably accommodate the women in its workforce by extending leave for pregnancy when such leave is necessary for health reasons, unless the employer can demonstrate that business necessity prevents that accommodation.

Administrative Leadership

Chief Justice Poritz has overseen the completion of the transformation of the New Jersey Judiciary into a single statewide court system. The Judicial Unification Act of 1994 initiated enormous changes in the way New Jersey's courts are managed, affecting everything from practices and procedures in the courtrooms to the job classification system used to manage the Judiciary's 9,000-strong workforce.

A critical first step in building a statewide Judiciary was the equalization of funding around the state. Because the court system previously had been funded at the county level, there were wide disparities in the resources available to manage the local courts. Facilities, staff, technology and equipment varied greatly in quality and quantity around the state. After establishing an equitable funding system, the Judiciary created staffing models to equalize the courts' human resources around the state. Today, each court vicinage has an equitable share of people and receives an equitable share of funds to meet statewide operating standards.

Chief Justice Poritz has brought a unique collegiality to the unification process, instituting a management structure that allows for input from managers and judges in every vicinage to build consensus and achieve compliance with management standards as new ideas are put forth. The Judicial Council was expanded during her tenure to include the chairs of the conferences of presiding judges for each state-level practice area—family, criminal, civil, and general equity—giving that body greater insight into the day-to-day operations of the state's courts.

As a result of this coordinated and collaborative approach, court operations around the state have become more consistent. Statewide procedures have been incorporated into the Rules of Court and in numerous operations manuals to ensure that the court staff in every vicinage is able to comply with the approved standards. Litigants are assured of receiving the same treatment no matter where they file their case, and attorneys benefit by being able to practice anywhere in the state without the confusion of disparate policies and procedures in each courthouse.

Equally important, uniformity and standardization have helped the courts to achieve unprecedented reductions in case backlog in every practice area. Backlog refers to cases that remain open

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beyond the self-imposed time goals that the Judiciary has established for each case type. The reduction in the Judiciary's backlog reflects an increase in the number of cases that are resolved in a timely manner by the courts.

Reducing backlog improves the quality of justice for those seeking relief from the courts. Most litigants have put some part of their lives "on hold" while awaiting resolution of their case. Prolonging the outcome can result in prolonged upheaval for individuals, families, and businesses. Witnesses and evidence become less effective and it becomes more difficult to pull the pieces of a case together as time passes. Therefore, the Judiciary has implemented backlog standards for virtually every case type and strives to resolve as many cases as possible within these time frames. Those cases that are not resolved within expected time goals—the backlog—receive particular attention by judges, court managers and staff members to ensure that they are being processed as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Since the Chief Justice took office in 1996, the Judiciary has reduced the overall backlog by 66 percent, from 67,829 cases on June 30, 1996, to 22,765 cases on June 30, 2006. The reduction includes a 22 percent reduction in post-indictment criminal cases in backlog. The Criminal Division has the lowest number of cases in backlog that it has had in 25 years. Also included are a 66 percent reduction in backlogged civil cases and a 47 percent reduction in backlogged special civil cases. General Equity backlog has been reduced by 72 percent during the same 10-year period. The most dramatic reductions have been achieved in the Family Division, where backlog virtually has been eliminated in some case types. From 1996 to 2006, the backlog of child abuse and neglect cases declined 81 percent and the backlog of juvenile delinquency cases declined by 96 percent. The backlog of domestic violence cases declined by 97 percent, the backlog of dissolution (divorce) cases declined by 84 percent, and the backlog of non-dissolution cases declined by 91 percent.

Since the Chief Justice took office in 1996, the Judiciary has reduced the overall backlog by 66 percent, from 67,829 cases on June 30, 1996 to 22,765 cases on June 30, 2006.

Chief Justice Poritz has led the New Jersey courts during a time of important changes in the Judiciary workforce, and she has used her authority to increase staff diversity in all parts of the Judiciary. Under her leadership, the Judiciary has implemented successful recruitment strategies as well as advanced software that makes possible in-depth statistical comparisons of the Judiciary workforce and the pool of qualified workers within reasonable commuting distance for different positions within the organization.

Diversity on the bench, as well as staff diversity, builds public trust and confidence in the Judiciary in several ways. As one of the most diverse states in the nation, New Jersey has a population that comes from a wide range of backgrounds, ethnicities and languages. The judges whose rulings affect these citizens and the court staff working in courthouses around the state should reflect that diversity. Moreover, the Judiciary is strengthened by the variety of experiences and viewpoints that its workforce, including its judges, contributes to the organization. Finally, basic fairness requires that career opportunities within the Judiciary, including leadership positions, be made available to the widest pool of qualified applicants.

In 1996, just under 28 percent of the Judiciary workforce were minority employees, which was 3 percentage points higher than the percentage of minority workers in the New Jersey job market. Ten years later, that number is just below 37 percent, which is 5 percentage points higher than the percentage of minority workers in the New Jersey job market. The increase in the percentage of management positions held by minorities and women is even more significant: In 1996, 10.5 percent of executive positions were held by minorities, compared to a qualified candidate pool that was 5.1 percent minority. In addition, 27.5 percent of executive positions were held by women, compared to their 38.5 percent share of the qualified job market. Today, the percentage of minority court executives has doubled to 20.8 percent, virtually equal to a candidate pool that is 20.9 percent minority. The percent of women court executives in the Judiciary also has almost doubled, to 50.4 percent, well above the qualified candidate pool, which is 38.5 percent female.

Chief Justice Poritz has assigned a significant number of minority and women judges to leadership roles, including presiding judge positions, in which they have responsibility for overseeing the judges in the various practice areas within a vicinage, and assignment judge positions, in which they have responsibility for overseeing the entire vicinage. The change is reflected in the most recent General Assignment Order, prepared for September 2006. During her term in office the Chief Justice has increased the percentage of minority presiding judges from 5 percent to 8.3 percent. In addition, the percentage of minority judges in the Appellate Division increased from 9.4 percent in 1996 to 11.8 percent. Similarly, the Chief Justice

has increased the percentage of women assignment judges from zero in 1996 to 40 percent, and the percentage of women presiding judges from 16.7 percent in 1996 to 28.3 percent. In addition, the percentage of women appellate judges has increased from 25 percent in 1996 to 32.4 percent.

Another important initiative in the New Jersey court system during the past decade has been the development and implementation of drug courts. The drug court program is a highly specialized team process that functions within the criminal practice area of the Superior Court to address non-violent drug-related cases. Introduced on a pilot basis in Camden and Essex Counties in 1997, the drug court pilot program depended heavily on state and federal grants. Passaic, Union and Ocean Counties began programs shortly thereafter. The early success of those programs convinced the Chief Justice and the criminal presiding judges that drug courts should be implemented statewide. The Chief Justice authorized the courts to request legislative appropriations commensurate with the projected cost of statewide drug court implementation. The funding was provided in three stages, with expansion of the drug court program to the final counties in 2004. The option of rehabilitation rather than incarceration now is available to all eligible non-violent offenders, regardless of where in the state the crime was committed. Further, since sixty-four percent of current drug court participants are minorities, drug courts help reduce racial disparity in the state's prisons.

Both nationally and in New Jersey, drug courts have revolutionized the way the justice system addresses the pervasive problem of drug abuse and crime. By acknowledging the interdependence of these two social ills, the courts have been able to devise sentencing alternatives that offer intensive treatment for substance abusers while retaining the threat of incarceration for non-compliance. Strict oversight balanced with frequent encouragement gives offenders the opportunity to recover from their addictions and regain productive lives. The program also saves money by putting funds into treatment programs, which cost less than $10,000 for six months of in-patient treatment, rather than prison, where incarceration can cost nearly $20,000 for the same period of time. In addition, drug court participants are required to find employment and pay taxes as well as court-ordered fines and, where applicable, child support.

Chief Justice Poritz also has devoted significant resources toward upgrading and improving the Judiciary's information technology systems to ensure reliability and efficiency in all of the courts' case management systems. These systems process more than four million transactions each day, and their security and reliability are critical to court operations, as well as the operations of attorneys, law enforcement agencies, human services agencies and others who rely on information stored and processed on these systems.

In 2001 the Supreme Court approved the statewide Information Technology Strategic Plan, a document to guide the Judiciary in developing and maintaining efficient and reliable computer systems to safeguard and enhance case management, information sharing, communications and other vital operations. In accordance with the plan, the Judiciary recently has completed statewide upgrades on all local and wide area networks, which enable judges and court staff around the state to share information. In addition, the Judiciary now has one statewide e-mail system, which has improved communication among judges and staff around the state.

Chief Justice Poritz also has devoted significant resources toward upgrading and improving the Judiciary's information technology systems to ensure reliability and efficiency in all of the courts' case management systems.

Another major component of the Information Technology Strategic Plan is the conversion of the Judiciary's databases from obsolete systems to newer Web-enabled ones. The municipal courts' Automated Complaint System/ Automated Traffic System (ATS/ACS) and the Civil Division's Automated Case Management System have been converted to date. Because the information stored on the newer databases can be extracted via widely used, Web-based programs, the new systems increase the Judiciary's ability to share information with other agencies as well as the public. In addition, the newer systems will enhance case management and strategic planning by enabling more comprehensive data compilation and research. Conversion of additional case management databases is underway.

After ten years in office, Chief Justice Poritz leaves the Judiciary stronger, more efficient, and better prepared to continue providing the high quality justice that has been the benchmark of the New Jersey Courts since the 1947 Constitution provided the basis for a statewide system.

Supreme Court

The Supreme Court consists of seven members who have been appointed by the Legislature to serve an initial seven-year term. After their initial term, justices may be re-appointed to serve until the mandatory retirement age of 70. Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz has served on the court since 1996. The other members of the court are Associate Justice Virginia A. Long, who was first appointed in 1999 and reappointed effective September 1, 2006; Associate Justice Jaynee LaVecchia, appointed in 2000; Associate Justice James R. Zazzali, also appointed in 2000; Associate Justice Barry T. Albin, appointed in 2002; Associate Justice John E. Wallace, appointed in 2003; and Associate Justice Roberto Rivera-Soto, appointed in 2004.

As the state's highest appellate court, the New Jersey Supreme Court decides appeals from the lower courts, including capital cases and cases in which a panel of appellate judges has disagreed on one or more issues on appeal. In addition, litigants may file a petition for certification with the Court to request that they hear their appeal. The Court may agree to hear an appeal because it presents legal issues of great importance to the public or because the issue is the subject of separate, conflicting appellate opinions. In deciding the cases that come before it, the Court interprets the New Jersey and the United States Constitution, New Jersey statutes, administrative regulations of the state's governmental agencies, as well as the body of common law.

New Jersey Supreme Court

Top row, from left to right:
Justice John E. Wallace, Jr.;
Justice James R. Zazzali;
Justice Barry T. Albin;
Justice Roberto Rivera-Soto

Front row, from left to right:
Justice Virginia A. Long;
Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz; Justice Jaynee LaVecchia.

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Annual Review

During the court year ending August 31, 2006, the Court received 1,325 petitions for certification and 1,660 interlocutory motions. The Court granted petitions for certification in 204 cases. In addition, the Court issued 95 written opinions deciding 109 appeals and one disciplinary matter.

In its administrative role as head of the state's judicial system, the Supreme Court oversees a number of standing committees comprising judges, attorneys, and members of the public. The committees make recommendations on a wide range of topics, including any proposed changes to the New Jersey Rules of Court. In court year 2006 the Court reviewed proposed changes to court rules submitted by the Civil Practice Committee, the Special Civil Practice Committee, the Tax Court Committee and the Professional Responsibility Rules Committee.

Special Committee on Electronic Recordation of Custodial Interrogations

Appointed by the Supreme Court, this committee was charged with weighing and balancing the significant public interests involved in recordation of custodial interrogations by considering the perspectives of law enforcement, defendants and the judicial system. The committee also was asked to make recommendations on when electronic recordation should be required and how legal and financial issues should be addressed. In October 2005 the Supreme Court adopted nearly all of the recommendations of the committee, including requiring electronic recordation when the interrogation occurs in a place of detention. The resulting Court Rule 3:17 (a) went into effect January 1, 2006, for homicide offenses, and will be effective January 1, 2007, for all other criminal offenses.

The Court oversees judicial education and performance and maintains authority over the Advisory Committee on Judiciary Conduct. In addition, the Court has authority over all aspects of the legal profession, overseeing the Board of Bar Examiners, the Office of Attorney Ethics, the Disciplinary Review Board and the Disciplinary Oversight Committee.

Open Captioning of Supreme Court Arguments

In May 2006 the New Jersey Supreme Court became the first court in the nation to offer open captioning of oral arguments, which are broadcast on the Web at njcourtsonline.com. Open captioning allows viewers to read a text version of what is happening on the screen. Streaming video of Supreme Court arguments has been available on the Web site since January 2005. Open captioning helps not only viewers who have hearing impairments, but also those with visual challenges. Viewers can enlarge the text, make it a different color, and make other changes to the text that will enhance readability for those who need it. Open captioning has expanded public access to the Supreme Court by giving a remote audience the tools it needs to observe justice in action at the highest level of our state courts.

Electronic Database for Attorneys

At the direction of the Supreme Court, the Supreme Court Clerk's Office has begun compiling the first statewide electronic database to manage attorney information. Their goal is to build a comprehensive database housing data on attorneys from the 19th century to the present. The information will incorporate data provided by the Office of Attorney Ethics, the Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection, the Institute for Continuing Legal Studies, the pro bono system, and other organizations. When complete, the database will allow attorneys to register and pay their annual assessment online, to enter address changes or other changes to personal information, and to verify the accuracy of the courts' records of their ethics, continuing education, payment and pro bono histories. The public will be able to use information from the database to make informed decisions in seeking legal representation from any attorney registered in New Jersey.

APPELLATE DIVISION OF
SUPERIOR COURT

The Appellate Division receives appeals from all divisions of Superior Court, the Tax Court, and the state's administrative agencies. The judges are selected from the trial bench by the Chief Justice. The Appellate bench is divided into eight parts of four or five judges, and each case is decided by a panel of two or three judges formed from one of the parts. The senior judge of each part is the presiding judge who manages the workflow for that part. The Appellate Division staff manages day-to-day operations from the Clerk's Office in Trenton, which houses case management, reporting services, library services and central appellate research functions.

The presiding judge for the administration of the Appellate Division oversees both the judicial functions and support offices. Judge Edwin H. Stern has held this position since 2004.

Judge Edwin H. Stern
Presiding Judge for Administration of the Appellate Division

In court year 2006 the Appellate Division added 6,963 appeals and resolved 6,886 appeals. On June 30, 2006, there were 6,330 appeals pending. In addition close to 1,000 motions for leave to appeal were filed.

In addition to the regular calendar of appeals, the Division offers accelerated case management of certain types of civil, criminal and family cases. The Civil Appeals Settlement Program (CASP) gives litigants the opportunity to meet in conference before oral arguments are scheduled. Cases often can be settled before argument through this program and cases that are not settled move forward with the parties focused on the issues being appealed rather than the entire case. The average time to disposition in CASP cases is much shorter than for regular appeals. Last year, CASP helped speed resolution in 473 appeals.

If the sentencing issues are the only aspect of a criminal appeal, the case may be resolved through the Excessive Sentence Program. Because of the narrow issues being addressed, appeals in this program are argued without the need for full briefing. This program speeds resolution and reduces litigation costs. There were 628 appeals disposed of through the Excessive Sentence Program last year.

Children-in-court cases such as contested custody, termination of parental rights, and child abuse and neglect are resolved on an accelerated basis as well. The processing of these appeals is overseen by a judge of the Appellate Division working with a specialized team in the Clerk's Office. Speedy resolution of 174 cases in this category helped minimize the impact of delays in litigating these matters on the children involved.

Addition of Unpublished Opinions on Judiciary Web Site

Appellate decisions are issued in the form of written opinions. "Published" opinions set legal precedent and are recorded in case law for reference in future cases. "Unpublished" opinions are specific to the case being decided and are not precedent setting. In recent years, the New Jersey Judiciary has made published opinions available on its Web site. Thereafter, published opinions are moved to a searchable database on the Rutgers University Law School—Camden Web site, where they may be downloaded free by the public. In September 2005, the Judiciary added unpublished opinions on the Judiciary Web site. Through arrangements with Rutgers, unpublished opinions also are archived on the Rutgers site. While unpublished opinions cannot be cited in future court cases, they are very important to the parties in the case, attorneys, law students and the media. In addition to providing the outcome of court cases quickly, conveniently, efficiently, and free of charge, posting unpublished opinions on the Internet builds public trust and confidence in the courts by improving public access to the workings of the appellate process.

In addition, this court year the Appellate Division began e-mailing opinions to the parties in each case. This is the beginning of the Appellate Division's initiative to utilize e-mail and the Internet to serve customers in a more efficient and effective manner.

New Locations for Appellate Division Arguments

The Appellate Division expanded the number of sites where oral arguments are held during the court year, offering a greater opportunity for local students, attorneys and members of the public to view the appellate process first-hand.

Along with Trenton, Hackensack, Morristown, and Atlantic City, appellate panels heard cases in Mount Holly, New Brunswick, Paterson and Toms River. The Appellate Division schedules arguments on the campus of Rutgers University School of Law—Newark several times per year to give law students the opportunity to attend and learn from these arguments.

Trial Courts
Family Division

New Jersey's families seek relief from the courts in a wide range of cases, including dissolution (divorce), child support, domestic violence, adoption, abuse and neglect, termination of parental rights, juvenile delinquency, juvenile and family crisis, as well as state-mandated reviews of cases where children have been placed outside the home.

Videoconferencing

The Family Division has initiated videoconferencing for Children-in-Court (CIC) cases by installing necessary equipment in Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) facilities to allow DYFS representatives to participate in court events from their offices. This arrangement reduces the time spent by DYFS caseworkers traveling to different courthouses waiting for their cases to be called. Monmouth County is the first county to participate in videoconferencing with DYFS.

Currently, the Judiciary has approximately 60 courtrooms around the state that are equipped with the technology necessary for videoconferencing. The Judiciary already uses videoconferencing for other types of court cases, including criminal matters, in which defendants participate in certain types of hearings while remaining incarcerated. In civil matters, videoconferencing saves time and travel costs associated with bringing remote witnesses to testify.

Mediation Program for Children-in-Court Cases

The most complex cases resolved in the Family Division are those involving children-in-court, where multiple parties are involved in helping the courts decide the best course of action for children whose families require state intervention. A new mediation program allows the various participants in these matters the opportunity to share information, voice concerns, identify needs and plan visitations in a cooperative atmosphere. Family Division staff members who serve as mediators are required to participate in mediation training as part of the program. Currently, 15 counties are participating in the Child Welfare Mediation pilot program.

Family Dependency Drug Court Program

The family dependency drug court program is an innovative approach to working with parents whose addictions to drugs or alcohol have inhibited their ability to parent their children safely and have caused the removal of their children from home. The program offers these parents the opportunity to overcome their addictions and regain custody of their children by combining an array of court services including drug and alcohol treatment, frequent court appearances, routine drug testing, parenting and relationship counseling, and assistance with housing and employment.

The Morris/Sussex Vicinage currently operates the state's only family drug court program, but it soon will be joined by Essex Vicinage, whose family drug court program will be implemented in the coming months. Stakeholders include the judge, the certified drug and alcohol counselor, DYFS, a law guardian (representing the interests of the child(ren)), the Deputy Attorney General (representing the State) and the parents' attorneys. This team works in concert to provide services, monitor progress, and plan the best future for the child(ren) involved. While the goal is to reunite the family within one year, additional monitoring continues after the family is reunited.

Drug Court Program Celebrates 10th Anniversary

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the New Jersey drug court program. The New Jersey Judiciary drug courts began in 1996 with pilot programs in Camden, Essex, Mercer, Passaic and Union Counties. Currently, the statewide drug court program serves approximately 2,500 participants. More than 600 participants have graduated from the program.

Courts around the country are implementing drug court programs similar to New Jersey's to address the growing problem of drug-related crimes. These programs offer a cost-effective alternative to incarceration, saving thousands of dollars annually for each participant. In place of prison, participants receive treatment for their addictions; close supervision by specially trained probation officers; frequent drug testing; job training and other rehabilitative opportunities; and the frequent and consistent support and encouragement of the drug court judge, who meets personally with each participant on a regular basis. Participants who violate the conditions of the program receive sanctions that range from increased reporting requirements to incarceration.

The success of New Jersey's drug court program can be measured in a number of ways. The retention rate for the period April 2002 through June 2006 is 69 percent, and the re-conviction rate for new indictable offenses for drug court graduates is 6 percent. Sixty-seven drug-free babies have been born to participants since 1995, and 74 parents regained custody of their children. Since the statewide program began in 2002, 96 percent of the drug tests have been negative. At the time of their graduation from the program, 92 percent of the participants were employed.

Distribution of Statewide Bail Schedules

The presiding judges of the Criminal Division and Municipal Courts have developed statewide bail schedules to assist Superior and Municipal Court judges when setting bail amounts. The schedules set ranges for bail amounts for the most frequently charged crimes and offenses. The statewide distribution of these schedules helps to ensure consistency and fairness in the bail setting process no matter where in the state the charges are initiated.

Pilot Program Offers More Choice for Litigants in "Lemon Law" Cases

The Civil Practice Division has enhanced its services with a new program for resolving "lemon law" cases, that is, cases in which consumers believe they have purchased a defective new car. The Lemon Law Pilot Program, which began on January 1, 2006, allows the parties in lemon law cases under N.J.S.A. 56:12-29 to choose which form of complementary dispute resolution (CDR) they want to use to resolve their case. By offering the parties a choice among mediation, non-binding arbitration, or voluntary binding arbitration, the program accommodates the unique needs of each case and the preferences of the parties involved. In mediation, a neutral mediator with expertise in lemon law cases facilitates negotiations between the parties in order to reach a mutually acceptable settlement. In arbitration, the dispute is heard by either one or two experienced arbitrators who then make a non-binding decision, usually on the same day the case is heard. In voluntary binding arbitration, the parties sign a written agreement to abide by the decision of a two-member arbitration panel. A retired Superior Court judge also hears the case, but only becomes involved if the arbitrators do not agree.

Special Civil Part Receives One Millionth Electronic Filing

In November 2005, the Judiciary celebrated the one millionth filing via JEFIS, the Judiciary Electronic Filing and Imaging System. Using JEFIS, participating attorneys can use the Internet to file DC docket type special civil part cases, which are civil cases involving damages of less than $15,000. The cases are docketed automatically, initiating the necessary notices, all of which also are sent electronically. Electronic filing eliminates the need for court staff to enter case information into the Judiciary's Automated Case Management System, resulting in greater efficiency and fewer clerical errors at critical points in the case processing system. JEFIS saves attorneys time, effort and cost in delivering documents to the courts. These savings can in turn be passed on to litigants. Statewide implementation of the electronic filing component of JEFIS was completed in October 2000. More than 120 law firms have filed electronically using JEFIS, representing about one half of cases eligible to be filed using the system. The Civil Division now is implementing the imaging component of JEFIS, which will allow documents to be managed and stored in electronic form. This "paperless" case management is available in fifteen counties, with the remaining implementation scheduled for the coming months.

Centralization of Mass Tort Litigation

New Jersey's mass tort litigation has proven successful at resolving large numbers of personal injury cases through efficiencies such as consolidated case management, standardized forms, and innovative approaches to managing discovery. Many techniques developed in the mass tort program have been adopted by other states that currently are working to resolve similar types of litigation. New Jersey pioneered the use of videoconferencing to conduct "nationwide depositions" that can be used in similar cases filed in other states, and a form developed to comply with the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) has been adopted by other courts as well.

Eleven mass torts involving products such as tobacco, lead paint and various pharmaceuticals have been consolidated for resolution in three vicinages of New Jersey Superior Court: Atlantic/Cape May, Bergen and Middlesex. A comprehensive collection of information on each of these mass torts is available on the Judiciary Web page for easy access by court staff, attorneys, and litigants, as well as interested parties involved in similar cases in other states. In May 2006, the Web site was updated to include an online manual to guide the resolution of asbestos cases in New Jersey.

Management Training Initiatives

A customer service training initiative for Civil Practice managers and supervisors has been developed to further enhance the level of service provided to attorneys and litigants around the state. Modeled after the customer service training given to staff, the program connects customer service back to strong leadership and emphasizes the role that managers play in serving the staff who serve the public. Managers are trained to inspire confidence, enthusiasm and integrity among their staff to help them provide Judiciary customers with a positive experience as they conduct their business with the courts.

In addition, a pilot program designed specifically for Civil team leaders is now in place, giving new and current team members the skills and confidence to lead staff as well as advance their careers. This two-year program combines specialized coursework with standard Judiciary training courses and a number of electives to provide leaders with information such as using statistical data as a management tool, improving written communication and making hiring decisions.

General Equity/Probate

Civil disputes involving the enforcement of rights—rather than monetary damages—are filed with the General Equity Part of the Chancery Division. These cases are often unique, but they include labor disputes, dissolution of a corporation, or even a patient's right to refuse life-sustaining medical treatments.

The conference of presiding judges has undertaken a number of projects that will better protect New Jersey citizens. Working closely with attorneys, the conference has developed proposed changes to court rules governing foreclosure matters. The new rules will tighten standards currently in place to help ensure compliance in these matters. Standardization of practices and procedures in foreclosures will give homeowners better protection against fraud and will ensure that they receive information that might enable them to meet their financial obligations and possibly save their homes from foreclosure.

Probate matters also have been the subject of the conference, which has reviewed several statutes proposed by the Legislature during the court year. A new statute allowing a pendente lite guardian in cases of temporary incapacitation will be implemented by the probate part to ensure that those suffering from an illness or accident and who may be unable to make decisions for themselves will receive the benefit of having a guardian appointed without losing their right to make decisions for themselves at a later date. Another statute protects incapacitated persons by regulating the business of professional guardians, who are now required to register with the Office of the Public Guardian.

Trial Courts

Tax court

Judge Joseph C. Small
Presiding Judge of the Tax Court

The Tax Court resolves disputes between taxpayers and local and state taxing agencies. Created in 1979, the Tax Court reviews determinations of tax assessors, county boards of taxation, and state agencies to make decisions on whether a tax has been assessed fairly. On occasion, a judge of the Tax Court may hear Superior Court cases that involves complex tax issues.

The Tax Court added 8,205 cases during court year 2006, a 12 percent increase from the previous court year. The Court also achieved a 12 percent increase in resolutions, disposing of 7,533 cases during that time period. On June 30, 2006, there were 13,120 cases pending.

Municipal Courts

The Municipal Court system in New Jersey comprises 532 local municipal courts that resolve more than six million cases annually. Cases heard in the municipal courts include parking violations; disorderly persons offenses; local ordinance matters; and traffic violations, including driving while intoxicated cases. For most citizens, their only contact with the court system occurs in a municipal court. Each vicinage has a Municipal Division that provides support and oversight to the municipal courts. The Division consists of a presiding judge-municipal courts and a Municipal Division manager who act as liaisons between each municipal court and the statewide court system. As part of this responsibility, the presiding judge and the division manager organize a visitation team to analyze operations in each municipal court and offer feedback on the various functions to help each court comply with statewide operating standards.

By far the largest number of court cases in New Jersey is filed in Municipal Court. During court year 2006 the state's municipal courts received 6,421,301 filings, a two percent increase from the previous court year. Of those, the courts received 36,705 driving

while intoxicated offenses and 2,655,019 other traffic matters. Another 205,373 filings were for indictable cases, 390,872 for disorderly and petty disorderly cases, and 244,376 were for cases involving violations of local ordinances, boating laws, hunting and fishing, and other lesser offenses. In court year 2006, the state's municipal courts resolved 6,424,832 cases.

Statewide Support for Municipal Court Information Technology Systems

New Jersey stands alone among state court systems in operating a centralized, integrated, online municipal court computer system that incorporates traffic and criminal information from every municipal court. The Automated Traffic System and Automated Complaint System (ATS/ACS) provides operating efficiencies for the municipalities as well as state agencies such as law enforcement agencies and the Motor Vehicles Commission, whose own operations are dependent on information from these systems. Access for these agencies has improved tremendously with the conversion of ATS/ACS to a new Web-enabled platform that will streamline the exchange of information in addition to enabling more sophisticated data analysis.

New Jersey also is unique in providing full information technology support to every municipal court. The Judiciary is in the process of installing new hardware into every municipal court and connecting them all to a single broadband network with access to standard software programs, enabling more efficient communication among the courts and with the Judiciary.

For the public, the Judiciary offers access to municipal courts via the Web on NJMCDirect.com. The site allows traffic and parking offenders to get information about their case and, if no court appearance is required, to plead guilty and satisfy the summons online using a credit card. More than 2 million tickets have been disposed of and more than $100 million in fines and fees have been collected using NJMCDirect since its implementation in 2003. Currently, 28 percent of all eligible tickets are processed using the Web site, which translates into greater efficiency for the municipal courts and improved access and convenience for the public.

Electronic Complaint System Now in Place

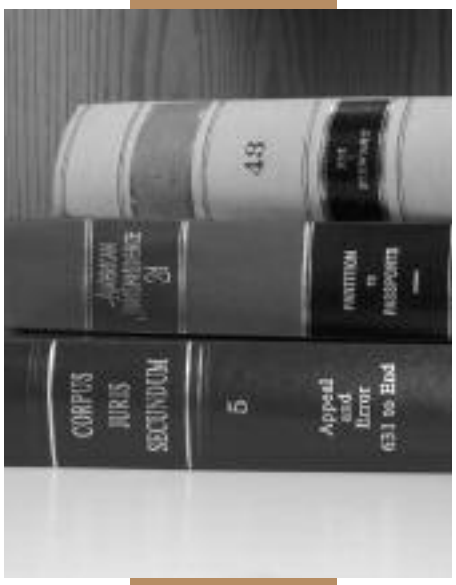
Beginning in January 2006 New Jersey's municipal courts began implementing an electronic criminal complaint system (E-CDR) that allows law enforcement personnel to generate and electronically file criminal cases through the Internet. The new system eliminates the manual filing of criminal complaints and avoids redundancies in data entry while improving the efficiency of criminal complaint processing. Currently more than 300 law enforcement agencies around the state have received training and are using the E-CDR system.

Training and Certification of Municipal Court Administrators

The Judiciary offers extensive training to municipal court administrators to ensure basic competence in all areas of court operation and to encourage excellence in the services provided by each municipal court. The training covers a wide variety of topics including standard procedures, case management, the ATS/ACS system, ethics and communications. During this court year, more than 700 municipal court administrators and staff around the state received formal training.

Administrators who have completed the coursework may go on to earn certification by passing an examination and completing a project designed to improve operations in their own municipal court. More than 450 administrators have received official certification by the New Jersey Supreme Court. On May 25, 2006, certification for municipal court administrators became mandatory when the Governor signed into law amendments to N.J.S.A. 2B:12-11. As a result, all newly appointed court administrators must now be certified within 5 years from the date of appointment.

Trial Courts
Probation Services



Adult Supervision

The Office of Probation Services has created the first statewide manual that includes all relevant information on adult supervision. Covering every topic from intake through release from supervision, the manual offers easy reference for probation officers and court staff in the field to ensure that any questions or concerns are addressed according to standardized practices and procedures. It will be made available to Probation staff online as well as in hard copy.

Efforts to standardize operations also were behind the statewide visitation program, in which representatives from the Administrative Office of the Courts join chief probation officers in observing operations and interviewing staff in each vicinage to ensure the standard and uniform delivery of services around the state. Aspects of the program reviewed through the visitation program include the organizational structure of each probation office, the intake process for new probationers, the assignment of separate caseloads for adults, juveniles, sex offenders, domestic abusers, and other groups, employment efforts to help adult probationers find jobs, incentives and support provided to juveniles to encourage their completion of high school or other education programs, referrals for psychiatric or drug treatment to eligible probationers, partnerships with other court divisions and other agencies, adequate supervision by senior probation officers, and reporting of data to appropriate offices. After initial visits were conducted in each vicinage, follow-up visits were conducted to ensure that any areas in need of improvement have been addressed. This ongoing program of visitation and evaluation ensures that the Office of Probation Services operates efficiently and cooperatively statewide.

In recent years, the Office of Probation Services has moved to an evaluation system that measures performance according to outcome-based standards such as whether probationers have met requirements for employment and payment of court-imposed fines. The new measures were made possible by statewide unification, which allowed for centralized data collection. In addition, the division enforces payment obligations for offenders whose sentences require them to pay fines or perform community services.

On June 30, 2006 the Office of Probation Services was supervising 61,370 adults and monitoring the payments and community service of an additional 58,791 clients.

Intensive Supervision Program

The Intensive Supervision Program (ISP) is an opportunity for nonviolent prison inmates to serve the remainder of their prison term in the community under strict supervision by specially trained probation officers. Both rigorous and highly structured, the program requires participants to report frequently to supervising officers, undergo frequent drug testing, adhere to tight curfews, and keep logs of their daily activities and expenditures. The program has been successful in helping participants re-enter society and avoid criminal behaviors that often lead to re-incarceration in other populations of ex-prisoners, and it saves significant resources for the state's prisons. Since the program began, more that 13,260 nonviolent inmates have been released into ISP, saving nearly $363 million in prison costs. Currently there are 1,222 participants in the program.

Juvenile Supervision

The goal of juvenile probation is to protect the safety of the community while offering youth offenders the opportunities and support they need to change destructive or self-defeating behaviors that might jeopardize their futures. Like the outcome-based standards used in adult supervision, success in rehabilitating juveniles is measured in the performance of key behaviors such as attending school or maintaining employment, paying fines, and performing community service. Parents and guardians are considered critical to the success of juvenile probationers and may be required to participate in joint counseling. In addition, juvenile probation officers give their clients the chance to benefit from social and educational opportunities outside their communities, cognitive skill development to help them develop better self-awareness and control, and social and sporting events to help them enjoy positive leisure activities. On June 30, 2006 there were 11,938 juveniles under active supervision, and another 7,629 juvenile clients were being monitored for payment of fines and performance of community service.

Juvenile Intensive Supervision

The Juvenile Intensive Supervision Program (JISP) was begun in 1996 to provide a community-based correctional alternative to detention. The program is more restrictive than traditional juvenile probation, with more stringent requirements for frequent reporting, tight curfews, community service and counseling. As with other juvenile probationers, the families of JISP participants are required to participate and to fulfill their responsibilities in helping youth achieve success in the program. Incarceration remains a possible sanction for non-compliance. Currently there are 161 participants in the program.

Comprehensive Enforcement Program

The Comprehensive Enforcement Program (CEP) enforces compliance of court ordered restitution, fines, assessments, surcharges and judgments in Superior Court. CEP also enforces compliance of court ordered community service in Superior and Municipal Courts. This enforcement of court orders maintains the respect of the public for the rule of law and the credibility of the judicial process.

Sanctions for non-compliance may include assignment to labor assistance or enforced community service programs. Other sanctions available to CEP include jail time for willful non-compliance, suspension of driving privileges, additional fines, state income tax refund offsets, civil judgments, bench warrants,

income withholding, weekly reporting requirements and/or a return of the case to the sentencing court. CEP addresses non-compliance with community service orders as well as failure to pay court-ordered financial obligations involving both adults and juveniles.

CEP also holds hearings for those individuals who fail to return a jury questionnaire or who fail to attend when they have been assigned jury duty. Individuals summoned to these hearings may be fined and rescheduled for future jury assignments.

In court year 2006, approximately, $24,394,399 of the $37,805,608 in total probation collections was received after strategies for comprehensive enforcement were implemented. More than half of the money collected by probation goes to victims of crime as direct restitution or reimbursement to the Victims of Crime Compensation Board.

Child Support Enforcement

Within the Probation Division, Child Support Enforcement is responsible for the collection of court-ordered child support and spousal support. Collections for court year 2006 totaled $1,070,679,867, a 5 percent increase over the previous year. More than 65 percent of all support that is due is paid on a current basis; New Jersey ranks ninth in the nation in this key measure of performance.

Building on previous work in the development of best practices and customer service, new procedures were approved that will enable the Probation Division to facilitate the closure of support cases where the parties agree that the children are emancipated or as a result of a status review hearing. Status review hearings also may be convened to assist in the resolution of other enforcement issues.

The Child Support Call Center for Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset Counties continues to operate effectively. During the court year, it received more than 138,000 telephone calls and was able to handle 75 percent without the need for local referral. Locally, multi-divisional pilot intake teams are now set up in several counties to meet with litigants after establishment hearings in order to obtain updated demographic information and to help them understand their responsibilities as payers or recipients of child support.

In fulfilling its mission to enforce court-ordered child support, Child Support Enforcement relies on the Automated Child Support Enforcement System (ACSES) to assist with case management activities and to initiate a number of automated enforcement mechanisms through data matches. The Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM) program, which identifies the financial accounts of people owing child support, helped the Judiciary collect $4,782,062 owed to 5,601 families during the court year. The Child Support Lien Network, which identifies insurance settlements paid to obligors, resulted in an additional $1,009,846 in collections for the court year. Finally, the National Medical Support Notice program, which links child support enforcement agencies with employers and administrators of group health plans to ensure that non-custodial parents provide health insurance for their children, has made it possible for 32,663 uninsured children to receive insurance through their non-custodial parents.

Working in conjunction with the Department of Human Services, Judiciary managers, supervisors and line staff are currently participating in the development of a replacement system for ACSES, which will facilitate greater efficiency in the establishment and enforcement process. It is anticipated that the replacement system will be implemented by January 2009.

Debit Cards Offer Convenience for Child Support Recipients

In January 2006 New Jersey began an initiative to issue child support payments electronically, rather than mailing paper checks to child support recipients. Custodial parents were asked to choose between State-issued debit cards or direct deposit into their personal bank accounts. Either option helps increase the security of their funds and improves the accessibility and timeliness of support payments. In addition, having a debit card means child support recipients in temporary housing or in a new home will still receive their payments without interruption. The debit cards are available in all counties and, as of June 2006, nearly 95 percent of all support payments were made electronically. Electronic payments also eliminate the printing and postage costs associated with checks. The savings are significant, as the child support system generates more than five million payment transactions per year.

Trial Court Filings, Resolutions and Backlog by Division

	Filings			Resolutions			Inventory (Active Cases Pending Within Time Goals)			Backlog (Active Cases Pending Over Time Goals)		
	July 2004 to June 2005	July 2005 to June 2006	percent change	July 2004 to June 2005	July 2005 to June 2006	percent change	June 2005	June 2006	percent change	June 2005	June 2006	percent change
Criminal Division												
Indictable Cases	53,762	54,671	2%	56,722	55,960	-1%	9,148	9,664	6%	4,604	4,713	2%
Municipal Appeals	1,487	1,402	-6%	1,517	1,420	-6%	338	315	-7%	176	181	3%
Post-Conviction Relief	619	762	23%	502	738	47%	158	183	16%	687	673	-2%
General Equity	5,154	5,201	1%	5,460	5,105	-7%	1,947	2,126	9%	351	337	-4%
Civil Division												
Civil	99,706	104,022	4%	106,982	99,445	-7%	76,965	81,784	6%	14,029	14,215	1%
Special Civil	466,274	502,199	8%	467,247	507,785	9%	45,720	42,219	-8%	945	1,020	8%
Probate	10,488	10,018	-4%	10,462	9,960	-5%	1,451	1,508	4%	105	121	15%
Family Division												
Dissolution	64,252	66,059	3%	64,314	66,352	3%	16,829	16,767	0%	869	601	-31%
Delinquency	72,926	66,365	-9%	73,123	66,061	-10%	4,826	5,165	7%	293	229	-22%
Non-Dissolution	156,290	158,544	1%	155,630	158,402	2%	10,510	10,635	1%	496	350	-29%
Domestic Violence	58,924	59,639	1%	59,006	59,670	1%	1,425	1,434	1%	50	41	-18%
Abuse/Neglect	4,021	4,728	18%	3,935	4,085	4%	4,586	5,214	14%	26	47	81%
Adoption	2,557	2,398	-6%	2,722	2,409	-11%	531	516	-3%			
Child Placement Review	5,855	6,181	6%	7,271	6,863	-6%	11,844	11,158	-6%	10	73	630%
Juvenile/Family Crisis	1,088	915	-16%	1,111	933	-16%	26	19	-27%	13	2	-85%
Term of Parental Rights	1,095	1,029	-6%	1,237	1,070	-14%	434	426	-2%	146	114	-22%
Criminal/Quasi-Criminal	11,499	10,812	-6%	11,436	10,842	-5%	738	734	-1%	54	38	-30%
Kinship	1,311	1,454	11%	1,285	1,474	15%	205	201	-2%	23	10	-57%
Total	**1,017,308**	**1,056,399**	**4%**	**1,029,962**	**1,058,574**	**3%**	**187,681**	**190,068**	**1%**	**22,877**	**22,765**	**0%**

Trial Court Filings, Resolutions and Backlog by County

	Filings			Resolutions			Inventory (Active Cases Pending Within Time Goals)			Backlog (Active Cases Pending Over Time Goals)		
	July 2004 to June 2005	July 2005 to June 2006	percent change	July 2004 to June 2005	July 2005 to June 2006	percent change	June 2005	June 2006	percent change	June 2005	June 2006	percent change
Atlantic	46,832	51,637	10%	44,423	45,944	3%	10,579	16,053	52%	870	1,173	35%
Bergen	74,617	76,454	2%	81,199	78,577	-3%	14,300	12,966	-9%	1,471	1,304	-11%
Burlington	47,268	48,501	3%	47,541	48,312	2%	8,602	8,712	1%	1,062	1,306	23%
Camden	78,821	78,917	0%	80,034	80,092	0%	13,836	13,079	-5%	1,408	1,403	0%
Cape May	13,681	13,704	0%	13,688	13,814	1%	2,203	2,142	-3%	191	171	-10%
Cumberland	28,337	28,678	1%	28,602	28,583	0%	4,145	4,228	2%	619	634	2%
Essex	145,465	149,727	3%	146,651	152,162	4%	28,419	26,944	-5%	2,669	2,839	6%
Gloucester	29,761	31,055	4%	29,722	30,821	4%	5,133	5,312	3%	582	630	8%
Hudson	90,043	94,642	5%	91,850	95,455	4%	14,659	14,645	0%	1,317	1,295	-2%
Hunterdon	6,900	7,250	5%	6,895	7,254	5%	1,329	1,311	-1%	128	119	-7%
Mercer	45,359	46,641	3%	44,833	47,185	5%	8,786	8,214	-7%	1,248	1,306	5%
Middlesex	75,692	78,955	4%	76,871	79,402	3%	17,135	16,793	-2%	2,843	2,765	-3%
Monmouth	66,495	66,233	0%	67,843	67,187	-1%	11,989	11,804	-2%	2,839	2,436	-14%
Morris	32,825	34,370	5%	33,010	34,539	5%	6,173	6,077	-2%	879	828	-6%
Ocean	50,104	52,762	5%	50,497	52,113	3%	8,386	9,118	9%	1,049	1,057	1%
Passaic	66,268	70,224	6%	66,121	69,959	6%	10,991	11,798	7%	1,229	1,147	-7%
Salem	11,638	12,145	4%	11,722	12,117	3%	1,421	1,458	3%	134	139	4%
Somerset	22,059	23,987	9%	22,111	23,738	7%	4,058	4,230	4%	618	665	8%
Sussex	12,574	13,004	3%	12,913	13,120	2%	1,932	1,954	1%	315	233	-26%
Union	62,134	66,569	7%	63,016	67,213	7%	12,088	11,726	-3%	1,254	1,152	-8%
Warren	10,435	10,944	5%	10,420	10,987	5%	1,517	1,504	-1%	152	163	7%
Total	**1,017,308**	**1,056,399**	**4%**	**1,029,962**	**1,058,574**	**3%**	**187,681**	**190,068**	**1%**	**22,877**	**22,765**	**0%**

Vicinages

Assignment Judges and Trial Court Administrators
Court Year 2005-2006

Vicinage 1 — Atlantic County, Cape May County

Assignment Judge	Valerie H. Armstrong
Trial Court Administrator	Howard H. Bertchtold Jr.

Vicinage 2 — Bergen County

Assignment Judge	Sybil R. Moses
Trial Court Administrator	Jon Goodman

Vicinage 3 — Burlington County

Assignment Judge	John A. Sweeney
Trial Court Administrator	Jude Del Preore

Vicinage 4 — Camden County

Assignment Judge	Francis J. Orlando Jr.
Trial Court Administrator	Michael O'Brien

Vicinage 5 — Essex County

Assignment Judge	Patricia K. Costello
Trial Court Administrator	Collins E. Ijoma

Vicinage 6 — Hudson County

Assignment Judge	Maurice J. Gallipoli
Trial Court Administrator	Joseph F. Davis

Vicinage 7 — Mercer County

Assignment Judge	Linda R. Feinberg
Trial Court Administrator	Sue Regan

Vicinage 8 — Middlesex County

Assignment Judge	Robert A. Longhi
Trial Court Administrator	Gregory Edwards

Vicinage 9 — Monmouth County

Assignment Judge	Lawrence M. Lawson
Trial Court Administrator	Marsi Perkins

Vicinage 10 — Morris County, Sussex County

Assignment Judge	B. Theodore Bozonelis
Trial Court Administrator	Michael J. Arnold

Vicinage 11 — Passaic County

Assignment Judge	Robert J. Passero
Trial Court Administrator	Kirk L. Nixon

Vicinage 12 — Union County

Assignment Judge	Walter R. Barisonek
Trial Court Administrator	Elizabeth Domingo

Vicinage 13 — Hunterdon County, Somerset County, Warren County

Assignment Judge	Graham T. Ross
Trial Court Administrator	Eugene T. Farkas

Vicinage 14 — Ocean County

Assignment Judge	Eugene D. Serpentelli
Trial Court Administrator	Richard D. Prifold

Vicinage 15 — Cumberland County, Gloucester County, Salem County

Assignment Judge	Georgia M. Curio
Trial Court Administrator	James R. Castagnoli

New Jersey Judicial Council

September 2005

Seated (left to right): Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson; Assignment Judge Eugene D. Serpentelli; Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz; Acting Administrative Director Philip S. Carchman; Assignment Judge Linda R. Feinberg

Standing (left to right): Deputy Administrative Director Theodore J. Fetter; Assignment Judge B. Theodore Bozonelis; Assignment Judge Graham T. Ross; Assignment Judge Walter R. Barisonek; Judge Ellen L. Koblitz *(Chair, Conference of Family Presiding Judges)*; Assignment Judge Maurice J. Gallipoli; Assignment Judge Georgia M. Curio; Judge Eugene J. Codey, Jr. *(Chair, Conference of Civil Presiding Judges)*; Assignment Judge John A. Sweeney; Judge James D. Clyne *(Chair, Conference of General Equity Presiding Judges)*; Assignment Judge Sybil R. Moses; Assignment Judge Robert A. Longhi; Judge Albert J. Garofolo *(Chair, Conference of Criminal Presiding Judges)*; Assignment Judge Francis J. Orlando, Jr.; Assignment Judge Valerie H. Armstrong; Assignment Judge Robert J. Passero; Assignment Judge Patricia K. Costello

Judges and Justices of the New Jersey Judiciary

(as of June 30, 2006):

Supreme Court

Deborah T. Poritz, Chief Justice
Barry T. Albin
Jaynee LaVecchia
Virginia A. Long
Roberto Rivera-Soto
John E. Wallace
James Zazzali

Superior Court

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Salem Vincent Ahto
Roberto Alcazar
Christine Allen-Jackson
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Valerie H. Armstrong
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Eugene H. Austin
Francine I. Axelrad**
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Max A. Baker
Marc M. Baldwin
Peter F. Bariso Jr.
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Ann Reynolds Bartlett
Raymond A. Batten
Linda G. Baxter
Marie White Bell
Arthur Bergman
Glenn J. Berman
Stephen J. Bernstein
Maryann K. Bielamowicz
Audrey Peyton Blackburn
James M. Blaney
Ronald E. Bookbinder
Salvatore Bovino
G. Thomas Bowen
B. Theodore Bozonelis
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Joseph C. Cassini III
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Amy Piro Chambers
Joseph Charles Jr.
Lisa F. Chrystal
Yolanda Ciccone
Alfonse J. Cifelli
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Marilyn C. Clark
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Rudy B. Coleman**
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Erminie L. Conley**
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Michael R. Connor
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Joseph S. Conte
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Heidi W. Currier
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Frederick P. DeVesa
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W. Hunt Dumont
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Harold A. Kuskin
Marie E. Lihotz
Gail L. Menyuk
Peter D. Pizzuto
Joseph C. Small

Retired on Recall

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R. Benjamin Cohen
Elaine L. Davis
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Kenneth R. Stein
June Strelecki
Timothy J. Sullivan
Birger M. Sween
Norman Telsey
James J. Walsh
Harold B. Wells III

**retired during the year*
***Appellate Division*

In Memoriam

Charles J. Walsh
David A. Rosenberg


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