

JUDICIARY TIMES

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New TCAs Named in Bergen, Hudson Vicinages

By **Tamara Kendig**

Communications Manager
Administrative Office of the Courts

New trial court administrators have been named in the Bergen and Hudson vicinages.

Laura A. Simoldoni is the new TCA in the Bergen Vicinage and Silvia I. Gonzalez is leading the Hudson Vicinage as TCA.

The trial court administrator is the highest ranking staff executive in the vicinage in charge of all court operations, including financial management, human resources, information systems, case coordination, case flow management, probation services, jury utilization, facilities, equipment, maintenance, records management and statistical analysis.

Under New Jersey court rules, the administrative director of the courts appoints the trial court administrator in each vicinage.

Simoldoni succeeded Jon Goodman, who retired after 21 years with the Judiciary, 16 as trial court administrator.

She works closely with Assignment Judge Peter E. Doyne and with vicinage leadership to manage a court operation that includes 30 judges and 500 staff members.

“Laura has risen through our ranks to become an outstanding leader who is intimately familiar with all of our court operations,” said Judge Doyne. “She is well-respected both in our local vicinage and the statewide Judiciary for her management skill, her intelligence and her unparalleled work ethic.”

Simoldoni graduated from Fairleigh Dickinson University and the Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing, Mich. She began her career working in the law office of her father, Charles J. Simoldoni in Garfield, Bergen County before becoming a fraud investigator for the Bergen County Board of Social Services. She then worked briefly as an insurance claims representative before returning to the private practice of law.

Simoldoni joined the Judiciary as a probation officer in 1998 and was promoted to supervisor of the domestic violence intake office in Bergen in 2000. She was named the vicinage ombudsman, ADA coordinator and EEO/AA officer in 2001, a position she held until 2006, when she was named the vicinage human resource manager. She has held that position until her current appointment.



Middlesex Vicinage Presiding Family Judge Deborah J. Venezia stands beside a new art exhibit in the Middlesex County Family Courthouse that depicts family life in the great outdoors. See story and more photos on Page 8.

A Set of Eyes Helps the Physically Challenged in Morris Courthouse

By **Brenda L. Soto-Rivera**

Administrative Specialist 2- Confidential
Morris/Sussex Vicinage

You might have seen guide dogs walking in the Morris County Courthouse, leading a person through the halls, up the stairs, and to the elevators.

Have you ever wondered why they are here or how they know when to stop, avoid dangerous situations, and disregard distractions?

The answers lie in the quote, “Gentlemen, I give you ‘the Seeing Eye’ Dog,” by Dorothy Harrison Eustis, co-founder of The Seeing Eye, the oldest existing guide dog school in the world.

Morris Frank lost his sight at the age of 16.

One day, Frank’s father read him an article, *The Seeing Eye*, written by Eustis, an American dog trainer.

While living in Switzerland, she visited a school where she saw shepherds being trained as guides for blind veterans of World War I. Eustis wrote “As I followed him it seemed impossible to believe that the man wasn’t taking the dog for a walk and stopping for traffic of his own accord, so quietly

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Trial Court Administrators Named in Bergen, Hudson Vicinages

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In addition to her undergraduate and law degrees, Simoldoni has completed the Certified Court Manager Program through the Institute for Court Management of the National Center for State Courts. She holds certificates in human resource management and equal employment studies from Rutgers University.

“I have enjoyed every step of my career in the Judiciary and I work with wonderful people,” said Simoldoni. “I am tremendously grateful for the opportunity to serve the public in this new capacity, and I look forward to working with Judge Doyne, the other judges and the amazing staff of the Bergen Vicinage.”

Simoldoni lives in Wood-Ridge, Bergen County.

Gonzalez is working closely with Assignment Judge Peter F. Bariso Jr. and with Hudson Vicinage leadership to manage a court operation that includes about 30 judges and 547 staff



Laura A. Simoldoni



Silvia I. Gonzalez

members.

“Silvia is an experienced court manager with a broad range of experience across several divisions,” said Bariso. “Under her guidance, the Hudson Vicinage will continue its tradition of excellence.”

Gonzalez began her Judiciary career as a clerk typist in the jury management unit of the Essex Vicinage in 1980.

She progressed to the position of administrative specialist while attending Rutgers University, earning a bachelor’s degree in English and philosophy in 1991.

In 1998, she was named jury manager for the Hudson Vicinage. She became assistant family division manager in Hudson in 2000, and in 2007 was named assistant chief probation officer.

In 2011, she returned to the Essex Vicinage as vicinage chief probation officer, a position she held until being named trial court administrator.

Gonzalez’ work includes service on a number of committees charged with helping improve court services for probationers, families receiving child support, and the public, including serving as chair of the statewide Chiefs of Probation Conference, the child support enforcement managers committee and the vicinage committee on minority concerns.

In addition to her bachelor’s degree, Gonzalez is a certified public manager and is a graduate of the National Center for State Courts’ Institute for Court Management. She also earned

a paralegal certification at Upsala College.

“I have worked for the New Jersey Judiciary my whole career,” said Gonzalez. “I can say without reservation that our judges and staff are dedicated, talented, compassionate people and I am proud to work with all of them.”

Gonzalez lives in Kenilworth, Union County with her husband Michael, who works in special operations for the New Jersey Division of Parole. Their daughter Arielle is a senior at New York University, and their son Michael is a freshman at Montclair State University.

Ocean Vicinage Schedules Sessions at LRIC

By **Monika Skurzynski**
Administrative Specialist 2
Ocean Vicinage

In accordance with the New Jersey Judiciary’s vision to provide equal access to a fair and effective system of justice for all court users, the Ocean Vicinage Legal Research and Information Center (LRIC) hosted a series of seminars that addressed divorce, expungement of criminal records, custody and support, and landlord/tenant cases.

The first seminar, which was held Feb. 21 at the Ocean County Courthouse in Toms River, focused on the divorce process. The seminar was presented by Ombudsman Ann Marie Fleury and a staff attorney from Ocean-

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The chief justice is Stuart Rabner. The acting administrative director of the courts is Judge Glenn A. Grant.

Please send short news articles, photos and suggestions to Mike.Mathis@judiciary.state.nj.us. Submissions are subject to editing, and not all can be published.

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Advances of Women in the Judicial System “Dramatic and Rapid”

By Mike Mathis
Judiciary Times Editor

When Justice Jaynee LaVecchia spoke to a community group about women and the law in 1996, she recalled, there were no female assignment judges.

“I couldn’t help but notice we had numerous assignment judge positions and not a single woman in that important leadership position,” she remembered.

When she became an associate justice on the New Jersey Supreme Court four years later and took part in a Women’s History Month presentation, she noted, there were three female justices on the Supreme Court and two assignment judges, six of the 33 appellate judges, two of the 11 Tax Court judges, and 74 of the 364 Superior Court judges were women.

“To me, those numbers sounded much better,” she said.

In 2014, there are five female assignment judges, and one third of the Judiciary workforce is composed of women.

“The advances have been dramatic and rapid,” LaVecchia said.

LaVecchia and Appellate Division Judge Mary Catherine Cuff spoke about the challenges and opportunities women in the legal profession face during a program at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton on March 28.

The jurists discussed their legal and judicial careers and the decisions they faced and made on their journeys to the bench, provided insight into the challenges women face and gave advice on taking advantage of career opportunities.

The road toward equality for women and the law has been a long and old one, LaVecchia said.

Susan B. Anthony was prosecuted and fined \$100 for attempting to vote in 1872, she said, and Myra Bradwell was denied a law license in 1869 after she graduated from law school.

“And yet we persevered and over the years, things changed,” she said.

One of the largest obstacles for



New Jersey Supreme Court Associate Justice Jaynee LaVecchia holds a photograph taken of the five women who at the time comprised a majority of the court. Appellate Judge Mary Catherine Cuff, who is temporarily assigned to the Supreme Court, is seated.

aspiring female attorneys was removed during the Vietnam War in the late 1960s. The military exemption to the draft was ended, opening seats in law schools that would have been occupied by men and prompting large numbers of women to enroll.

“There was a great amount of social change that worked very favorably for me and others like me at the time I came into the law,” said LaVecchia, who served as commissioner of the state Department of Banking and Insurance and in other high-level positions in state government before she was appointed to the bench.

When Cuff attended Rutgers School of Law-Newark in 1970, one third of the class was women. She recalled the five female students in her advanced criminal procedures class who also became judges.

Among them was Sybil Moses, who became the first female assignment judge in 1997.

Cuff, who is temporarily assigned to the Supreme Court, said she decided to pursue a career in public service after graduating from law school in 1973.

She served as a deputy attorney general, special assistant to the state treasurer and an assistant U.S. attorney before she became a judge in 1988.

Cuff was the second female judge in

the Monmouth Vicinage. There are now 10.

LaVecchia and Cuff also worked at law firms during their careers.

They said women should accept challenging assignments, even if it means feeling apprehensive about moving from a secure position.

“Somebody believes they can trust you and that you have skills you can bring to the table, and so you accept the challenge,” Cuff said.

“New challenges are what make you better attorneys, better administrators, better performers,” LaVecchia said. “People should not shrink from those opportunities. They’re wonderful when they come along.”

To illustrate how far women have come, LaVecchia produced a photo of herself, Justice Anne M. Patterson, retired Justice Virginia Long, former Justice Helen Hoens and retired Appellate Judge Dorothea O’C Wefing taken when they served together on the Supreme Court.

“Not only did we have a majority of women for a while serving on the New Jersey Supreme Court, we actually had a quorum,” LaVecchia said.

Vicinages Celebrate Black History, Hispanic Heritage Months



The Neptune High School Jazz Band performed several selections during the Monmouth Vicinage Black History Month program.



Guest speakers at Bergen Vicinage's Black History Month program included Theodora Lacey and Arnold Brown. Lacey knew the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. when she was a child. Brown is a local historian who had VIP tickets to King's *I Have a Dream* speech in Washington, D.C. in August 1963.



Hudson Vicinage employees Angelica Crespo and Raul Mantilla dance during the vicinage's celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month.



Loretta Little and Laurel Dockery pose with ethnic food at the Bergen Vicinage Black History Month celebration.



The winners of the Monmouth Vicinage Black History Month essay and art contests, all students at Long Branch High School, pose with Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson.

Judges O'Connor, Rothstadt Elevated to Appellate Division

By **Tamara Kendig**

Communications Manager
Administrative Office of the Courts

Superior Court Judges Amy O'Connor and Garry S. Rothstadt have been elevated to the Appellate Division.

The Appellate Division of the Superior Court is New Jersey's intermediate appellate court. The 32 Appellate Division judges hear appeals from decisions of the trial courts, the Tax Court and state administrative agencies.

The Appellate Division decides approximately 6,500 appeals and 7,500 motions each year.

O'Connor received a bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan and a law degree from the Seton Hall University School of Law. She also holds a master of laws degree from New York University School of Law.

She began her legal career as a law clerk to Superior Court Judge Michael R. Imbriani before joining the law firm of Conway & Reiseman.

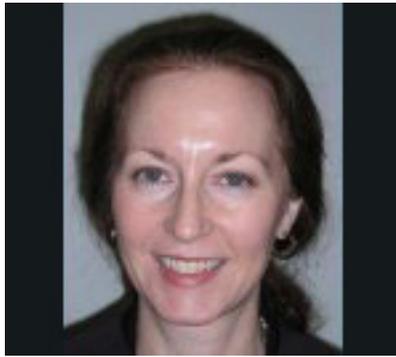
After making partner, she joined the law firm of Mulligan & Mulligan. She was a member of the District XIII Fee Arbitration Committee from 1995 to the time of her appointment, serving as its vice chair from 1997 to 1998.

She was president of the Warren County Bar Association from 1997 to 1998.

O'Connor was nominated for a judgeship by Gov. Christie Whitman and took the oath of office on July 24, 1998. She was reappointed with tenure effective June 20, 2005.

She has served in the civil and family divisions in Warren County since her appointment.

"I am honored to join the esteemed judges of the Appellate Division," O'Connor said. "While I am looking forward to this new chapter in my career, I want to acknowledge the hard-working, dedicated judges and court staff in the Warren County Superior Court, with whom I have worked for over 15 years. It has been a privilege to serve in Warren County and I will miss the wonderful people at the court-



Amy O'Connor

house."

Rothstadt holds a bachelor's degree from Rutgers College and a law degree from Rutgers School of Law-Newark.

He began his legal career as a law clerk to Superior Court Judge Joseph L. Conn.

He then became an associate at Cole, Geaney, Yamner & Byrne. In 1988 he formed a firm with Randal C. Chiocca, who later became a Superior Court judge.

He was a member of the firm of Bray, Chiocca, Rothstadt & Miller at the time of his judicial appointment.

Nominated to the bench by Gov. Donald T. DiFrancesco, Judge Rothstadt took the oath of office on Sept. 5, 2001.

He first served in the criminal division of the Passaic Vicinage and moved to the family division in 2004.

In 2007 he was assigned to the civil division and recently also served as the general equity disqualification judge. He was reappointed with tenure in 2008.

Judge Rothstadt is a former president of the Passaic County Bar Association and a member of the New Jersey State Bar Association and the American Bar Association. He is a long time member of the Supreme Court Committee on the Rules of Evidence and he has been an instructor for both the New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education and Rutgers School of Law-Newark.

"I am grateful to the chief justice for the opportunity to serve the Judiciary and the citizens of New Jersey in this



Garry S. Rothstadt

new capacity," said Rothstadt. "The law has been a lifelong passion for me. I am very grateful to be able to work in what I believe is the finest Judiciary in the country, with outstanding judges and court staff who work hard every day to ensure that justice is served."

Ocean Vicinage Schedules Sessions at LRIC

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Monmouth Legal Services.

Attendees were given information about the types of cases Ocean-Monmouth Legal Services accepts, how to access the Legal Services of New Jersey's publication *Divorce in New Jersey: A Self Help Guide*, how to obtain court forms from the New Jersey Judiciary website, njcourts.com, and information about a divorce from bed and board.

A divorce from bed and board is the closest legal proceeding to legal separation in New Jersey.

Preparing and filing a divorce complaint, types of divorces, serving the divorce complaint, the process for filing a default judgment, and contested divorces also were discussed.

The vicinage plans divorce seminars on May 15, Aug. 22, and Nov. 21.

For a complete listing of upcoming seminars, go to njcourts.com, go to the Self Help Center tab on the right and click on Court Seminars and Public Events on the right.

What Does It Really Mean? A Court Interpreter Translates

By **Evelyn Armenta**

Court Services Supervisor 2
Middlesex Vicinage

To have a second language is to have a second soul.

-Charlemagne

Let's accept the view that a language interpreter must traverse two cultural worlds in order to interpret accurately.

Good interpreters hunt for meaning, the "semantic load," as we sometimes call it in our shop talk.

Consider this: meaning in language is often conditioned by culture.

We know that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" is a saying that expresses a certain practical attitude in English. It's a strong and durable usage that has persisted in our language for many years.

More than that, it is a saying that is cultural, it is knowledge that our cultural world presumes.

To prove this assertion, try this. Say to any native English speaker, please complete this saying: "A bird in the hand is worth..." We would be surprised if anyone were to answer anything different from "two in the bush."

Did you know that in Spanish, there is an analogous saying? It starts out the same "A bird in hand," but it ends differently, "is worth one hundred flying." And this saying is as venerable a part of

Spanish culture as our old saws are a part of English.

While we're talking about birds, in English "birds of a feather..." Well, we all know how it goes, "flock together." In Spanish-speaking countries, birds of a feather might flock together too, but saying so would be only an observation.

A good interpreter would try to find a cultural equivalent to get the meaning of the English saying in a natural way.

And here it is: "Dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres." Literally it means: "Tell me who you spend your time with and I'll tell you who you are." It's the culturally innate way to express the idea in Spanish.

No feathers, no flocks, yes, but if we have been hunting for the real meaning of the phrase, it does a pretty good job.

False cognates. Like the call of the siren, these words are tempting and easy to grasp and can lure a translator onto the rocks.

Cognates are words that are related by descent from the same ancestral language. For example, the romance languages share many cognates derived from Latin.

Between English and Spanish there are many cognates. Consider the words *rodeo*, *lasso*, *chicle*, *mosquito* and *alcohol*. They're all Spanish words and they are all English words.

These are true cognates. Their mean-

ings are the same in either language.

Although true cognates greatly outnumber false cognates, it is the false cognates of which we must be wary.

False cognates are words that look the same, but they don't have the same meaning, nor do they really share the same derivation as true cognates.

Our team partners can catch us from making errors with false cognates. A controversial word that we dealt with lately was "asalto," which in Mexico means a holdup, not an assault.

A juror could consider that a pretty significant difference. Here's another example of a false cognate: A "discussion" in English is not the same as a "discusión" in Spanish. In English it's a conversation, but in Spanish it's an argument.

People sometimes ask, "What do you mean?"

I remember having a conversation on a hot summer day with a Chinese friend who was not a native English speaker. I had a nearly empty carton of lemonade and I offered a glass and the lemonade carton to my friend and I said: "Here, Chen, polish this off."

What do you think happened next? He reached for a dish towel and began to wipe the carton.

Traversing cultures can be challenging.

New App Gives Jurors Helpful Information About Their Service

By **Tamara Kendig**

Communications Manager
Administrative Office of the Courts

The New Jersey Judiciary has released the NJJuror mobile application for Apple devices that enables jurors to get helpful, current information about their jury service.

"We appreciate the sacrifices that jurors make to perform a vital public service for the community and want to make jury service as convenient as possible," Chief Justice Stuart Rabner said. "With that aim in mind, the Judiciary developed the 'NJJuror'

app to inform jurors about their role, provide directions as well as up-to-date information about whether they need to report on a particular day, and relay other useful details."

The app, which is available at no cost from the Apple App Store, takes jury information from the Judiciary website and packages it as convenient, one-touch links formatted for Apple iOS devices, including iPhones and iPads.

Jurors can use the General Information portion of the app to access an extensive FAQ on jury service. The app also links to the Judiciary's social media channels and to

the "You the Juror" introductory video shown to all jurors at the beginning of their jury service.

The app contains information specific to each location where juries are empanelled, including grand jury at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton.

Users can access directions to the courthouse, parking information, call-off information, unscheduled closing announcements and contact information for the local jury manager.

A link will bring users to Yelp if they

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Seeing Eye Provides Guidance for Morris Courthouse Visitors

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and evenly did they work together. I had to pull myself up pretty sharply once or twice to realize that the man was blind and that the only thing that kept him from pitching off the curb into the street was the intelligence and faithfulness of his dog. For not once through the whole hour that I followed them did that dog's attention wander."

Frank later wrote Eustis and asked if she would train him. He traveled to Switzerland to meet and work with her and his new guide dog, Buddy.

Upon his return to New York City in 1928, Frank shocked awaiting reporters as he and Buddy safely crossed a busy street, making history. They then traveled across the country as the first dog guide team in the United States, educating others about the specially trained guide dogs.

Eustis returned to the United States in 1929, and with Frank and Buddy, founded The Seeing Eye.

There is a sculpture of Morris Frank and Buddy in downtown Morristown. But how are the dogs selected, how are they taught, and why do they walk the halls of the courthouse?

The Seeing Eye breeds and trains labs and shepherds in their own breeding station in Chester.

When puppies reach the age of about seven weeks, they leave the breeding station to spend 15 to 17 months with volunteer puppy raisers.



The sculpture of Morris Frank and Buddy in Morristown.

At 13 to 19 months, puppies return to The Seeing Eye for formal training. After introducing a dog to basic commands and to the harness on the campus, the instructor begins to train the dog outside the campus.

Seeing Eye dogs visit public buildings to gain familiarity with layouts such as stairs and elevators.

A courthouse gives trainers the perfect opportunity to teach the dogs how to avoid distractions such as noisy crowds and to maneuver confusing hallways while focusing on their destination.

Once a dog is retired from its duties in the Seeing Eye program, it is offered

back to the family that raised it as a puppy. If the volunteer does not want to keep the dog, it is placed up for adoption.

To learn more about the Seeing Eye Program, visit www.seeingeye.org.

App Gives Jurors Information About Service

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are looking for nearby restaurants to visit during the lunch break.

To download the app, go to the Apple App Store and search for the "NJJuror" app. Mobile applications for Windows and Android phones will be released in the coming months.

"The mobile app is the latest of several innovations the Judiciary has developed to improve its services to jurors," said Chief Justice Rabner.

A program introduced in June lets jurors register to receive emails and text messages from the courts about their upcoming juror service.

Jurors who opt in receive reminder notices before their reporting date and call-off notices during their service that inform them whether they need to report for juror service.

Since June, more than 200,000 residents have chosen to use the system.

Since 2010, jurors have also been able to complete the jury qualification questionnaire online. More than 57 percent of jurors now take advantage of that option.

Dietrich To Head Family Practice Division

By Tamara Kendig

Communications Manager
Administrative Office of the Courts

Joanne M. Dietrich has been named assistant director of family practice for the New Jersey Judiciary.

Dietrich succeeds Harry Cassidy, who recently retired.

"Joanne has gained extensive experience in family law, in private practice as well as in her previous role as chief of children in court and

juvenile practice," said Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts.

As assistant director, Dietrich will work with the statewide Conference of Family Presiding Judges and the Conference of Family Division Managers to develop and implement policies, procedures, standards, case management systems and staff education programs to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the Judiciary's services for families in court.

Did You Know?

The Judiciary uses Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to communicate the work of the courts to the public and court staff? The Judiciary also uses RSS feeds and SMS text alerts to inform users about court news, closings and Supreme Court decisions.

To sign up for these services, go to njcourts.com and look for the icons under "Here's the Latest" on the right side.

Middlesex Vicinage Unveils New Family Art Exhibit

Work Dedicated to Deceased Attorney Who Served on Art Committee

By **Betty Agin**

Librarian
Middlesex Vicinage

A 7-foot by 12-foot mural depicting pastoral family scenes was unveiled in the Middlesex County Family Courthouse on Feb. 19.

Artist “Little” Bobby Duncan created the acrylic on plywood mural over 12 weeks after his concept sketches were approved by the Middlesex County Art Advisory Committee. The committee is chaired by Judge Deborah Venezia.

The mural is dedicated to Renee Anthony, a lawyer and past president of the Middlesex County Bar Association who worked on many projects as a member of the art committee. Anthony died last year.

“This project is a great example of the benefits to the community resulting from project collaboration,” Judge Venezia said.

At the unveiling reception, Assignment Judge Travis Francis recognized the importance of family court and the contribution of the mural to the courthouse. Judge Venezia acknowledged the hard work of the art committee and the gratifying product of its endeavor.

The process of moving from concept to proposal to consideration of sketches and final production took three years.

Where there was once a large, white, vacant wall at the entrance of the family courthouse stands a colorful depiction of family joy in the great outdoors.

And as in every Duncan mural, a small animal wearing sunglasses, in this case a cat, is hidden in the art - the signature of a Duncan production.

The family court can be a place of anxiety and stress for litigants.

The colorful mural creates a serene, tranquil environment that can have a calming effect on nervous customers. The landscape scene of family joy and togetherness can remind people of what really counts in life.

Duncan is an experienced muralist and artist whose work can be seen on the bridge over the Lawrence River in Milltown and in the Jamesburg municipal building. Duncan has a bachelor’s degree in art from Rice University in Houston and a master’s degree in sculpture and printmaking from Washington University in St. Louis.

The painting was funded by the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission and the New Brunswick Bar Association.



The new art exhibit, shown here as it was being painted by “Little” Bobby Duncan. The artwork and an exhibit composed of pictures drawn by students from the New Brunswick School District are designed to ease the stress and anxiety of families as they wait for their cases to be heard.



The exhibit is the newest of several that adorn the walls in the two courthouses in the Middlesex Vicinage. Other exhibits document the history of New Brunswick, explain the state’s judicial system, and describe general equity cases and family life through the eyes of children.



Mission Statement of the New Jersey Courts

We are an independent branch of government constitutionally entrusted with the fair and just resolution of disputes in order to preserve the rule of law and to protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States and this State.