

Judiciary Times

Summer 2007

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Stuart Rabner Sworn in as Chief Justice



Swearing in—Acting Chief Justice Virginia Long administers the oath of office to Stuart Rabner. Looking on are wife Debbie, daughters Erica and Carly.

Stuart Rabner, 46, New Jersey's former attorney general, was sworn in June 29 as chief justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court. He succeeds James R. Zazzali, who retired June 17.

"Stuart Rabner is one of the top legal minds in New Jersey and one of the finest public servants our state has to offer," Gov. Jon Corzine said during a press conference this spring. "I have no doubt that he will uphold the New Jersey Supreme Court's tradition of excellence and demonstrate all of the wisdom, integrity and fairness that the people of New Jersey have come to expect from him."

Gov. Corzine selected Rabner as his chief counsel in December 2005 and nominated him to be attorney general in August 2006. Rabner is the eighth chief justice of the Supreme Court since the 1947 Constitution.

"I am humbled by Gov. Corzine's nomination," Rabner said. "I pledge to do everything I can to maintain the Supreme Court's tradition of excellence, which has earned the court deep respect throughout our nation."

Prior to joining the governor's staff, Rabner served nearly two decades in various leadership positions in the U.S. Attorney's Office, District of New Jersey. He served as chief of the Criminal Division, first assistant U.S. attorney, executive assistant U.S. attorney, deputy chief, Special Prosecutions Division and chief of the Terrorism Unit. Rabner was a recipient of the Department of Justice's John Marshall Award for his work prosecuting a terrorism case in 2005.

Rabner, who grew up in Passaic County, graduated summa cum laude from Princeton University and cum laude from Harvard Law School. He currently lives in Caldwell with his wife and three children.

Following his swearing in, Chief Justice Rabner swore in former Federal Prosecutor and First Assistant Attorney General Anne Milgram as the state's 57th attorney general.

Chief Justice James R. Zazzali Retires With Impressive List of Achievements

Chief Justice James R. Zazzali retired effective June 16, the day before his 70th birthday.

Appointed by Gov. Jon S. Corzine barely nine months ago, Chief Justice Zazzali vowed during his public swearing-in ceremony on Nov. 9 that he would be "not just a caretaker." In fact, he said, he hoped he could "still move some mountains."

Part of this heroic effort involved visiting all 15 vicinages shortly after taking his oath, demonstrating his commitment to both judges and staff around the state. He also met with several bar groups and with other bodies to hear their opinions and share his perspective on various topics.

He lobbied vigorously for judicial pay raises and made a number of key appointments that demonstrated his commitment to fairness and equal opportunity for the state's judges. He promoted the state's participation in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative and, in cooperation with the Division of Children and Families, worked to

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"It Takes a Vicinage"

Assessing Successes and Planning for the Future At Atlantic/Cape May Strategic Leadership Day

by Ellen Procida
Training Coordinator
Kathleen Obringer, Ombudsman
Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage

The leadership of the Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage attended a Strategic Leadership Day conference held during the afternoon of April 26 in the Carnegie Center, Atlantic City.

The text for the meeting was the vicinage's strategic plan which

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The chief justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court is Stuart Rabner. The acting administrative director of the courts is Judge Philip S. Carchman.

Please e-mail short news articles saved as Word documents in plain text without formatting, as well as photos and/or suggestions to: Linda.Holt@judiciary.state.nj.us or send disk, photos and paper copy to: Editor, *Judiciary Times*, Office of Communications, PO Box 037, Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, Trenton NJ 08625-0037. Submissions are subject to editing, and not all can be published.

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focuses on three main areas: service, development and communication. Particular attention was paid to continuous development in these areas. Team leaders, supervisors, assistant division managers and managers attending the program found the insights invaluable for future development initiatives within the vicinage.

The program began with a welcome from Assignment Judge Valerie H. Armstrong who spoke about the strengths of the vicinage and its leadership team. She spoke candidly about the three things that are at the heart of effective leadership. "Trust, respect and accountability are what we are about," she said. Judge Armstrong said every person is vitally important and has special talents to offer.

Following the judge's remarks, Trial Court Administrator Howard H. Berchtold Jr. spoke about the vicinage's past, present and future. At his request, the audience provided a long list of vicinage successes, including common threads that allow those successes to happen. Those threads included risk taking, creativity, vision, communication, embracing change and trust. There was an obvious sense of pride as each person contributed to the long list.

"The spreading of power throughout the organization have created an environment where all employees feel empowered," Berchtold said. "This has been the foundation for the success of this vicinage."

The leadership team broke into work groups facilitated by their peers and began to brainstorm their thoughts, experiences and ideas. The discussion focused on the development of current leaders, future leaders and their own challenges and opportunities as leaders. The break-out groups were engaged, insightful and productive as they delivered pages of

ideas and thoughts to go forward.

The day concluded with a summary of the input given by the leadership team. A planning group will compile the information gathered and align it with the strategic plan by designing future initiatives for the vicinage.

Monmouth Holds Municipal Advance

by Rosemarie Marinan-Gabriel
Municipal Division Manager
Monmouth Vicinage

On April 21, the Monmouth Vicinage Municipal Division celebrated its 15th annual "Advance" which brings together municipal court judges, municipal court administrators and Municipal Division staff for a collective movement forward. By doing so, they can share and expand their knowledge while enhancing the municipal courts' ability to serve the public.

The advance began with welcoming remarks from Monmouth Vicinage Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson, Trial Court Administrator Marsi Perkins and newly appointed Municipal Division Manager Rosemarie Marinan-Gabriel. Robert Smith, assistant director, AOC, Municipal Court Services, addressed the group about advancements on the horizon.

In a presentation titled "Beyond the Nine to Five," the guest speaker, Dr. Michael Fowlin, portrayed characters ranging from an elementary school child to adults of different racial and religious backgrounds and genders. The audience watched each character materialize through Dr. Fowlin, who was chosen to perform at the advance in order to augment the Municipal Division's focus on diversity awareness.

Monmouth County has been

Judiciary Hosts First Bench Bar Media Conference

The Judiciary hosted the Bench Bar Media Conference March 29 in the Rutgers Law Center. Participants discussed common issues and engaged in dialogue on compelling topics such as access to the courts and the right to know. Shown below are (top left to right): Anna Quindlen, keynote speaker; Grayson Barber and Herb Jackson, panelists; and Chief Justice James R. Zazzali.



Shown below, clockwise from top left, are: Panelists Tim Scheld of WCBS radio, Essex County Prosecutor Paula Dow and Frank Scandale of The Record; Essex Assignment Judge Patricia K. Costello and Justice Helen E. Hoens; Tamara Kendig and William Mecca capturing audience discussion and participation; and former Gov. Brendan T. Byrne with Judiciary Communications Director Winnie Comfort.



Jack Hvizdos Receives Statewide Award for Outstanding Services

by Mary McGinty Flanagan
Administrative Specialist 4
Probation Services

On April 20, the New Jersey chapter of the Association for the Treatment of Sex Abusers (NJATSA) awarded Jack Hvizdos, Burlington Vicinage senior probation officer, the first Barbara Frank Award for outstanding service by a probation officer, parole officer or law enforcement officer.

This award has a double significance for the Probation Division, because both the award itself and this year's recipient honor two of our own staff. Barbara Frank was a probation officer in the Union Vicinage who was among the first to supervise a sex offender caseload, and she remained at the forefront of supervision approaches until her death in 2006. Barbara's personal investment in addressing the rehabilitation needs of her clients, including those of their families, started long before these unique needs were generally recognized. Because of her significant contributions to NJATSA's mission of training staff involved with the treatment and rehabilitation of juvenile sex offenders, the board decided to honor Barbara's memory with this award in her name.

Jack Hvizdos was nominated for this award by his supervisor, Evangeline Lilly, supervising probation officer in the Burlington Vicinage, and members of NJATSA elected him as their choice. At the award ceremony at the NJATSA annual conference in April, Evangeline "Van" Lilly, supervising probation officer, Burlington Probation Division, expressed her confidence that by awarding this to Jack, we were honoring both Jack and Barbara:

Senior Probation Officer Jack Hvizdos has worked tirelessly at the Burlington Vicinage Probation Division since 1990 and, since 1996, has been the first officer in the vicinage to supervise a

juvenile sex offender caseload. Jack has set the standard for how a sex offender caseload should be handled under probation supervision. He is diligent in his efforts to maintain contact with his probationers, many of whom require contact three to four times per month. He is secure and knowledgeable in terms of confronting probationers and parents about triggers and maintaining a safety plan.

He is consistent, having an excellent work ethic, which makes him highly respected by probation staff as well as by the other professionals he encounters. He provides stability which is especially important to this clientele. He has shown tremendous dedication in his day-to-day activities. Professional development is important to Jack, and he employs the many tactics that he has the opportunity to learn. Jack is one of the four designated Judiciary representatives to attend NJATSA meetings. Jack also sits on the Best Practices Subcommittee for the Supervision of Juveniles with Sexually Abusive Behavior as well as a network dedicated to this

subject, both state-level committees. Jack has established ties and works closely with the counseling groups attended by the probationers on his caseload. He is known to make frequent unannounced visits which leaves an impression with the clients and encourages attendance...

Jack's job more often than not is thankless. It is important for him to know at this time that we sincerely appreciate his efforts on behalf of this youthful population and the staff at the Burlington County Probation Division.

It is with much pride that I congratulate Jack for being selected as the first recipient of the Barbara Frank Award.



Probation Officer Jack Hvizdos and Supervising Probation Officer Evangeline "Van" Lilly

Muller Receives Awards from Trenton Chapter of the Association of Government Accountants

Christine Muller, financial specialist 2 in the Management Services Division of the AOC, received two honors at the Trenton Chapter of the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) annual awards dinner meeting held May 16.

She received the Special Achievement Award for her notable contributions towards improving governmental financial management early

in her professional career.

In addition, AGA President Jackie Shelly, presented Christine with the Presidential Award for assisting the president in leading the chapter's activities during the year. Christine joined the Judiciary in March 2003 as a financial specialist 1 in the Position Control Unit and was promoted to financial specialist 2 in November 2005.

Municipal Division Praises Faculty and Staff At First POMCA Trainers' Symposium

by Tina LaLena
Information Technology Analyst III

The First Trainers' Symposium for the Principles of Municipal Court Administration (POMCA) program was held March 23 in the Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton. The symposium was designed to thank volunteer faculty and to seek their input into how to improve course content and faculty development during 2007.

The POMCA provides three multi-day programs (Introduction, Advanced, and Introduction to Management) for municipal court administrators, deputies and other staff. The AOC Municipal Court Services Training Unit developed and facilitated these programs. During 2006, nearly 600 students attended the classes. Combined, these programs represented a total of 138 days of instruction.



Training Team #1: Assistant Director Bob Smith joins Municipal Court Services Training Unit: Chief John Podeszwa, Phyllis Ferone, Joann Montagna, Marti Bartuska, Valorie Paglia and Tina LaLena.

During 2006, more than 40 judges and staff served as faculty. Their commitment and willingness to share their time and expertise allowed the AOC to provide an extremely high level of training to municipal court staff.

John Podeszwa, chief, kicked off the event by expressing appreciation for the group's outstanding performance and cooperation. Monmouth Assignment Judge Lawrence Lawson, who served as a faculty member, provided opening remarks titled, "A Judge's View of Training."

Bob Smith, assistant director of Municipal Court Services, highlighted 2006 accomplishments as well as his future training goals and vision. Phyllis Ferone, administrative supervisor, outlined the 2007 curriculum changes, followed by John Podeszwa with 2007-08 program objectives. Tina LaLena, information technology analyst, presented the POMCA Faculty Development Plan, and the top 10 reasons "Why It's Great to Train for the POMCA," a humorous look at the predicaments all trainers face.

The event culminated with the awarding of certificates of appreciation, personally signed and presented by Judge Philip S. Carchman, acting administrative director of the courts. Judge Carchman expressed his gratitude for the trainers' dedication to the POMCA and encouraged them to continue their participation during 2007. Participants then gathered for a group photograph to commemorate the occasion. Plans are already underway for next year's symposium.



First Trainers' Symposium participants get together during the event this spring.

Empowering Youth, Assuring Democracy:

New Jersey's courts throughout the state celebrated Law Day this spring. Vicinage correspondents contributed the following reports detailing their courts' observances of this important celebration of the rule of law. Names of contributors appear at the end of this special Law Day section.

Bergen

On May 1, the Bergen Vicinage Minority Concerns committee hosted more than 100 students from Bergen County schools for Law Day activities.

Naveen Srivatsa, a student at Ramsey High School, was selected the first-place winner of the 2007 Bergen Vicinage Minority Concerns Law Day Essay Contest. The theme of the essay contest was "Empowering Youth; Assuring Democracy."

Annabel Lau, a student from



Law Day in Bergen--Laura Lee Kreminski from General Operations Division sings "God Bless America" during Bergen Law Day ceremonies. Behind her to the left is Judge Joseph Conte and to the right is Sheriff Leo McGuire.

Emerson Middle School, was selected the first-place winner of the 2007 Bergen Vicinage Minority Concerns Law Day Poster Contest. The theme of the poster contest was "Voice of Youth on Liberty and Democracy."

The program began in the courtroom of Bergen Vicinage Assignment Judge Sybil R. Moses. Minority Concerns Committee Chairperson Betty Williams and Vice Chair Margaret McLaughlin welcomed the students. The students then observed a video presentation from Chief Justice James R. Zazzali regarding the Law Day theme.

Nola Steele, vicinage volunteer coordinator, discussed the various divisions that encompass the vicinage and showed a video about the Bergen Vicinage. Judge Joseph S. Conte, Law Day chairman, discussed the role of the Judiciary, and a question-and-answer session followed. This was followed by a presentation by the Bergen County Sheriff's Department regarding the role of the sheriff's K-9 unit and also concerning alcohol awareness.

The students were provided with booklets about the courts as well as Law Day pens, bookmarks, rulers and key chains. The students were given a walking tour of the historical courthouse and of the old jail by members of the Vicinage Minority Concerns Committee and the Vicinage EEO/AA Advisory Committee.

At 3 p.m., the students assembled outside of the courthouse

for the formal Law Day ceremony. The Bergen County Sheriff's Department Honor Guard began the program with the presentation of colors. Judge Donald R. Venezia sang the National Anthem. Judge Conte moderated the program. Sheriff Leo McGuire led the Pledge of Allegiance. Judge Moses welcomed the public to Law Day. Laura Lee Kreminski from General Operations then sang "God Bless America." The keynote speaker, U.S. District Court Judge Katharine S. Hayden, was followed by Bergen County Executive Dennis McNerney and Bergen County Bar President Cathy D. McAuliffe.

The Ridgefield Park High School Chorus performed throughout the program. The Wood-Ridge High School Marching Band also participated in the program. The Minority Concerns Essay Contest winner, Naveen Srivatsa, read his essay and received an award from the Minority Concerns Committee Chairperson Betty Williams and Minority Concerns Committee member, Professor Dallas Gray of Bergen Community College. Various awards were then presented.

The students remarked that they enjoyed their day at the courthouse and asked to attend the 2008 Law Day program. Law Day was extended to Law Month at the Bergen Vicinage, and a number of school tours and presentations took place throughout the month of May.

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Burlington

This year's Law Day theme, "Liberty Under Law: Empowering Youth, Assuring Democracy," clearly came to life in this year's Juror for the Day Program. Seventy seventh and eighth grade students from Burlington County participated in the program.

Students were summoned to serve jury duty and reported to the jury assembly room. To begin their juror experience, students viewed the juror orientation tape and heard from the jury manager, Gina Fe Whittaker, and Trial Court Administrator Jude Del Preore.

Students were then escorted to a courtroom to begin the jury selection process. Judge James J. Morley led the students through the voir dire process, and a jury was empanelled. One of the highlights was that this year's law clerks assumed the responsibility of drafting the criminal trial fact pattern involving charges of criminal mischief and the possession of a prohibited weapon.

Law clerks involved in this year's project were Rebecca Berger, Matthew Gayle, Joseph Bevis, Kendall Champion and Pamela Mulligan. Students were randomly selected to shadow the judge, prosecution and defense attorneys, court clerk, sheriff's officers and took on the witness roles in the courtroom. All other students assumed the role of separate empanelled juries and rendered their verdict as well.

Other individuals assisting with the Juror for the Day program were Law Day co-chairs, Donna Mazzanti and Reema Hindawi Scaramella, Court Clerk Joseph

Turgyan and Burlington County Sheriff's Officer George Colajezzi. After the trial, students were treated to refreshments. Students and advisors left the courthouse with an increased knowledge of our judicial system.

Other law day activities involved Assignment Judge John A. Sweeney commencing Law Day activities and events by reading the proclamation to all invited guests. Students from the Rancocas Valley High School jazz band and Junior ROTC program delighted guests with patriotic musical selections and presentation and posting of the flag. Members of the Criminal Practice Section of the Burlington County Bar Association hosted a presentation on notorious cases in Burlington County at the Olde Historic Courthouse.

The annual Law Day Dinner hosted by the Burlington County Bar Association was held May 1. This year, Assignment Judge Sweeney delivered the 2007 State of the Burlington County Judiciary Address. Other highlights of the evening included the presentation of the mock trial awards and the award of the Jan Schlessinger law school scholarship.

A panel discussion was held at the Burlington County Institute of Technology for over 250 students. The panel consisted of Criminal Presiding Judge Thomas S. Smith Jr. and local prominent attorneys, William Buckman and Timothy Farrow. Trial Court Administrator Jude Del Preore facilitated the lively discussion. Students were encouraged to list their comments and reactions to the panel discussion on their school blog.

(Related photos appear on pages 9 and 15)

Camden

In keeping with tradition, on May 1, Camden County high school students were invited to kick off Camden Vicinage's Law Day program by attending a naturalization ceremony at the Mitchell H. Cohen United States Courthouse.

After witnessing new citizens take the Oath of Allegiance and listening to comments by U.S. District Judge Joseph H. Rodriguez, the students proceeded to the Hall of Justice's ceremonial courtroom. There, they were greeted by Ombudsman Nalo Brown and then officially welcomed by Assignment Judge Francis J. Orlando Jr.

Judge Orlando reminded the students that this year's Law Day theme was "Liberty Under Law: Empowering Youth; Assuring Democracy," and told them that the future of our nation is in their hands. To help the students understand the importance of making their voices heard, they took part in an activity called, "Taking a Stand." This activity gave them the opportunity to participate in a mock city council meeting to consider a proposed teen curfew law.

First, the students were addressed by Angel Osorio of the Camden County Prosecutor's Office. As community justice coordinator, Osorio has done significant work with Camden's Curfew Taskforce and was able to provide the students with valuable "real world" perspective on the curfew issue. She shared insight into the pros and cons of curfew laws which gave them an appreciation of all of the factors that must be considered before enacting a curfew ordinance.

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Next, the students were divided into four teams: 1) the city council; 2) police officers and the community organization “Families Against Violence;” 3) the local merchants’ association; and 4) the community organization “Students for the Rights of Youth.” With the assistance of law clerks Tanya Alm, Joyce Atkins, Gissou Azarnia, Asha Bryant and Jonathan Friedman, each team discussed the issue then presented persuasive supporting or opposing arguments to the city council. After each group testified, the city council team deliberated and chose to enact the curfew law with a few modifications.

After the activity, the students were treated to a luncheon sponsored by the Camden County Bar Association. During the luncheon the Bar Association also presented an award to its 2007 mock trial winners from Cherry Hill High School East.

Essex

This year Essex Vicinage celebrated the 10th anniversary of its Law Day Mock Trial Program. Since 1997 Essex Vicinage, in partnership with the Essex County Bar Association, the New Jersey State Bar Foundation and the Essex County Sheriff’s Office, has organized this outstanding public education event.

This year 60 Essex County schools participated in the mock trial program. The 2007 theme selected by the American Bar Association was, “Liberty Under Law: Empowering Youth, Assuring Democracy.” A judge visited each school along with two attorneys and a sheriff’s officer. The 2007 mock trial case, *Hanshee v. Fort George School District*, involved a middle school student who sues her school district after she is suspended from school for wearing a T-shirt that criticizes the Iraq War. This fact pattern presented the students with an excellent

opportunity to discuss, analyze and argue their First Amendment rights as students while on school grounds.

As in past years, many of the participating judges, attorneys and court employees attended the Law Day awards luncheon after their visits to the schools. This year’s luncheon took place in the rotunda of the Historic Courthouse. Assignment Judge Patricia K. Costello was on hand to recognize the students who submitted the winning 2007 Law Day poems, essays and artwork.

Hudson

The *New Jersey Lawyer* (April 23, 2007) said it best in its article about the Hudson County Youth Summit when it wrote, “Often the best way to understand a social problem is simply to ask the people at the center of it.”

For this reason, the Hudson Vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns, in collaboration with the Hudson County Bar Association, hosted a Youth Summit April 24 in Jersey City relating to this year’s Law Day theme, “Liberty Under The Law: Empowering Youth, Ensuring Democracy.” The theme aligns with both national and local initiatives to highlight the needs and concerns of youth in an effort to provide meaningful services and other support that empowers them to succeed in their lives.

The idea for the youth summit, titled *Empowering Ourselves as Tomorrow’s Leaders: Making Positive Choices to Ensure a Positive Future*, arose from Hudson’s



Assignment Judge Patricia K. Costello speaks at Essex Law Day.

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October 2004 Report on the juvenile justice disparity inquiry initiated by the chief justice, the attorney general and the Juvenile Justice Commission. Hudson's report on that project was prepared by a local study group that consisted of the Hudson County Superior Court Family Division, Youth Services Commission and Minority Concerns Committee. The study identified factors that have contributed to the disproportionate number of African-American and Hispanic males in the justice system.

Students from elementary and middle schools in Jersey City, West New York and Union City were invited to the summit held in the Mary McLeod Bethune Life Center, Jersey City. About 260 students and another 30 teachers, guidance counselors and school administrators attended the event. In addition, about 50 court employees participated as volunteers.

The program began with a keynote presentation by Dr. Michael Fowlin, an actor, poet and psychologist who presented a customized version of his show, *You Don't Know Me Until You Know Me*, which deals with issues of race, discrimination, personal identity, gender equity and the emotional pain experienced by youth in general. In his show, Dr. Fowlin plays a variety of male and female characters who share their realities, often in a humorous or heartbreaking manner.

The keynote presentation was followed by break-out group discussions with the youth to determine what influences them to make positive or negative life

choices. College students from New Jersey City University, Hudson County Community College and Montclair University were trained as group facilitators so that the discussions would be led by people who were close in age to the youth participants. The college students led the youth through a variety of exercises relating to four questions: 1.) Who am I? 2.) Who would I like to be? 3.) Who influences me? and 4.) What community factors influence my decisions to make positive or negative choices?

The Hudson Vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns plans to produce a record of the young people's responses to the questions that can be shared with other courts, law enforcement, schools and other interested parties. Ultimately, the court anticipates that the program and document that will be produced will provide useful information in determining the specific needs of

this particular at-risk population.

Through the keynote presentation and discussions with their peers, the many students in attendance became empowered and excited about the possibilities that the future has in store.

The summit also provided an opportunity for collaboration between the court and community service providers. Representatives from the Urban League, Partners in Prevention, WomenRising (domestic violence services), North Hudson Community Action, Division on Youth and Family Services, and Johnson & Associates (psychological services group) were on hand to provide information and referrals for student participants. The planning committee was chaired by Family Presiding Judge Maureen B. Mantineo. The program was made possible in part through a grant from the New Jersey State Bar Foundation/IOLTA Fund.

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Assignment Judge John A. Sweeney of the Burlington Vicinage addresses a Law Day gathering.

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Hunterdon/Somerset/ Warren Vicinage

Hunterdon and Somerset Counties celebrated Law Day with a variety of programs this year.

Hunterdon Vicinage judges and staff were joined by members of the Hunterdon County Bar Association on May 1 to celebrate Law Day with a special Court Night program. The program was co-sponsored by the New Jersey State Bar Foundation and made possible through funding from IOLTA Fund of the Bar of New Jersey.

Two-hundred participants, aged eight through senior citizens sitting in the four courtrooms, observed four judge/attorney teams present trial vignettes in the Civil, Criminal, Family and Surrogate Court areas.

Notification of the event to the Girls Scouts, Boy Scouts and newspapers generated an interest that far exceeded expectations and participation in previous years. The maximum capacity of the courtrooms is 240 participants; 230 registered.

Each of the judge/attorney teams developed its own case and presented the scenario using judicial staff volunteers. The case was presented and decided in 20 minutes with 10 additional minutes allowed for questions and answers. The Hunterdon County mock trial winners were presented with their awards during the reception.

Highlighted below are comments from two Court Night participants:

“Thank you for sharing Law Day with us. My kids and scouts

had a great time. It was a plus that they got to see their uncle, who is a sheriff’s officer....I forgot all about the possibility of his being there. A great time was had by all!”

“Sincere thanks for your Reality Court program on May 1. I brought my eighth-grade daughter, and we both found it very interesting and informative. The question-and-answer period was a key aspect in helping the kids understand what was happening, as some of the typical language of a courtroom is unfamiliar to them, especially the younger children. We truly appreciate the time you spent to offer this program. The other girls in my Cadette Girl Scout troop were unable to attend due to conflicts, but I will definitely recommend the experience to them if you offer the program again in the future.”

On May 10, the Vicinage 13 Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns in conjunction with the Somerset County Prosecutor’s office held a program entitled, “Internet Safety....Advice On How to Protect Our Children.” The event was held in the Somerset County Courthouse.

The evening program, which was covered by the *Star-Ledger*, began with refreshments and the opportunity to meet Judge Paul Armstrong, chairperson of the Vicinage 13 Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns, and Aime Alonzo-Serrano, ombudsman for the vicinage. Also in attendance were Judge Robert Reed and Judge Thomas Dilts, former chairperson of the Vicinage 13 Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns. During their welcome

remarks, Judge Reed and Judge Dilts expressed their support of the program.

W. Brian Stack, assistant prosecutor and Detective Brian J. Gilmurray talked about the dangers of the Internet and how these dangers are just a click away from entering our homes. Their tips included information on how to check a computer’s history files, how to prevent children from becoming victims of dangerous people online, and what parents can do to monitor their children’s use of the Internet.

Program participants, which included parents and educators, were receptive to the program and participated in a lively question-and-answer session.

Mercer

The Mercer Vicinage celebrated Law Day with a variety of activities during the first two weeks of May. On May 1, courthouse visitors and employees enjoyed a Law Day display containing information about the history of Law Day, this year’s theme, a video-taped message from Chief Justice James R. Zazzali, photographs from previous events and essays prepared by middle-school students. Middle-school students were offered an interactive *Who’s Who in the Courts* presentation as well as a program titled *Justice Empowering You* which educates students on the use of mediation, arbitration and other dispute resolution programs in the courts.

The Law Day High School Summit brought the theme *Empowering Youth, Assuring Democracy* to life. Assignment Judge Linda R. Feinberg was pleased to welcome more than 90 par-

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ticipants including high school seniors and their teachers to the summit at the Trenton Marriott. In describing her role as a judge, she stated, "All of you are the leaders of tomorrow." She encouraged students to embrace Law Day as a celebration of our democracy, freedoms to make choices and liberties guaranteed by our constitution which should not be taken for granted.

Dr. Susan Hodgson, child advocate for New Jersey, introduced the audience to the concept of five promises to children: caring adults, safe places, healthy start, effective education and opportunities to help others. Students had small group discussions led by facilitators including assistant prosecutors, public defenders and members of the Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns.

The Mercer County Bar Association offered a presentation titled "Hey, I'm 18," which educates youth on their rights and responsibilities as they enter the adult world. Mercer County mock trial

competition winners also received awards during this program.

Event organizers were impressed with the students' enthusiasm, eagerness to learn, future plans and involvement in their communities. Judge Audrey Peyton-Blackburn closed the program with the words, "...continue to be engaged because you are our future."

On the evening of May 9, Mercer County residents had the opportunity to obtain court information from self-represented litigant packets to career and volunteer opportunities in the Judiciary at a Law Expo in the Quakerbridge Mall. Attorneys from the Mercer Bar offered free 15 minute consultations through their Lawyers C.A.R.E. program.

Mercer Vicinage Assignment Judge Linda Feinberg and Trial Court Administrator Sue Regan thank court staff, the Mercer County Bar Association and volunteers from the Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns for making Law Day 2007 activities a success.

Middlesex

On May 21, Middlesex Vicinage, including the members of the Vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns, observed its annual Law Day. This year's Law Day theme was, "Liberty under Law: Empowering Youth, Assuring Democracy." The importance of youth empowerment and making the right choices was the overall theme of the event that was attended by approximately 300 students from the Middlesex County school districts.

The event opened with a videotaped welcome address from Chief Justice James R. Zazzali. Middlesex Vicinage Assignment Judge Robert A. Longhi read a formal proclamation for Law Day 2007. This was the final Law Day program under Judge Longhi's term as assignment judge. The reading of the proclamation was followed by the student contest award ceremony. The six county students who received awards for their essays on the importance of democracy read their essays to the assembled group at the Law Day program.

The keynote speaker for the event was Dr. Lenworth Gunther. Dr. Gunther, a noted historian, spoke on the historical impact of democracy and how important it is for students today to understand that many of the movements in our country were started by students. Dr. Gunther noted that educating the next generation is important for assuring that they become effective participants in our nation's civic life.



Mercer Vicinage's celebration of Law Day included a colorful exhibit with information and handouts.

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Empowering Youth, Assuring Democracy:

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The program concluded with a panel discussion and a video presentation, "It Could Be You." The panel session focused on helping students think about and make the right choices in situations involving negative peer pressure. It also focused on the possible consequences students, their peers and their school may face if they make the wrong choice Judge Roger W. Daley, who is assigned to the Middlesex Vicinage juvenile section, served as the moderator for the panel session.

Monmouth

The Monmouth Vicinage observed the 50th anniversary of Law Day by conducting a formal ceremony as well as several community outreach events. The Law Day ceremony was held at the General Equity courtroom in the Hall of Records in Freehold. The vicinage was honored to have

Supreme Court Associate Justice Roberto A. Rivera-Soto appear as the keynote speaker. Associate Justice Rivera-Soto delivered a moving and informative address on the history of Law Day and the "majesty of our legal system."

Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson and Monmouth Bar Association President Mitchell J. Ansell greeted the audience and presented Chief Justice James R. Zazzali's remarks by videotape. The program included a performance of "God Bless America" by Monmouth Vicinage employee Tarika Jean-Pierre, and a Color Guard presentation by Boy Scout Troop 180 of Tennent, N.J.

During the ceremony, the Honorable Daniel J. O'Hern Mock Trial Award was presented to Colts Neck High School for winning this year's competition. At the conclusion of the ceremony, student winners of the essay and art contest sponsored by the Monmouth

Vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns accepted their awards. They were thrilled to pose for photographs with Assignment Judge Lawson who stated to them, "Congratulating this year's student winners is especially rewarding, given the youth-oriented theme of Law Day 2007. Students, you have taken the first steps towards empowerment and have proven your respect for the rule of law. I sincerely hope that your interest in law and the legal process continues."

Other Law Day activities included a Law Informational Fair at the courthouse for members of the public. The fair presented practical information on court topics, such as domestic violence, child support, expungements, landlord/tenant issues, elder law and the courts' ombudsman program. During the fair, the Monmouth Bar Association and Ocean-Monmouth Legal Services sponsored an "Ask a Lawyer" program with attorneys from those organizations providing 15-minute consultations to interested participants. During the month of May, vicinage staff also displayed an exhibit at the Asian Heritage Festival in Manalapan, conducted a Legal Expo at the Freehold Raceway Mall in Freehold and represented the Judiciary at the Latino Issues Convention and Business Exposition held at the New Jersey Convention and Expo Center.

In addition, the vicinage's Educational Program for Students on May 4 was enjoyed by both the student participants and the vicinage facilitators. Approximately 100 students from Freehold Intermediate School and St. Rose of Lima School in Freehold



Monmouth Vicinage Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson with the winners of the Law Day 2007 essay and art contest sponsored by the Monmouth Vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns. The winners are: (front row, left to right) Dominika Rybaltowski, Patrick McHugh, Therese Kavtaradze, Amelia Carlson, Danielle Brex, Diana Reyes; (back row, left to right) Christian Phipps, Justin Nguyen, Ali Hashimee, Judge Lawson, Alyssa Gallipani and Katie Fitzgerald. (Evan Johnson is not pictured.)

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New Jersey's Courts Celebrate Law Day 2007

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were in attendance. After opening remarks and a question-and-answer period by Assignment Judge Lawson, the students attended several instructional presentations. Trial Court Administrator Marsi L. Perkins offered an interactive session on the rule of law and the role of the courts. She told them, "As you go through this building today, remember that it is not just a building; it is a symbol of the justice that we enjoy in our nation, a place where your rights are guaranteed."

Panel discussions on employment with the Judiciary were presented by Court Services Supervisor 2 Randal Yorker, Official Court Reporter Mary Heimbuch, Court Interpreter Ana Rivera, Law Clerk Shigenobu Fujii, Judiciary Secretary Baryne Rosenfeld, and Information Technology Analyst Juan Colmenares. Sheriff's Officer Daniel Melendez also spoke to the students about law enforcement careers. All of the panelists encouraged the students' participation and piqued their interest by providing relevant examples and stories. In fact, Yorker broke the ice and made quite an impression when he distributed copies of his below-average grammar and law school grades. He explained to the students that, even if they don't always excel in school, it is always possible to turn around their past, work hard and achieve great things, as he did. The program concluded with a session of Judicial Jeopardy and a canine unit demonstration by the Monmouth County Sheriff's Department. The students came away with an appreciation of the court system

and promised that they would plan another visit to expand on this valuable learning experience.

In summary, this year's Law Day activities inspired a sense of respect and honor for the rule of law in all participants. Vicinage staff members are already expressing their enthusiasm about planning for next year's Law Day events.

Morris

The Morris County Superior Court held its annual Law Day celebration on May 1. Led by Assignment Judge B. Theodore Bozonelis, the celebration featured the Morris County Sheriff's Office Honor Guard as well as remarks from Morris County Freeholder Director Margaret Nordstrom and Kim Daniels Walsh, court ombudsman.

Morris County Bar Association President Robert McAndrew delivered the keynote presentation. The program, which was held on the front grounds of the courthouse, was open to all employees as well as the public. A string ensemble and choir from Morristown High School, led by Orchestra Director Norma Davis, added a musical element to this year's program.

This year, eighth-grade students from Dover Middle School were recognized for participation in the Vicinage Minority Concerns Committee Mentor Program. Beginning in January, employees from Probation, Criminal and the Family Divisions, in addition to Minority Concerns Committee Chairman Judge John B. Dangler, traveled to the school to provide a thorough overview of the state judicial system. The mentor pro-

gram concluded with a tour of the court complex and participation in the Law Day event.

In addition, Bar Foundation President Roy J. Evans, acknowledged and congratulated the winners of the county mock trial competition, West Morris Mendham High School, who were also in attendance. West Morris High School captured the mock trial title for the second time in as many years.

Passaic

Jointly sponsored by the Passaic Vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns and the Passaic County Bar Association, this year's Law Day program was, by all accounts, a great success. Approximately 140 high school students attended this year's celebration at the Passaic County Courthouse. Participating schools included the following Passaic County high schools: De Paul, Hawthorne, John F. Kennedy, Manchester Regional, Mary Help of Christians, Rosa Parks Fine and Performing Arts, Paterson Catholic, Wayne Valley and West Milford. Also in attendance were 33 sixth-grade students from Al-Hikmah, a Muslim school in Prospect Park. The theme was Liberty Under Law: Empowering Youth, Assuring Democracy.

Students were invited to participate in a mock city council session in which they debated one of two topics, drug testing in schools or teen curfew. Four city council members were on hand to assist in the program. Paterson City Council President Ken Morris addressed the students

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on the structure and operations of city council. He later worked with students from John F. Kennedy High School in Paterson and some students from Al-Hikmah. Paterson Councilman Rigo Rodriguez worked with students from Paterson Catholic High School. Haledon City Council Member Michael Tirri assisted students from Manchester Regional High School and students from Al-Hikmah, while Councilman Joseph

Smolinski worked with students from West Milford High School.

At the same time, a dual program for new citizens and a swearing-in ceremony were taking place in the Freeholder room. Arranged and coordinated by Sohail Mohammed, an immigration attorney from Clifton and a long-time member of the Minority Concerns Committee, 24 new citizens were administered the oath of allegiance by Assignment Judge Robert J. Passero.

Those sworn in were from countries from around the world, including Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, India, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, Poland and Turkey. The new citizens learned about voting rights and responsibilities from the Deputy Superintendent of Elections Robert J. De Mers. Ken Hirmann showed the attendees how to operate a voting machine. Donna Umstead, a supervisor from the County Clerk's Office talked about passports and Jury Manager Hayley Encarnacion spoke about jury service. Also on hand were Freeholder Director Elease Evans and Passaic County Bar President Glenn F. Peterson.

Participating judges from the vicinage were Assignment Judge Robert J. Passero; Judge Stephen H. Womack, chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns; Civil Presiding Judge Thomas F. Brogan; Criminal Judge Ernest M. Caposela; Family Judge Miguel de la Carrera; Family Judge Richard M. Freid; Civil Judge Thomas J. LaConte; Criminal Judge Raymond A. Reddin; Civil Judge Joseph J. Riva; Criminal Judge George F. Rohde Jr and Family Judge John E. Selser.

Two Minority Concerns members, Yolanda Adrianzen and Larry Pollack, who are attorneys, also helped out by advising the city councils in two of the courtrooms. Once again, members of the EEO/AA Advisory Committee assisted by accompanying a class for the duration of the program. Liaisons included Lydella Clarkson, Rosa Guardiola, Milagros Guzman, Dorothy Howell, Ying Lan Ho, Fatima Manese, Sandee Nole, Yocasta Tapia-Lugo and June Zieder, as well as Judiciary

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Students from Passaic County prepare for a mock city council session.



A mock trial is held in a Passaic Vicinage courtroom.

New Jersey's Courts Celebrate Law Day 2007

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Union

Union County Superior Court, along with its co-sponsors Union County Bar Association and the Union Vicinage Minority Concerns Committee, celebrated Law Day on May 1 in the courtroom of Assignment Judge Walter R. Barisonek. Law Day is a national day set aside to celebrate the rule of law.

Each year, Law Day follows a theme around which programs and events are focused. The 2007 Law Day theme was "Liberty under Law: Empowering Youth, Ensuring Democracy." Union County middle schools competed in essay, poster, and spoken word/rap/poetry contests revolving around this theme. Students took first, second and third place in each category. The winning schools included Rahway, Christa McAuliffe and Alexander Hamilton Middle Schools. As part of Law Day 2007, the students were treated to an Awards Program followed by lunch provided by the court.

Paul Endler, who is the coor-

dinator of the Vincent J. Apruzzese Mock Trial Competition on behalf of the Union County Bar Association, was on hand to present the Mock Trial Award to Union County's Oratory Preparatory High School, winners of the Union County Mock Trial Competition. Oratory went on to finish in third place in the statewide competition and qualified to compete nationally. The Oratory team was unable to be present at the celebration to accept their award because they were competing in the National Moot Court Competition held the week of May 1.

Judge Frederic R. McDaniel, co-chair of the Minority Concerns Advisory Committee for Union Vicinage and chair of the Law Day program, presided over the celebration. The keynote speaker was Danielle McCall of New Jersey Orators. McCall delivered Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech, "The Purpose of Education." Choral musical selections were performed by the Myles J. McManus Middle School of Linden under the direction of Reggie

Turner.

In addition, for the first time as part of its Law Day celebration, Union County Superior Court hosted an information fair. Representatives of the Civil, Criminal and Family Divisions were on hand to answer questions from the public. Also represented were the County Clerk's Office, the Surrogate's Office, Human Resources, Volunteer Services, Probation and Child Support. The event was organized by Nancy S. Yurek, Union Vicinage's volunteer coordinator.



Mark Chai, fire official from the Elizabeth Fire Department, provided a fire prevention display during the Law Day Information Fair.

Law Day articles were contributed by the following vicinages, counties and authors: Bergen, Laura A. Simoldoni; Burlington, Donna Mazzanti; Camden, Nalo Brown; Essex, Shazeeda Samsudeen; Hudson, Pauline D. Daniels and Kristen A. Hands; Hunterdon/Somerset/Warren, Pierrette Torres, Aime Alonzo-Serrano and several additional staff sources; Mercer, Judith Irizarry; Middlesex, Lawrence Bethea; Monmouth, Janet Slocum; Morris, Kim Daniels Walsh; Passaic, Sharon Kinney; Union, Leslie A. Santora.



Law Day 2007--Judge James J. Morley of the Burlington Vicinage shares the bench with Ryan Carr, a seventh-grade student from Maple Shade Jr. High School, during Law Day activities this spring.

Chief Justice James R. Zazzali Retires with Impressive List of Achievements

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improve the government's response to domestic violence cases where children are involved.

In addition, Chief Justice Zazzali made significant efforts to expand the public's understanding of their

Judiciary and to that end he met with reporters and editorial boards at several newspapers, held a conference to promote cooperation between the bench, the bar and the media, and re-instated the Bench, Bar, Media Committee.

During his term the Chief Justice addressed several audiences on a wide range of topics. Below are a few of his observations culled from recent speeches:

On the work of the courts

Our decisions become case law, guiding future court decisions, legislative decisions, administrative decisions in our executive branch, and of course, the lives of our citizens. It is through the courts that many of our social advancements are achieved.

From the right to sue to the right to die, the New Jersey Supreme Court has been at the forefront of some of the most important social issues we face, as a state and as a nation.

On the term "judicial activism"

The simple fact is that conservative judges can be activist; liberal judges can be activist. The bottom line is that we do not make laws. We interpret laws.

We spend countless hours in many cases trying to understand what the legislature intended by the statute.

We then seek to apply that legislative intent.

In doing so, we simply do no more than what the law tells us to do. And surely, at times, as you would expect us to do, we might add considerations of public policy to our deliberations—that is, what is best for the public. That's not activism; that's justice.

On his career in public service

When I graduated from law school in 1962, most of my classmates were headed north, to big firms and big paychecks near the Big Apple and other northern cities. I headed south, toward the civil unrest and labor strife taking place in the Carolinas, the Virginias and Georgia. I worked

to organize workers and bring about some amelioration of the abject poverty and dismal working conditions of those who didn't have the means or the education to get the job done for themselves. All for the grand salary of \$5,000 a year, which, even in those days, was not a princely sum.

That was a formative period for a number of reasons. I began to see, to really see, what it means to be truly poor and powerless in this country. It was an awakening. Since having that experience and learning that lesson, in small ways, incrementally and like so many other public servants, I have tried to make a difference in our society and to strengthen the protections afforded by our legal system to those who need them most.

On the need for diversity

I believe that diversity is and will be the source of our strength both as a state and as a court system. We want to ensure that we serve our entire population with fairness and respect, and we continue to work on demystifying the court system through outreach programs, customer service initiatives and community partnerships.

We also want to ensure that our workforce reflects the wide diversity of the communities we serve, and we continue our efforts to attract and retain highly qualified workers from all backgrounds.

On the need for an informed citizenry

In terms of being informed, young people today, indeed, most people today, do not read newspapers the way your parents and grandparents

Monmouth Municipal Advance

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identified as the fastest growing county in the state, and the demographics are rapidly changing. The Monmouth Vicinage and the Municipal Division realize that diversity awareness must be brought to another level so that the courts will be prepared and equipped to deal with differences in the community. These differences encompass not only race, religion and ethnic backgrounds, but include gender, age group, sexual preference and other socio-economic traits. By increasing their sensitivity to an ever-changing population, the Municipal Division can ensure positive interaction with the public as they serve as the first point of contact.

Also during the program, Sharon Astorino, administrative specialist 4, improvised a role-play to clarify jurisdictional questions with the assistance of Linda Schwartz, administrative specialist 4, and Linda Nelson, administrative specialist 3 from the Ocean Vicinage Municipal Division. As a perfect ending to an inspirational day, judges challenged administrators in a game of Municipal Tetragon. Questions related to all aspects of the municipal courts were presented, and both groups of contestants proved their skills and expertise during the competition. The advance was successful at uniting all in attendance in a common goal of ensuring excellence in service to their constituency.

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Judiciary Times Newsletter Wins Three Awards from Society of Professional Journalists and NJ CAMA

Judiciary Times, the quarterly newsletter of New Jersey's courts, won the Newsletter Writing and Reporting Award from the New Jersey Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists (NJSPJ) and two silver Astra Awards for Excellence in Writing from the N.J. Communications, Advertising and Marketing Association (NJ CAMA) this spring.

The NJSPJ award was presented June 9 at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. Entries in the NJSPJ contest were judged out-of-state by members of another chapter of the national society.

The Astra Awards were presented March 29 at the Conference Center of Mercer County Community College.

Linda Brown Holt, founding editor and writer of the *Judiciary Times* newsletter, accepted the Astras for "Staff Who Keep on Giving" (Excellence in Writing: Newslet-

ter) and "Judiciary Skills on Duty in Iraq" (Excellence in Writing: Feature Story). Winnie Comfort directs the Judiciary's Office of Communications which produces the newsletter, an award-winning Web site njcourtonline.com, a nationally recognized video program and other communications venues.

The Judiciary also received an award from the NJSPJ in 2005 and received gold and silver Astra Awards in 2004 and 2006 in the Excellence in Writing: Newsletter category.

NJSPJ is the only organization in New Jersey dedicated to the interests of all journalists and people in related fields, including reporters, editors, producers, public information officers, freelancers; publication, radio, television and cable owners, and anyone else who works to disseminate information, according to www.njspj.org.

NJ CAMA is a non-profit orga-

nization founded in 1986. Its mission is to support a community of creative and business professionals with programs and resources that continually improve the effectiveness and integrity of communications, delivered through advertising, marketing programs, public relations and other tactical efforts.

This year, NJ CAMA received 300 entries for its annual competition, a 30 percent increase over last year's submissions. A panel of independent experts from major advertising and marketing firms in the tri-state area judged the entries.

Competing for awards were some of the state's top advertising and marketing firms, including Creative Marketing Alliance, MRM Gillespie, Oxford Communications, Princeton Communications Group and Princeton Partners, as well as organizations such as ETS, Merrill Lynch and several medical centers.

The annual ASTRA Awards honor the best creative concepts, strategies and design by the communications, advertising and marketing community. According to the NJ CAMA Web site, the ASTRA Awards is one of the most prestigious communications honors in the New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania community.

The award categories include sales promotion, collateral material, direct marketing, out-of-home, business/trade publications, consumer magazine, and newspaper advertising, Web banner ads, interactive Web sites, radio, cable and television advertising, multi-media campaigns, self promotion, design/advertising arts, public service advertising, marketing, public relations, excellence in writing and ideas that never went beyond the concept stage.

A host of Judiciary staff contribute articles and photographs to *Judiciary Times* throughout the year.

Union Vicinage Hosts its First Health Fair

by Linda Wiggins
Administrative Specialist 4
Union Vicinage

On May 24, Union Vicinage hosted its first health fair to provide employees with an opportunity to educate and evaluate themselves on such health issues as nutrition, heart-healthy living, prevention care, cancer detection and treatment. The event was held in the Union Vicinage Courthouse, outside Assignment Judge Walter R. Barisonek's courtroom.

From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Robert Wood Johnson Fitness and Wellness Center administered screenings for blood pressure, body-fat analysis, nutrition and cosmetology health. Children's Specialized Hospital offered information on child safety covering such topics as bicycle, water/pool, car seat and teen driving. Newark Beth Israel Medical Center for Geriatric

Health Care provided heart-healthy living advice including the prevention of heart disease and a free senior health membership program. True Health Chiropractic screened for stress and spinal concerns.

More than 150 employees attended the event. Union Vicinage is committed to the physical and mental wellness of its employees and intends to sponsor additional health fairs in the coming year.



Judiciary Employee Arlene DeJesus with Nurse Cora Losordo from Newark Beth Israel Medical Center.

Essex Vicinage Celebrates Bring Your Child To Work Day

by Donna Cestari
Administrative Specialist/HR
Essex Vicinage

April 26 marked another successful Bring Your Child to Work Day at Essex Vicinage. The children attending the event ranged from ages nine to fifteen. This year it was held in the Historic Courthouse and the Wilentz Justice Complex. Many of our special young guests have returned over the years. As they get older, we recognize their increased knowledge of the courts; that growth makes the event a more meaningful experience for everyone involved.

The icebreaker at both sites was “Who’s the Judge?” The children at both sites asked challenging questions of panel members and excitedly collaborated in an attempt to identify the real judge. Participants in the Veterans Courthouse were: Judge Verna G. Leath; John Merkt, court services supervisor 2; Abigail

Jacobson, administrative supervisor 1; Carol Lyew-Giles; court executive 2b; Debra Dadic, court executive 1b; and Christopher Stanecki, court executive 2b.

In the Wilentz Building, participants were: Judge Thomas P. Zampino; Joseph O’Neal, Judiciary clerk 3; Rubi Lochner, administrative specialist 4; Patricia Draude, administrative specialist 3; and Sophia Boye-Doe, court services supervisor 2.

The activities at the Wilentz Justice Complex included a demonstration on how K-9 dogs are taught to sniff out drugs, bombs and dynamite. The children seemed to enjoy this as they asked numerous questions, petted the dog and took pictures with their cell phones. Detective Arnold Anderson conducted a presentation on Internet safety that was very helpful to the children.

The closing event held at both locations was Jeopardy. The children were split into groups and asked

questions regarding the activities and presentations of the day. The groups’ scores tied, so everyone won!

The children received goodie bags filled with informative brochures on the courts, candy and a certificate of participation. The remainder of the day was spent at their guardian’s work area.

Working hard to make the day a success were Bring Your Child to Work committee members Juanita Carrion, Donna Cestari, Gerald Edwards, Jamilah Holden, Ana Lazo, Patricia McCoy, Akwaugo Ndedi-Okehi, Lynn Norcia, Yesenia Rivera and Gwendolyn Terrell.

Monmouth Vicinage Children Visit the Courts

by Janet Slocum,
Administrative Specialist 4
Monmouth Vicinage

“A New Generation at Work” was the theme of the Monmouth Vicinage’s 10th annual “Take Your Child to Work Day.” This theme was conveyed to over 60 children through various activities focused on realizing each child’s potential for the future.

After visiting their parents’ work sites, the children gathered before Civil Division Judge Louis F. Locascio who captivated them with his welcoming remarks. During a question-and-answer session, he responded to inquiries from the children, such as, “Did you ever have to put anyone in jail?” and “Tell us about the most difficult case that you have heard.”

The children broke into various age groups to participate in mock trials conducted by vicinage staff. Younger children enjoyed the trial “Goldilocks” and “The Case of the Misplaced Lottery Ticket,” while the older groups took part in “It’s Icy Hear” (sic) and “Piesh Enluv v. The United Hands School District.” (sic) Most of the children took their assignments very seriously, and fervently portrayed the roles of attorneys, witnesses and judges.

Take a Child to Work Day – Vicinage 15

by Geraldine P. Doyle
Administrative Specialist 3
Cumberland/Gloucester/Salem Vicinage

Vicinage 15 hosted its annual Take a Child to Work Day on April 26 in Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem Counties. Children ages 8 to 13 participated in the half-day program.

The day started with a visit to the employees’ work sites. The program

began with welcoming remarks by judges followed by a presentation by the Sheriff’s Department which included composite drawings and the ever-popular search dogs.

The children enjoyed a mock trial where they participated as co-counsel, witnesses and jurors. The day ended with refreshments and certificates for the children. A good time was had by all.



South Jersey’s courts welcomed staff children during Take a Child to Work Day in April.

Betty Crocker, Move Over: Bergen Bakes Up a Storm

by Deborah Gonzalez
Administrative Specialist 2,
Civil Division
Bergen Vicinage

How many people does it take to sample 21 pies and cakes?

Give up? The answer is two judges and one trial court administrator. What began as a joke between co-workers turned out to be an enjoyable surprise and success for the Bergen County Civil Division.

Jamie Fessano, assistant Civil Division manager, suggested a lunch as part of Civil's popular "Give 'em the Pickle" program. Everyone thought it was a good idea, and then decided to go one step further and have a bake-off.

The number of entries submitted, a total of 21, was not only surprising to the division but also to our contest judges Jon Goodman, TCA of Bergen County, Judge Brian R. Martinotti and Judge Robert L. Polifroni, who took their judging very seriously.

Judge Martinotti came in with his own fork in a sealed envelope. Jon Goodman's eyes went wide when he saw all the cakes and pies that he would taste. Judge Polifroni was a little late for the beginning of the tasting, but he caught up in no time.

Among the many delicious entries were apple walnut almond tort, gooey pumpkin cake, German apple streusel, apple walnut rum cake, pumpkin cream pie, apple crisp and pumpkin cheesecake. Small pieces were cut and given to each of the

judges to taste. You thought judges could be serious on the bench; well, they are even more serious when they are deciding whose baked goods would win in the two categories. There were whispers between the judges about consistency, smoothness and what was pleasing to the palate. They even went back for seconds a few times.

After tasting the apple pies and cakes, the judges retired to their chambers to discuss the winner. Before announcing the winner of the apple category, our judges dove right into the pumpkin entries. Because there were so many entries, we were able to have two winners instead of only one.

Passaic Vicinage Recognizes Volunteers

by Frank Sagato
Volunteer Coordinator, Passaic

On May 8, the Passaic Vicinage held its Annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner at The Brownstone restaurant in Paterson. More than 120 volunteers, judges and Judiciary staff attended the event celebrating National Volunteer week.

This year, the vicinage honored two new groups of volunteers. The first group serves with the Village Initiative, a partnership among the Probation Division, the Paterson Police and staff from St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center that works to improve the quality of life in some of Paterson's poorest neighborhoods.

Our first bake-off winners were Donna Suszynski for her apple crisp and Nancy LeCount for her two-layer pumpkin pie. They each received an American Express gift certificate generously donated by Division Manager Kathleen Andes Stylianou, Assistant Division Managers Mary Demmer and Jamie Fessano and the Civil Division's Sunshine Fund.

After the judging and winners were announced, Civil Division staff got to dive in and reap the rewards of the contest. The event prompted additional suggestions, such as the possible publication of a book of recipes.

So, as they say, the division that bakes together, stays together.

The second group of new volunteers is from the Civil Mediation program. Recognized for their contributions were attorneys who mediate cases with a demand of \$3,001 to \$15,000 without charging a fee for their services.

Tech-KNOWLEDGE-y's Janet Bastien Retires

Janet Bastien, author of *Judiciary Times'* award-winning tech-KNOWLEDGE-y column, retired this summer. A project manager in the central office's information technology office, Janet's first column appeared in the Winter 2001-2002 edition of *Judiciary Times*.

The column provided readers with information and insights on a wide range of IT topics, from searching the 'Net to nipping computer problems in the bud. The columns were infused with Janet's sense of humor and colorful metaphors.

Thank you, Janet, for a job well done. We wish you many years of happiness and creativity in retirement!



Pies, Glorious Pies! Staff from the Civil Division, Bergen Vicinage, present their culinary triumphs during their first bake-off.

Chief Justice James R. Zazzali Retires with Impressive List of Achievements

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did when they were young, when newspapers were the main source of information about government and world events. I find that extremely troubling. Even identifying what is news has become difficult. The lines between news and entertainment

have blurred and the so-called “shock jocks” are directing the public discourse. An uninformed or, worse, a misinformed citizenry is a blight upon our great state and our nation. And it threatens democracy itself. We must work together to have a strong system

of delivering accurate information about what we do.

Without an informed citizenry, our democratic system, our government, including our legal system, cannot survive. This system has been in successful operation for 230 years. This system makes possible the work that we do, as judges, as attorneys and yes, as journalists.

As judges, we rely on an informed citizenry to understand the difference between a ruling from the bench and a political platform. We rely on an informed citizenry to uphold the separation of powers and the checks and balances that protect judges whose decisions often are unpopular.

We rely on an informed citizenry to serve on unbiased juries who hear and analyze both sides of a case because they understand that work is critical to our democracy.

Perhaps most importantly, we rely on an informed citizenry to respect our work and to adhere to our decisions.

Attorneys also rely on an informed citizenry. If our citizens do not understand and respect our system of justice then, frankly, they do not need attorneys to represent them in court. They can, and will, find less peaceable ways to resolve their disputes.

Our news media rely on an informed public as well. They need citizens who are interested and engaged in current events or they, too, will suffer irrelevance.

Without the public’s understanding of and trust in our work, our democratic system—any democratic system—cannot stand.

Without a free press and an independent Judiciary, our democratic system cannot stand.

Chief Justice Appoints Two Assignment Judges

Chief Justice James R. Zazzali appointed two new assignment judges this spring: Judge Travis L. Francis, Middlesex Vicinage, and Judge Vincent J. Grasso, Ocean Vicinage.

Judge Francis was appointed assignment judge of the Middlesex Vicinage effective May 26, upon the retirement of Assignment Judge Robert A. Longhi. Judge Francis is

responsible of assignment judge,” said Chief Justice Zazzali.

Judge Francis holds a Bachelor of Science in psychology from Bradley University, a Master of Education from North Carolina State University and a Juris Doctorate from Rutgers University School of Law, Newark.

Judge Grasso was named assignment judge of the Ocean Vicinage Superior Court. The appointment was effective July 4 upon the retirement of Judge Eugene Serpentelli, who served as assignment judge since February 1985, the longest term of any assignment judge in the modern Judiciary’s history.

In announcing the Judge Grasso’s appointment, the chief justice said, “Judge Grasso is a seasoned manager and a respected jurist. His dedication to the rule of law and to the effective operation of the courts makes him the ideal candidate for the role of assignment judge. His colleagues, attorneys, staff and the citizens of Ocean County will be well served by his experience and commitment.”

Judge Grasso received his bachelor’s degree from Columbia University and his juris doctor degree from Vermont Law School. He was admitted to the bar in 1977 and was in private practice until his judicial appointment.



Judge Francis

Judge Grasso

the first African-American assignment judge in the Middlesex Vicinage and, at the time of his 1992 swearing-in, was the first African-American judge ever appointed to that courthouse.

“Judge Francis is an extraordinary jurist. During his 15 years of service in Middlesex County, he has sat in the Family, Civil and Criminal Divisions and has proven his leadership as presiding judge in the General Equity Division. His depth of experience across all case types and his management experience will serve him and the vicinage well as he takes on the



Mission Statement of the New Jersey Court System

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.