Judiciary Times

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Chief Justice Touts Bail Reform in Bar Speech

Measure Will Transform Criminal Justice System When Implemented in January 2017

By Mike Mathis
Judiciary Times Editor

Bail reform, complex commercial cases, and advances in technology were the highlights of Chief Justice Stuart Rabner's speech to the New Jersey Bar Association in May.

Two of the most pressing issues the Judiciary has undertaken, bail reform and speedy trial reform will fundamentally change how judges set bail and how quickly cases move.

By Jan. 1, 2017, the state will shift from a system that relies principally on setting monetary bail as a condition of release to a risk-based system that other states, including Kentucky and Arizona, have used with success. (*See story on Page 2 for detailed information about bail and speedy trial reform.)*

Under the current system, in which judges typically set a dollar amount of bail, poor defendants who pose little risk of danger or flight are sometimes held in county jail because they can't make even modest amounts of bail.

Meanwhile, under current law, defendants with assets can post bail and be released even if they pose a serious risk of flight or danger.

After Jan. 1, 2017. judges will be able to order defendants who pose a serious risk of flight, or a serious risk of danger to the community or to witnesses held without bail.

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Chief Justice Stuart Rabner speaks at the annual convention of the New Jersey State Bar Association in Atlantic City in May. Among the topics the chief justice addressed were bail reform, complex commercial litigation and technology.

Magna Carta, Individual Rights Focus of Law Day Events

Editor's note: Instituted by the American Bar Association (ABA) 56 years ago, Law Day is observed each year throughout New Jersey by the Judiciary in partnership with county bar associations.

A special day set aside to focus on the American heritage of liberty under law, Law Day was officially designated by a joint resolution of Congress in 1961.

The event has grown over the years, with many counties hosting activities throughout May. This year's theme was "Magna Carta: symbol of Freedom Under Law."

Atlantic/Cape May

Judiciary, Atlantic County and Atlantic City staff and the

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How Drug Courts Improve the Lives of Offenders and Society

By Judge Glenn A. Grant
Acting Administrative Director of the Courts

It has been nearly 20 years since the first drug court became a reality in New Jersey.

Who could have imagined that the pilots in Camden and Essex counties would grow into the successful statewide program we have today? We have drug courts in every county, mandatory drug courts in nine vicinages to date, and we are a few months away from rolling out the third phase of mandatory drug courts statewide, expanding into Bergen, Burlington and Monmouth counties.

Since the inception of drug court, we have sentenced

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Bail Reform, Advances in Technology Focus of Chief's Speech

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The speedy trial component will set limits on the amount of time from arrest to indictment and from indictment to trial, with appropriate extensions of time for pretrial motions, competency hearings, plea negotiations, the consent of the parties, and other valid reasons.

"Why are these changes important? For the simple reason that in other states that have done this -- let's take Kentucky, as an example -- more defendants are being released pretrial, yet there has been no increase in the rate of failures to appear and there has been a drop in the arrest rate for defendants on supervision," the chief justice said.

The chief justice also spoke about the Judiciary's new approach to handling complex commercial cases, which has been in place since January.

One judge in each vicinage has been assigned to handle complex commercial matters with damages of more than $200,000 and complex factual or legal issues.

"An impressive roster of judges has been selected for this assignment, and we will make every effort not to rotate them with frequency to allow for greater stability in this area of the law," he said.

The Judiciary has made substantial strides in technology, with a number of projects that have made the courts more transparent, more accessible, and more user-friendly to the public and the bar, the chief justice said.

The Judiciary posts a variety of materials online, including opinions of the Tax Court, the Disciplinary Review Board and hundreds of model jury charges in criminal and civil cases.

There's also an online attorney index that lawyers and the public can use to check the status of the more than 70,000 registered New Jersey attorneys.

The Judiciary also interacts with jurors online. More than 700,000 jurors responded to the standard juror questionnaire online last year.

The Administrative Office of the Courts now sends out more than 24,000 text messages each month telling jurors if they have to report shortly before their designated date and on each day of their service. Jurors also can download an app that gives them information about where to go, where to park, and where to eat, as well as details about actual jury service.

An attorney app that can be downloaded with similar information about each vicinage also is available.

Instead of going to a courthouse, victims of domestic violence can apply for a temporary restraining order by way of videoconferencing equipment from seven hospitals throughout the state, and from 10 safe houses in 10 different counties.

Last year, attorneys began filing motions in criminal matters electronically, and Tax Court filings have been done electronically since February. Planning is underway to roll out electronic filing in family and civil cases.

"In these and other areas, the successes that the Judiciary has been able to achieve are the result of cooperation between the bench and the bar," the chief justice said. "The judges and the court system, as a whole, deeply appreciate the support of the state bar and the county bars in recent years."

Judiciary Times is published by the Office of Communications and Community Relations, Administrative Office of the Courts, for employees of the Judiciary, volunteers who work with the court system and the public.

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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How Bail Reform Will Affect Criminal Justice in New Jersey

By Mike Mathis
Judiciary Times Editor

The New Jersey Judiciary is leading the massive effort to reform New Jersey's bail system, an initiative Chief Justice Stuart Rabner said is one of the most significant criminal justice reform measures that the state has undertaken.

Bail reform, which will be implemented on Jan. 1, 2017, will fundamentally change how judges set bail and, for the first time as well, there will be a speedy trial law.

The state is shifting from a system that relies principally on setting monetary bail as a condition of release to a risk-based system that other states have used with success.

Under the current system in which judges set a dollar amount of bail, poor defendants who pose little risk of danger or flight are sometimes held in county jail because they can't make even modest amounts of bail.

Meanwhile, under current law, defendants with assets can post bail and be released even if they pose a serious risk of flight or danger.

That will change; judges will be able to order defendants who pose a serious risk of flight, or a serious risk of danger to the community or to witnesses held without bail.

"Poor defendants are cut off from families; they may lose their jobs; they may go without access to medication

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Importance of Magna Carta Celebrated With Lectures, Contests

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public assembled at the Atlantic City Police and Fire Memorial Plaza in Atlantic City on April 29 to honor the New Jersey State Bar Foundation High School Mock Trial winners, Mainland Regional High School, and to witness the swearing in of 20 individuals as U.S. citizens.

Candidates and their families anxiously awaited the arrival of staff from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security so they could register and complete paperwork in what would be one of their final steps to citizenship. Many milled around the Atlantic County Office Building adjacent to the plaza collecting information from the Law Day fair participants.

Atlantic City Mayor Don Guardian welcomed the crowd before a color guard from the Atlantic County Department of Corrections presented the colors and the mock trial students from Mainland Regional High School led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Rebecca Lafferty spoke of the great effort put forth by individuals involved in the state mock trial competition by not only the students, but by the coaches and teachers. The members of the mock trial team received their awards before the mock trial championship cup was awarded to their teacher and leader, Christopher Fernandez.

Atlantic County Executive Dennis Levinson gave remarks before Nieves Cardinale, field office director for Homeland Security made a motion to the court to naturalize the 20 citizens. Assignment Judge Julio L. Mendez administered the Oath of Citizenship.

Trial Court Administrator Howard H. Berchtold Jr. and daughter Lauren Berchtold concluded the ceremony with *The Star-Spangled Banner.*

Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage Assignment Judge Julio L. Mendez and Nieves Cardinale of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services stand in front flags of countries from where candidates for U.S. citizenship hail. The naturalization ceremony took place in Atlantic City.

Bergen

The Bergen Vicinage, in partnership with the Bergen County Bar Association, Bergen County and the vicinage Minority Concerns Committee celebrated Law Day with a naturalization ceremony on May 1. The ceremony was held on the rotunda steps of the Bergen County Courthouse.

Judge Susan J. Steele, chair of Bergen's Law Day program, addressed the crowd with welcoming remarks and a brief history of Law Day. An impressive rendition of *The Star Spangled Banner* was sung by Olivia Wilson, a student at Ridgefield Park High School.

State Sen. Paul Sarlo delivered the keynote address. He spoke about how his wife moved to the United States from Italy at the age of six and how

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Judiciary Times Receives Journalism Award

Judiciary Times, the quarterly newsletter of the New Jersey Judiciary, has received a third place ranking in newsletter writing from the New Jersey Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists (NJSPJ). This is the fifth consecutive year the newsletter has received an NJSPJ award.

The publication, edited by Judiciary Publications and Video Production Manager Mike Mathis under the direction of Judiciary Communications and Community Relations Director Winnie Comfort. The contest was judged by out-of-state journalism professionals.

The award was given at a ceremony at the New Jersey Historical Society in Newark on June 27.

Each quarter, *Judiciary Times* publishes statewide and local news stories about the New Jersey courts, including new programs and services offered by the Judiciary, recent events held around the state and accomplishments of judges and staff.

The Society of Professional Journalists was founded in 1909 to encourage excellence in the journalism field. Emphasizing the critical role that journalists play in making sure that America's citizenry is well-informed, the society aims to protect the freedom of speech and freedom of the press as guaranteed in the Constitution.

The New Jersey Chapter of SPJ was founded in 1959, and its annual journalism awards program has grown steadily over the years to become one of the most competitive and prestigious in the state.

Judiciary Times is available at njcourts.com

Courthouse Celebrations Centered On the Magna Carta

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he remembers with pride the day she became a U.S. citizen.

The senator then addressed the new citizens directly.

"Enjoy this moment," he said. "We welcome you with open arms. Help make this country an even better place."

Presiding Chancery Judge Robert P. Contillo administered the Oath of Citizenship to the new citizens.

"What a beautiful tradition we have here in New Jersey, by swearing in our newest citizens and welcoming them to this wonderful country," Contillo said.

The judge told the audience that one of his most treasured possessions is the passport his grandmother used to emigrate from Scotland to the United States in 1920. His grandparents settled in Kearny, Hudson County.

The Mock Trial Competition Award was presented to Bergen Catholic High School. The Bergen County poster contest awards were presented by Bergen County Clerk John Hogan. Additional songs were performed by the Ridgefield Park High School chorus.

Students raise their hands to take their oaths as jurors in the Juror for a Day program at the Olde Burlington County Courthouse in Mount Holly.

Burlington

Assignment Judge Ronald E. Bookbinder joined the Burlington County Bar Association to deliver the Law Day proclamation on May 5. In recognition of the 40th anniversary of the New Jersey Supreme Court's decision in the Mount Laurel affordable housing case, a panel discussion with attorneys Peter J. O'Connor, Carl S. Bisgaier, and Kenneth E. Meiser was held. The panelists gave an inside look into the case and its progress.

The Juror for a Day program was held twice, once in collaboration with Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst and again with seventh and eighth grade students. More than 300 students participated in these programs featuring State v. The Cat in the Hat and a newly developed mock trial, Arrendale v. Elsa, based on the movie Frozen.

Fourth and fifth grade students submitted artwork based on the Law Day theme. An awards ceremony was hosted by the vicinage and Burlington County Bar Foundation. Other events included three community seminars and high school forums hosted by the Vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns.

Camden

The Camden Vicinage hosted high school students from Camden County Technical Schools – Pennsauken and Gloucester Township campuses on May 1.

Criminal Presiding Judge Edward J. McBride Jr. gave opening remarks and answered students' questions about the Law Day theme and his roll with the courts. U.S. Magistrate Judge Karen M. Williams was the guest speaker.

Students participated in a panel discussion moderated by Family Court Judge Morris G. Smith. Panelists included Administrative Law Judge Lisa James-Beavers, attorney Brenda Lee Eustler, president of the Camden County Bar Foundation, and Assistant Deputy Public Defender Felicia B. Felder. Smith answered students' questions in his courtroom and then the students toured the juvenile holding cell.

Assignment Judge Deborah Silverman Katz also spoke about the Law Day theme and the courts. Closing remarks were delivered by Family Presiding Judge Charles W. Dortch Jr. Law Day was sponsored by the Camden Vicinage in partnership with the Association of Black Women Lawyers, the IOLTA Fund of the Bar of New Jersey, the Camden County Bar Association and the New Jersey State Bar Foundation.

Essex

Judges, law clerks, attorneys and court personnel traveled to 30 schools throughout Essex County for mock trial presentations and public outreach events as part of the vicinage's Law Day festivities.

The Law Day Committee received and judged hundreds of entries from elementary, middle and high school students in the poetry, poster and essay contests. The event culminated with a Law Day recognition program on May

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Editor's Note

The deadline for the fall 2015 edition of the *Judiciary Times* is Friday, Aug. 28..

Feature stories about court programs and newsworthy profiles about judges and court staff are welcome.

Magna Carta Was Focus of Law Day Festivities in New Jersey

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27.

This included a key-note address by Assignment Judge Sallyanne Floria, who discussed the opportunity Law Day provides for judges and lawyers to interact with students.

More than 120 students submitted poetry, essays and posters. A winning essay was submitted by Dareana Hidalgo, an 11th grade student at Bloomfield High School.

She said that the Magna Carta led to important principles, including "the right to be judged fairly by the laws, right to trial by jury, right to travel, and habeas corpus. The Magna Carta was an important step in the development of a democratic government; since it was the first legal contract between the government and the governed."

More than 25 Superior and municipal court judges volunteered for the mock trial presentations. They heard student witnesses present testimony and respond to cross examination from law clerks and volunteer attorneys from the Essex County Bar Association.

Students spent weeks learning their parts and preparing for their roles as witnesses, parties, jurors and lawyers. There were some innovations this year.

One school eliminated the traditional student jury. Instead, the teacher, to loud cheers, told all the students in the packed auditorium to turn on their cell phones.

The 200-plus students then texted the teacher their vote for innocent or guilty, with the tally displayed on a screen above the auditorium. The mock trial defense attorney said it was like being on *Dancing with the Stars* waiting for the vote of the home audience.

This year also marked the first presentation of the Assignment Judge Law Day Spirit award, given to individuals or organizations that have displayed their long-term support and commitment to the program.

The first recipient was Bloomfield High School. Floria praised the partnership between the Essex County Bar Association and Essex court staff.

Superior Court Judge Morris G. Smith welcomes students to the Camden Vicinage Law Day program on the Magna Carta. Also pictured are (from left) Brenda Lee Eutsler, president of the Camden County Bar Foundation; Administrative Law Judge Lisa James-Beavers and public defender Felicia Felder.

Middlesex

Law Day activities began ith a Teen Driver Workshop on April 16 at the New Brunswick Hub Teen Center. Students were introduced to the rule of law as it pertains to operating a vehicle in New Jersey and the role of the municipal courts.

The program was sponsored by the Middlesex Vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns (VACMC), the Middlesex County Sheriff's Department, the Middlesex County Bar Association and the Puerto Rican Action Board.

The program was moderated by Alberto Rivas, criminal presiding judge and chair of the VACMC.

On May 14, the Middlesex County Bar Foundation hosted its annual Project Law program at the Middlesex County Courthouse. The Middlesex County Mock Trial team champions from Monroe Township High School and the student winners of the county Project Law essay contest, I. Li and P. Shah from John P. Stevens High School and A. Bhattiprolu from Middlesex County Academy for Applied Health and Biomedical Science, were honored.

The Monroe Township High School mock trial team performed an excerpt from its winning dramatization. Judges John Jorgensen, Michael A. Toto and Barbara C. Stolte participated.

In May and June, the vicinage also celebrated Law Day 2015 in the classroom. A program combining the legacy of the Magna Carta and *You're 18 Now* was presented to students at high schools throughout the county.

Each program opened with a video message from Chief Justice Stuart Rabner about the Law Day theme. Students learned about the role the Magna Carta played in the development of the U.S. Constitution and the laws of the nation. The *You're 18 Now* program provided the students information on the rights and new responsibilities that come with turning 18. Jorgensen and Judge James F. Hyland presented the program.

Monmouth

The Monmouth Vicinage celebrated Law Day on May 1 with a program held at the historic general equity courtroom in the Hall of Records in

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Speeches, Seminars and Expos Mark Law Day 2015 in N.J.

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Freehold.

The program opened with remarks from Marie A. Accardi, president of the Monmouth Bar Association, followed by a moment of silence.

Secretary Tarika Jean-Pierre delivered a rendition of *God Bless America.*

Assignment Judge Lisa P. Thornton spoke about her experiences celebrating Law Day and the importance of recognizing and understanding the rule of law in our nation. Thornton also spoke about current issues in the country, such as the events in Baltimore and Ferguson.

She said that it is critical for youth to grasp the importance of law in relation to these events. She also discussed her vision to have all Monmouth County schools participate in next year's Law Day celebration.

East Orange Mayor Lester E. Taylor III delivered the keynote address. The mayor, a Monmouth County native and graduate of the Long Branch school system, highlighted the importance of education and community.

The program then shifted to recognize attorney William J. Gearty with the Abraham J. Zager Professionalism Award. Presented by attorney John P. Duggan, the award is the Monmouth Bar Association's highest honor. Chancery Presiding Judge Patricia Del Bueno Cleary gave a moving tribute to Gearty. Del Bueno Cleary worked for Gearty early in her career and acknowledged his impact on the legal profession and her success.

The mock trial team from St. John Vianney High School in Holmdel was presented with the Daniel J. O'Hern Mock Trial Award.

The program concluded with Thornton's presentation of awards to the student winners of the Law Day 2015 Poster and Essay Contest.

Monmouth Vicinage Assignment Judge Lisa P. Thornton poses with winners of the Law Day 2015 Poster and Essay Contest during Law Day festivities in Freehold.

Morris/Sussex

In Morris County, the traditional lunchtime ceremony was held on May 1 at the Morris County courthouse in Morristown, with a welcome by Assignment Judge Thomas L. Weisenbeck and a keynote speech by Appellate Division Judge Mary Gibbons Whipple.

Whipple's overview of life in the 13th century, when the Magna Carta was signed, elicited chuckles from the audience, as she explained how a rebellion by English barons forced the king to cede absolute power. More importantly, the idea that everyone is subject to the rule of law ultimately became the underpinning of democracy, including the concepts of justice, due process, and the common good.

Whipple pointed out that there are several memorials at Runnymede, where the Magna Carta was signed, including a British memorial to the late President John F. Kennedy.

Placed in 1965, it quotes his inaugural address: "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend or oppose any foe, in order to secure the survival and success of liberty."

The Morris celebration also featured speeches by Robin Bogan, president-elect of the Morris County Bar Association, Patrick Galligan, bar foundation president, and Morris County Freeholder Douglas Cabana.

The mock trial team from West Morris-Mendham High School was honored for winning the county and regional competitions. The Morristown High School Vocal and String Ensemble, under the direction of Norma Davis, performed.

The Sussex County celebration, held on April 30, took place at the historic courthouse in Newton. The keynote was delivered by Lauren Fraser, Sussex County Bar Association president.

The county mock trial winners from Kittatinny Regional High School were honored, as was Sanford Hollander, who at 83 is the oldest practicing attorney in Sussex County.

Passaic

Assignment Judge Ernest M. Caposela administered the Oath of Citizenship to 30 new citizens from 15 countries at a naturalization ceremony on June 1. The new citizens included two sisters, a man from Bangladesh who was celebrating his birthday, and, for the first time in the ceremony's history, someone from Iran. Other countries represented included the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Jamaica, Turkey, Macedonia, Poland, Ecuador, Colombia, Nigeria, Jordan, Italy, Egypt and the Bahamas.

Passaic County Clerk Kristin Corrado spoke to the new citizens about passports, Assistant Passaic County Superintendent of Elections Shona Mack-Pollock discussed voting rights and responsibilities and Jury Manager Patricia Storzillo discussed jury service. The new citizens also witnessed a demonstration of a voting machine.

Judge Sohail Mohammed led the new citizen program, sharing his own experiences of becoming a naturalized citizen and introducing the speakers.

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Vicinages Across New Jersey Host Public Law Day Celebrations

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Also addressing the new citizens were Caposela, Carmen De Padua from the office of U.S. Rep. William J. Pascrell Jr.; Passaic County Freeholder Director Hector C. Lora; John E. Thompson, U.S. Customs and Immigration Services district director and Charles Rabolli Jr., president of the Passaic County Bar Association.

Middle and high school students were invited to submit posters, poetry and videos that best illustrated the Law Day theme. Students from Passaic County Technical Institute won the first place video award in the vicinage and state competitions. Winners were invited to watch the new citizen program and participate in an awards ceremony. After the awards ceremony, the students were treated to a pizza luncheon sponsored by the Passaic County Bar Association.

Two area high schools, Passaic Valley High School in Little Falls and Eastside High School in Paterson, conducted a mock trial before Judge Raymond A. Reddin that the middle school students watched. Passaic Valley was judged the winner of the hard-fought contest by a panel consisting of attorneys, judges, freeholders and prosecutors. The middle school students who attended were from St. Andrew the Apostle School in Clifton and St. Mary's School in Pompton Lakes.

The naturalization and Law Day programs were sponsored by the Passaic County Bar Association and the Passaic Vicinage.

Somerset/Hunterdon/Warren

The Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns for the Somerset/Hunterdon/Warren Vicinage hosted a seminar, *Intent Doesn't Always Equal Impact: Understanding the Cycle of Prejudice,* on May 7 at the Somerset County Historic Courthouse in Somerville.

A total of 58 people, including attorneys, assistant prosecutors, educators, law enforcement, social workers, county employees, Judiciary employees and members of the public attended. Classier Davis, committee member and volunteer, gave the opening remarks and introduced chair Judge Peter Tober and Elizabeth Williams Riley, presenter and moderator of the program. Riley is president and CEO of the American Conference on Diversity.

Riley spoke about how prejudice can build barriers to creating an inclusive work environment and discussed ways to increase intercultural understanding. The program examined how diversity evolved and focusing on who we are, what we have learned and how we lead and interact. Implicit bias, inclusion, laws surrounding equal employment opportunity and affirmative action and misconceptions regarding diversity were also discussed.

Riley asked the audience to reflect on their own experiences with race and racism by reading a series of statements for them to think about, then turn to someone nearby and discuss.

This report was compiled by Lawrence Bethea, Brenda Carmichael, Sarah Chavez, Cheryl Cohen, Sarah Hatcher, Bruce Humphreys, Sharon Kinney, Donna Mazzanti, Beth Raimondo, Vannessa Ravenelle, Janie Rodriguez, Theresa Romano and June Zieder.

The mock trial team from West Morris Mendham High School was honored for winning county and regional competitions during Law Day ceremonies at the Morris County Courthouse in Morristown.

Ocean Vicinage Joins with High School for Internships

By Sonal Pushko
Ocean Vicinage

The Ocean Vicinage worked with Lakewood High School to provide students with a unique internship opportunity.

For a few days during a two- week period in the spring, EEO/AA Officer Sonal Pushko and Lakewood High School teacher Gay Dickey arranged for several students to visit the Ocean County Courthouse and learn about the Judiciary.

Students met and shadowed staff from the probation, family, criminal, civil, information technology and human resources divisions. The students also met with judges who explained their roles in the judicial system.

The students also learned how to write a cover letter and resume and how to succeed in an interview.

Pushko and several members of the vicinage outreach committee visited the high school and spoke to students about careers in the Judiciary.

Did You Know?

The Judiciary uses Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to communicate the work of the courts to the public and court staff.

Unearthing the Mystery of the Underground Railroad in N.J.

By Carmelita Vazquez and
Elena Flynn
Cumberland/Gloucester/Salem Vicinage

The Breakthrough Gospel Choir performs during a sumposium on the Underground Railroad at Cumberland County College. The Cumberland/Gloucester/Salem Vicinage played a prominent role planning the event.

History came alive for more than 200 people who celebrated the Underground Railroad and South Jersey's important role in the abolitionist movement at a symposium at Cumberland County College on April 27.

The event, *A Timeless Journey, the Underground Railroad Beyond the 21st Century,* was inspired by Assignment Judge Georgia A. Curio's lifelong interest in South Jersey history, especially the Underground Railroad.

"These were real places, where chances were taken and lives were saved," said Judge Curio, who recalled a childhood trip with her family to Underground Railroad sites. "Celebrating our local history, specifically this area's contribution to the Underground Railroad, allows for mutual support, outreach, dialogue and collaboration with the community."

The Underground Railroad was an informal network of individuals and organizations who assisted runaway slaves seeking freedom before the Civil War, providing food, shelter in "safe houses," encouragement and assistance to reach subsequent stops.

In 1804, New Jersey passed a law providing for the gradual elimination of slavery, becoming the last northern state to become "free."

However, bounty hunters had legal authority under the federal Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 and the harsher Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, to enter free states, abduct escaped slaves and those claimed to be escaped slaves, and return them to bondage in slave states.

Consequently, the Underground Railroad stretched to Canada, where slavery was prohibited and freedom could be guaranteed.

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 levied severe penalties for assisting escaped slaves, including substantial fines and imprisonment.

Carmelita Vazquez, former staff liaison to the Cumberland/Gloucester/Salem Vicinage Advisory Committee on Minority Concerns (VACMC) and the vicinage's human resources division manager, helped organize performances, lectures, workshops and exhibits that detailed the history of the Underground Railroad and its connection to South Jersey.

For people on the route, New Jersey was the first free state they reached, and many came through safe houses in Greenwich and Springtown in Cumberland County.

Historical records state that by the late 1830s, Springtown was a thriving community of free blacks, despite the threats of the Fugitive Slave Acts of 1793 and 1850. The area was particularly hospitable to the escaped due to its dense forests and swamps, which provided natural cover and made tracking by bounty hunters difficult. Escaped slaves were assisted by local populations of Quakers, a religious denomination that steadfastly opposed slavery, and native Lenni Lenape.

The symposium featured presentations by the descendants of William Still, the famous black abolitionist, author of *William Still's Underground Railroad* in 1873 and director of the General Vigilance Committee in Philadelphia, which helped fund abolitionist Harriet Tubman and safe houses stretching to Canada.

The Rev. Terrell W. Person, a Still family descendent and pastor of Jacob's Chapel AME Church in Mount Laurel, gave the keynote address, encouraging the audience to oppose modern slavery in the form of human trafficking and abuse of migrant and sweatshop workers.

Still family descendants Wanda Stancil, Karen Boyd and Portia Tyson presented a workshop on Still family history and the family's involvement in the Underground Railroad entitled *Still Family United.* Local historian Lisa S. Garrison presented a workshop called *Free People of Color, Freedom Seekers & Greenwich Quakers,* and Matthew Pisarski of the Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission presented a workshop on architecture and history in Cumberland and Salem counties.

The symposium also featured numerous performances and exhibits.

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Bail Reform: Changing the Criminal Justice System in N.J.

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for a period of time," the chief justice told the New Jersey State Bar Association convention in May.

"In terms of the charges against them, studies have shown that they face tougher plea offers, they face pressure to plead guilty because of the amount of time they have already spent in jail, and they receive longer sentences as compared to similarly-situated defendants who were able to make bail," he said.

The speedy trial component will set limits on the amount of time from arrest to indictment and from indictment to trial, with appropriate extensions of time for pretrial motions, competency hearings, plea negotiations, the consent of the parties, and other valid reasons.

The move to reform the state's bail system grew from the work of the Joint Committee on Criminal Justice, a special committee of the Supreme Court that examined the issues of bail reform and speedy trial.

The committee, which comprised the attorney general, public defender, judges, representatives of the executive and legislative branches, prosecutors, defense counsel, and the American Civil Liberties Union, made a series of recommendations that were incorporated into landmark legislation that was passed and signed into law by Gov. Chris Christie.

Voters in November approved a measure permitting judges to hold high-risk defendants without bail. Instead of setting bail for defendants, judges will assess the level of risk each defendant presents and impose conditions of release.

To do that, judges will use an objective risk-assessment tool that has been tested and validated with data from hundreds of thousands of actual cases in New Jersey.

Judges will consider factors such as the defendant's age at the time of arrest, pending charges, prior convictions and whether any of those involved violence, prior failures to appear, and prior jail sentences.

With that information, each defendant will be classified as low, moderate, or high risk and will likely be released on a series of conditions without having to post bail.

Defendants who are released pretrial will be monitored and supervised by pretrial services officers, similar to those in the federal system and a number of states.

The officers, who will be employed in a pretrial services agency that will be part of the Judiciary, will complete risk assessments within 48 hours of each arrest and will supervise defendants on release based on the level of supervision that each defendant requires.

For low-risk defendants, that could amount to nothing more than a phone call to remind them to show up in court. As the risk level increases, the nature of the monitoring will be enhanced.

Speedy trial practices vary across the state, and it can sometimes take many years for a case to go from arrest to trial.

"That's not good for anyone involved in the process: not for defendants, who have charges hanging over their heads, whether they are in or out of custody; not for the prosecution, which has a more difficult time presenting cases with the passage of time, as memories dim and evidence may be lost; and not good for victims who sometimes have to wait a long time to see a case resolved," the chief justice said.

The Judiciary is engaged in work on several fronts so that bail reform is fully implemented by January 2017.

These include developing and finalizing the risk-assessment tool and creating the pretrial services agency, weighing proposed rule changes and having information technology staff work on implementing changes to enable bail reform and speedy trial reform to proceed efficiently and smoothly.

In June, Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts, joined a delegation of Judiciary officials to Kentucky, where more defendants are being released pretrial, yet there has been no increase in the rate of failures to appear and there has been a drop in the arrest rate for defendants on supervision.

Kentucky also is detaining more high-risk defendants.

The judge led a similar visit to Arizona in April.

Judge Grant is conducting regular meetings with key vicinage and AOC staff and has created several subcommittees to work on specific aspects of the plan.

A comprehensive outreach plan for the rollout of the program also is being developed.

Underground Railroad

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Historical interpreter Daisy Century enthralled participants with a portrayal of Tubman's life as a child born into slavery, an escaped slave, rescuer of other escaped slaves and scout for the Union Army during the Civil War. Tubman is credited with assisting more than 300 slaves to freedom through the Underground Railroad, earning her the nickname "Moses."

The Breakthrough Gospel Choir and African American Literature Class from the Cumberland Regional High School District also performed. Exhibits from the African American Museum of Southern New Jersey and the Vineland Historical Society featured pictures, documents and artifacts documenting black history from the 1800's.

Included in the exhibits were quilts with secret codes used to assist escaped slaves on their way to the Underground Railroad.

Trial Court Administrator Mark Sprock served as the master of ceremonies and acknowledged the contributions of VACMC member, the late Harry Lindenmuth, with a moment of silence. VACMC member and former vicinage EEO/AA Officer Benjamin Mike gave the invocation.

The symposium was presented by the VACMC and the college.

Guardianship Monitoring Lauded at Elder Abuse Conference

Grown children and spouses, staff at elder care facilities, powers of attorney, scam artists and others who take advantage of vulnerable older adults contribute to an often hidden problem—elder abuse. These cases can appear in all aspects of the courts—criminal, civil, family and probate.

About 200 judges, attorneys, guardianship monitoring volunteers, state judiciary staff and county surrogates attended the Superior Court of New Jersey's Elder Abuse Awareness Conference at Stockton University in Galloway Township, Atlantic County on June 15, the 10th anniversary of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

The issue is critical because 20 percent of the population in New Jersey will be age 60 and older by 2030, Chief Justice Stuart Rabner explained.

"We have too many cases in which individuals who have been granted authority, who have been granted responsibility, take advantage of the very people that they have promised, to assist.

So building on the work of Judge Margaret McVeigh and others, New Jersey created the first statewide guardianship monitoring program…the first such program in our nation," Chief Justice Rabner said.

The state's guardianship monitoring program has volunteers who work with surrogates to review annual filings to identify red flags that need to be brought to the attention of court staff and in turn brought to judges' attention for appropriate follow-up action.

"There have been occasions where as a judge, where as you appoint someone a guardian, you have a sense that perhaps there's just something you need to follow up on no matter how busy you are," said McVeigh, who is Passaic Vicinage's presiding general equity judge. "Something just triggers a sense that you have. So those cases you have the ability to bring back for review. But it's the idea that now you have the volunteers who are looking at these reports who may flag something."

A guardianship is established when a judge declares a person incapacitated and appoints a guardian to oversee the incapacitated individual's well-being and/or financial affairs. The guardianship monitoring program monitors guardians in their handling of the affairs of incapacitated individuals.

With help from volunteers, important information is being discovered.

"What we've seen so far is a high level of non-compliance with the annual reports that are required, and in the more than 2,400 annual reports that have been reviewed to date, we've identified a number of cases that have been referred to judges for follow-up action. There is a great deal of work that lies ahead, notwithstanding the work that has been done so far. To be sure, we need to enlist and train yet more volunteers to be able to continue reviewing these reports on a sustained basis," said the chief justice.

"The very fact that this program now exists in New Jersey will cause people to think twice before they might even consider to take a step, to take advantage, of those they've promised to help. And that deterrence factor is so critically important," he added.

A panel of experts discussed the court's role in elder abuse prevention and guardianship monitoring programs. Susan Sheppard, Cape May County surrogate, said of guardianship monitoring, "I think it's a success. I was a little bit scared when I first started. The surrogates really didn't know how this was going to operate."

To gather volunteers, Sheppard said she distributed a press release and spoke to groups.

She went through training with the volunteers, who have since been going through old reports.

"It's been very exciting and worthwhile. There were a couple matters that I'm very proud to say that because of the guardianship monitoring program…the court became alerted to some situations," she said.

Brenda Uekert, principal court research consultant for the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), is the founder and director of the NCSC's Center for Elders and the Courts, which was created in 2008 to serve as the primary resource for judiciary and court management on issues related to aging.

Of elder abuse prevalence, Uekert said, "You might have to look for it, but it's there. It's everywhere."

Laws can be narrow and if individuals aren't looking for it, elder abuse cases can be overlooked.

"The issues in the media generally portray elder abuse as the Nigerian scam, the grandmother scam, some stranger is preying on me," said Uekert. Elder abuse includes physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, financial exploitation, neglect and abandonment. "Most elder abuse is not reported, so for every report about 24 actually go unreported," Uekert said.

Reasons for not reporting abuse include that it's difficult to come forward to ask for help and to admit to being a victim, some adults are too incapacitated to report abuse or signs may be missed.

Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage Assignment Judge Julio Mendez gave welcoming and closing remarks. Stockton University's Acting President Harvey Kesselman also welcomed guests to the conference.

Burlington TCA Del Preore Receives National Award

Burlington Vicinage Trial Court Administrator Jude Del Preore has been awarded the 2014 Star Award by the Institute for Court Management (ICM). The award is presented annually to an ICM fellow who demonstrates excellence in the advancement of court administration through leadership and education.

The award was conferred July 15 at the annual National Association for Court Management (NACM) conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

Del Preore has worked for the New Jersey Judiciary for 41 years. He has held the position of trial court administrator since 1997, serving the last 10 years in his home county of Burlington.

Peter Doyne Retires as Assignment Judge in Bergen Vicinage

By Cheryl Cohen
Bergen Vicinage

The Bergen Vicinage offered best wishes and a warm farewell to Assignment Judge Peter E. Doyne, who retired May 1 after 22 years as a respected jurist, including seven as assignment judge.

"Judge Doyne has been an exemplary jurist and a tireless advocate for the rule of law," Chief Justice Stuart Rabner said. "He served as a hands-on leader in the Bergen Vicinage, which has been enhanced by his capable guidance. We are grateful for his service and scholarship and wish him a healthy and fulfilling retirement."

Judge Bonnie J. Mizdol was named to succeed Doyne.

To Doyne, "fulfilling" means working.

Upon retirement, he immediately began working at his former law firm, Ferro, Labella & Zucker in Hackensack.

Although the judge was seven years shy of the mandatory retirement age for judges, he decided to retire so he could attend to obligations at home. Doyne has four sons, one of whom attends law school.

"I will miss almost everything about working here," Doyne said in an interview before his retirement. "The opportunity to work with such talented people, the opportunity to serve, the opportunity for collegiality--I loved it all. I am, and have been, extremely proud of this vicinage."

Doyne was first nominated to the bench by Gov. Jim Florio in 1993.

"To me, as a lawyer, becoming a judge was always the pinnacle of our great profession," Doyne said. "To serve one's community, to work with attorneys, and to try to help all litigants who had come before me was a wonderful opportunity. I have loved being a judge. I love it today as much as I did 22 years ago."

Doyne became the presiding judge of the civil division in 1997 and was assigned to general equity in 2004. Two years later, he became the

Peter E. Doyne

presiding judge of general equity. Chief Justice Stuart Rabner named Doyne assignment judge in 2008.

"Judge Doyne has proven himself a very capable, wise and effective leader in the Bergen Vicinage," the chief justice said at the time.

Doyne's reputation has been one of tireless dedication and boundless energy. He regularly arrived at the courthouse while most people were still asleep and stayed long after most had gone home. It was important to him to remain a "working judge" once he became the assignment judge.

"The most challenging part of the position," Doyne said, "was presented during our continued periods when we were short many judges. The volume of work was then daunting and the effort to try to maintain the same quality of work when the work was cascading all around me was probably the single greatest challenge."

The time for retirement seemed appropriate to Doyne now that most of Bergen's judicial vacancies have been filled and other issues of primary concern have either been resolved or have resolutions set in motion, including construction of a new Justice Center building and garage. Courthouse renovations are planned to begin in 2017.

A retirement luncheon was held for Doyne on April 24 in the jury room, complete with a specialty cake shaped like law books and a gavel. The Bergen County Bar Association held a retirement dinner at the Venetian in Garfield on June 25.

Drug Courts

Continued from page 1

17,102 defendants, collected more than $9.02 million, and have celebrated the births of 348 drug-free babies.

More important than the numbers, however, are the human success stories.

Jeff entered drug court stubborn and angry at the world. He had become unreliable and lost his job with a florist because he stole money to buy drugs.

Since Jeff entered drug court, he has opened up about his relationships and his drug use. He regained the trust of his employer, who rehired him. Jeff is paying his fines and has turned his life around.

Robert participated in drug court and has been able to obtain many certifications and a good job through a glass repair and replacement company.

Robert learned to live life without drugs and alcohol and is now there for his children and his wife, who suffers from a terminal illness.

Jenna came to Burlington County Drug Court in February 2008. When we reviewed her evaluation, we could not believe the amount of drugs she had been using. She was only 24 years old and lucky to be alive.

Jenna used drug court to change. She graduated from the program on June 10, 2010.

Jenna spoke at a drug court graduation last year, and we were happy to learn she continues to do great things.

She was still attending school and working towards a degree. She started running and recently completed a marathon. She was married, working full time and living in her own house. She also was still active in her recovery and continued to attend meetings.

Across the state, the positive impact of the drug court program can be felt in the lives of thousands of people:

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Vincent Grasso Retires as Assignment Judge in Ocean Vicinage

By Monika Skurzynski
Ocean Vicinage

Ocean Vicinage bid a warm farewell to Assignment Judge Vincent J. Grasso, who retired July 1, two weeks shy of reaching 26 years of service on the bench.

Grasso was responsible for the management of approximately 62,000 cases each year and the county's 33 municipal courts.

He was succeeded by Judge Marlene Lynch Ford.

Asked what he liked best about the role of assignment judge, Grasso said he especially enjoyed working closely with the trial court administrators, executive management team and his colleagues on the bench. He also enjoyed a professional and collegial relationship between the Ocean County bench and the bar, he said.

"I have had the privilege and honor of serving under four Supreme Court chief justices as well as with my fellow colleagues on the bench, past and present," Grasso said in an interview before he retired. "The dedication of Ocean's TCA's, managers and judicial staff has been exemplary and instrumental to the success and efficient operation of the Ocean Vicinage for which I will be eternally grateful."

Grasso served in all divisions of the Superior Court, including the family division for 11 years, six as presiding judge) and the criminal division for approximately 5½ years.

Grasso received his bachelor's degree in economics from Columbia University in 1972 and his law degree from Vermont Law School in 1976.

After Grasso spent 12 years in private practice and five years of service as an assistant Ocean County prosecutor, Gov. Thomas Kean nominated him to the Superior Court. He was sworn in on July 14, 1989.

While serving in the criminal division, Gov. Christie Whitman nominated him for tenure on July 14, 1996. He was serving as presiding general equity judge when Chief Justice James R. Zazzali named him assignment judge on July 5, 2007.

Vincent J. Grasso

Grasso worked closely with freeholders on plans for a new Ocean County courthouse complex, and he was especially proud how the vicinage pulled together after Superstorm Sandy and worked hard to ensure court matters resumed as quickly as possible.

Grasso was instrumental in revamping the outdated law library and opening a Legal Research and Information Center. At the new center, court users can conduct legal research and receive direct assistance from the ombudsman and administrative specialist staff members who answer questions about court forms, processes and the status of cases.

Grasso was a member of the best practices visitation team in the family division and chaired a committee that revised a procedure manual for domestic violence cases that is used by judges and law enforcement officers throughout New Jersey.

Grasso has lectured at Judicial College and served on various Supreme Court committees, including chairing the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Extra-Judicial Activities and serving on the Judiciary Budget and Planning Committee.

In 2014-2015, Grasso chaired the New Jersey Judicial Council of Assignment Judges and recently chaired the Supreme Court ad hoc Committee on Judicial Disqualification.

Grasso received the Ocean County Bar Association's Achievement Award on Law Day 2010.

"Judge Grasso has provided exemplary service to the county and state," said Criminal Presiding Judge Wendel E. Daniels, who has known Grasso for 16 years. "He has a kind, caring demeanor. He is respected by both the bar and the Judiciary. His leadership style has been encouraging, supportive, fair, and effective. My prayers are for him to have future success in any path he elects to travel; and great health for him and his family."

After retiring from the bench, Judge Grasso became of counsel at the law firm of Carluccio, Leone, Dimon, Doyle, and Sacks in Toms River.

Drug Courts

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families reunited, jobs regained, housing obtained. Many situations may have seemed hopeless, with individuals destined for ongoing criminal justice involvement. Yet, these same people have turned their lives around and are now stable and productive.

It is because of the hard work and dedication of all of the members of the drug court teams across the state and our partners in the executive and legislative branches that we have these successes.

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 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 nj-courts.com and look for the icons on the right side.

Bad Weather? Power Outage? Get Text Alerts

Go to njcourts.com and click on the SMS button on the right side of the page.

Chief Justice Names Marlene Ford Assignment Judge in Ocean

By Tamara Kendig
Administrative Office of the Courts

Superior Court Judge Marlene Lynch Ford began leading the Ocean Vicinage on July 1, succeeding Vincent J. Grasso, who retired after nearly 26 years on the bench, eight as assignment judge.

"We congratulate Judge Grasso on his many years of outstanding service to the Judiciary and the public. He has led the Ocean Vicinage with distinction," said Chief Justice Stuart Rabner. "Judge Ford brings a wealth of experience to the position in light of her exemplary service in all three branches of government. Under her leadership, I am confident that the dedicated judges and staff in the vicinage will continue to dispense justice in a fair and efficient manner that is accessible to all."

Ford was appointed to the bench by Gov. James Florio and took the oath of office on Oct. 16, 1992. She first served in the family division of the Ocean Vicinage before moving to the civil division in 1996. She served in the civil division until 2006, when she was named presiding judge of the family division.

Marlene Lynch Ford

In June 2007, Ford was appointed Ocean County Prosecutor by Gov. Jon Corzine. In 2013, Gov. Chris Christie appointed her once again to the Superior Court. She has served in the family division of the Burlington Vicinage since the time of her appointment.

Ford graduated magna cum laude from Georgian Court College and earned her law degree from Seton Hall Law School, where she received the Women's Law Forum Award. She began her legal career in private practice while also serving as the municipal prosecutor for Jackson Township.

She was elected for two terms to represent the 10th Legislative District in the New Jersey General Assembly and worked as general counsel to the Assembly Democratic delegation. She also worked as general counsel to H. Hovnanian Industries.

In 1992, she was honored by *New Jersey Monthly* magazine as one of New Jersey's "heroes" for her role in expanding the rights of people to fair housing and employment, regardless of their sexual orientation. While on the bench, Ford has served on a number of Judiciary committees, including chair of the committee on outside activities of Judiciary employees and chair of the model civil jury charge committee.

"I want to thank the chief justice for placing his confidence in me," said Ford. "I am so proud of the work of our judges and staff in the Judiciary. I am committed to ensuring that they maintain the highest level of fairness and quality service that the public expects and deserves from their government."

Bonnie Mizdol is New Assignment Judge in Bergen Vicinage

By Tamara Kendig
Administrative Office of the Courts

Superior Court Judge Bonnie J. Mizdol is now leading the Bergen Vicinage following the May 1 retirement of Peter E. Doyne, who retired after more than 22 years on the bench and nearly seven years as assignment judge.

"Judge Doyne has been a tireless advocate for the legal system and the Bergen Vicinage," said Chief Justice Stuart Rabner. "Thanks to his leadership, the vicinage is in a very strong position. We are grateful for his exemplary service and scholarship. "Judge Mizdol is a wise and capable jurist with an impressive record and a clear vision. In light of her expertise and dedication, I have every confidence that the transition will be seamless."

Bonnie J. Mizdol

Mizdol was appointed by Gov. Donald T. DiFrancesco and took the oath of office on Feb. 6, 2006. She was reappointed with tenure by Gov. Chris Christie in 2013. Mizdol has served on the family court bench since her appointment and was named presiding judge of the family division on Oct. 1, 2008. She served on the Judicial Council from 2010 to 2013 in her capacity as chair of the Conference of Family Presiding Judges.

"I want to thank the Chief Justice for his confidence in me and for the opportunity to serve the residents of New Jersey in this new capacity," said Mizdol. "I also want to thank Judge Doyne for his guidance and support as assignment judge. It will be a challenge to live up to the high standards he has set, but I am looking forward to it."

A graduate of Montclair State University and Seton Hall Law School, Mizdol began her legal career as a general practice attorney. She served as a municipal judge in Wallington,

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Chief Justice Selects Minkowitz to Head Morris/Sussex Vicinage

By Tamara Kendig
Administrative Office of the Courts

Superior Court Judge Stuart A. Minkowitz is the new assignment judge in the Morris/Sussex Vicinage, succeeding Thomas L. Weisenbeck, who retired May 28 after 10 years on the bench, four as assignment judge.

"The Morris/Sussex Vicinage has flourished under Judge Weisenbeck's leadership. He has excelled as a judge and a leader, and we wish him the best as he reaches his mandatory retirement date," said Chief Justice Stuart Rabner.

"Judge Minkowitz is a gifted jurist, a strong manager, and a dedicated public servant. I am confident that his skill and wisdom will enable him to lead the vicinage with distinction."

A graduate of the State University of New York at Albany and Brooklyn Law School, Minkowitz began his career in public service in the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office in 1992. In 1996, he joined the Hackensack firm of Cole, Schotz, Meisel, Forman & Leonard as an associate. He returned to public service in the U. S. Attorney's Office, District of New Jersey, working as a civil health care fraud coordinator.

He remained in that position until

Stuart Minkowitz

his appointment to the bench by Gov. Jon Corzine. He took the oath of judicial office on Jan. 10, 2008.

From 1999 until his appointment to the bench, Minkowitz served as a captain in the Judge Advocate General's Corps, first in the United States Army Reserve, and then in the New Jersey Army National Guard. In that role, he conducted legal reviews of administrative actions and policies, acted as legal advisor to administrative hearing boards, and provided legal assistance to soldiers and their families.

While on the bench, Minkowitz served first in the family division, then moved to the criminal division in 2011. He was named presiding judge of the criminal division in December 2012.

Since December 2014, he has served as the statewide Megan's Law coordinator. He also has been a member of the Criminal Division Visitation Team, which reviews and reports on the implementation of criminal division standards and best practices statewide.

Other committee service includes the Conference of Criminal Presiding Judges, the Conference of Drug Court Judges, and a working group to explore technology solutions for judicial work.

He has served on the faculty of the annual Judicial College as well as on other judicial education panels.

"I am delighted to accept the chief's appointment, and I look forward to working with the judges and staff of the Morris/Sussex vicinage to serve the public in this new role," said Minkowitz.

Mizdol

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Englewood Cliffs, Fair Lawn and the Bergen County Central Municipal Court.

She was an active member of the Bergen County Bar Association, where she served on the municipal court and family law committees, and the Bergen County Municipal Judges' Association, where she served as vice president, then president.

In addition, Mizdol was a trustee and past president of the Bergen County Bar Foundation. She served as a member and past chair of the District II-A Ethics Committee. She was also a member and co-chair of the Bergen County Committee on the Status of Women.

Singh Named Trial Court Administrator in Monmouth Vicinage

By Tamara Kendig
Administrative Office of the Courts

Gurpreet M. Singh has been named trial court administrator in the Monmouth Vicinage, effective July 18, Assignment Judge Lisa P. Thornton announced.

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.

Singh will work closely with Judge Thornton and vicinage leadership to manage a court operation that includes 26 judges and more than 400 staff members.

Under New Jersey court rules, the administrative director of the courts appoints the trial court administrator in each vicinage. Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts, said he named Singh on the strong recommendation of Judge Thornton.

"Gurpreet and I have worked together in the past and I am so honored that she has agreed to join me in leading the Monmouth Vicinage," said Judge Thornton. "She is a brilliant lawyer and a talented manager whose leadership and dedication will enable us to provide the highest quality justice to the people of Monmouth County."

Singh earned a bachelor's degree from Rutgers University and a law degree from New York Law School. She was

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Middlesex Offers Employment Workshop for Probationers

By Sonja Asante
Middlesex Vicinage

"You are hereby sentenced to a 3-year term of probation. As a condition, you are ordered to obtain and maintain employment."

In today's economy, the condition of probation that requires clients to obtain and maintain employment is difficult to enforce.

To ensure compliance with this condition, clients who are unemployed or underemployed are referred to the Middlesex Employment Workshop.

Since October 2013, Senior Probation Officers Jessica Cannon and LaQuina Fladger have coordinated the workshop, which is held monthly at the Middlesex County One-Stop Career Center in New Brunswick.

"The Middlesex Employment Workshop is important for probationers and the community because people need resources, structure, and support to be able to successfully return to the community and contribute to society," Fladger said.

The workshop does not guarantee employment, but it provides the tools necessary for a job search.

Participants are referred by their supervising probation officers and can attend morning or afternoon sessions. Attendance is taken, and participants are required to arrive on time. Attendance records are shared with supervising officers.

Cannon and Fladger also provide probation officers with a weekly packet that includes information on job fairs and job leads. Copies of the packets are placed in client waiting rooms along with flyers about the employment workshops.

Clients conduct a self-evaluation to determine suitable careers based on their personality types. This is helpful for those who could need to consider new careers because of their charges.

Officers review job search methods and direct clients to resources in the community. Participants are required to register on Job4Jersey, which is a job search tool offered by the New Jersey Department of Labor. Department of Labor representatives assist them with registration on site.

During the workshops, officers review the dos and don'ts of completing job applications and resumes and prepare them for the interview process.

Participants are given information on how to obtain identification, business interview attire, and other free resources such as mailboxes, information about housing, and access to fax machines.

Feedback from clients has been positive. They appear to be engaged during the workshops and express appreciation for the assistance and information. They like that the workshops are conveniently located and that resources are available to them at the One-Stop Center.

Supervising officers are thankful for the assistance the workshops provide for their clients. They report any known successful job placements that result from the workshop.

AOC staff have recommended other vicinages observe the format of the workshop as they prepare to launch similar workshops in other vicinages.

Gurpreet Singh Named Trial Court Administrator in the Monmouth Vicinage

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a litigation associate at the New York firm of Kelley Drye & Warren LLP from 1995 to 2001, when she joined the Judiciary as the equal employment opportunity and affirmative action officer in the Union Vicinage.

In 2002 she joined the Administrative Office of the Courts as the statewide affirmative action officer, and in 2006 she moved to the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General (OAG) as the director of equal employment opportunity. She was named chief of staff for the OAG in 2008.

Singh returned to the Judiciary in January 2010 as counsel to the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Extrajudicial Activities. She was named special assistant to the administrative director of the courts in December 2010.

"As a resident of Monmouth County, I am honored and excited to serve in this new role and eager to work with Assignment Judge Thornton and the talented and dedicated judges, managers, and staff of the Monmouth Vicinage in providing quality court services to the public," said Singh. "I want to thank Judge Grant and Judge Thornton for this opportunity. I am grateful for the guidance and mentorship I have received from Judge Grant and Chief of Staff Steven Bonville and for the support and encouragement from my colleagues at the Administrative Office of the Courts and throughout the Judiciary."

Gurpreet M. Singh

Judiciary Releases General Assignment Order

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner has released the General Assignment Order for the court year 2015-16. It becomes effective Sept. 1. The order lists all assignments for judges in the Appellate Division, Tax Court and Superior Court. The order also lists acting assignment judges, vicinage presiding judges of each trial court division and presiding judge of each part in the Appellate Division of Superior Court. The order is available at njcourts.com

Court Managers Attend, Offer Leadership Training Courses

By Kenneth W. Kerwin
Trial Court Administrator
Ocean Vicinage

Since July 2014, the New Jersey Judiciary, in collaboration with the Institute for Court Management and the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) has provided training courses for court executives.

Court executives attend a train-the-trainer course at the NCSC in Williamsburg, Virginia to learn, present, and teach the material to other court executives in New Jersey.

The first course offered was leadership.

The course is designed to allow court executives to explore ways to motivate, communicate, and improve the Judiciary through their leadership. It explores the challenges involved when promoting change in an organization, as well as the process for that change.

The course was offered and presented by Kenneth W. Kerwin, trial court administrator in the Ocean Vicinage, and Tina LaLena, municipal division manager in Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage, in July 2014, October 2014 and in April 2015. Dorothy Howell, criminal division manager in the Essex Vicinage, recently became an instructor/facilitator for the April session.

The participants and presenters had opportunities to learn from each other about their experiences when leading through change in the Judiciary.

Judiciary managers are shown outside the National Center for State Courts in Williamsburg, Va., where they attended training that will help improve the Judiciary through leadership.

The learning method, experiential learning, allows the participants and presenters to share their work challenges and successes. The course is presented over 2½ days. A total of 62 court executives have completed the leadership course.

Passaic Breaks Ground on New Courthouse Plaza in Paterson

By June Zieder
Passaic Vicinage

The Passaic Vicinage and the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the Passaic Vicinage joined local officials May 19 to break ground on the new Passaic County Courthouse Plaza. The ceremony took place on Hamilton Street between Lee Place and DeGrasse Street in Paterson.

The project will provide a new pedestrian plaza for visitors and employees using the courthouse and Social Services Building while helping promote Paterson's historical downtown district.

The plaza is a "green" project that will use only LED lighting, along with curbing and planters. It will also feature decorative rain gardens. In the middle of the plaza there will be a cast metal sculpture of a relief map of the county. Funded by Passaic County, the new plaza will be maintained as part of the county's park system.

Passaic Vicinage, Passaic County and local officials break ground on the Passaic County Courthouse Plaza in front of the Passaic County Courthouse in Paterson on May 19.

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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.