Judiciary Times

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Vicinages Launch Criminal Justice Reform Pilots

Camden, Morris/Sussex, Passaic Serving as Test Sites for Statewide Intiative

By Megan Gallardo
Administrative Specialist 2
Camden Vicinage

The Camden Vicinage hosted its criminal justice reform kickoff meeting at Camden County College in Blackwood on March 4 to discuss the new bail reform and speedy trial law going into effect Jan. 1, 2017 and its implementation in Camden County.

A criminal justice reform pilot program is scheduled to begin in the Camden Vicinage in July following rollouts in the Passaic and Morris/Sussex Vicinages.

"This major reform effort in how criminal cases are handled from the outset directly involves all components of the criminal justice system, not just the Judiciary," said Assignment Judge Deborah Silverman Katz.

This new law represents one of the most dramatic changes to the criminal justice system in decades.

By Jan. 1, 2017, the state will shift from a system in which a defendant's pretrial release is dependent upon their ability to pay monetary bail to a more objective one in which a defendant's pretrial release is dependent upon their risk of failing to appear for court and the danger that they pose to the community.

The new law also will change how quickly incarcerated defendants are tried and how released defendants are monitored pretrial.

Judge Silverman Katz and Trial Court Administrator Carole A. Cummings welcomed more than 270 participants to the daylong event. Attendees included judges, Superior Court and municipal court staff, and other criminal justice stakeholders in state, county and local government, law enforcement and corrections, and the community.

"All of you will have the opportunity to learn about the changes to the bail reform laws, and all of you will see how your specific roles in the criminal justice system are vitally important to ensure the realization of these changes," said Judge Silverman Katz as she stated the purpose of the day's program. "The success of these reforms depends upon your understanding of them and your participation in the process."

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner, who appeared by video, and Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts, delivered opening remarks.

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Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts, addresses stakeholders at the criminal justice reform kickoff in the Camden Vicinage at Camden County College in Blackwood in March as Assignment Judge Deborah Silverman Katz listens. Excerpts of Judge Grant's remarks can be found at youtube.com/njcourts.

Municipal Court Judges and Staff Are Integral to Success of Criminal Justice Reform in NJ

Judge Glenn A. Grant

By Judge Glenn A.Grant
Acting Administrative Director

Criminal justice reform has shifted into high gear with the kickoff meeting and launch of the initial pilot in Passaic Vicinage, with the Morris/Sussex and Camden Vicinages to follow shortly.

The pilot counties, working closely with the Administrative Office of the Courts, have an integral role to play in developing and testing the operational components of criminal justice reform, such as the automated risk assessment tool.

The other 12 vicinages, while not part of the pilot, are every bit as active in designing how those operational components will be structured in those counties.

As part of that process, all 15 vicinages and 21 counties are scheduling and conducting many outreach meetings for

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Criminal Justice Reform Pilots Start in Three Vicinages

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Speakers included Criminal Presiding Judge Edward J. McBride Jr., who provided a comprehensive overview of criminal justice reform; Jennifer M. Perez, director of Trial Court Services, and Jack M. McCarthy III, director of Information Technology, who spoke on the Judiciary's work to automate key components of the criminal justice process to increase efficiency and the development of an objective and reliable risk assessment tool; Municipal Presiding Judge Robert T. Zane III, who explained how the risk assessment tool will be utilized and changes to the Municipal Court process; and Camden County Prosecutor Mary Eva Colalillo and Public Defender Harold Katz, who gave their perspectives on criminal justice reform.

"The large turnout at the event is a credit to everyone who helped plan it and to all of our law enforcement, municipal, and community partners who attended and share our commitment to successfully implement criminal justice reform in Camden County," said Judge McBride.

Katz said, "I was very happy to have played a role in the criminal justice reform kickoff event on March 4, 2016. The promise of bail reform is a fairer, more equitable criminal justice system. I look forward to a continued partnership with the Judiciary as we implement these important changes in Camden County."

Stemming from recommendations made by the Joint Committee on Criminal Justice, a special committee of the Supreme Court established and chaired by Chief Justice Stuart Rabner to examine bail and speedy trial reform, the new system of pretrial release will be fairer to criminal defendants and will also serve to improve public safety.

Under the current bail system, poor defendants who pose little risk of flight or danger to the community sometimes remain in jail simply because they cannot afford to pay even a small amount of bail.

Meanwhile, defendants with money are able to post bail and secure their release even if they are dangerous or pose a significant flight risk.

Under the new law, when a defendant is arrested on a complaint-warrant, the judge will use an objective, validated risk assessment tool or Public Safety Assessment (PSA) to help determine the appropriate form of pretrial release. Defendants who are released pretrial will be monitored by pretrial services staff.

Judges also will be permitted upon motion of the prosecutor to keep a defendant detained pretrial without bail if they pose a significant flight risk or a serious risk of danger to the community or witnesses.

Incarcerated defendants will be subject to the law's speedy trial provisions, which set limits on the amount of time a defendant can remain detained pretrial.

The municipal court will no longer set bail for cases that have been charged on a complaint-warrant because those defendants must be detained and transported to jail so that pretrial services staff can complete the PSA and make a release recommendation to the judge.

The release decision must be made within 48 hours of arrest.

County stakeholders, including Freeholder Director Louis Cappelli Jr., Administrator Ross G. Angilella and Warden David Owens shared their points of view on criminal justice

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Criminal justice reform stakeholders in the three pilot vicnages participated in panel discussions similar to the one shown above in the Camden Vicinage.

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.

Director of Communications and Community Relations
Winifred Comfort

Editor
Mike Mathis

Contributors
Diana Archer; Nancy Einbinder; Megan Gallardo; John Harrison; Greg Lambard; Michael Mazza; Tricia Nikiel and the AOC Print Shop.

Three Pilot Vicinages Host Criminal Justice Reform Seminars

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reform.

Angilella said, "Camden County was delighted to be invited to participate in the Camden Vicinage Criminal Justice Reform Kickoff event on March 4, 2016. The event was very well produced, from start to finish, making it valuable to all of the stakeholders. Even though we have been engaged in this effort, there was much new information to be learned. The staff and judicial presentations were very enlightening, and Judge Zane's videos were a terrific addition.

"We support and appreciate all of the efforts of the Camden Vicinage in criminal justice reform. Kudos and thank you to the assignment judge and the trial court administrator, and all of the staff, for producing an effective and informative event."

Criminal justice reform begins statewide on Jan. 1, 2017

The meeting concluded with a panel discussion moderated by Judge McBride to address remaining questions.

Panelists included Vance Hagins, chief of the Judiciary's new Pretrial Services Unit; Tricia Murphy-Moore, assistant criminal division manager; Dana Petrone, assistant prosecutor; Alba Rivera, criminal division manager; Marcia Soast, acting first assistant public defender; and Mary Wiesemann, municipal division manager.

At the end of the event, Judge Silverman Katz thanked those who attended and contributed.

"All of the speakers today presented a variety of perspectives, but each and every one of them stand with us as we undertake this historic change," said Judge Silverman Katz.

"I hope that as you leave here today, you're better armed with the information necessary to know and implement the required changes. The criminal justice reforms...will change the system as we know it. We will shift to an evidence-based, data-driven system, and it will be a successful one."

Morris/Sussex

By Mike Mathis
Judiciary Times Editor

Stakeholders from the Judiciary and other levels of government convened in Parsippany on Feb. 1 to officially roll-out criminal justice reform in the Morris/Sussex Vicinage.

More than 200 people, including Chief Justice Stuart Rabner; Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts; judges; court staff; prosecutors; defense attorneys and law enforcement officials participated in the event, which was held at the Morris County Public Safety Training Academy.

"The Morris/Sussex Vicinage is extraordinarily proud to have been chosen as one of the pilots for criminal justice reform initiatives," Assignment Judge Stuart A. Minkowitz said. "We are also very fortunate to have the full and active participation of our partners in the executive and legislative branches to accomplish the goals of criminal justice reform."

The Judiciary and its criminal justice reform partners in state, county and municipal government are working to implement bail and speedy trial reform and to form a pretrial services unit.

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 is more objective, and thus fairer to defendants because it is unrelated to their ability to pay monetary bail. The changes stem from a committee formed and chaired by Chief Justice Rabner.

The committee made recommendations that led to the passage of legislation and a voter-approved constitutional amendment in 2014.

The statute also sets deadlines for the timely filing of an indictment and the disposition of criminal charges for incarcerated defendants.

"We all share the same goal: to create a system that's fairer, that is better, that is more effective and more efficient - a criminal justice system that we participate in and can be proud of," Chief Justice Rabner said.

In addition to Morris/Sussex, pilot programs also are underway in the Camden and Passaic vicinages, where kickoff events were held in March and January, respectively.

Other speakers at the Morris/Sussex event included Judge Grant; Judge Minkowitz; Public Defender Joseph Krakora; Elie Honig, director of the New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice; Jennifer Perez, director of Trial Court Services at the Administrative Office of the Courts and Jack McCarthy, the Judiciary's chief information officer.

Perez and McCarthy spoke of the sweeping changes to the Judiciary's computer systems to accommodate several new and automated enhancements. These include development of the evidence-based risk assessment tool to determine a defendant's risk-level for purposes of pretrial release, which interfaces with systems that capture fingerprint identification and criminal background checks.

Judge Grant said criminal justice reform would not be possible without the support of and cooperation from representatives from each branch of government.

"This effort was embraced by all three branches of government - the legislature, executive branch and judiciary - to say that we can make our system fairer," he noted.

Passaic

By John Harrison
Criminal Division
Passaic Vicinage

The Passaic Vicinage held its criminal justice reform kickoff event at the Passaic County Public Safety Academy in Wayne on Jan. 14. Members of the

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Criminal Justice Reform in Camden, Morris/Sussex, Passaic

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Judiciary, law enforcement, prosecutors, public defenders and private bar attended.

Passaic Vicinage, along with Morris/Sussex and Camden vicinages, has been selected as a pilot to test programs that will be part of the criminal justice reform that will begin statewide on Jan. 1, 2017.

By Jan. 1, 2017, the state will shift from a system in which a defendant's pretrial release is dependent upon their ability to pay monetary bail to a more objective one in which a defendant's pretrial release is dependent upon their risk of failing to appear for court and the danger that they pose to the community.

The new law also will change how quickly incarcerated defendants are tried and how released defendants are monitored pretrial.

Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director, said reforming the criminal justice system will require that all stakeholders working together to create a fairer, more equal system.

Defendants charged on warrant complaints will be detained until risk assessments are conducted and they appear before a judge. It is expected that more defendants will be charged on summons complaints when criminal justice reform begins.

Defendants who are not released from detention must have their cases presented to a grand jury within 90 days from arrest and must have their cases disposed of within 180 days from indictment. Defendants whose cases exceed these deadlines without the subtraction of excludable time will be released.

Marie VanNostrand, a consultant who is working with the Judiciary on criminal justice reform, discussed the public safety assessment and the decision-making framework that will be used by staff and provided to judges and attorneys to help determine whether a defendant will be released without conditions, released with conditions or detained pending disposition upon motion by the prosecutor.

There are several risk factors that the program considers, including prior violent crimes and failure to appear for court. The resulting score measures the risk to public safety and risk of non-appearance in court.

To prepare for criminal justice reform, the Administrative Office of the Courts has updated the eCDR and eCourts systems and has created new systems. Applicable court rules have been reviewed and will be revised. Numerous committees composed of members of the Judiciary, prosecutors, public defenders, private attorneys and law enforcement have been working to ensure that New Jersey is ready for the implementation of criminal justice reform next year.

Work Being Done in Municipal Courts Vital to the Success of Criminal Justice Reform

Continued from page 1

stakeholders and the public to explain what criminal justice reform is and how it will affect them. Kickoff events are being scheduled throughout 2016 leading up to the Jan. 1, 2017 statewide implementation date.

All of this is a collaborative and synergistic effort, involving the AOC, the Superior Courts, and the municipal courts, with everyone working diligently toward the mandated deadline for statewide implementation.

The overall project has been termed a sea change. Perhaps more accurately, though, it can be described as a series of sea changes, with each building upon the other.

One such change is to ensure that all defendants are positively identified as early in the process as possible in order to be able to accurately assess that individual's risk level, which is the fundamental principle of criminal justice reform.

To accomplish this, we have worked closely with the state police to develop and implement a real-time interface, called LiveScan, that will send the newly entered arrest fingerprint record directly from the state police to the Judiciary for criminal complaint entry. This process ensures that the defendant's State Bureau of Identification (SBI) number and other data are available in the complaint entry process as well as for the risk assessment tool.

Combining the current arrest information and the defendant's criminal history allows the risk assessment tool to provide numerical scores that will assist municipal court judges and authorized municipal court administrators and deputy municipal court administrators in determining whether to issue a warrant or summons.

This also allows the first appearance judge to determine any conditions of release for the defendant.

Integrating the LiveScan fingerprinting process, which is operational in virtually every law enforcement agency throughout the state, with our Electronic Court Disposition Reporting (eCDR) system not only allows for the positive identification of the defendant but also improves the accuracy of the data and the speed by which law enforcement officers can complete the complaint entry process.

This new integrated eCDR LiveScan system will be rolled out across the state ahead of criminal justice reform implementation and should be completed by the end of July.

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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 of the page.

Municipal Courts Are Critical to Success of Criminal Justice Reform

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To date, Passaic, Morris/Sussex and Camden vicinages have completed comprehensive training sessions for Municipal Court judges, court staff, and local law enforcement agencies.

In addition to the eCDR LiveScan upgrade, we have built and rolled out a new unified master statute table.

We now have one comprehensive charging table that will be used by the criminal, municipal, family and probation divisions and by law enforcement.

We have coordinated with the state police for them to use the table for their Computerized Criminal History (CCH) records and for all the LiveScan devices across the state.

This enhancement is foundational to the success of criminal justice reform by ensuring that historical data and new charges are scored correctly. The assignment judges and trial court administrators are filling the Judiciary leadership role in the counties in this effort.

In the municipalities, that leadership role must be played by the municipal court judges and municipal court administrators, with oversight by and assistance from the vicinage presiding judge and division manager.

The municipal court judges and administrators must ensure that the municipal governing body is aware of this sea change that is in progress, that the local police department understands the importance of having a functioning and up-to-date LiveScan system, that the local court staff have been trained on the details and impact of criminal justice reform, and that information is provided to the public through numerous outreach opportunities.

While significant outreach on the details and impact of criminal justice reform has already occurred at the municipal court level, with more than 500 municipal courts, much more remains to be done.

The outreach to judges and court staff will continue throughout the year to ensure that all fully understand their critical roles in implementing criminal justice reform.

And the need for outreach by judges and court managers – municipal court and Superior Court – to the public will continue and in fact will increase the closer we get to Jan. 1, 2017.

I want to thank everyone involved in that outreach and for helping to inform and educate the public on what this criminal justice reform is all about.

Hudson Lauded for Commuter Efforts

The Hudson Vicinage recently was cited by New Jersey Smart Workplaces (NJSW) for creating programs that provide and promote commuting options for employees. The statewide program recognizes employers who have commuter-related services available to staff. "The Hudson Vicinage has always demonstrated a concern for the challenges with commuting to Jersey City," said Jay DiDomenico, director of the Hudson Transportation Management Association.

Camden Hosts Women's History Month Event

By Megan Gallardo
Administrative Specialist 2
Camden Vicinage

The Camden Vicinage held two special events in honor of Women's History Month in March.

Women in Leadership Roles in Camden County were celebrated during a panel discussion at the Hall of Justice on March 18.

Assignment Judge Deborah Silverman Katz served as moderator. The panel included Trial Court Administrator Carole A. Cummings, Camden County Freeholder Susan Shin Angulo; Riletta Cream, a former freeholder and educator with roots in the city of Camden; Brenda Lee Eutsler, past president of the Camden County Bar Foundation; and Jenifer Fowler, president of the Camden County Bar Association. Historical interpreter Daisy Nelson Century performed as the abolitionist and Union spy Harriet Tubman on March 22.

Century is an actress, speaker, author, radio talk show host and educator who has travelled all over the country to portray influential and inspiring women throughout history.

Judge Silverman Katz thanked everyone for attending the events, which marked the first time women were honored by the vicinage.

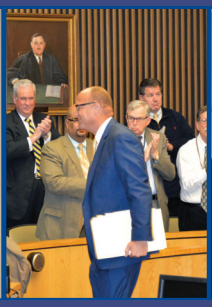
New Jersey Judiciary 2016 Black History Month

Retired Judiciary EEO/AA Officer and civil rights pioneer Bobby Battle speaks with the media after his presentation at the Burlington County Courthouse.

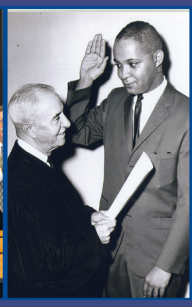
Festivities at the Monmouth County Courthouse included this jazz performance.

Monmouth Vicinage Law Clerk Omari Reed performs Sam Cooke's "A Change is Gonna Come."

Actress Alma Day portrays civil rights activists Fannie Lou Hamer at the Burlington County Courthouse.



Attorney Joseph Jacobs pays tribute to his father, the late Judge Herbert Samuel Jacobs, at the Atlantic County Civil Courthouse.



The swearing in of Judge Herbert Samuel Jacobs in 1964 as the first African-American judge in Atlantic County.

The Rosa Parks School of Fine Arts choir performs at the Passaic County Courthouse.

Camden Vicinage Ombudsman Vanessa A. Ravenelle; Stacy Hawkins, associate professor at Rutgers School of Law-Camden; and EEO/AA Officer Natonya C. Phillips.

Judge Sheila A. Venable, Hudson Vicinage Assignment Judge Peter F. Bariso and Judge Martha T. Royster at the Historic William J. Brennan Jr. Courthouse .

Motivational speaker Yvonne Harvey at the Passaic County Courthouse

Cumberland County Prosecutor Jennifer Webb-McRae. Judge Christine Allen-Jackson and retired Supreme Court Justice John E. Wallace, Jr. at Salem County Courthouse event celebrating the life od John S. Rock, the first African-American sworn into the bar of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Winning entries from Monmouth Vicinage's student essay/poetry/art contest.

Middlesex Vicinage Unveils 12th Judiciary-Related Art Exhibit

By Nancy Einbinder
Finance Division
Middlesex Vicinage

The Middlesex Vicinage held a reception Jan. 29 to unveil its latest art exhibit, a permanent display that highlights the organization of New Jersey's court system and the importance of an independent Judiciary.

The Judicial Landscape in New Jersey is the 12th project undertaken by the Middlesex Courthouse Art Advisory Committee and its Judicial Independence Subcommittee, chaired by retired Judge Amy Piro Chambers.

The exhibit includes paintings accompanied by text that describe the Supreme Court, the Appellate Division, the trial courts, the Judiciary's role in state government and the meaning of an independent Judiciary.

"We wanted the public to have a better idea of who we are and the importance of judicial independence," Judge Chambers said, adding that the exhibit's nature scenes leave viewers with the understanding that "the law is a part of life and it influences what happens in the outside world."

Funded by the Middlesex County Bar Foundation, the exhibit is the second project designed by Artisa LLC.

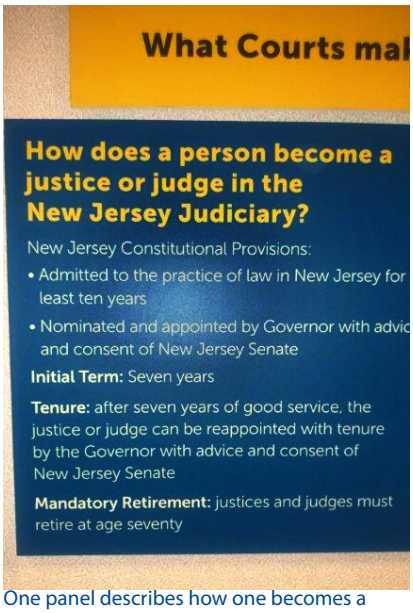
Working closely with the committee, creative director Isabella Duicu Palowitch and artist Alessia Lorea Arregui, developed a display that is educational and beautiful.

After the renovations of the courthouse were completed, the Middlesex Courthouse Art Advisory Committee was formed to consider various ways to provide the public with interesting and educational displays relating to the law and Middlesex County.

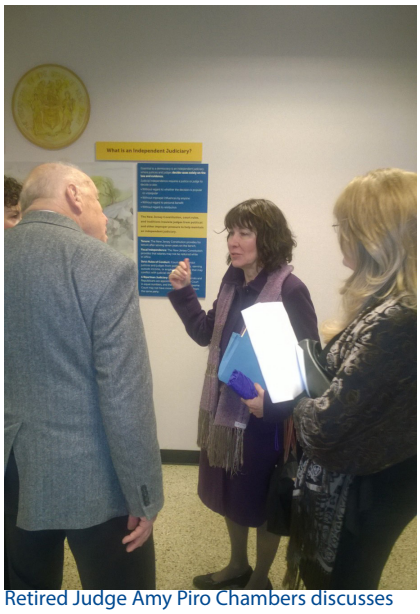
"Recognizing that court users often have downtime, we sought to enhance the courthouse halls by providing an aesthetically pleasing, law related educational diversion," explained Judge Deborah J. Venezia, the art advisory committee chair. The displayed were financed through grants.

Middlesex Vicinage's latest art exhibit features paintings and text describing the structure of the New Jersey courts. It is the vicinage's 12th art exhibit.

The exhibit includes paintings describing the functions of each branch of government, including the Judiciary.



One panel describes how one becomes a judge and for how long they can serve.



Retired Judge Amy Piro Chambers discusses the exhibit during its unveiling in January.

JCC Volunteers Discuss Their Satisfaction With Helping Youth

By Diana Archer
Senior Probation Officer
Cumberland/Gloucester/Salem Vicinage

Two Gloucester County residents have dedicated their time and service to the Juvenile Conference Committee (JCC) for more than 35 years.

Carl Fratz of Mantua is no stranger to inspiring and mentoring youth. He is a veteran teacher with more than 39 years in education. He was named Teacher of the Year in 2013 and was awarded the Governor's Teacher Recognition Award in 1992.

As a JCC volunteer, Fratz's patience, understanding, and guidance has steered many youth who appear before the committee in a positive direction. He exemplifies leadership with his fellow committee members.

"Our collective goal on the JCC has never been to punish or scold offenders, but rather, to always help our young people make positive changes in their lives," Fratz said. "We strive to make each child a better person. At the start of every case, I tell each youngster, "You are the most important person in this room tonight."

In addition to his work on the JCC, Fratz serves as a volunteer for the Court Appointed Special Advocates and received the Advocate of the Year award for Gloucester County. He is a member of the Mantua, Merchantville and Maple Shade masonic lodges and the Scottish Rite, and transports children and their families to and from appointments at the Shriners Hospital in Philadelphia. He also picks up and delivers food to servicemen and servicewomen during layovers at Philadelphia International Airport.

Michael Ticcino of Mantua has been a JCC volunteer since March 1979.

His sense of humor and practical knowledge have help helped the disposition of many cases.

Ticcino was born and raised in South Philadelphia. He served in Korea with the U.S. Army for 15 months and has volunteered with the Rainbow for Boys and Girls, CONTACT, Boy Scouts of America, Gloucester County Veterans Post, and Clearview Marching Band.

Ticcino is married and has three children and four grandchildren.

Ticcino enjoys working with youth and seeing the difference the committee makes in their lives, something he witnessed firsthand.

Ticcino recalled a case early in his tenure on the JCC: a boy stole a toy soldier from a store.

The panel talked with the boy and his mother and suggested things he could do to better his circumstances.

A few years later, Ticcino saw the boy selling newspapers. The boy told him how the JCC helped him turn his life around.

"This is what did it for me," Ticcino said.

Monmouth Vicinage Staff Tour Juvenile Detention Facilities

By Michael Mazza
Assistant Family Division Manager
Monmouth Vicinage

Representatives from the Monmouth Vicinage and partner agencies recently took part in guided tours of three state juvenile detention facilities.

Participants included Assignment Judge Lisa P. Thornton, Presiding Family Division Judge Kathleen A. Sheedy, Trial Court Administrator Gurpreet M. Singh, and family division management and staff, along with representatives from the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office and Office of the Public Defender.

The tours were arranged and personally conducted by Felix Mickens, deputy executive director of operations for the Juvenile Justice Commission. Mickens led the group on a tour of the New Jersey Training School in Monroe Township in December. The facility, the commission's largest, houses male juveniles.

After touring the expansive grounds and residential and vocational centers, the group observed the intake process for new residents and visited the optical lab.

The lab is managed by a licensed optometrist who teaches residents how to make prescription eyeglasses, for juvenile and adult correctional residents throughout the state.

One of the juvenile residents discussed his plans to use his new skills to get a job when he's released. The tour concluded with several juvenile residents sharing their life stories during a question and answer session.

Mickens led a tour of the Juvenile Medium Security Facility in Bordentown Township in January.

The facility houses juveniles with mental health issues requiring secure placement. Custody officers gave details on juvenile gang involvement, explaining the extensive knowledge and planning required by staff to

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Editor's Note

The deadline for the summer 2016 edition of the *Judiciary Times* is Friday, June 3.

Feature stories about court programs and newsworthy profiles about judges and court staff are welcome. Submissions can be sent to mike.mathis@judiciary.state.nj.us.

Horsing Around

Morris/Sussex Municipal Staff Experience Veterans Therapy

By Tricia Nikiel
Municipal Division Manager
Morris/Sussex Vicinage

Municipal court judges in New Jersey are required to make an opening statement when they begin a court session.

One area they must address is informing court users of available programs through the Veterans Assistance Project, a combined effort of the Judiciary, the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMAVA), and the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health Services, to refer veterans to existing community services.

One program is the Freedom Horse Farm, Horses Serving Heroes, in Long Valley. To better understand the plight of veterans who use the municipal courts, judges and staff from the Morris/Sussex Vicinage recently visited the farm.

Staff learned how the nonprofit farm uses equine assisted therapy for veterans and their families.

Farm staff perform exercises with the horses that are explorative and supportive to help service members and families make the sometimes difficult transitions from military to civilian life.

A farmhand escorts Morris/Sussex Presiding Municipal Court Judge Andrew Wubbenhorst during an visit to the Freedom Horse Farm in Long Valley. Vicinage judges and staff visted the farm to better understand the plight of veterans who use the municipal courts.

The exercises help to build trust, confidence and courage to help individuals recover from post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury while promoting physical, emotional, social and cognitive healing.

Farm staff allowed the judges and court staff to participate in similar exercises, demonstrating how to deal with barriers, enhance communication and listening skills and build trust and relationships. They also experienced the physical therapy afforded to veterans who are disabled.

"My daughter is in the military and I preside over many cases that involve veterans," said Judge John Mulhern, who sits in the municipal courts in Sparta Township, Ogdensburg, Hamburg, Hardyston, Newton and Green Township. "I was so happy to spend the day with an organization that really cares about issues facing veterans and their families. It was a great day."

Court staff said they left the farm with a better understanding of the challenges some veterans face. They said they will be able to serve them better when they appear in municipal court.

"I now have a clearer understanding of how very different each of our customers really are," said Bonnie Diamond, court administrator in Sparta Township.

"The exercises that were performed, along with my peers, helped to teach me how very unique we all are and how very differently we will react to situations we encountered. The Horse Farm was a great teaching tool for customer service skills as well as team building skills."

The Veterans Assistance Project is geared toward providing services to veterans, not diverting veterans from the courts. Veterans who are charged with indictable and non-indictable offenses, other than minor traffic matters, as well as veterans who are on probation, are eligible to participate in the program.

Some veterans return from military service with physical, mental or personal issues, and some might turn to drugs or alcohol in an attempt to manage the stress of returning to civilian life. The Veterans Assistance Project aims to connect service members who need help with existing programs to address those issues.

Individuals are asked whether they are veterans at the point of arrest or detention, when the person is remanded to the county jail, and at initial court appearances. Persons identified as veterans are referred to the veterans service office for an assessment of their needs and then matched with existing service providers.

"Visiting the Freedom Horse Farm allowed municipal court staff to experience the unique therapeutic resources available to our veterans and made many of us aware of the importance of the Veterans Assistance Project," said Ashley Fritz, court administrator for the Kinnelon Borough Municipal Court.

Juvenile Facilities Tour

Continued from page 8

monitor gang affiliations. The group visited the housing monitoring station, the gymnasium and residents' living quarters.

Later that day, the group toured the Female Secure Care and Intake Facility in Bordentown Township.

Officers reviewed the services offered to residents, including instruction in beautician and culinary skills.

At a roundtable discussion, three female juvenile residents explained a week-long program where they design and display T-shirts that portray their internal struggles.

They also shared emotional life stories and gave their perspective on the juvenile justice system and their aspirations for the future.

Law Day 2015

Throughout May, courthouses across New Jersey conducted a variety of activities to mark Law Day, an annual celebration established by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1958. Reports of celebrations in each vicinage will appear in the summer edition of the ***Judiciary Times.***

Monmouth Customer Service Kiosks Serve As Statewide Model

By **Mike Mathis**
Judiciary Times Editor

Courthouses can be confusing places, especially for those who don't visit them often.

Once past security, one can easily get lost without asking for directions. But in the Monmouth County Courthouse in Freehold, new directional touch-screen kiosks with maps of the building were installed in early March to make it easier for visitors to reach their destination.

The kiosks are the newest in the vicinage; six others have been installed in the probation, family and criminal divisions and the ombudsman's office.

Kiosks also have been installed in courthouses and court facilities in nearly all 15 vicinages; 13 vicinages are using them in their probation divisions to track clients and to inform staff when they arrive.

"They're working very well," said David Gonzalez, the vicinage's IT manager, said of the Monmouth kiosks.

The idea for the kiosks was developed by then-Assistant Chief Probation Officer Ralph Esposito, who saw a similar customer service device at a wireless phone store and thought the idea could be applied in the courthouse.

At the time, probationers who arrived for appointments with their probation officers signed their names on a clipboard and waited until the officer was available to see them. Officers would have to periodically leave their desks to see if clients arrived. Clients often waited too long and were not seen in the order of their arrival.

"An officer (would) get up and walk to and from the lobby to see if they had a client," Esposito said " They would do this 20-30 times a (shift) If they check and no one is waiting, they may do some other work, get involved and forget to check, so a client can be waiting unnecessarily."

The first kiosk was installed in the probation division in 2012,

Now when probationers sign in, a real-time notification is sent to their officers, reducing wait time. The on-duty manager can see all waiting clients and knows how long they have been waiting.

The system also generates reports, including lists of clients and wait times sorted by officer and the percentage of probationers whose primary language is Spanish.

There were 47,000 check-ins at the probation kiosk in 2012, Gonzalez said.

The kiosks were later installed in the criminal and family divisions and the ombudsman's office and at the two entrances to the courthouse.

In the division offices, a pop-up on a computer screen lets staff know someone has arrived for an appointment or hearing, reducing wait times and eliminating the sometimes long lines that used to form at check-in windows, Gonzalez said.

The units are self-contained, so there are no mice or keyboards that can be damaged or stolen.

Last year, the vicinage opened a domestic violence waiting room that helps provide more effective service and security to clients dealing with highly emotional and personal domestic violence matters. Victims of domestic violence or plaintiffs are told to report to the waiting room after a temporary restraining order is granted in municipal court.

The plaintiffs are asked to sign in using the kiosk system that helps streamline the process and automatically notifies court staff of their arrival. The plaintiffs remains in the waiting room until they are escorted to the courtroom for a final hearing.

The defendant is instructed to report directly to the family division reception unit, where they are met and searched by a sheriff's officer before they are brought into court. The procedure minimizes the possibility of both parties being together in a common area without the presence of a sheriff's officer.

Ombudsman Theresa Romano said the kiosk installed in her office helps her better serve the public and helps her maintain statistics.

"It's a time-saving measure and lends itself to more accuracy," Romano said. "It's an easier way to track. It gives you

Did You Know?

Hunterdon County's first courthouse and jail were constructed about 1720 in the center of Trenton, before Mercer County was created.

David Gonzalez, information technology manager in the Monmouth Vicinage, demonstrates how a customer service kiosk in the family division works. Similar kiosks are now in operation in most vicinages.

College Students Redesign Kids Section of Judiciary Website

By Mike Mathis
Judiciary Times Editor

If you build it, they hopefully will return.

That's the hope of Judiciary leaders in the wake of improvements to the njcourts.com kids page by a group of college students.

For the last few months, a group of students from NJIT and Rutgers have been working on enhancements to the page in partnership with the schools and the Judiciary's EEO/AA unit.

The students said the existing page, which can be found at njcourts.com under the general information tab, was informative but not kid-friendly. The page includes basic information about juries, the municipal courts, trial courts and Supreme Court and the cases they hear. There is a quiz at the end of each section.

The students created a new layout, interactive quizzes and games, a kid-friendly glossary and a section on criminal justice reform.

The completed product was unveiled during Bring Your Children to Work Day on April 28, and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Several parents commented that the new site was a great educational tool.

"We wanted to make it engaging, entertaining and enjoyable," said Esin Kaya, an information technology student at NJIT.

The students' work on the website is part of NJIT's College of Computing Sciences Capstone Design Program, which provides mentors and hands-on training to computer science, information security and information technology students. More than 1,100 projects have been undertaken through the program over the last nine years.

"This has been an exceptional project," said Marcus Mapleh, a computer science student at NJIT. "The staff has been very supportive to get us where we are."

The students met with Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts, on March 24 to update him on the status of the redesign and to demonstrate the new features.

Judge Grant congratulated the students on their work and told them that their collaboration would help them succeed in their career when they'll have to work with others to complete projects.

"The students have created a well-designed framework for a new application which was done in a short period of time," the judge said of the website. "It's a wonderful opportunity for the Judiciary to partner with talented and creative technology students on enhancements that can assist the Judiciary and the public."

Marcus Mapleh, a computer science student at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, explains how a section of the kids section of the Judiciary's website, njcourts.com, works.

Burlington Staff Active in Youth Board

By Greg Lambard
Chief Probation Officer
Burlington Vicinage

Members of the Burlington Vicinage family and probation divisions participated in the kickoff meeting of the Burlington County Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Policy Planning Board at Rowan College at Burlington County Enterprise Center in Mount Laurel on Feb. 25.

The board helps prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice system and attempts to prevent youth in the system from entering the adult criminal justice system through the creation and implementation of positive educational, recreational and social opportunities.

College President Paul Drayton opened the session. Participants remarked how the effort would produce tangible actions that will have a positive effect in the participating towns and the county. Family Presiding Judge John Call noted that the effort was needed to effectively address the issues seen with juveniles in today's world.

Juvenile delinquency policy boards have evolved from an initiative of the Attorney General's Office. There are six boards throughout the state, Newark, Trenton, Camden, Asbury Park, Atlantic City/Pleasantville, and Cumberland County. Planning efforts to establish boards in Jersey City and Paterson are underway.

The boards include municipal officials; juvenile justice stakeholders such as prosecutors, family court, police departments, juvenile probation, the New Jersey Police Chaplin's Association; human services; local- and county-level educators; child protective services and child behavior health providers and non-profit organizations.

1924-2014

Supreme Court Honors Justice Robert Clifford in Special Session

By Mike Mathis
Judiciary Times Editor

The New Jersey Supreme Court bid the late Associate Justice Robert L. Clifford a final farewell on April 19 in a tribute replete with remembrances.

Justice Clifford died in his sleep at his Morris County home on Nov 29, 2014. He was 89.

Justice Clifford was one of the longest-serving members of the court, having sat from September 1973 until he reached the mandatory retirement age of 70 in December 1994.

He served under three chief justices, Pierre Garvin, Richard J. Hughes and Robert N. Wilentz. He shared the bench with 11 associate justices over the course of his judicial career, including two whose tenures went back to the 1950s.

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner spoke of Justice Clifford's wit, his reputation for scholarship, dignity and elegance, and his role as the court's grammarian and editor.

It was the final two attributes with which the chief justice became most acquainted when he asked Justice Clifford to edit his first published opinion.

"He readily took up the challenge and sent it back in a few days with a fair amount of ink in a number of spots- fair comments all," said the chief justice, adding that Justice Clifford's skills as an editor continue to inspire the court's work.

Retired Associate Justice Gary S. Stein, who served with Justice Clifford on the court for nearly 10 years, also spoke of Justice Clifford's use of his "merciless red pen," adding that he often used it to edit *Time* magazine.

Justice Stein said then-Chief Justice Robert N. Wilentz assigned Justice Clifford the most controversial opinions to write and that he was a champion of the constitutional rights of citizens.

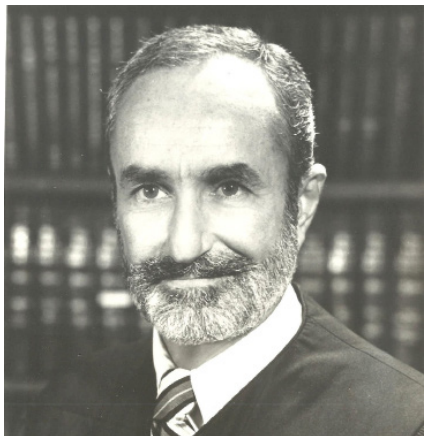
"His influence was enormous," Justice Stein said. "He was among the court's least predictable justices. He was neither a liberal nor a conservative justice, but his votes and opinions were shaped by a strong belief that the court's decisions, although formed by law and precedent, had to conform to an overriding standard of fairness and justice."

At 21 years, Justice Clifford was the third longest-serving Supreme Court justice under the 1947 New Jersey Constitution behind Nathan L. Jacobs and Alan B. Handler.

Before Justice Clifford was nominated to the Supreme Court by Gov. William Cahill, he served in the governor's cabinet as head of the Department of Banking and Insurance and the former Department of Institutions and Agencies. He was in the private practice of law for more than 20 years before his appointment to the Supreme Court.

He was a graduate of Lehigh University and Duke University School of Law in 1950 and served as a law clerk to New Jersey Supreme Court Justice William A. Wachenfeld, one of the original seven justices under the 1947 Constitution.

Retired Supreme Court Associate Justice Gary S. Stein speaks about his relationship with Associate Justice Robert L. Clifford and the late justice's work during memorial proceedings at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex on April 19. Justice Clifford died Nov. 29, 2014 at his Morris County home, several weeks before his 90th birthday.



Robert L. Clifford served for more than 21 years on the Supreme Court. His tenure, from September 1973 until December 1994, included serving with three chief justices and 11 associate justices.

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.

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