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Passaic Vicinage Appoints First Ombudsman

Passaic County residents will have a new advocate on their side when they visit the Passaic County Courthouse, today announced Assignment Judge Robert J. Passero and Trial Court Administrator Kirk L. Nixon. Renita McKinney, the vicinage's first ombudsman, now will be there to ensure that each court "customer" receives good customer service.

Judge Passero stated, "One of the Judiciary's core values is quality service, and the ombudsman program is intended to improve the quality of service in the courts. Ms. McKinney is sure to do a great job."

As ombudsman, McKinney will provide the public with information, conduct community outreach efforts, and offer assistance to those visiting the courthouse. Among her responsibilities are informing court users of court procedures, programs and services; arranging court tours, speakers, and special events; directing court users to the appropriate offices; investigating citizen complaints; making recommendations for improvements in court services; and referring court users to social service agencies.

The ombudsman program began in the Camden Vicinage in 1996 and expanded to Essex in 1998. In June 2005, the Judiciary adopted a statewide policy for providing an ombudsman in each vicinage.

Ms. McKinney began her nine-year career in the Judiciary as an administrative specialist in the General Operations Division. She moved on to become a financial specialist and then the vicinage training coordinator. She holds a bachelor's degree from Howard University and a master's degree from William Paterson University. A Paterson native, she enjoys reading and spending time with her family.

"I am very excited about this opportunity and I look forward to the rewards that go hand in hand with helping people," said Ms. McKinney.

Ms. McKinney's office is located on the second floor of 77 Hamilton Street. She can be reached at 973-247-8651.

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