



BURLINGTON VICINAGE PRESS RELEASE

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EASTERN JUDGE COURTS BURLINGTON WAYS

MOUNT HOLLY – The Japanese Judge Visitation Program is the result of collaborative efforts of the N.J. Judiciary and the Supreme Court of Japan. It was implemented in 1972 and has been operating within the Superior Court since then. It was specifically designed to meet the needs of Japan's young judges (ages 25 to 30). The purpose of the program is to assist them in gaining broader insights into the administration of justice through comprehensive research in foreign jurisdictions. In addition, judges who participate in this program have been identified by the Supreme Court of Japan as the most promising of the young judges who sit on a three-judge panel. This year, the program comes back to Burlington County after a significant hiatus.

This year's visiting judge, Judge Nobuyuki Funabashi, is from the prefecture Aichi, Japan. He is a judge of the Nagouya District Court which is the capital of the prefecture. It is located in the region of Chubu, island of Honshu. There are 15 districts and 88 municipalities. Its capital city is the fourth largest in Japan. Aichi has the greatest industrial production. It has a reputation as the nucleus of Japan's automotive and aerospace industries. You might recognize such names as Toyota Motor Corporation, Daimler Chrysler, Fuji Heavy Industries, Mitsubishi Motors, Pfizer, Sony Suzuki and Volkswagen who have offices and operating plants in this area.

Burlington County's Assignment Judge John A. Sweeney said, "The program really benefits both countries through an exchange of information. We feel very fortunate to have Judge Funabashi here with us."

Burlington County's Trial Court Administrator Jude Del Preore, who has worked with the program the last six years, explained that Japan has only federal courts because of its small size. Its summary courts basically function as municipal courts do here, while Japan's district courts approximate superior courts here. In Japan, law graduates embark on three potential careers: assistant judges, prosecutors or private attorneys. All three legal tracks are open to women, and there are many women judges in Japan.

Judge Funabashi is primarily interested in the Criminal Division. He is doing extensive research on the jury system because Japan will be changing over to jury trials within the next few years. This is a big change for their culture. In light of this, he is speaking to Criminal Division trial judges, as well as, Criminal Division and jury staff. He is also very interested in Burlington County's video arraignment process.

After his time in Burlington, the Japanese jurist will visit other courts around the state. He will also be exposed to the Appellate Court and the Federal Court System.

Judge Funabashi is married and has one infant child.

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