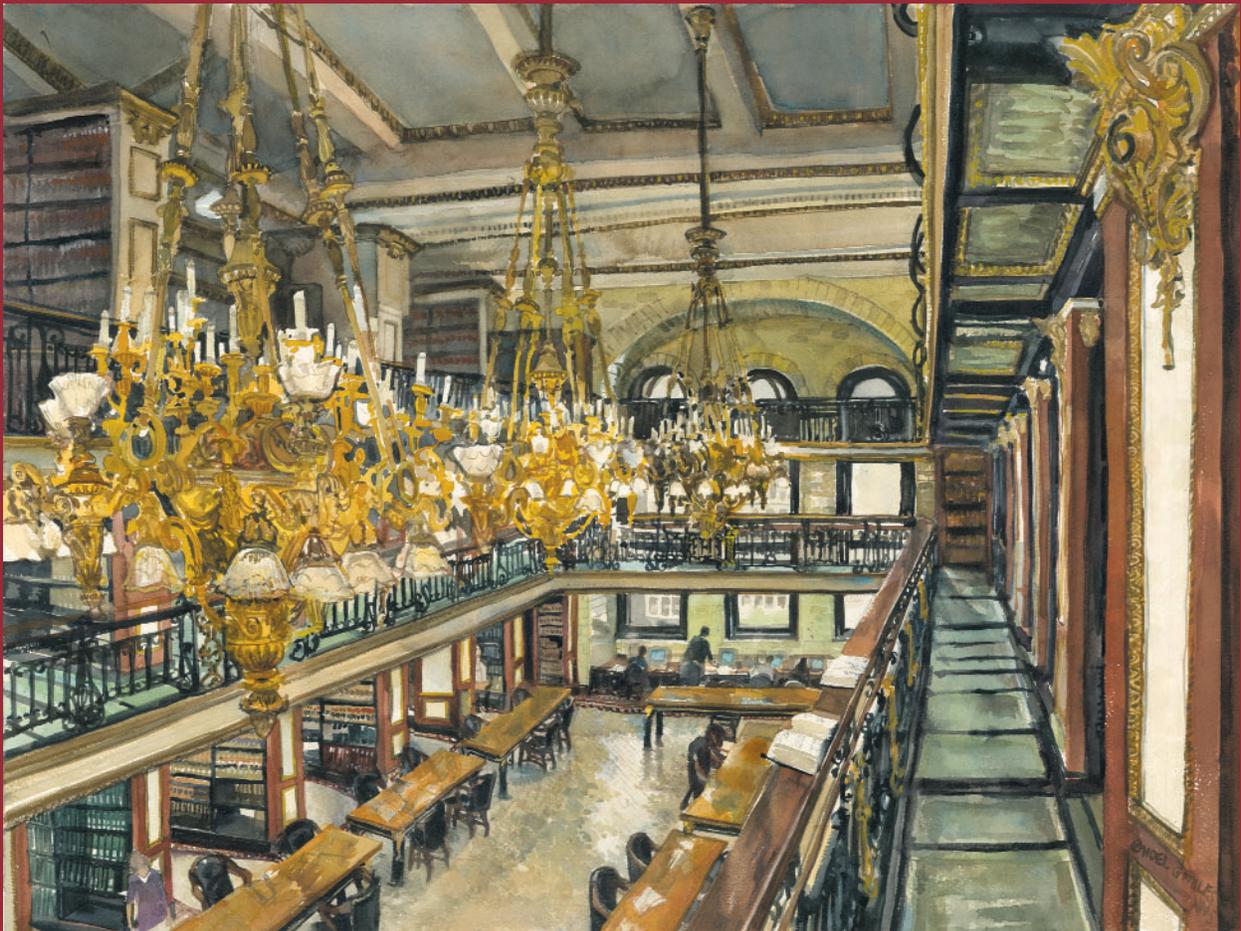


Court of Common Pleas



Law Library, Room 600 City Hall (artist Noël G. Miles)

Court of Common Pleas

The Court of Common Pleas is the largest of the three courts of the FJD, and the largest court in the Commonwealth. A court of general jurisdiction, the FJD Common Pleas Court has a complement of 93 judges. Aside from the Office of the President Judge and its constituent components, the Court of Common Pleas comprises three divisions – Family, Trial, and Orphans’ Court. In turn, the Family and Trial Divisions are each further delineated into separate sections: Family including Domestic Relations and Juvenile Branches; and the Trial Division including Criminal and Civil sections.



Judge Frederica A. Massiah-Jackson
President Judge

Responsibilities

In support of the judicial decision-making process, Common Pleas Court employees receive filings, coordinate schedules, manage case flow, and aid in the disposition of thousands of cases annually. The Court of Common Pleas’ three constituent divisions, subdivisions, and jurisdictions are summarized here. The Trial Division Civil Court has jurisdiction over civil cases where the amount in question exceeds \$10,000. For the Trial Division Criminal Court, adult felony cases represent almost all the inventory (appeals from the Philadelphia Municipal and Traffic Courts are also heard). In the Family Division, Juvenile Branch judges preside over cases involving delinquency, dependency, and adoption. The Domestic Relations Branch disposes of cases involving paternity, spouse and child support, custody, divorce, and protection from abuse. The Orphans’ Court Division administers matters involving the management and distribution of the property or estates of decedents, minors, and incapacitated persons.

Common Pleas Court Bench



Judge Howland W. Abramson
Trial Division Civil



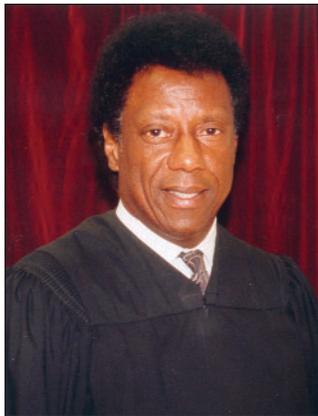
Judge Norman Ackerman
Coordinating Judge Complex
Litigation Center 2002



Judge Jacqueline F. Allen
Trial Division Civil



Judge Mark I. Bernstein
Trial Division Civil



Judge Willis W. Berry, Jr.
Trial Division Criminal & Civil 2001
Trial Division Criminal 2002



Judge Alex Bonavita
Orphans' Court Division 2001
Civil 2002



Judge Gwendolyn N. Bright
Trial Division Criminal



Judge Genece E. Brinkley
Trial Division Civil 2001
Trial Division Criminal 2001-2002
Family Division 2002



Judge Joan A. Brown
Trial Division Criminal



Senior Judge Joseph C. Bruno
Family Division



Judge Sandy L. V. Byrd
Trial Division Criminal



Judge Matthew D. Carrafiello
Trial Division Civil



Judge Ida K. Chen
Family Division 2001-2002



Senior Judge John J. Chiovero
Trial Division Criminal



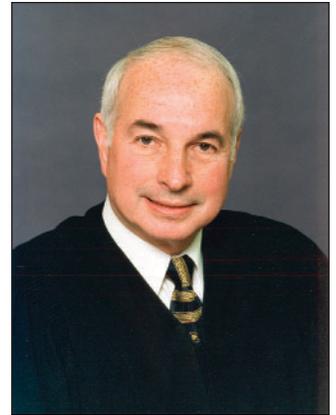
Senior Judge Nicholas Cipriani
Family Division



Judge Tama Myers Clark
Trial Division Criminal 2001
Family Division 2001-2002



Judge Denis P. Cohen
Trial Division Criminal 2001-2002
Family Division 2002



Judge Gene D. Cohen
Trial Division Civil



Judge Mary D. Colins
Trial Division Civil



Judge Amanda Cooperman
Trial Division Criminal



Judge Nicholas D'Alessandro
Family Division



Judge Legrome D. Davis
Supv. Judge Criminal 2001
Trial Division Civil 2002



Senior Judge Anthony J. DeFino
Trial Division Criminal



Judge Rose Marie DeFino-Nastasi
Trial Division Criminal 2002



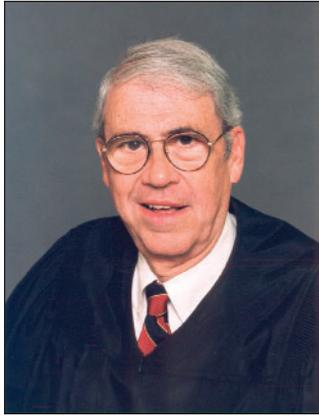
Judge Pamela Pryor Dembe
Trial Division Criminal



Judge Thomas Dempsey
Trial Division Civil 2001
Trial Division Criminal 2001-2002



Judge Alfred J. DiBona, Jr.
Trial Division Civil



Judge Victor J. DiNubile
Trial Division Civil



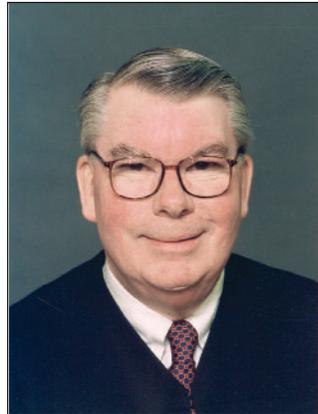
Judge Gary F. DiVito
Trial Division Criminal 2001
Trial Division Civil 2001-2002



Judge Kevin M. Dougherty
Family Division



Judge Myrna Field
Trial Division Civil 2001
Admin. Judge Family Division 2002



Judge James J. Fitzgerald III
Trial Division Criminal 2001
Admin. Judge Trial Division 2002



Judge Leslie Fleisher
Trial Division Criminal 2002



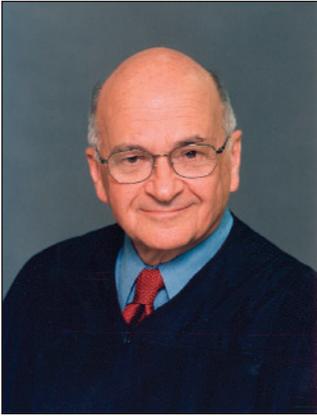
Judge Idee C. Fox
Supervising Judge Domestic
Relations
Family Division 2001 - 2002



Judge Steven R. Geroff
Trial Division Criminal



Judge Gary S. Glazer
Trial Division Criminal 2001
Trial Division Civil 2002



Senior Judge Bernard J. Goodheart
Trial Division Civil



Judge Richard J. Gordon, Jr.
Family Division



Judge Jane Cutler Greenspan
Trial Division Criminal



Judge Lynn B. Hamlin
Trial Division Criminal 2001
Orphans' Court Division 2002



Judge John W. Herron
Admin. Judge Trial Division 2001
Orphans' Court Division 2002



Judge Glynnis Hill
Family Division



Judge Renee Cardwell Hughes
Trial Division Civil 2001-2002
Trial Division Criminal 2001-2002



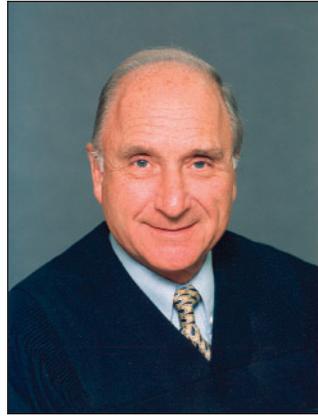
Senior Judge Leonard A. Ivanoski
Family Division



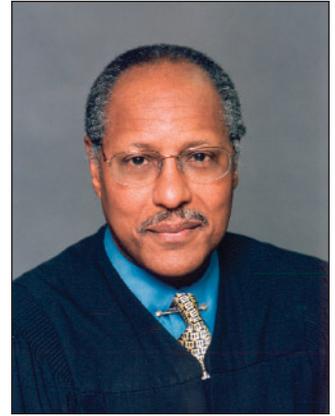
Judge Elizabeth Jackson
Family Division



Senior Judge Ricardo C. Jackson
Trial Division Civil



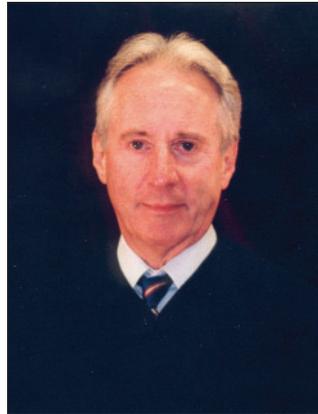
Judge Sheldon C. Jelin
Supv. Judge Fam. Division Juv. 2001
Trial Division Civil 2002



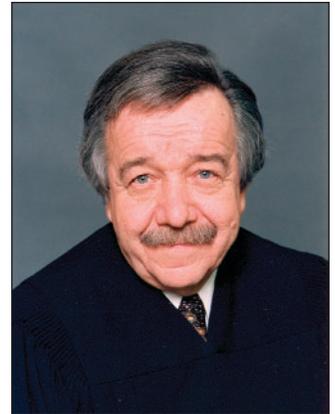
Judge C. Darnell Jones, II
Trial Division Civil



Judge Barbara A. Joseph
Trial Division Criminal 2001
Trial Division Civil 2001-2002



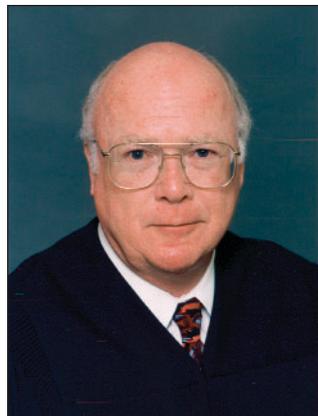
Judge Arthur S. Kafriksen
Trial Division Civil



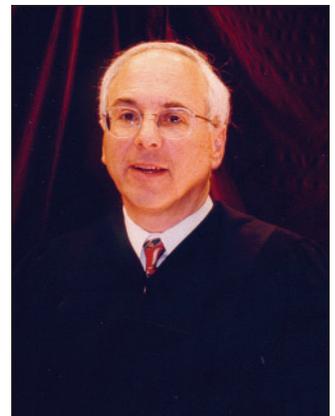
Judge Harold M. Kane
Trial Division Criminal



Judge Joyce S. Kean
Trial Division Civil 2001
Trial Division Criminal 2001-2002



Judge D. Webster Keogh
Supervising Judge Criminal
Trial Division 2001- 2002



Judge Richard B. Klein
Trial Division Civil 2001
Trial Division Criminal 2001



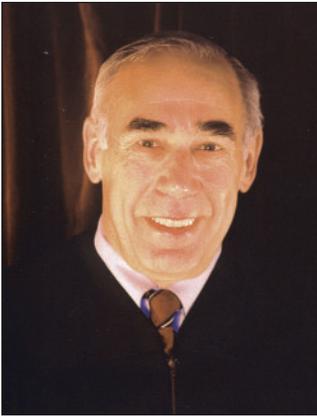
Judge Marlene F. Lachman
Trial Division Civil



Judge Anne E. Lazarus
Orphans' Court Division



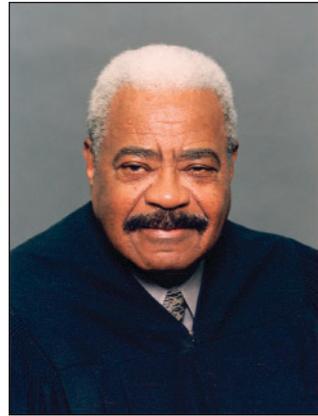
Judge Benjamin Lerner
Trial Division Criminal



Senior Judge Stephen E. Levin
Trial Division Civil



Judge Kathryn S. Lewis
Trial Division Criminal



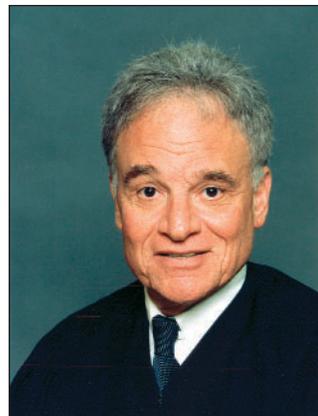
Senior Judge James A. Lineberger
Trial Division Criminal



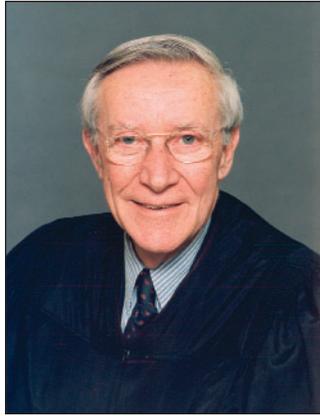
Judge James Murray Lynn
Family Division



Judge Eugene Edward J. Maier
Trial Division Criminal



Judge William J. Manfredi
Trial Division Civil 2001
Supv. Judge Civil Trial Division 2002



Judge M. Robert J. Matthews
Family Division



Judge William J. Mazzola
Trial Division Criminal



Judge Patricia A. McInerney
Trial Division Civil 2001-2002
Trial Division Criminal 2002



Judge Margaret T. McKeown
Family Division



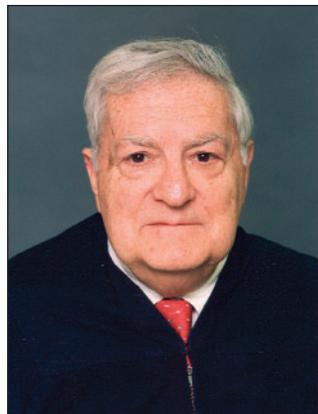
Judge Rayford A. Means
Trial Division Criminal



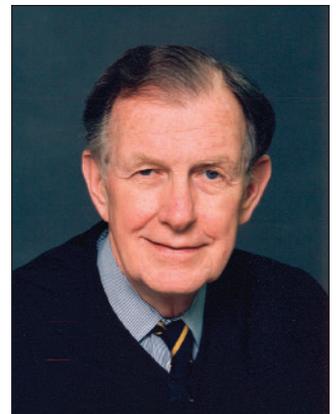
Judge Sandra Mazer Moss
Trial Division Civil



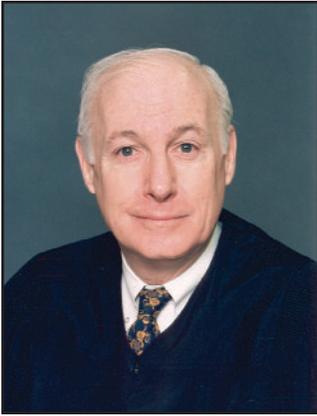
Judge Arnold L. New
Trial Division Civil



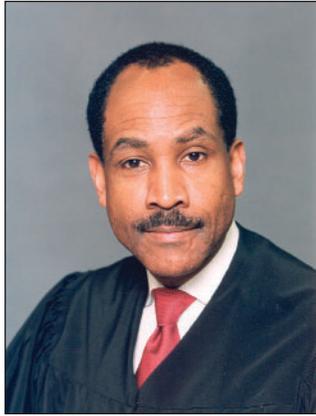
Senior Judge Frank X. O'Brien
Family Division



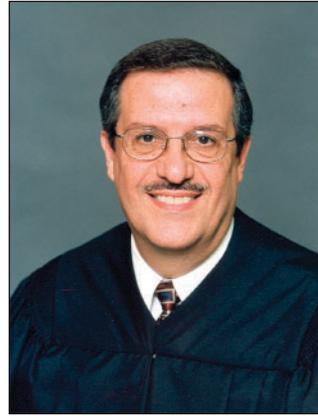
Judge John J. O'Grady, Jr.
Trial Division Criminal



Judge Joseph D. O'Keefe
Administrative Judge
Orphans' Court Division 2001-2002



Judge George W. Overton
Trial Division Criminal



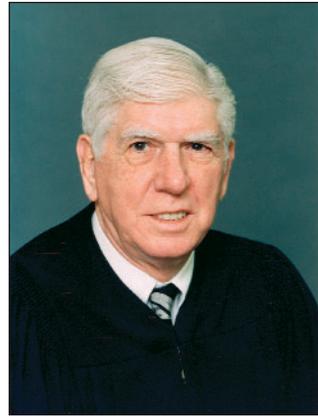
Judge Paul P. Panepinto
Family Division 2001-2002
Trial Division Civil 2002



Judge Joseph I. Papalini
Trial Division Civil



Judge Edmund S. Pawelec
Orphans' Court Division 2001
Retired



Judge John J. Poserina, Jr.
Trial Division Criminal



Judge Nitza I. Quinones Alejandro
Trial Division Civil



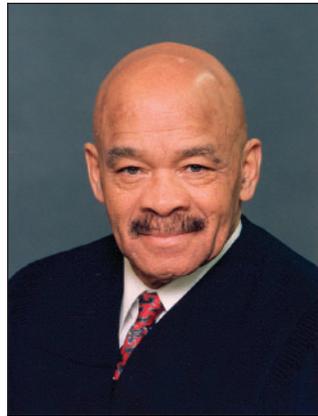
Judge Lillian Harris Ransom
Family Division 2001
Trial Division Criminal 2002



Judge Lisa M. Rau
Trial Division Criminal



Judge Robert J. Rebstock
Family Division



Judge Abram Frank Reynolds
Family Division 2001
Supv. Judge Fam. Juv. Division 2002



Senior Judge Lisa A. Richette
Trial Division Criminal



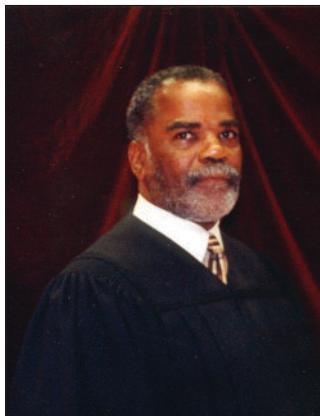
Judge Annette M. Rizzo
Trial Division Criminal



Judge Shelley Robins New
Family Division 2001-2002
Trial Division Criminal 2002



Judge Rosalyn K. Robinson
Family Division



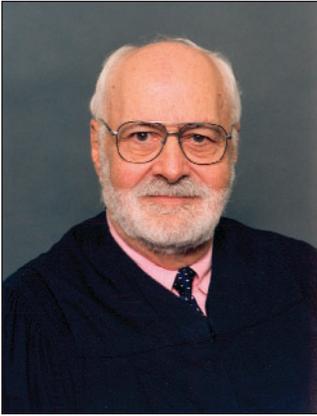
Judge Peter F. Rogers
Trial Division Criminal



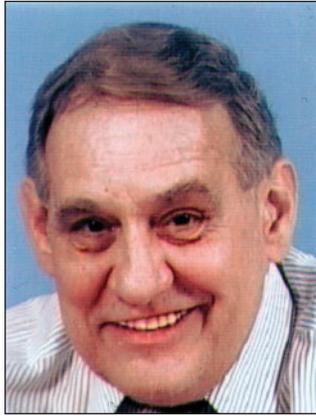
Judge Edward E. Russell
Family Division



Judge M. Teresa Sarmina
Trial Division Criminal



Senior Judge David N. Savitt
Trial Division Criminal



Judge Albert W. Sheppard, Jr.
Supv. Judge Trial Division Civil 2001
Trial Division Civil 2002



Judge Karen Shreeves-Johns
Trial Division Criminal



Judge Gregory E. Smith
Trial Division Criminal



Judge Albert John Snite, Jr.
Trial Division Criminal 2001-2002
Trial Division Civil 2001-2002



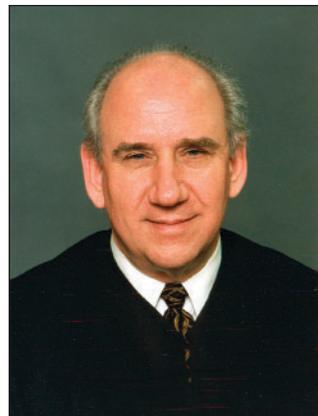
Judge Edward R. Summers
Family Division



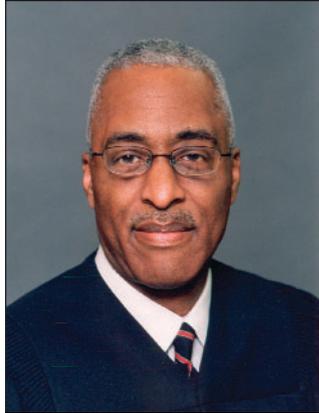
Judge Esther R. Sylvester
Admin. Judge Family Division 2001
Trial Division Civil 2002



Judge Carolyn Engel Temin
Trial Division Civil 2001
Trial Division Criminal 2001-2002



Judge Allan L. Tereshko
Coordinating Judge Complex
Litigation Center 2001
Trial Division Civil 2002



Judge Earl W. Trent
Family Division



Judge Thomas D. Watkins
Trial Division Civil



Judge Flora Barth Wolf
Trial Division Civil 2001-2002
Family Division 2002



Judge John Milton Younge
Trial Division Civil 2001-2002
Trial Division Criminal 2001-2002

Not pictured:
Judge Joseph A. Dych, Judge Chris R. Wogan, Judge Sheila Woods-Skipper, and Judge Jerome A. Zaleski.

Office of the President Judge

Civil Mental Health Program

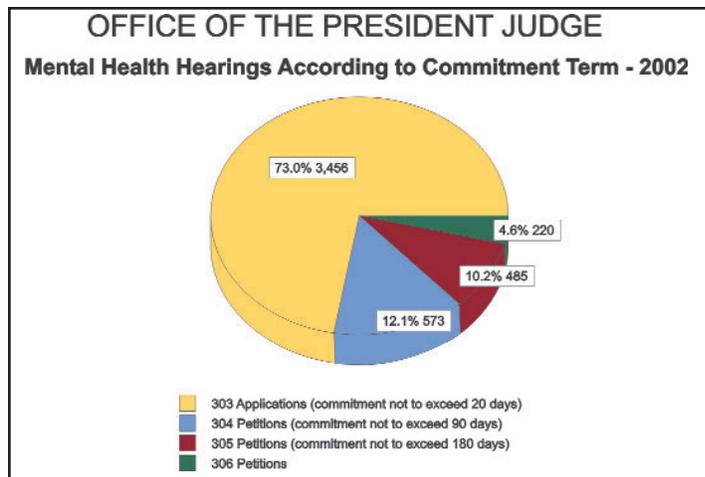
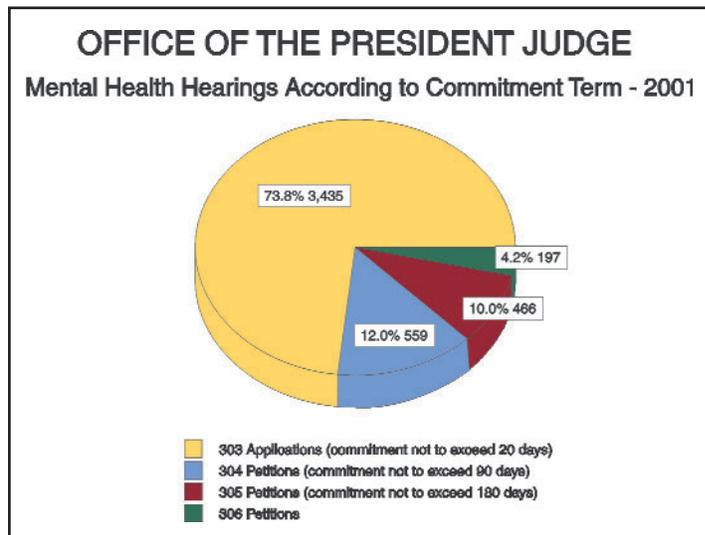
The Office of the Court of Common Pleas President Judge supervises the Civil Mental Health Program. State law requires the President Judge to appoint Mental Health Review Officers who hear all civil petitions involving involuntary civil commitments for the purpose of rendering mental health treatment to individuals determined to suffer from mental illness and who pose a clear and imminent danger to themselves or others. President Judge Frederica A. Massiah-Jackson, consistent with prior practice, has appointed one Mental Health Review Officer, who is assisted by five Assistant Mental Health Review Officers — all of whom are required to be lawyers with experience in Mental Health matters.

The Mental Health Procedures Act of 1976, as amended, requires that individuals who have been involuntarily committed under Section 302 of the Act must be released within 120 hours unless a petition (known as a “303 Application”) is filed with the Prothonotary, and heard by a Mental Health Review Officer before the expiration of the 120 hours. The Act requires that once the 303 Application is filed, counsel for the individual must be appointed by the court, a hearing must be scheduled, held and a decision issued — all within 24 hours of the filing of the Application. Other petitions must be heard within, at most, five days of the filing date. All hearings are held at five sites located throughout the City of Philadelphia, associated with hospitals which render mental health treatment (Friends Hospital, Tenet EPPI, Albert Einstein Medical Center, Girard Medical Center, and Norristown State Hospital).

In calendar year 2001, a total of 4,657 petitions were filed, of which 3,435 involved 303 Applications, which were heard, as required, within the 24-hour requirement. In calendar year 2002, 29 facilities filed a total of 4,734 petitions, which were heard by seven Mental Health Review Officers at several hearing locations. A full breakdown of all petitions heard, by case type, is set forth in the charts below.

In light of the time-sensitive nature of civil mental health proceedings, an electronic filing system was planned in late 2000 by then President Judge Alex Bonavita. In January, 2001 under the leadership and guidance of President Judge Massiah-Jackson and Court Administrator Joseph J. DiPrimio, Esquire, with the assistance of Prothonotary Joseph H. Evers, that design and implementation of the Electronic Filing Program began in earnest. Several pilot programs were conducted, with various hearing sites, and on August 27, 2001, the Electronic Filing Program was implemented city-wide.

The Mental Health Electronic Filing Program provides for the secure filing of mental health petitions by more than 30 mental health providers throughout the Philadelphia area. To ensure that only authorized users can access the web-based system, digital certificates must be installed on computers that access the system. In addition, First Judicial District issued user names and passwords must be utilized. Different user profiles have been created, and each has differing access rights to the data stored.



The Electronic Filing System is available to the more than 30 mental health institutions which heretofore were required to manually type and file their petitions in the Prothonotary's Office, in City Hall. Counsel for the parties and the Mental Health Review Officers are now able to view the petitions on-line. Moreover, any one of six Mental Health Review Officers are able to log-on and access their assigned daily list and all of the cases on the list. As each case is heard, an appropriate order is prepared on-line, submitted to the Prothonotary on-line, and an e-mail notice is sent to the interested parties consistent with Pa. R.C. No. 236.

Civil Mental Health participants have benefited greatly from this very important initiative completed by the Offices of the President Judge and the FJD Court Administrator. The Civil Mental Health Electronic Filing System enables electronic filing, scheduling, order preparation, as well as service of petitions and orders. In addition, case scheduling and disposition data, as well as the actual petitions and orders, are available to authorized parties both through the Internet and through the FJD's Banner Case Management System. FJD-supplied software is required to protect access to, and the confidentiality of, the information. In this way, all parties are able to comply with the time-sensitive requirements of the Mental Health Act and provide the mental health services to the citizens of Philadelphia County as necessary

.Office of the Prothonotary

The title "Prothonotary" has its origins in the Ecclesiastical Court during the Middle Ages and the English Court of the King's Bench. The Philadelphia Prothonotary's Office is said to be the oldest continuously held legal office in the Western hemisphere. The word "Prothonotary" is a combination of the Greek word "Protos" meaning "first" and the Latin word "Notarius", meaning "scribe or clerk". The most famous Prothonotary was the lawyer Andrew Hamilton.

The Prothonotary is recognized as the clerk who keeps records and the Great Seal of the Commonwealth, issues process, enters judgment, and certifies the record. The Office of the Prothonotary was created under the provisions of Article 9, Section 4, of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The duties, responsibilities, and other provisions of the office are set forth under Title 42, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure, Section 2737 of Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes. The Prothonotary of Philadelphia is appointed by the judges of the Court of Common Pleas (the Board of Judges).

Organization and Responsibilities

In May of 1995, Joseph H. Evers was appointed Prothonotary of Philadelphia, and he remains in that capacity to the present. He is assisted by two Deputy Prothonotaries, Stanley J. Chmielewski and Bonnie O’Kane, along with a support staff of 66 employees. The Prothonotary is, by law, responsible for all the civil business of the courts. The Prothonotary must maintain the Seal of the Court and has the power and duty to administer oaths and affirmations and affix and attest the Seal of the Court or Courts. In addition, the Prothonotary controls process and thereby establishes jurisdiction, certifies all pertinent documents and records and acts as the representative of the court, while entering all civil judgments and satisfactions of civil judgments. The Prothonotary is an officer of the court; and has the authority to “exercise such other powers and perform such other duties as may now or hereafter be vested in or imposed upon the office by law...”.

During the 2001-2002 Biennial, the Office of the Prothonotary received in excess of 134,000 original civil filings each year while maintaining a huge current inventory of active civil files.

Initiatives

During the tenure of Joseph H. Evers, the Office of the Prothonotary has undertaken numerous initiatives to better serve the Judiciary, the legal establishment, and the citizens of Philadelphia County:

- Introduction of new data system—Banner
- The establishment of a quality assurance unit: this unit monitors day-to-day operations in an attempt to maintain the integrity and quality of data entries, forever improving the quality of operations to best serve the courts.
- Employee training: training for new employees; initiation of new policies; reviews; and periodic training to ensure understanding and knowledge of changes in the civil law and its implementation and application.
- Internet docket website expanded.
- Updated computer equipment with Internet access for each employee.

- Employee professional work stations: ergonomically designed for the comfort and safety of each employee.
- Educational opportunities for employees: membership in court associations and seminar participation encouraged.
- Touch-screen cash register system for the finance unit installed.
- Enabled Wire transfers on city payouts.
- Electronic mental health filings implemented.
- Divorce decrees scanned in order to enhance retrieval time and as a physical space-saver: 10,000 cases in the last two years.
- Aggressive records reduction effort: cut cost of off-site storage by screening records; since 1999—450,000 cases to date.
- New case management system: appeals from the Zoning Board of Adjustment; Licenses & Inspections; Board of Revision of Taxes; Civil Service Commission; Tax Review Board; Municipal Court landlord & tenant appeals; and PennDOT appeals.
- Computers and programs made available for public access in judgment index and lien unit.
- Interfacing with Municipal Court's new computer system for judgment and lien access.
- United States Passport Issuance Unit opened.
- Active in establishing the First Judicial Court Information Center. The Center makes information from every court within the FJD available to the public. Center personnel also provide accurate site location information and required forms to individuals who attempt to communicate with the court for the first time. The Center formally opened to the public on September 17, 2002.

Community Relations

The Office of the Prothonotary has responded to the public and business community interests of the City of Philadelphia by actively participating in numerous civic programs:

Big Sisters of Philadelphia-Project SELF— Every summer since 1997, high school students with disabilities have been provided with the opportunity to acquire practical job experience while utilizing their data entry and processing skills in various units of the Prothonotary.

Philadelphia @ Work— Beginning August 16, 1999, transitional work sites in the Prothonotary have been provided for participants moving from being welfare recipients into a work environment which provides them with clerical and business skill experience to better prepare them for future and permanent employment in the business community.

Penn-Bartram Human Services School- an educational annex of John Bartram High School. During the school year, Philadelphia high school students are placed in various units of the Prothonotary in order to earn academic credits and gain practical experience in a professional workplace environment.

In an effort to implement innovative ways to supplement the permanent staff of the Prothonotary, without straining already existing financial resources, the three above-mentioned organizations have provided needed manpower in various Prothonotary units of operation. This positive association has benefitted all involved; work experience and the establishment of an impressive work record, has helped agencies, organizations, and individuals achieve their respective goals.

Court – Community Initiatives

Roberts Vaux Middle School Annual Career Guide – For the past three years, the Office of the Prothonotary has participated in these annual career-oriented programs at the Roberts Vaux Middle School. Employees of the Prothonotary share their career-experiences with Philadelphia’s school children in this joint school/community venture.

State of Pennsylvania, Bureau of Consumer Protection Information Fair – The Office of the Prothonotary provides representatives and public information for interested consumers during these annual fairs along with various state and federal agencies.

Philadelphia Reads – Prothonotary employees volunteer their time as reading coaches for elementary-age students in the Philadelphia Public Schools once-a-week.

Legal Secretary’s Association – In 2000 and 2001 the Office of the Prothonotary was invited to send representatives to the Legal Secretary’s Association seminar to provide information about the various venues and facilities of the court.

Philadelphia Operation Town Watch’s Seventh Annual Conference and Awards Luncheon, June 15, 2002 – The Prothonotary was invited to participate at this conference in order to provide court information to city agencies and the public.

Trial Division

The Trial Division of the Court of Common Pleas commands an important place among the Divisions and Courts of the First Judicial District. Of the total FJD complement of 93 Common Pleas judgeships, the Trial Division is assigned 66 judges, or 71%. Of the 2,500-person First Judicial District 2001-2002 workforce, almost a third (29%), or 742 employees, were assigned to the Trial Division of the Court of Common Pleas. When compared to the 1,810 person Common Pleas Court workforce, those in Trial Division represent a 41% share.

The Honorable John W. Herron was assigned by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania as Administrative Judge overseeing the Trial Division in 1996 and remained such through 2001. In February, 2002 he was succeeded by the Honorable James J. Fitzgerald, III. The Division has two components: Civil and Criminal. In 2001-2002, non-judicial leadership was provided in the Criminal Section by Deputy Court Administrator Joseph A. Cairone, and in the Civil section by Deputy Court Administrator Charles A. Mapp, Sr. Mr. Cairone has since been elevated to the position of FJD Court Administrator.

The Trial Division Civil court processes civil cases only where the amount in controversy exceeds \$10,000 (the Municipal Court civil jurisdictional ceiling). For criminal cases, the Trial Division Criminal docket is primarily composed of felony criminal cases that have undergone preliminary hearings in Municipal Court. Some appeals from Municipal Court misdemeanor trials and Traffic Court proceedings are included in the Trial Division hearing schedule pursuant to laws providing for trial *de novo* in those cases.

A great deal of Division resources are devoted to probation and other forms of criminal case defendant supervision. Pretrial Services and Adult Probation Department employees total 492 workers, or 66% of the total Trial Division workforce.

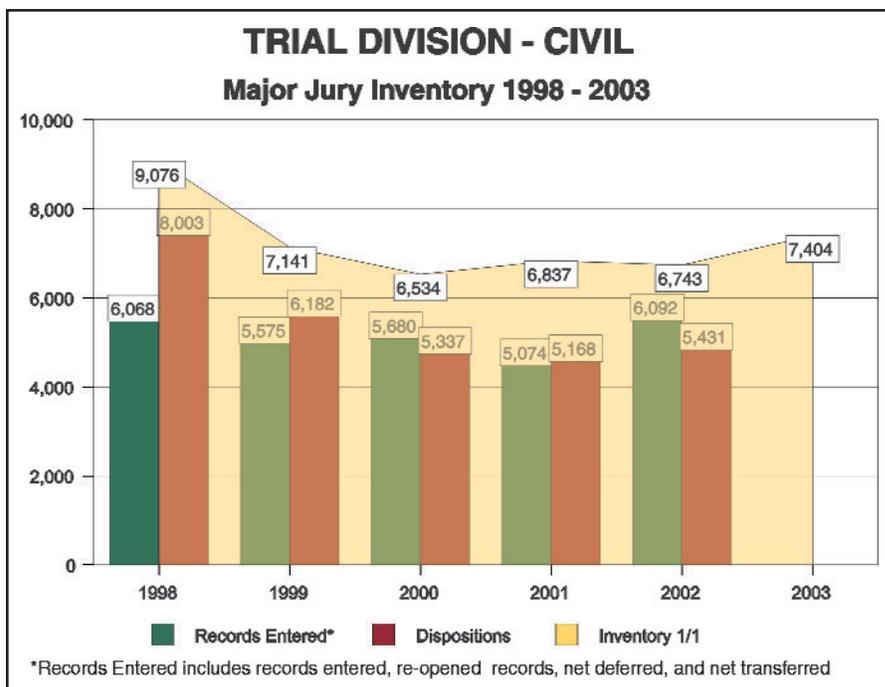
While Jury Selection services are included under Criminal Section lines of authority, certain civil matters are also heard by juries. Supervised by a Jury Commissioner, jury summonses are sent to more than 281,000 Philadelphia citizens every year. Jury trials occur only in Trial Division cases.

Trial Division ♦ Civil Court Operations

Under the direction of Administrative Judge James J. Fitzgerald, III, Supervising Judge William J. Manfredi, and Coordinating Judge Norman Ackerman, Trial Division - Civil judges, administrators, and staff are committed to assuring the administration of justice in Philadelphia in an efficient and economical manner, providing the highest standard of equality, fairness and integrity to the public. Judicial leaders are supported by Deputy Court Administrator Charles A. Mapp, Sr. who is responsible for overseeing the day to day operations of all Trial Division-Civil programs.

Trial Division-Civil judges and employees are dedicated to providing access to justice. This is evidenced by the implementation of innovative and progressive caseload management systems employed with continued education for its support staff, the creation of appropriate pretrial forums, and the necessary advancements in technology.

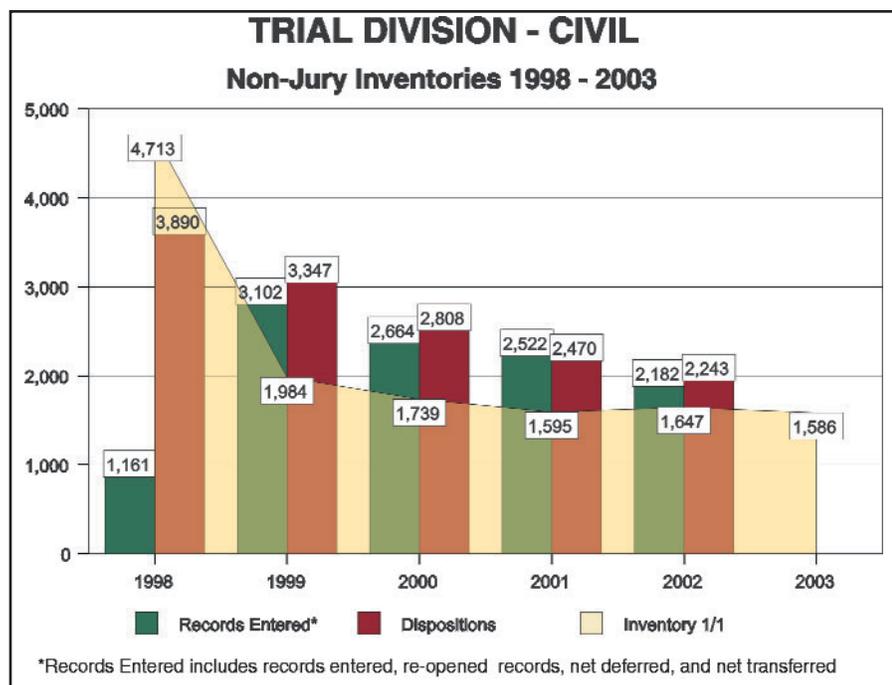
Including per diem Senior Judges, 31 Common Pleas Court Judges and 50 employees receive, process, adjudicate, and dispose of all civil filings where the amount in



controversy is more than \$10,000. Cases involving less money are under the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Municipal Court.

In calendar years 2001 and 2002, Trial Division-Civil staff received 72,673 total filings. During the same period, 65,797 dispositions were recorded for a 91% disposition rate.

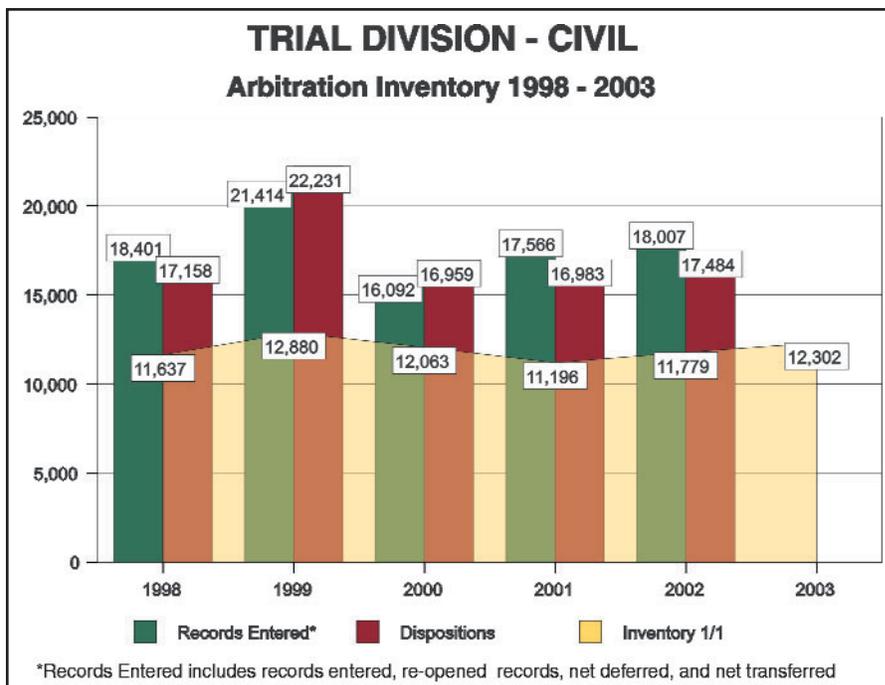
Trial Division-Civil cases are categorized and placed into case management programs specifically tailored for effective handling and prompt and precise disposition. These include the Complex Litigation Center, Day Forward Major Jury Programs, the Commerce Case Management Program, the Civil Motions Program, and the Arbitration Program (compulsory for cases where the amount in controversy is \$50,000 or less). Cases in the Day Forward Major Jury and Commerce Programs are further channeled into tracks for expedited, standard, and complex case types through an early intervention and evaluation process.



Complex Litigation Center

The Complex Litigation Center (CLC) was the first courthouse in the United States designed exclusively for complex, multi-filed Mass Tort cases when it opened in 1992. Since then, the Mass Tort, Asbestos, Major Non-Jury, Arbitration Appeals, Landlord Tenant Appeals and the Penn-DOT Appeals Programs have been managed within the CLC. In 2002, the Honorable Norman Ackerman was appointed Coordinating Judge of the Complex Litigation Center. The Judiciary is assisted by Deputy Manager Mary K. McGovern who supervises the administration of all Complex Litigation Center Programs.

Calendar years 2001 and 2002 experienced an increase in the Mass Tort and Arbitration Appeals Programs. The Mass Tort inventory increased by 2,519 cases alone. The fact that these overall inventories nonetheless remained at manageable levels is confirmation of the success of the case management programs and the hard work and

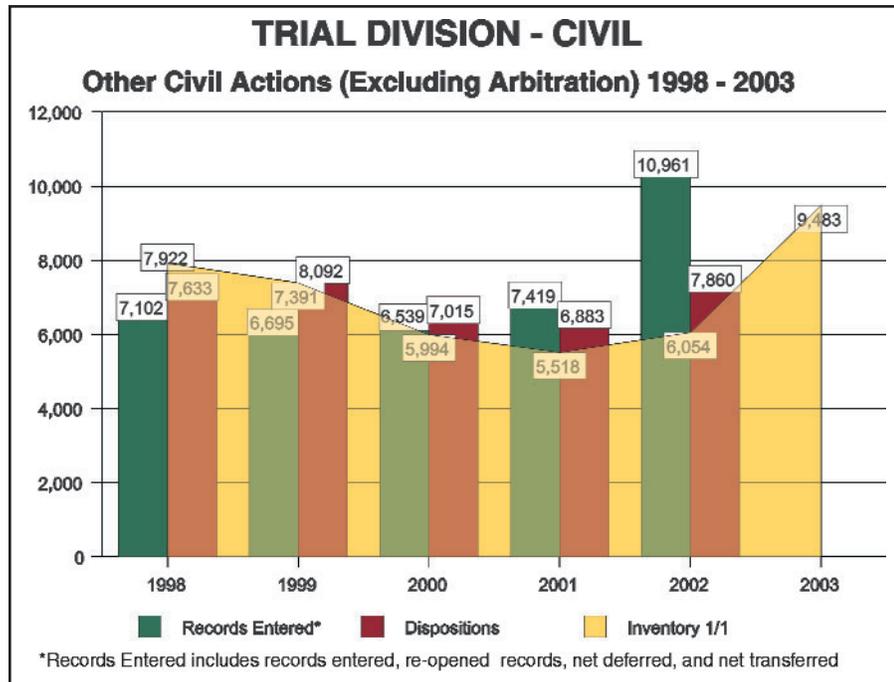


dedication of Coordinating Judge Ackerman and the judges and employees assigned to this department.

The Trial Division-Civil leadership is proud to report that twelve Mass Tort Programs have been fully completed since the date of the program's inception.

During this reporting period (2001-2002), the judges and staff assigned to the Complex Litigation Center received 13,538 new filings and disposed of 13,517 filings.

The long-term goal of consolidating all civil trials in one facility has been achieved. Renovations enabled the Court to move the Complex Litigation Center from the Wanamaker Building to Room 622 City Hall. This "change of venue" fosters greater efficiencies in case-flow management. Also, the closer proximity improves the court's ability to quickly identify and direct judicial resources to areas in need. Additionally, savings have been realized through related reductions in leasing costs.



Day Forward Major Jury Programs

The Day Forward Major Jury Programs utilize a very successful case management strategy premised on the fact that 95% of the civil case inventory is disposed via settlement – not trial. Relying on a vigorous application of judicial resources and volunteer Bar Association “Judges Pro Tempore,” the once massive civil case inventory was brought current for calendar year 2000. Where cases may once have taken up to seven years to bring to trial, case age statistics now indicate that the District is within established guidelines for time to disposition.

In the Day Forward Major Jury Programs, judges are assigned in cluster groups, or teams, with one judge serving as the Judicial Team Leader. During calendar years 2001 and 2002, the following judges were appointed to Major Jury leadership positions by either former Administrative Judge John W. Herron or Administrative Judge James J. Fitzgerald, III:

Honorable Howland W. Abramson

Honorable Norman Ackerman

Honorable Jacqueline Allen

Honorable Mark I. Bernstein

Honorable Sandra Mazer Moss

Honorable Arnold L. New

Honorable Nitza I. Quinones Alejandro

Honorable Albert W. Sheppard, Jr.

Honorable Allan L. Tereshko

Judicial Team Leaders administer the program, assume responsibility for caseload, and provide judicial accountability for the inventory. Case inventories are distributed to the team, which is responsible for all discovery and pretrial motions affecting that inventory. In 2001-2002, Judicial Team Leaders continued to use conferencing, guaranteed event dates and stringent case management orders to drive the process.

During this reporting period (2001-2002), the judges and staff assigned to the Day Forward Major Jury Programs received 9,607 new filings and disposed of a total of 10,599 filings.

Commerce Program

With the support of the Administrative Governing Board and the Philadelphia Bar Association's leadership, the Commerce Case Management Program was launched on January 1, 2000. The Commerce Program is an extension of the Day Forward Major Jury Program, adopting additional features and alternative dispute resolution provisions proven helpful in managing commercial litigation in other jurisdictions. The Honorable Albert W. Sheppard, Jr. is the Judicial Team Leader of the Commerce Program. Since its inception, the following judges have served with former Administrative Judge Herron and Judge Sheppard in the Commerce Program: Honorable Gene D. Cohen, Honorable Victor J. DiNubile, Honorable C. Darnell Jones, II and Honorable Patricia McInerney.

The Commerce Case Management Program has been extremely successful and well received by the bar and litigants. This success can be attributed in part to early intervention, mediation measures, and the close monitoring of the cases by both volunteer Judges *Pro Tempore* and the Commerce Program Judges.

During the 2001-2002 Biennium, the judges and staff assigned to the Commerce Program received 965 new filings and disposed of 1,076 filings.

Compulsory Arbitration Program

All civil actions filed in the Court of Common Pleas with an amount in controversy of \$50,000 or less, excluding equitable actions and claims to real estate, must first proceed to a compulsory arbitration hearing before a panel of three attorneys who have been certified by the court to serve as arbitrators.

The Compulsory Arbitration Program in Philadelphia County is one of the most successful programs of its kind in the nation. In a continuing effort to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Arbitration Center, Joseph L. Hassett, Esquire, was appointed Director of the Arbitration Center in 1998.

All Compulsory Arbitration Hearings are held in the Court of Common Pleas Arbitration Center located on the 2nd Floor of 1601 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA.

Arbitration cases are scheduled for hearings eight months from the date of commencement. The hearings are scheduled before Arbitration Panels consisting of three attorneys engaged in the active practice of law, who have principal offices in Philadelphia. Ten to thirteen panels of arbitrators hear approximately 30 cases per day. During the Biennium, approximately 34,467 cases were concluded at the arbitrators' level.

Dispute Resolution Center

All settlement conferences in the Major Jury Programs are conducted in the Dispute Resolution Center, at Room 691 City Hall, Philadelphia. The center is under the supervision of manager Frank E. Checkovage. Settlement conferences are conducted by special Judges *Pro Tempore*, working under the direct supervision of Judicial Team Leaders. Employing the principle that early intervention and preparation lead to more timely and better dispositions, conferences scheduled at the completion of discovery in this forum enable the parties to resolve disputes without unnecessary extensive trial preparation. Non-resolution of cases at this point triggers the scheduling of pretrial conferences before Judicial Team Leaders, who may then issue orders scheduling cases for trial. This system reduces additional costs to the parties and the court and, through improved efficiency, provides greater access to quality justice.

Civil Case Management Center

To ensure effective and efficient management of the Day Forward Major Jury cases and Commerce Program cases (as of CY 2000), the Case Management Center, located in Room 613 City Hall, was created to provide a centralized location for Case Management Conferences. The center is staffed by three Civil Case Managers and a Legal Clerk (Anthony St. Joseph, Esquire, Paul Salter, Esquire, Charles Pelletreau, Esquire and Sandy DeMuro). The purpose of the conferences, scheduled 90 days from the date of commencement, is to provide the court and the parties with early disclosure of basic information enabling the Civil Case Managers to assign each case to an appropriate track: Expedited, Standard or Complex. Case Management Orders, setting forth deadlines for discovery, expert reports and the filing of motions, along with conference and trial schedules, drive the process toward the collaborative goal of timely, prudent resolution.

Civil Motions Program

The Honorable Matthew D. Carrafiello, the Honorable Albert J. Snite, Jr. and the Honorable Esther R. Sylvester presided over the Civil Motions Program during calendar years 2001 and 2002. The Civil Motions Program, which is located in Room 296 City Hall, consists of the management of all non-discovery motions filed in all Trial Division - Civil actions. Judges Carrafiello, Snite and Sylvester personally reviewed and decided the majority of civil motions filed. Except in rare and complicated matters, it is the goal and practice for the review and order process to be completed within three working days. Civil Motions Judges are assisted by Deputy Manager Deborah E. Dailey who supervises the administrative staff and oversees the processing and tracking of approximately 33,000 civil motions per year.

Discovery Program

Whenever the parties in a civil matter have a serious discovery dispute that they cannot resolve among themselves, a hearing may be scheduled before a Civil Judge in the Trial Division-Civil's Discovery Program, which is located in Room 287 City Hall. Civil's Judicial Team Leaders and Motions Judges preside in Discovery Court on a particular day of the week reserved for their respective programs. The judges are assisted by Manager Dennis Brennan who supervises the administrative staff and oversees the scheduling of approximately 22,500 discovery hearings per year.

Civil Courtroom Construction and Technology Enhancements Project

In order to address and eliminate the shortage of Civil Courtrooms, the Civil Courtroom Construction and Technology Enhancements Project is underway. Encompassing Rooms 612, 616, 625, 630 and 636 on the sixth floor of City Hall, this project includes renovating courtrooms and constructing high technology courtrooms to create a more technologically advanced user environment for civil litigation programs. The goals are to use state of the art technology to enhance the ability of jurors to better understand complex medical and engineering evidence, reduce costs to litigants, and shorten the length of trials in complex cases.

The plan is to create one very high-end technologically enhanced courtroom in Room 625 City Hall that is modeled on the Courtroom 21 Project's McGlothlin Courtroom in Williamsburg, Virginia. This courtroom will include:

- court record capability consisting of stenographic court reporter real-time transcription and digital audio recording;
- a video evidence presentation system with distributed monitors, projection screen, interactive plasma display, and touch-screen annotation at the podium and witness positions;
- a central Courtroom 21 Litigator's Podium, with switching control;
- counsel tables with laptop computer inputs for counsel table presentations;
- videoconferencing for remote witness appearances, including multiple TV cameras and basic multi-frame output capability;
- advanced audio reenforcement and communications;
- infrastructure for teleconferencing and foreign language interpretation;
- a sophisticated control system providing simple user operation with a minimum of training; and
- all appropriate infrastructure technology including specialized millwork.

Additionally, City Hall Courtrooms 612, 616, 630 and 636, will be completely wired for future technological enhancements, and equipped with basic evidence presentation systems.

The projected completion date for the sixth floor courtrooms is April, 2003.

Achievements

- Arbitration Program - Implementation of Automated Scheduling and Notification Process for Arbitrators - The Trial Division-Civil Arbitration Program automated the process by which arbitrators are selected, scheduled and notified of arbitration hearing dates. The transition from the old court mainframe to the Banner Court System for scheduling and notifying arbitrators has been an overwhelming success.
- First Judicial District Website-Useful in making justice more accessible.

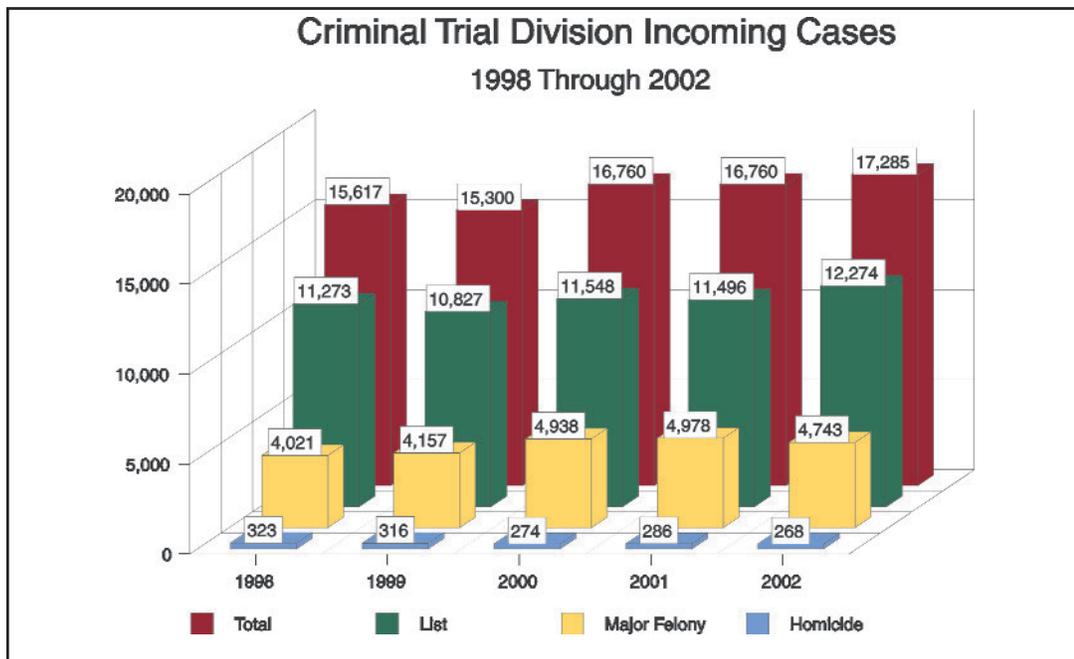
- Public Access to Civil Docket Information via the Internet - Civil docket information, notices, attorney activity reports, hearing and trial lists, and Commerce Program opinions can be accessed through the Court's website (<http://courts.phila.gov>). The civil docket access display has burgeoned to include almost 17.5 million docket entries for more than 1.7 million civil cases.
- Wireless Applications - The Trial Division-Civil court dockets, attorney activity reports, hearing lists, civil rules, fee schedules, court holidays, hours of operation and maps can all be accessed and downloaded through a wireless hand-held computer.

Trial Division ♦ Criminal Court Operations

The Criminal Trial Division of the First Judicial District is dedicated to the fair, impartial, and timely processing and adjudication of criminal cases. Pretrial and post-trial supervision of thousands of pretrial defendants and County probationer/parolees, in accordance with Court-ordered conditions, is a further responsibility of professional staff within the Section.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court appointed the Hon. James J. Fitzgerald, III, as Administrative Judge of the Trial Division in February, 2002. Judge Fitzgerald assumed the responsibilities of former Administrative Judge John W. Herron, who served in that capacity throughout 2001. The Hon. D. Webster Keogh served as Supervising Judge of the Trial Division's Criminal Section both years. The Deputy Court Administrator for the Criminal Trial Division was Joseph A. Cairone.

Despite ever-increasing new felony case filings as a result of aggressive local law enforcement crime reduction strategies, the Criminal Trial Division experienced two of

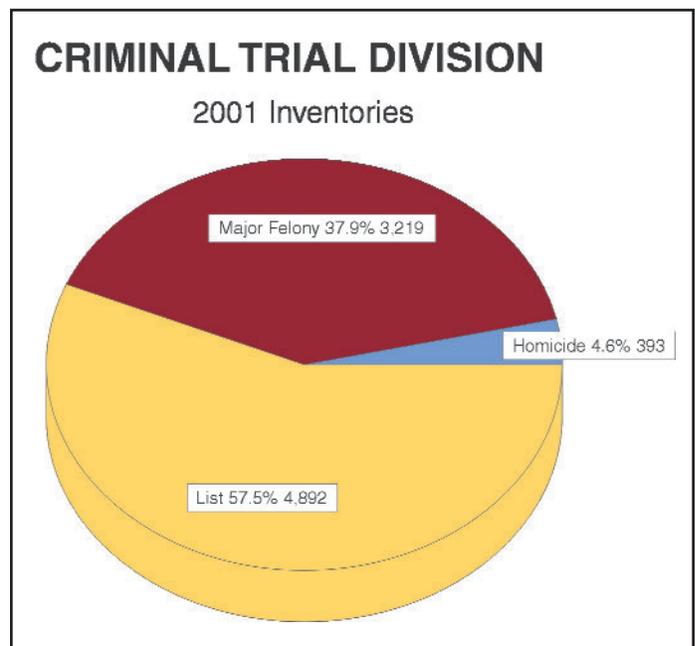


the most productive years in the history of the Court. In 2001, new filings increased by 10% – compared to filing averages in each year of the preceding decade. Assigned judges nevertheless adjudicated more than 17,000 felony grade cases (approximately 1,000 more cases than new filings). This represented an overall inventory reduction of 8%. Calendar year 2002 saw an even greater influx of new case filings and, yet, achieved another outstanding disposition rate: The total 2002 year-end case adjudications were a remarkable 19,086, representing an increase over 2001 by a further 1,655 adjudications. The criminal felony case inventory was reduced by 16.5% in 2002.

These excellent results were achieved through the dedicated, hard work of all of the judges assigned to the Criminal Trial Division, and the development and implementation of innovative case management strategies, including some based on positive working relations between the court and its partners within the City's criminal justice system.

Calendar Year 2001

- In March, 2001, the Section Calendaring Program was realigned to provide centralized Pre-trial conferences to facilitate resolution of major felony and homicide cases. As a result, Judicial Section Leaders were able to devote additional hours to the task of managing inventories, further contributing to the overall productivity of the program.
- In the last quarter of 2001, Supervising Judge Keogh, in cooperation with prosecution and defense attorney representatives, entered into negotiations with



Pennsylvania State Department of Corrections (DOC) officials for the purpose of moving State-incarcerated inmates with ‘open’ Philadelphia felony cases down to the DOC Graterford facility in an effort to streamline trial scheduling of those cases in FJD Courts. As a result of this court-initiated case management strategy, delays associated with cancelled inmate trial “bring downs” markedly decreased.

- Also in 2001, as a result of the special efforts of both Judge Keogh and the Hon. Sandy L. V. Byrd, the Criminal Trial Division disposed of more than 80% of a major backlog in the Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) assignment.

Calendar Year 2002

Administrative Judge Fitzgerald’s emphasis on the further development of positive working relationships with other partners in the City criminal justice system enabled administrators to implement several strategies to increase case management efficiencies:

- Emphasis on early intervention and case review by prosecutorial and defense counsel resulted in the expedited identification and processing of noncapital cases, and the timely identification of cases ripe for guilty pleas and degree-of-guilt hearings.
- With the cooperation of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and the practicing Bar, the Criminal Court dramatically increased the use of video conferencing with State-incarcerated defendants for a variety of hearings, including PCRA’s, VOP’s, sentencings and, on occasion, negotiated guilty pleas. This initiative not only facilitates disposition, but also saves the Sheriff’s Office considerable transportation time and expense.
- An anecdotal spike in inventories due to outside influences, such as unfilled judicial vacancies, was addressed in Mid-summer 2002 by the Criminal Section’s temporary opening and staffing of three additional criminal courtrooms, including one private-counsel list room. The temporary re-assignment of judges from the Trial Division Civil Section to address the emergent inventory increase within Criminal reflected the flexibility in approach to ensure continued high disposition rates throughout 2002.

- Revised procedures in scheduling VOP hearings were implemented for newly-arrested probationers and parolees pending disposition of their open bills in order to maximize judicial and courtroom resources.

Adult Probation and Parole Department and Pretrial Services Unit

Pretrial Services (PTS) and Adult Probation and Parole (APPD) are departments under the umbrella jurisdiction of the Trial Division. Both are headquartered at 1401 Arch Street. Together, PTS and APPD have labored to develop innovative operations and procedures to fulfill the obligation to supervise in excess of 52,000 individuals placed in the community in pretrial, probation or County parole status.

Over the course of 2001-2002, these departments have improved formal alliances with district-based law enforcement and social service agencies, increased electronic monitoring capabilities at the request of the City, and, upgraded substance abuse screening and testing supervision techniques.

PTS Warrant Unit staff and APPD's specialized Probation Officer staff worked in cooperation with the Youth Violence Reduction Program initiative between the non-profit agency Safe and Sound, Police Department, the District Attorney's Office, and the Court, to bring increased supervision and services to the most homicide-prone sections of Philadelphia.

Based on data prepared by the Crime and Justice Research Institute, APPD designed and developed a Philadelphia-based risk assessment tool for evaluation and case management of adult probationers and parolees. For offenders sentenced to probation directly out of the Municipal Court Crash Court (located within the Philadelphia Prisons System facilities on State Road), the APPD Parole Unit developed a new protocol to better support offenders released to APPD supervision. In addition, the APPD Training Unit developed new officer training modules and improved the content of the probation officer annual training curriculum. For two successive years, APPD attained 100% compliance with all applicable Pennsylvania Probation and Parole Bureau of Probation Services standards. In 2001, APPD increased collections in victim costs, with 2002 APPD calendar year collections totaling in excess of \$4 million in restitution for the victims of crime.

PTS assumed a proactive approach to the reduction of the city “bench warranted” population. The innovative deployment of warrant service investigators, mapping crime with federal and local law enforcement authorities, and other highly-effective methods utilizing a small but highly efficient professional staff, make PTS a major contributor to the court efforts at ensuring the well-being of the community. PTS representatives served on various F.B.I. and Philadelphia Police Department task forces, continuing to work on initiatives to reduce bench warrants and remove violent offenders from the streets.

Juror Service Programc

The Trial Division relies on the good citizens of Philadelphia in the fulfillment of the court’s obligation to provide fair and impartial juror panels in all criminal cases where a party requests a jury trial, and in those civil cases where a right to jury exists by law. Attention to the needs of the serving public motivated Division leaders to develop the means to call for duty only that number of citizens necessary to court operations on any given day. In 2002, Common Pleas Court launched a fully automated call-in system, whereby summoned jurors are able to call in on the evenings prior to service, give their identification numbers, and learn whether they are needed the next day. This new protocol already has benefitted large numbers of prospective jurors who were not required for pools based on anticipated daily juror needs.

Additional 2001-02 Criminal Trial Division Accomplishments

- Exceeded by 67% the Crime Commission mandated collections goal in 2001, and by 74.5% in 2002.
- The Office of Criminal Listings initiated the collection of \$40,386 in delinquent fines, costs, and restitution from violators at County Prison Gagnon I hearings during calendar year 2001. In 2002, their efforts resulted in a 241% increase, with collections totaling \$97,247.
- Design, development, and implementation of FJD bar-coded facility identification cards.
- Court Administration and PTS participated in on-going Preliminary Arraignment System (PARS) upgrades, including installation of a new interface between PARS and PC Pretrial Plus.

- Extensive research and development of Automated Criminal Case Processing Programs to assist in greater efficiency in case processing in virtually all areas of Criminal Section Court Administration.
- The creation of an On-Line Criminal Case Docket, further improving criminal case management, including the processing of trial records to the appellate courts and enabling case-specific on-line inquiries about daily court activities.

Family Division

With 867 workers, the Family Division employs almost half (48%) of all the Common Pleas Court workforce. The Division benefits from the leadership of an Administrative Judge appointed by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, with ministerial duties assigned to a Deputy Court Administrator (DCA) working under the auspices of the Administrative Judge and the Office of the FJD Court Administrator. In 2001, the Family Division Administrative Judge was Esther R. Sylvester. In February, 2002, the Honorable Myrna Field was appointed Family Division Administrative Judge by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. The Deputy Court Administrator for Juvenile Court Operations in 2001 was Mario D'Adamo, Esquire. Family Division is delineated into two major branches: 1) Juvenile (including Adoptions); and 2) Domestic Relations.

The Juvenile Branch processes cases involving allegations of juvenile delinquency and dependency, and also has within its jurisdiction adoption and truancy cases. An adjunct of the Dependency Court operation is a diversionary program called the Reasonable Effort at Prevention of Placement Program that includes mechanisms to identify and qualify certain cases for diversion from the formal court processes. Mental health assessments are also provided here. A significant portion of Juvenile Branch resources are dedicated to supervising children on probation (delinquency) or those under protective supervision. These services include the ongoing administration of substantial caseloads of children as changes occur in their lives and surroundings, goals are changed, and plans for final discharge are defined and redefined.

The jurisdiction of the Domestic Relations Branch includes actions relating to Child and Spouse Support, Paternity, Custody, Divorce, and Protection from Abuse. In both divisions, sensitivity and understanding of the family and its needs are a hallmark of every employee's performance.

Family Division ♦ Adoption Unit

Adoption Unit personnel investigate and process cases relating to the termination of parental rights and adoption. They facilitate legal filings, conduct investigations, and prepare cases for court proceedings. In addition, upon finalization of adoptions, adoption decrees are prepared and amended birth certificates are issued through the unit.

Pursuant to statutory requirements, the court carefully provides certain non-identifying information and searches for biological parents of adoptees. In accordance with law, the process is conducted in strict confidence, mindful of the sensitivities of the adoptees and their biological and adoptive parents.

The Adoption Unit has formulated and initiated a procedure in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Health with regard to the handling of gestational carrier cases. In addition, a procedure to effectuate the registrations of foreign birth has been implemented through the cooperative effort of the Bureau of Statistics and the Adoption Unit.

Accelerated Adoption Review Court (AARC) is a specialized review court for cases where parental rights have been terminated but adoptions have not been finalized. With Masters presiding, the goal is to involve all parties in the hearings so that obstacles to adoption finalization may be identified early and rectified in a timely fashion.

Family Court staff provide child care services for parents attending court on week days at the Juvenile Court facility at 1801 Vine Street and the Domestic Relations site at 34 South 11th Street. On Sundays, supervised visitation for children and parents is conducted at 1801 Vine Street.

To facilitate meaningful interaction between children and parents, Family Court, in conjunction with the Department of Human Services, Creative Arts for Everyone and The Please Touch Museum, sponsors a program that provides art, music and dance therapy during the Sunday visitation from September to June.

The REAAP Unit is a well-organized, family-centered community support program, that comprises individualized client assessments; case management; and uniform, consistent case monitoring. The goal is to empower families by directing them to, and monitoring their utilization of appropriate community resources. To accomplish this goal, the REAAP strategy coordinates a team of social work, probation, and auxiliary community services focused toward ensuring the independence, viability, and growth of the family unit.

The REAAP program helps families whose children are exhibiting behavior beyond parents' control – placing the children at risk. Problems may include truancy, runaway, drug/alcohol abuse, curfew problems and myriad other actions for which children might be deemed ungovernable. The REAAP Unit serves children up to 17 and a half years of age and engages parents and children in seeking resolution to problems. Incurability petitions are filed only after reasonable efforts have been made to prevent court action, and are recommended only if children are at risk or require referral to the Department of Human Services (DHS) for services.

The REAAP Unit also processes "Under-Ten" petitions, where children under the age of ten are accused of committing acts that would be considered delinquent had the children been older. The REAAP Unit mediates complaints and diverts matters to appropriate community resources, or alternatively, files dependent petitions on behalf of complainants. Cases are sometimes resolved through restitution or supervision. Extreme situations may lead to referrals to the Department of Human Services.

Emancipation petitions filed for qualifying minors who are self-sufficient are investigated and filed with the REAAP Unit. In addition, changes of custody for non-related individuals are also investigated and processed by the REAAP Unit.

In April, 2001, the Governor's Community Partnership for Safe Children and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) provided funding for a

Blueprint for Violence Prevention Initiative known as Functional Family Therapy (FFT). This is an outcome-driven prevention/intervention program for youth who have presented a range of maladaptive, acting out behavior and related syndromes. The Family Court was very fortunate to be the recipient of this grant and has collaborated with the Temple University School of Medicine to help REAAP clients with this successful intervention tool.

Family Division ♦ Juvenile Branch

The Juvenile Court, the Juvenile Probation Department, and other court offices are located at the Juvenile Courthouse at 1801 Vine Street overlooking Logan Square. Juvenile Court offices include the Juvenile Probation Department, Dependency Court Administration, Children & Youth Services, and management and staff offices.

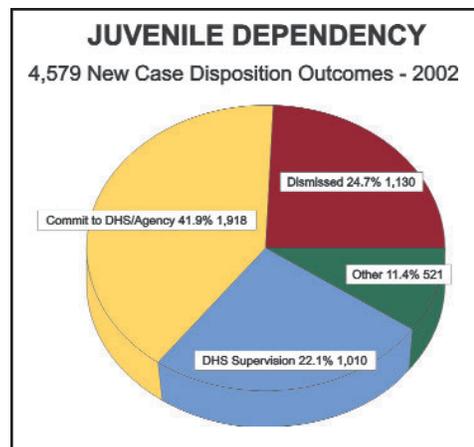
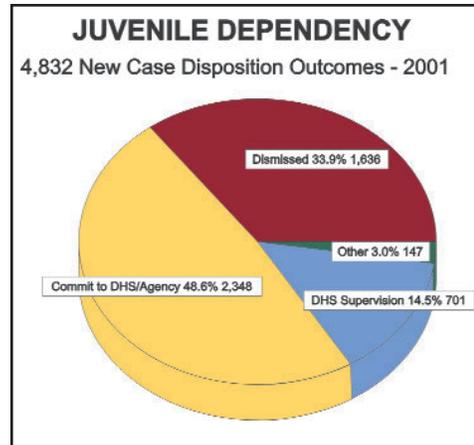
In 2002, there were new delinquent petition filings, delinquent petition dispositions, and Review Hearings. Dependency Court had new petition filings; new case dispositions, and Review Hearings.

Delinquency petitions are filed against juveniles aged 10 to 17 who have been accused of violations of criminal law. Dependency petitions are filed on behalf of children alleged to be suffering from abuse, neglect, or inadequate care. Dependency Court also has jurisdiction over status offenders, including incorrigible and truant juveniles, and adoptions.

2002 Developments

Courthouse Improvements: Since early 2002, Juvenile Court has been involved in a large-scale renovation program. Improved courtrooms, staff offices, and public areas are the result. This project continues into 2003.

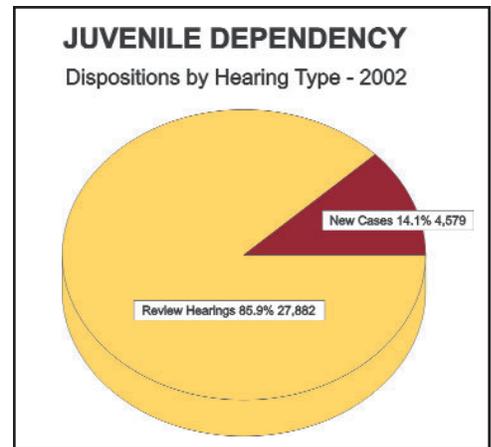
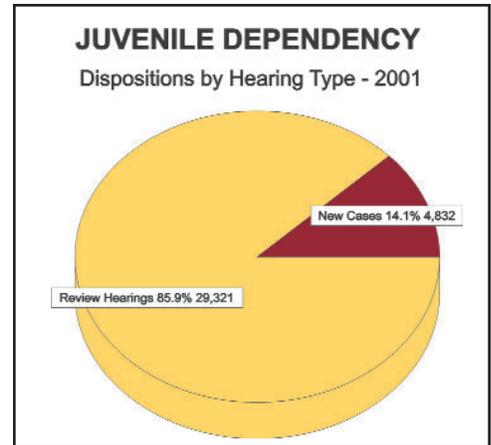
Juvenile Automated Computer System (JACS): In November, 2002, JACS was implemented to replace the Juvenile Court Database introduced in the 1970's. The new system provides updated services to the Delinquency Court, the Dependency Court, Juvenile Probation, and Truancy Court. JACS created a multifaceted Juvenile Probation Case Management system, which will eventually replace paper files.



Community-Based Probation Offices: In December, 2002, the Juvenile Probation Department opened a second community-based probation office at 4601 Market Street. This office provides both general probation services and special services, including aftercare, intensive supervision, school-based probation, and electronic monitoring. The site also houses a Youth Violence Reduction Program, which provides intensive supervision to high-risk juvenile and adult probationers living in the 12th Police District. Juvenile Court had previously opened a neighborhood probation office at “I” and Tioga Streets. This office continues to provide similar services to local youth.

Therapeutic Services: Functional Family Therapy and Multisystemic Therapy services are now available to delinquents on probation and aftercare and to incorrigible youths. Both forms of family-based therapy have been certified as effective in preventing violence, crime, and other social problems by multiple national research studies.

Inter-Agency Partnerships: During 2002, the number of collaborative projects between Juvenile Court and other youth serving agencies increased. Partnerships with the Department of Human Services, the Department of Health, the School District, and other agencies made progress in dealing with truancy, schooling for juveniles returning from placement, psychological evaluations of children and parents, greater access to drug and alcohol treatment, and violence reduction.

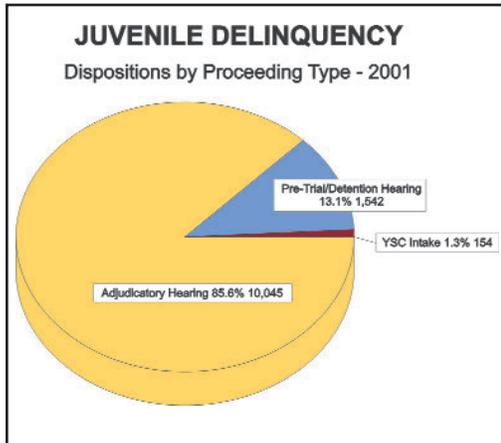
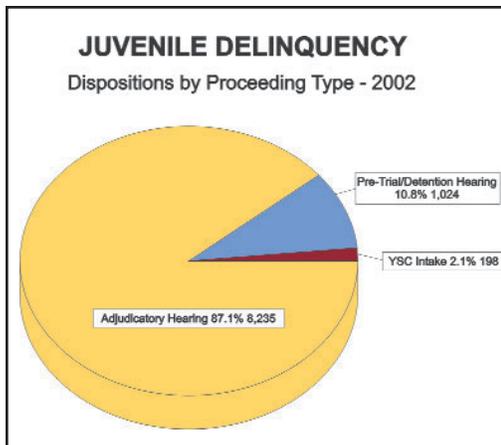


Victim Services: Funding from the state, helped to expand the Victim Services Unit, which provides information and assistance to victims of juvenile crime. More victims are now receiving court-ordered restitution payments through a new program that enables indigent offenders to do community service hours to earn money to repay the victims.

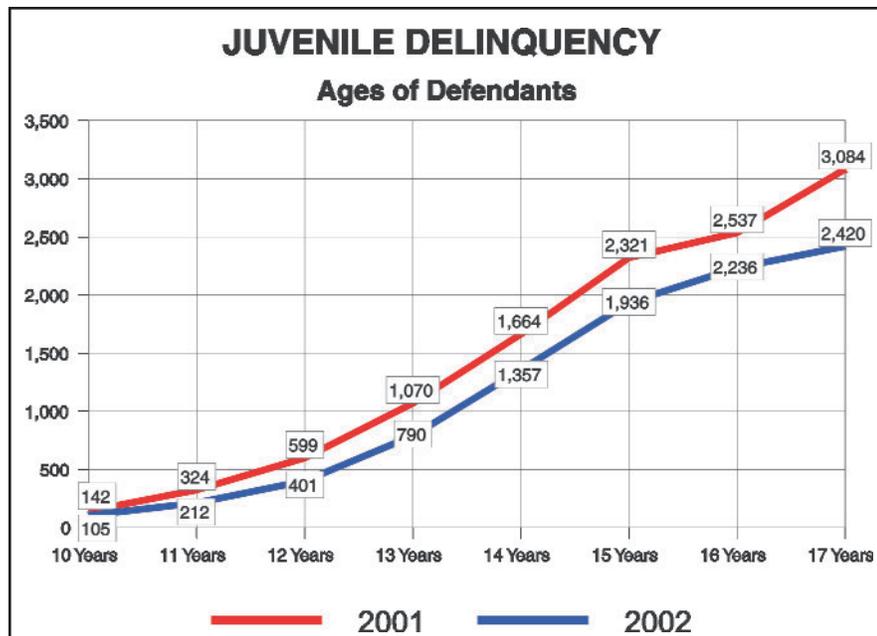
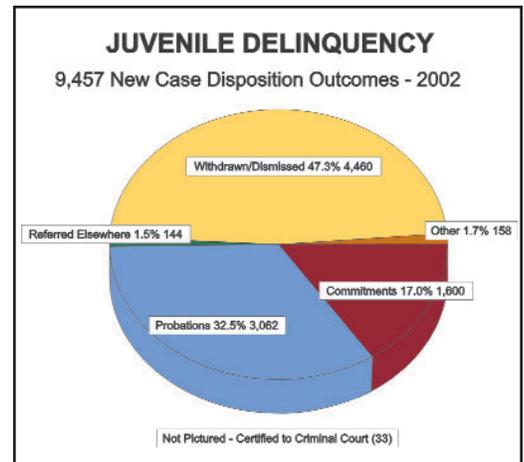
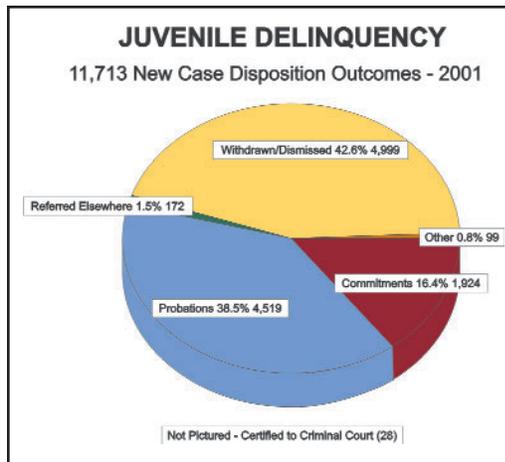
Diversion Services: In 2002, in order to reduce court dockets and to provide needed delinquency prevention services, several new diversion programs were funded by the Department of Human Services for juveniles charged with minor offenses.

Front-loaded Dependency Court Process: In early 2002, a study conducted by the National Center for Juvenile Justice found that the Dependency Court had successfully implemented the elements of the Frontloaded Model of Case Processing. Prior to the initial hearings, all attorneys are appointed, all parties are provided with copies of the petitions, and the parents and children are contacted by their lawyers. Immediately prior to the initial hearings, a Pre-Hearing Conference moderated by a mediator is held to reach agreements and submit recommendations for placements, visitation, behavioral health evaluations, and other services.

On-Site Dependency Behavioral Health Services: Through the support of the City Behavioral Health System, Dependency Court has a Clinical Evaluation Unit on-site that assesses family members for drug & alcohol problems, refers them to treatment, and provides progress reports for subsequent hearings.



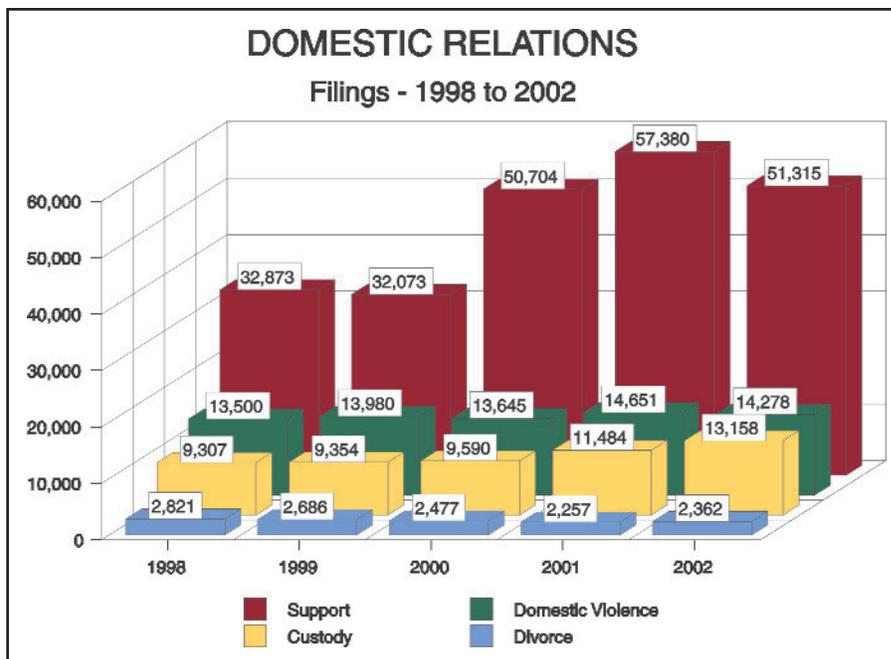
A second unit, the Behavioral Health System's Family Court Unit, staffs Pre-Hearing Conferences to identify behavioral health needs and arranges for evaluations and therapy for family members.



Family Division ♦ Domestic Relations Branch

Under the leadership of Family Division Administrative Judge Myrna Field, Supervising Judge Idee Fox, and Deputy Court Administrator, Mary Lou Baker, 12 judges of the Court of Common Pleas preside in the Domestic Relations Branch of the Family Court Division. Located at 34 S. 11th Street, approximately 400 administrative, professional, and support staff work resolving cases involving paternity, support, divorce, custody, and domestic violence. Four directors: Joseph J. Harbison, Daniel F. Madonna, Esquire, Joseph C. Kamnik, Jr. and Roy Chambers head the departments: Operations & Case Management, Personnel & Facilities, Systems & Program Development, Bureau of Accounts/Enforcement and IV-D Compliance, and Customer Service.

Domestic Relations Branch personnel endeavor to efficiently administer cases through modern case management principles. In 2001 and 2002, a total of 166,885 filings were made with the Domestic Relations Division. They have varied responsibilities in responding to complaints that can be broadly categorized under Child and Spousal Support, Paternity, Child Custody, Divorce, and Domestic Violence.



Court Units

Clerk of Family Court: The Clerk of Court primarily processes all attorney-filed complaints for support, divorce, and custody, all *pro se* complaints, all complaints initiated by the Department of Human Services, and incoming Interstate complaints and petitions.

Intake Unit: This unit provides services for walk in *pro se* clients who wish to file complaints and petitions in support and custody.

The 643 Lab: This unit is the point of contact for electronic referrals from the Pa. Dept. of Public Welfare. New complaints for support for all Welfare clients are filed in this unit.

Customer Service Center: The CSC was established to enhance customer access to Family Court. It screens, routes and guides customers, and answers telephone calls and mail for the purpose of addressing and resolving any Domestic Relations-related issues.

The Pretrial / Enforcement Units: These units process all local and Intrastate cases for the establishment of paternity, child and spousal support orders and modifications of those orders. Conference Officers and support staff also process cases requiring enforcement of outstanding support arrears. Conference Officers adhere to the Rules of Civil Procedure and calculate support obligations using state support guidelines. This ensures similar treatment of persons similarly situated, a more equitable distribution of financial responsibility for raising children, settlement of support matters without court involvement, and more efficient hearings when they are necessary. (Explanatory comment - 1993 Rule 1910.16-1).

Bureau of Accounts Accounting /Charge Unit: The Accounting Unit is responsible for controlling and monitoring all financial activity and funding relating to the child support enforcement program. It reconciles daily the PACSES and PARENTS financial subsystems, and completes comprehensive audits on cases referred by judges and staff.

The Charge Unit is required to compile and compute multi-level financial adjustments that control and distribute child support payments.

Tactical Enforcement: In addition to regular enforcement remedies the Conference Officers in this unit are committed to a primary system using IRS intercepts, Credit Bureau Reporting, Driver's License Suspension, FIDM, Passport denial, lottery interceptions, and liens.

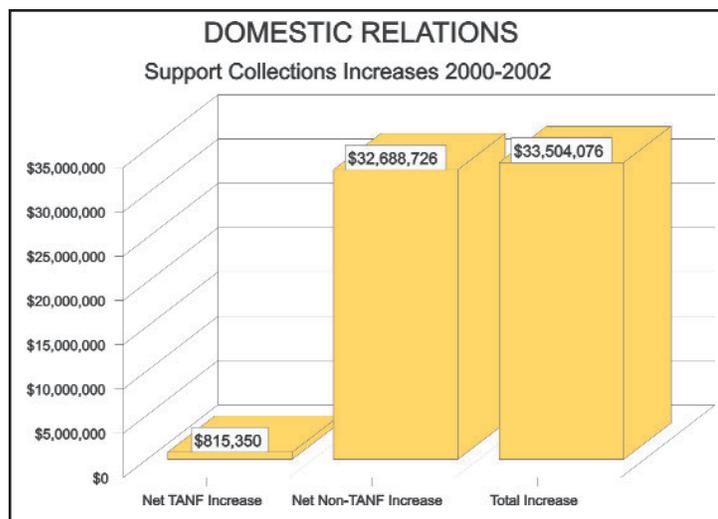
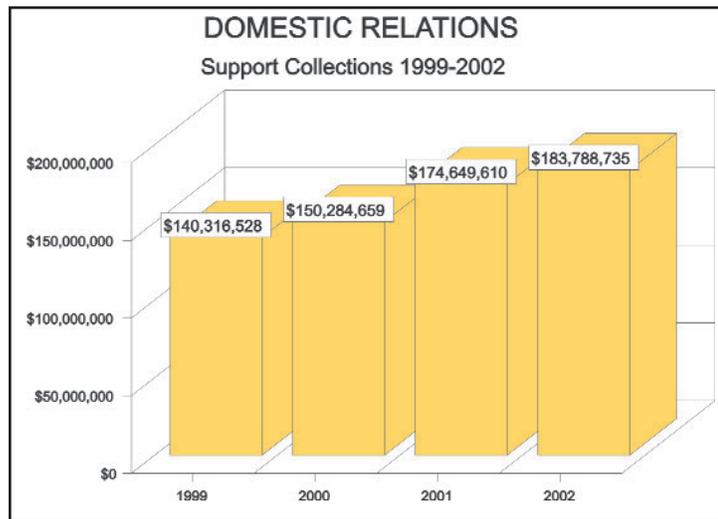
Interstate Unit: This unit is a centralized support unit responsible for processing all incoming and outgoing support requests that are out of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Support Masters Unit:

The Masters in Support follow Rule 1910.12 of the Rules of Civil Procedure. Masters conduct electronically recorded hearings. A determination is made in cases where there is an obligation to provide support as to whether the support guidelines apply.

Divorce Masters Unit:

The Permanent Masters in Divorce are assigned all cases where the grounds for divorce, either fault or no-fault, are at issue as well as divorce matters arising from claims for equitable distribution, alimony, counsel fees, costs, and expenses.



Custody Masters Unit: The Custody Masters handle conferences and processes all aspects of cases with respect to custody, partial custody, and visitation.

Domestic Violence: This unit handles all actions filed under the Protection From Abuse Act. It houses all PFA records and provides assistance to unrepresented victims of domestic violence in obtaining court ordered protection from their abusers.

Order Establishment Unit: This unit's concentration is focused on Federal Case Closure requirements, and special projects designed to enhance Federal performance measures.

Genetic Testing Unit: The Genetic Testing Unit coordinates genetic testing for support and dependency cases in an effort to establish paternity for children where paternity has been denied. Cases are processed through Laboratory Corporation of America and upon receipt of results, referred to Conference Officers for case setting of support obligations.

Bench Warrant Unit/Trial Commissioner: The Bench Warrant Unit is responsible for the apprehension and arrest of parties who have outstanding warrants resulting from failure to appear at hearings and conferences. Defendants who are arrested or surrender themselves to the Bench Warrant Unit go before Trial Commissioners to dispose of warrants.

Parent Locator Services Unit/Writ Servers Unit: The PLS Unit is responsible for locating absent parents in an effort to set and collect support obligations as well as custody cases. The Writ Servers Unit provides personal service for Court Orders to appear in support and for custody cases, bank seizures, and judgements.

Court Support: The Court Support Unit supplies the staff for the courtrooms under the direction of the judges. The staff process all the documents needed and update the computer systems as directed by the orders entered by the judges.

Networking For Jobs (NFJ): In an effort to set and enforce support obligations, the NFJ is designed to provide access to job training and employment opportunities for those least able to obtain these services on their own.

Training Unit: This unit provides comprehensive training by the Domestic Relations Training Coordinator for new and current employees in the policies and procedures of the Domestic Relations Branch. The training coordinator also works on special projects and acts as a liaison between Domestic Relations Division and other outside agencies.

Systems Support and Development: The SSD is responsible for all aspects of automation in the DR Branch. Included are: PACSES, PARENTS, administration of the FJD Network in Domestic Relations, and the purchase, installation, and maintenance of all computer equipment including the mainframe computer and peripherals, servers, personal computers, and printers.

Listings and Scheduling Unit: This unit coordinates all scheduling of cases listed for court hearings, support and enforcement conferences, and all Master's hearings for support and custody cases.

Administrative Services: This unit is charged with mail functions, quantity photocopy issues, maintaining original petitions relating to child support and custody filed prior to 1997, as well as acting as a storage area for bulk supplies and taking on all first echelon maintenance functions in the facility.

Specialized Units: Domestic Relations also has several other specialized units that provide support services for the Branch. Among them are the Security Guard Unit, and the Sheriff's Department located in the Division. In addition, through a cooperative agreement with the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, the ADAs of the Child Support Enforcement Unit represent the Department of Public Welfare at hearings in which DPW is a party of interest, and in some military and Interstate cases.

Highlights for 2001

In an effort to better serve the community, there have been many new developments in the Domestic Relations Branch. The staff and administration worked hand in hand to break some new ground and forge ahead in new directions. The Child Support Enforcement Units and the Principle Enforcement Units merged. This merger has allowed for enhanced service to the public and expeditious case processing. The Hearing Officers now can address order establishment issues and enforcement of outstanding arrears simultaneously eliminating fragmented case processing.

In addition to the merge, clients scheduled for support/enforcement conferences are pre-screened in the Customer Service Center located in the lobby area of 34 S. 11th St. The cases are updated in the PACSES system more rapidly, and customers spend less time waiting. In October alone, the Customer Service Center pre-screened 2,695 people enabling them to move more rapidly through the system.

On March 5, 2001, all cases that involve clients receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) are scheduled for group conferencing. Ninety cases are scheduled daily, 60 in the morning and 30 in the afternoon. Due to the massive scheduling effort, support obligations, paternity establishment, and modifications can be entered very quickly on these voluminous cases.

The Customer Service Telephone Center is now operational for extended hours on Wednesday evenings until 8:00 p.m. Clients are encouraged to contact the center with any general or case specific questions they may have. This helps to serve the segment of the public whose work schedules prohibit them from calling the court during regular business hours.

Intake Triage is located in the lobby area, helping to reduce long waits for clients who wish to file support petitions. Assigned staff update the computer system, and direct clients to the proper court units.

Based on cooperative plans with the Domestic Relations Division, the Department of Public Welfare, the School District of Philadelphia, and Child Care Resources of Philadelphia, a paper referral process is now in place for the Child Care Subsidy Cases. Parents who are re-entering the work force and have applied for day care can now seek child support through an initial paper referral process.

The Order Establishment Unit began as a pilot project with a multitask purpose. It was designed to manage the influx of welfare referrals by providing them with speedy conference dates resulting in the issuance of child support orders or even case closure. In addition, it's a unit that assists in special projects, with the goal of enhancing compliance with Federal performance measures. Currently, the Order Establishment Unit's concentration is focused on Federal Case Closure requirements, reports and referrals from other units.

Finally, in an effort to expedite the processing of bench warrants, newly renovated offices have been completed in the basement of 34 S. 11th St. The Bench Warrant Unit and the Trial Commissioner's Courtroom are now housed side by side helping to timely move clients with outstanding bench warrants through the system.

Highlights for 2002

Parenting Sessions: Since November, 2001, the Domestic Relations Branch has been involved with the Parental Access, Visitation and Education Program (PAVE). This program is sponsored by the Salvation Army, and is funded by the Department of Public Welfare and Bureau of Child Support and Enforcement Services. The PAVE program offers supportive services to non-custodial incarcerated parents, their children and families. The program's primary purpose is to support, nurture, and to enable parents to financially support their children. The Salvation Army provides a Lead Case Manager who holds parenting classes and runs structured and supervised parent/child activities to help clients address the challenges they encounter as they seek to become more responsibly involved in their children's lives. The program has been very successful. Classes are scheduled every Monday from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at 34 South 11th Street.

Professional Business License Suspension: Through the PACSES computer system, the Domestic Relations Branch conducts matches with the Pennsylvania Department of State to identify delinquent obligors who maintain professional licenses, such as barbers, taxi drivers and accountants. If obligors fail to make payment after notification, a court order is obtained to suspend or void their licenses.

Performance Measure Committee: Under the supervision of the Honorable Idee C. Fox, Supervising Judge, the Domestic Relations Branch has gathered a group of Administrators and Supervisors to review the new federal performance measures of the Child Support Enforcement Program to develop ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the program.

Group Enforcement: A specialized contempt court list has been developed to handle large volumes of delinquent child support obligors who are provided an opportunity to resolve their account delinquency through pretrial conferences. If unresolved, these cases are given same day contempt hearing.

Training Institute: The Domestic Relations Branch has worked closely with the Bureau of Child Support Enforcement (BCSE) in developing and instituting a new statewide Child Support Enforcement Training Institute (PACSETI). The new training institute provides two week training for all new child support employees throughout Pennsylvania and a one week training program for more experienced employees. Additionally, specialized training constituting a one or two day course is planned for specific topics such as guideline calculation, financial institution data match enforcement, and mail alerts management.

Financial Services: A Financial Services Unit was established in the Bureau of Accounts to process the most difficult and technical financial issues raised by clients and court staff. The unit addresses issues such as financial exception requests submitted to State Collections and Disbursement Unit (SCDU) in Harrisburg, and the verification of arrears accumulated under multiple court orders.

Bench Warrant Officers: In the autumn of 2002, a need was discovered for additional bench warrant officers to assist in processing the backlog of bench warrants accumulated in the Domestic Relations Division. Additional bench warrant officers who are private contractors are trained by the Philadelphia Police Academy. Late in 2002, they began to intensively address new and old bench warrants.

Record Retention: In March, 2002, a significant change was implemented in the record retention schedule for Domestic Relations records. A new Supreme Court directive on retention of records significantly increased the number of records that could no longer be destroyed and presented a new challenge for the Domestic Relations Division. A planning committee was formed to determine the most expeditious way to conform with the new schedules.

Record Room: The Domestic Relations Record Room is charged with the responsibility of maintaining, transferring and storing records for all child support and custody cases. The unit is also responsible for maintaining the record retention schedule which includes culling and storage functions.

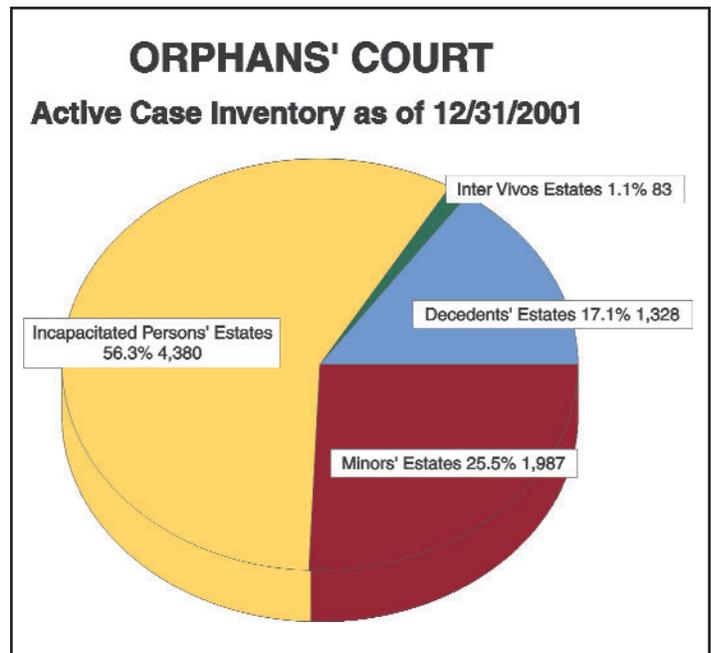
Data Management and Scheduling Unit: This unit focuses federal case closure requirements, and special projects designed to enhance compliance with federal performance measures. It also coordinates scheduling for court hearings, Master's hearings, support and custody cases, and enforcement conferences.\

Orphans' Court Division

The 1968 Amendments to the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1874 established “divisions” of the Court of Common Pleas. As a result, the old Orphans' Court of Philadelphia became the Orphans' Court Division of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. The 2001-2002 Court was composed of Administrative Judge Joseph D. O'Keefe, Judge John W. Herron and Judge Anne E. Lazarus.

The Orphans' Court Division is responsible for adjudicating a wide range of matters. The name is derived from the definition of “orphan” as one bereft of some protection or advantage, and not the more common parlance of a child whose parents are deceased. Instead, the purpose of the Orphans' Court is to protect the personal and property rights of all persons and entities that may not be otherwise capable of handling their

own affairs. Included under this rubric are minors, incapacitated persons, decedents' estates, nonprofit corporations and trusts – both *inter vivos* (between the living) and testamentary. Also, the Orphans' Court is the arbiter of any dispute or issue that may arise in connection to the application for a marriage license through the Philadelphia Marriage License Bureau. It is the role of the court, in any of these matters, to ensure that the best interests of the person or entity are not compromised. It has been a longstanding tenet of the Orphans' Court to provide access to the courts for those who may lack the ability to defend or represent themselves.



Specifically, but not limited to the following list, the Orphans' Court Division has the authority to: appoint guardians for both minors and incapacitated persons; adjudicate disputes over the administration of decedents' estates including approving accounts of administrators/executors; resolve appeals from the Register of Wills ("will contests"); and resolve inheritance and estate tax disputes or approve civil settlements involving minor plaintiffs and/or estates.

Starting in January, 2001, newly appointed Administrative Judge O'Keefe initiated several projects designed to build on the basic principles that have guided the Orphans' Court since its creation in 1683, to improve upon that foundation, and, to guide that Court into the 21st Century. Most important toward achieving both these goals was the upgrade to the technological capabilities of the Orphans' Court.

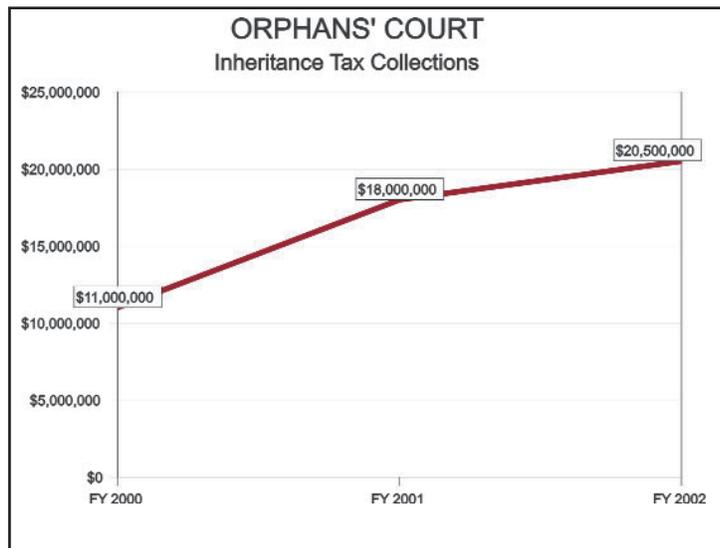
On July 1, 2001, the Orphans' Court debuted its new case management and docketing system. The Banner Court System, similar to that used in the Civil Trial Division, has allowed Orphans' Court to better track case flow, to accumulate statistics and projections, and to dispose of matters more quickly than ever before. In addition, attorneys now have access to dockets, hearing and conference schedules and audit lists via the Internet.

The Orphans' Court Website has seen marked improvement since January, 2001. In an effort to make practice in the Orphans' Court more user-friendly and, spurred by interest from the Probate Section of the Philadelphia Bar Association, the court has continuously added helpful resources to the website including official court forms, unofficial sample forms, reference materials and both the Supreme Court Orphans' Court Rules and the Philadelphia County Orphans' Court Rules.

By soliciting the cooperation of the Probate Bar and utilizing the internal resources at its disposal, the Orphans' Court Division has been able to keep the ever-increasing caseload at a manageable level. Eliminating extraneous and unwieldy practices and procedures have been important recent trends in Orphans' Court practice. By streamlining and simplifying once archaic procedures, filings and court-related activities have increased. These matters can now be resolved much more quickly than ever before.

Statistics confirm these conclusions. Of the 6,386 total matters pending before the Court in calendar year 2001 (consisting of 1,136 “open” matters as of January 1, 2001, and 5,250 “new” filings), the court disposed of 5,897 of these matters in 2001, or 92%, leaving only a total of 489 “open” matters to carry over into 2002. Compare these numbers to 2000 – a total of 6,180 matters were before the court (794 “open” and 5,386 “new”) and there were 5,044 dispositions, or just under 82%. Furthermore, the court saw a reduction of 57% in “open” matters between 2000 and 2001 that needed to be carried over to the following calendar year (1136 reduced to 489). This is in contrast to the increase of over 40% of the number of matters that were still pending between 12/31/1999 and 12/31/2000 (794 increased to 1,136). With the increasing utilization of technology and greater interaction with the Probate Bar, these trends should continue.

Several changes were made in the Orphans’ Court bench and operational enhancements during 2002. Judge Lynn B. Hamlin was assigned to the Orphans’ Court in December of 2001. On July 7, 2002, Judge Hamlin resigned from the Bench and the Honorable John W. Herron was appointed to the Orphans’ Court Division by the



Supreme Court. The Orphans' Court Division is now composed of Administrative Judge Joseph D. O'Keefe, Judge John W. Herron, and Judge Anne E. Lazarus.

The Probate and Trust Law Section of the Philadelphia Bar Association has presented the court with the 21st century edition of "Register of Wills Manual," (the Blue Book) and "Forms for Use Before the Register of Wills and Orphans' Court Division," (the venerable Green Book), together in one volume. They constitute the 2002 edition of the "Philadelphia Estate Practitioner Handbook", a comprehensive compendium of forms and narrative to assist fiduciary lawyers in the Philadelphia area. The quality of practice in the Orphans' Court will be greatly enhanced by the updates to this well-respected form book, which provides novice and experienced Orphans' Court practitioners with suggested forms which follow the relevant statutes and rules of court in common situations. In addition, this latest edition incorporates the advances of technology by providing links to computerized forms which can be downloaded from the court's website, contributing to the quality of the work-product and ultimate convenience to the practitioner.

For the future, 2002 saw several meetings held with regard to the exciting possibility of electronic filing in the Orphans' Court Division.

When reviewing the statistics, note that accounting methods differ from 2001 to 2002. As a result, some case-types that had been charted in 2001 are not displayed in the 2002 material. For those types of filings, "dispositions" are not reached. These case-type categories, and their corresponding numbers of filings follow: Opinions Filed (10); Re-exam of Trust Assets (55); Citation Issued (741); Disposition of Marriage License Matters (212); Report of Cemetery Assets (775); Miscellaneous Matters (915); and "Other" Decrees Signed (1,787).

