



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

NEWS RELEASE

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Chief Justice Cappy Salutes Jurors on Occasion of Juror Appreciation Week

HARRISBURG, May 3, 2007 – Pennsylvania will mark Juror Appreciation Week May 7-13. In the following statement, Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice Ralph J. Cappy discusses the critical role jurors play in our system of justice:

“This week, we recognize and give special thanks to the many thousands of Pennsylvanians who, during the past year, have responded to the call of their government, and the needs of their justice system, by serving as jurors.

“We all know that a jury trial is a basic American right, but the court system would have no way to guarantee that right if citizens were not willing to set aside their personal business and come forward when summoned to serve.

“During the past year, approximately 200,000 citizens have appeared for jury duty at county courthouses across the Commonwealth. More than 60,000 of those individuals were chosen as jurors for 4,500 civil and criminal trials.

“By appearing when called, each of these individuals played a role in their Democracy, keeping faith with the principles of freedom set down in the constitutions of the United States and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

“We on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court believe that no better system of justice has ever been devised by man than ours in which citizens, not kings or high tribunals, sit in judgment of other citizens in civil and criminal trials. We are most grateful to all citizens who have helped to make our justice system work, and who will do so in the future, by participating in that system and performing invaluable service as jurors.”

The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania currently is working on plans to improve the jury system throughout the Commonwealth by developing uniform standards and "best practices" in the areas of jury summonses, jury source lists and jury selection methods. These improvements are expected to lead to increased juror participation in the overall population and increased juror representation among minorities.

The Supreme Court is being advised and assisted in this effort by the Pennsylvania Association of Court Management, an organization of court administrators; the Interbranch Commission on Gender, Racial and Ethnic Fairness, which seeks to eliminate discrimination in state government, and the Commission for Justice Initiatives of the Pennsylvania Bar Association which makes recommendations to the Supreme Court for improvements in the administration of justice.

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