



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

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CONTACT:

[Stuart Ditzen](#), Assistant for Communications
215-560-6052

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New Family Court to be Built in Philadelphia Chief Justice Praises Release of Funds for the Project

HARRISBURG, May 21, 2010 - Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Ronald D. Castille said today that a new Family Court in Philadelphia - a project that for years has seemed unattainable - is on its way to becoming a reality.

"Rarely has there been so clear a need," said Chief Justice Castille. "You could almost literally call it a crying need."

At a joint news conference in Philadelphia with Castille and Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter participating, Governor Rendell announced the release of up \$200 million in state capital funds for the construction of the new courthouse at 15th and Arch Streets in Center City Philadelphia.

Chief Justice Castille issued the following statement at the news conference:

"As the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's liaison justice to the Philadelphia's First Judicial District, it has been one of my top priorities to unify the fragmented divisions of Philadelphia Family Court in a modern, purpose-built and centrally-located building. Rarely has there been so clear a need. You could almost literally call it a crying need.

"The existing facilities of Family Court are two physically-separated, inhospitable, outdated buildings, one a grand and cavernous classical structure at 1801 Vine Street, the other a cramped former department store and office building at 34 South 11th Street.

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"These buildings are poorly located and inadequate for the needs of thousands of people who walk through their doors each day bringing with them some of the most sensitive and delicate problems our courts must attempt to resolve. Family Court cases involve divorce, child custody disputes, juvenile delinquency, matters of child abuse and neglect, petitions for protection from abuse and other issues that almost always encompass aspects of individual or family tragedy or crisis. It has been said that the only happy cases in Family Court are adoptions, and even those can involve disappointed biological parents.

"The new courthouse at 15th and Arch Streets is designed to be functional and efficient and to meet the needs of citizens whose cases are heard in Family Court. The building has been planned specifically as a Family Court - for that alone. Its design is clean and attractive. It is conveniently located near other government buildings, support agencies and public transit interchanges. I am fully confident that everyone who comes to this courthouse will find it infinitely more accommodating than the existing Family Court facilities.

"Many people thought a new Family Court building in Philadelphia was an unattainable goal. Many thought this day - a day when the Governor, the Mayor and the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania would stand before you to say, "This Building Will Be Built" - would never come.

"Well, the day is here. Thanks to the efforts of many people, especially those in the Legislative and the Executive branches of state government, as well as those in city government and in the First Judicial District, we look forward now to watching this courthouse rise at 15th and Arch Streets. The building promises to be a benefit to the citizens of Philadelphia for decades to come."

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