



# Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**HARRISBURG, December 6, 2001** —Court Administrator of Pennsylvania Zygmunt A. Pines said today that Allegheny County Common Pleas Judge Patrick McFalls is on voluntary administrative leave with pay from his work in the county's civil court division pending further review.

Pines noted that public trust and confidence in our courts is of paramount importance to Allegheny County President Judge Robert A. Kelly and to Civil Division Administrative Judge Joseph James, as well as to all of those who are a part of Pennsylvania's unified judicial system. It is important therefore, Pines said, that the public know that as of November 8, the civil division control judge in Allegheny County has been instructed by Administrative Judge James to assign no further cases to Judge McFalls until further order. Since then, Judge McFalls has not presided over any jury or non-jury trials.

"Pennsylvanians justifiably expect that the administration of justice will be thoughtful, effective and impartial," said Pines. "As reports have arisen in various media with respect to staffing of Judge McFalls' office and the filing of resulting litigation, concern that such matters might affect the public's perception of the courts in Allegheny County has also arisen even as constructive actions have occurred to ensure appropriate administration of judicial service.

"While the system's ability to function with public confidence is always foremost in our minds, we are equally aware of the need to respect the privacy of personnel within the judicial system. With that in mind, and mindful as well of pending litigation, we would anticipate no further comment on this subject in the foreseeable future."

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