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Supreme Court Announces Changes on Orphans' Court Rules Committee

HARRISBURG, January 6, 2005 — The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania today announced the following changes on the Orphans' Court Procedural Rules Committee:

The Hon. Calvin S. Drayer Jr., Montgomery County; Kristen M. Del Sole, Esq., Allegheny County; Michael L. Mixell, Esq., Berks County and Shari J. Odenheimer, Esq., Montgomery County all were appointed as members of the committee. Each was appointed for a three-year term beginning Dec. 31, 2004.

Mary Jane Barrett, Esq., Philadelphia and Richard E. Flannery, Esq., Lawrence County both were reappointed as members of the committee for three-year terms that begin Dec. 31, 2004. Barrett also was designated as chair of the committee, beginning Dec. 31, 2004. Barrett is a partner at the Philadelphia law firm of Harkins and Harkins.

The committee reviews current rules governing statewide practice and procedure in the Orphans' Court, recommending amendments and new rules, notes and commentary as necessary. The committee also responds to questions from the bench, bar and public.

In 2004, under the leadership of the Hon. John M. Cascio of Somerset County, the outgoing chair, the committee recommended a new statewide rule to permit e-filing in Orphans' Court. The Orphans' Court Division of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas is in the process of implementing an e-filing program pursuant to the new rule under the guidance of outgoing committee member the Hon. Joseph D. O'Keefe, who serves as the Administrative Judge of that division.

The committee also continued its work on a major statewide forms project, and expects to publish forms for comment in the near future. The committee also published a joint recommendation with the Appellate Court Procedural Rules Committee, addressing the appealability of Orphans' Court orders.

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