



Guardianship Tracking

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(continued on page 2)



With the new Guardianship Tracking System, everyone wins

After careful research, design and development, Pennsylvania's much-anticipated Guardianship Tracking System (GTS) is now live in almost every county.



Developed by AOPC/IT and the Office of Elder Justice in the Courts under the direction and supervision of the Advisory Council on

Elder Justice in the Courts, the GTS is a new web-based system in which guardians of adults of all ages, court staff, Orphans' Court clerks and judges can file, manage, track and submit guardianship reports.

The new system is designed with the goal of monitoring guardian activity in Pennsylvania while streamlining and improving the guardianship filing process.

"Pennsylvania ranks fourth in the nation for the highest population percentage of elders," said Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice **Debra Todd**. "As the commonwealth's aging population continues to grow, it is increasingly important to ensure the protection of some of our most vulnerable citizens."

Court-appointed guardians of incapacitated adults can now receive automatic reminders about important filing dates and deadlines. They can file inventory forms and annual reports online rather than having to go to their county courthouse to file reports manually.

Historically, court staff in each county have been tasked with manually scanning and filing guardians' inventories and annual reports. However, the Elder Law Taskforce noted in its final report to the Supreme Court that the majority of Orphans' Court clerks reported that they do not monitor whether inventory and annual reports are submitted by guardians.

The GTS will ease the burden of the guardianship filing process for these court staff while ensuring that every report is automatically reviewed.

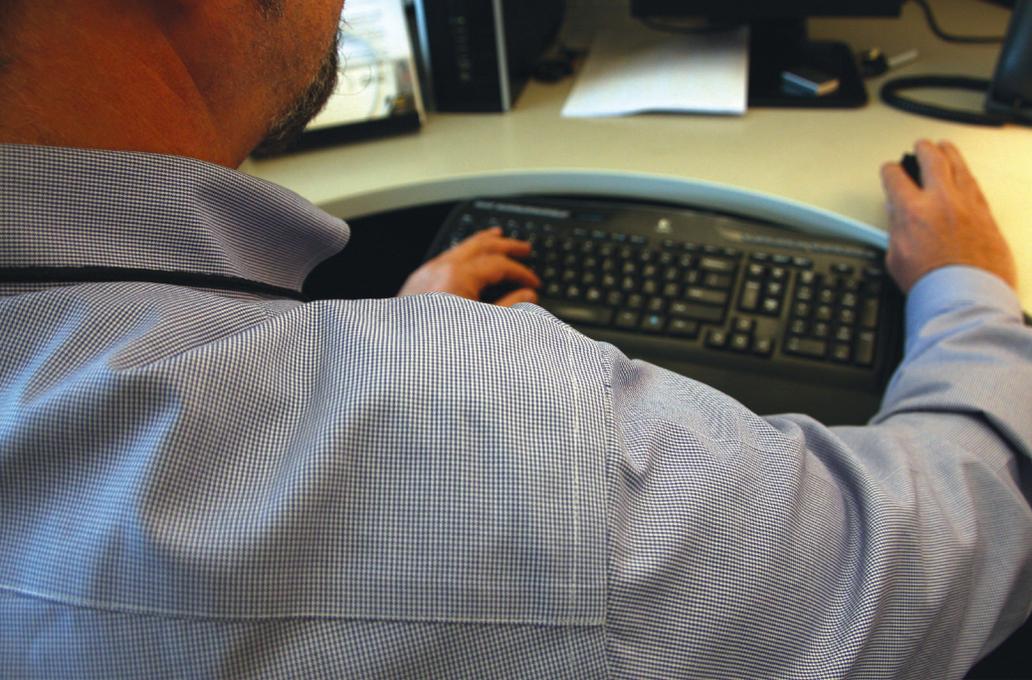
Far too often people who are financially exploited do not realize what has happened to them for

months, sometimes years. Among its many benefits, the GTS will ensure that potential guardianship problems are identified and responded to quickly.

Additionally, the GTS integrates guardian information into a statewide database rather than separate, individual county databases.

"This statewide collection of data will not only eliminate the potential for an unsuitable guardian to relocate to other counties, but will also generate information about guardianship trends that will help decision makers draft laws and establish procedures to better protect Pennsylvanians," said **Amy Whitworth**, AOPC/IT analyst manager.

Everyone involved in the development and implementation of the GTS should be very proud knowing that their long-dedicated efforts have effected real change in the way Pennsylvania protects its most vulnerable citizens.



Harassment training conducted online

Earlier this year, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court approved mandatory harassment prevention training for all AOPC, appellate court and state-level district court staff.

Participants were introduced to concepts and received practical guidance on how to identify the various types of harassment and recognize behaviors that may be considered inappropriate through videos inspired by real-life harassment cases.

The course also introduced staff to harassment prevention guidelines through scenario building and outlining of both organizational and personal liabilities arising from any such transgressions. A manager's version of the training extended the employee version with discussion regarding the pitfalls and risks for failing to stop known harassment.

Designed to engage participants and validate comprehension, a short quiz concluded the program and directed staff to policies and procedures including specific reporting instructions.

While harassment prevention training is currently not required for all employers in Pennsylvania, this training reinforced our long-standing dedication to fair and equal treatment to all who work in or enter the commonwealth's courts and related offices.

The Supreme Court is committed to promoting equal employment opportunity and non-discriminatory practices and this comprehensive training ensured that message was sent to staff. [AOPC](#)

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Cumberland County pilots text notification program

In an attempt to reduce the number of people who fail to appear at scheduled court dates, Cumberland County is piloting a mandatory electronic notification system that requires people to sign up for text or email alerts about upcoming court hearings.

District Court Administrator for Cumberland County, **Melissa Calvanelli**, explained that the county initially rolled out the system in the fall of 2017 on a volunteer basis, but only saw about 100 people sign up to participate over the six-month trial period.

Beginning this past July, the system was rolled out again, but this time participation from everyone in the court system was mandatory.

Alerts are sent out seven days prior to the scheduled court date and again one day before.

“The first notification gives people a heads-up to make arrangements to find a babysitter, take off work or whatever they need to do to be able to attend,” said Calvanelli. “The second notification is a last-minute reminder so people really can no longer use ‘I

forgot’ as a valid excuse in front of a judge.”

The notification program technology was developed by the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania as a pilot for Cumberland County.



“Other counties have shown a lot of interest in the program and are waiting to see our results,” said Calvanelli.

According to Calvanelli, since the county rolled out the program on a mandatory basis in July, there has been a slight downtick in the number of people who miss their scheduled hearings.

However, the first month was mainly spent entering data into the system and getting people set-up to receive alerts, so they plan to re-evaluate the program’s results after about six months, where they hope to see a more significant decline in that number.

Calvanelli explained that court hearings are usually scheduled months in advance and often times when someone doesn’t show up, it’s because they either forgot or got the date wrong.

Even if a defendant’s court absence is an innocent mistake, a failure-to-appear warrant must be issued. This ends up costing taxpayers thousands of dollars every year in additional staff time, paperwork and possibly jail time for the defendant.

If the program reduces the number of failure-to-appear warrants by just six percent, it will end up paying for itself. Counties in other states including Oregon and Washington have implemented similar programs and saw reductions in missed court dates by 30 to 50 percent.

If it’s deemed a success in Cumberland County and other counties decide to implement similar programs, it could end up reducing administrative court costs statewide. [AOPC](#)

Lottery prizes now subject to intercept by Revenue

A new law took effect in October requiring the Pennsylvania Lottery to check with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) for any outstanding court judgments before awarding any winnings over \$2,500.

Additionally, the new law requires that the Lottery check for any outstanding tax obligations with the Department of Revenue as well.

All Pennsylvania Lottery winnings over \$2,500 were already subject to intercept by the Department of Human Services for child support obligations, but the new law adds Revenue and AOPC to that process.

If court-ordered obligations are found to exist, the AOPC must report the total amount owed to the Department of Revenue, which will be deducted from the prize amount and used to satisfy those obligations.

For any outstanding obligation that exists for either back taxes or court judgments, a \$15 administrative fee will be deducted from the final winnings that will go into the Lottery Fund supporting benefits for older Pennsylvanians.

If obligations exceeding the prize amount are found to exist with any of these three departments, the claimant



will not be eligible to receive any of the winnings.

For Lottery winnings over \$5,000, applicable income taxes will be withheld before any outstanding obligations are intercepted. [AOPC](#)



L to R: Becky Rider, Melanie Jesko and Ashley Mansberry

Staff and community respond during Fayette County district court incident



“I’m very thankful and proud of the bravery displayed by my staff during this tragic event,” said Judge Shimshock. “They were a huge part of ensuring that a terrible situation was not as bad as it could have been without them.”

On Sep. 19, 2018, at the office of Fayette County Magisterial District Judge **Daniel Shimshock** in Masontown, a gunman opened fire in a waiting room full of court users and court staff.

The assailant was identified as the defendant in a domestic abuse criminal action scheduled for preliminary hearing that afternoon. The defendant shot his estranged wife, two other men and a police officer who attempted to prevent him from continuing.

Court staff and the public heard the shots and took cover in Judge Shimshock’s office and in the staff’s restroom.

Ashley Mansberry and **Melanie Jesko**, secretarial staff, bravely took the young daughter of a police officer, who was shadowing her dad that day, and a mother and infant into the restroom for cover.

Office manager, **Becky Rider**, while praying, attended to the wounded wife who had been shot in the arm. The shooter was fatally wounded by a German Township police officer.

“I’m very thankful and proud of the bravery displayed by my staff during this tragic event,” said Judge Shimshock. “They were a huge part of ensuring that a terrible situation was not as bad as it could have been without them.”

The magisterial district court staff were commended for their fast thinking and selflessness and were presented certificates of appreciation by President Judge **John F. Wagner, Jr.**

“I’m grateful for the response from the criminal justice community during this traumatic situation,” added President Judge Wagner. **AOPC**

Pennsylvania courts launch outreach campaign to help stop abuse

In October, the Pennsylvania courts launched an educational outreach campaign using social media ads and bilingual video production to educate victims of abuse on how the courts can help them.

Funded by federal STOP Grant money, AOPC created and launched digital ads on Facebook, Instagram and Google. The online ads work to make victims increasingly aware that protection orders exist as an option to help stop their abuse.

When clicked on, the ads direct users to a detailed step-by-step video explaining the process of how to file for a protection order in Pennsylvania – a process that the courts recognize can be overwhelming and scary for victims to navigate alone.

Produced by AOPC/Communications, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, the video aims to make victims feel comfortable navigating the court system when filing for a protection order and prepares them for exactly what to expect at each step of the process.

The video is available in both English and Spanish on a new webpage on pacourts.us/learn that houses a variety of helpful protection order resources.

Through an expanded online and social media presence, the courts can reach a significant audience that they might not have previously been able to engage.

“The public’s access to courts is a fundamental right but that right is only fulfilled when people know how the judicial system works,” said **Tom Darr**, court administrator of Pennsylvania.

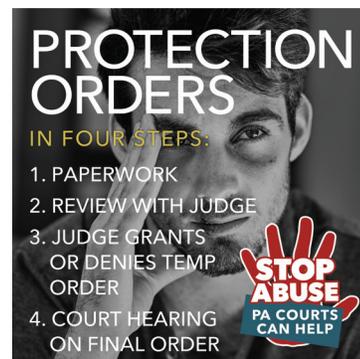
This campaign marks an exciting step in the courts’ efforts to reach a specific audience immediately and directly using social media. It opens the door a lot wider when it comes to how the courts communicate important information about the resources we can provide to the public.”

Many victims of abuse either are not aware that protection orders exist as an option to help end their abuse, or they are intimidated by the process. By educating the public, the courts hope that victims of abuse gain the knowledge and confidence to seek the help they need.



Follow us on Facebook!

View the campaign on our official Facebook page. Follow PA Courts on Facebook to keep up to date on important court news and organizational updates.



What is the federal STOP Grant?

Administered through the U.S Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), the STOP Formula Grant Program awards federal grant money to states and territories to help enhance their communities’ efforts to combat violence against women.

Court security: Assessing threats, avoiding tragedies

Since the inception of Pennsylvania's Judicial Incident Reporting System (PAJIRS) in Magisterial District Courts in 2005 and Common Pleas Courts in 2007, staff in the AOPC/ Office of Judicial District Security (OJDS) have assessed and responded to over 4,700 security incidents.

PAJIRS provides judges, court administrators and other designated users with an electronic format in which to capture threats to court safety and security. For staff in the OJDS, it provides a dynamic tool that serves many purposes.

First and foremost, it enables these OJDS staff members to connect quickly with courts to provide guidance on any needed protective measures for judges and court staff. It also allows them to liaise with law enforcement when necessary, and recommend short-term and long-term countermeasures that may be warranted.

In addition to OJDS staff, the district court administrator and sheriff both receive an immediate email notification that an incident report has been filed in their county.

Accordingly, these two key local court security members have instant access to information related to the incident, allowing them to follow through on guidance provided by OJDS staff and discuss the incident with other members of their local court security committee established pursuant to Pa. R. JA. No. 1954.

Subsequently, they are able to offer recommendations to the president judge regarding policies and procedures to mitigate risks associated with the instant and future threats.

PAJIRS is emblematic of the vital communication efforts designed to keep judges, court staff and other building occupants and visitors in court facilities safe.

Of the incidents reported via PAJIRS, those that arise out of domestic relations cases are especially concerning to OJDS staff. Decisions regarding divorce, child custody and financial support can serve as overwhelming stressors for the involved parties.

Regardless if a physical altercation occurs at a proceeding or not, the communication of any type of threat, whether directed towards others or implied, merits attention. There is no "over-reporting" of such threats.

Developing and maintaining a robust security posture for court facilities necessitates consistent collaboration and communication among stakeholders at the local level. Through PAJIRS, these stakeholders have a formal method by which to communicate threats and implement strategies to avert tragedies. [AOPC](#)

Changing with the times

Court security is a national concern that is expanding in scope. This past July, the 2018 Annual Conference of State Court Administrators and Conference of Chief Justices' was devoted to security topics that went beyond people and facilities.

Cyber threats are growing as rapidly as technology, pressing court security professionals and judicial leaders to expand their definition of secure courts.

Cyber security measures must keep pace with increasingly sophisticated

attacks on automated systems that contain confidential court data and govern orderly court operations.

Leading experts from across the country briefed conference participants on federal government cyber security initiatives, manipulation of social media designed to thwart the rule of law, the dangers of the dark web and cyber-crimes prosecuted in the courts.

Other sessions updated best practices in physical courthouse

security, including training for active shooter situations, the presence of dangerous toxins associated with the opioid epidemic breaching the courthouse and a panel offering first-hand accounts of continued operations in the wake of recent Hurricanes Harvey and Maria.

The conference served as a reminder that modern court security continues to evolve with contemporary challenges. [AOPC](#)

Domestic Relations Rule Change

By Bruce J. Ferguson
Counsel to the Domestic Relations
Procedural Rules Committee

In August, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania adopted rules implementing parenting coordination, which become effective March 1, 2019.

Parenting coordination is a non-confrontational, conflict-resolution process for parents who have ongoing high conflict or extensive custody-related litigation. The underlying principles of parenting coordination focus on providing for a child's best interest and facilitating parents' decision-making.

The process helps parents implement and comply with final custody orders, reduces conflict between parents and minimizes custody-related litigation.

The Court adopted a procedural framework for parenting coordination similar to that of the rules governing the processes that child custody and juvenile dependency hearing officers must follow – processes that also incorporate a mediation concept to assist parties in resolving their issues.

Parenting coordinators meet with parties to discuss their issues and possible resolutions. If the parties are unable to agree, the parenting

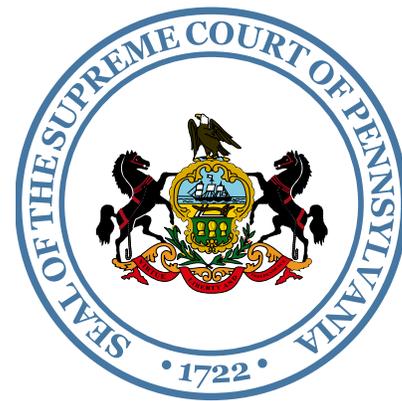
coordinator provides his or her recommended resolution to the court. In the event a party disagrees with the recommendation of the parenting coordinator, the rules provide for a new hearing before a judge.

Most importantly, the rules outline the judiciary's role in the parenting coordination process – the appointing judge is responsible for supervising the parenting coordinator and reviewing each of their recommendations.

For judicial districts implementing a parenting coordination program, the rules require that the local court maintain a list of qualified parenting coordinators – these can include attorneys or mental health professionals who meet the rule's qualifications and have submitted an affidavit to the president judge or administrative judge.

Additionally, the rules require that a judicial district implementing a parenting coordination program establish a local rule allowing low-income parties to participate in the program either for free or at a reduced fee.

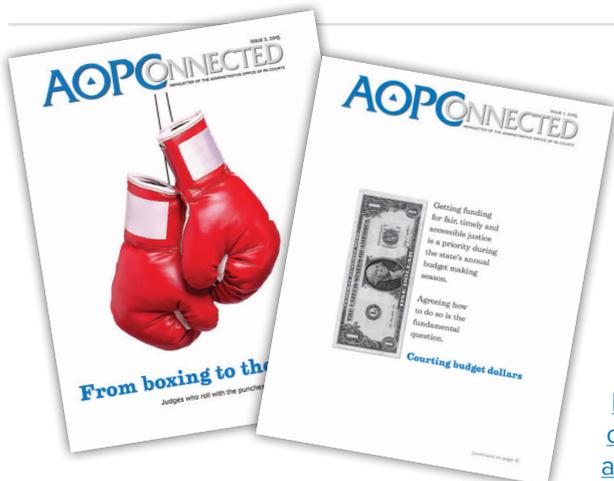
The judicial district is also required to establish a local rule establishing the hourly rate that a parenting coordinator may charge the parties.



In addition to the parenting coordination rules, the Domestic Relations Procedural Rules Committee recommended amendments to the Rules of Civil Procedure that eliminate the charging of fees that are not specifically authorized by statute in all domestic relations actions, as well as establish a statewide uniformity for the filing of support-related pleadings and documents.

The amendments require that all support-related pleadings and documents be filed in a single filing office in each county's domestic relations section. Additionally, the amendments now prevent parties with child support, spousal support and alimony claims from filing them as counts in a divorce complaint, requiring that they be filed in the domestic relations section as well.

These amendments were adopted by the Supreme Court and become effective Jan. 1, 2019. **AOPC**



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Veterans belong in our hearts, not in our prisons

“I went from being in a war zone to being back home in North Carolina within 72 hours,” said former U.S. Marine Sergeant Tim Wynn.

“Four days after returning home, I was arrested for aggravated assault.”

One of the three Veterans Courts events presented this fall by AOPC’s Problem-Solving Court unit included a half-day session at Widener Law School, where former U.S. Marine Sgt. Tim Wynn shared how his experience with Pennsylvania’s Veterans Court gave him his life back.

Wynn served from 1999 to 2003 and was stationed in Iraq following 9/11 when he was honorably discharged and sent back home.

“I went from being in a war zone to being back home in North Carolina within 72 hours,” said Wynn. “Four days after returning home, I was arrested for aggravated assault.”

Unable to process this abrupt transition, Wynn began to abuse drugs and alcohol as a way to cope with his posttraumatic stress disorder and other mental issues that stemmed from his time in the war.

After serving a brief sentence in a Philadelphia county prison, Wynn was arrested an eighth time. This is when he found himself in Veterans Court where he was given the opportunity to turn his life around.

Within eight months, Wynn had graduated from the program and dedicated his life to helping other

veterans. He is now a Veterans Certified Peer Specialist and leader of the Philadelphia Veterans Court Mentor Program.

“I had no mission when I returned home from war,” said Wynn. “Veterans Court put a mission back in my life, and I’m now an employee at the court that I was once a defendant in many times.”

Wynn was able to get 17 charges expunged from his record, but of all the things Veterans Court allowed him to get back, Wynn said the most important to him was the ability to be a part of his family and be a good father to his two young children.

There are currently Veterans Courts in 20 Pennsylvania counties that see a 73 percent successful graduation rate. The purpose of these treatment courts is to reduce recidivism and help veterans return to their jobs and families and become productive citizens – the effects of which Sgt. Tim Wynn can personally attest to.

Other keynote speakers for the event included the director of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals’ (NADCP) new Advancing Justice initiative, Melissa Fitzgerald, and her father, former Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice **James Fitzgerald**, who both spoke about the crucial need for Veterans Courts in our society.

“I firmly believe that Veterans Courts work,” said Justice Fitzgerald. “Veterans Courts, mental health courts, and all other problem-solving courts play a vital role in ensuring our courts and criminal justice system truly provides justice to all.”

Justice Fitzgerald spoke about the negative effect that harsh, mandatory sentences have had on the country as a whole. He explained that incarceration costs the taxpayers



above: former United States Marine Sgt. Tim Wynn
below: former Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice James Fitzgerald



roughly \$36,000 per prisoner, per year, and that anywhere from 20 to 40 percent of those incarcerated suffer from mental health issues.

“Ironically, America, home of the free, has the highest incarceration rate of any other country,” said Justice Fitzgerald. “We can’t incarcerate our way out of crime and criminal activity.”

Other panel members for the event included Veterans Affairs professionals, as well as Veterans Court mentors and judges including Philadelphia County Judge **Patrick Dugan**, a former captain in the United States Army reserve who oversaw Wynn’s journey through the program.

“Veterans Courts exemplify all that we owe to our veterans for their sacrifices for this country,” Justice Fitzgerald concluded. “We must make room for veterans in our hearts, not in our prisons.” **AOPC**

Legislative roundup

by Damian J. Wachter, Esq.

The legislature ended its final scheduled day of voting for the 2017-18 legislative session on October 17, sending over 90 bills to the governor for his consideration. Many of the bills impact the courts in some fashion, such as programming changes to case management systems and the implementation of rule and/or form changes.

Domestic Violence (DV) – The governor signed HB 2060 as Act 79. Authored by Rep. Marguerite Quinn, the legislation adds language to the current Uniform Firearms Act (UFA) and Protection from Abuse (PFA) Law, specifically regarding relinquishment of firearms in DV cases.

Under the UFA, individuals convicted of misdemeanor crimes of DV must relinquish firearms and firearm licenses to law enforcement within 24 hours of the conviction. Under the PFA Law, all final PFA orders not resulting from consent agreements must prohibit defendants from possessing firearms during the term of the order and require defendants to relinquish firearms and firearm licenses. For final PFA orders based on consent agreements, courts may order defendants to relinquish firearms. Relinquishment must occur within 24 hours.

Other DV legislation enacted provides for sentencing enhancements for DV crimes witnessed by minors who are family or household members (Act 157); requires plaintiffs with knowledge of founded or indicated reports of child abuse involving defendants to include such information in the PFA petition (Act 92); prohibits parties convicted of committing personal injury crimes against the other party from receiving spousal support or alimony pendente lite (Act 102).

Use of audio/video devices in court – A bill authored by Rep. Jerry Knowles and signed by the governor as Act 94 amends the Crimes Code to prohibit the operation of devices to capture, record, transmit or broadcast a photograph, video, motion picture or audio of proceedings or persons within a judicial facility, without the approval of the court or as provided by rules of court. Judicial facility is defined as courtrooms, hearing rooms or judicial chambers, as well as other rooms made available to interview witnesses. Rule of Judicial Administration 1910 indicates judges should prohibit broadcasting in courtrooms and adjacent areas, but the rule allows for exceptions.

Other legislation of note signed by the governor:

- Allowing incumbent magisterial district judges to file certificates of nomination for reelection – specifying the intent to seek reelection – in lieu of filing nominating petitions (Act 127)
- Providing for automated speed enforcement systems (i.e., cameras) in active works zones on highways under the jurisdiction of PennDOT and the Turnpike Commission and a portion of U.S. Route 1 in Philadelphia (Act 86)
- Adding a new chapter to the Crimes Code to focus on hazing, primarily on college campuses (Act 80). [AOPC](#)



{Damian Wachter is the assistant director of Legislative Affairs.}

The Hollenbach's helping hands and hearts

Longtime AOPC employees **Bill and Sue Hollenbach** share many things – a home, an employer and a love for animals so strong that it inspires a call to service for many people who hear about their work.

On top of busy work schedules and hosting international exchange students, the couple runs an animal rescue shelter from their home in Mechanicsburg called The Homeward Bound Animal Rescue.

Soon after forming the rescue in 2006, they discovered an unsettling truth about the fate of pregnant dogs – they are almost always euthanized because they are deemed unadoptable by shelters. This knowledge shifted the rescue's mission to primarily taking in pregnant dogs or dogs who have just delivered their puppies.

While equipped with birthing sites in their basement to deliver the puppies, Sue explained that often times during delivery they end up having to call the vet.

"A good number of our moms require C-sections because there is no control over them breeding with a much larger dog. They often can't pass the puppies naturally and we end up doing emergency C-sections to save the mothers' lives," Sue said.

After delivering the puppies, they raise them to a certain age before sending them to one of their 20 foster homes. The mommy dogs are kept with the puppies for at least three months until the Hollenbachs are confident about the type of home they would fit best in.

Sue explained that their rescue has evolved over the years to focus on the type of rescue work that they feel compelled to do – whether that's paying the electric bill for another local animal shelter, buying horses that would've otherwise been sent to a glue factory or paying to transport donations to their partner rescue in Kentucky and its surrounding communities.

Most of the dogs come from their partner rescue in Kentucky where they help fund a program that gives Christmas meals and gifts to impoverished children in the community. Sue said that the presents are said to be from a shelter dog, and attached to the gift is the dog's story.

"If you can turn the mindset around on these kids at a young age, they will hopefully look at animals in a much more humane way and learn not to abuse them," Sue said.

Sue and Bill are able to do all of this with the money that their rescue takes in from puppy adoption fees. Without those fees, they would not be able to fund the care and treatment for their mommy dogs, or the many other expenses they incur.

Since their rescue was formed, the Hollenbachs have seen the adoption of over 4,300 lucky dogs – dogs who likely faced a very different outcome.

"It all started with one litter of puppies," Bill said. "After that it didn't take long for Sue to discover that this was her passion. 12 years later, Sue is Homeward Bound – and I'm happy to help support her dreams." **AOPC**



Judicial Conduct Board Chief Counsel Retires

The Honorable **Robert Graci** is retiring after serving six years as chief counsel to the Judicial Conduct Board (JCB).

Looking back, Graci said he is grateful for his varied career, having earned marvelous opportunities and experiences that he never imagined he would have – like arguing a case in the U.S. Supreme Court, serving the Pennsylvania attorney general and running a department within state government.

Among the many other notable roles he assumed over the last four decades, Graci served as deputy attorney general for almost 18 years before being appointed to the Superior Court in 2002.

After serving on the Superior Court, Graci worked in private practice where he headed the firm’s Appellate Practice Group for a short period before eagerly returning to state government to serve as chief counsel for the JCB.

“I’ve had the privilege of working for a great board and a wonderful staff,” Graci said. “I’ve experienced a lot of interesting things and a lot of difficult things, but all of it was important to the board and to the people of the commonwealth, and I am happy to have been a part of it.”



Honorable Robert Graci

Upon retirement, Graci said he looks forward to spending more time with his wife, children and grandchildren.

While he has no specific plans, Graci said that he likes being a lawyer and expects that he will be engaged with something related to law. [AOPC](#)



Halloween spirit

AOPC/Finance participated in a pumpkin-decorating contest in October and celebrated the Halloween spirit with a staff luncheon. [AOPC](#)

Around the Judiciary



The Butler County Veterans Court graduation, where Justice **Debra Todd** spoke on July 18, 2018. Pictured are: Stephan Todd, Butler County Veterans Court Mentor Coordinator, Justice Debra Todd, Judge **Timothy McCune**, Butler County Veterans Court Judge, and Butler County Judges **Marilyn Horan** and **William Shaffer**.



On Sept. 20, Lancaster County Veterans Court, state and county officials participated in a ribbon cutting ceremony announcing the opening of “Veterans Barracks,” a home that will provide housing to veterans participating in Lancaster County Veterans Treatment Court presided by Judge **Jeffrey Wright** and their dedicated team.



A three-judge panel of the Superior Court participated in a special session in September in Erie County to better acquaint Pennsylvanians with the court appeals process. Approximately 40 arguments were heard during the special session by Judges **Mary Jane Bowes**, **Jacqueline Shogan** and **Victor Stabile**.



In September, Commonwealth Court held a special session at Lehigh University to educate the public about the service of the judiciary. Judge **Robert “Robin” Simpson** chaired the panel and was joined by President Judge **Mary Hannah Leavitt** and Judge **Anne Covey**. Following the special session, court members participated in a Lunch and Learn session with Lehigh University faculty, staff, students and community members.



The portrait unveiling ceremony for the Honorable **Ronald D. Castille** as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania was held on Sept. 25, 2018, in Philadelphia. The portrait is on display in the Philadelphia Supreme Court Chamber and joins other chief justices dating back to 1600s.



Attendees at the Office of General Counsel (OGC) University listened intently during a panel discussion regarding “Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania for Records Filed with Commonwealth Court and Other Pennsylvania Courts.” **Michael F. Krimmel**, chief clerk, Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania and **David Price**, senior counsel – IT, Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, participated in the panel and Jonathan D. Koltash, Senior Counsel, Department of Health, served as moderator. The discussion focused on how the policy is being implemented in courts across the commonwealth and provided insights and updates on the rollout to date.

Around the Judiciary



On Sept. 28, 2018, national and Pennsylvania officials met in Harrisburg for a one-day event: “Veterans Courts in Pennsylvania: Ensuring Success for the Veteran,” hosted by Widener University Commonwealth Law School. AOPC is a co-sponsor of this annual event. AOPC’s **Angela Lowry**, state problem-solving court administrator, and **Andy Simpson**, judicial programs administrator, moderated the panel, “Veterans in the Courts: Alternative Solutions.”



Panelists included (pictured left to right): Judge **Joseph Sklarosky, Jr.**, Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas; **Kelly Cesari**, program coordinator; Judge **Michael Salisbury**, Clinton County Court of Common Pleas; **David Goodwin**, Clinton County program coordinator; Magisterial District Judge **John Fishel**, York County’s veterans diversion program.



Other participants pictured below left to right: **Melissa Fitzgerald**, executive director of Justice for Vets, **Rhonda Campbell**, chief administrative judicial assistant to PA Supreme Court Justice Debra Todd, Justice **James Fitzgerald**, Senior Judge, Superior Court and former PA Supreme Court Justice, Judge **Patrick Dugan**, Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, Judge **Craig Trebilcock**, York Court of Common Pleas, **Angela Lowry**, AOPC and **Andy Simpson** AOPC.



top L to R: Superior Court Judges Mary P. Murray, Maria McLaughlin, Carolyn H. Nichols, Deborah A. Kunselman and President Judge Emeritus Corraele F. Stevens



In October, Superior Court held an educational program for the Scranton and Wilkes-Barre Chambers of Commerce. Superior Court Judges participated in the program to discuss how business-related cases flow through the state court system and how commerce courts in Philadelphia and Allegheny Counties operate.

Around the Judiciary



The annual Mid-Atlantic Association for Court Management conference was hosted in Pennsylvania in October. Supreme Court Justice Debra Todd provided opening remarks to conference attendees. The conference featured discussions on a broad range of issues from managing high-profile trials to creating a better judicial neighborhood.

Pictured are **Don Heagy**, Westmoreland County Minor Courts administration and MAACM president, **Tom Darr** court administrator of Pennsylvania, Justice **Debra Todd** and President Judge **Rita D. Hathaway**.



Chief Justice **Thomas G. Saylor** gave keynote remarks on Oct. 24, 2018, at an event hosted by Duquesne University's School of Law entitled "The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania: Life and Law in the Commonwealth – a Conversation." Members of the Supreme Court also participated in the program with Duquesne University President, Ken Gormley, and School of Law Dean, Maureen Lally-Green, based on a recently published book edited by John Hare – The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania: Life and Law in the Commonwealth, 1694-2017.

top row L to R: Justice David N. Wecht, Justice Christine Donohue, Justice Kevin M. Dougherty and Justice Sallie Updyke Mundy
bottom row L to R: Justice Max Baer, Chief Justice Thomas G. Saylor and Justice Debra Todd

Transitions

(Listings include changes from July 24 to Nov. 2, 2018)

NEW TO THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

- ALICIA E. ACEVEDO** - ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT - JUDICIAL EDUCATION
- AMELIA J. DUFFY** - ACCOUNTANT - FINANCE
- ANDREW J. KOSER** - IT SPECIALIST - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
- DANETTE L. OAKES** - CLERICAL ASSISTANT - JUDICIAL DISTRICT OPERATIONS AND PROGRAMS
- KENDRA L. RILEY** - ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT - FINANCE
- JAMES M. WHARTON** - PJC INFRASTRUCTURE TECHNICIAN - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

RETIREMENTS/RESIGNATIONS

- ANDREW J. COVAL** - COUNSEL - LEGAL
- KATE D. GRENKE** - ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT - JUDICIAL EDUCATION
- JAMES R. HESS JR.** - NETWORK/TELEPHONE SPECIALIST - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
- DAVID H. KERSTETTER** - PJC INFRASTRUCTURE TECHNICIAN - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- FRANCES K. MUZA** - HELP DESK OPERATOR - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
- ELIZABETH N. SMITH** - PAYROLL TECHNICIAN - FINANCE

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- CHRISTOPHER H. CONNORS, ESQ.** - REAPPOINTED - COMMITTEE ON RULES OF EVIDENCE
- WILLIAM M. DAVIS, ESQ.** - REAPPOINTED - COMMITTEE ON RULES OF EVIDENCE
- HONORABLE G. MICHAEL GREEN** - REAPPOINTED - COMMITTEE ON RULES OF EVIDENCE
- FREDERICK N. FRANK, ESQ.** - REAPPOINTED - COMMITTEE ON RULES OF EVIDENCE
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- MDJ JAMES R. EDGCOMB** - APPOINTED - MINOR COURT RULES COMMITTEE
- MDJ DAVID M. HOWELLS, JR.** - CHAIR - MINOR COURT RULES COMMITTEE

- JOHN J. HARE, ESQ.** - REAPPOINTED - CIVIL PROCEDURAL RULES COMMITTEE
- HONORABLE JOY REYNOLDS MCCOY** - REAPPOINTED - JUVENILE COURT PROCEDURAL RULES COMMITTEE
- MDJ DENISE SNYDER THIEL** - CHAIR - MINOR JUDICIARY EDUCATION BOARD
- MDJ KAREN EISNER ZUCKER** - VICE CHAIR - MINOR JUDICIARY EDUCATION BOARD
- NICHOLAS J. WACHINSKI, ESQ.** - APPOINTED - MINOR JUDICIARY EDUCATION BOARD
- CAROLYN S. BENGEL, ESQ.** - APPOINTED - MINOR JUDICIARY EDUCATION BOARD
- CHRISTOPHER M. MILLER, ESQ.** - APPOINTED - DISCIPLINARY BOARD
- MARKITA MORRIS-LOUIS, ESQ.** - APPOINTED - INTEREST ON LAWYERS TRUST ACCOUNTS (IOLTA)
- DANIEL J. ROVNER, ESQ.** - REAPPOINTED - CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION BOARD
- CLIFFORD B. LEVINE, ESQ.** - REAPPOINTED/CHAIR - CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION BOARD
- MAX W. LAUN, ESQ.** - REAPPOINTED - CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION BOARD
- MURREL R. WALTERS, III, ESQ.** - VICE CHAIR - CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION BOARD

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