



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

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Special Master's work completed; Control of juvenile cases returned to Luzerne Court

HARRISBURG – The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania today announced that Senior Judge Arthur E. Grim has completed his service as court-appointed Special Master in charge of reviewing juvenile court adjudications in Luzerne County under former Judge Mark A. Ciavarella. A Supreme Court [Order](#) was issued today returning control of all juvenile court functions to the Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas and is posted on the Pennsylvania Judiciary's website at www.pacourts.us.

Judge Grim was appointed by the Supreme Court in February 2009 to review thousands of juvenile cases appearing before former Judge Ciavarella and in October 2010 was further tasked with administering the statutorily-created juvenile crime victim compensation fund.

As a result of Judge Grim's review, a total of 2,251 juveniles have had their records expunged and \$65,000 in restitution has been provided to 110 victims of juvenile crime. Original reports claimed that upwards of 6,000 juveniles were adjudicated by former Judge Ciavarella but that number was based on speculation, although some of the 2,251 juveniles had multiple cases expunged.

Judge Grim previously filed his [Final Report as Special Master](#) outlining the actions he undertook in his review of every juvenile case handled by former Judge Ciavarella and recommended further action by the three branches of government that would prevent the situation that occurred in Luzerne County from occurring elsewhere in Pennsylvania. Several recommendations involved opening all juvenile court proceedings to the public and strengthening the role of the Juvenile Court Judges Commission and the oversight role of the Department of Public Welfare.

“All Pennsylvanians owe Judge Grim a debt of gratitude for helping coordinate unprecedented cooperation among all three branches of state government in bringing about a fair resolution to a miscarriage of justice that affected so many juveniles, their families and the community at large,” said Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Ronald D. Castille. “I thank him – on behalf of the entire court – for his service, dedication, and professionalism.”

Judge Grim described the situation in Luzerne County under Judges Michael T. Conahan and Mark A. Ciavarella as “a judicial process [that] had run amok and in essence was governed by

the wanton exercise of power, dominated by greed, and with little or no concern for the welfare of juveniles and with little or no adherence to the time-honored precepts of juvenile justice.”

Former Judge Ciavarella has since been convicted of racketeering and income tax evasion and was sentenced to 27 ½ years in federal prison. Former Judge Conahan pled guilty and is serving a 17 ½-year term in federal prison.

In March 2010, Chief Justice Castille issued a [progress report](#) on changes made by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court as a result of recommendations by the Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice. An update on that progress report will be issued in the coming months.

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