

AOPC^{ON}NECTED



Issue 1, 2022

In this issue

Read about appellate court transitions, county court highlights, a department spotlight on AOPC/Finance and more.





Justice P. Kevin Brobson was sworn in by Commonwealth Court President Judge Emerita Mary Hannah Leavitt

Judge P. Kevin Brobson Sworn in as newest Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania officially welcomed Justice **P. Kevin Brobson** as a member of the Court following his swearing-in ceremony in early January.

Surrounded by his wife and children, Brobson took the oath of office administered by Commonwealth Court President Judge Emerita Mary Hannah Leavitt in the Supreme Court Courtroom, Harrisburg.

A resident of Dauphin County, Justice Brobson is the 178th member to serve on the Court and the third Commonwealth Court judge elected to the Supreme Court.

Before his election to the Supreme Court, Brobson served for more than a decade as a judge of the Commonwealth Court, one of Pennsylvania's two intermediate appellate courts. In 2020, his colleagues selected him as president judge. He served in that capacity until his installation on the high court. He also served a four-year appointed term on the Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania, where he served as Board chair in the final year of his term.

In the early years of his career, Brobson clerked for the Honorable James McGirr Kelly of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District. He entered general practice in 1996 with Buchanan Ingersoll PC and from 2016 to 2018 joined Widener University Commonwealth Law School as a Jurist-in-Residence.

Justice Brobson received his bachelor's degree in accounting and economics from Lycoming College in 1992 and his juris doctorate from Widener University School of Law in 1995.



Legislative roundup

by Damian J. Wachter, Esq.

The following enactments and legislative action have occurred since mid-December. Prior to the holiday recess, the legislature passed, and the governor signed an important piece of the judicial budget. On Jan. 10, the legislature convened in voting session to begin the second year of the 2021-22 legislative session and has acted on several bills of interest.

Act 49 Reauthorization

[Act 93 of 2021](#) extended the \$11.25 and \$10 Act 49 surcharges until June 30, 2022. Under statute, revenue from the surcharges funds a significant portion – nearly \$60 million – of the judiciary’s operational budget.

Budget

On Feb. 8, the governor proposed his 2022-23 budget. Overall, the state budget would increase spending by 16.6 percent. For the first time in several years, the proposed budget for the judiciary includes a funding increase of \$35.88 million (10.1 percent), for a total state funding level of \$391.9 million. The governor also proposed that the diversion of \$15 million from the Judicial Computer System Augmentation Account to the School Safety and Security Fund pursuant to Act 42 of 2018 not occur in FY 2022-23. This is just the first step in a long process and the governor’s proposal does not guarantee increased funding will occur. Additionally, the Act 49 surcharges, which as noted above were just reauthorized in December, must again be addressed in the 2022-23 budget.

Constitutional Amendments

Prior Passage – None
Earliest Possible Ballot Appearance: 2023 Municipal Primary

[House Bill 1880](#) amends Art. V, section 15 by adding a subsection to provide for a term limit of two 10-year terms for Supreme Court justices and Superior and Commonwealth Court judges. A jurist who exceeds the term limit at the time of passage would be permitted to complete the current term. The bill was reported from the House Judiciary Committee by a vote 15-8 with all Republicans and one Democrat voting in favor and has since been tabled.

[House Bill 2141](#) amends Art. V, sections 13 and 15 by removing language providing for and referencing retention elections for common pleas, Philadelphia Municipal Court and appellate court jurists, thereby requiring those jurists to seek reelection at the expiration of their term. The legislation was reported from the House Judiciary Committee by a vote of 13-10 with all but one Republican voting in favor and all Democrats opposed. It has since been tabled.

[Senate Bill 956](#) amends Art. I, adding a subsection affirmatively stating that there is no constitutional right to an abortion, public funding of abortion or taxpayer funding of abortion. The bill was reported from the Senate Health and Human Services Committee by a party-line 7-4 vote and is on the Senate floor.

Whistleblower Law

[House Bill 661](#) amends the Whistleblower Act, extending protections to all judicial branch employees by defining

the term *public body* to include the Supreme, Superior and Commonwealth Courts, courts of common pleas, the minor judiciary or other body in the judicial branch of state government. The legislation was reported unanimously from the House Judiciary Committee and has since been tabled.

Firearm Ordinance Preemption

[House Bill 979](#) sought to amend Title 18 to allow an individual adversely affected by a local firearm ordinance to seek declarative and injunctive relief and actual damages in an appropriate court. The bill also would have amended the Municipal Code to affirmatively state:

The General Assembly has always intended and continues to intend to occupy the entire field of regulation of firearms, ammunition, magazines, accessories, firearms components and ammunition components ... including the purchase, sale, transfer, taxation, manufacture, ownership, possession, use, discharge, transportation and reporting of loss or theft of firearms, ammunition, firearms components and ammunition components in this Commonwealth, to the exclusion of any existing or future ordinance, resolution, regulation, rule, practice or other action adopted by a municipality. [A]ny ... ordinance, resolution, regulation, rule, practice, or other action promulgated or enforced by a municipality of firearms, ammunition, firearms components, or ammunition components ... is declared null and void.

The bill passed the House 124-79 and the Senate 32-17. It was vetoed by the governor.

Suspension of Operating Privilege

[House Bill 987](#) requires PennDOT to update driver records to address an active sanction imposed for a conviction of any offense under a federal, state or other state law governing controlled substances, changing the record to indicate the active departmental sanction has ended. Additionally, the legislation repeals the statutory provisions currently imposing a suspension upon receipt of a certified record of conviction, adjudication of delinquency or admission into a preadjudication program for misrepresentation of age to secure liquor or malt or brewed beverages, purchase, consumption, possession or transportation of liquor or malt or brewed beverages and carrying a false ID card. The bill was passed unanimously by the House and the Senate Transportation Committee and is currently pending on the Senate floor.

Determinate Sentence for Title 75 Summary Offenses

[Senate Bill 1031](#) amends Titles 42 and 75, allowing a court to impose a determinate sentence for summary offenses under the Vehicle Code. The legislation also modifies sentences for certain violations under driving while operating privilege is suspended. The bill was reported unanimously from the Senate Transportation Committee and is pending on the Senate floor.



{Damian Wachter, Esq. is the acting director of Legislative Affairs.}

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PENNSYLVANIA’S COURTS, VISIT:



www.pacourts.us



Facebook
[@pennsylvaniacourts](https://www.facebook.com/pennsylvaniacourts)



YouTube
[@PACourts](https://www.youtube.com/PACourts)



Twitter
[@PACourts](https://twitter.com/PACourts)



Instagram
[@pennsylvaniacourts](https://www.instagram.com/pennsylvaniacourts)

First female President Judge in Montgomery County

In November 2021, Montgomery County Judge **Carolyn Tornetta Carluccio** was unanimously elected by her colleagues to become the first woman president judge in county history.

“It is my honor and privilege to serve the citizens of Montgomery County in this role,” Carluccio said. “In the aftermath of the last several years, I seek to treat the challenges of the next five years as an opportunity to recreate, revitalize and redefine rather than merely repair. Together we will safely keep the courts open, administering justice fairly and efficiently.”

Carluccio was first elected to the bench in 2009 and won retention in 2019. Throughout her service to the courts, she has sat on the criminal, civil, juvenile and family court benches.

Succeeding President Judge **Thomas M. DelRicci Jr.**, her five-year term as president judge began in January.

Prior to joining the bench, Carluccio made history in 2002 when she became the county’s first female chief public defender – a role she served in until 2006.

Carluccio began her legal career as a federal prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Delaware, where she served from 1989-1997. Carluccio maintained a private practice for several years while serving as

Montgomery County’s chief deputy solicitor and director of the Human Resources department.

Carluccio is a past president of the Montgomery Bar Association and has served on more than 15 association committees.

Additionally, she is in line to be the president of the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges in July of 2023.



Montgomery County President Judge Carolyn Carluccio

AOPC welcomes new IT assistant director



AOPC/IT assistant director Wendy Hosch

In early January, **Wendy Hosch** became assistant director of AOPC/Information Technology – a position that has been vacant since **Russel Montchal** assumed the role of director in June.

“We are excited that Wendy has joined our department as the assistant director. She will add a fresh perspective to implementing and managing AOPC/IT projects and initiatives with her previous court and private sector experience,” Montchal said.

Prior to joining the AOPC, Wendy served as the deputy chief information officer for the First Judicial District in Philadelphia.

She has also worked in various leadership roles at the Administrative Office of the Courts for Georgia as well as the Albuquerque, New Mexico Metropolitan Court.

In addition, she spent a number of years working for Journal Technologies – one of the top five case management vendors in the country.

Welcome Wendy!



Swearing-in ceremony of Commonwealth Court President Judge Renée Cohn Jubelirer

Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court Elects Judge Renée Cohn Jubelirer as President Judge

The Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania announced the election of Judge **Renée Cohn Jubelirer** as its next president judge on Jan. 7.

Cohn Jubelirer has served on the Court for more than two decades and succeeds President Judge **P. Kevin Brobson**, who was recently sworn-in as a member of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

During her five-year term as president judge, Judge Cohn Jubelirer will oversee administrative matters of the court – including budgeting, oversight of administrative offices, scheduling, special sessions, education and bench-bar interaction.

“I am honored to have the trust and confidence placed in me by my colleagues and look forward to continued service alongside such a wonderful group of jurists and all of the capable staff who see to the seamless operation of the Court,” Judge Cohn Jubelirer said.

“It is humbling to join such a distinguished list of those who have served before me as president judge of this Court and I look forward to seeking out their wise counsel as we continue to move the court forward, particularly through the ongoing global pandemic.”

Judge Cohn Jubelirer was elected to the Commonwealth Court in 2001 and was retained for a second, ten-year term in November 2011 and a third term in 2021.

She earned a bachelor’s degree from the Pennsylvania State University in 1978, a juris doctor, cum laude, from

Northwestern University School of Law in 1983, where she served as the editor of the Law Review, and her Master of Laws from Duke University School of Law in 2014.

Prior to her service on the bench, Judge Cohn Jubelirer was a teaching fellow at Stanford Law School and an assistant professor at DePaul College of Law, while maintaining a private law practice, before serving in the Lehigh County Solicitor’s Office as Deputy and then Assistant Solicitor.

Following her time in the county solicitor’s office, she worked as counsel for ATX Telecommunications Services. She also served as a South Whitehall Township commissioner, Lehigh County.

Since taking the bench, Judge Cohn Jubelirer has served as Vice Chair of the Judicial Conduct Board, co-chair of the Supreme Court’s Commission on Judicial Independence, on the Continuing Judicial Education Board of Judges, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Appellate Procedural Rules Committee, and the Judicial Advisory Board for the George Mason University School of Law, Law & Economics Center.

She is a member of the James S. Bowman American Inns of Court, Master Emeritus, as well as the American, Pennsylvania, Lehigh and Centre County Bar Associations.



Judge Beth Lazzara stands with the treatment court graduates at the ceremony on Dec. 20.

Allegheny County Mental Health Court Celebrates 20th Anniversary

In a ceremony on Dec. 20, 12 participants graduated from Allegheny County's Mental Health Court – a special occasion marking its 20th anniversary.

Allegheny County Common Pleas Judge **Beth Lazzara** has presided over the program for the last 10 years.

The county's Mental Health Court was created in 2001 and has been overseen by four different judges. Overall, the program's successful graduation rate since 2008 has been around 75 percent.

To qualify for the program, a participant must have a persistent, serious mental illness, and be charged with a nonviolent felony, or misdemeanor crime.

The program is designed to divert participants from jail into community-based services that help them to maintain treatment, housing and support.

Judge Lazzara is currently working to develop another part of the program that would allow for charges to be reduced or ultimately withdrawn upon successful completion.

Statewide, there are currently 26 mental health courts.

Lancaster County court begins consumer debt resolution program

Lancaster County Court recently began a new program to resolve credit card debt cases with the goal of bringing debtors and creditors together to work out their problems, while reducing the burden on the court system.

Above state averages, credit card cases accounted for nearly 16 percent of all civil cases in Lancaster County.

Through this new program, all cases that would have traditionally involved litigation will instead go into an alternative resolution program that is designed to help consumers resolve their credit card debt and ultimately get on better financial footing.

The program works similarly to the county's mortgage foreclosure diversion program that started

back in August where parties will be automatically enrolled into the program once a court action is filed.

As part of the program, debtors must undergo financial counseling while a case management order will set the groundwork for parties to share information and schedule a conciliation conference.



(l to r) Elizabeth Henry, Gary Heffner, Sharon Downer, Kristi Dodge, Megan Gibson, Christy Newton, Casey Scarborough, Victoria Christen, Michelle Speicher, Nicole Mirra, Kacey Baumgardner, Ryan Bonafair, Amanda Kreuter

DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT: AOPC Finance

The AOPC Finance Department provides critical management of budget, accounting and payroll systems for the entire Unified Judicial System (UJS).

Following the retirement of Mary Gillette at the end of December, former

AOPC/Finance Assistant Director **Casey Scarborough** assumed the role of acting director.

Serving as the primary resource for the organization on all financial-related matters, the department develops and recommends policies and

procedures on accounting, budget and procurement issues and trains staff at all levels in their use.

Each year, the finance team monitors and prepares the budget for nearly 40 UJS line items for appropriations – including the administrative office, appellate courts, various Supreme Court advisory committees, juror cost reimbursements and county court grants. The

department manages \$475 million in annual appropriations, including \$27.1 million in grants paid to counties.

Committed to providing public access to court financial information, they also manage and respond to public requests for financial and personnel information, including expenditure and salary information made available on the judiciary's website.



William Penn School District superintendent Dr. Eric Becoats (l) and Judge Keith Williams (r)

A judge on a mission

Following a growing number of fights in the beginning of the school year, the William Penn School District developed a new program – “Men on a Mission” – to bring volunteers from the community into the high school to greet students and offer support to encourage a more focused learning environment.

The program started in December following a period of training and approval of security clearances. Community leaders lend support and guidance to the younger generation and give them some good advice that they can use in their personal and professional lives.

One of the community leaders who answered the call to help create a better environment for students at Penn Wood High School was Delaware County Magisterial District Judge **Keith Williams II**.

“We all must do our part to inspire and to ensure a good future for of our children. It is important for young adults to see and to hear success stories,” said Judge Williams.

“As a graduate of Penn Wood High School, Class of 1983, I’m able to relate to the students. I share with them my experiences and what steps I took to become an attorney and district judge, with the hope of inspiring them.”

The superintendent said that the program is starting slowly with two shifts every day – in the stairs and hallways at the start of school and dismissal.

Editors

Stacey Witalec
Kim Bathgate

Writer

Casey Scheffler

Contributors

Patti Campbell
Rhonda Hocker
Stephen Baldwin

Graphic Design

Gretchen Smith

Photography

Kyle Kauffman

Court Administrator of PA

Geoff Moulton

Deputy Court Administrator of PA

Andrea B. Tuominen

All content is collected, written and edited by the AOPC Communications Office unless noted.

You may reach the office by calling: (717) 231-3300

or by emailing:

CommunicationsOffice@pacourts.us

For more information about Pennsylvania’s courts, visit: www.pacourts.us

 Twitter @PACourts

 Facebook @pennsylvaniaicourts

 YouTube @PACourts

 Instagram @pennsylvaniaicourts

Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

Max Baer

Chief Justice of Pennsylvania

Debra Todd

Justice

Christine Donohue

Justice

Kevin M. Dougherty

Justice

David N. Wecht

Justice

Sallie Updyke Mundy

Justice

P. Kevin Brobson

Justice



AOPC/Judicial Operations holds regional trainings for DCAs and ADA coordinators

AOPC/Judicial District Operations recently conducted in-person regional trainings for district and deputy court administrators, ADA coordinators and others on three important topics: Investigations, Performance Evaluations Overview, and Mental Health and ADA Accommodations.

The trainings were offered on three different dates at the end of November and beginning of December at three locations around the state – Pittsburgh, State College and Allentown.

Led by AOPC is Assistant Chief Counsel of Litigation **Geri St. Joseph** and Legal Counsel **Robert Krandel**, the first part of the training explored the investigation process, best practices for conducting an investigation and how to document the investigation properly.

AOPC/Human Resources Analyst **Leah Somers** and Director of Judicial District Operations **Joe Mittleman** presented the second portion of the training that focused on a review of the new automated evaluation system and went over the Do's and Don'ts when writing an effective performance evaluation.

During the final session, AOPC Court Access Coordinator **Mary Vilter** and mental health advocate and professor Samantha Osterlof discussed how mental disorders and illnesses can affect people when they interact with the courts and how ADA Coordinators can accommodate people with mental health disabilities.

The trainings were very well attended with over 175 participants taking part over the course of the three days.

Celebrating Black History Month

In recognition of Black History Month, February provides us with an annual opportunity to reflect on how diversity on the bench inspires courts and the communities they serve. AOPC interviewed several judges to learn how their own history and experiences have shaped them – both as individuals and as judges. Some of their answers are highlighted below.

Q: How has adversity helped to shape you as a judge?

We hope and pray for peace, love and happiness. Adversity is guaranteed. However, difficult times shape us and give us direction. Adversity can lead to progress. We are truly defined by how we handle adversity. As a judge, it is important to acknowledge that difficult circumstances don't define an individual's entire existence.



Judge Sierra Thomas Street
Philadelphia County Common Pleas Court

Q: What value does a diverse judiciary bring to the communities it serves?

Having a diverse judiciary allows the communities it serves the perception and hopefully reality that when they seek access to the courts, they will have a judge who understands their beliefs, struggles, plight, way of thinking, upbringing and hope that is so important. A diverse bench is fruitful not only to the community, but fruitful to the bench too, as it allows a sensitivity level that otherwise is lost, or unknown, resulting in better justice.



Judge Garrett Page
Montgomery County Common Pleas Court

Q: Were there any defining moments in your life that inspired you to become a jurist?

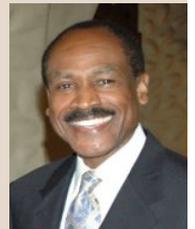
Yes, I was fortunate enough to have been mentored early in my legal career by two giants of the Pennsylvania legal profession – Chief Justice Robert N.C. Nix, Jr. and Common Pleas Court Judge Lawrence Prattis. As a result of my exposure to them I decided in 1983, just two years after graduating law school, that I wanted to become a judge.



Judge Charles Hayden
Philadelphia County Municipal Court

Q: Growing up, did your family impart any lessons/advice that you still carry with you today?

My parents stressed the importance of education as essential to opening the doors to opportunity in life. They taught me to be a leader not a follower, to be principled and considerate of others.



Judge George Overton
Philadelphia County Common Pleas Court

Q: Were there any defining moments in your life that inspired you to become a jurist?

My first job after my first year of law school was with The Honorable Justin M. Johnson, a distinguished African-American jurist who came from a family of trail blazers. His chambers were run like a well-oiled machine and set the standard for judicial excellence. My first job after law school was serving as the law clerk to Clarion County President Judge Charles Alexander. Judge Alexander was a wonderful mentor and set the standard for what a Court of Common Pleas Judge should be. Additionally, at a pivotal time in my early career, I was the law clerk to Butler County President Judge Thomas Doerr. Having the opportunity to work closely with these judges helped me to see this as a possibility for myself.



Judge Nicola Henry-Taylor
Allegheny County Common Pleas Court

Q: What value does a diverse judiciary bring to the communities it serves?

The community at large looks to the judiciary to resolve legal issues which are presented in court be they civil, criminal or family law based. The real advantage of having a diverse judiciary is that the judges of different backgrounds have the opportunity to talk and share ideas about solutions to common problems which may present themselves in diverse parts of the community. The interaction between the judges may result in a new or different perspective and may raise awareness of bias which was unknown.



Judge Lillian Ransom
Philadelphia County Common Pleas Court

Q: How has adversity helped to shape you as a judge?

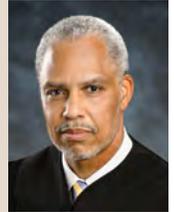
Every trial and tribulation has made me stronger, bolder, wiser and more courageous. I have been blessed in my life but the adversity and resulting brokenness have forced me to appreciate the simple things in life and to look at the glass as half full as opposed to half empty. My own unpleasant experiences keep me grounded and humble so that I can never forget that although I have been charged with this duty of “judge”, my view is not so high that I cannot see below me. I am so grateful to be able to serve others from this position. I truly believe that the totality of my life experiences, both good and bad, informs the fullness of every judicial decision that I make.



Judge Lori Dumas
Commonwealth Court

Q: If you could go back in time and have dinner with any person from history, who would it be and what would you ask/tell them?

There are so many that I would prefer a dinner party and invite, Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, President Abraham Lincoln, W.E.B. DuBois, Paul Robeson, Honorable Thurgood Marshall, Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Jr., and Malcolm X. I would thank them all for being relentless in their efforts to advocate for and ensure the human rights of African slaves and their African American descendants. Then I would listen to what they would offer.



Judge Steven Tolliver
Montgomery County Common Pleas Court

To read more Q&A responses and to stay up-to-date on court news and activities, follow PA Courts on social media.



Facebook
[@pennsylvaniacourts](https://www.facebook.com/pennsylvaniacourts)



Twitter
[@PACourts](https://twitter.com/PACourts)

New court data now available

Over the last several months, the [interactive data dashboards](#) were updated to reflect verified 2020 statewide caseload statistics. For anyone interested in a quick look at statewide or county court data, these dashboards can be a helpful tool.

Also released this past month was the 2020 Annual Report, providing an

organizational overview of the AOPC and statewide court programs, data and operations.

With the recent release of 2020 court data, AOPC/Communications is now in the process of completing the 2021 Annual Report, which is targeted to be released next fall.

WHO WE ARE
By the numbers

 <p>Pennsylvania's problem-solving courts had a 69% combined successful graduation rate.</p>	 <p>Pennsylvania courts collected over \$156 million in fees, fines, costs and restitution.</p>	 <p>31% of Pennsylvania's active judges were women.</p>
 <p>1,580,188 million new cases were filed in magisterial district courts.</p>	 <p>34,678 protection from abuse (PFA) orders were filed.</p>	 <p>75% of children who were under court supervision and left the system were reunited with family or relatives.</p>
 <p>100 million docket sheets were viewed for free on our website.</p>	 <p>14,460 total dispositions representing 12,756 juveniles were processed through juvenile courts.</p>	 <p>92,101 people reported for jury duty.</p>
 <p>Facilitated 32,398 requests for interpreters.</p>	 <p>More than 10,000 followers on Twitter @PACourts.</p>	 <p>Trial and appellate judges completed more than 34,000 hours of continuing education.</p>

Page from the 2020 AOPC Annual Report

Data Dashboards

Caseload Statistics

Data dashboards, also known as data visualizations, identify court trends and can serve as a valuable resource. These dashboards offer the chance to compare, analyze and download court data - from court caseload statistics to protection from abuse, juvenile delinquency, problem-solving courts and financial data.

 <p>CIVIL CASELOAD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caseload data by type of case (e.g. contracts, property, tort, civil appeals, etc.) Medical malpractice Mortgage foreclosure Statewide and county-level comparisons 	 <p>CRIMINAL CASELOAD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caseload data by type of crime (e.g. person, property, drugs, weapons, DUI, motor vehicle, etc.) Statewide and county-level comparisons
 <p>CIVIL INVENTORY PROJECT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An ongoing, statewide civil case management initiative Tracks the size and age of each county's civil inventory over time Classifies each county's type of civil case management system 	 <p>MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT CASELOAD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cases by docket type (e.g. civil, criminal, landlord/tenant, non-traffic, private criminal, private summary, traffic) Statewide and county-level comparisons
 <p>CHILD DEPENDENCY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children under court supervision Demographics of children (age, gender, race) Placement of child (e.g. foster care, kinship care, etc.) Statewide and county-level comparisons 	 <p>ORPHANS COURT CASELOAD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounts Adoptions Relinquishments/Terminations Appointment of guardians Statewide and county-level comparisons
 <p>PROTECTION FROM ABUSE CASELOAD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection from abuse orders Statewide and county-level comparisons 	 <p>CUSTODY AND DIVORCE CASELOAD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child custody cases Divorce cases Statewide and county-level comparisons
 <p>PATERNITY AND SUPPORT CASELOAD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paternity cases Spousal and child support Statewide and county-level comparisons 	 <p>JUVENILE DELINQUENCY CASELOAD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hearing dispositions Formal and informal dispositions Filing procedures Statewide and county-level comparisons
 <p>PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult drug courts DUI courts Mental health courts Veterans courts Statewide and county-level comparisons 	 <p>FINANCIAL DATA STATISTICS</p>
 <p>MONEY COLLECTED FOR FEES, FINES, COSTS AND RESTITUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Magisterial District Courts Common Pleas Courts Where does the money go? Statewide and county-level comparisons 	 <p>COLLECTION RATES OVER TIME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Magisterial District Courts Common Pleas Courts How quickly is money paid? Statewide and county-level comparisons

UJS data dashboards



Valentine's Day Weddings in Berks County District Court

To celebrate Valentine's Day, Berks County Magisterial District Judge **Eric J. Taylor** was scheduling only weddings. Judge Taylor, the District Judge for District Court 23-2-02 serving West Reading and Wyomissing, performed eight wedding ceremonies.

The first wedding was at 10:30 AM and the last was at 3:45 PM. Some of the wedding ceremonies were done in Spanish, as Judge Taylor is not conversationally fluent in Spanish but he can passably read Spanish wedding scripts.

"Since often times people are in court under negative circumstances, I really enjoy the opportunity to be a part of happy moments like these," Judge Taylor said.

To make the weddings extra special, Judge Taylor and his staff decorated the courtroom and had flowers and balloons, and each couple received pretzels that looked like brides and grooms.

Hudock says goodbye at Union-Snyder Treatment Court ceremony

By Eric Scicchitano | Reprinted with permission from the Daily Item

Eleven participants of the Union-Snyder County Treatment Courts graduated on Dec. 15 during the final ceremony retiring President Judge **Michael Hudock** presided over.

Graduates and participants, their supporters and loved ones plus Treatment Court staffers crowded the courtroom at the Union County Courthouse for the 35th Commencement Ceremony.

Hudock spoke of his exit, giving thanks and respect to all he worked with, but not before focusing on the graduates. The judge compared Treatment Court participants' experiences with "The Wizard of Oz," saying that in their search for heart, brain and courage, they discovered they didn't have to look beyond themselves.

The graduates, and those before them, had the courage to be brutally honest with themselves; had the heart to mend damaged relationships and create new ones; had the mind to make difficult decisions daily. There have been 258 graduates since the program's start.

"You always had it. It was always there," Hudock said.

The Treatment Court program opened in 2008. It's designed as a last chance for repeat offenders to avoid a state prison term. The goal is to thwart recidivism and instill a sober lifestyle through intensive supervision and access to treatment and other social services.

The Union-Snyder program achieved national prominence within the treatment court community, being designated in 2017 as a mentor court by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and the U.S.



President Judge Michael T. Hudock congratulates treatment court graduates on what was his last day of presiding over the court program.



Department of Justice. Its role as a mentor court extends through at least 2023.

During the recent ceremony, a participant approached the podium and took in the setting before speaking. He said he never thought he'd be standing there,

having successfully completed the program. Like all who would follow him, he thanked the probation officers, judges and related personnel who make up the Treatment Court team.

“I got some time in jail to think about why I wanted sobriety,” Sharp said, explaining he finally put himself ahead of other motivations to maintain recovery. “I never had support like this.”

Another participant credited the court program with saving her life. She said she maintained sobriety for 10 years. Then, in 2017, she said she relapsed.

“You put me in jail and you saved my life,” Fleming told District Judge **Lori Hackenberg**, who will succeed Hudock on the county court bench. “Thank God. If I left I don’t think I’d be here today.”

Robert Walter said he’d never been to rehab. He’d been to jail, though, and said he’d only learned how to cook crack cocaine and make jailhouse liquor. Treatment Court changed him. He said he met good people, found friends and role models and built and developed trust in people.

Recovery doesn’t end with a graduation ceremony. Walter said it continues indefinitely.

“My recovery is not over. It’s never going to be over. It’s something I’ll have to work on every day,” Walter said.

Guest speaker Jennifer Zampogna shared in that sentiment. A former dermatologist, Zampogna saw her professional career and personal life collapse when she became addicted to pain medication. She was prosecuted by the Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Office for writing faulty prescriptions for herself. She lost her medical license and her practice.

And, she’s built back. She’s a recovery advocate, speaking at engagements like the graduation ceremony statewide. She serves as director of operations at Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers, a nonprofit aiding attorneys, judges and their relatives in need of peer support and treatment referrals for mental health and substance use issues. She’s also a member of the Pennsylvania Advisory Council on Drug and Alcohol Abuse.

Recovery began one step at a time, minute by minute, she said. She encouraged graduates and current participants to consider becoming involved in community service that interests them.

“You have this privilege to be able to do this. Take that opportunity and run with it,” Zampogna said before emphasizing the commitment needed to maintain recovery. “I’m either one step closer to enhancing my recovery or I’m one step closer to relapse.”

Hudock closed the ceremony and reflected on his career. He expressed gratitude to all of the graduates, thanking them for teaching him about resilience, redemption and overcoming challenges. He thanked Treatment Court staff — including coordinator Steve Diehl, public defender Brian Ulmer and Hackenberg, among them — and his own court staff, as well as his wife. At times, he became emotional as he spoke.

The ceremony closed with a slideshow of moments from past ceremonies and photos showing Hudock celebrating with graduates in the courtroom.



Mary Vilter (l) and her student, Vera (r)

AOPC Language Access Coordinator Tutors New U.S. Citizen

As Coordinator for Court Access for the AOPC, **Mary Vilter** spends a lot of time on language access issues – and that carries over to her life beyond the office.

For the past 15 months, Mary has tutored an adult English language learner (twice a week) through the Volunteer English Program in Chester County.

The pair spent about six months of that time preparing Mary’s student, Vera, for her citizenship interview with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

“It’s certainly been interesting to do the entire tutoring experience remotely, screen-sharing all sorts of online ESL resources like videos, articles, new learner dictionaries etc.,” Vilter said.

Despite the circumstances that were made more difficult due to the pandemic, Vera passed her citizenship test with flying colors and was sworn in as an official U.S. citizen in September.

“I cannot express how proud I am of Vera, nor how fortunate our country is to have her as a new citizen,” she said.

Restoring dignity to human trafficking victims and survivors

Written by Amy Kehner, AOPC Judicial Programs administrator and Jamie Pizzi, Esq., STOP grant consultant

The pervasive, worldwide issue of human trafficking is of great concern to judicial, legislative, and executive officials throughout Pennsylvania.

Traffickers are predators who use a wide range of tactics, such as coercion and deception, to exploit vulnerable people – including children – to gain illicit profits. Tragically, victims may be required to perform sexual acts or participate in forced labor. The mental and emotional fallout from the mistreatment is especially severe in children.

Unlike most crimes with distinct victims and perpetrators, people exploited by traffickers are likely to commit crimes of their own due to their victimization. For example, sex-trafficking victims are frequently arrested and charged with prostitution, and labor-trafficking victims often lack proper visas and are sent into removal proceedings. Indeed, what can appear as routine interactions with the legal system may be evidence of trafficking victimization.

Because intimidation, language barriers, and socioeconomic vulnerabilities can impede cooperation with law enforcement, court-case statistics offer only a limited perspective about the scale of the criminal activity involved. These sorts of factors also complicate prosecutions even when victims recognize their exploiters as criminals and are willing and able to come forward. Consistent with these concerns, since Pennsylvania enacted its current anti-trafficking law in 2014, of the 222 human trafficking cases filed only 125 of the 831 trafficking related charges resulted in a conviction.

To combat a crime as insidious as human trafficking, it is important to recognize victims as victims, even when they have become ensnared in the criminal justice system. Key remedial measures include collaboration among state and local partners, increased awareness through education, and utilization of tools provided by law to meet the needs of the survivors served by the justice system.

The Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) provides training and resources to judges and court-related staff through a federal STOP (Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors) Violence Against Women grant. Programming focuses on strengthening the court's ability to identify and respond to victims of human trafficking by providing law updates and best practices to improve outcomes and minimize trauma. AOPC recently developed a [virtual tool](#) that includes information about identifying human trafficking with links to resources to help readers understand this highly complex and nuanced crime.



Pennsylvania has several human trafficking laws that provide tools for the court to assist victims and survivors. The [Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children](#) law forbids minors from being charged with prostitution and dictates that sexually exploited children be provided with services, rather than placed in delinquency proceedings. The vacatur provision of the [Commonwealth's anti-trafficking law](#) creates a mechanism for trafficking survivors to vacate certain trafficking-related convictions.

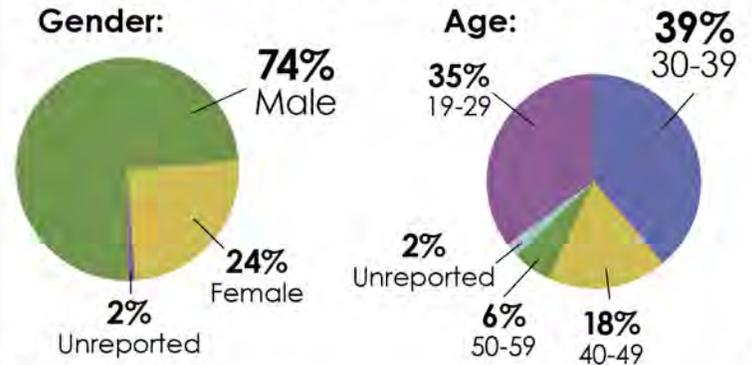
Senator Katie Muth recently introduced SB 1009 – [“Expanding Post-Conviction Relief for Victims of Human Trafficking”](#) – to expand the current vacatur provisions by adding two new eligible offenses and providing the court with exclusive authority to decide whether a conviction was trafficking-related. For survivors with a criminal record, vacatur may present an opportunity to remove barriers to gainful employment, housing, education, financial assistance and other critical resources that reduce the likelihood of revictimization. The remedy also provides a chance for survivors whose victimization predates human trafficking laws to remove a painful reminder of the past.

As reflected above, although human trafficking often occurs in the open, it remains difficult to redress. Being proactive in confronting systemic hurdles and utilizing tools like vacatur offers survivors the opportunity to recover. Building on the existing resources, and with a commitment to create other effective tools, the judiciary can be an agent of change in restoring dignity to human trafficking victims and survivors in Pennsylvania.

Cracking down on Human Trafficking in Pennsylvania

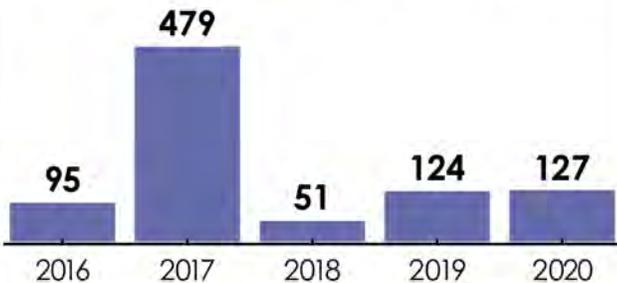
Human trafficking is a type of human rights abuse where people profit from the exploitation of others – mainly through the use of **force, fraud or coercion** to manipulate victims into engaging in sex acts or labor/services in exchange for something of value. Those under age 18 who exchange sex for something of value are human-trafficking victims, regardless of whether force, fraud, or coercion is involved.

Demographics of defendants convicted:

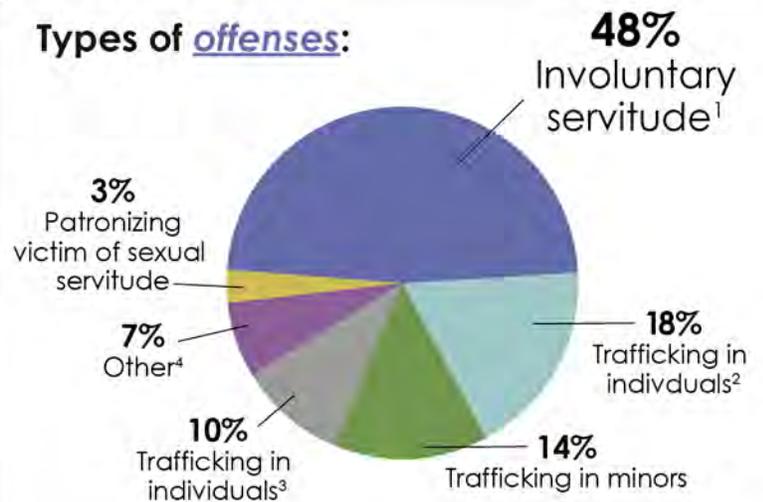


222 human-trafficking **cases** were filed over the past five years.

876 total human-trafficking **offenses** were filed:



Types of **offenses**:



¹ duress through force, debt coercion, physical restraint, etc.

² recruits/entices/solicits

³ benefits financially

⁴ obstruction of justice, unlawful conduct, nonpayment of wages etc.

Victims of human trafficking may:

1. Not have access to their own **travel or ID documents**
2. Not be in control of their own **financial records, money or bank account**
3. Have very few **personal possessions**
4. Work excessively **long/unusual hours** with little or no pay
5. Not able to clarify **their address/living situation**

Counties with highest number of human-trafficking **offenses** filed:



JURY SIZE: DOES IT MATTER?

Reprinted with permission from the National Center for State Courts newsletter – @ the Center.



Do smaller juries allow for more unanimous verdicts? Are they representative of their communities? Are they more cost effective?

These and other questions are posed in a recently released report by NCSC researcher Erica Boyce called *Time to Reflect: Has the research changed regarding the importance of jury size?*

The pandemic has made it more difficult to empanel juries, and the American Board of Trial Advocates asked NCSC's Center for Jury Studies to review the empirical research conducted on jury size during the past 20 years. Boyce said recent research tended to mirror previous findings and did not always help answer whether 12-member juries are better or worse than smaller juries.

The 12-person jury, which the American Bar Association supports, is used by 33 states for civil jury trials, 34 for misdemeanor trials and 45 for non-capital felony trials. Other states use six-, seven- or eight-member juries for those trials.

Boyce said the most recent research continues to highlight the complexity of the issue, and her report presents that complexity in these findings:

- Some research says reducing jury sizes saves money for courts and for litigants with lawyers, but other research says the savings are minimal.
- Jury service is sacrificial, forcing jurors to lose wages and time from family, so smaller juries mean fewer people have to make those sacrifices. But other research says people who serve on juries develop a greater appreciation for the justice system, so smaller juries mean fewer people will experience that appreciation.
- It's easier to reach consensus in smaller juries, some research shows, but they're less likely to include diverse viewpoints, and larger, 12-person juries often possess a better collective memory when they adjourn to review testimony and evidence.
- Smaller juries are often less diverse and less likely to accurately represent their communities.

Boyce concluded that future research should rely on court and juror data as well as predictive models.

"Since pros and cons are associated with 12-person juries as well as smaller ones," she said, "I would encourage states to weigh all of the research before they make decisions about what size jury works best for them."

Please join the AOPC in welcoming the newest members of the Pennsylvania Judiciary.

New to the bench

Denise Ashe – MDJ – Montgomery
Wendi Barish – CP Judge – Philadelphia
Kay Bates – MDJ – Wayne
Clark Bearinger – MDJ – Lancaster
Andrew Bender – CP Judge – Juniata/Perry
Tina Boyd – CP Judge – Berks
John Bruner – MDJ – Washington
Priscilla Campos – MDJ – Berks
Stephen Corr – CP Judge – Bucks
Jason Cox – MDJ – Fayette
Michael Culp – MDJ – Delaware
Robert Dappenbrook – MDJ – Beaver
George Dawson – MDJ – Delaware
Christian DiCicco – Judge – Philadelphia Municipal Court
Kevin Diehl – MDJ – Bedford
Denise Dieter – MDJ – Lycoming
Jonathan Dunsinger – MDJ – Wayne
Jeffrey Engle – CP Judge – Dauphin
Scott Fanchalsky – MDJ – Westmoreland
Ann Feldman – MDJ – Chester
Aurelis Figueroa – MDJ – Lebanon
Kevin Flaherty – MDJ – Butler
Gina Force – CP Judge – Indiana
Daniel Freedman – MDJ – Cumberland
Paul Gasper – MDJ – Monroe
James Gavin – CP Judge – Berks
Monica Gibbs – CP Judge – Philadelphia
Richard Gibney – MDJ – Juniata/Perry
Joe Gothie – CP Judge – York
Jeffry Grimes – CP Judge – Greene
Christopher Hall – CP Judge – Philadelphia
Kelly Hammers – MDJ – Westmoreland
Michele Hangley – CP Judge – Philadelphia
Tom Harteis – MDJ – York
Nicola Henry-Taylor – CP Judge – Allegheny
Christopher Hobbs – CP Judge – Schuylkill

Lauren Holt – MDJ – Chester
Terrence Hughes Sr. – MDJ – Bucks
Susan Hutnik – MDJ – Northampton
Nick Kamau – CP Judge – Philadelphia
Jordan Knisley – MDJ – Northampton
Dale Klein – MDJ – Dauphin
Gregory Koehle – MDJ – Centre
Sabrina Korbel – CP Judge – Allegheny
Patrick Krouse – MDJ – Montgomery
Joseph Kubit – CP Judge – Butler
Michael Lambert – Judge – Philadelphia Municipal Court
Craig Levin – CP Judge – Philadelphia
Marc Lieberman – MDJ – Chester
Leanne Litwin – CP Judge – Philadelphia
Jodi Lukens Griffis – MDJ – Montgomery
Tamara Mahady – MDJ – Westmoreland
Elysia Mancini Duerr – MDJ – Delaware
Amy Marcinkiewicz – MDJ – Butler
Nicholas Martini – MDJ – Allegheny
Travis Martwinski – MDJ – Mercer
Francis McCloskey – Judge – Philadelphia Municipal Court
Sandra McClure – MDJ – Northampton
Louis McQuillan – MDJ – Washington
Matthew Meagher – CP Judge – Wayne
David Meholick – MDJ – Clearfield
Lisa Middleman – CP Judge – Allegheny
Atinuke Moss – CP Judge – Delaware
JoAnne Murphy – CP Judge – Lancaster
Joseph Nash – MDJ – Butler
Xander Orenstein – MDJ – Allegheny
Andrea Phillips – CP Judge – Montgomery
Alita Rovito – CP Judge – Chester
Matthew Rudzki – MDJ – Allegheny
John Sabatina – CP Judge – Philadelphia
Stefanie Salavantis – CP Judge – Luzerne

Felicia Santillan – MDJ – Beaver
Francis Schultz – CP Judge – Crawford
Stacy Seaman-Wertman – MDJ – Bucks
Michelle Sibert – CP Judge – Cumberland
Natacha Simmons – MDJ – Chester
Tiffany Sizemore – CP Judge – Allegheny
Mackenzie Smith – MDJ – Chester
Christopher Snyder – MDJ – Adams
Adam Stallard – MDJ – Crawford
Steve Stambaugh – CP Judge – York
Kelly Stewart – MDJ – Washington
Douglas Straub – MDJ – Mercer
Megan Sullivan – Superior Court
Edward Tarantelli – MDJ – Schuylkill
Tarah Toohil – CP Judge – Luzerne
Rebecca Tyburski – MDJ – Westmoreland
Marian Urrutia – MDJ – Dauphin
Linda Vega Sirop – MDJ – Lehigh
Anthony Verwey – CP Judge – Chester
Chelsa Wagner – CP Judge – Allegheny
Betsy Wahl – CP Judge – Philadelphia
Stacy Wallace – Commonwealth Court
Mary Walsh Dempsey – CP Judge – Lackawanna
David Washabaugh – MDJ – Franklin/Fulton
Wrenna Watson – CP Judge – Allegheny
Hilary Wheatley Taylor – MDJ – Allegheny
Leah Williams Duncan – MDJ – Allegheny
Edward Wilson – MDJ – Erie
Johosha Wright – MDJ – Allegheny
Gregory Yorgey-Girdy – Judge – Philadelphia Municipal Court
Amy Zanelli – MDJ – Lehigh

Judicial changes

Kevin Brobson – Justice – Supreme Court
Lori Dumas – Judge – Commonwealth Court
Lori Hackenberg – CP Judge – Snyder/Union
Deborah Krull – CP Judge – Delaware
D. Neil McEwen – CP Judge – Mercer
Jesse Pettit – CP Judge – Washington
George Twardy – Judge – Philadelphia Municipal Court



SPEAKERS:



Hon. Sallie Updyke Mundy
Justice, Pennsylvania Supreme Court



Hon. Susan Peikes Gantman
President Judge Emeritus, Superior Court of PA (retired)



Hon. Kim Berkeley Clark
President Judge, Allegheny Court of Common Pleas



Hon. Cheryl L. Austin
Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas (retired)



Aurora Austriaco, Esq.
Valentine Austriaco & Buesche; Past President, National Conference of Bar Presidents; Past President, Chicago Bar Association



Jeralyn Lawrence, Esq.
Lawrence Law, President-elect, New Jersey State Bar Association; President, NJ Chapter AAML

PBA Commission on Women in the Profession and Minority Bar Committee

present

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY PROGRAM

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Q & A and networking will follow presentations.

Join President Kathleen D. Wilkinson for this unique program to celebrate International Women's Day, a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. To celebrate this important day in 2022, hear from a diverse panel of trailblazing women lawyers and judges from within Pennsylvania and beyond who have each paved the way for so many others on their road to the pinnacle of success in their respective spheres.

There is no charge for this program, and it is open to members and non-members.

To register for the program, please click on the link below.

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUtc-6uqDkrHdBIH7OPYu4E6D9ZBLkPQsAz>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.