

Judiciary Times

Fall 2007

The newsletter of the New Jersey Judiciary

Winner of Society of Professional Journalists-New Jersey Chapter Awards for Newsletter Writing

Three Vicinage Family Divisions Pilot Risk Assessment Tool

by Janet Slocum
Administrative Specialist 4
Monmouth Vicinage

The Family Divisions of the Atlantic, Camden and Monmouth Vicinages are proud to be piloting a risk assessment tool fostered by the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative. The divisions eagerly anticipate launching the tool this fall and are committed to its success, realizing its impact on the futures of juveniles.

The risk assessment tool was devised as a screening method for admission of juveniles into detention. Currently when a juvenile is arrested, the police will contact a Family Division probation officer who then decides whether to detain or release the juvenile. The risk assessment tool will provide the probation officer with specific guidelines to be followed when assessing these options.

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Judiciary Offers Training To Maximize Officer Safety

Field itinerary complete? Check.

Field bag? Check.

Field team briefed? Check.

A typical field day for Probation supervision officers? Well, not exactly.

This is the simulation training for probation officers taking part in the Judiciary's new field safety training known as The Tactical Probation Officer, or "TacPro." TacPro is a five-day program developed to replace the NOVA Officer Safety Training Course.

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They're off! Probation youth prepare to race at the 20th Annual Judiciary Olympics. (See article and more photos on pages 8 and 9).

National Consortium Focuses On Youth And The Courts

by Yolande P. Marlow, Ph.D. and
Lisa R. Burke, M.A.

The National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts (NCREFC) met from May 2 – 5 at the Marriott New York at the Brooklyn Bridge for its 19th annual conference.

Titled “Saving Our Children: Justice and the Fair Treatment of Youth in the Courts,” this year’s conference was attended by representatives of more than 30 states and addressed the paramount issue of disparate justice outcomes for minority

youth as well as fairness and equity for children in custody and adoption cases and the needs of youthful victims.

Hosted by the New York State Unified Court System, the conference was produced under the direction and guidance of the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities which is chaired by retired Justice Lewis L. Douglass. The Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission is the New York counterpart to the New Jersey Supreme Court’s Committee on Minority Concerns.

Judge Ronald J. Freeman, chair of the Supreme Court Committee on Minority Concerns, and Yolande P. Marlow, manager of the Minority Concerns Unit and board member of the National Consortium, were the official representatives of the Judiciary’s Minority Concerns Program and delegates of then-Chief Justice James R. Zazzali. Attending day components of the program were several Minority Concerns staff liaisons and committee members including Renee Anthony



Judge Ronald J. Freeman
at the consortium

(Middlesex), Lawrence Bethea (Middlesex), Lisa Burke (Administrative Office of the Courts-Minority Concerns Unit), Pauline Daniels (Hudson) and Sylvia O’Connor (Middlesex).

Following a welcome by Justice Marilyn Kelly of Michigan, consortium president, the program opened with a keynote address by Jeremy Travis, president of John Jay Col-

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Judiciary Times is prepared by the Office of Communications, the Administrative Office of the Courts, for employees of the Judiciary and volunteers who work with the court system.

The chief justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court is Stuart Rabner. The acting administrative director of the courts is Judge Philip S. Carchman.

Please send short news articles saved as Word documents in plain text without formatting, as well as photos and/or suggestions to the Office of Communications or mail disk, photos and paper copy to: Editor, *Judiciary Times*, Office of Communications, PO Box 037, Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, Trenton NJ 08625-0037. Submissions are subject to editing, and not all can be published.

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Burlington Vicinage TCA Named to National Leadership Position



Jude Del Preore

Burlington County Trial Court Administrator Jude Del Preore has been named secretary-treasurer of the National Association for Court Management (NACM). This designa-

tion puts Del Preore on a three-year track to the organization’s presidency. Del Preore was named to this post at the 2007 annual conference titled, “The Base: Court Governance and Accountability,” held July 8 to 12 at the Fairmount Hotel in Chicago, Ill.

NACM has more than 2,600 members from the United States, Canada,

“I am honored to be designated by my colleagues nationally to this post in an organization devoted to increasing professionalism, management proficiency, and the administration of justice,” Del Preore said.

In addition to providing quality education to judges and professionals who manage courts internationally, NACM is committed to improving the public’s access to trial courts and to educating the public on the role of courts.

Del Preore has been with the New Jersey Judiciary for more than 30 years. He has held court administration posts in Essex, Mercer and Burlington Counties. He resides in Moorestown with his wife, Penny, and two sons.

Korean Delegation Visits Essex in Preparation for Jury Initiative

by Matt Izzo, Assistant Criminal Division Manager, and Brenda Carmichael, Civil Team Leader, Essex Vicinage

On July 23 and July 24, the Criminal and Civil Divisions hosted two delegations from the Court of the Republic of Korea. Among the nine members of the Criminal delegation were four judges, three administrators and two clerks of the court. The Civil delegation consisted of four judges and four court administrators. Their primary goal was to study our jury system.

On May 28, 2004, a law for implementation of the Saiban-in system in criminal court proceedings was promulgated. This system will allow the general public to take part in criminal court trials, to deliberate and make decisions together with judges on guilt and sentencing. The judicial panel in criminal matters will consist of six lay judges (Saiban-in) and three professional judges. In civil matters the panel will consist of four lay judges and one professional judge. South Korea intends to implement the Saiban-in system in their country by May 2009.

Criminal Division Manager Sonya Noyes greeted the contingent in the morning and showed them around the new Criminal Division facilities. They were impressed by the lack of excessive paper in individual work stations. Jury Manager Michelle LaPreard and Assistant Criminal Division Managers Giuseppe Fazari and Matthew Izzo toured the fourth floor facilities with the group while Fazari and LaPreard presented an overview of our jury management practices, including both petit and grand jury.

Izzo led the delegation on a tour of several courtrooms. Three pleas were taken by Judge Joseph Cassini under the group's scrutiny. They then visited Central Judicial

Processing Court with Judge Amikar Velez-Lopez where they watched several defendants being arraigned on the video monitors. Judge Thomas Vena welcomed the delegation into chambers where a brief discussion of our system ensued. At the request of the visitors, the interpreter took a photograph of Judge Vena and the group. They seemed particularly interested in the prisoner holding cell for the courtroom. Finally, the contingent was escorted on a tour of the Historic Courthouse by Izzo and Fazari. They admired the architecture and related that they had no such courtrooms in their homeland.

On Tuesday, the South Korean dignitaries observed the lengthy jury selection in a "car-jacking" trial being conducted in the courtroom of Judge Ned Rosenberg. They were given materials and explanations of what was happening and why.

In Civil, Monday's activities began with a reception by the division manager, Vanessa Hendrickson. The group then observed the civil calendar call before Presiding Judge Eugene Codey. Hendrickson then gave a presentation that outlined the division's structure and how cases are processed. The delegation noted that they were impressed by the efficient

handling of such a large volume of cases.

After lunch Aileen Matias-Castro and Kimberly Cicala of the ombudsman's office conducted a tour of the Historic Courthouse. Next, Judges Donald Goldman and Alfonse Cifelli held a "Q and A" session in which they discussed their roles as Superior Court judges.

On Tuesday Michelle LaPreard provided the Civil group with a tour of jury operations and also escorted them to Judge Michael L. Ravin's courtroom to watch a portion of the *voir dire* being conducted. Judge Peter V. Ryan then hosted them and talked about his role as a Special Civil Part judge.

Once the delegations arrived home safely, they e-mailed Thomas Dibble of the Operations Division in Essex. Dibble was responsible for the coordination of the group's visit to our vicinage at the request of the National Center for State Courts, International Visitors Educational Program to TCA Collins Ijoma. The message expressed the delegation's sincere gratitude to Essex for their hospitality and courtesy. They felt that the visit was informative and instructive in their preparation for a new jury trial system.



Staff Welcome Delegation: Welcoming members of the Korean delegation are (center left to right): Tom Dibble, Vanessa Hendrickson, Brenda Carmichael and Kimberly Cicala.

Superior Court Clerk's Staff Completes Customer Service Training

The staff of the Office of the Clerk of the Superior Court recently completed intensive training in an effort to enhance customer service.

Facilitated by Michelle Perone, chief of Civil Court Programs with the Administrative Office of the Courts, the training consisted of three separate courses. Prior to beginning the training, staff were asked to provide commonly asked questions, common troublesome issues and other obstacles to providing exceptional service both to internal and external customers.

Using the responses, Perone tailored the *Give 'Em the Pickle* and *Leadership Pickles* courses and, enlisting the help of Superior Court staff, created a specialized version of the *Providing Exceptional Customer Service While Not Giving Legal Advice* course.

The *Give 'Em the Pickle* course is based upon a video created by Bob Farrell, a successful entrepreneur who owns a chain of restaurants across the United States. A customer used to receiving complimentary pickles in one

of Farrell's restaurants, was dismayed when a server mistakenly attempted to charge him for a side of pickles. When the customer complained,



Portraying Court Customer-- Shoba Chopra with the Civil Practice Division portrays a court user during a customer service skit.

Farrell's response was "Just Give 'em the pickle!"

This became the "war cry" of Farrell's businesses. The mantra is founded on the premise that we are in the people business and serving customers should be every organization's number one priority. According to Farrell, giving away pickles, special or extra things that please customers, is a way for any organization to exceed customer expectations and differentiate itself.

The *Leadership Pickles* course, given to every supervisor and manager including Acting Clerk Theodore Fetter, is based upon the notion that although great leaders possess many qualities, any manager or supervisor can excel in leadership by mastering three key skills. These are:

- * demonstrating integrity both in and out of the office;
- * inspiring confidence by keeping staff in the "loop," asking for their input and advice and taking fear out of the future for them; and
- * spreading enthusiasm by injecting energy and excitement into the work day and making staff look forward to coming to work.

The *Leadership Pickles* is founded upon the notion that leaders serve those who serve the customers and what staff see is what managers will get.

In the *Providing Exceptional Customer Service While Not Giving Legal Advice* course, Perone asked for volunteer co-trainers from among the staff. These volunteers mastered the curriculum by being taught by Perone. Serving as co-trainers were:

Sharon Medina, Patricia D'Errico, Jose Sierra and Debra Gabauer of the Clerk's Office and Donna Albanese and Shoba Chopra of the Civil Practice Division. The objectives of the course were to help staff discern what is and what is not legal advice and to provide the tools in order to delight customers within the bounds of the Judiciary's Code of Conduct, which prohibits the provision of legal advice.

Goldstein Receives Governmental Award from the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey

by Kim Manuguerra
Supervisor
ISP- Research/MIS Unit

Harvey M. Goldstein, director of the New Jersey Intensive Supervision Program (ISP), received the Governmental Award from the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey at its Annual Statewide Conference awards dinner. The dinner was held on Sept. 27 in Red Bank. Goldstein received the award for his continued work with the council to promote treatment for gambling addiction among ISP participants.

The Intensive Supervision Program is a component of the Probation Services Division of the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts. ISP provides an opportunity for a

carefully selected population of non-violent offenders, sentenced to state prison, to be released in the community under a rigorous form of community supervision. ISP emphasizes control, monitoring, surveillance and treatment for multiple types of addictions.

ISP participants have been engaged with the 12-step program, gambling evaluations, budgeting, restitution and treatment while staff has received substantial training during Council institutes and programs.

"I would like to thank the Council on Compulsive Gambling for their commitment to providing innovative treatment promoting productive, healthy, law-abiding lifestyles among ISP participants with gambling addiction," Goldstein said in accepting the award.

Mission Possible: 5,000 Judiciary Volunteers are Making a Difference

by Karen June, Manager
Volunteer Services
Trial Court Services

During National Volunteer Week April 15 through 21, more than 5,000 Judiciary volunteers were honored throughout New Jersey for their service during the 2006-2007 court year. The New Jersey Judiciary has a long history of celebrating the court-community partnership embodied through its Volunteer Services Program.

During the celebration this spring, thousands of court volunteers attended recognition events, including formal banquet programs, organized by the volunteer coordinator in each vicinage. Court employees of all ranks paid tribute to volunteers' dedicated service to the Judiciary and the community at large.

"We just can't thank you enough..." was a common remark made by assignment and trial judges, trial court administrators, operations managers, division managers, program coordinators and other personnel who work with court volunteers.

The ceremonies included keynote addresses and the presentation of awards. A number of volunteers received special recognition for extraordinary contributions as well as for completing 5, 10, 20, 30 and even 50 years of service. In some cases, program coordinators pooled personal funds to purchase or prepare unique, personalized gifts.

Many other not-for-profit organizations engage volunteers to fill staffing gaps. Similarly, Judiciary volunteers make significant contributions to the courts' workflow. Yet, court volunteers are not merely "helping out" with case processing and customer service functions.

The Judiciary Volunteer Services Program is specifically designed to promote the public's trust in the judicial system and to advance the court-community partnership through direct participation that facilitates dialogue, feedback and accountability. Volunteers bring to life the partnership between the court and the community,

which is really at the heart of the New Jersey Judiciary Volunteer Services Program.

At present, volunteers serve through 19 distinct programs affiliated with the Family Court, Municipal Court, Civil Practice, and Probation Services Divisions. In complementing the work of court employees, Judiciary volunteers are highly valued and adhere to high standards defined in a Code of Conduct and Litigation Reporting Policy for Judiciary Volunteers. The Volunteer Services Program is essential to the Judiciary's fulfillment of its strategic mission, vision and core values.

The legacy of being a nationally recognized program for promoting public trust and confidence in the judicial system is excellent motivation for advancing the court-community partnership through strategic planning. Nearly 75 program coordinators and vicinage volunteer coordinators throughout the state were focused on strategic planning at the Judiciary Volunteer Management Conference on June 19. Held at the New Jersey Law Center in New Brunswick and

hosted by the Judiciary, the conference theme was "Judiciary Volunteer Services... The Next Level, *By Design!*" Participants were challenged to draft the framework for measuring program outcomes and conducting needs analyses in order to move to the next level. It is a *Mission Possible!*

Though employees are not eligible to serve as a Judiciary volunteers, all are encouraged to inform family members, neighbors and others about court volunteer opportunities. Anyone interested should go to the Judiciary Web page (www.judiciary.state.nj.us/volunteer/index.htm) and contact the vicinage volunteer coordinator for an application or additional information.

Just as volunteering can be life changing for the volunteer; how much more meaningful must a volunteer's service be for court users? Lives are changed... one case at a time; one life at a time.

The community is strengthened because of the dedicated and powerful service of court volunteers to the people of New Jersey.

Service Through Technology At The Monmouth Vicinage

by Janet Slocum
Administrative Specialist 4

The Monmouth Vicinage, in conjunction with the Judiciary's Central Office, has piloted a wireless network in its courthouse. The vicinage is the first to install a total of 11 wireless access points strategically placed to form a "blanket" of signals.

To access the network, users simply double-click on the wireless network icon on their laptop display. Selection of the New Jersey Judiciary Public Access network directs users to a page requesting their name and acceptance of a disclaimer. The Judiciary home page is displayed and users can then navigate to other Internet sites. The acceptance of the disclaimer is a continuous requirement. When the user's laptop is shut down, the connection is lost and has to be re-established by repeating

the process. Instructional flyers for users are available at the courthouse, although most have found the process effortless and convenient.

The system allows broad access to the Internet, but there are still some sites that are restricted due to content. If users require access to legitimate business sites, they may contact the IT Division to have their requests forwarded to the central offices for consideration.

The Monmouth Vicinage is pleased to provide this service to court users. IT Division Manager Troy Fitzpatrick has received a great deal of positive feedback from attorneys, prosecutors, jurors and litigants. Former Monmouth Bar Association President John F. DeBartolo uses the system frequently and was delighted to report, "Wireless access at the courthouse is terrific! This is a much-needed service."

Vicinage Recognizes Excellence with PASSAIC Awards

by Sharon Kinney
EEO/AA Officer
Passaic Vicinage

The vicinage celebrated the third PASSAIC Awards ceremony on June 22 in the Jury Assembly Room. Recipients of the June 2007 awards included: Donald DeHart, a court services supervisor 2 from the Probation Division; Milagros Guzman, a Judiciary secretary 1 confidential from the Family Division; John Harrison, a

court services supervisor 2 from the Criminal Division; Syreeta Pough, a senior probation officer from the Probation Division; Lucia Tirone, an administrative specialist 2 from the Operations Division; and Teresa Varcadipane a Judiciary clerk 4 from the Civil Division.

The PASSAIC Awards were initiated in June 2006 as a method to recognize Judiciary staff for exemplary customer service, meritorious performance, outstanding professional achievement and/or exceptional ser-

vice to the courts. To date 40 individuals have been recognized in sessions that occur twice a year in June and December.

Attending the ceremony were the award recipients, their family members and guests, the assignment judge and presiding judges, court managers, Judiciary staff who made the nominations, and volunteers who assisted with the program. Each recipient received a plaque acknowledging their contribution to the courts.

(Related photo on page 15)

Assignment Judge Longhi Honored at Retirement Dinner

by Josephine Marchetta
Court Services Supervisor 2
Middlesex Vicinage

A special dinner co-sponsored by the Middlesex County Bar Association and Middlesex Trial Lawyers Association, lauding the career of Assignment Judge Robert A. Longhi, was held in the Pines Manor in Edison in June. More than 600 people attended.

Retired Judge Robert Quackenboss was the master of ceremonies for the evening. Highlights included

proclamations from the New Jersey Legislature and the Middlesex County Board of Freeholders. These proclamations were presented by Assemblyman Peter Barnes III and Freeholder Director David B. Crabiel, respectively.

Retired Judges Richard Cohen and Barnett Hoffman were guest speakers. Judge Hoffman presented a video that included comments from many of Judge Longhi's colleagues and friends. The video even included a cameo by Rutgers football coach,

Greg Schianno. Supreme Court Associate Justice Barry Albin, Assignment Judge Travis Francis and Trial Court Administrator Gregory Edwards gave eloquent testimonials describing Judge Longhi's years of dedication to the bench.

One of the evenings many emotional moments came when Judge Longhi was presented with a photograph of his many former law clerks. Before Judge Longhi's final remarks, an oil portrait of the judge was unveiled. That portrait is now located in Courtroom 201.



Judge Longhi (left) with retired Judge Barnett Hoffman



Freeholder Chris Rafano and Freeholder Director David B. Crabiel share a happy moment with Judge Longhi.

A Legacy of Style

Assignment Judge Serpentelli Retires After 29 Years on the Bench

by Ken Kerwin,
Civil Division Manager, and
Michael King,
Vicinage Training Coordinator
Ocean Vicinage

On July 4, Assignment Judge Eugene D. Serpentelli retired after 29 years on the bench. During 22 of those years, he served as the assignment judge in the Ocean Vicinage, making him the longest sitting AJ in the Judiciary's history.

Sworn in as an Ocean County Superior Court judge in 1978, he began hearing cases that at the time were not defined as Family Court matters, but rather as domestic relations/matrimonial cases. These cases involved important issues concerning custody and visitation. That became his first assignment, and over the next 29 years Family Court cases have become his interest and his passion. Cases over his 29-year tenure covered the spectrum from Mount Laurel housing cases to landlord/tenant cases to issues involving environmental-radon-tainted soil dumping in Ocean County.

Strong Work Ethic

The list of achievements and committee memberships is long, but what became apparent as he was interviewed for this article on the eve of his retirement, was that his personal work ethic, his compassion and love of his job, were also apparent in his everyday work.

In 1985, New Jersey Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert Wilentz appointed Judge Serpentelli as the first full-time assignment judge for the newly formed Ocean Vicinage. While Judge Arthur Blake held the position for about one year prior to 1985, Judge Serpentelli took the reins at a critical time. Ocean County was growing at an unprecedented rate, the county had just become its own vicinage (prior to 1985 Ocean was one of a two-county vicinage with

Burlington) and the formulation of a state-wide Family Court was mandated by law.

Early on in his role as the assignment judge, he gathered as much information as possible about the day-to-day workings of the court from the management staff. His own management approach as the head of the organization began to transform as well, from the independent, analytical decision-making style of a lawyer to that of a leader who embraced a model of participative management. He truly listened to the judges, managers and those most affected by decisions, building consensus and creating win-win decisions.

Encouraging Creativity

His style soon became the norm for how business was done in the Ocean Vicinage. Allowing staff to be creative and to think outside of the box has created a healthy environment for change.

Our volunteer programs grew, a greeter program emerged and good customer service became the norm, not just by luck but because of Judge

Serpentelli's leadership. As he has said, "I just get out of the way to let things happen." Or to paraphrase him, "There should be no fear in failing, only the fear of failing to *try* new things."

Judge Serpentelli has always been a strong advocate of making the courthouse a customer-friendly place, where litigants, who initially may come here anxious, worried and stressed, will find smiling faces at the entrances each morning ready to assist, put them at ease and get them where they need to go.

While the renovation of Courtroom 1 was an important historic preservation/restoration project, and one that was important to him from an historical perspective, it is not what defines his legacy. His legacy is much more defined and all encompassing. His legacy will be defined in the qualities that he brought out in others: kindness, humility, a sense of humor, patience, civility and an overall respect and sensitivity for the welfare of others.



Unveiling Painting of the 1850 Courthouse--Ocean Vicinage Assignment
Judge Eugene D. Serpentelli, who retired this year, is shown in a file photo with Judge Thomas E. O'Brien (right) as they unveiled a painting of the 1850 courthouse which stood on the site of the present courthouse in Toms River.

Positive Interventions Committee Presents...

The 20th Annual Judiciary Olympics, sponsored by the Positive Interventions Committee (PIC) of the Juvenile Probation Managers Committee, was held Aug. 1 at the Somerville High School. One hundred-and-eighty-six juvenile

probationers from 17 counties and the Juvenile Intensive Supervision Program (JISP) competed for medals in track and field events, including a 100-meter dash, long jump, relay race, home run derby and obstacle course.

Although the day presented some problems in terms of heat, traffic back-ups and a state car breakdown on the way, the Somerset Vicinage staff, under the direction of PIC member Steve Mand-

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First-Place Trophy--Bergen Vicinage probation officers display the trophy that their probationers won. Left to right are: SPO Rich Blanchfield, VCPO John Fuhrman, TCA Jon Goodman, VACP Ron Nowakowski, PPO Bob Szweczyk. Not pictured: SPO Chris Putnam.



Vigorous activity--Competitions included volleyball, tug of war and long jump. Top left, a probation client receives an award for excellence..

...The 20th Annual Judiciary Olympics

Continued from page 8

raccia, managed to keep the games running on time. There was an extra trip to the store to get more water for the overheated players, and Jonathan Bell, vicinage chief probation officer, Morris/Sussex, drove down to pick up the Morris team stranded by car problems.

To celebrate this special anniversary, PIC invited the host of the first Judiciary Olympics, Roy Van Houten, retired Ocean Vicinage assistant chief probation officer (VACPO). Roy initially provided juvenile probationers in Ocean County with outdoor recreational

activities such as hiking and canoeing to give them an opportunity to learn some skills, achieve a goal and talk informally with probation staff. Eventually, he collaborated with other counties to expand this into regional activities, and the Judiciary Olympics was started.

Roy found funding for these activities through grants and by working with his friend Mickie Coen, an employee of the Ocean County Department of Parks and Recreation. Mickie also was present at the games Aug. 1 to see how their local idea has taken root and

spread statewide. Roy is a strong believer in providing these experiences for kids who have problems: "When they start out on a hike, you hear a lot of complaints. But when they're done, they have a sense of accomplishment that can't be taken away from them. Most of these kids don't get to experience that."

Somerset Vicinage Assignment Judge Yolanda Ciccone was on hand at the luncheon award ceremony to present the individual first, second and third place medals for each event, and the trophies to the counties with the top three overall scores. Bergen County won the first place trophy, Mercer and Passaic tied for second place, and Salem received the third place trophy.

Juvenile probationers are selected to participate in the Judiciary Olympics based on compliance with their conditions of probation. Participation is a reward for probationers achieving their goals and also an opportunity to assist in their rehabilitation by providing positive leisure activities that can improve their self-esteem. Curtis Hurff, Salem County VACPO, is the new chair of PIC and is looking forward to not only continuing, but also expanding these "positive interventions" for juvenile probationers.

"We need to continue to provide our probationers with activities that have a long-term impact on their behavior," he said. "Sporting events that improve their self-esteem, educational trips to Ellis Island and just time spent with our staff to see adults model positive social behavior, all aid in the long-term rehabilitation we want for our clients."



A Great Day in the Sun—Left to right enjoying the annual Olympics are: Roy Van Houten, retired VCPO Ocean, first host of the Olympics; Gloucester VCPO Bob Miles, former PIC chair; Salem VACPO Curt Hurff, PIC Chair; Morris PPO Chris Burkhart; Morris PPO Linda Snow..



Jumping rope is an art as well as a healthy physical activity for young people.

Atlantic/Cape May Recognizes Service of Mental Health Caseload Probation Officers

On Oct. 2, the Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage held its annual Exemplary Service Award Ceremonies. Senior Probation Officers Marianne Hassett-Marrero and Tracy Weiss were recognized for their supervision of caseloads consisting of clients with diagnosed mental illnesses. All of these clients have multiple problems and special needs. They require an inordinate amount of patience and dedication to effectively supervise.

Marianne and Tracy perform weekly visits to local mental health service providers and the Atlantic City Rescue Mission (a shelter for the homeless) where they meet with clients who would otherwise be difficult, if not impossible, to contact. They work with service providers to develop and monitor individualized treatment plans. They have assisted in meeting their client's most basic

needs by coordinating donations made by court staff of more than a dozen bags of clothing and a bounty of educational supplies.

Marianne has represented the vicinage as a presenter and panel member at a University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey conference on the Criminal Justice System/An Overview for Mental Health Professionals. She and Tracy are scheduled to facilitate a discussion with Criminal Division staff on mental health treatment programs that should assist in the preparation of presentence investigations.

"The networking and outreach performed by Marianne and Tracy has reduced the number of violations that would have otherwise been filed on their clients," said Frank Zollner, chief probation officer. "Their knowledge and insight often provides the

court with alternatives to incarceration, which are more humane and cost effective ways of dealing with most mentally ill clients."

Camaraderie & Creamery: ITO Annual Ice Cream Social

by Linda Comerford
Executive Support Specialist,
Information Technology Office

The calendar said Sept. 20, knocking on the first day of autumn. But the weather outside was warm and sunny and said, "Summertime!"

That could mean one thing in the Information Technology Office: Ice cream! And so the fourth annual ice cream social was held on Thursday afternoon, Sept. 20, in ITO offices in Trenton.

ITO managers, who funded the annual event for staff, dug deep at their official dipping station and served up scoops to ITO and other Judiciary personnel. Chief Justice Stuart Rabner, Acting Administrative Director Judge Philip Carchman, several directors, assistant directors, managers and supervisors, along with their staff, were spotted along "fixin's boulevard" enjoying their favorite ice cream flavor swirled around with hot fudge, walnuts, M&Ms, sprinkles/jimmies and, of course, whipped cream and a cherry on top (no ice cream creation should exist without that!).

ITO senior management was the main organizer of the yearly. During the event, 33 gallons of ice cream were served to 300 people. It seemed everywhere you turned, whether around ITO office space, in and around the elevators or the common walking areas of the building, small white bowls and spoons were visible along with satisfied smiles.

A good time was had by all. A few sugar let-downs were noticed the next day; but nothing so serious as to stop the flow of Judiciary work business.

Passaic Training: Cruisin' on the Highway of Life

by Sandee Nole
Training Coordinator
Passaic Vicinage

Like any fine-tuned automobile, the body needs periodic tune-ups, oil changes, routine maintenance and a full tank of gas to perform at maximum capacity. Participants in the training seminar, *Cruisin' through Life at 35 MPH*, were reminded just how important it is to maintain a full tank of quality octane in order to reap the most out of life.

During the training earlier this year in the Passaic County Courthouse, the presenter, Brian Blasko, provided key techniques to help participants keep their engines purring at full capacity instead of sputtering with only half a tank of gas.

Judiciary employees were equated to high-performance cars in this age of Blackberries, Bluetooth technology, high-speed cable and Internet. Staff are constantly on stage whether at work as supervisors or line staff, or at home as parents, siblings

or caregivers. It may not be apparent, but at some point in either situation, we are leading and influencing other individuals in some capacity. One of the key components to remember is that self leadership is where it all begins, Blasko said.

As leaders, we are in the driver's seat, and people are more inclined to follow individuals who not only have a positive attitude, but also are moving forward. Just as when we drive down any street or highway in New Jersey, in our lives we encounter speed bumps and potholes. At every mile marker, we need to remember that we have the potential to affect individuals with our actions and reactions.

The key to not "getting a flat" in those moments is to keep our speed in check. We need to keep a positive outlook, recharge our batteries when necessary and treat others as they would like to be treated, Blasko said. He encouraged us to remember to pause at pit stops and check our tanks. We never know when we might find ourselves on empty!

Mental Health Players Perform and Educate at the Bergen Vicinage

by Cheryl Cohen
Administrative Specialist 2
Human Resources, Bergen Vicinage

Judiciary employees understand the importance of good customer service. Since many of us have direct contact with the public everyday, it is imperative that we know how to deal effectively with all types of people and situations, including what to do if we encounter someone who may have some type of mental illness.

On July 27, the Mental Health Players treated Bergen Vicinage employees to an engaging role-playing performance designed to raise

awareness and understanding of mental health issues, including how to defuse a potentially volatile situation successfully with a customer who has a mental illness. Sharon Curran, the program's facilitator, stated that the Mental Health Players' purpose is "to promote an anti-stigma message."

The Mental Health Players program has been around for almost 30 years and is composed of trained volunteers who learn all they can about various mental health issues so they are able to accurately depict the characters they portray. The scenes are based on realistic situations tailored to the specific audience (in this

case, Judiciary staff), complete with familiar problems and conflicts. For each scene, the audience is asked to pay close attention and think about how the situations might have been handled better, and also to figure out which mental illness is being depicted.

For example, the first scene took place in the Family Division. An overwhelmed, under-trained receptionist had to handle a waiting room full of impatient or upset customers: the frightened victim of domestic violence, the frustrated woman who could only speak Spanish, the angry man whose son and daughter-in-law were recently killed by a drunk driver and a woman with schizophrenia who lost custody of her children and was desperate to get them back.

After each scene, the audience was encouraged to directly address the actors who remained in character as they explained their behavior and took advice from the audience. Through this interactive discussion, the audience learned some key points regarding how to defuse a potentially explosive situation, such as: speak slowly, lower your voice, don't overreact or act negatively, and most importantly, treat the customer with respect.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the actors introduced themselves. Andrea Becker, who played the overwhelmed receptionist, explained that "playing these roles is a great way for us to learn empathy ourselves."

Another actor, Mitchell Becker, who is a retired chemist, said, "I have a more valuable experience now that I'm giving back, and it's rewarding for us to have this opportunity to impart what we know."

The presentation was also a valuable experience and opportunity for the Bergen Vicinage employees who were not only entertained by the talented performances but who also hopefully walked away with a better understanding of how to deal with difficult situations and provide the quality of customer service the Judiciary expects of its employees.



The Mental Health Players use familiar scenarios to educate audiences about mental illness. Top, Andi Becker (left), Alma Carpi. Below, Mitchell Becker and Mona Hennessey. (Photos used with permission of Sharon Curran, troupe facilitator).

Three Vicinage Family Divisions Pilot Risk Assessment Tool

Continued from page 1

The tool uses objective standards to assign points to all aspects of the case, taking into account the juvenile's past history and the nature

of recent and prior offenses. Based on the total number of points derived by using the tool, the probation officer can make an equitable determination regarding detention of the juvenile or

can recommend other new alternatives, such as house arrest or home detention.

The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative is a reform project that works to establish more constructive and effective approaches to juvenile detention. Among its strategies is the risk assessment tool which was created by multiple stakeholders in juvenile justice and approved by the Supreme Court. Presiding judges, judges handling juvenile cases, prosecutors, members of the Juvenile Justice Commission, public defenders, correctional facility staff, police officers and central office staff all collaborated to develop the tool. Family Division Judge Eugene Iadanza and Monmouth County Assistant Prosecutor Barry Serebnick were strongly involved in its development and several Family Division representatives participated in its final review.

Implementation of the system will begin with initial training of team leaders and judges on policy and procedure, followed by practical training of probation officers. A key benefit of the tool is that it allows data to be compiled for use in comparison of juvenile detention figures and analysis of demographics.

Nancy Pollinger and Winston Mays, court services supervisors 2 at the Monmouth Vicinage, were involved in its planning stages. Nancy Pollinger commented, "We have looked forward to a system like this for quite some time. It will be an important step in making sure that the appropriate juveniles are detained."

Winston Mays added, "It certainly will help to level the playing field, and we hope that it will help give more juveniles the opportunity to become productive adults."

The risk assessment tool is also scheduled to be piloted in the Atlantic, Essex, Camden and Hudson Vicinages.

--Contributions by Court Services Supervisors 2 Nancy Pollinger and Winston Mays.

Bergen Volunteers Attend Informative Gang Seminar

by Nola Steele
Volunteer Coordinator
Bergen Vicinage

On Oct. 2, Bergen County Superior Court hosted a seminar on gang awareness for vicinage volunteers. Many Judiciary volunteers are active in programs involving child placement and juvenile issues, making the latest information about gangs of the utmost importance to them.

More than 50 volunteers attended the presentation given by Lt. Edwin Torres and Senior Investigator Cindy Badger from the Gang Management Unit of the Juvenile Justice Commission of the Department of Law and Public Safety. Combating gang activity is a high priority of the department.

During the two-hour session, volunteers were amazed to hear the extensive information on gang infiltration of New Jersey's counties. Gangs are in almost every area of the state, whether urban or rural, with juveniles as young as third-graders being recruited as members. Gang presence is noted by specific graffiti or "tags" to mark territories.

Colors play a major part in gang identity, often in the form of sports team apparel, beads, including rosaries and bandannas. Tattoos are a major form of identification, often received during incarceration. Juveniles in gangs do not expect longevity. To them, a large gang funeral is something to look forward to as an ultimate tribute.

When asked what can be done about the growing gang population, Lt. Torres said, "Communities must work together to combat gang activity. Parents, schools, houses of

worship, mayor and council, all have to be united to keep gangs out. After school and weekend programs are very important to keep juveniles from getting into trouble."

Vicinage volunteers remarked that this was a very informative and important program that everyone should experience.

A Glimpse of Different Cultures: Starting with India

by Sonal Pushko, EEO/AA Officer,
Ocean Vicinage

If you just can't find the time or money to go on a trip around the world, you no longer need to worry. You can now just go to the Ocean County Courthouse in Toms River. Ocean County Courthouse users and staff now can enjoy a cultural display case located in the Justice Complex. The idea, developed by Lilia Lopez, Human Resources Division manager, was to expose people to cultural artifacts from all over the world.

First stop on this trip is India. India's culture is unique, and a small sample of this culture is now on display. Currently, the display case houses items and clothing from the Gujarat region of India. There are several different household items on display such as candy dishes, wall art and wall hangings. In addition, several colorful saris are draped inside the glass case. A sari is a traditional article of clothing worn by Indian women. Finally, there are a number of jewelry pieces that consists of multicolored bangles, ankle bracelets, necklaces, head pieces and earrings.

The display case was a collaborative effort on behalf of the entire EEO/AA Advisory Committee.

Essex Vicinage Information Center Marks 10th Anniversary

by Kimberly Cicala
Community Relations Liaison
Essex Vicinage

In September, the Essex Vicinage marked the 10th anniversary of its Information Center.

The center, which operates as part of the Office of the Ombudsman, is located on the first floor of the Veterans Courthouse. It was established in September 1997 to provide centralized information, court user assistance and community relations services for the public. Ten years later, the center has fulfilled those initial goals and evolved into a comprehensive resource for the community at large.

The brainchild of Trial Court Administrator Collins Ijoma and then-CDR Program Coordinator Michele Bertran, the center was established during a time of a national movement to improve services tied to both access to and perception of court systems. Michele described TCA Ijoma as a key supporter of this “quality of justice” initiative, highlighting his active involvement with court management and administration organizations and his sensitivity to the particular needs of the Essex Vicinage.

From its inception, two information and community relations liaisons have staffed the center. Michele initially led the center in her capacity as CDR coordinator, and continued to do so during her tenure as ombudsman, which commenced in May 1998 with the establishment of that program in Essex Vicinage. Michele, now Family Division manager, recalled her trepidations concerning how the center would be received, both internally and externally. Despite being faced with some initial skepticism, it didn’t take long for people to become quite receptive to the center.

Information Clerk Bob O’Hare, who directs individuals to the center from his desk in the first floor lobby, remembered how when the center first opened, most people did not know of its existence. Since then, he said, it

has become a much more well-known resource, and individuals value the more in-depth services it provides.

Today, the center exists under the direction of Ombudsman Shazeeda Samsudeen and is staffed by Liaison Yesenia Rios and me. The center provides assistance and information to between 20 and 30 individuals each day. They come to the Center with inquiries regarding court forms, procedures and directions; to use public ACMS and Promis/Gavel access terminals, copy and fax machines; and for referrals to non-court related agencies. They can also consult the nearly 200 pamphlets, guides and directories that the center displays. The center hosts several programs throughout the year, including speaker’s bureau, court tours and coat and toy drives. In addition, the center’s liaisons work with Shazeeda on the Law Day and court concierge programs.

While supporting the functions of the center, liaisons do not provide legal advice. Although it can sometimes be challenging to help “people to understand what we can and cannot do, as court employees we always have to remain neutral and impartial,” Shazeeda pointed out.

Internally, court employees refer individuals to the center when they require more assistance and detailed information than they themselves can provide. Externally, word of mouth

has been key. It is common to assist individuals several times over the course of their court experience.

Crucial to the success of the Information Center has been the support of Vicinage Coordinator of Interpreting Services Lauren Egbert and her staff. Either in person or over the phone, interpreters assist with the high volume of limited English proficient persons (LEPs) who come into the center, most of whom speak either Spanish or Portuguese. This reflection of the diversity of the community the center serves is a large part of what makes it so relevant to the Essex Vicinage.

Assistant Trial Court Administrator Sigfredo Carrion echoed that sentiment of relevance in commenting, “I don’t know how we ever got along without an Information Center” here in the Essex Vicinage. ATCA Carrion points to the complicated three-building layout of the Essex court complex, the many elderly litigants and the overall need for simplification of what can be a very complicated and daunting court experience.

Looking toward the future, TCA Ijoma commented, “The challenge for the future is to continue to be innovative in preparing for the anticipated needs of the public.” With the emergence of e-filing and the Digital Age, it is important that the center adjust its service approaches to accommodate related emerging needs, he noted.



At the Essex Information Center--Yesenia Rios (left) and Kimberly Cicala (right), administrative specialists 3, work on a project at the Information Center.

National Consortium Focuses On Youth

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lege of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York. Breakout sessions throughout the days addressed cultural and language barriers to justice; mentoring programs and alternatives to incarceration; teen violence and the media; collateral consequences [of delinquency] on youth; people of color in the profession; innovative elementary and high school programs focusing on gangs, the law, the courts and the community; and disproportionate numbers of minority youth in the family and criminal court systems.

As is customary for the consor-

Attendees from New Jersey included (left to right) Yolande P. Marlow, Lisa R. Burke and Pauline D. Daniels, Hudson EEO/AA Officer.



tium, meal time provided not only nourishment for the body but also illuminating and informative speakers from a variety of venues. Each of the featured speakers addressed a particular component of the conference theme and connected their own work to the larger mission of the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts and its member organizations.

This year's meal speakers included Byron Brown, mayor of the City of Buffalo, New York; Barry Kamins, president of the Bar Association of the City of New York; John C. Liu, the first Asian American councilmember in the City of New York; Judge Dora L. Irizarry, United States District Court judge; and Congressman Charles B. Rangel. New York Chief Judge Judith Kaye also addressed the conference participants and was presented with a commendation of appreciation from the consortium and the Williams Commission for her longstanding support of these vital programs and initiatives.

A program highlight unique to this year's conference included the site visits to New York's Community Courts. These courts are comprehensive problem-solving courts that offer unique approaches to addressing the presenting symptom (reason for the court action) and to providing access to services geared toward resolving underlying or related issues and problems. Conference participants were able to visit the site of their choice and benefited greatly from firsthand views of the Red Hook Community Justice Center, the Integrated Domestic Violence Court, Midtown Community Court, Brooklyn Treatment Court

and the Harlem Community Justice Center.

The conference concluded with the moving presentation of the documentary film, "The Untold Story of Emmett Till," and a compelling discussion session with award-winning documentary filmmaker Keith Beauchamp.

Once again, the conference provided a valuable opportunity to learn about current work in the area of juvenile justice and the courts and to come together to exchange ideas, information, and resources with colleagues from around the country involved in work similar to the New Jersey Judiciary's Minority Concerns Program.

For more information on the National Consortium, visit www.consortiumonline.net or contact Marlow at the Minority Concerns Unit. The 20th Annual Conference of the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts will take place in Seattle, Washington in spring 2008.

New Jersey's ISP Cited as a National Model

New Jersey's Intensive Supervision Program (ISP) is one of five programs in the nation singled out as providing "inspiration from the field" in the report, *Repaying Debts*, published this year by the Council of State Governments Justice Center.

The report reviews innovative collection practices and makes recommendations for national improvement. The report cites several New Jersey ISP practices that deserve to be adopted nationally, including:

- * Coordinating agencies' policies, procedures and information systems so that fines, fees, surcharges and restitution orders for each person sentenced to prison are consolidated to improve collection rates; and child support and restitution are prioritized appropriately;

- * Enacting child support enforcement policies that encourage parents released from prisons to maintain legitimate employment that will help them provide long-term support to their children;

- * Ensuring that victims receive the restitution they are owed;

- * Making certain that new fines, fees and surcharges do not reduce the ability of people returning from prisons to pay child support and restitution.

"With only 1,250 participants, we annual collect approximately \$3 million of which about 60 percent is restitution," said Harvey M. Goldstein, chief of the New Jersey Judiciary's ISP. "This collection rate establishes ISP as the foremost agency in the nation for enforcing court orders with financial obligations."

Goldstein praised the efforts of ISP managers and staff as "the reason ISP has been able to achieve this recognition."

Judiciary Offers Training to Maximize Officer Safety

Continued from page 1

“While NOVA served us well since 1993, TacPro was developed specifically for probation officers in New Jersey and offers a varied curriculum to prepare them for their field duties,” said Robert Sebastian, assistant director of Probation Services. “A tactical approach to probation supervision activities is one that is well thought out and strategized in order to maximize officer safety.”

The first two days of training take place in a classroom and concentrate on the role of the probation officer, threat management, increased awareness, communication and office and field safety. Days one and two form the foundation for the other training modules which are more interactive and experiential.

One day of training is devoted to the use of OC (pepper) spray and certification. Officers are taught the proper use and physiological effects of OC before they participate in a practicum which includes exposure to the OC and proper decontamination. Successful completion of the full day, including exposure to the OC, will certify officers to carry OC spray as provided in Directive #7-05, *Procedures on Aerosol Defensive Devices*.

TacPro introduces a self-defense module based on the Natural Response Control Training (NRCT) system developed by Robert Thornton, director of the Community Corrections Institute. This training concentrates on techniques that are easily learned, applied and retained by people of varying size, strength, experience and age, regardless of gender. Staff have an opportunity to learn and practice the self-defense skills under the guidance of certified instructors.

In May 2007, 30 staff were certified as instructors in NRCT after successfully completing a four-day instructor certification training program at Fort Dix. “These instructors have been working very hard to hone their skills and have met monthly to practice and deliver this curriculum,” said Gayle Maher, chief of juvenile

supervision services.

The final day of TacPro is devoted to simulation exercises. TacPro is conducted at safety or fire academies where outbuildings that simulate houses, high-rise apartments and so forth are available. Officers are given keys to a state vehicle and proceed into the “field” in teams of two or three to see their “probationer.”

These exercises are videotaped, and all trainees have the opportunity to see the concepts that are taught in the first four days put into practice.

“This is really where it all comes together for the officers,” said Maher. “We try to make these scenarios as real as possible so officers can practice in a safe learning environment. If mistakes are made, this is the place to do it and we all learn from each other.”

Much of the success of the training simulation scenarios has been due to Judiciary staff who portray probationers, spouses and neighborhood people. “We’ve had people from Family, Court Services, Intensive Supervision, Juvenile Intensive Supervision in addition to Probation who have done an amazing job making this training come to life for the new officers,” Maher said.

More than 60 staff volunteered to

participate either as trainers, technical support or simulation actors in this new and innovative training. “Staff who volunteer will enrich not only their own professional development but also that of their colleagues and there is certainly room for others to join in,” said Maher. “Our plan is to move ahead with getting trainers on board to conduct the full TacPro and a refresher module.”

To date, five TacPro classes have been conducted by the curriculum development committee consisting of Maher from the Central Office; Allen Quintavella, assistant chief, Bergen County; Mike King, training coordinator, Ocean Vicinage; and Candy Tice-Tomasik, supervisor, Family Division, Ocean Vicinage. Potential trainers have been observing the classes as part of a train-the-trainer component that will be completed this fall.

Central Office Holiday Party

The Judiciary Central Office Holiday Party is scheduled for Dec. 7 at Katmandu in Trenton. Tickets are now on sale and may be purchased from representatives in various central office divisions. Interested volunteers may contact the Criminal Division at 609-292-4638 for further details.



PASSAIC Awards Recipient--Glenn De Blasio (ACDM) Renita Mc Kinney (ACDM), award recipient Teresa Varcadipane (Judiciary clerk 4) and Civil Presiding Judge Thomas Brogan participated in the recent PASSAIC Awards program. (See article on page 6.)

Burlington Court Celebrates Constitution Week

by Donna Mazzanti
Administrative Specialist 4
Burlington Vicinage

Linda Carr's fourth-grade class from the Tabernacle Elementary School witnessed first-hand as the U.S. Constitution came alive in the Burlington Vicinage's celebration of Constitution Week Sept. 17-23. Students participated in the court's citizen naturalization ceremony.

N.J. Supreme Court Justice John E. Wallace Jr. presided over the court's citizen naturalization ceremony held in observance of Constitution Week.

"Citizenship is a defining event," Justice Wallace told the new citizens. "We set aside one day a year to honor our Constitution. You can also remember that during Constitution Week of 2007, you became citizens of this great and noble country."

In 2005, President George W. Bush proclaimed Sept. 17 Constitution and Citizenship Day to celebrate the privileges and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship in concert with commemorating the signing of the U.S. Constitution.

The naturalization ceremony saw 25 Burlington County residents, representing 15 different countries, take their Oath of Allegiance at the Olde Historic Courthouse in Mount Holly. Assignment Judge John A. Sweeney signed and read a proclamation designating the court's observance of Constitution Day, Citizenship Day and Juror Appreciation Week, which runs concurrent with Constitution Week in the Burlington Vicinage. Patriotic period music was offered by the Don't Give Up the Ship Fife and Drum Corps,

and the Rancocas Valley High School J-ROTC unit posted the colors.

Mrs. Carr's fourth-grade class led participants in the Pledge of Allegiance and recited the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution. In addition to the comments made by Justice Wallace, Burlington County Bar Association member, Sherleen Chen, shared her family's personal experience immigrating to the United States.



Fife and drum put visitors and staff in a festive mood during the Burlington Vicinage's observance of Constitution Week.

During the week's events, Judge Sweeney administered the Oath of Office to probation officers new to the vicinage, and Chief Probation Officer David Young read the Code of Responsibility to the newly sworn-in officers.

Burlington County jurors were recognized during the court's celebration of Juror Appreciation Week. Jurors received personal thank-you cards signed by Assignment Judge Sweeney and Trial Court Administrator Jude Del Preore.

"Jury service is the most direct participation a citizen can have in the workings of government," said Judge Sweeney. "We take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to those who have served this county as jurors."

The Burlington County Bar Association sponsored t-shirts and gavel pencils for giveaways to reporting jurors. In addition to the gifts, jurors were treated with law-related DVDs, bookmarks made by jury management staff and special puzzles depicting the week's theme. Popcorn and movies were offered in the afternoons.

Students said they were honored to play such an important role in this patriotic event and personally witness Burlington residents being sworn in as citizens.

**NEW JERSEY
JUDICIARY**



Mission Statement of the New Jersey Court System

We are an independent branch of government constitutionally entrusted with the fair and just resolution of disputes in order to preserve the rule of law and to protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States and this State.