

# Judiciary Times

Winter 2008-2009

The newsletter of the New Jersey Judiciary

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## New Families...New Beginnings

# Adoption Day Brings Celebrations and Smiles

**Editors Note: The following stories detail various Adoption Day events across New Jersey. The events brought judges, attorneys, adoption professionals and child advocates together to create families.**

### BURLINGTON

Burlington Vicinage held its second Adoption Day ceremony Nov. 16 to coincide with National Adoption Awareness Month.

From toddlers to teenagers, children and their new families came through the Courts Facility to finalize their adoptions.

Twenty-five children went home with their new families. There were single parents, families adopting siblings and foster parents becoming permanent moms and dads.

The emotional event was a collaboration of the Judiciary, the New Jersey Department of Children and Families' Division of Youth and Family Services, and the Burlington County Surrogate's Office.

Judge Jeanne T. Covert, who presides over Children-in-Court cases, finalized the adoptions along with Assignment Judge Ronald E. Bookbinder and Patricia B. Roe, presiding family division judge.

The new families celebrated with family photographs, balloons and gift bags at a luncheon, where they shared their stories, tears and happiness with each other.

Lisa von Pier, DYFS area director, Trial Court Administrator Jude Del Preore and Bookbinder addressed the families and guests.

"We gather to say thank you to our Burlington County

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Judge Jeanne T. Covert and Carol Shields pose with Mariah Fishman, 4 after Shields adopted the child during Burlington Vicinage's Adoption Day observance. Adoption ceremonies and celebrations occurred in courthouses throughout the state to provide children with new homes and families

## Language Services Manager Says Adios to the Judiciary

**By Mike Mathis**  
Judiciary Times Editor

Robert Joe Lee may have spent much of his time in an office at the Administrative Office of the Courts, but he never forgot how he arrived or why he was there.

His co-workers and the people he's served are located far beyond the walls of the Hughes Justice Complex.

"That's my audience," Lee said, pointing to a map several weeks before he retired as the architect and head of the Judiciary's Language Services Unit. "You get to meet the most fascinating people from all the cultures in the world."

Lee, 60, retired from the Judiciary on Dec.31,2008,



**Robert Joe Lee**

weeks shy of his 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary with the court system

The Language Services Unit didn't exist prior to Lee's arrival in the Judiciary.

Under Lee's leadership, New Jersey has become a national leader in providing high-quality interpreting services for litigants

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## Robert Jee Lee says Au Revoir to a Lengthy Judiciary Career

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and witnesses with limited English proficiency.

New Jersey has developed a comprehensive program including statewide interpreting policies and programs, testing, and translation of forms and other documents.

Many aspects of the program have been adopted around the country by other courts seeking to emulate New Jersey's success.

In 2007, the latest year for which statistics are available, the Judiciary used a combination of staff, freelance

and telephone interpreters to provide interpreting services in 82 languages, including American Sign Language.

Interpreters assisted in nearly 87,000 events, including trials, hearings, arraignments, conferences, and support services such as intake interviews and probation supervision contacts.

"His knowledge and passion for interpreting have really set the course for the New Jersey Judiciary," Leigh Eastty, who heads the Programs and Procedures Unit, said of Lee.

"Although I am so sorry to see him retire, I know that he has built us such a strong foundation that I am confident that 10 and 20 years from now, his programs will continue to flourish," she said

A Texas native whose parents were missionaries in Central America, Lee wanted to be a theologian or a biblical scholar.

He conducted Bible study sessions in Spanish to Hispanic inmates at Trenton State Prison and East Jersey State Prison in Rahway when he was a student at Princeton Theological Seminary in the early 1970s.

The inmates' main complaint, he said, was that they did not understand court proceedings because there either was no interpreter or they didn't understand the assigned interpreter.

There were no restrictions on who could interpret, so non-certified court staff, police officers and even children were often pressed into service, he said.

"I got to know a group of people on a personal level," Lee said. "I found what life is like from the bottom of society up."

The experience helped Lee decide to make improving lives of non-English speaking individuals his life's work.

He considered becoming a teacher or a bilingual social worker before he took a job as a researcher in the probation services division in 1978 under Harvey Goldstein, who now directs the Intensive Supervision Program.

At the time, there was only one

other bilingual employee at the AOC, he said. One of his early tasks involved developing a Spanish plea agreement form.

In 1982, Supreme Court Justice Robert N. Wilentz formed the Supreme Court Task Force on Interpreter and Translation Services.

As a result of the task force's 1985 recommendations, a permanent program was approved to ensure equal access to the courts for those with limited English proficiency (LEP).

Lee was asked to serve as chief of the new unit charged with the development of statewide standards and uniform policies for interpreted proceedings.

"We built the program, the three of us, from scratch," said Lee, referring to himself and the secretary and sign language interpreter he hired.

In 1994, the Supreme Court approved a code of conduct for interpreters.

Today, the AOC must approve all staff interpreters, who must pass a rigorous exam.

The Judiciary now has 61 court interpreters, including interpreters in Polish, Korean and American Sign Language.

Lee said the need for interpreters is growing globally.

"The globe is shrinking," Lee said. "The need (for interpreters) is international. The problems are international. The concerns are international."

Lee, who spent most of December helping successor Brenda Carrasquillo acclimate to her new job, said he would undergo a "period of rehabilitation" that involves exercising and playing the baritone horn before he engages in writing and consulting.

He said he won't miss the stress of the job.

"I'll miss feeling I'm making a difference in the world everyday," he said.

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The chief justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court is Stuart Rabner. The acting administrative director of the courts is Judge Glenn A. Grant.

Please send short news articles [saved as Word documents in plain text without formatting](#), as well as photos and/or suggestions to Mike Mathis, Editor, *Judiciary Times*, Office of Communications and Community Relations, PO Box 037, Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, Trenton NJ 08625-0037 or via e-mail at [Mike.Mathis@judiciary.state.nj.us](mailto:Mike.Mathis@judiciary.state.nj.us). Submissions are subject to editing, and not all can be published.

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Claudia Astore; Deidra Carvin; Carmen Flores; Brian Giustozzi; Judith Irizarry; Donna Mazzanti; Kathleen Obringer; Julie Palmer; Sonal Pushko; Maria Roberson; Laura Simoldoni; Janet Slocum; Fern Varasano and the AOC Print Shop.

## Courthouses Host Adoption Day Festivities for Families

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families that open their hearts and homes to children in need of a loving family and a place to call home,” Bookbinder said.

The Alliance for Children’s Rights began National Adoption Day in 2000 to raise awareness and to help finalize adoptions across the country.

### ESSEX

The family division of Essex Vicinage celebrated its Eighth Annual National Adoption Day on Saturday, Nov. 15, 2008.

It was a wonderful day to honor the legal and moral bonds created by the decision to adopt. Gov. Jon S. Corzine and Acting Administrative Director of the Courts Judge Glenn A. Grant were in attendance to observe the creation of “forever families.”

The event at the Wilentz Justice Complex in Newark marked the vicinage’s eighth consecutive year of participating in the nationwide event to raise public awareness of the number of children in foster care waiting to find permanent loving families.

Adoption hearings for 77 children and their families began at 8:30 a.m. and were presided over by five judges: Sallyanne Floria, presiding judge of the family part; Margaret M. Hayden; Craig R. Harris; Thomas P. Zampino; and David B. Katz.

Court interpreter Robert Zemser was on hand to help facilitate the proceedings. The addition of interpreting services to this year’s celebration helped accommodate limited English proficient adoptive families and upheld the Judiciary’s mission to provide quality service.

Officers from the Essex County Sheriff’s Department were also on site to provide security and to help guide families throughout the court complex.

Coordination of this type of event requires the collective effort of the court, the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS), the Essex County Surrogate’s Office, adoption

professionals and attorneys.

Representatives from the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteered to make this day special for the participants by contributing coloring books and other items.

After the hearings, DYFS sponsored a brunch celebration at Rutgers School of Law-Newark for the adoptive families. The celebration included the presentation of plaques, gifts for the children, family entertainment and photos.

According to the National Adoption Day Web site, more than 300 events are held each year throughout the country to finalize the adoptions of children in foster care and to celebrate all families who adopt.

Senior Probation Officer Angela Evans, Children-in-Court Team Leader Karen D. Smith and law clerk Sandra Ostwald worked tirelessly to prepare for the day.

Other family division staff members contributing to the successful event included family law clerks Simple Thomas, Natalie Giraldo Dennis Feeney and Rachel Packer.

The following court clerks also participated: Ronda Baker; Lavonda Davenport; Tashana Molette; Maribel Serrano-Lopez; Gwen Terrell; Danita Welch and Moniesha Williams.

Additional family division staff on hand were Sabrina Beyah; Toni Brown; Patricia Draude; Fantasha Hill; Lila Maxwell-Dasi; Lynn Norcia; Bridgett Patillo and Joenika Ponder.

Essex Vicinage was proud to be a part of this joyous, significant, life-changing day for children and families in New Jersey. To learn more about National Adoption Day, visit [nationaladoptionday.org](http://nationaladoptionday.org).

### MERCER

Mercer Vicinage, in collaboration with the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) and the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Mercer County



Mercer Vicinage Assignment Judge Linda R. Feinberg speaks during Adoption Day activities.

presented Mercer’s first National Adoption Day program on Nov. 14.

Family Presiding Judge Mary C. Jacobson defined the day as “a day of love and commitment” while describing the long and engaged process of becoming an adopting family.

“You bring special stories to this event,” she said.

Assignment Judge Linda R. Feinberg commended organizers and participants. She gave a brief history of the program and reflected on the many children who are waiting to be adopted.

“There are children, wonderful loving children, who need a home,” Feinberg said. “In a small way you are the messengers of hope for these children, and you will spread the word in your churches, synagogues, schools and communities. The gift of love and security is the greatest gift we can give a child.”

Other speakers included two adoptive parents.

Families were treated to a continental breakfast and a magician. Boomer, the Trenton Thunder’s mascot, delighted the children with high fives and handshakes.

Family portraits were taken of the new families.

Judge Lawrence P. DeBello, who hears Children-in-Court cases, congratulated the families and expressed his appreciation to everyone involved. He presided over 12 adoptions. Family Assistant Division Manager Amy Fischer coordinated the event.

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# Adoption Day Means a New Life for Many Children

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## MONMOUTH

Monmouth Vicinage's family division was delighted when it learned that 31 children would be adopted by 25 families at its Adoption Day program Nov. 20, 2008. This exceeded the number of adoption proceedings from programs held in previous years.

More than 200 guests attended the pre-adoption ceremony to hear from adoptive parents and children and to learn more about the adoption process.

Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson and family division Presiding Judge Honora O'Brien Kilgallen offered remarks, focusing on the importance of the family unit in our society.

Speakers with first-hand experience related their heartwarming stories to the audience. Adoptive parent Kate Sharkey spoke about the joy that her family experienced after adopting two baby girls. Partners James Scavone and Paul Chalifour related how they came to adopt three brothers, 16-year old twins and an 11-year old named Freddie.

Freddie explained how his life has changed since becoming part of a new family. He said he enjoys playing the piano, viola and videogames and waveboarding.

He said he believes that his happiness helps him to maintain straight A's in school.

While the families awaited their adoption proceedings, they were photographed by Evan and Eric Sanborn, the adoptive twin sons of James Scavone and Paul Chalifour, and Steven Ehnot from Monmouth Cares, a non-profit care management agency.

The families were presented with a framed photograph. Each adopted child went home with a teddy bear and a pin that read, "I'm special - I'm adopted."

These words seemed to capture the true essence of the occasion.

Several media outlets, including



Court Services Supervisor Fern Varasano and Assistant Family Division Manager Claudia Astore worked diligently to ensure that Monmouth Vicinage's Adoption Day program was a success.

the Asbury Park Press and Millenium Radio, covered the event.

**The following staff contributed to the Adoption Day stories: Donna L. Mazzanti, administrative specialist 4, Burlington Vicinage; Deidra**

**Carvin, assistant family division manager, Essex Vicinage; Judith Irizarry, ombudsman, Mercer Vicinage and Janet Slocum, administrative specialist 4, Claudia Astore, assistant family division manager and Fern Varasano, court services supervisor, 2, Monmouth Vicinage.**

## New Lawyers Admitted in Burlington Vicinage

**By Donna L. Mazzanti**  
Administrative Specialist 4  
Burlington Vicinage

Burlington Vicinage held a swearing-in ceremony for 21 new attorneys Dec. 3, 2008 in the ceremonial courtroom at the Olde Courthouse in Mount Holly.

Friends and families filled the courtroom to witness the new lawyers being admitted to the bar after graduating from law school and passing the bar exam.

Assignment Judge Ronald E. Bookbinder presided over the ceremony and administered the oath to the new attorneys.

The new lawyers included 13 Burlington Vicinage law clerks and two Appellate Division clerks.

Judge Michael Haas, whose daughter Melissa Ann was among the candidates, recited the lawyer's pledge with the new lawyers.

Judge Michael Hogan encouraged the new attorneys to strive for excellence, make a difference in their communities and maintain a sense of humor.

### Editor's Note

The deadline for the spring 2009 edition of the Judiciary Times is Friday, March 20.

I am interested in feature stories about court programs and newsworthy profiles about judges and court staff.

I'm also interested in current stories and information about court staff and events and submissions of awards, honors, promotions and appointments for JT Briefing, the Judiciary's new monthly e-newsletter.

JT Briefing can be found at [njcourts.com/jt/index.htm](http://njcourts.com/jt/index.htm).

I can be contacted at [Mike.Mathis@judiciary.state.nj.us](mailto:Mike.Mathis@judiciary.state.nj.us).

## Veteran Judiciary Employee Retires After 44 Years

The Supremes were popular on the radio when Joe DeMarco started in 1964

By Mike Mathis  
Judiciary Times Editor

The Supremes' first number one hit, "Where Did Our Love Go," began its ascent to the top of the charts in August 1964.

Lyndon B. Johnson was president of the United States (he had just been nominated for a four-year term during the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City), a stamp cost a nickel, a gallon of gas cost 30 cents and the average price of a new car was \$3,500.

And Joe DeMarco began working for the Judiciary, a fresh graduate of Cathedral High School in Trenton. He never worked anywhere else.

"I needed a job and decided court work would be very interesting," said DeMarco, 62, who will retire Jan. 31 after a 44-year career with the Judiciary, most of which he spent with the Supreme Court. "A neighbor who worked for the court took my application, and here I am."

DeMarco has worked for every chief justice except Arthur T. Vanderbilt, the first chief justice under the 1947 constitution, and for every Supreme Court clerk under the constitution.

Supreme Court Clerk Stephen Townsend described DeMarco as thoughtful, incisive and meticulous, a person who has a passion for "getting it right."

"He is extraordinarily hardworking and has dealt with any and all assignments that have come his way in a professional and more-than-competent manner," Townsend said. "He has been a terrific teacher and trainer to the Supreme Court's staff, acting with patience and perseverance.

"He also is devoted – seriously devoted – to accuracy, and his actions reflect a thorough understanding of why that is so important for an employee of the Supreme Court," Townsend said. "Over the years,



Joe DeMarco

the justices have found him to be an invaluable asset, ably handling everything from opinion facesheets to arcane requests for materials relating to pending cases."

DeMarco was just 17, one month shy of his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, when he began working for the Superior Court, which was then housed with other Judiciary operations in the State House Annex.

He performed a variety of duties, including opening and sorting mail, reviewing judgments and typing and indexing docket sheets for newly-filed cases.

In those days, cases from throughout the state were filed in Trenton, not in the individual courthouses as they are today, he said.

DeMarco took a clerical position when he moved to the Supreme Court. He recalled loading boxes of work into justices' vehicles that were parked on the side of the State House Annex.

Today DeMarco serves as an administrative supervisor and supervises the financial, calendaring and scheduling, facilities and library functions of the Supreme Court Clerk's Office. He creates ad hoc (on demand) reports from the court's case management system as requested by the clerk.

"Working for the Supreme Court has been a great experience," DeMarco said. "It is one of the highest regarded Supreme Courts nationally."

DeMarco said he plans to perform volunteer work at his church after he retires, but he admits he'll miss his

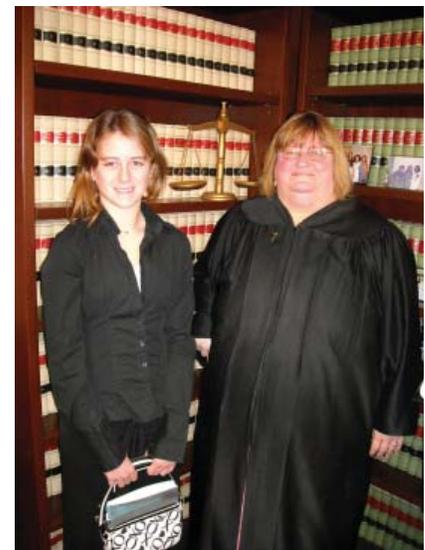
co-workers.

He's enjoyed working for the Judiciary so much, in fact, that he has used fewer than 10 sick days since August 1964, he said.

DeMarco said he's never complained about his job and never considered leaving.

"It's been very rewarding for me to work here, and the people I work with are all family," he said. "I enjoyed what I did. I never reached the point where I was bored or unhappy. I always felt there were new challenges."

### Shadowing a Judge in Atlantic/Cape May



Rebecca McLaughlin, a student at Brigantine Middle School in Brigantine, Atlantic County, visited Superior Court Judge Carol E. Higbee, presiding judge in the civil division in Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage, for a half day on Oct. 23.

Rebecca interviewed Higbee for her school newspaper, sat on the bench during the Accutane trial and had an opportunity to ask questions.

The program was part of the vicinage's annual Law Day celebration. On Oct. 30, Rebecca told her class what she learned. Trial Court Administrator Howard H. Berchtold Jr. attended and spoke about his job.

## Ocean Heritage Festival Reflects Staff Diversity

By **Brian Giustozzi**  
and **Sonal Pushko**  
Ocean Vicinage

Ocean Vicinage has a diverse group of employees from many cultures who observe time-honored traditions.

Ocean Vicinage held its first cultural diversity day, "The Heritage Festival," on Oct. 1, 2008.

The event was held in the Mancini Room at the Toms River branch of the Ocean County Library.

There was a wonderful crowd in attendance, which included judges and close to 200 employees.

They were treated to an array of ethnic dishes ranging from Hungarian goulash and jerk chicken wings to delectable desserts such as apple pie and Italian walnut cookies.

There were samples of many other homemade dishes that were prepared with pride by our employees.

Employees also brought in an assortment of items and artifacts that represented many cultures.

There was clothing from Africa and India; coins and currency from around the world; Russian paintings, sculptures, and war memorabilia; pottery, jewelry, books, and linens from Mexico, Bulgaria, India and Egypt; origami and silk items from Asia and many other treasured pieces from different parts of the world.

The American Lithuanian club made a special appearance sharing beautiful cultural items and delectable sweets from Lithuania.

The Heritage Festival also featured four dance routines performed by two different groups.

The Toms River North Step Dance Team, known as N'Step, performed two synchronized step dances that had the crowd riveted.

A Latin dance group, the D4C, performed two Latin American folkloric dances.

The event was organized by the EEO/AA Advisory Committee and others.



**Family division manager Brendon Toner, retired Judge Peter J. Giovine, Assignment Judge Vincent J. Grasso and Trial Court Administrator Richard J. Prifold enjoy Ocean Vicinage's Heritage Festival.**

## Monmouth Vicinage Hosts International Festival

By **Carmen Flores, EEO/AA Officer and Janet Slocum, Administrative Specialist 4**  
Monmouth Vicinage

Monmouth Vicinage held its third International Celebration Oct. 17, 2008 with the theme "International Artistry: A Celebration of Universal Art through Sight and Sound."

Nearly 300 guests were captivated by the transformation of the jury room into an art gallery and cultural performance venue.

The celebration included performances by artists from around the world and a collection of 31 original contemporary pieces of artwork that were displayed around the room.

"We may celebrate our differences, but we must rejoice in all of the qualities we have in common as human beings. By building mutual bonds, we will be driven to meet the diverse needs of our citizenry," Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson said.

The stage was opened with a touching performance of the "Star-Spangled Banner" by Veronica Kole. Remarks from Lawson and Judges Thomas Scully and Honora O'Brien-

Kilgallen, chairs of the EEO/AA and Minority Concerns Committees and co-sponsors of the program, followed.

There also were memorable ethnic performances, including world-renowned Indian performers Archana Joglekar, a Marathi actress and celebrated Kathak dancer, and Mitali Banerjee Bhawmick, a classical vocalist and instrumentalist.

Another outstanding cultural performance was given by Chief David "Stands With Song" Hughes, principal chief of the Cherokee Nation of New Jersey. Chief David coaxed members of the audience, including judges and staff, into dancing an interactive Native American friendship dance.

Students from the Jersey Shore Chinese School performed a Chinese peacock dance. There also was a colorful demonstration of international native dress attire from Africa, Asia, South America and the United States, with a narration by Deadra Hubbard and modeled by employees Taposi Chatterjee, Sharon Daniels, Gwendolyn V. Jenkins, Michele Krkuti, Angela Lee, a member of the Minor-

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# Monmouth Forms Criminal Training Committee

By Janet Slocum, Administrative Specialist 4  
 Maria Roberson, Senior Probation Officer and  
 Julie Palmer, Judiciary Clerk 3  
 Monmouth Vicinage

*“How can I learn more about Drug Court?”*

*“What procedures are used by the Prosecutor’s Office?”*

*“What safety measures are in effect at the county jail?”*

In response to numerous questions like these, several probation officers and clerical employees in the Monmouth Vicinage criminal division formed a training committee known as the Criminal Division Training Committee (CDTC).

The committee’s plan was to offer division-specific training so staff could gain a better understanding of how related agencies and programs function.

They decided on a “Lunch and Learn” format so that new information could be presented in a comfortable setting.

Perhaps the most important committee objective was to initiate positive and productive interaction which would ultimately result in a more effective system.

The CDTC, Court Services Supervisor 2 Paula Francisco, Senior Probation Officers Maria Roberson and Carol Marion, Probation Officer Timothy Campbell, and Judiciary Clerks Julie Palmer and Holly Dell’olio, began by surveying division staff to determine the most relevant training topics.

Former criminal division Presiding Judge Bette E. Uhrmacher spoke at the first session.

“It was interesting to get different insight and understand the judge’s thought process,” Probation Officer Shally Rivera said. “The friendly atmosphere encouraged everyone to participate and ask questions.”

The next class was led by Drug Court Coordinator Adri Lieb. It was



Staff from Monmouth Vicinage’s criminal division listen to a topic presented during a recent “Lunch and Learn” session.

followed by a session presented by an attorney from the Office of the Public Defender.

Staff responded with great enthusiasm to all of the classes and made it clear that additional training should be planned.

The committee subsequently arranged a field trip so staff could visit the Monmouth County Jail. The trip included a tour of the facility, and staff was given information on lockdown procedures, handling of contraband materials and safety requirements.

They were surprised to learn that even their cell phones were considered contraband. They also were interested in the explanation of how hostage situations are handled.

One probation officer commented that, although she had frequently visited the jail to interview defendants, she was surprised at the tremendous amount of new information she gained from the presentation.

Another well-received session was offered by an executive member of the New Hope Foundation, who discussed addiction treatment methods. In a reciprocal gesture, Court Services Supervisor 2 Paula Francisco recently provided a fundamental criminal

case management class to New Hope employees.

Future speakers are being scheduled to conduct sessions on topics such as domestic violence, sexual assault, the Prosecutor’s Office’s Victim/Witness Program and psychological evalua-

## Monmouth Hosts International Celebration

**Continued from page 6**

ity Concerns Committee, Nandini Shah, Sonnia Supple, Eli Vazquez and Randall Yorker and a Spanish vocal performance by Veronica Kole.

Bookmarks featuring Chinese calligraphy were made and given out by Angela Lee, a member of the Minority Concerns Committee.

Guests enjoyed a wide assortment of international desserts.

Scully expressed his heartfelt appreciation to the performers, artists and nearly 100 volunteers for the role they placed in the success of the celebration.

“The art exhibit and cultural performances were spectacular and were enjoyed very much by our judges, staff, jurors and members of the public,” he said. “We appreciate that members of the community joined us to promote awareness of world cultures.”

## Bergen Vicinage Offers Docent Program For Tours

By **Laura A. Simoldoni**  
**Human Resources Manager**  
**Bergen Vicinage**

Staff and visitors to the Bergen County Justice Center may know little about the building's rich history and the history of courthouses that preceded it.

Bergen Vicinage began a docent program in December 2008 to educate the public about the building by focusing on its architecture, stained glass and artwork.

Bergen Vicinage Ombudsman Jennifer V. Shultis, Volunteer /CDR Coordinator Nola Steele and intern Ryan E. Coyle were instrumental in developing the docent program.

Shultis and Steele will be working with Coyle to train other college students to assist in expanding the program, which was created with the support of Assignment Judge Peter E. Doyne and Trial Court Administrator Jon Goodman.

The current Bergen County Courthouse is the sixth built for Bergen County.

In 1683, four counties were created in East Jersey: Bergen, Essex, Middlesex and Monmouth.

In 1710, Hackensack became the county seat in Bergen County. The first courthouse was built five years later in a location three blocks from the current courthouse. The first courthouse also housed a jail.

The second courthouse was built in 1734 near the Green, but it was burned by the British in 1780 during the Revolutionary War.

The third courthouse, a log building, was then built in Oakland. The courthouse later moved to the home of John Hopper in Ho-Ho-Kus.

After the war, the courthouse was moved to the house of Archibald Campbell in Hackensack.

Bergen County Freeholder Peter Zabriskie later donated land near his Hackensack home at the northeast corner of Main and Bridge Streets for a new courthouse and jail, which opened in 1786.



Intern Ryan Coyle was instrumental in developing Bergen Vicinage's Docent Program.

A new courthouse was built in 1822 at the location of the current courthouse. It was utilized for more than 90 years.

James Riely Gordon, a civil engineer, won a competition to design the Bergen County Courthouse. The style of the courthouse is known as American Renaissance.

Construction began in 1910 and was completed in 1912 at a cost of \$1 million. The Medieval Revival-style jail also was completed in 1912. The interior dome of the courthouse rotunda is modeled after the Pantheon in Rome.

The first floor of the rotunda building featured a fountain, which was removed in 1930.

As part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930s, murals were painted in Courtrooms 253 and 352. Another mural was added in Courtroom 357 in the 1940s. The murals were designed by Teaneck resident William Winter.



### 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.*