

Justice Matters

A publication from the Maryland Judiciary

December 2001

Judge Vaughan Assumes Helm of District Court, Replaces Judge Rasin

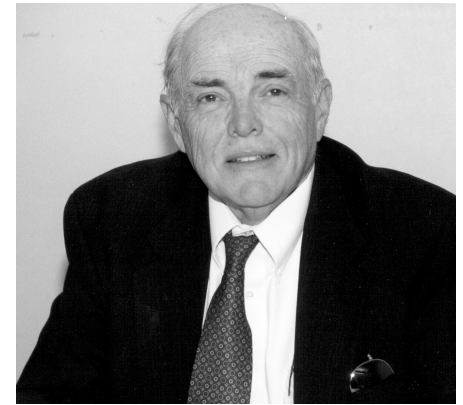


photo by Ron White

September 18 was a momentous day for the District Court of Maryland, as Judge James N. Vaughan, formerly the Senior Administrative Judge in the District Court, became its new Chief Judge. He replaces former Chief Judge Martha F. Rasin, who announced on August 22 that she had decided to return to the Anne Arundel District Court Bench, to concentrate on her first love — being a trial judge. In announcing her decision, she said, “I am proud of what we accomplished during the past five years. But my closest associates know that I loved being a trial court judge and that I missed it tremendously. It seemed right to make the transition back to the courtroom at the five-year mark.”

Judge Vaughan, a popular and well-loved judge, is renowned for his legal excellence. According to Chief Judge Bell, who solicited Judge Vaughan for the position, “He possesses a strong vision for the future of the District Court, and I am confident that he will continue the outstanding work that Chief Judge Rasin has accomplished during her tenure.”

In accepting the position, Judge Vaughan said, “This is an exciting prospect, and I look forward to the challenge. Judge Rasin filled large shoes, and made them larger.” Judge Vaughan plans to continue the legacy of his two esteemed predecessors. When asked about his view of the District Court and his vision for the future, he said, “The District Court for the first 25 years should have been known as the

(cont. on p. 8)

Race, Ethnic Bias in Courts to be Studied

In response to growing concerns over racial and ethnic bias in Maryland’s court system, as evidenced by a newly-released Bar/Bench study, Court of Appeals Chief Judge Robert M. Bell has created the Commission on Racial and Ethnicity Fairness in the Judicial Process. This new Commission will examine instances of, and perceptions about, racial and ethnic bias cited in the Select Committee on Gender Equality’s “2001 Retrospective Report.” Court of Appeals Judge Dale R. Cathell will chair the Commission and Carmen Shepard and U.S. Magistrate Charles Day will serve as Vice Chairs.

“It is imperative that our legal system operate without bias of any kind, and be perceived as dispensing justice fairly and equitably,” Judge Bell said. “Working together, the Bench and Bar have responded effectively to gender fairness issues. Now, we will begin to

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Justice Matters is published quarterly.
We welcome your comments or ideas.

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Judiciary's Legislative Package for 2002

The Judicial Conference has presented its legislative package to the General Assembly. Proposed legislation includes:

- **Circuit Courts Rental of Space for Clerks of Court** - This bill would implement the Judiciary's Circuit Court Action Plan recommendations with regard to State funding of circuit court operations. In effect, this bill would require the State to pay leasing costs to local jurisdictions for Clerks of Court offices.
- **Clerks of Court - Auditor's Reports and Bonds - Recording and Indexing** - This bill would repeal a requirement for recording and indexing of auditor reports relating to the distribution and proceeds of a sale of real or personal property and bonds.
- **Interim Domestic Violence Orders and Interim Peace Orders Issuance by District Court Commissioners; and Constitutional Amendment: District Court Commissioners - Powers and Duties** - This legislation would expand a commissioner's authority to include the power to issue interim *ex parte* orders in domestic violence cases and peace orders to afford 24-hour/7 day/week coverage.
- **Land Records Improvement Fund** - This bill would remove the sunset provision and raise the present \$5 maximum surcharge to \$10, at the State Court Administrator's discretion.
- **Clients' Security Trust Fund Renaming** - This legislation changes the CSTF's name to the Clients' Protection Fund of the Bar of Maryland, which better reflects its mission.
- **Interpreters** - This bill addresses interpreter costs in civil proceedings for both circuit and District courts. While it is clear in Article 27 that all appropriate interpreter costs are paid by the State in criminal proceedings, the statute lacks similar clarity for appropriate civil proceedings.
- **Juries in Civil Proceedings** - Requested by the Rules Committee, the bill would enable the committee to recommend to the Court of Appeals an amendment to Rule 511, to eliminate the concept of "alternate jurors," and permit more than six regular jurors instead.

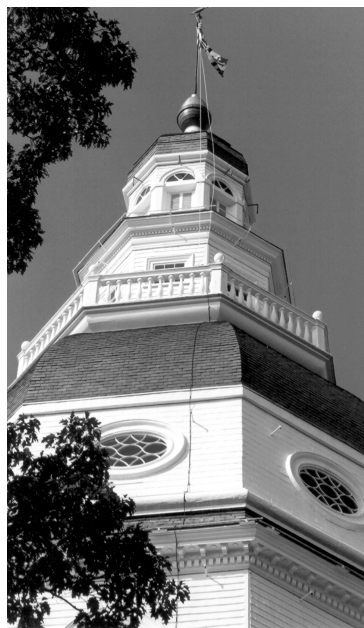


photo by Mary Brighthaupt

— Kelley O'Connor



photo by Jack Fino

Baltimore City Family Division Gets New Home

After years of dreams and months of renovations, Baltimore City's Family Services Division finally has a new home. A ceremony to celebrate the opening of this new space, dedicated to assisting the families of Baltimore, was held on October 18. A highlight of the ceremony was the unveiling of a portrait of Judge Robert B. Watts, who served as a Maryland judge from 1968 to 1985, and was one of the guiding lights for creating a family division in Maryland. Participants were also treated to a special singing engagement from Nu World Art Ensemble.

"This court deals with families in crisis," said Baltimore City Circuit Court Administrative Judge Ellen M. Heller. "The new family division allows us to coordinate support services and assist families in making these programs more accessible and integrated to their needs." The new space even more effectively meets the needs of Baltimore families. Integral parts of the Family Division that were previously fragmented throughout Courthouse East and the Clarence M. Mitchell Courthouse are now located in a single area. Space is also allocated for separate waiting rooms for children and parents. Paintings and art projects created in collaboration with the Maryland Institute College of Art and its 'Community Arts Project' will be displayed throughout.

"As we dedicate our new facility, bringing under one roof so many resources for families, we rededicate ourselves to the mission of our family division," said Baltimore City Circuit Judge Marcella A. Holland. "We are especially excited that we now have the space to both continue existing programs and create new, innovative services to better serve the families of Baltimore City."



Judge David B. Mitchell Accepts National Position

It is with great sadness that we announce the departure of Judge David B. Mitchell, one of Baltimore City Circuit Court's most beloved jurists. He has been recruited for a prestigious national position, as Director and Chief Executive Officer of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges in Reno, NV.

Although he is best-known for his outstanding work as Judge-in-Charge of the Baltimore City Criminal Docket from 1999-2001, Judge Mitchell's first love is helping children in need. From 1984 to 1995, he served as Judge-in-Charge of Baltimore City's Juvenile Docket, where he made sweeping changes, including bringing in volunteers to advocate for children going through the system, and lobbying for the new Juvenile Justice Center, scheduled to open next year.

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Law Judges (NJCFJ), which Judge Mitchell will now head, was founded in 1937 to improve the effectiveness of our nation's juvenile courts.

FCCIP Recognizes Leaders

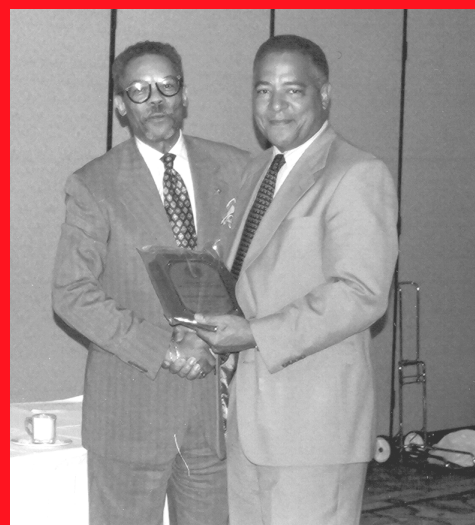


photo by Maria Smiroldo

Chief Judge Bell and award recipient Delegate Kenneth Montague

On October 4, a recognition dinner was held at the Sheraton Hotel in Columbia to celebrate the Foster Care Court Improvement Project's accomplishments.

Commission on Fairness, contd. from p. 1



photo courtesy of Maryland State Bar Association

left to right: Carmen Shepard, AOC's Will Howard, Court Information Officer Sally Rankin, Court of Appeals Judge Dale R. Cathell, Chief Judge Bell. U.S. Magistrate Charles Day not pictured.

look more closely at issues of racial and ethnic equality.”

According to the new Bar/Bench study results, many of the court system's existing gender bias problems have been eliminated, through educational programs, judicial training, new legislation and other corrective measures. Yet, problems of gender, racial and ethnic bias still exist.

In 1989, a Bench/Bar study exposed widespread gender bias in Maryland's court system, and the Bar and Bench immediately created the Select Committee on Gender Equality to address these concerns. Since then, education, awareness, new laws, Bar/Bench civility codes, professionalism courses and judicial training programs have sensitized judges, attorneys, litigants and court personnel to gender bias issues, and fostered a greater awareness of attitudes, behaviors and perceptions that promote equality. When the 2000 “follow-up” poll was

conducted, Chief Judge Bell requested the inclusion of questions assessing racial and ethnic fairness in the legal system.

“The Conference of Chief Justices passed a resolution urging every state court to ensure gender equality, and Maryland heeded the call,” Judge Bell said. “The Conference passed a similar resolution with regard to racial and ethnic fairness. Results from the national conference on public trust and confidence in the justice system and Maryland's own public survey report that perceptions of inequality are prevalent,” Judge Bell said. “With the strong commitment of MSBA's President to eliminate bias in the legal system, the time is right for us to expand our efforts.”

-Janet Eveleth, MSBA, contributed to this story

I'Net Team

The Technology Oversight Board recently established an I'Net Policy Team to make recommendations regarding content policies and standards and to develop a process for all Internet and Intranet requests.

The Team is chaired by Baltimore City Circuit Court Judge William D. Quarles and is comprised of representatives from the Office of the State Court Administrator, District Court Headquarters, Clerks of the Circuit Court, District Administrative Clerks, the Court Information Office, and JIS.

ADR Practitioners Get Code of Conduct

As of October 31, Maryland mediators, arbitrators and other ADR practitioners must now abide by newly-approved Standards of Conduct, which are reflected in Maryland Rules 17-104(a)(4) and 17-105(a) (1). These Standards perform three major functions:

- to serve as a guide for the conduct of ADR practitioners;
- to inform the participants involved in ADR processes; and
- to promote public confidence in ADR processes as a means for resolving disputes or addressing issues.

MACRO Executive Director Rachel Wohl was very pleased with the final product. “MACRO's Professional Responsibilities Committee, chaired by Professor Roger Wolf, did a terrific job of adapting the ABA, AAA, SPIDR Mediators' Standards to apply to the non-mediator ADR practitioners covered by Title 17,” she said.

NEWS FROM THE BENCH

Prince George's County District Court welcomes Judges Richard A. Palumbo and Leo Green Jr., who fill the vacancies created by the elevation of Judge Melanie Shaw Geter to the Circuit Court, and the retirement of Judge Gerard Devlin. Both have demonstrated a serious commitment to public service — Judge Palumbo, as a longtime Delegate in the General Assembly, and Judge Green, as a Bowie City councilman since 1996. Judge Palumbo also spent 30 years practicing law in Prince George's County, most recently as Senior Partner with Palumbo, Palumbo, & Zafirooulos. Judge Green has been in private practice with the firm of Green & Green since 1985.

Judge Gloria Butta joins the Baltimore County Orphans Court, filling the vacancy created by the death of her husband, Judge Sal Butta. Prior to her appointment, she had spent 20 years working for the Baltimore County Circuit Court Clerk's Office.

Best wishes to our retired judges, Prince George's County District Judge Gerard F. Devlin, Prince George's County Circuit Judge Joseph S. Casula, Baltimore County Circuit Judge Edward A. DeWalters, Jr., and Anne Arundel County Circuit Judge James C. Cawood, Jr.

Law Library Unveils New Service for the Hearing Impaired

On November 15, Maryland's law library became the first state law library in the nation to offer a communication system for the hearing and speech impaired. It takes the traditional relay system, which relies on an intermediary to transmit messages, one step farther, by allowing the user to actually "speak" directly with a law librarian. Similar to instant messaging, the system is accessed by calling a special phone number.

Law Library Director Michael S. Miller is a strong proponent of this cutting-edge system. "Accessibility to the courts in our State is one of the major tenets of our Chief Judge," he said. "Public law libraries are stakeholders in that expressed mission, and now the State Law Library has taken a major step forward in providing more meaningful and direct access to the citizens of Maryland with hearing and speech disabilities who have the need to find more information about the law and their government."

At an unveiling ceremony and ribbon cutting where the new technology was previewed, Chief Judge Bell said the system is part of the Judiciary's commitment to provide information to a public that increasingly seeks direct access to the courts. This service is available to the public by calling the Law Library at: 410-260-1571, or toll-free in-state at 1-877-233-3871.



photo by Dan Clark

Chief Judge Bell cuts the ribbon on the library's new communication system for the hearing and speech impaired. (l-r: Leonard Blackshear, President of vendor Telesonic, Inc., Chief Judge Bell, Michael Miller)

Librarian Travels to China

Joanne She, Head of Technical Services at the Maryland State Law Library, was one of 10 speakers from the U.S. invited to present a paper at an international conference of the Chinese Society of Library Science.

Ms. She was one of 1,000 attendees. Her presentation was entitled: "Using OCLC CatME to Decrease Online Cost and Improve Efficiency."

EMPLOYEES



ON THE MOVE

Circuit Court

Allegany County

Welcome Jacqualine Harper.

Anne Arundel County

Welcome Norman Finkle, Roxanne Neil, Sarah Schaffner, Sheila Taylor, Carrie Ehmke, and Matthew Welker.

Baltimore City

Welcome Michael Fleming, Ray Lunn, and Angel Maes. Congratulations on your promotion Denise Stevens, Sharon Myles, and Beverly Tillman.

Baltimore County

Welcome Christine Gardner. Congratulations on your promotion Elizabeth Adams and Elizabeth Domozych. Best wishes on your retirement Angeline Julio.

Carroll County

Welcome Kim Caprorola and Karen Kibler.

Cecil County

Congratulations on your promotion Susanne Wells.

Charles County

Welcome Richard Day and Joyce Tippet. Best wishes on your retirement/new role Donna Burch.

Frederick County

Welcome Linsi Byrd and Tammy Keeney.

Montgomery County

Welcome Richard Beall, Lynn Garfield, Kevin Jefferson, Roza Mekonnen, Jamie Mohler, and Enid Williams. Congratulations on your promotion Letitia Douglas and Theresa Mozzano. Best wishes on your retirement Marie Bonanno and Gladys Dwiggins.

Prince George's County

Welcome Darrin Hawkins, Tiffani Jones, Stephanie Lewis, Nicole Thomas, and Wendy Wade.

Saint Mary's County

Welcome Charito Stottlemeyer. Congratulations on your promotion Kathleen Emig.

Somerset County

Welcome Linda Jamison and Melissa Smith. Congratulations on your promotion Jacqueline Johnson and Kimberli Lee. Best wishes on your retirement Rebecca Boston.

Washington County

Welcome Lisa Quick.

Wicomico County

Welcome Ann Malone, Brenda Cohman, Beverly Morris, and Megan Truitt.

Worcester County

Welcome Margaret Mariner and Rhonda Wilkerson.

District Court

Headquarters

Welcome Chief Judge Vaughan, Janet Burl, Frank Corcoran, Mark Foertsch, Eric Powell, and Christine Scheef.

Anne Arundel County

Welcome Christina Garrett, Andrea Edwards, Robert George, Joseph Miller, Tammy Rogers, James Summa, and Arthur Thomas. Congratulations on your promotion Khalima Jacobs. Best wishes on your retirement Mary Main.

Baltimore City

Welcome Robert Ackerman, Kimberly Alt, Kristina Franzier, Mary Geer, and Gregory Jones.

Baltimore County

Welcome Roland Hertsch, Joseph Roberts, and James Zombro. Congratulations on your promotion Dona Bartlett. Best wishes on your retirement Eugene Marshall.

Calvert County

Welcome Dany Cantwell, Lolli Petrillo, and Dennis Welch. Best wishes on your retirement JoAnn Bissett.

Carroll County

Welcome Cynthia Sizemore.

Frederick County

Congratulations on your promotion Lori Whitt.

Harford County

Welcome Elizabeth Owens.

Howard County

Welcome Thomas Barth, Raul Galindo, John Glorioso, Steve Halteman, Robert Hogan, Dennis Laumann, Ethel Leffingwell, Monica Logan, and Theresa Renner.

Montgomery County

Welcome Adeel Ahmed, Corey Bissell, Francisco Brenes, Joan Chandler, Joe Cicoria, Charles Pyles, Veda Roberson, Maureen Sandlin, and Marketa Williams.

Prince George's County

Welcome Shannon Crawford, Theresa Dean, Jennifer Edwards, Jacqueline Johnson, Arlene Komala, Lori Lane, Stephen Lennon, Roosevelt Lewis, Quiani Mendez-Ortiz, Edward Neboh, Robert Pointer, Elizabeth Schmidt, Dennis Settles, and Adella Thompson. Congratulations on your promotion Cynthia Hall and Susan Williams.

Washington County

Welcome Royann Hall.

AOC

Welcome Debra Bright and Sharee Queen.

Court of Appeals

Welcome Portia Brown, Somaree Taru, Daniel Clark, Mary Cowgill, Melody Ellison, Joshua Lerner, Sen Li, Jason Lyons, Carol Magnanelli, Jennifer Molinaro, Cathleen Opel, Kathleen Orr, Tonya Osborne, Michaela Roberts, and Wendy Webb.

Court of Special Appeals

Welcome Megan Adams, Scott Amey, Dale Cathell, Todd Chason, Anne Connolly, Miatta Dabo, Matthew Esworthy, Ursula Gorham, Shoshana Hutchinson, Richard Kutchev, Craig Leavers, Tracey McKirgan, Michael O'Day, Sarah Otwell, Kristin Pickett, Jefferson Triplett, Natasha Varnovitskaia, and Christopher Wallace. Congratulations on your promotion Brent Bolea, Kristine Candura, and Maria Themelis.

Court Related Agencies

Welcome Alecia Parker. Best wishes on your retirement Ralph Densmore.

JIS

Welcome April Brown, Danielle Campbell, Tyra Herndon, Patricia Lefkowitz, Robert Lisbon, Jason Thomas, Charles Weber, and Denise York.

Employee Extra

Circuit Court

*New Coordinator...*Former law clerk Tiffany Reiff was recently named the Family Services Coordinator for Washington County. Reiff, who also worked in the Clerk's office, will be responsible for reviewing and making recommendations as to whether cases should be referred to mediation, holding status conferences for cases involving *pro se* litigants, and assessing cases and making recommendations for the courts ordering services such as home studies, substance abuse and psychological evaluations, and appointment of attorney for minor child.

*Twice as nice...*Congratulations to Prince George's County Judge Sheila Tillerson Adams, the proud mother of twins. Kayla and Timothy were born on October 12.

Court Related Agencies

*Beyond Chance...*Judicial Training staffer Kelli Rigsbee, who last year suffered a brain aneurysm, will have her incredible story told on the program "Beyond Chance," on Saturday, January 19 at 11:00 p.m., on the Lifetime network. The program will highlight Rigsbee's miraculous recovery, including the birth of her daughter, Kaylee Ann, and her motivation to return to work.

*Fond Farewell...*The Law Library in Annapolis recently held a retirement party for 67-year-old Ralph S. Densmore. Densmore began his nearly eight-year tenure at the Law Library as a volunteer, then became a full-time library assistant. He previously worked for CSX.

More Awardees

Some very important employees were mistakenly left off the Service Awards list in the last issue of *Justice Matters*. Our sincere apologies to the Law Library's Shirley Aronson **25 years**
Ruth Henderson **20 years**
Cindy Terry **15 years**

Thank you for your many years of dedication!!!

District Court

*Courting a Cure...*Cecil County District Court employees Lea Gochnauer, Grace Achuff, Mary Lowe, Paul Williams, Marie Abromitis, and Terri Travers surpassed their goal of \$1,500 when they raised \$5,450 for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. The team walked throughout a rain-filled night, and contributed more money than any of the other 52 teams entered in the event.

*New Addition...*Congratulations to Anne Arundel County District Court Commissioner Amye Tester-Mallon on the birth of her daughter, Ella Joy, born on October 9.

*Let's Celebrate...*District Court employees celebrated the Court's 30th anniversary in a variety of ways, including an outing to one of Baltimore Oriole Cal Ripken's last games, a golfing expedition at the Easton Club in Easton, and a train ride from Cumberland to Frostburg.

Let's Hear From You

Submit your events, happenings, and articles to
F Todd Silver at
410/260-1488 or email to todd.silver@courts.state.md.us.



Courtroom Christened

On October 17, all but one of the current and former Howard County District Court judges gathered for a ceremony celebrating the opening of a fifth courtroom in the Howard County District Courthouse.

Speakers included District Court Chief Judge James N. Vaughan, Court of Appeals Chief Judge Robert M. Bell and Retired Judge J. Thomas Nissel, the county's first administrative judge, who provided a historical perspective of the courthouse.

Compensation Study

Remember those time-consuming PDQ's you had to prepare this summer? Well, they are currently being reviewed by a committee of Judiciary representatives. The consultants are also conducting a second market salary survey, to help map out new classification structures for all Judiciary positions. This phase should be completed by December 1, 2001.

— Yvonne Moore contributed to this article

Zdravstvuite [hello]

From October 12 to 20, Court of Appeals Judges Alan Wilner (second from left) and Lynne Battaglia (not shown), along with Joseph P. Gill, Esq., Hon. Marna McLendon, and Jack Rubin, Esq., visited the Judiciary of Russia, where they instructed their counterparts about the concept of plea bargaining, which does not yet exist there. They also found some time for sightseeing and visiting with the locals (see photo).



photo compliments of Court of Appeals Judge Lynne Battaglia

(cont. from page 1)

Judge Vaughan Replaces Judge Rasin

Sweeney Court. He [late Chief Judge Robert F. Sweeney] started it, it had his personality. All of its success was because of his leadership, and the people working there. Under Judge Rasin, it became our court. That's how I look at it — and I like it. I want to continue the efforts of these judges and make it better.”

A key issue of importance to Judge Vaughan is staying in close touch with all the districts. “I hope to get out to all of the Districts and sit—to get to know the clerks and judges better and to learn what problems there are with individual courthouses, and how I can be of help to them,” he said.

Judge Vaughan has served on the District Court of Maryland since 1982, becoming his District's Administrative Judge in 1990. Among the positions he held before joining the bench were Assistant County Solicitor and Deputy State's Attorney for Howard County, and Examiner for Howard County Circuit Court. He was also a past president of the Howard County Bar Association. Judge Vaughan received his LL.B. from the Mt. Vernon School of Law in 1960, and also served his country in the U.S. Army and Maryland National Guard. Judge Vaughan has one son, and three grandchildren, aged 9, 6, and 19 months. He and his wife Nancy live in Ellicott City.



Judge Martha Rasin models the stylish gardening chapeau presented to her by the Court Information Office at one of her farewell events.

photos by Todd Silver

Interns Learn the Law on Lower Shore

Four outstanding high school students from Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties gave up lazy days at the beach or by the pool to spend their summer in court — as part of a judicial intern program developed by Somerset County Circuit Judge Daniel Long and Circuit Court Administrator Lynn Cain, in conjunction with the local school systems and the Lower Shore Workforce Investment Program.

With the support of Judge D. William Simpson, Judge Kathleen L. Beckstead, Wicomico County Clerk of Court Mark S. Bowen, and coordinators from the school systems, these students had a life-changing summer exploring the inner workings of the court system, observing trials, working in the law library, and assisting judges, family service coordinators and jury commissioners. This unique experience may be the start of something big for these teens — one intern is planning to become a lawyer; another, a court reporter. And their supervisors are hoping to hire them back next summer!



left to right, standing: April Powell, Somerset County Intern; Natasha Foster, Wicomico County intern; Lynn Cain, Circuit Court Administrator/Somerset County Supervisor; Wanda B. Rayne, Wicomico County Judicial Administrator/Supervisor; Wendy Restein, Wicomico County Court Clerk/Supervisor; Christopher Thomas, Wicomico Intern. seated: Wicomico Circuit Judge Kathleen L. Beckstead.

Congratulations to:

Anne Arundel District Judge Martha F. Rasin, who received the ninth annual Rosalyn B. Bell Award for her achievements in the area of family law from the Women's Bar Association.

MACRO Executive Director Rachel Wohl, who received the Mary Parker Follett award for her outstanding contributions to the field of conflict resolution. This prestigious national recognition was presented to Ms. Wohl by the Association for Conflict Resolution during their October conference in Toronto.

Harford County Circuit Judge William O. Carr, who received the 2001 "Judge of the Year Award" from the National Child Support Enforcement Association. This national award honors the judge who has helped to improve the quality of life for children by strengthening the child support program.

The proud recipients of *The Daily Record's* 2001 Leadership in Law Awards, which recognize members of the legal community who have devoted time and energy to bettering the profession, and have played the important role of men-



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We must never forget that the only real source of power that we as judges can tap is the respect of the people.

Supreme Court Justice
Thurgood Marshall



The Wait Is Over

To satisfy popular demand from judges who speak frequently to school children and other groups, the Court Information Office has produced two new eye-catching bookmarks. To order yours, call 410-260-1488.

toring future professional and community leaders. The list includes: **Court of Appeals Chief Judge Robert M. Bell**, **Court of Appeals Judge Irma S. Raker**, **Baltimore City Circuit Judge John Carroll Byrnes**, **Baltimore City Circuit Judge David B. Mitchell**, **Calvert County Circuit Judge Warren J. Krug**, **Prince George's County Circuit Judge Steven I. Platt**, and **Allegany County Circuit Judge J. Frederick Sharer**.

Assistant State Court Administrator Deborah A. Unittis, who was elected to serve as Chair of the Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification held in Santa Fe, NM in November.

One Less Hassle for Bar Hopefuls

Attention law students and other would-be Maryland lawyers — Bar application forms are now available on-line, provided by the State Board of Law Examiners.

The downloadable forms are available in PDF format, at www.courts.state.md.us/ble/index.html.

Pretrial Release Project Advisory Committee Issues Landmark Report

On October 11, the Judiciary's Pretrial Release Project Advisory Committee issued a landmark report and recommendations for change — the culmination of over a year's study of the current pretrial release procedures in Maryland.

"I am very pleased that this Committee has completed its exhaustive study of Maryland's pretrial release policies and procedures, and I will look very closely at its recommendations," Chief Judge Bell said. "Ultimately, reforms will be adopted to ensure that justice is even better served, not only for indigent defendants, but also, for the victims of crime."

The Committee's nine key recommendations include the creation of a statewide pretrial release agency; the guarantee of legal representation by counsel at initial appearances and bail review hearings for the accused; and an expansion of alternative modes for releasing defendants pending trial while ensuring that the defendant is not a danger and appears for trial, like pretrial supervision of the accused. The Committee also carefully considered crime victims' rights, and in the report stressed the importance of pretrial personnel serving as an interface between victims, witnesses and the criminal justice system.

The Pretrial Release Project Advisory Committee was formed in response to a request by Professor Douglas Colbert to Chief Judge Bell for assistance to study pretrial procedures and practices in Baltimore City, an outgrowth of the Professor's 2000 Lawyers At Bail Project. Judge Bell believed, however, that a more comprehensive study involving other criminal justice agencies would lead to recommendations for a broader range of changes in practice and procedure.

-Elizabeth Veronis contributed to this story

DISTRICT COURT — IT SURE ISN'T JUDGE JUDY!



ONLY IN AMERICA can a person be a game show host, social critic, Jerry Springer, and a judge at the same time. I recently ventured into the Never-Never land of TV judge shows. The industry standard is "Judge Judy," in which former New York City Family Judge Judy Sheindlin presides over contracted arbitration featuring paid participants, belittling them and making such acerbic comments as, "Beauty Fades, Dumb is Forever," (her book title), without invoking any law at any time. While it qualifies as base entertainment, the Marx Brothers, it is not. Joining the ranks are Judge Joe Brown, who gained fame by

presiding over the reopened James Earl Ray case; and Judge Mills Lane, who achieved notoriety as the fight referee who disqualified Mike Tyson for biting off part of Evander Holyfield's ear during the famous Tyson-Holyfield fight. The ultimate nostalgia judge show, of course, is "People's Court," which began in the '80's with Judge Joseph Wapner (reincarnated in "Animal Court.") And the list goes on

Key to the public's appetite for judge shows is a voyeurism similar to watching

(contd. on next page)

Twelve Angry Men: a theatrical review

Drawing upon our fine tradition as a court system built upon legal statutes, rules, and precedents, this article bears a disclaimer: It was submitted by an extremely humorous judge who enjoys poking good-hearted fun at his colleagues, all of whom are fine actors who missed their Broadway callings to follow the siren lure of the law. It is in no way intended to demean, embarrass, libel or otherwise stain the pristine names of these erstwhile jurists. —ED

Several Prince George's County judges, together with actors from the regular complement of the Prince George's Little Theater, were cast in roles in a production of "Twelve Angry Men," staged in the Jury Assembly Room of the Courthouse in Upper Marlboro on the evenings of August 17-18. The staging was a co-production of the Little Theater and the Prince George's County Bar Association. The Bar Association's share of the net proceeds from the performances was earmarked for its public service projects.

Although competition for the roles was fierce (for example, Circuit Judge William B. Spellbring, Jr., did not make the cut because of his limited emotional range — somewhere between a clam and a pencil), several local judges were selected for parts. Circuit Judge Michele Hotten was the jury foreperson. She reportedly patterned her interpretation of the role after Captain Joseph Hazelwood of the *Exxon Valdez*. Circuit Judge James J. ("Doc Hollywood") Lombardi, who attended each rehearsal dressed like a U-boat commander, was cast as Juror #8, the role Henry Fonda/Jack Lemmon played in the movie versions. Juror #8, as readers may recall, was the reasonable, rational juror, a role which proved to be a real stretch for Judge Lombardi. Orphans Court Chief Judge Al Northrop was cast fortuitously as Juror #6, a juror who could not make up his mind. Lastly, Judge Glenn Harrell, Prince George's County's contribution to the Court of Appeals, was given (out of charity and a sense of *noblesse oblige*) a small part as Juror #12, an aloof, out-of-touch advertising exec. At least he did not have to play against type.

The crowds attending the two performances (the performance on the 18th was standing-room-only, no kidding) rated the judges' stagecraft as following in the best traditions of Sir Lawrence Olivier, John Wilkes Booth, and Curly Joe (the bald Stoooge.) Chief Judge Robert M. Bell, an attendee at the performance on the 17th, was overheard advising the judges "not to quit their day jobs." A grueling rehearsal schedule (3 nights a week, 7:30 - 10:00 p.m., from mid-June), persuaded the jurists that Judge Bell's advice was well-taken.



Photo courtesy of Judge James Lombardi

l-r: Court of Appeals Judge Glenn T. Harrell, Jr., actor Danny Brooks, actor Elliott Malumuth, Prince George's County Circuit Judge James J. Lombardi, actor Mike O'Connell

Judge Judy (contd. from p. 10)

"Jerry Springer," professional wrestling, and reality shows like "Survivor," which create a vicarious relationship with real people that is probably more enticing than soap operas. Obviously, beyond the threat to one's intelligence and sensibility, the danger of these shows is that viewers will conclude that the participants' bizarre behavior, and the sensationality of the 10-15 minute cases played out on TV, represent what really goes on in court. I am wary that litigants in District Court, where I preside, expect to be yelled at and belittled. My concern is that such portrayal will erode the respect that Americans generally have for the judicial process, even expecting it to be comical or torturous in its conduct and implications.

-- Judge Ralph Burnett

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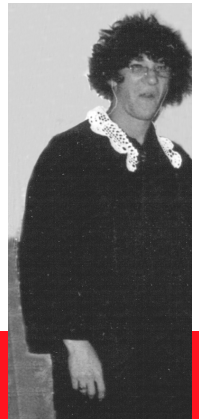
December

- 18 Holiday party for AOC, court-related agencies, District Court headquarters, appellate judges and staff, Sheraton Barcelo, Annapolis

January

- 17 District Court Administrative Clerks Meeting, District Court Conference Center, Annapolis
- 25 District Court Administrative Judges Meeting; District Court Conference Center, Annapolis
- 28 Conference of Circuit Judges, Judiciary Training Center, Annapolis
- 29 Conference of Circuit Court Clerks, Judiciary Training Center, Annapolis

The Court Information Office's own Todd Silver enjoys dressing up as Judge Judy. See related story, page 10.



February

- 21 District Court Administrative Commissioners, District Court Conference Center, Annapolis

March

- 18 Conference of Circuit Judges, Judiciary Training Center, Annapolis
- 19 Conference of Circuit Court Clerks, Judiciary Training Center, Annapolis
- 21 Criminal Cases Pre-trial Matters, 9-12*
Evidence Issues in Criminal Cases, 1-4:30*
Guardianships, , 9-4:30*
- 22 Basic Evidence, 9-4:30*
Contract Law, 9-4:30*

* Judicial Institute of Maryland program open to judges and masters