

Justice Matters

CONSUMERS AND THE COURTS

SPRING/SUMMER 2012

A word cloud featuring various legal and financial terms. The words are arranged in different sizes, colors (blue, green, and grey), and orientations (vertical, horizontal, and diagonal). The most prominent words include 'JUDGMENT', 'LOAN', 'DEBT', 'FINANCIAL', 'foreclosure', 'LIBERTY', 'LAWYER', 'PAID', 'fairness', 'MEDIATION', 'ESCROW', 'OBLIGATIONS', 'summatation', 'JURY', 'installments', 'assets', 'statutes', 'AGREEMENT', 'BORROW', 'UNDERWRITING', 'COMPANIES', 'case', 'JUDGE', and 'statutes'.

JUDGMENT
LOAN
foreclosure
LIBERTY
LAWYER
PAID
fairness
MEDIATION
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JUDGE
OBLIGATIONS
summatation
FINANCIAL
ESCROW
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case

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WELCOME to the special consumer issue of *Justice Matters*. This edition contains a number of articles written with consumers in mind, as the Maryland Judiciary takes steps that better protect consumers from overzealous debt collectors and ensure that the public is aware of free and low-cost legal resources available to those who need legal advice or who are

looking for legal information. We invite you to visit our online edition, which contains more in-depth articles, multimedia tools and other links to help you make more informed legal decisions. As always, we invite your feedback on how to make this publication more useful and user-friendly. Send your questions and comments to communications@mdcourts.gov.

CONSUMERS AND THE COURTS

Self-Help Center Provides Options for People Representing Selves in District Court

More and more people are representing themselves in Maryland's courts. These self-represented litigants are the newest "consumers" of court services. Courts cannot provide legal advice, but they are trying to find ways to help people get the assistance they need.

The District Court of Maryland Self-Help Center has launched free, online live-chat and phone-in self-help services for people across Maryland who need assistance with civil legal issues before any of the District Court's 35 locations.



The new services are an extension of the District Court's walk-in self-help center in Glen Burnie, which opened two years ago, and are offered to help people who are representing themselves in small claims, landlord-tenant and other civil matters in District Court.

Through a contract with Maryland Legal Aid, four full-time attorneys, a paralegal and an administrative assistant provide basic information, legal assistance and help in finding and completing court forms. The District Court's self-help services are free.

"Few people who come to the District Court are represented by an attorney, but that doesn't mean they don't need help," said Chief Judge Ben C. Clyburn of the District Court of Maryland. "Our challenge is to serve the needs of the many self-represented court users who may appear at any District Court location throughout the state, and provide that service in a fiscally responsible way."

The Maryland Access to Justice Commission estimates that, each year, nearly 350,000 people appear in District and Circuit court proceedings involving basic human needs cases. These

Marylanders, mostly individuals and families with low incomes, come to court without the benefit of counsel and usually without help from the existing voluntary legal services system.

In 2011, the District Court Self-Help Center provided legal information to more than 10,000 self-represented litigants with civil cases before the District Court of Maryland. After the remote-access service was launched last September, the Center began serving more than 1,500 individuals each month. In February, the Center served 1,908 individuals.

"Although many people do not realize it, the right to be represented by a lawyer in court applies primarily to criminal cases and does not apply in most civil matters," said Wilhelm H. Joseph, Jr., Esq., executive director of Maryland Legal Aid. "Our partnership with the District Court helps close the immense justice gap that exists for low-income Marylanders seeking resolution with their critical civil legal problems."

District Court Self-Help Center

Online, live-chat and phone:

Phone 410-260-1392

www.mdcourts.gov/district/selfhelpcenter/home.html

Hours: 8:30 a.m.-noon, 2-4:30 p.m., M-F

Walk-in:

Glen Burnie District Court

7500 Ritchie Highway, Room 206

Glen Burnie, MD 21061

Hours: 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., M-F

CONSUMERS AND THE COURTS

Judiciary Takes Next Steps to Launch Consumer-Friendly “Paper on Demand” Case Management System

The Maryland Judiciary has been moving forward with a project that will change the way our courts receive, send and keep forms, filings and case records. What does that mean for “consumers,” the citizens and residents of Maryland who use the courts? Better access, more options, and improved convenience.

Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC, pronounced “Em-Deck”) is a single Judiciary-wide integrated case management system that will be used by all the courts in the state court system. Courts will collect, store and process records electronically, and will be able to instantly access complete records as cases travel from District Court to Circuit Court and on to the appellate courts. The new system will ultimately become “paper-on-demand,” that is, paper records will be available when specifically asked for.

“People are shopping, paying bills, even dating online. They’re doing everything online except for matters that have to do with our courts,” explains Chief Judge Ben C. Clyburn of the District Court of Maryland. Judge Clyburn leads the advisory committee that is working to implement MDEC. “Not only are people accustomed to online services, but they are demanding them more and more.” MDEC will make it convenient for people to access court services and records online, with 24/7 availability.

The new electronic case management system should make it easier to file lawsuits and keep track of cases within any part of the court system. Cases can be filed, and files can be viewed, anywhere and at any time, with a keystroke rather than a trip to the courthouse. With electronic storage, critical records will be kept safer and not subject to destruction from disasters like fires or floods, or even simply misfiling or misplacing of paper.



Even though many states have been changing over to electronic systems, no court system has completely done away with paper, and neither will Maryland. Plans call for keeping records and doing business electronically, and using paper only when it's requested. If lawyers and people representing themselves want to file paper, they will be able to, and court clerks will digitize the documents. There are also times when papers are necessary, such as protection orders that people need to carry with them. "There will always be some paper," Judge Clyburn said.

Next Steps Have Been Taken

The Judiciary has taken a significant step forward in the multi-year, multi-phase project by selecting Tyler Technologies as the vendor for the new system. "This is an incredibly complex project, and we believe that this vendor will help us meet both our short- and long-term objectives," Judge Clyburn said. "Our initial goal is to replace the legacy systems and 22 court applications that our courts currently operate with a single system that will enable the efficient and accurate electronic exchange of judicial information. Longer term, the Maryland Judiciary wants to transform the way justice information is processed and shared among all participants."

There's More Online

An in-depth article with more information about the vendor is featured in *Justice Matters Online* on the Judiciary's website, www.mdcourts.gov.

“

Not only are people accustomed to online services, they are demanding them more and more.”

**Chief Judge Ben C. Clyburn,
District Court of Maryland**

The screenshot displays the Tyler Technologies website. The header features the Tyler Technologies logo and the tagline "Empowering people who serve the public". A navigation menu includes links for Home, Solutions & Products, News & Events, About Us, Client Support, Investors, Careers, and Contact Us. The main content area highlights the "Odyssey Courts & Justice Solution" as "The most comprehensive courts and justice software system available." It describes the solution as a robust, fully integrated justice solution that delivers proven information management, unparalleled access to mission critical data, and improved workflow. A sidebar on the left lists related products and services, including Odyssey Product Suite, Courts & Justice Solutions, Client Services, Integrated Justice, and Integrated Jail Management. A right sidebar lists resources such as Odyssey Client Videos, Resource Center, Odyssey Technology, Product Information, Success Stories, and Request Information.

CONSUMERS AND THE COURTS

Access to Justice Commission Names Second Annual Awards Program Winners

Access to justice is a critical consumer issue. Each year, the state's courts handle more than two million cases and Marylanders are appearing in court on their own, without a lawyer, in record numbers. Many Marylanders are forfeiting important rights because they do not have access to representation or because they face critical barriers in exercising their rights. These barriers can include language or literacy issues, challenges due to varying physical abilities or a lack of understanding of the civil justice system in Maryland and the resources available.

The Maryland Access to Justice Commission works to improve and expand all people's access to the state's civil justice system, which includes landlord-tenant cases, divorce, child custody issues, small claims and debt collection, domestic violence and other non-criminal case types. As a part of its efforts, the commission's annual awards program recognizes the leadership achievements of those working to enhance the quality of justice in civil legal matters.

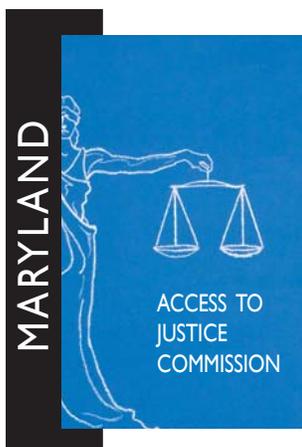
The Maryland Access to Justice Commission has announced the recipients of its second annual Maryland Access to Justice Awards.

"The Access to Justice awards recognize individuals, programs and entities that improve the ability of all Marylanders to access the courts or to get legal help in civil legal matters so they can benefit from the rights, protections, services and opportunities that the law provides," said retired Maryland Court of Appeals Judge Irma S. Raker, chair of the Commission.

The 2012 honorees are :

- **Outstanding Program of the Year Award:** District Court Self-Help Center operated by Maryland Legal Aid [See article on p. 1.];
- **Judge of the Year Awards:** Judge Karen Murphy Jensen, administrative judge for the Circuit Court for Caroline County, and retired Maryland Court of Appeals Judge Joseph F. Murphy, Jr.;
- **Judicial Branch Excellence Award:** Connie Kratovil-Lavelle, executive director of Family Administration, Administrative Office of the Courts;
- **Legislator of the Year Awards:** Del. Samuel I. Rosenberg, Maryland House of Delegates, and Sen. Jamie Raskin, Maryland Senate;
- **Executive Branch Award:** Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown.

For details, see the news release announcing the honorees: www.mdcourts.gov/press/2012/pr20120418.html.



Maryland's Courts Require More Proof in Debt Collection Cases against Consumers

The Maryland Judiciary has enacted stricter measures that protect consumers from overzealous debt collectors. The Court of Appeals has adopted new rules changes that will require “debt buyers” to provide more proof before being allowed to obtain affidavit judgments against consumers to recover alleged debts. Debt buyers get affidavit judgments when the alleged debtor does not respond to the lawsuit. The amendments took effect January 1, and apply only to actions started on or after that date.

The Judiciary's Rules Committee investigated this issue and recommended the changes.

Debt buyers are companies that specialize in buying debts owed to creditors, usually credit card companies. They buy those debts for a tiny fraction of the amount owed. Debts may be sold to other debt buyers several times, and the documentation – the proof – that the debt is owed is sometimes little more than the person's name, last known address and Social Security number.

The rules changes were needed because of “the flood of thousands” of debt collection cases filed in the District Court, the Judiciary's Rules Committee stated in its report to the Court of Appeals, noting that the problem “has received national attention.”

“In this current recessionary economy, the District Court has been seeing an increasing number of debt collection cases,” said Chief Judge Ben C. Clyburn of the District Court of Maryland. “The rules changes provide more transparency, and our judges will have more information to base decisions on, which makes it a true win for consumers in Maryland. I commend the Court of Appeals, the Rules Committee and the Office of the Attorney General for their insightful response to this serious consumer issue.”

More Online

See *Justice Matters Online* on the Judiciary's website, www.mdcourts.gov, for links to:

- The 171st Report of the Standing Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure (The Rules Committee): www.mdcourts.gov/rules/reports/171stReport.pdf
- The Court of Appeals Rules Order, including the amendments to Rule 3-306, 3-308, and 3-509: www.mdcourts.gov/rules/rodocs/ro171.pdf
- The Rules Committee home page: www.mdcourts.gov/rules/index.html



CONSUMERS AND THE COURTS

District Court of Maryland Acts on Thousands of Consumer Debt Cases

The District Court of Maryland, where debt collection cases are filed, has dismissed thousands of debt collection cases against Maryland consumers over the past 18 months.

“Our actions in dismissing these cases is another effort to respond to several issues in the debt collection industry, and put us at the forefront in responding to these issues,” said Chief Judge Ben C. Clyburn of the District Court of Maryland.

As reported in the article on page 5, a new industry — “debt buying” — has clogged the dockets of small claims courts in Maryland and throughout the country over the past few years. Debt buyers specialize in buying debts owed to creditors, usually credit card companies, for a tiny fraction of the amount owed. Debts may be sold to other debt buyers several times, and the documentation — the proof — that the debt is owed sometimes is little more than the person’s name, last known address and Social Security number.

“In this current recessionary economy, the District Court has been seeing an increasing number of debt collection cases,” Judge Clyburn said. “We have been responding to many issues related to debt-buying and we now have new rules in place that help make the process more transparent, give the judge more information, and level the playing field for consumers.” (See related article on page 5.)

The District Court has directed that court records and the Judiciary Case Search public records website be updated to show these orders. The cases were dismissed “without prejudice,” which mean a case can be re-filed in the future. For more information, Maryland residents who are affected by these dismissals or stay orders should contact the local District Court location where the debt collection case was filed.

More Online

An in-depth article, with details about the District Court’s dismissals, is available in the online version of Justice Matters, on the Maryland Judiciary’s website, www.mdcourts.gov.



When Courts Aren't the Answer, Other Agencies Can Help

Consumers may be able to avoid court if they get the right information and advice before entering a contract, or seek help before a problem becomes a lawsuit. Here are two valuable self-help resources:

The People's Law Library is a website that provides legal information, self-help legal resources, and referrals to low or no-cost legal services for Maryland citizens. The website is maintained by the Maryland State Law Library. Library staff members, non-profit legal services providers, legal aid programs, public interest attorneys, and community advocacy groups provide content for the website.

Maryland State Law Library's website:
www.mdcourts.gov/lawlib.

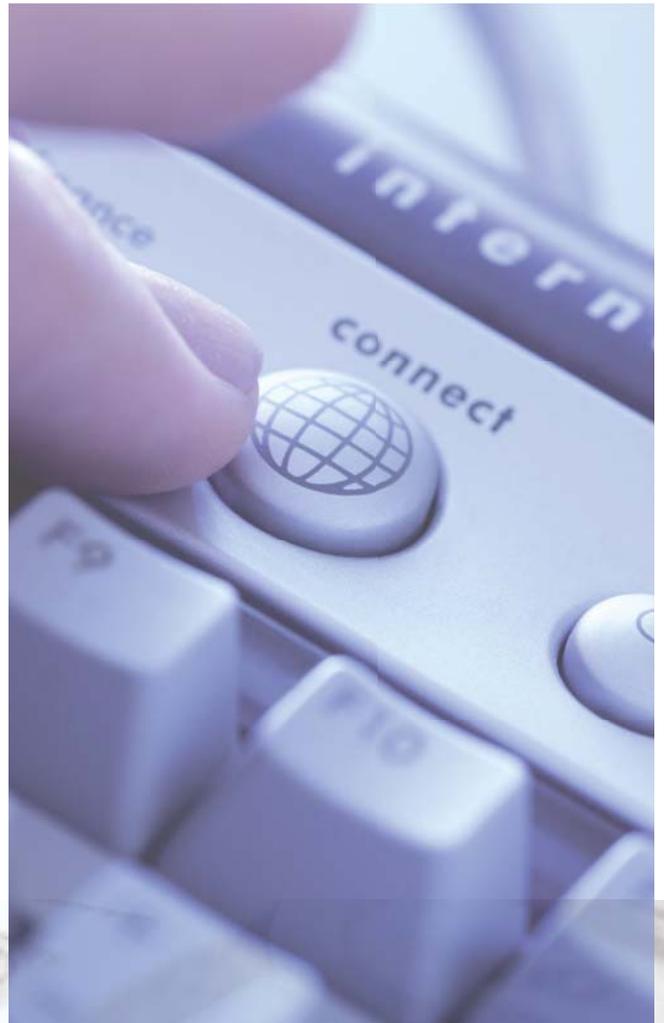
PLL website: www.peoples-law.org.

The Maryland Office of the Attorney General Consumer Protection Division

offers information, tips and mediation services for consumers to help resolve complaints against businesses and health insurance carriers.

Hotline number: (410) 528-8662.

Website: www.oag.state.md.us/consumer/



CONSUMERS AND THE COURTS

Open to All

Maryland State Law Library

By James G. Durham, Deputy Director, Maryland State Law Library

The Maryland State Law Library is open to everyone seeking legal information, including those who wish to represent themselves in court. The library has self-help materials that explain legal issues and how to file a claim. Staff members at the information desk provide assistance in person, by telephone, by email, and through the online chat service available through the library's website.

Patrons can use all materials at no charge, including eight public computer stations to access specialized legal databases. Computer printers and copy machines, if needed, are available at a charge of 25 cents per page.

Patrons can also visit the library's website at: **www.mdcourts.gov/lawlib/**, which includes the People's Law Library (PLL) with legal information specifically written for non-lawyers.

If a patron needs legal advice, the staff can provide contact information for lawyer referral services and no-cost/low-cost legal help.

The Maryland State Law Library is in the Robert C. Murphy Courts of Appeal Building at 361 Rowe Boulevard in Annapolis with on-street parking near the entrance.

HOURS

8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Mon., Wed., Fri.

8 a.m. - 9 p.m. Tues., Thurs.

9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sat.

Phone: 410-260-1430, 888-216-8156 (toll free in MD)

Email: lawlibrary@mdcourts.gov



Judges Head Back to Class to Help Students Learn About Law

Several judges went back to class this past school year to share their expertise and personal experiences to help area students learn about law and society. The judges were taking part in a new program called the Civics and Law Academy, which gives students a chance to meet face-to-face with judges and other legal professionals and learn from their unique perspective on the importance of becoming active participants in our democracy.

The Civics and Law Academy is designed to help high school students gain a better understanding of the law, which helps them develop civic competency. Some of the topics include juvenile rights, criminal law, free speech, and the law in the age of technology.

“An understanding of law and legal issues is essential to understanding the functioning of politics, culture, and society,” said Howard County District Judge Pamila J. Brown. Judge Brown heads the Judiciary’s Public Awareness Committee, which hosts the program with the Maryland State Bar Association, the Citizenship Law-Related Education Program (CLREP), and the American Bar Association. “How can you hope to function in our society, which is based on the Rule of Law, if you don’t learn civics? The Academy provides a chance for young people to take part in an intensive program to start to gain the knowledge, skills, and values needed to participate fully and effectively in our pluralistic, democratic society.”



Students share lunch and opinions.

“

How can you hope to function in our society ... if you don’t learn civics?”

Judge Pamila J. Brown, Howard County District Court; Chair, Public Awareness Committee



Chief Judge Robert M. Bell talks to students at a Civics and Law Academy event.

Three sessions were held this year: the first in October in Baltimore County for students from Chesapeake, Dundalk, Patapsco, and Kenwood high schools; the second in January in Prince George’s County with students from Surrattsville, Potomac and Central high schools; and the third in March in Frederick County with students from Oakdale, Linganore, Middletown, Frederick, Tuscarora, and Urbana high schools.

Schools who are interested in the program and judges who want to volunteer to take part in the program during the next school year should contact Judge Brown, Pamila.Brown@mdcourts.gov.

Robert N. McDonald Joins Court of Appeals

Robert N. (“Bob”) McDonald, the chief counsel of opinions and advice for the Office of the Attorney General, was sworn in on Jan. 24 to represent the Second Appellate Circuit (Baltimore and Harford counties) on Maryland’s highest court. He fills the vacancy on the Court of Appeals created by the retirement of Judge Joseph F. Murphy, Jr.

As the chief counsel of opinions and advice for 15 years, Judge McDonald wrote or edited all formal opinions of the Attorney General’s Office. He also provided less formal legal advice to all segments of state government on a wide array of issues.

“Bob McDonald possesses one of the best legal minds in the entire state and has an impressive record of public service,” said Gov. Martin O’Malley. “He is regarded by his peers as an expert in Maryland law as well as fair, impartial, and intellectually honest.”

Prior to becoming chief of opinions and advice, Judge McDonald served as the Maryland Securities commissioner, chief of the Antitrust Division at the Office of the Attorney General, and principal counsel to the Maryland Department of Transportation. He also served for nine years as an assistant United States Attorney and executive United States Attorney with the United States Attorney’s Office for the District of Maryland. With the U.S. Attorney’s Office, Judge McDonald prosecuted fraud, white collar crime, narcotics, and espionage cases. He also has experience as a litigator in private practice. Mr. McDonald graduated magna cum laude from Harvard Law School in 1977 and served as a clerk for Judge Frank A. Kaufman of the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland.



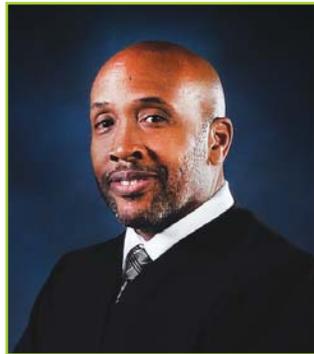
For his outstanding career of public service to the State of Maryland and the Office of the Attorney General, Mr. McDonald received the J. Joseph Curran, Jr., Outstanding Career Service Award in 2007.

Judge Barry Williams Heads Baltimore Circuit Court's Criminal Division

Judge Marcella A. Holland, administrative judge for the Circuit Court for Baltimore City, selected Judge Barry G. Williams to head the court's Criminal Division.

As the judge in charge of the Criminal Division, Judge Williams is responsible for the assignment of judges and the management of the criminal docket. He also chairs the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

Judge Williams has served on the bench since December 2005, and is a member of the Judiciary's Technology Oversight Board. He earned his Juris Doctorate from the University of Maryland School of Law in 1987, and was admitted to the Maryland Bar that same year. From 1987 to 1988, Judge Williams served as law clerk to Judge Arrie W. Davis, who was then a judge with the Baltimore City Circuit Court. From 1988 until 1989, he was law clerk to now Chief Judge Robert M. Bell, then with the Court of Special Appeals. Before joining the bench, Judge Williams prosecuted cases as an assistant state's attorney for Baltimore City from 1989 until 1997. In 1997, he joined the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice where he served as a trial attorney until 2002, and as special litigation counsel from 2002 to 2005.



Judge Nancy Davis-Loomis Named Fifth Circuit Administrative Judge

Anne Arundel County Circuit Court Administrative Judge Nancy L. Davis-Loomis has been named administrative judge for the Fifth Judicial Circuit, which includes the Circuit Courts of Anne Arundel, Carroll and Howard counties. Chief Judge Robert M. Bell of the Maryland Court of Appeals designated Judge Davis-Loomis as the circuit administrative judge following the retirement of Judge Diane O. Leasure last November.

Judge Davis-Loomis oversees the administration of the courts for the three counties and supervises the county administrative judges within the judicial circuit.

Judge Davis-Loomis served as a District Court judge from 1996 to 2000, when she was appointed as a Circuit Court judge. In July 2007, Judge Bell designated her as the administrative judge for Anne Arundel County, following the retirement of Judge Joseph P. Manck. She will continue to serve as administrative judge for Anne Arundel County.

After receiving undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Akron, Ohio, she graduated from the University of Maryland School of Law and was admitted to the Maryland Bar in 1982. She was assistant county solicitor for Anne Arundel County from 1983-1986, and was in private practice with Cohen, Bennett, Greene & Davis-Loomis from 1986-1994. Judge Davis-Loomis is a past member of the board of governors of the Maryland State Bar Association and past president of the Anne Arundel County Bar Association.



Judge Lenore Gelfman Named Administrative Judge for Howard County Circuit Court

Court of Appeals Chief Judge Robert M. Bell has named Judge Lenore R. Gelfman as administrative judge for the Howard County Circuit Court. Judge Gelfman succeeded Judge Diane O. Leasure last fall upon her retirement from the bench.

Judge Gelfman received her Juris Doctor from the University of Baltimore in 1973 and began her legal career as an assistant state's attorney in Baltimore City. She was engaged in the private practice of law in Howard County until 1989, when she was appointed to the District Court for Howard County. In 1996, she began her term as a judge in the Howard County Circuit Court.



Judge Gelfman is a past president of the Howard County Bar Association and has been an active member of the Maryland State Bar Association. She is a director and fellow of the Maryland State Bar Foundation, a fellow of the Howard County Bar Foundation and a fellow of the Women's Bar Foundation. She is also an adjunct professor of law at the University of Baltimore School of Law, where she teaches trial advocacy. She is a designated ASTAR (Advanced Science and Technology Adjudication Resource) judge.

Steve Anderson, Director of the Maryland State Law Library, to Lead National Law Library Organization

Steve Anderson, director of the Maryland State Law Library, has been elected vice president/president-elect of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), a national professional association with more than 5,000 members. Anderson has been a member of AALL since 1996. He has been active with committees and chapter leadership roles, and served a term on the AALL executive board from 2005 to 2008.

Anderson joined the Maryland Judiciary in 2005, when he was named director of the Maryland State Law Library. Prior to that appointment, he served as director of research services for the Baltimore law firm of Gordon Feinblatt Rothman Hoffberger & Hollander, LLC. From 1995 to 1998, he was an associate librarian at the Baltimore County Circuit Court Library.



Currently a member of the Maryland Access to Justice Commission and the Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors, Anderson has been active in professional organizations throughout his career. He obtained his J.D. from the University of Maryland and his master's in library science from the University of Arizona. Originally from California, Anderson earned his undergraduate degree at the University of California, Berkeley.

New Building Brings Order to the Court

Reported by Ashley Bryant, District Court Operations

The new District Court for Montgomery County may be just steps away from its old location, but its design is “miles ahead” in meeting the needs of the citizens who rely on it.

The new courthouse at 191 E. Jefferson Street opened its doors to the public Aug. 1, 2011. While overlooking decades of judicial history on Courthouse Square, the six-story building’s design and construction firmly focus on the future, addressing the growing needs of the court in the 21st century.

According to Assistant Chief Clerk of Engineering and Central Services Lisa Ritter, the building that the District Court occupied before moving to Jefferson Street was very antiquated and didn’t have secure hallways, which forced the judges, staff, citizens, and people in detention to come in the same corridors. “It was a maze,” Ritter said. “The functional use of the space was horrible because it wasn’t laid out to accommodate our current needs. It was great when we started . . . we needed to grow.”

In addition to growth, caseload and changing mandates, there are several reasons for replacing a building, according to Ritter. “Over the years, the court has evolved and we now need space for other agencies and support groups that come in to provide services to clients,” she said. The new building houses the Office of the Public Defender and the Alternative Dispute Resolution office.

The \$72 million project, a collaborative design by DMJM Design and J.A. Ammon and Associates, has

added several enhancements and overall structure to the courthouse: nine courtrooms; three hearing rooms; security; public service access terminals with space for researching cases and completing paperwork; all-day commissioner’s office accessibility; and front-door handicapped accessibility. Recently, the court has added two handicapped parking spaces along the side of the building.

The move was challenging, and a major concern for Administrative Clerk Judy Lohman was timely file relocation. To avoid confusion and delays, they relocated the files a week before the move.

Additionally, she and Administrative Judge Eugene Wolfe attended several meetings plan for the move.

For court personnel, the move was a much needed improvement. According to Lohman, the building has been uplifting for employees. “We’ve moved into this bright, shiny building, plenty of glass, bright sunshine . . . that was a big benefit to staff,”

she said. “We have a clean, bright, new building and new workstations, and I think that was a huge morale booster for staff.”

To view the various stages of the building’s construction, visit Courtnet: courtnet.courts.state.md.us/district/featured/rockvilleprogress.html



PHOTO BY TIMOTHY K. JONES

Now Playing

“The Maryland Court System”

You can learn about Maryland’s courts and how they work in less than 10 minutes. A new video, online at www.mdcourts.gov, provides a concise overview of the four different levels of courts in the state, as well as a review of other courts and bodies that operate in Maryland.

Go to the Judiciary’s home page, www.mdcourts.gov and click on Video Library to watch “The Maryland Court System” (www.mdcourts.gov/videolibrary.html).

Also playing in the Judiciary’s video library: An in-depth history of the Prince George’s County Courthouse and a celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Adult Drug Court of the Prince George’s County Circuit Court.



Young Artists Bring New Perspectives on Resolving Disputes

More than 450 young artists took part in the sixth Maryland Judiciary Conflict Resolution Day Student Bookmark Art Contest. This contest celebrates National Conflict Resolution Day, which is observed each October.

The students’ artwork reflected the theme of resolving or preventing conflict, including peer mediation, talking things out, apologizing,

respecting differences, solving problems together, listening, tolerance, building peace, or alternatives to violence.

Prizes (\$75, \$50, and \$25) were awarded for first, second, and third place in three age groups: kindergarten-second grade; third-fifth grade; and sixth-eighth grade. In addition to the cash prizes, three to five entries have been printed as bookmarks to promote conflict resolution across Maryland.



More Online

A full list of winners and pictures of the winning bookmarks are available in *Justice Matters Online* on the Maryland Judiciary’s website, www.mdcourts.gov.

A Peaceful Walk to Raise Awareness

In celebration of International Conflict Resolution Month, the Maryland Judiciary held its inaugural free, family-friendly, 3K walk around the Baltimore Inner Harbor on Saturday, Oct. 1, 2011. The event was hosted by the District Court of Maryland Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Office and the Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office (MACRO) to raise awareness about the variety of services people can use to peacefully resolve conflicts within their families, neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, houses of worship, and other organizations.



PHOTO BY ANN EID

More than 70 families and walkers weathered the chill and damp to enjoy music, games, and information-gathering about organizations in Maryland that offer conflict resolution services, such as mediation, community conferencing, conflict coaching, and more. Planning is under way for this coming fall's walk. Rachel Wohl, MACRO executive director said, "We're hoping to make this an annual event that reaches more people every year with the vital message that they can resolve their conflicts without violence and bring peace to all our communities."

The second annual walk will be held on Sunday, Oct. 7, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m., at Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

High School Students Learn about Life Choices in Anne Arundel County District Court

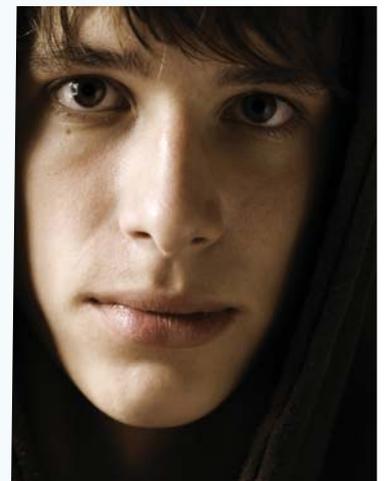
In April, a slew of teens were "summoned" to appear in Anne Arundel County District Court. They came, not with their attorneys but with their teachers, to learn first-hand about the consequences of making bad decisions. It was all part of the Anne Arundel County District Court's twice-yearly Schools in the Court program.

"The students see defendants who may be not much older," said Judge Danielle M. Mosley, who leads the program. "Students can learn how the court system works but, perhaps more importantly, we want them to understand how making wrong choices about things such as speeding, driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, drug use, and other crimes can deeply and adversely impact their lives."

Severna Park High School took part in the program. In addition to watching actual criminal cases, students heard from victims and people who have been convicted of various offenses, learned about the legal and financial consequences of being charged with drunk driving, and met with a representative from Maryland's Shock Trauma Center.

A reporter from the local paper captured the most dramatic moments for an article in *The Capital*.

For a link to the article, see *Justice Matters Online*, www.mdcourts.gov.





New High Court Portrait Unveiled



After Judge Joseph F. Murphy, Jr., retired and Judge Robert N. McDonald joined the Maryland Court of Appeals, a new official portrait was taken this spring, and shows: (front row, left to right) Judge Glenn T. Harrell; Chief Judge Robert M. Bell; Judge Lynne A. Battaglia;

(top row, left to right) Judge Mary Ellen Barbera; Judge Clayton Greene, Jr.; Judge Sally D. Adkins; and Judge Robert N. McDonald.

More Online

The online version of *Justice Matters* has more to offer, including the following exclusive content:

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