

**Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the
Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors
Friday, November 22, 2024
Maryland Judicial Center**

Attending

Florence Barnes (Carroll County; Chair, CMCLLD); Joan Bellistri (Anne Arundel County; Vice-Chair, CMCLLD); Justice Jonathan Biran (Supreme Court of Maryland); Greg Hilton (Clerk of the Supreme Court of Maryland); Nancy Faulkner (Deputy State Court Administrator); Judge John P. Morrissey (District Court of Maryland); Melissa L. Lahey (Court Administrator, Wicomico County); Pamela Ortiz (A2J); Christian Noble (A2J); Brittany West (A2J); Sarah Cataldo (A2J); Kimberly Alvarez (A2J); Tommy Fisher (MCLA); Kelsey Newcomb (Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence); Kazeem Anifowoshe (Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence); James Durham (State Law Library) Catherine McGuire (State Law Library); Leland Sampson (State Law Library); Audrey Dingler (State Law Library); Mariemily Rodriguez (Anne Arundel County); Scott Stevens (Baltimore County); Amy Lubinski (Baltimore County); Ever Hanna (Baltimore County); Kimberly Viera (Charles County); Julia Viets (Montgomery County); Jill Schorr (Montgomery County); Zachary Gunther (Washington County)

Welcome and Introductions

Florence Barnes welcomed the meeting participants who introduced themselves.

Honorable Maryland Supreme Court Justice Jonathan Biran welcomed the meeting participants but also thanked the group for what they do to further Access to Justice through service to the bench, bar, and the public. Justice Biran stated that law libraries make a difference every day.

Justice Biran who chairs the Maryland Judiciary's Artificial Intelligence Workgroup spoke about the potential of Generative AI to increase access to justice and level the playing field in instances such as cert petitions. So far, the workgroup has produced guidelines for judiciary use of AI. FAQs have been developed as well.

Deputy State Court Administrator Nancy Faulkner began her remarks with a poem, "[The Public Library](#)," that detailed the reality of a public library and what it

is like for court law libraries to deal with the public. In the past, law libraries served attorneys who knew what to expect. Law libraries now serve people who struggle with issues of addiction and housing with no idea how to handle them. Libraries have helped courts provide justice to all. Law libraries can transform something bad into something accessible and attainable.

Round the Room – Court Law Library Highlights

Zach Gunther reported that **Washington County** has seen an increase in expungement questions. As a result, the Washington County Law Library will partner with Maryland Legal Aid to offer expungement clinics four times a year.

Scott Stevens reported that the **Baltimore County** Law Library is now a part of the newly formed Access to Justice Center. He introduced Ever Hanna who will be the A2J Coordinator overseeing the law library, the Family Help Center, and Language Services. The Center will concentrate on service to the self-represented litigant. There will be a soft opening in the beginning of 2025 with a grand opening in the spring.

Lee Sampson reported on the new discovery layer at the **Thurgood Marshall State Law Library** added in September. It is more modern and user and mobile friendly. The classic view is still available for use of some functions.

Kim Viera talked about the pilot kiosk in **Charles County** to be installed in December. With the same day mediation program there have been increased questions about mediation.

Julia Viets announced new hours of operation for **Montgomery County**. The new hours will be from 8:00 to 4:00 like the rest of the court. Use of conference rooms in the law library are again at pre pandemic levels. They have improved the Education/School Law collection by weeding and adding new titles.

Sandy Brewer could not attend but sent this report from **Howard County**:

Howard County Law Library & Legal Resource Center continues to see in-person visitor numbers and phone call numbers increase. The Law Librarian continues to manage the Court's free, in person legal advice services – both the Civil Law Center and the Family Law Assistance Program. In October, the Law Library & Legal Resource Center changed its closing time to by 30 minutes and is now open to the public from 8:00am to 4:00pm. However, the Courthouse remains open until 4:30pm.

Tonya Baroudi sent the following from **Prince George's County** since she could not attend: The law library provides dedicated access to Zoom for patrons including SRLs, attorneys and Court Interpreters who do not have access to the Internet or a compatible electronic device for court hearings. The service is provided on first come first serve basis with no time limits and is used weekly. Library staff created 14 guides and/or pathfinders based on FAQ such as Administrative Actions, Expungement, Foreclosure, Guardianship, Landlord Tenant, and Power of Attorney to name a few. The guides can be accessed from the library's webpage. The guides provide categories such as links to the MD Code, Court Rules and Regulations, Executive Orders, frequently used forms, legal resources, and resources in our collection.

Joan Bellistri reported that the **Anne Arundel County** Public Law Library moved (traded places with the Jury Office) so that the law library is now the first thing seen after security along with the Court Information Desk. The law library is again co-located with the Family Court Help Center. As a result, the number of people visiting the space is ten times more than seen in the temporary space. It is a more accessible and visible space that accommodates the needs of all users – attorneys, judges, and court [staff](#) in addition to FCHC clients and SRLs.

Flossie Barnes reported that in **Carroll County** SRL continued requests to access email and to use their own flash drives to produce documents for court and ADR has led to the installation of an interactive un-networked laptop and printer that provides access to both.

Meeting Presentations

Presentation slides will be posted on the CMCLLD SharePoint site.

Maryland Center for Legal Assistance – MCLA Leading the Way

Thomas J. Fisher Jr., Esq., Managing Director, MCLA

AI and the People’s Law Library of Maryland

C. Leland (Lee) Sampson, Head of Web Content and Services, Thurgood Marshall State Law Library

Demo of Resource/Asset Map (MSCFV)

Kelsey Newcomb and Kazeem Anifowoshe, Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence. This presentation of the Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence provided information on their interactive resource maps that map housing and resources. *(This was a live demonstration without slides.)*

Access to Justice - Updates

Pamela Ortiz, Esq., Director, Access to Justice, Administrative Office of the Courts

Law Libraries: Open to the Public – How Law Libraries are Serving Self-Represented Litigants Across the Country and Maryland

Joan Bellistri, Law Library Director, Anne Arundel County Public Law Library

Hon. Chief Judge John P. Morrissey – District Court of Maryland

Judge **Morrissey** thanked the law libraries and law librarians for their service. He voiced appreciation for the work of Maryland Law Libraries and Court Help Centers for assistance to the previously unserved needs of the Self Represented Litigant.

Closing Remarks

Florence Barnes concluded the meeting by expressing her sincere appreciation to the speakers for their valuable contributions today and thanked all for their presence and participation.