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Judiciary welcomes seven new judges

The Wisconsin judiciary this summer welcomed seven new judges. They will serve in Barron, Dane, Eau Claire, Oneida, Outagamie, and Washington counties. Meet the new judges:

Timothy M. Doyle Barron County



Judge Timothy M. Doyle

The Governor selected longtime Court Commissioner Timothy M. Doyle to succeed Judge Edward R. Brunner, who was elected to the Court of Appeals in April.

A graduate of Dartmouth College and the UW Law School, Doyle has worked in private practice in Rice Lake for 33 years. Most recently, he was a shareholder in the law firm of

Thrasher, Doyle, Pelish & Franti, Ltd.

Doyle is a past member of the State Bar Board of Governors and served as chair of the District 11 committee for the Office of Lawyer Regulation from 1997-2004. He also helped to found the Humane Society of Barron County.

Doyle's wife, Elizabeth, is an English teacher at Rice Lake High School. He has three adult children, two adult stepchildren, and one grandchild.

John W. Markson Dane County



Judge John W. Markson

On June 27, Gov. Jim Doyle appointed Atty. John W. Markson to the Dane County Circuit Court. Markson will fill the Branch 1 vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Robert A. DeChambeau.

In making the appointment, Doyle said: "John Markson is a respected lawyer in the Dane County community. His dedication to the people of

Wisconsin and his dedication to justice will make him an asset on the bench."

Prior to taking the bench, Markson was a shareholder in Bell, Gierhart & Moore, which he joined as an associate in 1984. Prior to this, he was a partner in Stafford, Rosenbaum, Rieser & Hansen. He began his law career as a law clerk to Justice William G. Callow at the Wisconsin Supreme Court. He is married to wife Diane Rivard and they live in Middleton. They have two children.

Michael A. Schumacher Eau Claire County

On June 6, Gov. Jim Doyle appointed Atty. Michael A. Schumacher to the Eau Claire County Circuit Court. Schumacher succeeds Judge Eric J. Wahl, who served 14 years before his death in April.

"Michael Schumacher is a respected lawyer in the Eau Claire community," Doyle said. "His dedication to the people of Eau Claire County, and all people of Wisconsin, will make him an asset on the bench. He brings great experience and leadership, and I know he will serve well in this judgeship."

Schumacher, who worked in private practice for 26 years prior to taking the bench, said: "I am honored and humbled that Governor Doyle has put his faith and confidence in me by making this appointment. Over the past 26 years I have had the pleasure of appearing many times in Branch II before the Honorable William O'Brien and the Honorable Eric Wahl. I hope to be as good and as fair a judge as they were."

Schumacher joined the Eau Claire law firm of Herrick & Hart in 1981, following his graduation from the University of Nebraska Law School. His practice there emphasized plaintiffs' personal injury work. He earned his undergraduate degree from St. Cloud State University and is board certified as a civil trial advocate by the National Board of Trial Advocacy. He is also past president of the Eau Claire County Bar Association.

Schumacher and his wife, Joan, a veterinarian, live in Eau Claire. They have two children; their daughter, Kristen, is a recent college graduate and their son, Bryan, is a student at UW-Madison.

Patrick O'Melia Oneida County

Gov. Jim Doyle appointed Oneida County District Atty. Patrick O'Melia to succeed Judge Robert E. Kinney, who ended a 31-year career on the bench with his retirement in May.

"Patrick O'Melia will serve very, very well in this judgeship," Doyle said. "His experience as a respected lawyer, his leadership in



Judge
Michael A. Schumacher



Judge Patrick O'Melia



Director's column: Remaining an 'employer of choice'

As the state budget works its way through a legislative conference committee, it's easy to get caught up in day-to-day politics and decision-making. Which budget item is in? Which item is out? Who are the winners and the losers?

After each session of the conference committee, we can check news reports for the scorecard. But as this process moves forward, it's important to keep the big picture in mind and to consider the potential long term effects of budget decisions.

What appear now to be isolated decisions could dramatically affect the future of the state court system, its employees, and the delivery of justice in Wisconsin.



A. John Voelker

We hope the final version of the state budget being negotiated by the conference committee won't compound challenges we already know we'll face in the future. But we're concerned.

The court system is not unique among public and private employers alike in that it will need to adjust to meet demands presented by the country's changing demographics.

The court system, which has a relatively high percentage of older workers, will have to work hard to remain an "employer of choice." Our statistics suggest that by 2017, roughly eight in 10 Wisconsin judges will become eligible for retirement, compared to about 20 percent of judges who are now eligible for retirement.

Nationally, some estimates indicate that by 2010 there could be as many as eight million more jobs available than employees. The state will need innovative ways to recruit well-qualified judicial candidates as well as other court system employees as the population ages, baby boomers retire and the pool of potential recruits shrinks.

Some of these challenges already have begun to reveal themselves. In Outagamie County, only four individuals

applied for two open judgeships. Likewise, during recent efforts to recruit district court administrators we found ourselves re-posting jobs in the search for well-qualified candidates to match the demanding set of job skills.

This scenario will likely repeat itself as we experience large turnover during the next five to 10 years. Many long-time employees will retire, taking with them years of institutional knowledge.

Our human resource policies have promoted the court system as a great place to work, and we will have to work at maintaining our reputation. We'll need to ensure that our salaries and compensation packages are competitive.

But we'll also need to be innovative, and we've begun taking steps in that direction. We're doing more workforce planning for the court system, such as encouraging professional development so employees are prepared to step up to new court system opportunities that may arise as the nature of our workforce changes.

We will likely need to accommodate varied work schedules and find ways to encourage retirees from the court system to return to work on a part-time basis. We will need to identify ways to help new employees successfully make the transition into their new positions by ensuring job processes are well documented.

In other words, we need to do everything we can to prepare for a challenging future. Unfortunately, some of today's budget proposals could take away some of the tools we need to address this challenge.

One version of the budget proposes cutting back the number of sick days offered to new employees and reducing take-home pay by increasing employee health insurance payments and retirement contributions. And sick time benefits could be eliminated altogether for judges. At a time when we need to step forward in attracting individuals to public service, these proposals would represent a step backward.

While none of these decisions considered individually may seem dramatic to some people today, the cumulative, long term effect could hamper the state court system of the future. ■

New Commission on Children, Families and the Courts established

by Michelle Jensen-Goodwin, Children's Court Improvement Program director

In June, Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson convened a meeting of leaders from across the state to address the challenging issues facing the courts, the child welfare system, and tribal governments in working with vulnerable children and families involved in the foster care system.

The *Wisconsin Commission on Children, Families and the Courts* is a 20-person group charged with developing and institutionalizing meaningful collaboration across systems to identify and address barriers to safety, permanency, and the well-being of children and families. The perspectives of judicial officers and administrators, juvenile clerks, tribes, county and state social services



Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson and Dane County Circuit Court Judge Shelley Gaylord address the first meeting of the Commission on Children, Families, and the Courts.

LEADERSHIP

DART targets high-risk drug abusing offenders for bail monitoring

by Sandra M. Knisely, court information intern

A new Dane County diversion program aims to lower the recidivism rate among high-risk drug abusing offenders.

The Dane County Day Report and Treatment Program is a bail monitoring program for individuals with drug or alcohol problems – and also, in the case of many, mental health issues. It's an initiative of the Dane County Criminal Justice Group, which meets once a month to assess the needs of the criminal justice system. Overseeing DART is a subcommittee that includes members from the courts, law enforcement and the Dane County Department of Human Services.

"We can take a high-risk defendant who's in danger of re-offending and continuing to re-offend and get that person some stability in his life, some supervision and some treatment to prevent that long term revolving-door recidivism," said longtime Dane County Circuit Court Commissioner Todd Meurer, who has been the key organizer.

"The program is directed toward people that might be at higher risk than most diversion programs may normally take," Meurer added. "We thought that if we wanted to try and serve that higher-risk population, we'd have to provide a higher level of services, including treatment for underlying conditions."

Meurer is the only court official currently able to refer offenders to DART. Candidates must be 18 years or older, alcohol or drug dependent, and incarcerated in the Dane County Jail. DART is for offenders who are unable to make cash bail. "This is not designed for a person who would normally be getting out anyway," Meurer said.

Two treatment options

DART offers out-patient and residential treatment. Out-patient participants are referred to the Mental Health Center of Dane County. Participants are monitored by a case manager daily if necessary and are subject to random drug and alcohol testing. Electronic monitoring may also be used.

Residential participants are referred to Hope Haven-Rebos United, Inc. and are offered individualized treatment and case management plans. Ultimately, successful participants are transitioned to post-plea or post-conviction diversion program.

Celebrating occasional success

Despite criminal risk assessments and screening, participants in DART are high-risk – and that means organizers have to anticipate only occasional success. "The first guy we released (in mid July) didn't make it," Meurer said. "He didn't show up for any of his scheduled meetings. There's a warrant out for his arrest."

But Meurer remains optimistic. "Obviously our success rate may not be as good as programs that can deal with an easier, lower-risk defendant. We're hoping to make up for that difference with a bit more community supervision and getting them appropriate treatment."

Funding DART

For now, DART remains a limited program. The main funding comes from the Wisconsin Treatment Alternatives and Diversion program discretionary grant, which is a collaborative grant from the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, and the Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services. The \$180,000 three-year grant is "relatively small," Meurer said, "so we need to keep the numbers down." DART also charges a fee to participants who are able to pay.

Meurer said that the idea for DART has been around for about seven to eight years; however, the grant wasn't established until two years ago. "This is our way of trying to address an unmet need," he said, "and we have been very fortunate to have the active support of the past chief judge, Mike Nowakowski, and the current chief judge, Bill Foust." ■



The Dane County Courthouse, where Court Commissioner Todd Meurer and Judges Michael N. Nowakowski and C. William Foust, among others, have organized the DART program.

First-ever statewide *pro se* conference focuses on customer service

by Ann Zimmerman, *pro se* coordinator

On June 19, more than 60 Wisconsin judges, attorneys, court commissioners, clerks of court, registers in probate, academics, and concerned community members attended the first-ever Statewide Conference on Self-Representation to discuss how to improve services to people who represent themselves in court. Participants came away energized with new ideas for serving *pro se* litigants.

“What is necessary in every community is an effort to educate the self represented in both court procedure and decisional process,” said Judge Eugene D. Harrington, Washburn County Circuit Court. “Self represented need to know what evidence is necessary when they come to court [and] need to have some understanding as to the judge’s process for making a decision. Without that information, [they] will continue to flounder and be frustrated with their court experience.”

The day-long conference, held in Wausau, was organized by the chairs of the District 9 and District 10 committees on self-represented litigants: Deputy Chief Judge Gary L. Carlson, Taylor County Circuit Court; Clerks of Court Karen Hepfler, Chippewa County, and Diane Sennholz, Marathon County; District 10 Court Administrator Gregg Moore; and me. I coordinate statewide *pro se* projects as executive assistant to Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson.

An outgrowth of last June’s first-ever joint meeting of the Ninth and Tenth Judicial Districts in Chippewa Falls, this conference offered sessions on how to build the necessary infrastructure for supporting sustainable court-based *pro se* programming; available resources for program development; and various Wisconsin-based

model programs.

A highlight of the day was the keynote address delivered by Judge Kevin S. Burke, who serves on the district court in Hennepin County, Minnesota. He offered practice tips to court commissioners and judges, which included making eye contact and active listening, using plain language and treating people as if they were customers.

“If people have a sense that there was procedural fairness, they are much more likely to comply with court orders,” Burke noted. ■



Photo credit: Wisconsin Law Journal

Judge Kevin S. Burke of Hennepin County, Minnesota, explains to participants in the Statewide Conference on Self-Representation that treating *pro se* litigants with respect, taking the time to listen, and explaining decisions in an understandable way will help improve compliance with court orders.

Conference participants weigh in on the experience

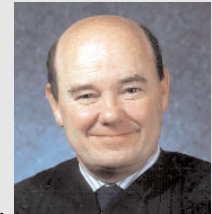


“I thought that the presentations by the speakers had a common theme – urging us, as court managers and judges, to improve our customer-service orientation in our courthouses....

It is incumbent upon us to effectively listen and respond to the needs of those who use our services.”

Clerk of Circuit Court Carlo Esqueda
Dane County

“The most valuable observation that I have is that court officials must look outside the box occasionally for solutions. What works in one community is not possible in others for many reasons.”



Judge Eugene D. Harrington
Washburn County



“Judge Kevin Burke ... helped me to see the challenges presented by self-represented litigants in a positive way, rather than a negative one. He noted that self-represented litigants, like all litigants, deserve three things from the courts: to be listened to and heard, to be treated with respect, and to be given understandable reasons for any decision made by the court. He argued that doing these things with self-represented litigants would significantly increase their compliance with court orders. When framed this way, addressing the challenges presented by self-represented litigants is not just an annoying problem to solve, but rather it is an integral part of doing our jobs well.”

Judge Michael J. Dwyer
Milwaukee County

WISCONSIN CONNECTS

Wisconsin sends judicial delegation to science/tech training

Understanding complex scientific evidence can be a



Judge
Daniel P. Anderson

Judge
Mark J. McGinnis

challenge for everyone in court – including the judge. In recognition of this fact, Congress in 2005 mandated science

and technology training for judges through the U.S. Department of Justice.

The training program, *The Advanced Science & Technology Resource Program* aims to educate and certify a small group of judges in every state to “go to work when evidence-related new issues

pressure case management...” The certified judges also are expected to teach at judicial-education programs.

This summer, three Wisconsin judges – selected by Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson – took part in the training program. Judges Daniel P. Anderson, Court of Appeals, District II; Mark J. McGinnis, Outagamie County;

and Dale T. Pasell, La Crosse County, reported that the training was very worthwhile.

The judges brought back new methods for managing evidence in the trial courts, and resources for helping appellate judges to understand the record in cases involving complex scientific evidence. They will now help to design judicial education programs here in Wisconsin to share their knowledge.

Justice speaks in Azerbaijan

Justice Ann Walsh Bradley traveled to Baku, Azerbaijan

this summer to meet with members of the Supreme Court of Azerbaijan and participate in a seminar for local attorneys.

Bradley was invited by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), which helps developing nations to build strong economies. Part of IFC’s mission is to mobilize advisors from across the globe to share their expertise.

Her visit made the front page of the nation’s largest English language newspaper, where participants in the seminar expressed their gratitude. “I am amazed,” said one participant, “at the wonderful things that come out of Wausau!” ■



Justice Ann Walsh Bradley talks with one member of the group of attorneys from Azerbaijan with whom she met this summer.

PPAC activities update

by Erin Slattengren, policy analyst

Videoconferencing

The Planning and Policy Advisory Committee (PPAC) Videoconferencing Subcommittee, chaired by Judge William M. McMonigal, presented its final report at the May PPAC meeting. The report included a draft rule proposal that provides guidance to foster appropriate use of videoconferencing in court proceedings.

The subcommittee was a multi-disciplinary group that included judges, public defenders, a district attorney, a district court administrator, and others who had many varying views on the best way to move forward with videoconferencing guidance for the courts.

The final proposal is the result of nearly two years of work and compromise. The subcommittee was able to develop a proposal that encourages videoconferencing use without forfeiting constitutional rights. The proposal is intended to provide minimum standards to judges for expanded use but still reserves their unilateral prerogative to deny its use in a given case. PPAC voted to accept the proposal carry it forward through the Supreme Court rule petition process.

Court security

In response to courthouse security being identified as a top priority in the current “Critical Issues” plan, PPAC voted to organize a new subcommittee to address this topic. This subcommittee, chaired by Judges Michael O. Bohren and Judge Sarah B. O’Brien, will begin by reviewing SCR 70.39, examining how well these standards have worked to date, and determining whether they should be updated or modified to strengthen the local process so security upgrades keep in line with evolving security challenges.

Planning

PPAC and its Planning Subcommittee are gathering information for the next two-year operational planning cycle. Also under discussion is the possibility of revisiting and developing a new long-range strategic plan for the court system, an update the 1994 “Framework for Action.” PPAC Planning develop two-year operational plans emphasizing current priorities. The Planning Subcommittee

see PPAC on page 6

Business of the Courts program is a hit in Milwaukee

It's a busy Monday morning in May, and Chief Judge Kitty K. Brennan is fielding tough questions from a group that has gathered in the sixth floor conference room. The group includes politicians, journalists, county employees, business leaders, judges, and court staff – and the topics range from federal cuts to child-support enforcement (“that’s going to hit us this fall,” Brennan tells the group) to the location of Milwaukee Children’s Court (“it’s horrible”) to the need for more and better effective justice strategies.

The wide-ranging discussion occasionally focuses on pet peeves. “Your calendars are very inefficient,” says one participant. “In federal court, if you have

a hearing at 9, it starts at 9 – and you’re out of there by 9:30. Here, it might start at 11.”

The Chief Judge explains that court calendars often are driven by the lawyers’ schedules, and can be upended any number of ways. “The various players – the district attorney, the public defender, the sheriff, the courts – are all interrelated,” she explains.

This is the start of another Business of the Courts session in Milwaukee County. Between the questions, Brennan works in an orientation to the courts – supplemented with a packet of information that Deputy District

Court Administrator Beth Bishop Perrigo has developed – and Judicial Review Coordinator Holly Szablewski talks about pre-trial diversion and treatment alternatives, a topic of intense interest to all participants.

This is the First Judicial District Business of the Courts program, an initiative that aims to improve communication and understanding between the courts and their many constituencies. Among today’s participants are Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Investigative Reporter Gina Barton; Northwestern Mutual Vice President and General Counsel Robert Berdan; Deborah Donaldson, a community columnist for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel; Rep. Mark R. Honadel (R-South Milwaukee), who serves as majority caucus chair in the state Assembly; Fiverse Vice President David Irwin; and Harold Mester, a former news radio reporter who is now public information manager for the Milwaukee County Board.

Following the orientation/question-and-answer session, the participants are given a tour that includes a glimpse of the standing-room-only crowd of *pro se* litigants awaiting their hearings in small claims court. The District Attorney’s Office tour leads the visitors past crowded holding cells and domestic violence charging conferences, and a stop in intake court and preliminary hearing court shows Court Commissioners David Sweet and Barry Slagle in the trenches.

The participants spend the balance of the morning ‘riding along’ with various court officials. Barton, the reporter, is sent to felony court, where she watches sentencing hearings and then meets with Judge M. Joseph Donald to discuss some of the complex issues the criminal justice system is facing.

After the group reconvenes – this time with about a dozen judges – for further discussion and lunch, Brennan thanks the participants for taking the time to visit the courthouse. Each of them, in a moment that underscores the value of the program, shares last thoughts about what they’ll take away from the experience. “Breaking away for half a day is pretty difficult,” says one, “and I had no idea how worthwhile it would be. But this was the most interesting, thought-provoking experience I’ve had in a long time.” ■



Gina Barton, an investigative reporter for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, joins Judge M. Joseph Donald on the bench as part of the First Judicial District’s Business of the Courts program.

PPAC

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is currently researching various long-range planning processes and will make a recommendation to PPAC, the director of state courts, and the Supreme Court on how best to approach long-range planning in coordination with our short-term prioritization process.

Effective justice strategies

Judge Carl Ashley, chair of the Effective Justice Strategies Subcommittee (EJSS) reported that members of the EJSS are currently working in partnership with the Sentencing Commission on developing a database of justice programming and practices occurring throughout the state, including but not limited to court system programs (i.e. day report, electronic monitoring, treatment courts, community service programs). Much of the information to be included in is this database started with promising practices being reported to the Chief Justice throughout her 72-county tour. ■

Questions about PPAC and its subcommittees may be directed to Erin Slattengren at erin.slattengren@wicourts.gov or (608) 266-8861.

Monitored exchange program launches in Rock County

by Sandra M. Knisely, court information intern

A pilot program in Rock County, modeled on successful efforts in Illinois and Florida, is working to keep custody exchanges peaceful for parents under no-contact orders.

Rock County judges started issuing orders specifying exchange at the Neutral Exchange Site (NEST), located at a local health-care facility, on June 15. Rock County Judge James P. Daley said his colleagues are supportive. "This is another tool for the mediation process," he said. "All of the judges are behind this."

The program's first monitored exchange occurred July 13 and was "awesome," according to Program Coordinator Rita Costrini-Norgal. "We've now finished the creation on paper, and we're actually building the project," she said.

The idea of monitored exchange is not new for Costrini-Norgal. A 15-year mediation veteran, Costrini-Norgal said the idea surfaced 10 years ago when parents who "pressed each other's buttons" despite no-contact orders expressed the need for a formalized exchange program. "I kept it in the back of my head, but I haven't been able to organize this until this year," she said.

During that time, Illinois and Florida mandated monitored exchange, and the University of Florida conducted a three-year study that provided information and advice for implementing these programs. Costrini-Norgal said she used both states as models for NEST.

Procedures ensure no contact

Costrini-Norgal said NEST's target group is small, "but it's the group that needs it." The program's procedures ensure no parental contact during a custody exchange. The receiving parent arrives 15 minutes before the scheduled exchange. The parent is screened by two volunteer monitors and a Rock County Sheriff's Department deputy for intoxication, a valid driver's license, and, if necessary, a car seat.

At a separate entrance, the drop-off parent arrives with the child at the scheduled exchange time. The monitors escort the child from the drop-off entrance to the other entrance where the receiving parent waits. The receiving parent and child leave while the drop-off parent stays for 15 minutes to ensure the other parent and child are gone. Only those with scheduled exchanges are permitted to be present; friends and other family members are prohibited.

No more McDonald's exchanges

If the exchange is successful, the parents do not even see each other – but controlling interactions between the adults is not the only benefit to the supervised transfers. The record of the exchanges, including who is late, who is unprepared and who does everything right, can be used by judges in later custody decisions.

Daley described the program as "win-win." He said judges often order custody exchanges at a public place, such as a local McDonald's restaurant, "[but] too often ... one parent is saying the other was late or didn't show," he said. "With [NEST], the kids get transferred and you've taken out

of the equation fear of violence."

County businesses are equally pleased. "I've heard thank you, thank you from businesses because they're tired of being the war zone," Costrini-Norgal said.

The key ingredients

Two key ingredients – community support and a committed program coordinator – have been vital for NEST. The hospital that serves as the Janesville exchange site donated use of space throughout Rock County, though some communities may choose to use other facilities. Costrini-Norgal said it is important to keep the exact location of the sites private to prevent exchanges from becoming "unruly." Costrini-Norgal is a tireless program coordinator who has taken on this project as a volunteer. She is director of Rock County Mediation and Family Court Services and said she now has the equivalent of two full-time jobs.

"Rita's done the [heavy lifting]," Daley said. "She's been really tireless once we sat down and said 'let's do this.'"

The exchange monitors are also volunteers, and NEST is in the process of recruiting. "My goal is to have the same volunteers on the Friday exchange as the Sunday exchange so the same team stays with a family," Costrini-Norgal said.



Judge James P. Daley

Support from law enforcement

Because domestic disturbances can be dangerous, high-stress, unpredictable situations for police, NEST has support of law enforcement. Although it is currently limited to Janesville, NEST may expand to Beloit as the client base widens.

Beloit Police Department Chief Sam Lathrop said he supports the program. "I told [Costrini-Norgal] to let us know, include us, let us participate when she's ready to expand," he said. "Many exchange meetings are done in the lobby of the police department, and the only staff available are records department staff and non-sworn personnel. A couple of parents are not warm and fuzzy, and staff are forced to be referees."

Lathrop said NEST could reduce the number of domestic calls on Fridays and Sundays, the days custody exchanges generally occur. "We [frequently] respond to child custody issues, which are more frequent when divorces are pending," he said.

Lathrop said an important element of NEST is the third-party witness to the exchange with no connection to the situation. "Just somebody there – that will reduce conflict," he said. "Who misbehaves when they're being observed?"

Program costs

In Janesville, Rock County sheriff's deputies attend NEST exchanges. Costrini-Norgal said she would like to use retired police officers; however, they would need to be paid. In Beloit, Lathrop said he has asked officers to volunteer.

see NEST on page 11

AWARDS

Gramling honored for education commitment

Milwaukee Municipal Court Judge James Gramling, who stepped down on April 30 after 21 years on the bench, was honored this spring for his dedication to municipal judge education.

Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson presented Gramling with a plaque during the Municipal Judge Traffic Seminar in Lake Geneva.

Gramling is a longtime active participant in judicial education events, and also has served on the faculty at offerings such as the annual Justice Teaching Institute for high school teachers.

Muni Judge Hesch is 'Judge of the Year'

Arcadia Municipal Judge David R. Hesch has been named 2007 Judge of the Year by the Wisconsin Municipal Judges Association.

Hesch has been on the bench for 11 years. In that time, he has developed a community service program and, according to Trempealeau County Circuit Court Judge John A. Damon, has had a remarkable impact on young offenders. "Judge Hesch's philosophy is to present them with someone who actually does care," Damon said.



Arcadia Municipal Judge David R. Hesch accepts the Municipal Judges Association Judge of the Year award from Justice Louis B. Butler Jr. at a July luncheon in Racine. Butler served for a decade on the Milwaukee Municipal Court.

Muni Judge Larson honored for lifetime achievement

Town of Grand Chute Municipal Court Judge James R. Larson was honored with the Municipal Judges Association Jurist Lifetime Achievement Award in July.

Outagamie County Circuit Court Judge Mark J. McGinnis summed up the qualities that make Larson an



Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson presents Judge James Gramling with a plaque recognizing his strong commitment to municipal judge education.

extraordinary judge: "He treats all attorneys, parties, witnesses, and staff with respect. He handles a very busy caseload with passion and effectiveness, [and] he considers each case with an open mind and a complete understanding of the law," McGinnis said.

Larson has been a municipal court judge since 1974. ■



Town of Grand Chute Municipal Court Judge James R. Larson takes the podium after receiving the Municipal Judges Association Jurist Lifetime Achievement Award in July.

Six retired judges serve on new Government Accountability Board

Six retired Wisconsin judges are serving the state in a new capacity as the first members of the Government Accountability Board (GAB), which will replace the state Elections Board and Ethics Board. The Wisconsin Legislature earlier this summer confirmed all six to the new board.

The GAB is unique in the country; no other state has a board of this type whose members are all judges.

"The goal was to eliminate even the appearance of political partisanship from decisions related to elections and ethics," said Chief Judge Tom Cane, who began his service on the GAB following his July 31 retirement from the Court of Appeals. "I believe the Legislature's strong support is an important vote of confidence in our impartial state judiciary."

The new members are:

- ❑ **Judge Michael W. Brennan**, who served on the Clark County Circuit Court from 1971-2001. His term on the GAB ends May 1, 2014.
- ❑ **Chief Judge Thomas Cane**, who served on the Wisconsin Court of Appeals from 1981-2007 and on the Outagamie County Circuit Court from 1972-1981. His term on the GAB ends May 1, 2013.

- ❑ **Judge David G. Deininger**, who served on the Wisconsin Court of Appeals from 1996-2007 and on the Green County Circuit Court from 1994-1996. His term on the GAB ends May 1, 2009.
- ❑ **Judge William Eich**, who served on the Wisconsin Court of Appeals from 1985-2000 and on the Dane County Circuit Court from 1975-1985. His term on the GAB ends May 1, 2010.
- ❑ **Judge James B. Mohr**, who served on the Vilas County Circuit Court from 1983-2004. His term on the GAB ends May 1, 2011.
- ❑ **Judge Gerald C. Nichol**, who served on the Dane County Circuit Court from 1988-2004. His term on the GAB ends May 1, 2012. ■



Judge
Michael W. Brennan



Judge Thomas Cane



Judge David G. Deininger



Judge William Eich



Judge James B. Mohr



Judge Gerald C. Nichol

CCIP *continued from page 2*

professionals, attorneys, foster parents, and court appointed special advocates are represented.

"This is a unique and significant endeavor that requires leadership from all facets of the legal, judicial, tribal and child-welfare communities. We must work together across governments and cultures to start looking at our systems through the eyes of children," Abrahamson said.

The Commission will also advise the Director of State Courts Office in its capacity as the recipient of federal Children's Court Improvement Program (CCIP) funding. CCIP is a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to the highest state court of appeal to

improve the handling of cases involving children in need of protection or services, termination of parental rights, and adoption in the court system.

Abrahamson will serve as the Commission's chair, with Judge Shelley Gaylord, Dane County Circuit Court, serving as vice chair. Other court system representatives include Judge Mary Triggiano, Milwaukee County; Judge John P. Hoffmann, Waupaca County; Court Commissioner Sandra Marcus, Marathon County; District Court Administrator Patrick Brummond, Seventh Judicial District; and Juvenile Clerk Ericka Nelson, St. Croix County. ■

RETIREMENTS

Appellate courts say fond farewell to Wilcox, Cane

Justice Jon P. Wilcox's retirement party brought in hundreds of well-wishers. Posing with Wilcox (left) are: Supreme Court Commissioner Nancy Kopp, retired Justice William A. Bablitch, and retired Justice William Callow.



Justice Jon P. Wilcox attempts to clarify the record as a gleeful Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson takes full advantage of an opportunity to tell stories. Wilcox retired on July 31 after 15 years on the Wisconsin Supreme Court and an additional 13 years on the circuit court bench in Waushara County.



After 26 years on the Wisconsin Court of Appeals (nine of them as chief judge) and another nine years as a circuit court judge in Outagamie County, Chief Judge Thomas Cane was feted at a celebration in downtown Madison. Among the attendees were (at right) Judge Neal P. Nettesheim.

Jacobi retires as District 1 managing court reporter

Kris Jacobi accepts a plaque for her years of service as the District 1 managing court reporter.

After a multi-faceted career that included high profile trials, mentoring court reporters, and working for three chief judges, Kris Jacobi retired May 29 as managing court reporter in District 1.

Court reporters, judges, retired judges, commissioners, court staff, and bailiffs crowded into the Chief Judge's conference

room to celebrate Jacobi's successful career and many contributions to the court system. Former Chief Judge Michael J. Skwierawski, for whom Jacobi was an official reporter during her entire career with the courts, presented her with a plaque from the justices of the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

As a member of the Making the Record Committee, Jacobi will continue to share her expertise as the court system moves forward in an era that will unfortunately see a continued shortage of court reporters.

"It's important to know that while Kris is an exceptional resource on court reporting issues in the state, she has also been a valuable advocate for court reporters in Milwaukee," said District Court Administrator Bruce Harvey. "Kris has also played a valuable role as an administrator in the

RETIREMENTS *continued from page 10*

Milwaukee County courts, working with other managers on system-wide issues.”

Succeeding Jacobi is Michelle Smith, who has served District 1 in the Office of the Managing Court Reporter for more than eight years.

“Michelle brings an exceptionally strong set of skills and knowledge from her years in District 1,” Harvey said. “She also has experience in the courts through her work at The Justice Management Institute in Denver, the District Attorney’s Office in Milwaukee and the Judicial Oversight Initiative. We are exceptionally fortunate that she accepted this position so her leadership and service in the system will continue.”

Courts bid farewell to longtime RIPs

Columbia County Register in Probate Joan Maxwell, who served the courts for 37 years, and Milwaukee County Register in Probate Robert R. Knoll, who served for 35 years, retired this spring and summer.

Maxwell became Portage’s first part-time deputy register in probate 1970. She was appointed to the post full-time in 1974. Throughout her career, Maxwell has been active in the Registers in Probate Association.

Robert R. Knoll was only the tenth register in probate in Milwaukee County since the state Legislature established



Chief Judge Kitty R. Brennan presents Robert Knoll with a plaque commemorating 35 years of service.

NEST *continued from page 7*

“Our officers would be off-duty. It would just be somebody to have a watchful eye,” he said.

Costrini-Norgal said she would like to raise funds so the cost of the deputies wouldn’t have an impact on the county budget. “I don’t want this to be on the tax dollar,” she said. “I think this can succeed on a low budget.”

NEST does not charge its users. Other states, such as Florida, charge either one or both parent a fee for monitored exchanges, but Costrini-Norgal said Rock County judges decided finances should not determine who uses NEST.

the Office of Register in Probate in 1880. He began working in the office in 1971 and became register in probate in 1974.

Richland County loses veteran clerk of court

After 24 years as the Richland County clerk of circuit court and four years as deputy clerk before that, Ann Robinson retired in early July. Stacy Kleist was appointed to replace her.

“One of my fondest memories is working with Judge [Kent] Houck and Judge [Edward] Leineweber,” Robinson said. The Richland County office is small, with only Robinson and two other full-time employees. “We’ve raised our families together,” Robinson said. She described her colleagues as family and said the people will be what she misses most about the job.

Robinson had no legal experience before beginning as Deputy Clerk. She was working as a typesetter for the Richland Observer when the position opened, and she learned on the job. When the clerk of court passed away in February 1983, Robinson was appointed. She faced a contested election only once.

A Menominee native, Robinson said she will continue to live in the Richland Center area with her husband, with whom she plans on touring Florida and other southern states during the winter.

Leineweber praised Robinson for her 28 years of service. “Ann has served the people of Richland County admirably over a long career in public office and I wish her well in a richly deserved retirement.” ■

Special thanks to the following for their contributions to the Retirements section: Deputy District Court Administrator Beth Bishop Perrigo, Milwaukee; RIP Association President Jody J. Bartels, Grant County; Court Information Intern Sandra M. Knisely.



Stacy Kleist

Daley said the first goal is to serve all residents who meet the program criteria, meaning that there has been past violence between the parents. In the future, NEST may be expanded to other parents. Costrini-Norgal said one future use of NEST could be to help reunite families of prison inmates.

For now, NEST is expanding slowly “so we do this the right way,” according to Costrini-Norgal. “I’m very excited about this program. The support of the community has been very heartwarming.” ■

PEOPLE

Project Fresh Light, a Wisconsin organization that works with adolescent drug addicts and their families, reported on a new 'report card' project in Kenosha County's juvenile



Deputy Chief Judge
Mary K. Wagner

court. The project is an offshoot of a national effort to help juvenile justice systems assess their impact and report to the community. Deputy Chief Judge

Mary K. Wagner

led the effort to establish a system for issuing report cards letting the public know how the juvenile

justice system is protecting communities, holding offenders accountable, and helping offenders to develop useful skills. Kenosha County produced its first report card in May 2006, disseminating the results of a study of 651 cases in a simple, easy-to-read brochure. Wagner and **Mary Beier**, director of Juvenile Intake Services, reported that the project is valuable not only as a communications tool but also for system management.

The Marathon County Courthouse hosted a portrait-hanging ceremony on June 22, courtesy of the Marathon County Bar Association. Six judge portraits were hung, including former Judges **Joe Kucerick** (now deceased), **Daniel LaRocque**, and **John Stevens**. Three of the judges whose portraits were hung – Justice **Ann Walsh Bradley**



Posing with their portraits at a hanging ceremony in Marathon County are judges representing all three levels of court. From left, Judge Raymond F. Thums, who served on the bench in Marathon County from 1988-2003; Judge Michael W. Hoover, a member of the District III Court of Appeals who served on the Marathon County Circuit Court from 1988-97; and Justice Ann Walsh Bradley, who served in Marathon County from 1985-95, prior to her election to the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

and Judges **Raymond F. Thums** and **Michael W. Hoover** – attended the ceremony.

For a third year, Chief Justice **Shirley S. Abrahamson** was a featured presenter in the 2007 Intern Professional Speaker Program. The program is a unique opportunity for summer interns from the executive, legislative and judicial branches of state government to engage in small group discussions with top elected officials. The Intern



Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson poses with the first group of state government interns to whom she spoke this summer. The Chief gave presentations and answered questions from dozens of interns as part of a Wisconsin Women's Council program.

Speaker Program is hosted by the Wisconsin Women's Council, Office of Governor Jim Doyle, and Office of Senator Herb Kohl.

"She thinks jury duty is a waste of time" was the headline on a guest column in the July 31 edition of *The [Racine] Journal Times*. **Jayne Siler** complained that she had been called for jury duty and "wasted an entire, beautiful, sunny, summer afternoon waiting on 13 people with felonies attached to their names try to make decisions about their own fate.

"I can just picture the lawyers, district attorneys, and the judge all trying to educate these individuals about how the court works, the charges against them, and trying to persuade them to pick a certain option," Siler wrote. "What they leave out of the picture is the 54 people sitting and waiting doing nothing while this circus goes on." Siler wrapped up by suggesting that jail inmates be brought in to serve as jurors.

"More communities pass offender laws," a story in the July 27 edition of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, says ordinances limiting where sex offenders may live are popping up across the state. The ordinances generally block registered sex offenders from living within a certain distance

PEOPLE *continued from page 12*

– usually 1,000 to 2,000 feet – of schools, parks, pools, movie theaters, and other places where children may congregate. According to the article, municipalities that recently have passed ordinances or are considering them are: Algoma, Bayside, Cudahy, Franklin, Glendale, Green Bay, Little Chute, Menomonee Falls, Milwaukee, Oak Creek, Racine, South Milwaukee, and West Allis. Waukesha and Town of Brookfield officials have begun researching the issue, and Green Bay has made about 93 percent of the city off-limits.



Reserve Judge
John J. Perlich

“Retired judges help keep the wheels of justice in motion” headlined an article in the June 28 edition of the *La Crosse Tribune*. The article quoted Reserve Judge **John J.**

Perlich, who returned as a reserve judge shortly after his November 2006 retirement. Perlich said he is pleased to be in a position to help out, and values the contact with the legal community. “You cannot walk away from the job you did for 21 years and people you did it with for 21 years and not miss it,” he said.

Reserve Judge **Robert W. Radcliffe**, who served in Jackson County from 1984-2002, offered a slightly different perspective. “I enjoy being involved with the judicial system again and keeping myself up to date on the changes in the law as it affects the court system,” he said. “I’d much rather be driving my tractor or working in my garden or hunting, but I enjoy filling in.”



Reserve Judge
Robert W. Radcliffe

“Chief Justice **Shirley S. Abrahamson** has made headlines across the state this summer as she continues the 72-county trek she began in February 2006. Coverage in the *Door County Advocate* of her August visit to Sturgeon Bay led with this observation: “She’s a petite woman with a large presence, partly due to a no-nonsense demeanor, a keen sense of humor and a native New York accent that hasn’t been homogenized by her years in Wisconsin.” The reporter eventually did recount the substance of the roundtable discussion that included former Justice **Janine P. Geske**, Judge **Peter Diltz**, Sheriff **Terry Vogel**, County Board Chair **Charlie Most**, and others.

During her stop in Appleton, the Chief Justice took questions about judicial elections, campaign contributions,



Photo credit: Sean Krajaec, Kenosha News

and maintaining independence. “A judge does not go on the bench with strings, and is not a puppet for anyone,” Abrahamson said. “And it has to be kept that way.”

The Janesville Gazette headlined an August 11 article with this provocative question: “Is the jail a debtor’s prison?” The *Gazette* reported that 21 of the 550 inmates incarcerated at the Rock County jail on August 3 were there because of unpaid fines. Sheriff Bob Spoden expressed concern: “Far too often,” he was quoted as saying, “we lock up people who aren’t dangerous but perhaps irresponsible.”

Spoden said he and Rock County Presiding Judge **James Daley** may ask the county’s criminal justice coordinating council to organize a weekend work program that would let offenders work off fines through community service. ■



Photo credit: Tim Hughes, Isthmus

Director of State Courts **A. John Voelker** poses with his family – wife **Becky** and sons **Jay** and **Ross** – and *Mallards* players **Allan Donato** (left) and **Eric Nielsen**, both of whom are living with the Voelkers for the season.

NEW FACES *continued from front page*

the community and his dedication to the people of Oneida County – and all people of Wisconsin – will make him an asset on the bench.”

“I am extremely happy and very proud to continue serving the people of Oneida County in this capacity,” O’Melia said. “Our county has been blessed with a wonderful judicial system and I am thankful to have the opportunity to extend this tradition. I look forward to enhancing and maintaining the high quality of the Oneida County legal system.”

O’Melia has been Oneida County District Attorney since 1989. Prior to that, he served briefly as an assistant corporate counsel and assistant district attorney. As a new law school graduate, he spent three years with the O’Melia Law Firm.

A 1986 graduate of Marquette Law School, O’Melia earned his undergraduate degree at St. Norbert College in De Pere.

He and his wife, Karalyn, live in Rhinelander. They have three children: Elliott, Samuel and Eva.

**Nancy J. Krueger
Outagamie County**

Gov. Jim Doyle in late August appointed Atty. Nancy J. Krueger, a senior staff attorney at American Family Insurance in Appleton, to serve in Branch 2 of the Outagamie County Circuit Court. She succeeds Judge Dennis C. Luebke, who stepped down in June to accept appointment as an international judge for the United Nations Mission in Kosovo.

Krueger began her legal career as a staff attorney at the Department of Natural Resources. She also worked as an assistant district attorney in Outagamie County from 1980-82.

A graduate of the UW Law School, Krueger was a coach for the Appleton East Mock Trial Team and is a member of the steering committee for Leadership Fox Cities.

Krueger and her husband, Dr. Michael Krueger, live in Appleton and have two children, Greg and Elizabeth.

**Mitchell J. Metropulos
Outagamie County**

On the same day he appointed Nancy Krueger, Gov. Jim Doyle also appointed Atty. Mitchell J. Metropulos to the Outagamie County Circuit Court. Metropulos will serve in Branch 3, where he succeeds Judge Joseph M. Troy who resigned to take a position with Habush, Habush & Rottier.

Metropulos has been a prosecutor for 10 years. He is currently an assistant district attorney in Outagamie County, and also has served in the Winnebago County District Attorney’s Office. He is expected to stand for election to a full, six-year term in April 2008.

A graduate of the UW Law School, Metropulos has been active in restorative justice and domestic violence prevention and has taught courses at Fox Valley Technical College.

Metropulos and his wife, Teri, live in Appleton. They have three children, Sarah, Nick and Max.

**James K. Muehlbauer
Washington County**

In late August, Gov. Jim Doyle appointed Atty. James K. Muehlbauer to the Washington County Circuit Court. Muehlbauer will fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Judge Annette K. Ziegler, who now is a member of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Muehlbauer is expected to seek election to a full, six-year term in April 2008.

Muehlbauer is currently at the law firm of Schloemer, Spella, Muehlbauer & Enea. He began his career in 1979 as an assistant attorney general at the Wisconsin Department of Justice, and then worked at the law firm of Salza and Schiro. He also served as assistant city attorney for West Bend.



Atty.
James K. Muehlbauer

Muehlbauer holds a masters degree in economics from UW-Milwaukee and a law degree from Marquette Law School. He is a member of the Wisconsin Academy of Trial Lawyers and is a past-president of the Washington County Bar Association. He is also an active member of the West Bend Germanfest Committee.

Muehlbauer resides in West Bend with his two sons. He also has two grown daughters.

Court administrators’ shuffle

This summer has seen several changes in the offices of Wisconsin’s district court administrators. Here is the rundown.

In District 6, headquartered in Stevens Point, the district court administrator post is currently vacant. Recruitment is underway for that position. Former District 6 Court Administrator Susan Byrnes has moved to District 9, headquartered in Wausau, to replace Scott Johnson, who accepted a position with the federal district court in Des Moines, Iowa.



Susan Byrnes

In District 8, headquartered in Green Bay, Keith Pereira of Vancouver, Wash. was hired to replace Kathleen M. Murphy, who has agreed to return to Madison to fill the position of circuit court policy and procedures advisor. Murphy succeeds Robert Brick, who retired in spring after more than 20 years with the court system.



Keith Pereira

NEW FACES *continued from page 14*

Pereira will begin work August 27. He holds a master's degree in criminal justice and a certification in court management from the National Center for State Courts Institute for Court Management. Pereira began his career as a probation agent. He has since worked in a variety of capacities in court administration, most recently administering specialty courts in the State of Washington.

District 9 selects new *pro se* coordinator

The 12 northcentral Wisconsin counties that comprise the Ninth Judicial Administrative District have a new *pro se* coordinator to assist in the development of programs



Annette Barna

designed to improve services to self-represented litigants.

Annette Barna, a lawyer and advocate for domestic violence victims, began work May 21. She replaces Danial Johnson, who resigned the post earlier this year.

The District Nine *pro se* program is funded for the next two years with federal dollars

through a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice. In that time, Barna intends to fully implement the 'virtual' legal clinic that has been piloted in District Nine through a partnership among the State Bar, Northcentral Technical College, and the circuit courts.

The virtual clinic links self-represented litigants with lawyers in other counties using videoconferencing available at each technical college campus, enabling lawyers to provide legal help in divorce matters without creating conflicts of interest. Barna will focus on raising awareness of the clinic among *pro se* litigants.

Additional potential projects include:

- A forms-review clinic, where litigants could ask volunteer lawyers to check their forms prior to filing; and
- A public library partnership modeled on the District 10 effort, where public librarians receive special training from the Wisconsin State Law Library to enable them to help people find legal information.

"There is much to be done, and I am looking forward to traveling the district, meeting people, and learning about what would be helpful," Barna said.

see New Faces on page 17

OBITUARIES**Barbara J. Saeman
Office of Management
Services**

Barbara J. Saeman, who worked for the Director of State Courts Office for 23 years prior to retiring last February due to illness, died April 28 after a long battle with leukemia. She was 59.

Saeman was a graduate of Edgewood High School and Marquette University. Her diverse career included work in an orthodontist's office and at Holy Name Seminary prior to her career with the Wisconsin court system.

Saeman worked her entire court system career in Human Resources, taking on new projects and assignments as the scope of the office expanded. Her work in managing the details associated with the courts' complex court reporter employment structure was exceptional and court reporters from across the state expressed appreciation for her work.

Human Resources Officer Margaret Brady explained that many of Saeman's more recent contributions took the form of "behind-the-scenes

administrative tasks and assignments that make our work lives as court system staff run smoothly." Brady said that Saeman played a key role in training new staff and working on substantial information technology and job classification projects.

But most of all, Brady said, "Barb will be remembered for the kind and generous demeanor she possessed as she competently and capably carried out many Human Resources assignments over her 23 years with the court system. Her strong commitment to tending to the "human" side of Human Resources is missed."

Surviving are her parents, Ken and Bernice Saeman, and two sisters.

**Judge Nick Schaefer
Outagamie County
Circuit Court**

Judge Nick Schaefer, who served as an Outagamie County judge for 19 years and an Outagamie County district attorney for seven years before that, died May 15. He was 79.

An Appleton native, Schaefer worked as a reserve judge in the region for several years after his retirement in

1987. In 1972 he founded Volunteers in Probation, now known as the Volunteers in Offender Services, which pairs first-time misdemeanor offenders with community mentors. Outagamie County Judge Michael W. Gage said in *The Post-Crescent* obituary that the program was Schaefer's idea and "it's still going strong and even expanding."

Schaefer was described as "an inspiration and a mentor" by his Outagamie County successor, Judge Joseph M. Troy. Troy told *The Post-Crescent* that he appeared before Schaefer as a 20 year old for a "stupid prank" and was impressed at how Schaefer handled the courtroom. "Little did I know that Judge Schaefer would eventually help me take over his work as judge in Branch 3, 13 years later," Troy said.

"He really goes down as a great public servant," Gage said. "Nick was a judge who really treated people with respect and decency and was never pompous or officious."

Schaefer is survived by his sister and brother-in-law, Sally and Bill Hatch of Landisville, Penn., and several nieces and nephews. ■

Adams, Lafayette counties celebrate milestones

The State of Wisconsin celebrated its 150th anniversary in 1998, and a number of Wisconsin counties are now reaching milestones of their own. This summer, judges and court staff in Adams and Lafayette counties participated in celebrations that encouraged local residents to visit the courthouse and learn about court history.

Adams County

Although the striking Adams County Courthouse – completed in 1912 and expanded over the years – is not considered a building of great historic importance, its completion was an unusually celebrated event. The reason: it replaced a tomb-like structure made completely of stone without a single window.

The 1912 courthouse was again feted in the celebration of the Village of Friendship's 150th anniversary in July. Judge Charles A. Pollex, who had made a splash on July 4 by appearing, complete with powdered wig, on a float in the Independence Day parade, participated in the sesquicentennial celebration with members of the county board and Clerk of Circuit Court Dianna Helmrick.



Clerk of Circuit Court Kitty McGowan and Judge William D. Johnston participate in the centennial celebration at the Lafayette County Courthouse.

Lafayette County

The Lafayette County Courthouse is considered one of the state's crown jewels, and is listed on

both the state and national registers of historic places. Of particular note is the story of how this courthouse was funded: according to the U.S. Department of the Interior, the county set up a fund during the Civil War to help widows and others affected by the conflict.

Many donations were received, but – perhaps because the federal government assumed responsibility for war victims – the fund was never tapped. The original trustees died, and the fund was left in the hands of a cautious investor named Matthew Murphy, who determined that it ought to be used to build a much-needed new courthouse for the county. He willed the widows' fund to the county for this purpose, and added a substantial amount of his own money to the pot.

The courthouse was therefore privately funded building, and is adorned with a bust of Murphy, who died in 1903, was built for a total of \$136,500.

Unofficial Lafayette County historian (and register of deeds) Joe Boll, and his deputy, Cathy Paulson, organized an observance of the 100th anniversary of the construction of the courthouse, which drew about 350 people – thanks in part to a large story headlined "Courthouse is a jewel" in the Sunday edition of the *Wisconsin State Journal*. Boll has gathered photographs and articles about the courthouse, and, with funding from the county board and help from his staff, produced a book on the history of the courthouse. Much of his material was on display at the open house.

Judge William D. Johnston and other local leaders dressed in period clothing for the event, and led tours for the public. County elected officials, their staff, and the courthouse janitorial staff worked hard to prepare the courthouse for the celebration and the day ended with a band performance on the courthouse lawn. ■

Public hearings on judgeship bill

by Nancy Rottier, legislative liaison

Judges and local officials from Barron, Chippewa, Juneau, Monroe, and St. Croix counties testified recently to the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Corrections about the need for additional circuit court branches in their counties.

The director of state courts has introduced Senate Bill 199 and Assembly Bill 393 that would create seven new circuit court judgeships. The legislation is in response to the Judicial Needs Assessment Study showing Wisconsin needs 18 additional judgeships to maintain current service levels.

Senator Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee), lead author of SB 199 and chair of the Judiciary Committee, brought the committee to Eau Claire on August 13 and to Mauston on August 14 to hear testimony on SB 199.

The bill would establish new circuit court branches as of August 1, 2008 in six counties: Barron, Chippewa, Dodge, Green, Juneau, and St. Croix. It would also establish an additional circuit court branch in Monroe County as of August 1, 2010.

Judges James C. Babler of Barron and Edward F. Vlack III of St. Croix testified about the growth of their counties'

workload. In written testimony submitted to the committee, Judges Roderick A. Cameron and Thomas J. Szama of Chippewa noted their county has had a need for an additional judge for more than 10 years and that it "has reached the point where efficiencies no longer suffice."

In Mauston, both Judge John P. Roemer of Juneau and Chief Judge John R. Storck spoke about the urgent need that county faces. They were joined in support of SB 199 by Representative Sheryl Albers (R-Reedsburg), a co-author of the bill, and members of the Juneau County bar. Julie Radke, vice chair of the Monroe County Board, addressed the committee in support of an additional judgeship for her county.

District Court Administrators Gregg Moore, Patrick Brummond, and Susan Byrnes provided additional background information to the committee and assisted in preparing for the hearings.

Taylor's committee is holding additional public hearings on SB 199 on August 28 in Fond du Lac and September 11 in Madison. Executive action by the committee is tentatively scheduled for September 11. ■

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Prior to accepting the position, Barna was practicing law in Minneapolis. She was in-house counsel and ethics counsel for a corporation and also owned a residential construction firm. A native of the Rusk County community of Ladysmith, Barna earned her undergraduate degree at UW-Eau Claire and her law degree at Hamline University School of Law.

When she is not working, Barna enjoys spending time with her children, ages 4 and 6. She also volunteers as an advocate for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Barna will be based in the Wausau office of District Court Administrator Susan M. Byrnes. She can be reached at (715) 842-3872.

New Milwaukee County pro se clinic leader has visions for expansion

by Sandra M. Knisely, court information intern

Amy Wochos began serving as coordinator of the Milwaukee County Self-Help Center at the end of March, and has brought fresh faces and ideas – in the form of student interns and extra services – to the rapidly expanding center.

“There were such devoted volunteers that I wanted to expand what was in place and institute some new programs,” Wochos said.

Wochos now recruits student interns from local universities to help at the center. Several law, paralegal, and undergraduate students were selected at the beginning of July to offer legal information to *pro se* litigants with family-law issues.

Many of the applicants were former students of Wochos, who has taught introductory law at UW-Milwaukee for five years. Other students are from Milwaukee Area Technical College and Bryant and Stratton College, and Wochos anticipates more students from Marquette University next spring.

The self-help center volunteers offer information on court procedures and help to explain paperwork for family and small claims cases. “In some ways, it’s almost easier for students [to volunteer] because they can’t give legal advice,” she said. “It can be hard for the lawyers to hold back.”

Wochos was a civil litigator for 11 years, and attorneys are still predominant among the center’s volunteers.

Approximately 30 attorneys offer family law assistance and 20-25 volunteer in small claims. Each attorney volunteers once a month and people wait in line for help on a first-come, first-served basis.

“We have great numbers of volunteers, and it’s still just the tip of the iceberg,” Wochos said. We could double our volunteers and still not help everybody.”

Wochos added she is also interested in alternative ways of sharing legal information. Her goals include adding to the center’s Web site, branching out to Spanish and Hmong speakers and developing workshops for community groups.

Wochos has experience organizing service programs. She has been active with the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar and the American Bar Association for 10 years.

Pro se litigation is “not a new phenomenon, but it’s seeing its zenith,” she said. “I think the “Access to Justice” study has shown a lot of people can’t afford an attorney, and Legal Aid and Legal Action just don’t have the staff to provide an attorney to everyone.” She described the litigants as “patient and grateful” for the center’s services.

Away from work, Wochos, a Milwaukee native and trivia buff, is “desperately” trying to improve her 5K time. “You’ll see me at as many races as I can get to this summer,” she said. ■