

a publication of the Wisconsin Judiciary
The Third Branch



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Judges are honored

Six Wisconsin judges won state and national awards this spring. The honorees include Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson and circuit court Judges Robert A. Haase, Winnebago County; John J. Perlich, La Crosse County; William C. Stewart Jr., Dunn County; Joseph M. Troy, Outagamie County; and Maxine A. White, Milwaukee County.

The judges were honored for a broad range of accomplishments, from developing programs that have helped to improve the administration of justice, to consistently demonstrating all the qualities of an excellent jurist – wisdom, humanity, and commitment to the rule of law.

Abrahamson wins Opperman Award

Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson has been selected to receive the American Judicature Society’s first Dwight D. Opperman Award for Judicial Excellence. The award, which comes with a \$5,000 honorarium that Abrahamson will donate to the court system, is named for the former chair of West Publishing Co. The selection committee included Justice Randy J. Holland of the Delaware Supreme Court, Judge
see Awards on page 19

First class of certified court interpreters takes oath

The first 14 graduates of the Wisconsin court system’s interpreter training and certification program were sworn in at a ceremony on Tuesday, May 25 in the Wisconsin Supreme Court Hearing Room.

Prior to administering the oath, Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson recounted for the group her own experience with English as a second language and then told the story of her uncle who fled Poland at the start of World War II and, with his family, embarked upon an odyssey that ultimately landed him in Chile by way of Russia, Italy, and France.

After several years in Chile, he journeyed to the United States to visit family and was arrested for speeding in Miami – where, at that time, no one spoke Spanish, French, Russian, or Italian. Knowing the risk of owing up to his Jewish heritage, he reluctantly decided to reveal that he knew one more language: Yiddish. “And it turned

out everybody in the courtroom spoke Yiddish,” Abrahamson said. “When he told that story, he would always say, ‘Only in America can a Jew get justice.’”

The newly certified court interpreters are from Dane, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Walworth, and Waupaca counties (*see sidebar*). Nine are



Newly sworn-in court interpreter Tamesia Sosa accepts her diploma from Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson and Director of State Courts A. John Voelker.

Spanish interpreters (eight came through the new Wisconsin program and one is a federally certified interpreter who has been granted reciprocity), and five are American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, who attended the training and possess legal certification with the Registry of Interpreters for

the Deaf.

The certification process – the first of its kind in Wisconsin – is rigorous. Those who meet the requirements for certification are court interpreters who speak English and another language at the level of a highly educated native speaker. They also must demonstrate a

see Interpreters on page 18



Members of Wisconsin’s first class of certified court interpreters take the oath of office.

Spring
2004**Director's column: Judicial compensation effort is underway**

We have talked a lot in the past three years about our state's budget problems and there is no doubt about the fact that times are tight and we all have felt the pinch. Everyone in the system has participated in a concerted effort to decrease expenditures by reducing the use of reserve judges and freelance court reporters, canceling state-funded national travel, and eliminating certain in-state meetings. We were able to stay within our budgetary constraints with these measures and have managed to avoid cuts that would be even more painful, while remaining cognizant of our responsibility to the people of the state.



A. John Voelker

However, because of the current environment, when the issue of judicial salaries is raised, legislators, executive branch personnel, and even the public will likely ask a reasonable question, "how can you ask for judicial compensation increases at a time of fiscal crisis?" The answer is relatively straightforward, "because judicial compensation should be equitable to similar positions of public responsibility and it's not." Our analysis shows that by any comparison – the salaries of Wisconsin government officials, salaries of judges in other Midwestern states, federal judge compensation – Wisconsin judicial compensation does not measure up. Another way to look at the inadequacies of judicial compensation is to apply the formulas developed for the calculation of judicial salaries by previous committees (a 1973 Citizens Committee on Judicial Organization or a 1984 Compensation Study Committee). Either formula yields a fair-market wage that is substantially higher than what is currently paid.

There are a number of reasons why it is critical that we pay judges a competitive salary, but perhaps the most salient was put forth in a January 2003 *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* editorial (that, ironically, was addressing federal judicial salaries, which are substantially higher than state wages): "[i]t is obvious that the quality of justice in our society depends in significant measure on the quality of the judges who mete it out," the *Journal Sentinel* opined. "Equally obvious is the notion that many of the best lawyers will not become judges if doing so requires them to make a huge financial sacrifice."

I believe we need to act, and I have put together a working group that includes staff from my office, a circuit court judge (Judge L. Edward Stengel of Sheboygan County), a Court of Appeals judge (Judge Charles P. Dykman of District IV), and myself. We have provided our compensation analyses to the Office of State Employee Relations (OSER), which develops biennial compensation recommendations for elected officials, including the judiciary. At the behest of and with the cooperation of my office, OSER is currently conducting an independent review of judicial compensation to assist in formation of its recommendations.

In his 2005-07 biennial budget introduced in January 2005, the Governor will propose the amount of the Compensation Reserves to be set aside to pay for state employee raises in fiscal years 2005 and 2006. Shortly thereafter, OSER will submit proposed elected official compensation for those two years to the Legislature's Joint Committee on Employment Relations (JCOER). If JCOER approves the proposals as submitted, its action is final. If JCOER modifies the proposal, the modification must be submitted to the Governor for approval. JCOER may override a Governor's veto with a vote from six of the eight members of the committee.

There is no question that the fiscal situation will make the political waters rough as we pursue this issue. Our recommended increase would cost the state \$6.7 million. But when I look around, I see the importance judicial decisions have on people's lives, and you inspire me with your commitment to the work at hand. I am reminded of a comment from one of college football's all-time greatest coaches, Lou Holtz, who said, "If you don't make a total commitment to whatever you're doing, then you start looking to bail out the first time the boat starts leaking. It's tough enough getting that boat to shore with everybody rowing, let alone when a guy stands up and starts putting his jacket on."

On the issue of compensation, I shall keep rowing. It is critical that all judicial system employees are equitably compensated. I shall keep you apprised of all of our efforts. ■

**New juror orientation video in the works**

A \$13,350 grant from the Wisconsin Law Foundation will enable the Director of State Courts Office to produce an updated orientation video for jurors. Across the state, approximately 70,000 prospective jurors watch the orientation video each year.

The current video was created 10 years ago and fails to reflect jury-system-related changes to the statutes and Supreme Court Rules that have occurred. It also does not capture the practical changes that have been made, including permitting jurors to submit written

questions, taking more frequent breaks to combat juror boredom, providing post-verdict debriefing sessions with the judge, and incorporating what is now known about the dynamics of jury decision-making into the orientation process.

The video will be developed in consultation with the Chief Judges Jury Subcommittee. It will be shot in the Milwaukee County Courthouse and is expected to be available in March 2005. ■

ELECTION 2004**Two incumbent judges defeated**

The spring election featured nine contests and resulted in losses for two of the five incumbents who were running. Another 37 incumbent judges were reelected without opposition.

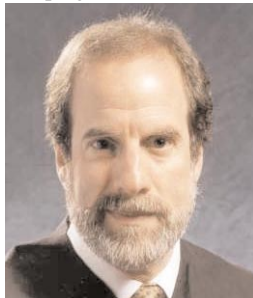
Kessler defeats Schudson

Atty. Joan F. Kessler

In a race the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* called a “rousing contest”, longtime Milwaukee divorce Atty. Joan F. Kessler challenged two-term incumbent Court of Appeals Judge Charles B. Schudson and won by a margin of 52 to 48 percent of the vote.

It is unusual, but not unheard of, for a sitting Court of Appeals judge to lose an election. In 1996, then-Milwaukee County Circuit

Court Judge Patricia S. Curley defeated Judge Michael T. Sullivan in his bid for a third term on the District I Court of Appeals, and in 1988, Judge Ralph Adam Fine defeated Judge Ted E. Wedemeyer Jr. Fine and Wedemeyer now are colleagues in District I: Wedemeyer won election to another seat on the court in 1991, the same year Schudson – then a Milwaukee County Circuit Court judge – began campaigning for Judge William Moser’s seat. During the campaign, Moser decided to retire and Schudson was elected without opposition.

Judge
Charles B. Schudson

Kessler is considered to be a top-notch attorney with broad experience, especially in the area of family law. She is a former president of the State Bar Board of Governors and has been very active in a variety of community outreach efforts. She received her law degree from Marquette Law School in 1968 and became U.S. attorney for Wisconsin’s Eastern District in 1978 (appointed by

President Jimmy Carter). At the time of her election to the Court of Appeals, she was a partner in the law firm of Foley & Lardner.

On election night, after hours of watching the candidates jockey for the lead, at times separated by just a few dozen votes, Judge Fred Kessler – who served on the bench in Milwaukee County Circuit Court in the 1970s and 80s – described the mood as “delirium” shortly before his wife gave her victory speech.

For his part, Schudson is considering several offers and anticipates making a decision about his next career move this summer. “For 22 years I have had the privilege of serving as a circuit and appellate judge, and the great pleasure of forming dear friendships with many colleagues,” he wrote. “While my career now will move in new directions, the friendships will continue. To all who serve, and to all who, throughout my career, have been so helpful and kind to me, thank you.”

Challenger Roemer defeats Schuh

Judge Dennis C. Schuh, whom Gov. Jim Doyle appointed to the bench in Juneau County in 2003 following the sudden death of longtime Judge John Brady in March 2003, was defeated by a former employee in his bid for election.

Assistant District Atty. John P. “Jack” Roemer Jr. won the seat by a margin of 3,341 to 2,045 votes. Prior to his appointment as judge, Schuh had been the county’s district attorney for 12 years.

Roemer is a 1980 graduate of Hamline University Law School and has been one of Juneau County’s two assistant district attorneys since 1992. Roemer also worked for five years as an assistant state public defender in Baraboo.

Roemer retired from the U.S. Army Reserves in November 2002 as a lieutenant colonel. He and his wife have three sons.

Atty. John P. “Jack”
Roemer Jr.**Thlusty wins decisive victory in Lincoln County**

In the race for the open seat in Lincoln County, Atty. Jay R. Thlusty took nearly 60 percent of the vote. His opponent was Atty. Don Dunphy, an assistant corporation counsel for Lincoln County.

Thlusty, a partner in the law firm of Russell & Thlusty, is a 1980 graduate of the UW Law School. He replaces Judge J. Michael Nolan, who will retire in July after 23 years on the bench.

Thlusty’s community involvement emphasizes his interest in children, music, and sports. He served on the Merrill School Board and on the Board of Directors of the Merrill High School Band Endowment Fund, Inc., which supports the instrumental music program at the high school. He also is a 30-year member of the Merrill City Band and, for 25 years, performed with his own band at events throughout central Wisconsin. Thlusty has managed the girls’ and boys’ Little League teams and served as a Girl Scouts volunteer.

Thlusty and his wife, Maxine, have two daughters at home.



Judge Dennis C. Schuh



Atty. Jay R. Thlusty

Longtime legislator is new judge in Wausau

Rep. Gregory B. Huber, D-Wausau, a Wausau native who has represented the area in the state Assembly since 1988, defeated Atty. Coleen Kennedy, a staff attorney at the Wisconsin Court of Appeals, in the race for the Marathon County Circuit Court.

Huber was a finalist for appointment to the position nearly a year ago when Judge Raymond F. Thums stepped down mid-term after 15 years on the bench. Gov. Jim Doyle, however, decided not to appoint and reserve judges have filled the gap since Thums’ retirement. Doyle appointed Huber early, on June 1, to address the workload issues created by the long-term vacancy.

A 1981 graduate of the UW Law School, Huber has served on a variety of court-related committees during his time in the state Legislature. He was a member of the

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Joint Review Committee on Criminal Penalties is untapped resource

by Nancy M. Rottier, legislative liaison

One disappointment of the recently concluded legislative session is that an oversight mechanism created by the Truth in Sentencing legislation, 2001 Wisconsin Act 109, appears to be going unused. Act 109 created the Joint Review Committee on Criminal Penalties, with members appointed by all three branches, to review legislative proposals that create new crimes or revise penalties for existing crimes.

The Joint Review Committee was intended to provide the Legislature with information necessary to make informed choices regarding the impact of proposed criminal justice legislation. The Joint Review Committee was to issue a report on any bill that proposed a new crime or a revised penalty. The report was to consider the costs that are likely to be incurred or saved by various branches of government, the consistency of penalties proposed in the bill with existing criminal penalties, the language needed to conform proposed penalties to existing criminal statutes, and whether existing criminal statutes already prohibit the conduct that is the subject of the bill.

Unfortunately, the Joint Review Committee was not used. Not only did the Assembly speaker announce he would not refer bills to the committee, he also introduced legislation (AB 392) to abolish it. In addition, there was a Senate bill introduced (SB 183) that would have abolished the Joint Review Committee. The bills' co-sponsors included all five members of the Legislature's leadership.

Neither bill passed this session, so the statutory mandate for the Joint Review Committee remains.

Legislature creates new crimes, revises penalties

The Legislature passed 15 bills that created new crimes or revised the penalties on existing ones. Among the bills enacted are:

- Act 49** increasing the penalty for possession of methamphetamine from a misdemeanor to a felony.
- Act 50** creating a new misdemeanor for "Peeping Tom" violations.
- Act 51** creating a new class of second-degree sexual assault for a prison guard who has sexual contact with an inmate.
- Act 53** increasing the penalty for failure to register as a sex offender from a misdemeanor to a felony.



Nancy M. Rottier

- Act 74** increasing the penalties for leaving the scene of an accident.
- Act 80** creating new penalties for leaving a gas station without paying for fuel.
- Act 104** creating a new felony for threats to release or disseminate harmful substances.
- Act 159** increasing the penalty for taking a shopping cart.
- Act 189** expanding the circumstances under which a burglary becomes a Class E felony.
- Act 190** creating two new felonies for pointing a firearm at certain persons and for throwing or expelling bodily substances.
- Act 222** expanding the stalking law.
- Act 223** expanding the definition of substantial bodily harm to include cuts that require staples or a tissue adhesive, and broken noses.
- Act 243** creating a new misdemeanor for flag desecration.
- Act 252** creating a penalty for defrauding recreational attractions.
- Act 306** lowering the threshold at which writing multiple bad checks constitutes a felony.

Other proposed legislation that would have created or changed criminal penalties failed to pass this session. Many of these are likely to be reintroduced next session and there will undoubtedly be other new proposals. Whether the Joint Review Committee on Criminal Penalties plays a role in their consideration remains to be seen. ■

CELEBRATING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Wisconsin celebrates Law Day

Mock trials, courthouse tours, free legal advice clinics, and special programs highlighting the 50th anniversary of the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education brought thousands of schoolchildren and visitors to courthouses around Wisconsin for Law Day 2004. Here is a sample:

Barron County dedicated its new Justice Center on May 1. Speakers included Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson; Gov. Jim Doyle; U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold; Atty. Mark Dobberfuhl, county bar president; and Barron County Circuit Court Judges Edward R. Brunner and James C. Babler (who served as master of ceremonies). More than 300 people attended the formal dedication.

Buffalo County invited local children to participate in mock trials at the courthouse. The children also observed traffic court and toured courthouse offices and the jail. "We had a great day," said Clerk of Circuit Court Roselle Urness. "I love the kids!"

In **Chippewa County**, Clerk of Circuit Court Karen Hepfler reported that five local high schools brought about 80

students for a half day of activities designed to improve understanding of the courts. The students participated in a mock trial with Judge Roderick A. Cameron and then split into small groups to rotate through a group of activities including: a mock referendum vote on the question, "Should the City of Chippewa Falls fluoridate its water?"; a videoconferencing demonstration with a mock bond hearing; a quiz bowl competition (with questions from the mock trial case and Brown v. Board of Education); and a courthouse tour. The morning ended with the referendum result and a discussion of the role of the county board and the election process, followed by a presentation by Jackie Millar, a crime victim, and the Crime Victim-Witness Office.



Gov. Jim Doyle, Judge James C. Babler, Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson, U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold, and Chief Judge Edward R. Brunner stop for a picture during the dedication of Barron County's new Justice Center on May 1.

Dane County invited eighth graders from Sherman Middle School for "A Day in the Life of a Criminal Case". The kids were given a shoplifting scenario and took the parts of the defendant, police officer, witnesses, and attorneys. Judge Shelley Gaylord presided over the trial. The students also toured the Madison Police Department, the jail, and other areas as they followed the case through the system. Also in Dane County, second graders from Park Elementary watched a mock trial based upon The Emperor's New Clothes and staged by members

see **Law Day** on page 7

Diversity Outreach Committee launches classroom program

The State Bar of Wisconsin Diversity Outreach Committee used the 50th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education to launch a series of classroom presentations designed to educate high school and middle school students about the history of the civil rights movement and the role of the legal system in that history, and to generate discussion on current issues in education as well as interest in the law as a profession.

Judge Margaret Vergeront, Court of Appeals District IV, and Atty. Miguel Salas, co-chair of the committee developed materials for lawyers to use in classroom presentations. They modified existing curricula with help from local social studies teachers and have posted the resources at www.wisbar.org/committees.doc.

Vergeront said the committee would have liked to make presentations in schools around the state, but a limited number of volunteers limited the presentations to schools in Dane and Waukesha counties. In Dane County, 19 lawyers have volunteered to participate and, to date, have made approximately 45 presentations. Vergeront said that 70 classes at nine schools are participating in this outreach effort, which the committee plans to continue through next fall. ■



Judge Margaret Vergeront, Court of Appeals District IV, meets with Special Education Assistant Roderick Carson, left, and (left to right) Tiffany O'Donnell, Quinn Clark, Mariana Zarate, and Melissa Childress. These students, from Madison's Wright Middle School, participated in a mock trial at the UW Law School in honor of Law Day. They were part of a group of 20 children from schools in Madison and Milwaukee who took advantage of an opportunity to see Julian Bond, president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), who spoke in Madison on May 6 at the State Bar of Wisconsin's spring convention.

CELEBRATING ACCESS TO JUSTICE *continued***Judges, lawyers discuss 'color of justice' at Capitol**

One judge recalled the “how-did-you-get-here” looks he got from fellow students at the UW Law School. Another told of her childhood in an impoverished, racist community that was renowned for its beautiful and abundant sunflowers. A law professor passed around a picture of her second-grade class in the segregated school she attended. As they spoke, the ornate Capitol hearing room – full of 100 high-school students and their teachers and principals – was silent.

This was the Wisconsin Supreme Court’s Law Day celebration. It brought 100 ‘at-risk’ students from high schools in Green Bay, Milwaukee, and Waukesha to the Capitol for lunch with the justices, First Lady Jessica Doyle, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Elizabeth Burmaster. The program was organized by the Wisconsin Legal History Committee, chaired by Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson and State Bar President R. George Burnett, and funded by the State Bar of Wisconsin.

Based upon the National Association of Women Judges ‘Color of Justice’ program, this event offered presentations on the importance of education and the value of careers in the law by several prominent minority judges and lawyers.

State Bar President-elect Michelle Behnke, who was given an exuberant round of applause as the first African-American to lead the State Bar of Wisconsin, discussed her childhood in Madison. She was raised in a military family and was one of two African-American students at Madison’s Edgewood High School (the other was her sister), a private Catholic school. She told the students not to let the cost of higher education scare them off, detailing her efforts to secure loans and scholarships for college and law school and discussing the various jobs she held in high school and

beyond in order to help pay the tuition. Behnke urged the students not to be satisfied with anything less than their best work, recalling that her father’s reaction to her straight-A report card was not praise but concern at the lack of A-pluses: “you can do better” he told her.

UW Law School Associate Vice Chancellor Linda Greene, who is an Evjue Bascom professor of law at the UW Law School, described the experience of attending segregated schools. She was bused 12 miles to a black school while a white elementary school was right across the street from her home. She recalled the broken furniture and torn books the black school would receive as castoffs from the white school but said the children did not know they were poor because of the teachers’ strong commitment to them. Greene, who began her career as a civil rights attorney for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, which was then led by Thurgood Marshall, emphasized the importance of mentors. She told the children she would not have accomplished much in her professional life without the assistance and support of teachers and her family.

Waukesha County Circuit Court Judge Ralph Ramirez, the son of a migrant worker and a foundry laborer, said his family traveled to Door County not to vacation but to pick cherries. He told the students that there once were “Mexican sections” in Wisconsin movie theaters and recalled the sense of not belonging when he was a UW Law School student in the early 1980s. Students from the bilingual program at Waukesha South High School – Ramirez’ alma mater – attended the presentation; Ramirez encouraged them to study hard and warned that he could appear at any time to check on them.

Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Maxine A.

White, who grew up in the poor, segregated community of Sunflower County, Mississippi, won a thunderous round of applause from Milwaukee-area students whom she has mentored. To additional applause, White noted that a number of the students face challenges that she and her fellow presenters never knew: they have absentee and/or drug-addicted parents. She urged these students not to give up on themselves, telling them that any dream is possible to achieve with the help of a caring adult. ■



Above: Judge Ralph Ramirez, Waukesha County Circuit Court, warns a group of about 100 ‘at-risk’ students who participated in the Supreme Court’s Law Day program that he might check up on them to ensure they are applying themselves to their studies. Seated next to Ramirez, from left, are State Bar President-elect Michelle Behnke, UW Law School Vice Chancellor Linda Greene, and Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Maxine A. White.

Left: First Lady Jessica Doyle (left), Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson, and Judge Maxine A. White talk with students before the Color of Justice Program.



CELEBRATING ACCESS TO JUSTICE *continued***Law Day** *continued from page 5*

of the Dane County Bar Association. Judge Maryann Sumi presided and Court Reporter Debby Manke organized the event. The bar also offered a free legal advice booth in the lobby all day.

In **Manitowoc County**, courthouse officials presented a two-day, six-show run of a mock trial based upon *The Three Little Pigs*. This was the program's fifth year and an estimated 700 second-graders took part. After the trial, Judge Patrick Willis asked the children in the audience to pretend they were jurors. "Their response is enthusiastic and we never have enough time to hear all the comments about why each student thinks the wolf is guilty or not guilty," Willis said.

Marquette County modeled a mock trial on the famous Wisconsin Supreme Court case involving a fugitive slave named Joshua Glover. Circuit Court Judge Richard O. Wright and Court Commissioner Ben Bult heard the cases while local attorneys served as coaches and instructors.

In **Outagamie County**, the courts and bar organized a mock trial for fifth graders with help from the drama department at Lawrence University. Audience members were selected at random to act as jurors in the case of *State v. B.B. Wolf*; local prosecutors and defense attorneys tried the case. The mock trial was presented three times, and each audience received "goodie bags" courtesy of the Outagamie County Sheriff's Department.

In **Racine County**, Atty. Sally Hoelzel, chair of the local bar's Law Day Committee, worked with *The Journal-Times* to focus a regular column called "Glad you Asked" on legal advice. The questions ranged from, "how do I begin a small claims case?" to "how are lawyers regulated in Wisconsin?"

In **Sheboygan County**, Judge James J. Bolgert again organized a program for fifth graders. The children rotate through four stations, including the Sheriff's Department, the District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, and the court. In court, Bolgert led participants through a mock trial based upon a simple vandalism case. Judicial Assistant Cindy Fale, who helps with the event, lauded the police officers for doing an especially effective job talking to the children about the tools that law enforcement uses. "These guys are really good as they always stress to these kids that the most important tools they use are their mind and their mouth," she said. "They tell them that it is the best way to resolve conflict."

In **Trempealeau County**, Judge John A. Damon and Clerk of Circuit Court Angeline Sylla organized a courthouse luncheon. Along with members of their staffs, they invited the county's legal secretaries, employees of the District Attorney's Office and the Corporation Counsel's Office,



*In Manitowoc County, 700 second graders were treated to a mock trial based upon *The Three Little Pigs*. This cast picture shows the three little pigs (Pam LaFond, Sue Koeppel, and Cary Moyer). Judge Patrick L. Willis is next, followed by R. J. Skrepenski, who played the wolf. Also pictured is Assistant Public Defender Ann Larson, who defended the wolf.*



Lawrence University drama students acted in a Law Day mock trial in Outagamie County.



Justice David Prosser Jr. celebrated Law Day by conducting mock trials in Sheboygan County with 175 students from Sheboygan and Kohler schools. Judges Tim Van Akkeren and James J. Bolgert worked with Law Day coordinator Cindy Fale on the celebration.

county board members, county department heads, and more.

Speakers discussed topics ranging from "The Prison System" (Rep. Barbara Gronemus, D-Trempealeau) to "Real Estate Transactions" (Atty. Alan Robertson) to "Medical Assistance Planning" (Atty. Terrence Madden) to "How to be your own Attorney" (Atty. Frederic Berns) and more. Participants/organizers included Register in Probate Kay Vold and Juvenile Court Clerk/Teen Court Director Jill Clark. ■

Spring
2004

Women jurists project goes national

As counties across Wisconsin organize ceremonies to honor 16 women judges by hanging their portraits and short biographical sketches in the courthouses where they served, a national judicial organization has announced it will develop and distribute a template to help other states to replicate this successful program.

The 'Wisconsin 16' – 13 of whom are still living – hail from counties that are small and large, rural and urban. Some served for many years, others for only a short time. But each, in her own way, was a trailblazer and all were memorialized in portraits that were unveiled at a March ceremony in Milwaukee.

Hundreds of people packed into Milwaukee County's largest courtroom and overflowed into a second courtroom to watch an historic event honoring 16 women, and Gov. Jim Doyle proclaimed the day "Wisconsin's Women Jurists Day". The State Bar of Wisconsin designed programs for the event and the National Association of Women Judges was the primary sponsor.

Judge Maxine Aldridge White organized the ceremony and the reception that followed, and now is organizing the effort to distribute the portraits and biographical sketches to the individual counties for hanging.

In May, White received word that the American Judicature Society planned to develop a how-to guide for the portraits project to enable other states to honor deceased and retired jurists in a similar manner. She and other organizers of the Wisconsin project will serve as consultants on the guide.



Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Maxine A. White displays a commemorative program; each of the honorees received one of these as a memento of the celebration.



Judges Elsa C. Lamelas and Mel Flanagan join a courtroom full of celebrants at the portrait-unveiling event.



Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Clare L. Fiorenza unveils a portrait of Judge Marianne E. Becker, who served in Waukesha County Circuit Court from 1985-2003.

The 16 honorees

Judges Verle E. Sells (deceased), Florence County (1936-40); Olga Bennett (deceased), Vernon County (1969-75); Vel R. Phillips, Milwaukee County Court (1971-73); Martha Bablitch, Court of Appeals, District IV (1978-85); Leah M. Lampone, Milwaukee County (1978-93); Donna J. Muza, Dunn County (1979-98); Arlene D. Connors, Milwaukee County (1980-98); Janine P. Geske, Milwaukee County (1981-93) and Wisconsin Supreme Court (1993-98); Vivi L. Dilweg, Brown County (1982-99); Marianne E. Becker (deceased), Waukesha County (1985-2003); Paulette L. Siebers, Dane County (1985-86); Susan R. Steingass, Dane County (1985-93); Virginia A. Wolfe, Sauk County (1988-2000); Louise Tesmer, Milwaukee County (1989-2001); Jacqueline Schellinger, Milwaukee County (1992-2003); and Nancy E. Wheeler, Racine County (1993-98). ■

LEADERSHIP

An afternoon in La Crosse Drug Court

It's 4 p.m. on a warm Thursday afternoon, and a roomful of recovering drug addicts is anxiously awaiting the start of another session of the La Crosse County Drug Court. In the jury box, two deputies keep an eye on three orange-suited inmates in handcuffs and ankle chains. In the gallery are women and men, mostly white and in their 20s or 30s, a few with small children in tow. The newer additions look nervous while those nearing graduation are comfortable and ready to share news of their progress.

In chambers, Judge John J.

Perlich is wrapping up his weekly pre-court meeting with the Drug Court coordinator and representatives of the

District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, Probation and Parole, and the county's Human Services Department. These meetings are an integral part of the county's two-and-a-half-year-old Drug Court. The discussion is free-flowing and centers on the five defendants (the total caseload is about 25; Perlich aims to double that number by fall) who are scheduled to appear today. Their attitudes, treatment progress, medical conditions, employment, housing, and relationships with family and friends all are explored.

As the discussion progresses, common threads emerge. While the defendants are of varying ages, races, and genders, they are mostly poor and unemployed. Many have chronic health problems. All are struggling with lengthy, hard-core addictions that have fueled other crimes and, today, some are doing well while others are barely hanging on.

"Mark" is first on the agenda. He missed his Drug Court appearance last week and borrowed a car for a cigarette run that turned into an eight-hour drug binge. He is now in jail. "He wants out," says a drug and alcohol counselor. "Everything about his behavior says he doesn't want to be here." The group is not ready to kick him out, but they know that this may be his last chance. When the discussion reveals that he is having trouble sleeping and experiencing nightmares, Perlich says he wants a psychiatric evaluation done: "There's something here that we're missing."

In court, Mark shuffles in leg irons to the podium and faces some tough questions from the judge. He has no answers, and the judge decides to leave him in jail for two

weeks to sober up and think about whether he wants to continue in the program.

Following Mark is "Janet" whose failure to complete every treatment program she has tried is discussed in advance. "No one wants to touch her," the drug and alcohol counselor says, "but the real concern is that she's poison. She'll take other people down with her."

For Janet, who is also in jail because she was caught "using", the judge decides that a full schedule combined with daily testing is the way to go. He gives her two weeks in jail with four-hour Huber privileges in order to find a job, rejecting her notion that she would work part-time cleaning a restaurant. "I want you to find a real job," Perlich emphasizes. "An eight-hour, serious job. We're going to keep you so busy that you won't know which way to turn."

The good news is that most of the defendants are drug-free. When Perlich asks about their drug test

results, and they respond "clean", the courtroom erupts in applause. Perlich then engages them in a discussion about what's gone well and upcoming challenges. One woman is celebrating her 21st birthday; others expect to face tough choices during Memorial Day weekend. Perlich has decided to "patch" all of the defendants for this holiday weekend, which means they will wear patches that change color if drugs enter their system. A lost patch is an automatic trip to jail.

As the session draws to a close, Perlich hands out a certificate of congratulations and a Wal Mart gift card to a woman who is being given slightly more freedom as a result of her excellent progress. A former prostitute who lost custody of her children, she is finally on a better path. "For the first time in my life, I don't have to look over my shoulder," she tells the judge. "I like going to work every day and I love my life." ■



Drug Court Coordinator Sue Wiese and Probation Agent Colleen Le Blanc take part in a pre-court meeting at which the progress of each Drug Court defendant is discussed and a plan to keep the defendants on track over Memorial Day weekend is put into place. The Drug Court program is funded by a mix of federal and county money, and a grant from the La Crosse Community Foundation.



Judge John J. Perlich has been on the bench for nearly 20 years, and says that Drug Court - which he started on a shoestring after learning about a similar program in Florida - is the most difficult assignment he has had. The treatment court is just one of La Crosse County's innovative justice programs. Victim-offender mediation, victim impact panels, and Unified Family Court also have been developed to help improve outcomes.

Judges reflect on how to handle DV cases

With the help of videos, fact scenarios, and interactive lectures, a group of 16 Wisconsin judges from the Seventh Judicial District reflected on their approach to domestic violence cases during a May workshop at the House on the Rock in Spring Green.

The workshop, "Enhancing Judicial Skills in Domestic Violence Cases", was developed by the National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence, a joint project of the Family Violence Prevention Fund and the National Conference of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. It has been presented to judges around the nation in a three-day format.

Chief Judge Michael J. Rosborough, Vernon County Circuit Court, attended the full workshop in New Mexico in 2002. He said the presenters did "an excellent job" of distilling information on topics such as victim and perpetrator behavior and judicial fact-finding for the one-day workshop.

Rosborough said the training is so valuable because it is put together by judges for judges, and integrates presentations by experienced and credible professionals from related fields, such as attorneys and social workers. The session appropriately avoids preaching that judges should change their approach to domestic violence cases and issues, Rosborough said. "Instead it suggests that there are a variety of ways to look at these cases and issues – some of which may be new, different or more enlightened. It also causes judicial participants to reflect upon the quality and quantity of court-related resources and services available to perpetrators and victims in their communities and the role the judge can and should play in ensuring the adequacy of such resources," he said.

Judge John A. Damon, Trempealeau County Circuit Court, said domestic violence cases are tough because the risk is so difficult to assess. "We have had murders due to domestic violence with no prior court contact," he said. "Other times the incident may be an aberration. The difficulty for the court is that we must assume the worst to protect the victims, and simultaneously protect the rights of the accused."

Damon said the workshop was helpful in encouraging judicial intervention to protect victims, even in cases where the victim has previously recanted. Consistent enforcement combined with periodic monitoring of compliance with court orders are useful tools, he said.

While all three presenters won accolades, attendees reserved their highest praise for Judge Peter MacDonald, who retired from the Kentucky District Court in 2003 after 25 years on the bench, and has taught on this subject both nationally and internationally.

Also on the faculty were Atty. Loretta M. Frederick, legal counsel to the Criminal Justice Center of the Battered Women's Justice Project; Judge Victor Reyes, who has served on the Colorado District Court for five years, handling domestic relations cases. ■



Chief Judge
Michael J. Rosborough



Judge John A. Damon

PPAC recommends a focus for the future

by Dan Wassink, senior policy analyst

In these days of doing more with less, it's not easy for any organization to find time to plan for the future. However, such planning is especially critical during lean budgetary times to identify more efficient ways of doing business, eliminate duplication of services, and focus on the issues that matter most.

That type of planning is at the heart of the operational plan for the court system recently approved by the Supreme Court's Planning and Policy Advisory Committee (PPAC). PPAC's Planning Subcommittee developed the plan following more than a year of research, augmented by several surveys to gauge the opinions of judges, court managers and staff, attorneys, and the general public. The final product, "Critical Issues: An Operational Plan for the Wisconsin Court System," identifies four critical issues for fiscal years 2004-05 and 2005-06, along with objectives and measures of success for each. PPAC forwarded the document to the Supreme Court in April.

It's no surprise that the plan's most critical issue is addressing funding constraints. The subcommittee discussed the usual effects of revenue shortfalls and budget deficits at the state and county level on court staff and services. However, subcommittee members felt it was important to go beyond basic problem identification, and urged the judicial branch to look at the opportunities created by funding constraints. In that spirit, the plan offers the following objectives:

- ❑ **Minimize or eliminate required activities that do not add value**
- ❑ **Identify and disseminate strategies for county level circuit court funding**
Methods that courts have used to minimize expenditures and maximize revenues might be shared. The plan urges development of effective program evaluation methods.
- ❑ **Identify and duplicate other "best practices"**
- ❑ **Reduce duplication of effort**
The plan recommends the development of model procedures, forms, templates, and other tools for meeting requirements that apply to all counties/courts.
- ❑ **Develop strategies to deal with cost and workload shifting**
This refers to attempts to shift costs and/or workload to circuit courts, and ensuring that funding shifts along with any new program responsibilities.

The operational plan lists various measures of success to help ensure that the above objectives are met. It also highlights the other three critical issues, which are: improving the effective resolution of cases involving self-represented litigants; making the court record; and fees and collections. In addition, the plan discusses a dozen other issues that deserve attention and resources, but that the

VOLUNTEERS IN THE COURTS

Foster grandparents help youth understand

A Wisconsin program that provides foster grandparents for special-needs and delinquent children soon will celebrate its 40th anniversary. Along the way, thousands of Wisconsin seniors have donated valuable time and skills to thousands of youth in need.

Foster grandparents have many roles. Typically, they are assigned to children with special needs – a broad category that includes delinquent youth at Lincoln Hills School (LHS).

As part of the Department of Corrections and the Division of Juvenile Corrections, LHS provides education and treatment to delinquent youth. The foster grandparents participate in the Victim Impact Program by telling students about situations in which they have been a victim or witness to a crime.

In existence since 1965, Wisconsin's foster grandparent program has become a national model. There are currently more than 200 sites in 24 counties throughout the state with a total of more than 450 volunteers who work with more than 5,000 children.



The foster grandparents receive a stipend of \$2.65 an hour, accident and liability insurance, meals while on duty, reimbursement for transportation, and monthly training.

Volunteers must be at least 60 years old, in a low income bracket, and able to work 15-40 hours per week. Volunteers are paired with a child or children for an extended period so that a relationship can develop.

The program is funded with a \$1.7 million grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service and is organized through the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services. ■

For more information on the Foster Grandparents program, contact Susan Mueller, coordinator, at (608) 266-2695 or muellsv@dhsf.state.wi.us.

Helping to preserve history

A gunner for the U.S. Air Force 93rd Bombardment Squadron in the Korean War speaks of several missions on which he flew. He discusses his feelings when President Harry Truman called the Korean War a "police action". He enlisted in the Air Force despite his asthma and racial discrimination. He speaks of bombing bridges at the Yalu River, problems with Russian aircraft, a mission where his plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire, and the close-knit nature of his crew. He was honorably discharged from service and settled in Wisconsin in 1965.

The gunner's story is one of many that Outagamie County Court Reporter Jannell Mineau – along with fellow court reporters – will be transcribing in an effort to preserve American history as seen through the eyes of war veterans.

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum (WVM) began interviewing veterans in 1994. Concerns about the lifespan of the audiotapes and the need to make the interviews more accessible to researchers prompted the WVM to ask court reporters to volunteer their time transcribing the more than 575 interviews. Archives Collections Manager Gayle Martinson made a presentation about the new project at the Wisconsin Court Reporters Association convention last fall.

Through an agreement with the National Association of Court Reporters, the court reporters can receive continuing

education credit for each interview transcribed. Mineau, who works for Judge James T. Bayorgeon, and Joan K. Biese, court reporter for Judge Dee R. Dyer, both will transcribe interviews with veterans of the Korean War.

"Joan and I are excited about helping the Wisconsin Veterans Museum to preserve our war veterans' memories," Mineau said.

The reporters

Court reporters currently working on the project are: Joan Biese, Outagamie County; Mary Lou Condon (not a court employee); Alice Fox, Price County; Kathryn Jagow, Ozaukee County; Jannell Mineau, Outagamie County; Jane Schneider, Ozaukee County; and Becky Thomas, Eau Claire County.

With 350 interviews still needing to be transcribed, the WVM needs more volunteers. Tapes are mailed to the court reporters and no time limit is given for transcription. ■

Those interested in participating may contact Martinson at (608) 262-0536 or gayle.martinson@dva.state.wi.us. Read more about the program at museum.dva.state.wi.us/RC_OralHistory.asp.

Messages to foster grandparents

Below are excerpts of personal letters sent to foster grandparents.

Sister B.,

Priest, nun, housekeeper slain. The headline blares at me like a beam from the past forcing me to watch. And look at something I rather not. I can't see how you have the gift of forgiveness toward someone who victimized you and your fellow parishiners (sic). Thanks for going so far into the pain of this tradgedy (sic) so much that it hurts me to even think what you all went through.

Thanks. J.

Dear Grandma A.,

I now realize what such damage a crime can do. No matter how little (in somebody's mind) it is. I used to steal bikes because I thought it didn't hurt anyone. Now after seeing your heartfelt emotions flowing at your memory I feel so much pity for your family...It is a really sad thing to realize how strong that "little" crime can be...R

The following is from a handmade holiday greeting card:
Dear Mr. D.

Thank you for all the help, I really needed it. Your (sic) the best. Without the help I would have been lost forever.

Spring
2004

RETIREMENTS

Retirees' years of experience will be hard to replace

Six long-term court employees, with a combined total of nearly 150 years of service, will take irreplaceable experience with them as they embark upon new adventures. They include a clerk of circuit court, a register in probate, two court reporters, a Supreme Court marshal, and a legal secretary.

Deputy marshal moves to Arkansas

Supreme Court Deputy Marshal Jack Bagley, who retired from the Supreme Court effective June 1, liked to say that he "got out of the military" 18 months ago when his supervisor,

Lieutenant Colonel James L. Jerney, retired. Jerney, the former Supreme Court marshal, had a reputation for barking orders at court visitors, media, staff, and sometimes Supreme Court justices. Jerney's replacement is Tina Nodolf, who has been called the "kinder, gentler" marshal.

Bagley often could be heard before he was seen as his signature cowboy boots clicked down the marble halls of the Capitol, where he was responsible for assisting the marshal in inspection and set up of the courtroom and

conference room for hearing, oral arguments, admission ceremonies, special sessions, and conferences.

On the job for 18 years, Bagley also was responsible for maintaining a filing system for logging in, numbering, labeling and filing briefs and case record materials, and distributing briefs and case records to the four districts of the Court of Appeals.

Bagley and his wife, Janelle, have relocated to Cherokee Village, Arkansas.

26 years of service

Carolyn L. Bartelt worked as a secretary for the Court of Appeals, District 3, since July 1978. After 26 years with the courts, she retired in May. Bartelt is keeping busy in her retirement and attempts to reach her for an interview were not successful.

Vilas RIP steps down after three decades

In 1979, then-Vilas County Court Judge Timothy Vocke appointed Mary Lou Bloch as the county's register in probate. Bloch stepped down in February after 25 years in the one-person office, leaving the work in the capable hands of Amy M. Franzen, a former probate paralegal.

Bloch's only regret is that she did not have an opportunity to work with newly elected Judge Neal A. Nielsen III. "That was the hardest part of leaving," she said. "He is the nicest man and truly cares about each and every person who comes before him."

After three months on the job, Franzen agreed. She praised Nielsen and her courthouse colleagues as top-notch.

"I absolutely love this job," she said. "This is a terrific place to work."

Franzen is familiar with county government, having spent 10 years as a county employee – including some valuable time in social services, where she learned how guardianships

work. A four-year stint with an Eagle River law firm gave her a firm grasp of probate. She is learning on-the-job about adoption and mental commitments.

"Amy brings a wealth of experience and a true sense of professionalism to the office," Nielsen said, adding that she stood out among many qualified applicants for the post.

In retirement, Bloch is biking, hiking, gardening and working on the home that she and her husband, a retired builder, built on one of Vilas County's many lakes. "I don't have enough time in the day anymore," she reported. "We just never get bored."

Longtime court reporter leaves

David W. Hoseck has served as court reporter in Pierce County for 36 years, beginning in 1968. In that time, he has worked for just two judges: William McEwen and Robert W. Wing.

Ellsworth, Wis., with a population of 2,900, was quite a change for Hoseck, who began his reporting career 46 miles west of here in the Hennepin County (Minneapolis) Courthouse. A Minnesota native, Hoseck told the *Pierce County Herald* that he became interested in court reporting while in high school and learned the trade at the Minnesota School of Business.

Hoseck's colleagues in Pierce County told the newspaper they would miss his uncanny ability to be in the right place at the right time. "He had this sixth sense, he always just knew where he was supposed to be," said Dee Clafin, Pierce County register in probate and juvenile clerk. "You never had to worry about the court reporter being there. We're going to miss him, he's been a mainstay here."

In retirement, Hoseck plans to travel with his wife, Vivian.

Outagamie's clerk has presided over 30 years of change

When Outagamie County Clerk of Circuit Court Ruth Janssen took office nearly 30 years ago, she faced an array of challenges that ranged from predictable (case exhibits stuffed into filing cabinets, no coherent system for records retention, funds on deposit had been there since before she was born) to shocking (a hold-up at gunpoint). Through it all, Janssen's patience, hard work, and vision held strong.

"I think it would be fair to summarize my tenure in office stating we've gone through an 'Extreme Makeover'," she said, "because the office now bears little to no resemblance to what it was in 1975."

Janssen began as a deputy clerk in 1968, became chief deputy in 1973, and won election to a first term beginning in 1975. Back then, county offices that took in money were responsible for getting it to the bank and Janssen worried that this duty could be hazardous for her employees. She met with the County Executive's Office to request security, but was told there was no money. Six weeks later, she was held up at

see **Retirements** on page 14



Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson presents Deputy Marshal Jack Bagley with a plaque in honor of his 18 years of service to the Supreme Court.



Amy M. Franzen

WISCONSIN CONNECTS

Justices will teach overseas

Following a time-honored tradition, Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson will spend her summer vacation teaching in distant lands. The chief justice will teach American and Chinese students at the East China School of Law and Politics in Shanghai, China and will lecture to Mongolian judges in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in July.



Justice Ann Walsh
Bradley

Meanwhile, Justice Ann Walsh Bradley will teach in the Philippines at the invitation of the American Bar Association on July 22 and 23. Bradley will participate

in roundtable discussions on courtroom procedure and pretrial issues and will present to groups of Filipino judges.

PPAC *continued from page 10*

subcommittee felt did not rise to the critical level.

This is the PPAC Planning Subcommittee's second report to the Supreme Court. The full document can be found on the court system's Internet site at: www.wicourts.gov/about/committees/ppac.htm.

The Planning Subcommittee membership and staff:

Circuit court judges:

James T. Bayorgeon, Outagamie County
Gary L. Carlson, Taylor County
Michael N. Nowakowski, Dane County
Richard J. Sankovitz, Milwaukee County

Clerk of court:

Carolyn Olson, Iowa County

District court administrator:

Kathleen M. Murphy, District Eight

Ex-officio members:

Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson, Supreme Court
Judge W. M. McMonigal, Green Lake County Circuit Court
Director of State Courts A. John Voelker

Public member:

Richard Swantz, La Crosse

Appellate court judge:

Daniel Anderson, Court of Appeals, District 2

Support staff:

Dan Wassink, Office of Court Operations

Law librarian attends 'community-based justice' workshop

When Law Librarian Paula Seeger of the Dane County Legal Resource Center returned from a conference on improving access to the courts, she brought back many materials and ideas, and one quote that resonated: "There are moments in history when choices are made that impact the shape and momentum of the country's access to justice." The speaker was legal ethicist Richard Zorza, who is an expert in legal system innovation and the use of technology to improve access to justice.



Richard Zorza

Seeger said the event, the *National Conference on Community Based Access to Justice: Volunteers, Partnerships, Technology*, inspired her with new ideas for improving legal resources and outreach to self-represented litigants and the community.

The conference materials are available at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/resources/calendar/conferences/communitymaterials.htm.

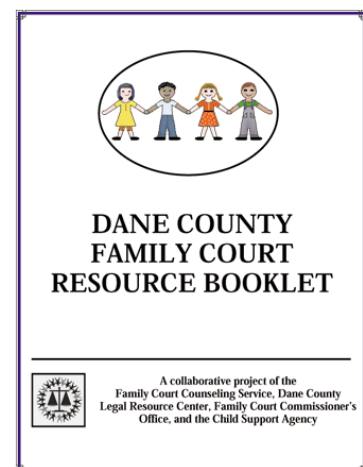
Family court resource booklet debuts

The newly revised and greatly expanded *Dane County Family Court Resource Booklet* is now available.

Designed for self-represented litigants in Dane County family court actions, the booklet also contains valuable information for family court litigants in general, including a question-and-answer section, a glossary of common legal terms, and an expanded 'community services' section.

"Several law firms have purchased multiple copies, and most Dane County court staff are using it regularly as a reference guide," said Law Librarian Paula Seeger who helped to produce the guide. Seeger added that many public libraries have ordered copies for their collections.

The booklet is a collaborative effort among the Dane County Family Court offices (Family Court Commissioner, Family Court Counseling Services, Child Support Agency) and the Dane County Legal Resource Center. A second booklet, focusing on juvenile court, is in the works.



The *Dane County Family Court Resource Booklet* is available for \$3 at Family Court Counseling (Room 108) or in the Legal Resource Center (Room 315) of the Dane County Courthouse. It also may be accessed on the Family Court Counseling Web site at www.co.dane.wi.us/familycourtcounseling/page1.html.

RETIREMENTS *continued from page 12*

gunpoint as she prepared to drive from the courthouse to the bank. "I was getting ready to start the car," she recalled, "and I had the money [about \$18,000] in my lap and this guy walked up and told me to open the door. I said 'no'." When he pointed a gun at her head, she handed over the cash. Stunned for a moment, she sat and noticed a car speeding through the parking lot. She memorized the license plate, got to the Sheriff's Department, and – after she convinced her friends at the front counter that she was not joking – things moved like clockwork. They traced the plate, found the car, and retrieved the money from the trunk. The gunman, unforgettably named Daniel Boone, struck a deal after Janssen identified him in a line-up and his wife owned up to having buried the gun. After the stick-up, the county found money for security guards.

The incident left Janssen shaken, but she had little time to wring her hands. Courthouse employees had just unionized, which, she said, "brought a whole new dimension to our hiring practices and increased the need to improve upon and sharpen management skills." About the same time, the county created new departments of Human Resources, Finance, and Information Systems all of which added more administrative duties and responsibilities to the clerk's job and contributed to turnover in county government. During Janssen's tenure, she worked with six county executives, eight district attorneys, four corporation counsels, three sheriffs, three registers of deeds, three treasurers, and an ever-changing stream of county board members. In addition, the four-judge county has grown into a seven-judge county and has added three court commissioners along the way.

Over the years, Janssen built a strong partnership with her colleagues in county government, with the judges, and with her counterparts around Wisconsin. Her leadership on a number of projects designed to improve access to, and understanding of, the court system won her accolades and gave her an opportunity to help other counties replicate successful programs. Among her accomplishments are a juror orientation video that is shown on a local cable station and available for check-out at public libraries in the county; a jury message phone to enable jurors could check on whether they are needed without having to travel to the courthouse; a pilot project to test electronic return of juror questionnaires; and membership on a statewide committee that shaped a training and certification program for court interpreters.

When Janssen departs on December 31, she will leave behind a staff that has grown from 10 to 27 employees handling case filings that have increased by more than 54 percent. She has survived two remodeling projects and a move into a new justice center and has helped to shelve the old ledger books and the Burroughs bookkeeping machines in favor of automation. She also has presided over a sea change brought on by a wave of new legislation in the areas of domestic abuse, prisoner litigation, juvenile, drunk driving, small claims, and more. "These changes, along with an increase in *pro se* litigants all have had a dramatic impact on the Clerk's Office," she said. "And meeting tomorrow's needs certainly will require refinement of our 'extreme makeover'." But I am confident that the office is well positioned to adapt. I have faced many challenges and have been given many opportunities that helped me grow as a person. I will truly miss the camaraderie of my colleagues and the many working relationships developed through the years."

Court reporter began on a Selectric typewriter

Carol A. Pacetti, who has been an official court reporter for Milwaukee County since July 1972, will retire effective June 30. "She will be sorely missed," said Kris Jacobi, court reporter manager. "She is a key person here."

Pacetti has seen many changes over the last 32 years; the most significant are an increase in the volume of cases and more judges.

Pacetti remembers her first transcribing machine was a manual machine that she used in conjunction with a Selectric typewriter. Things became easier when she switched over to a computer in 1987.

She began her reporting career with Judge Christ T. Seraphim in the mid-1980s in felony court. Seraphim was appointed as a county judge in

1960 and became a circuit judge in 1972. His tenure on the bench was marked by controversy and, in 1980, a three-year suspension from the bench. In that case, the Supreme Court noted that Seraphim had sexually harassed numerous women, opined on the guilt of defendants making initial appearances, and made inappropriate remarks to lawyers and litigants alike. A 1974 comment to a defendant on whom he had just imposed a prison sentence was typical: "That's a very light sentence, but when you get out of Green Bay, sir, I suggest you get out of this town and go back to Puerto Rico. Do you understand? ... Because you can't make it in a civilized community."

"He was a character," Pacetti recalled. But she preferred to talk about Judge Gary A. Gerlach, for whom she worked for 16 years in civil and family court. "It was just a great job. He was just wonderful to work for. He was kind, intelligent, and caring." Between the jobs with Seraphim and Gerlach, Pacetti worked briefly for then-Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Ralph Adam Fine, whom she described as "a very hard worker."

After Gerlach retired, Pacetti joined Milwaukee County's court reporter pool and is assigned out of the chief judge's office as needed. Unique in the state, this system has helped to maximize the availability of court reporters – but not without a cost. "It was a really big adjustment," Pacetti said. "You're there, but you're not part of the staff, and sometimes they think you're an extension of your machine – especially when you do not have a strong relationship with the judge."

Pacetti is proud of the fact that she has never had to request an extension for transcribing and has always been able to meet her deadlines. She said her toughest challenge may well have been trying to get an accurate record when things would become heated in the courtroom and everyone was talking at once.

In retirement Pacetti plans to delve into training her five Golden Retrievers (Logunn, Darby, Millie, Rocky, and Carlie) and one Irish Setter/Golden Retriever (Mia) for field trials and obedience. She is looking forward to taking one of her Golden into the ring for show, giving her the opportunity to travel. Other plans for retirement include home improvement projects at her Pewaukee home and gardening. ■



Carol A. Pacetti

PEOPLE

A bomb scare on May 17 forced the Waupaca County Courthouse to close for about two hours. The call came in to the office of Clerk of Circuit Court **Terrie Tews** at 1:41 p.m. saying that a bomb would explode at 2 p.m. With the help of bomb-sniffing dogs, several police agencies scoured the building but found nothing. The courthouse reopened at 3:30. A checklist for handling bomb threats is contained in the court security manual, which has been distributed to all court offices.

"Waukesha picking up the slack for DA," a story in *The [Waukesha] Freeman*, noted that the Waukesha City Attorney's Office would begin prosecuting underage drinkers following District Attorney **Paul Bucher's** decision not to pursue these cases. After losing three prosecutors due to a reduced budget, Bucher said that his office no longer would prosecute underage drinking and a variety of property crimes.



Judge J. Mac Davis

Judge **J. Mac Davis**, Waukesha County Circuit Court, was interviewed by *The Freeman* recently about the job of the judge in family court versus criminal court,

and about the influence that his father, the late U.S. Congressman Glenn R. Davis, had on his career choices. The senior Davis was a Republican member of Congress from 1947-57 and again from 1965-75.

In another recent story, "Blind justice/power outage closes courthouse," *The Freeman* reported that a construction worker on the Waukesha jail expansion project severed a power line and blacked out the courthouse for most of the day. Waukesha County Executive **Dan Finley** ordered administrative workers to go home, but four judges opted to keep their courts open. Chief Judge **Kathryn W. Foster**, Deputy Chief Judge **James R. Kieffer**, and Judges **Michael O. Bohren** and **J. Mac Davis** all continued to hold court, the newspaper reported. The incident followed a water-line break at the construction site two weeks earlier that spilled sewage into the ground floor of the Administration Center.

"Chief judge restates concerns", a story in the [Merrill] *Foto News*, recounted an appearance by Chief Judge **Dorothy L. Bain**, Marathon County Circuit Court, and District Nine Court Administrator **Scott Johnson** before the Lincoln County Public Property Committee to discuss courthouse concerns. Bain, who also

Chief Judge
Dorothy L. Bain

had spoken to the full Lincoln County Board, brought issues regarding the condition of the facility and the security of the courthouse to the attention of supervisors.

"Improvements seen in foster care system", a story that appeared in February in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, said the number of children waiting for permanent homes in Milwaukee

declined from more than 6,000 in early 2000 to less than 4,000 midway through 2003. "I'm astounded by the turnaround," said **Mark Courtney**, co-author of the evaluation issued by the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago. The newspaper also interviewed **Kitty Kocol**, administrator of the state Division of Child and Family Services, who emphasized the need for experienced social workers. "Having and keeping good staff is the essence of success in this work," she said. "We have to elevate and recognize the value of the work they're doing."

Judge **James C. Babler**, Barron County Circuit Court, spoke with his local newspaper about a February trip to Rio Bravo, Mexico to build housing for the poor. Traveling by bus, a group of 30 people from two Methodist churches journeyed for 30 hours to arrive at their home base: a church camp on the Texas side of the Mexico border. Babler told the *Barron News-Shield* that he and fellow volunteers worked eight-hour days building four houses and one small school. The families who would live in the tiny new homes were residing in plywood and corrugated metal shacks without electricity, heat, or indoor plumbing. "It was very emotional to give someone a house," Babler said.

Bayfield County Sheriff **Robert Follis** told *The Daily Press* (Ashland) that the county's Criminal Justice Council is taking steps to ensure that the new jail will have a long life. The council held meetings throughout April to answer questions from the public, update the community on how the construction of the new jail was progressing, and share information about programs and other criminal justice initiatives. Recent initiatives include a jail literacy program and a 12-step program for inmates with drug or alcohol problems. The council is made up of representatives from many areas of the justice system, including Judge **John P. Anderson**, Bayfield County Circuit Court. Other representation comes from the sheriff's department, human services, the district attorney, the public defender, the clerk of circuit court, victim-witness services, probation and parole, the county clerk, county administration, the University of Wisconsin Extension, and local service providers for mental health, drug and alcohol treatment, and school officials. They currently meet once a month.

During a recent community breakfast in Kenosha, Municipal Judge **John A. Neuenschwander** discussed the workload in his court. *The Kenosha News* reported that Neuenschwander's court handled about 16,000 citations last year. Not all of the citations issued were traffic related; many stemmed from noise complaints, dog problems, retail theft, battery, housing code violations, and disorderly conduct. Neuenschwander said that without effective policing, the quality of life in a community declines.

The State Bar of Wisconsin recognized Judge **Robert E. Kinney**, Oneida County Circuit Court, for his work on an article entitled, "Examining Wisconsin Jury Instructions," that appeared in the August 2003 issue of *Wisconsin Lawyer*.

see **People** on page 16



Judge James C. Babler

Judge
John P. Anderson

Spring
2004PEOPLE *continued from page 15*

The article compared the “Blindfold Rule” to the “Sunshine Rule”, advocating the “Sunshine Rule” that would advise jurors of the effect of a verdict. His law clerk, **Troy Mleziva**, also was recognized for his work on the article. *The Daily News* (Rhineland) reported that the State Bar praised the article as “well-written, well-organized, and extremely informative.”



Judge James P. Daley

“Judge back on bench after military duty” was the headline in the *Beloit Daily News* when Judge **James P. Daley**, Rock County Circuit Court, returned from six months of active duty in the Secretary of Defense Office of Force Transformation (OFT). The OFT is responsible for a gargantuan task: turning the military from an industrial-age force to an information-age force. A brigadier general in the U.S. Army National Guard, Daley worked on a post-war plan for stability and returning Iraq to the Iraqis. “I had a part in changing the way we do business for the next generation,” Daley told the newspaper. “I’m very proud to have been

involved with it.” Daley is the son of a World War II veteran and served with the Marines in Vietnam. One of his daughters is a Marine on embassy duty and another daughter is a first lieutenant in the Army, whose unit will be leaving for Iraq on June 12.

Rock, Walworth, and Jefferson counties made headlines by joining 15 other counties in Wisconsin that are piloting Internet jury questionnaires. Potential jurors log onto a secure Web site to fill out an electronic form. Communicating via the Web will save Rock County an estimated \$3,700 in postage, and substantial staff time. Clerk of Circuit Court **Eldred Mielke**, Rock County, told *The Janesville Gazette* that he estimated entering the handwritten answers to the questionnaires requires the equivalent of a half-time clerk position.

Justice **Patience Drake Roggensack** helped Fox Prairie Elementary School in Stoughton learn about the law when she sat as the presiding judge at the school’s first mock trial. The fourth graders performed the trial of **Gold E. Locks v. The**



Justice Patience Roggensack poses with the Fox Prairie mock trial actors.

Bears. The script was taken from the Law Day 2004 kit, available on the courts’ Web site.

Chief Judge **Dorothy L. Bain**, Marathon County Circuit Court, recently announced an initiative to improve access to justice for people in northeastern Wisconsin who represent themselves in court. “The goal of our new committee is to find ways to make the system less intimidating and easier to navigate to move us closer to equal justice for all,” Bain told the *Record Review* (Edgar). The committee is focusing on developing plain-English court forms and instructions, creating a Web site, designing a training program for court staff, and exploring the development of a self-help center. Judge **Gary L. Carlson**, Taylor County Circuit Court, will chair the committee, which

is called the Ninth District Self-Represented Litigants Committee. Other members on the committee include additional staff from the court, attorneys, and local representatives from the community.



Judge Gary L. Carlson

Bill Rehnstrand, a member of the Superior School Board, is the most recent recipient of the Heffernan award. Rehnstrand was recognized for his 25-year commitment to law-related education in March. He told *The Daily Telegram* that it came as a surprise to him. “I thought that I was going down there to make a presentation of the award and was surprised to find I was a recipient.” The award is named in honor of, and was first awarded to, former Chief Justice **Nathan S. Heffernan**, who served on the Wisconsin Supreme Court from 1964-95. The award is not given out annually, but rather when it is merited for lifetime achievement.

Fifty-six judges, eight district attorneys, and seven law enforcement officers planned to visit more than 77 high schools between March and June to make presentations about the dangers of drinking and driving.

The effort, according to *The Chronicle* (Weyauwega), was timed to coincide with prom season. Judge **John P. Hoffmann**, Waupaca County Circuit Court, told the paper that his presentations include discussions of actual cases.

Judge
John P. Hoffmann

Chief Justice **Shirley S. Abrahamson** was the keynote speaker at two University of Wisconsin-Madison mid-year commencement ceremonies and newspapers around the state reported on her presentation. During the speech, she won thunderous applause when she warned the approximately 4,000 family members and friends present not to skimp on gifts. “Just because graduations come close to the holidays, family and friends cannot get by with one gift for both occasions,” she joked. On a more serious note, she urged the 1,600 graduates to take an active role in the democratic process. “Celebrating and protecting our freedoms are tasks for all of us,” she said. “Let your voices be heard. Justice is too important to be left only to judges.”

“Conferences by video save money on travel” was the headline in the *Leader-Telegram* (Eau Claire) – and Judge **Paul J. Lenz**, Eau Claire County Circuit Court, was the guest writer. Eau Claire County has had videoconferencing equipment since 2002. Lenz compared the cost of transporting an inmate for a 10-minute court appearance (\$500) to having the inmate to appear via videoconference (\$26). Although some counties were hesitant to make the move to videoconferencing, many are seeing the cost savings. Lenz pointed out, however, that the savings depend on the county.

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2004**PEOPLE** *continued from page 17*

"According to the Office of Justice Assistance, the payback for Eau Claire County for this equipment is two years. The payback for Iron County is 30 years," Lenz said. "However, for 60 of Wisconsin's 72 counties the payback is fewer than four years."

Videoconferencing also was a hot topic on the other side of the state. *The Janesville Gazette* ran an editorial urging the use of videoconferencing ("All counties should tune in video justice") and other newspapers in the state, including the *Shawano Leader*, picked up the piece.

Reserve Judge **Edwin C. Dahlberg**, one of Wisconsin's longest-serving judges, was inducted into the Beloit Memorial High School Hall of Fame in an April ceremony. He is a member of Beloit Memorial Class of 1942. Dahlberg once said he was reluctant to become a judge back in 1960 when Gov. **Gaylord Nelson** offered him an appointment to the Beloit Municipal Court because he was not certain he would like the work, and because he was certain he would not like the two-thirds cut in salary. Forty-one years later, as he retired from the Rock County Circuit Court, he pronounced that it had been the right career move, after all.



Reserve Judge
Edwin C. Dahlberg

Milwaukee Municipal Court Judge **Derek C. Mosely** told the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* that a pilot program to encourage suspended drivers to clear up their fines had brought in crowds of people. In the first days, the newspaper reported, defendants formed lines that stretched outside the municipal building in order to sign up for the program. Eligible defendants were allowed to apply for a 120-day payment extension and then were given help resolving their court issues. If they paid half of what they owed, they received a valid driver's license. The newspaper interviewed a machinist who had been bussing to a lower-wage job and said a driver's license would allow him to expand his job search to more lucrative areas.

University of Cincinnati Professor **Edward Latessa**, a well-regarded criminologist, traveled to Racine at the invitation of the Racine County Citizen's Criminal Justice Advisory Task Force and met with an estimated 150 people at a local high school to discuss how to reduce jail overcrowding. In her introduction of Latessa, Judge **Emily S. Mueller** described him as "straightforward and witty" and the professor did not disappoint. As he discussed jail overcrowding and the myriad ideas for offender rehabilitation programs, he noted that "there are more studies and journals than there are offenders" and cautioned that, "if you believed every study out there you wouldn't eat anything, you'd just drink a lot of red wine." Latessa had a number of suggestions, including that analyzing the company an offender keeps is often more worthwhile than studying what led to his/her current situation.

When an undercover drug investigation led to charges against defendants whose attorneys then tried to file a private criminal complaint against one of the investigators (a Washington County Sheriff's Department detective), all four local judges recused themselves. Clerk of Circuit Court **Kristine Deiss** explained how and why judges recuse themselves from cases in a story in the *West Bend Daily News*. Deiss showed the reporter the official form and

explained the role of the District Court Administrator's Office in assigning an out-of-county judge in this circumstance.

When Reserve Judge **Robert F. Pfiffner**, who served in Chippewa County from 1967-83, elected to retire from the reserve ranks, *The Chippewa Herald* interviewed some of the people who knew his work best: the attorneys – some of whom are now judges themselves – who frequently appeared in his court.

Judge **Roderick A. Cameron**, who has sat in Chippewa County Circuit Court for more than 20 years, argued cases before Pfiffner as a young attorney. "He set a very high standard for the judiciary," Cameron said. Judge **Thomas J. Sazama**, a former district attorney who also is now a Chippewa County judge, lauded Pfiffner's ability to treat people fairly and with dignity. "I thought I was very lucky to have him as a circuit judge," Sazama said. Chief Judge **Edward R. Brunner**, Barron County Circuit Court, agreed: "He didn't talk down to people," Brunner said. "He'd tell you if you were right or wrong."

When the Oneida County Board's Law Enforcement Committee met to consider eliminating the 25-year practice of holding circuit court hearings in Minocqua one afternoon each month, Judge **Robert A. Kinney** was there to weigh in on behalf of saving the program. "It's better to have a clerk and a judge drive to Minocqua rather than 40 or 50 people drive to Rhinelander," Kinney told the committee. "It's a convenience for the public and it's a convenience for law enforcement." The committee agreed, and decided to leave the program untouched.

Dodge County announced its new Victim Impact Panels (VIPs) program in March, mandating program participation for everyone convicted of criminal drunk driving on or after March 15. Four times a year, beginning in July, victims of drunk driving will speak to convicted drunk drivers. "The victims have very powerful stories to tell, and these repeat offenders need to hear their stories. Our goal is to help reduce drunk driving," **Nancy Franke**, the director of Restorative Justice for Dodge County, told the *Watertown Daily Times*. Judges **Andrew P. Bissonnette** and **Daniel Klossner** both told the newspaper that VIPs are a powerful tool. VIPs currently operate in 18 other Wisconsin counties. "I am glad that we now have this option available at sentencing in these troubling cases," Judge **John R. Storck** told the newspaper. ■



Judge
Thomas J. Sazama



Judge
Robert A. Kinney



Judge John R. Storck

Interpreters *continued from page 1*

clear understanding of legal terminology. In order to become certified, they had to complete a two-day training program, pass a multi-part written exam, and then pass a lengthy oral exam. Of the 34 Spanish language interpreters who reached the oral exam phase, eight passed. The 25 percent pass rate exceeds the average national rate of 12 percent.

Driving the need for qualified court interpreters is Wisconsin's changing population. In 1990, according to the U.S. Census, there were 76,000 households in Wisconsin that spoke Spanish as a primary language. By 2000, that figure had jumped to nearly 169,000. "We all know the world is getting smaller. Its people are not just at our door...they are in our courts," said Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Elsa C. Lamelas, who serves as chair of the Committee to Improve Interpreting and Translation in the Wisconsin Courts. "Language is the tool of the courts, so we must have assurance that our interpreters can do the job."

The effort to improve translation and interpretation began in October 1999 with the appointment of Lamelas' committee. Since then, the Wisconsin Supreme Court has adopted an ethics code for court interpreters and U.S. Senator Herb Kohl helped to secure a \$250,000 federal grant to fund testing, certification, and a program manager position.

The oral Spanish exam will be offered at least once more this year, and testing in Hmong, Russian, and Arabic will also be offered. ■

Fay-Marie Filipiak, assistant to Interpreter Program Manager Carmel Capati in the Office of Court Operations, talks with Wisconsin Public Radio following the swearing-in ceremony. Filipiak was inspired to pursue certification as a Spanish interpreter after working on the program.

**The new graduates**

The following 14 people are now certified to interpret in Wisconsin courtrooms. Contact information for these individuals and other court interpreters who are in various stages of the certification process and who work in Spanish, ASL, Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian-Serbian-Croatian, Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), French, Italian, Laotian, Latvian, Polish, Russian, Somali, Urdu, and Vietnamese is available on the court system Web site at www.wicourts.gov/services/interpreter/docs/roster.pdf.

Dane County

Fay-Marie Filipiak, Madison
Lynn Leazer, Madison
Liesl Swansen-Monroy, Madison

Kenosha County

Debra Gorra, Kenosha (ASL)

Milwaukee County

Sharon Anderson, West Allis (ASL)
Aramis DeFort, Milwaukee
Christina Green, Glendale
Stephanie Kerkvliet, Greenfield (ASL)
Hedy Miller, Milwaukee (ASL)
Sandy Peplinski, Greenfield (ASL)
Tamesia Sosa, Milwaukee
Alexandra Wirth, Wauwatosa

Walworth County

Bruce Macadam, Walworth

Waupaca County

Susan Rascon, Clintonville (admitted by reciprocity)

OBITUARIES**Judge Donn H. Dahlke
Marquette County Circuit Court**

Judge Donn H. Dahlke, who served as judge in Marquette County from 1982-95, died unexpectedly on April 2. He was 70.

Dahlke grew up in Portage and graduated from the UW Law School in 1958. From 1961-68, he was a part-time district attorney for Marquette County. In 1968, he was appointed to serve as the county's family court commissioner. In 1982, Gov. Tony Earl appointed Dahlke as judge, and he served two full terms before assuming reserve status in 1995.

Dahlke was active in community organizations and he especially enjoyed his involvement in The People's Church of Montello. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, online investing, and



Judge Donn H. Dahlke

woodworking.

His wife, Joyce, survives him along with three daughters, two stepdaughters, four grandchildren, and four step-grandchildren.

**Register in Probate Kim Z. Vinet
Sauk County**

Kim ZumBrunnen Vinet, Sauk County's register in probate, died on May 9. She was 46.

Vinet was born in Lake Geneva and raised in DeForest. After graduating from Madison Area Technical College, she became Sauk County's juvenile court clerk and register in probate.

She was active in the community and enjoyed sewing costumes for the Baraboo High School plays. Vinet and her husband were avid gardeners, and she often brought flower arrangements to the courthouse.

Vinet's husband, Pierre, and her daughter, Noelle, survive her. ■

Spring
2004**AWARDS** *continued from page 1*

Candace C. Cooper of the California Court of Appeals, and Judge Kevin S. Burke, chief judge of the Hennepin County (Minnesota) District Court.

The Opperman Award is reserved for trial and appellate judges who have had at least 10 years of judicial service and whose written opinions “make clear that bench, bar and community alike would willingly entrust that judge with the most complex cases of the most far-reaching import.” Candidates also were judged on their lectures and scholarly publications and on activities that have helped to improve the administration of justice.

Judge Frederic W. Fleishauer nominated Abrahamson for the award, citing business, family, and criminal law cases in which Abrahamson’s opinions or dissents have had a far-reaching impact. He noted a series of cases in which Abrahamson labored to clean up the Wisconsin doctrine on misrepresentation, and others in which Abrahamson put Wisconsin on a path to a sensible parole evidence rule.

Beyond bestowing accolades upon Abrahamson for her legal work, Fleishauer lauded her for her leadership – and acknowledged that her many remarkable achievements are apparent to all, but impossible to adequately convey. “It is clear as the tinkling of a bell heard over a placid lake on a summer evening,” he wrote. “Five pages in the hands of a poet, perhaps, but five pages in the hands of a mere scrivener cannot render our Chief, justice.”

Haase wins ‘Lifetime Jurist Achievement Award’

Reserve Judge Robert A. Haase, who served on the bench in Winnebago County from 1982 until his retirement this year, was selected for the State Bar of Wisconsin’s Lifetime Achievement Award. The award was presented at the State Bar’s annual convention in Madison in early May.

The award is reserved for judges who have provided outstanding, long-term judicial service.

While Haase’s accomplishments are numerous, his use of mediation helped to set him apart. Judge Philip M. Kirk, Waupaca County Circuit Court, said Haase was one of the first Wisconsin judges to become a certified mediator. He also helped lead the development of the Conflict Resolution Center in Oshkosh, which has become a model for the state.

During Haase’s more than 20 years on the bench, he volunteered hundreds of hours to improving court administration. He

served for six years as chief judge of the Fourth Judicial Administrative District and for 10 years on the Records Management Committee, which recommends guidelines for the retention of court records and necessary statutory or rule changes relating to records management, devises new forms, reviews new and existing forms for their legal sufficiency, and establishes standards and guidelines for effective management of court records.

In retirement, Haase is working as a mediator. He also is indulging in his many hobbies, including singing with a barbershop quartet, sharing puns, practicing his Mandarin Chinese, and woodworking.

Past recipients include circuit court Judges Peter G. Pappas, La Crosse County; Patrick T. Sheedy, Milwaukee County; Mark J. Farnum, Rock County; P. Charles Jones, Dane County; Edwin C. Dahlberg, Rock County; Patrick L. Snyder, Waukesha County; and Supreme Court Justice Myron L. Gordon.

Perlich is ‘Judge of the Year’

Judge John J. Perlich, who has served on the bench in La Crosse County since 1985, is the State Bar of Wisconsin’s 2003 ‘Judge of the Year’.

Perlich’s leadership in developing the county’s drug court two years ago (*see separate story, page 9*) and his continuing role in managing the court set him apart from the other candidates, according to the award judges.

The *La Crosse Tribune* quoted a local attorney who has watched Perlich in action during the Thursday evening drug court sessions. “It is remarkable to see Judge Perlich when he presides over the drug court,” Atty. Keith Belzer said. “To hear formerly drug addicted individuals take responsibility for their lives and then thank the judge and the drug court team for saving their lives is about the highest goal that a criminal court could hope to attain.”

Perlich thanked the State Bar for selecting him for this honor, but emphasized the collaborative nature of the drug court and the importance of community support for non-

see Awards on page 20



Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson



On behalf of the State Bar’s Bench-Bar Committee, Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Jon P. Wilcox presents the 2003 ‘Lifetime Achievement Award’ to Reserve Judge Robert A. Haase and the ‘Judge of the Year’ award to Judge John J. Perlich at the Bar’s spring convention in Madison.

AWARDS *continued from page 19*

traditional approaches to judging. "This is an honor for the other judges in La Crosse County and La Crosse County itself," he said, "because of all the things we're trying to do and we are doing here. I think we're pretty much a leader in the state."

Past recipients of this award include circuit court Judges Thomas H. Barland, Eau Claire County; Dennis J. Barry, Racine County; Harold V. Froehlich, Outagamie County; Michael P. Sullivan, Milwaukee County; Gary L. Carlson, Taylor County; Maxine A. White, Milwaukee County; and Patrick Snyder, Waukesha County.

School administrators honor Stewart

Judge William C. Stewart Jr.

The Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators gave its Bert Grover Child Advocacy Award to Judge William C. Stewart Jr., Dunn County Circuit Court, during a May ceremony in Green Bay.

The award recognizes individuals who have dedicated themselves to improving the lives of children. Stewart, a judge since 1998, is founder of the Dunn County Truancy Court Program, a collaborative effort among the court, law enforcement, human services, and the schools. The program contracts with a local non-profit, Positive Alternatives, Inc., which provides supervision, Saturday study halls, and other services to families with kids who are having attendance problems. It is credited with having cut the truancy rate from 15 percent to 5 percent of students in Menomonie schools.

Menomonie Superintendent of Schools Jesse Harness and Elk Mound Superintendent of Schools Ron Walsh nominated Stewart for the award, and many teachers, school administrators, police officers, and community leaders wrote letters of support. Echoing a sentiment expressed by many, Pao Vang, executive director of the Hmong-American Community Association in Menomonie, thanked Stewart for spending much of his free time working on programs to benefit youth. "Judge Stewart has been very helpful to the Hmong community in Dunn County in so many ways, particularly in the youth and family-strengthening programs. He has helped to overcome many issues facing the Hmong teenagers and parents since he was elected into office."

In accepting the award, which came with a \$1,000 honorarium that he will donate to Positive Alternatives, Inc., Stewart underscored the importance of education as a foundation for a successful and productive life. Stewart told the group that it takes a commitment of time, energy, and money to make programs for children and families successful. "Our truancy program is not magic, but a commitment from many individuals," he said. "We must dedicate our professional lives to the good of children."

ABOTA honors Troy

A professional organization of trial attorneys who work for both plaintiffs and defendants has bestowed its highest honor upon Outagamie County Circuit Court Judge Joseph M. Troy, chief judge of the Eighth Judicial District.

The American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) gave Troy the award at a May dinner in Madison. He told *The [Appleton] Post-Crescent* that the honor came as a complete surprise. "I was very honored," he said. "I feel it is a recognition I share with all the judges of Outagamie County."

Atty. Joseph Beisenstein, an ABOTA member who participated in the nomination, said Troy's hard work, knowledge of the law, and respectful treatment of litigants helped him to stand out. "He deals with people very well," Beisenstein said. "Jurors, attorneys, the litigants themselves, he just bends over backwards for everyone involved. He is a class act."

Troy has served on the bench in Outagamie County since his election in 1987. Recently, the Supreme Court appointed him to a new term as chief judge for the Eighth District, which includes Outagamie, Brown, Waupaca, Oconto, Marinette, Door, and Kewaunee counties.



Chief Judge Joseph M. Troy

White selected for national women judges' award

Judge Maxine Aldridge White, Milwaukee County Circuit Court, has been selected to receive the 2004 Mattie Belle Davis Award from the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ). White described herself as "humbled" by the news; the award will be presented at a ceremony in October.

Judge Mattie Belle Davis was the first woman to sit in the Dade County (Florida) Metropolitan Court. When she was appointed to that court in 1959, she already had vaulted a number of barriers. She passed the bar exam in Miami in 1936, during the Great Depression. This was 11 years before women were permitted to be jurors in Florida. As a lawyer, she successfully argued two appeals before the Florida Supreme Court and was instrumental in establishing the Florida Association of Women Lawyers.

The Davis Award is reserved for individuals who demonstrate the same dedication to the cause of supporting women in the profession of law. White has been a leader in the NAWJ and serves as this region's director for the organization. In March, she presided over a ceremony in Milwaukee County that paid tribute to Wisconsin's retired female jurists by presenting their portraits and biographies for display in the courthouses where they served. White led the effort to organize this tribute, working nights and weekends to bring it to fruition.

AWARDS *continued from page 20***Clerks, law librarian honored**

Judges were not the only group gathering awards this spring; a clerk of circuit court, an assistant clerk, and a law librarian also were honored.

Walworth clerk celebrates 35 years of service

The Walworth County Board of Supervisors honored Clerk of Circuit Court Sheila Reiff for 35 years of service in



Clerk of Circuit Court Sheila Reiff, Walworth County, accepts an award for 35 years of service from then-County Board Chair William Norem.

March. Reiff accepted an award for her outstanding public service at the beginning of a county board meeting.

“For 35 years they offer a crystal bowl or a gift certificate to a jewelry store of your choice,” she said. “I didn’t even have to see the bowl.” Reiff bought herself a necklace with the gift certificate.

Reiff is celebrating her 10th anniversary as clerk of circuit court. Since

assuming the post, she has implemented a video arraignment system and improved collections after successfully making a case to the county for two employees to focus on this area. Currently, she is planning for an early-September move into the new justice center. The move will allow Reiff to bring her staff together on one floor and will create a jury assembly room – something the county has not previously had.

Reiff’s tenure with the county began in 1969 in the Sheriff’s Department, where she was the third woman ever hired. She moved over to the Clerk’s Office in 1980 and has been there since.

Joining her at the award ceremony were four of her five adult children, who range in age from 19 to 43. Four of her seven grandchildren also were present at the ceremony.

Dane County law librarian honored for pro bono work

Paula Seeger, reference/outreach services librarian at the Dane County Legal Resource Center since 2001, was presented with a Community Professional Service Award at the Dane County Bar Association’s annual *Pro Bono* Breakfast in April.

Dane County Circuit Court Judges Sarah B. O’Brien and Gerald C. Nichol nominated Seeger for the award, citing her effort to transform the former Dane County Law Library

into a self-help center. Through Paula’s leadership, the judges noted, “a comprehensive approach to assistance [for] a wide range of litigants has become a reality in Dane County.”

The Resource Center offers court forms (mainly for family law), books on self-representation, and basic legal research classes for non-lawyers. “Oftentimes people don’t know how to verbalize their legal problem,” Seeger explained, “so we try to translate their frustration into options using our resources.” The Center also serves the Dane County Circuit Court, city and county agencies, private attorneys, and the Dane County Jail.

In the future, Seeger hopes to provide more programs for the public to explain the court system’s structure and procedures and to expand the formats in which legal information services are offered to include video presentations and interactive court forms. Another priority is expansion of services to users for whom English is a second language.

Uecker’s volunteerism cited

It has been said that the busiest people get the most done. Norma Uecker proves the point. A farmer, part-time (80 percent) assistant in the Door County Clerk of Circuit Court Office, mother, and grandmother, Uecker devotes nearly all of her “free time” to volunteering. Her efforts earned her one of the first Golden Heart Awards from the Volunteer Center of Door County.

Presented in a ceremony on April 20, the award came with a \$1,000 honorarium, which Uecker split between two of her favorite charities, Relay for Life and DoorCANcer. Uecker decided to devote her time to the fight against cancer after the disease claimed the lives of her father, brother, and sister-in-law.

She thanked her sister, Lois Schubert-Brown, for nominating her and credited much of her success to her

husband Dale who, Uecker told the *Door County Advocate*, has wondered if she “lays awake at night and dreams up all these ideas.”

Because Uecker believes that donations should be earned rather than simply solicited, she organizes volunteer efforts as an exchange. She and a team of volunteers recently set up shelving for the Door County Co-op, sold and delivered Halloween pumpkins at the Farmers Market, and helped a local company package its products in exchange for donations. “When you have a cause, [the energy] is just there,”

she told the newspaper. And above all, she said, “You have to have fun. ■



Paula Seeger

ELECTION 2004 *continued from page 3*

Supreme Court's Commission on Judicial Elections and Ethics, which worked on a proposal to revise the Code of Judicial Conduct to address campaign-related issues, and also served on legislative committees that worked on issues surrounding jury service; telemedicine; and the use and compensation of guardians *ad litem*.



Judge Gregory B. Huber

In response to a question from *City Pages*, Wausau's weekly newspaper, about what "one thing" he would work on in the court system, Huber said he wanted to help with Chief Judge

Dorothy Bain's initiative to improve access for people who are not represented by attorneys. He told the newspaper he hopes to see guidelines for self-represented litigants that will help them to navigate the legal process.

Yamahiro easily wins first term

In what the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* termed a "landslide victory", Judge Glenn H. Yamahiro, appointed by Gov. Jim Doyle in November 2003, defeated challenger and



Judge Glenn H. Yamahiro

former Judge Robert Crawford in the race for Branch 34 of the Milwaukee County Circuit Court.

Yamahiro won by a margin of 65 percent to Crawford's 35 percent. Crawford was a circuit court judge for one term before losing his bid for reelection in 2002.

Doyle appointed Yamahiro to replace Judge Jacqueline Schellinger. He earned his law degree at the UW Law School and spent eight years with the State Public Defender's Office. He was appointed as a Milwaukee County judicial court commissioner in 1999.

He and his wife Deborah S. Vishny live in Glendale with their daughter.

Jude is choice of Racine voters

A high-profile judicial race that was called "unusually competitive" by *The [Racine] Journal Times*, ended in victory for Atty. John S. "Jack" Jude. His opponent was Atty. Georgia Herrera, a former Racine County assistant district attorney who now works in private practice.



Atty. John S. "Jack" Jude

Jude garnered about 16,270 votes to Herrera's 13,880. Racine County judges lined up on both sides, and homes in nearly every block of the city featured lawn

signs. Herrera won the endorsement of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* and Jude won the county bar poll and the endorsement of the three candidates who were eliminated in the primary.

Jude has practiced primarily family law for 27 years and

also has been a juvenile court commissioner. He is a 1977 graduate of Marquette Law School, which he entered after working as a probation officer and as a program development specialist for Center for Urban Concerns in Racine.

Jude replaces Judge Emmanuel J. Vuvunas who retired as of April 2004. Gov. Jim Doyle appointed Jude early to begin his new duties effective July 16.

Bates wins close Rock County race

Rebounding from a second-place finish in the primary, Atty. R. Alan Bates came out on top in the race for Branch 2 of the Rock County Circuit Court. He defeated Atty. James D. Wickhem by a margin of 51 to 49 percent of the vote.

An attorney with the law firm of Feingold, Bates & Vogel in Janesville, Bates has concentrated on criminal defense as well as family and juvenile law and has served as a court commissioner.

Bates currently holds several leadership positions in community organizations. He is president of the Janesville Noon Lions, the Hedburg Public Library Board of Directors, and the Boys & Girls Club of Janesville

Wickhem is an attorney with the Janesville law firm of Meier, Wickhem, Lyons & Schulz.



Atty. R. Alan Bates

A decisive win in Vilas County

Judge Neal A. Nielsen III, appointed by Gov. Jim Doyle in November 2003 after Chief Judge James B. Mohr opted to step down mid-term, won a decisive victory over Vilas County's district attorney in April.

Nielsen took about 67 percent of the vote in his race against District Atty. Albert D. Moustakis, widening the already substantial gap that was revealed in the primary. "It was obviously a great result," Nielsen told the *Vilas County News-Review*. "I am very grateful for the support from across the county."

At the time of his appointment, Nielsen was a Vilas County Board supervisor and vice president of Custom Components of Eagle River. He is a 1981 graduate of Suffolk University Law School in Boston.

He and his wife have two children at home.



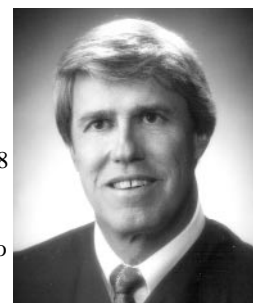
Judge Neal A. Nielsen III

A seventh term for Carver

Judge William H. Carver won election to a seventh term in Branch 5 of the Winnebago County Circuit Court, defeating Deputy District Atty. John Jorgensen by a margin of 52 to 48 percent.

Carver told *The Oshkosh Northwestern* that his 37 years in the courthouse (31 years as a judge; six years as a prosecutor) have flown by. He indicated during his 1998 race that his sixth term would be his last, but changed his mind as retirement approached. In 1998, Carver also had an opponent, Deputy District Atty. Thomas J. Gritton who won election to Branch 1 in 2000.

Carver has been a vocal proponent of justice system reform and has spoken out about the need for alternatives to incarceration. He also has spoken out about the 'justice for sale' scandal involving former Winnebago County District Atty. Joe Paulus, who now is awaiting sentencing on federal bribery charges. ■



Judge William H. Carver

Chief Justice
Shirley S. Abrahamson

Director of State Courts
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Spittoon returns to Capitol

Ray Roberts didn't know what to do with a 40-pound spittoon he had received from his father-in-law, the late Chief Justice George R. Currie, and had treasured for many years. So he contacted the Supreme Court about returning it to the Capitol.

At one time, it was common practice for retiring employees to keep a souvenir from their offices. It is unknown when Currie came into possession of the spittoon; one guess is that he brought it home when he left the bench in 1968.

Currie was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1951 and became chief justice in 1964. He was instrumental in creating the Wisconsin Judicial Conference and was part of the effort to introduce the Code of Judicial Ethics in 1967. He became the first chief justice to be unseated in an election when Justice Robert W. Hansen ran against him. There are a couple of factors that may have led to his defeat: first, he would only have been able to serve two years of the 10-year term due to a mandatory retirement age that was in effect at the time; and second, he had joined in an unpopular opinion the previous year that allowed the Braves baseball team to leave Milwaukee.

After Currie died in 1983, Roberts and his wife, Ann (Currie's daughter), acquired the spittoon. Roberts was introduced to Ann Currie by Judge Charles P. Dykman's wife, Bonnie, who knew they would hit it off. They were married for 21 years before Ann passed away.

Roxanne Nelson, Capitol restoration project liaison, is always on the lookout to return original items to the Capitol and was delighted to hear about the spittoon. "There was a very limited production and all of [the spittoons] disappeared into private ownership," Nelson said. "I saw one for sale at an auction house several years ago and it sold for over \$2,000."



Ray Roberts takes time for a picture with the spittoon he donated back to the Capitol building. He acquired the spittoon from his father-in-law, Chief Justice George R. Currie.

The spittoons are originals created by George B. Post, the architect of the current Capitol, which was built between 1910 and 1917. They are made of cast brass, with an ornate band around the base and a Wisconsin "W" on the front.

Other items returned to the Capitol in recent years include an oil portrait of Chief Justice Edward G. Ryan; a black and white photograph of the first justices of the Wisconsin Supreme Court (Chief Justice Edward V. Whiton and Justices Orsamus Cole and Abram D. Smith); an original Supreme Court seal; and a chair with its original leather, circa 1904. Nelson and Diane Al Shihabi, interior designer during the restoration, discovered some of the items at antique shops or consignment stores and returned them to the Capitol.

The spittoon now is displayed in the reception area of the Supreme Court with the other original pieces. ■

If you know of an item that should be returned to the Capitol building, contact Colleen Flesher at (608) 266-1298 or colleen.flesher@wicourts.gov.