February 2012

Judicial Branch News

Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County

Centennial Celebration

Equal Justice Under Law

Vol 6. Issue 2

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Judicial Branch News

The *Judicial Branch News* is an online newsletter published by the Media Relations Department.

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South Court Tower Dedication

Norman Davis

As most of you know, the South Court Tower dedication was a banner day for the court. February 14, 2012 was the 100th anniversary of Arizona's statehood and the ceremony was a historic link from the past to the future.

It was fitting that the dedication of this Court Tower coincided with the State's Centennial celebration. The Centennial is a significant milestone in our history. Each of us has an Arizona story. Whether we were born here, came to work here, or came for the climate or beauty of the State we all share a pride in this State.

In the beginning, justice came slowly to the Arizona territory. Many of us relate to that early version of justice from Hollywood depictions of gunfights and gunslingers meeting out justice with little mention of courtrooms and judges. In truth, justice was often swift and lethal, but without much proportion or due process. In frontier Arizona, Alternative Dispute Resolution had a different meaning.

Most of the action happened in places like Tucson, Tombstone, along the Mogollon Rim in the Pleasant Valley War, and in other dusty Arizona frontier towns. Maricopa County was relatively small and much less-influential in those days, but had similar episodes of vigilante justice. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, men like Ramon Cordova, Mariano Tisnado, Manuel Subiate and others were forcefully removed from the Maricopa County Jail and hung by mobs without any due process.

But as time passed, the seeds of due process and the rule of law took hold in this County. The first courtroom in Maricopa County was built in a grocery store in 1871 on the east side of South First Avenue. Four years later, a small adobe courthouse was built on the south side of Washington Street and used until 1884 when a two-story brick courthouse was built on a square facing Washington Street.

In 1929, the brick courthouse became inadequate and was torn down and replaced with what we now affectionately call the "Old Courthouse". The County Jail was built on the top floors of the Old Courthouse and housed many notable defendants like Ernesto Miranda and Winnie Ruth Judd, the notorious trunk murderess who cut her victims up and shipped them in trunks to California.

Maricopa County has now grown to nearly 4 million residents, requiring the Court system to grow as well from one division in 1912, to over 150 judges and commissioners today. To accommodate this growth, the 9-story East Court Building was opened in 1965, followed by the 13-story Central Court Building in 1978. During the last 34 years since the Central Court Building was built, the Court has controlled growth by expanding into three new Regional Court Centers throughout the valley, and a major expansion of the Durango Juvenile Court Complex in 2004.

Continued on Page 4

From the Presiding - Continued

The new South Court Tower has 16 stories, comprising of approximately 695,000 square feet, with 22 completed courtrooms and space for an additional 10 courtrooms for future growth. This building has some unique functionality and features:

- On the 2nd & 3rd floors, you'll find dedicated courtrooms for high-volume criminal case processing with offices for prosecutors and defenders in close proximity to support these courts and more quickly resolve cases;
- Separate entrances and rooms to protect victim rights;
- State-of-the-art courtroom electronics (with centralized video recording, capacity for remote witness testimony, remote interpreting, remote hearings and video conferencing);
- Jurors will have rapid check-in and payment from a modern kiosk system;
- You will notice improved way-finding and directional monitors;
- This will be a safer building with better prisoner separation and transport, and enhanced security systems.

The Maricopa County Superior Court currently oversees more than 50 buildings serving a wide variety of functions and uses, but the number and size of these buildings is not nearly as important as what happens here. Our mission is perhaps best stated by the words of Alexander Hamilton that appear on the façade of the new South Court Tower: "The First Duty of Society Is Justice".

This court takes seriously the charge to do justice in every case that comes before it. We don't always do it perfectly, but in the last 100 years, Maricopa County has grown from a sleepy one-judge court with occasional episodes of vigilante justice to the 4th largest trial court in the nation with a national reputation for excellence and innovation.

My thanks to all of you for your commitment and dedication to making our court the best trial court in the county, and to all of you who worked so tirelessly to program, design and construct the new South Court Tower.

Court Tower: Opening Day

Veterans Court: Arizona StandDown

On Saturday, February 4, veterans who served in the armed forces flocked to the Veterans Memorial Coliseum to learn about services that maybe available to them.

The Arizona StandDown is an annual three day event that brings together the Valley's homeless and at-risk military veterans, connecting them with services ranging from: VA HealthCare, mental health services, clothing, meals, emergency shelter, transitional and permanent housing, ID/ drivers license's, court services and legal aide, showers and haircuts and myriad other services and resources.

"What a great day and what a wonderful turn out,"said Criminal Presiding Judge Douglas Rayes."It was a Saturday well spent helping fellow citizens who served our country and are now down on their luck."

Arizona StandDown is held at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum at the Arizona State Fairgrounds on Super Bowl weekend.

Superior Court and Probation employees volunteer their time each year to staff the program.

While its primary goal is helping homeless veterans access the resources needed, including housing, to regain their highest level of independence; its secondary goal is to bring the community and service providers together in a collaborative format that can build relationships throughout the year that positively benefit homeless veterans.

Investiture Ceremonies

Judge Katherine Cooper

Arizona Supreme Court Justice W. Scott Bales administers the oath of office to Judge Katherine Cooper during her investiture ceremony in the Board of Supervisors Auditorium in Phoenix.

Judge Janice Crawford

Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice Rebecca White Berch administers the oath of office to Judge Janice Crawford during her investiture ceremony in the Board of Supervisors Auditorium in Phoenix.

Two Maricopa County agencies honored for excellence

Two Maricopa County agencies were among seven statewide winners in the Arizona Quality Awards competition recognizing superior performance from public, private and non-profit organizations.

The Maricopa County Transportation Department was honored for its "Scoreboard Measurement Process" and the county Adult Probation Department won for its Adult Education Program, which helps individuals increase their educational levels and earn General Education Development (GED) certificates.

Barbara Broderick, the county's chief probation officer, credited her staff for their hard work in serving the educational needs of probationers and other adult learners in the community. By raising their educational levels, individuals improve their employability and income potential, she said, benefiting themselves, their families, and the community at large. "Adult education is a proven strategy for reducing recidivism, and as such, this program contributes to our department's public safety goals," she said. "We are honored to win this very prestigious award. It validates the efforts of our staff and showcases the value we place on performance excellence."

Probate Establishes Report Line

The Probate Investigations Report Line, (602) 506-6730, was established to provide citizens with a way to report instances of abuse and exploitation of adult wards, who are under the care of a court appointed guardian or conservator. It encourages citizens to report concerns directly to the Probate Investigations Office. This allows all reports to be reviewed and serves to safeguard vulnerable adults against abuse and/or exploitation

When a citizen calls the Report Line they are asked for their information and a statement about the abuse and/or exploitation they are reporting. If they send an email they are asked to include their name, contact information and a brief outline of their concerns. The Probate Investigations Supervisor reviews the details of the concerns. If not immediately addressed, all reports are responded to within one business day. If necessary the Commissioner assigned to the case is notified of the concerns. If the Commissioner feels it is warranted an investigation is ordered.

By Star Felty, Guardian Review Program Volunteer Coordinator

Photo Highlights

A makeshift courtroom inside the Veteran's Coliseum for Arizona StandDown.

Wes Shipley of Adult Probation volunteers his Saturday to help with Arizona StandDown.

Arizona Clerks of the Superior Court and the Arizona Supreme Court sponsored a Centennial Marriage Event on February 14, 2012 as part of Arizona's official Centennial events.

All 15 elected Clerks participated by letting marriage license applicants know they can be married on the steps of the State Courts Building in Phoenix in a ceremony presided over by Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice Rebecca White Berch.

Employee Anniversaries

5 Years

Brandi Carter Adult Probation Officer
Giovana Howard Adult Probation Officer
Paul Lopez Adult Probation Officer
Scott Mortensen Adult Probation Officer
Danielle Sims Adult Probation Officer
Karina Hidalgo Juvenile Probation Officer
Vickie Vincent Juvenile Probation Officer
Rocio Galarza Presentence Screener
Brianna Collins Security Officer II
Andrew Mendola Security Officer II
Grego Moreno Security Officer II
Ana Pasos Security Officer II
Willie Yee Security Officer II
David Silvas Surveillance Officer
Amy Weaver Court Reporter
Jelayne Hall Judicial Assistant-Classified
Eric Hartley Judicial Clerk
Mary Clements Judicial Clerk
Karen Sapp Judicial Clerk Associate
Elizabeth Ikard Judicial Assistant
Stephanie Smith Adult Probation Officer
Nicole White Adult Probation Officer
Alejandro Caraveo General Laborer
Gloria Bramlett Judicial Clerk
Carolyn Gonda Judicial Clerk
Judy Ybarra Judicial Clerk Senior

10 Years

Jessie Jimenez Adult Probation Officer
Marsha Eritano Judicial Financial Clerk
Brian Armbruster Adult Probation Officer
Jill Bognar Adult Probation Officer
Kirsten Weigert Adult Probation Officer
Brandelyn Jackson Adult Probation Officer Supervisor
Kim Daniels Executive Assistant
Lisa Telles Judicial Clerk Senior
Klara Lowe Office Assistant Specialized
Cheryl Begay Adult Probation Officer
Kathleen Braley Court Reporter
Bob Wilmarth Human Resources Analyst

15 Years

Paul Anderson Adult Probation Officer
Patricia Comer-Lopez Adult Probation Officer
Cynthia Gordon Adult Probation Officer
Anthony Palmer Adult Probation Officer
Patricia Savage Adult Probation Officer
John Ziter Adult Probation Officer
Jill Gondek Adult Probation Officer Supervisor
Aurora Valenzuela Executive Assistant

20 Years

Roxanne Hernandez Office Assistant Specialized

Corrections from January Newsletter

Scott Hoffman
Judicial Clerk Senior 20 Years
Patricia Duran
Judicial Clerk Lead 20 Years
Scott Coniam
Court Reporter 20 Years
Kimberly Law-Woods
Juvenile Probation Officer 25 Years
Joan Kircher
Adult Probation Officer 25 Years
Auldric Pantin
Adult Probation Officer 25 Years
Meri Romero
Adult Probation Officer 25 Years

Entryways Reconfigured

With the opening of the South Court Tower (SCT), the court had reconfigured entryways to its network of downtown court buildings.

The court has redeployed security staff throughout the downtown complex.

This redeployment results in the use of only two entrances to the buildings, accessible from the court plaza:

· through the South Court Tower main entry
· through the Central Court Building (CCB).
[Note that the West Court Building (WCB) access will continue to operate as currently provided.]

In addition, **the public entrance to the East Court building (ECB) is closed.** The Attorney Express entrance on the east side of ECB has remained open for attorney access, and for court employees to exit the building.

Your understanding and cooperation during the transition are much appreciated.

Probation: Safety Matters

The Adult and Juvenile Probation Departments were selected by the National Safety Council to receive an award for Best Performance-Emergency Care, First Aid, CPR and AED.

In 2011, seven hundred sixty-eight (768) Adult and Juvenile Probation staff completed a CPR/FA class taught by its own faculty.

Kevin Westover Joins OET

Court Technology Services Kevin Westover left CTS to join Maricopa County's Office of Enterprise Technology.

Westover is in a high level management position, reporting to Dave Stevens, the Deputy County CIO for Infrastructure.

" His leadership, personality, extreme work ethic and keen sense of humor will be sorely missed," said CTS CIO John Barrett.

Court Launches ezCourtForms

Maricopa County Superior Court's eCourt has become ezCourtForms. The renamed ezCourtForms is an online intelligent legal forms system that helps self-represented litigants generate their own legal forms. Currently, this system focuses on providing intelligent family law forms and processes as well as an application to waive or defer filing fees. The family law forms include both pre-decree and post-decree modules.

All the content is the same as it was previously in eCourt. The main interface for ezCourtForms changed slightly, but the Court is confident users will find this change to be a significant improvement over the prior interface. ezCourtForms will be linked from the Maricopa County Superior Court's Self-Service Center website just as eCourt was. The direct web address is superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/ezcourtforms. If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Murray, Self-Service Center Administrator, at 602-506-3464 or murrayj006@superiorcourt.maricopa.gov for more information.

By Jennifer Murray, Self Service Center Administrator