



Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County

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Maricopa County Superior Court Recognized with Strategic Agenda Awards *Arizona Supreme Court Recognizes Family and Mental Health Programs*

PHOENIX (January 10, 2023) – The Maricopa County Superior Court led all counties by winning two Strategic Agenda Awards from the Arizona Supreme Court.

Maricopa County Superior Court’s Family Court *Kingdom Quest* program received the Promoting Judicial Branch Excellence & Innovation Award. The Mental Health Outreach Program won in the category of Enhancing Professionalism within Arizona’s Courts.

Family Court *Kingdom Quest*, a computer-based, interactive program modeled loosely after the television show “Game of Thrones,” was created during the pandemic and designed as a more effective approach to train judicial officers and staff members who are new to the Family Department. The program is an informative way to learn about Family Court. The program also won the national 2022 Irwin Cantor Innovation Award at the Annual Conference of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts.

“For many new judicial officers, family law is outside their prior professional experience. As they prepare for their new assignment, there are volumes of information they are expected to absorb over a very abbreviated period of time,” Family Department Presiding Judge Bruce Cohen said. “To help them retain all of this information, we needed a different approach that allowed for self-paced learning through an entertaining and interactive platform.”

Maricopa County Superior Court was also recognized for its exemplary Mental Health Outreach Program that enhances several Court-ordered evaluation and treatment initiatives. These initiatives include:

- To increase training efforts throughout Arizona, the Superior Court’s Mental Health Court Bench created a free, virtual training series for medical professionals and judicial officers. They also created a list of Court Ordered Evaluation and Treatment medical professionals, the first of its kind, to enhance communication between the legal and mental health community.

- Mental Health Court judicial officers developed a digital bench book for judicial officers statewide who handle mental health cases.
- Mental Health Court judicial officers developed continuing education presentations for community groups.
- Mental Health Court initiated bi-monthly, virtual Court Ordered Evaluation and Treatment Bench-Bar meetings. These meetings continue to provide a forum for improved operations and collaboration.

“On behalf of Commissioners Bell, Donnadieu, Selzer and Van Wie, who collectively developed these initiatives, I am honored to have our Mental Health Bench receive a Strategic Agenda Award. As the Court Ordered Evaluation and Treatment caseload continues to grow, these initiatives have and will increase the professionalism of current practitioners and ensure that future lawyers and judicial officers can maintain that heightened level of practice,” Presiding Probate and Mental Health Department Judge Jay Polk said.

To read more about the Strategic Agenda Awards, please visit: <https://www.azcourts.gov/awards/Strategic-Agenda-Awards>.

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The Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County is comprised of Superior Court, Adult Probation and Juvenile Probation, which includes juvenile detention. The Judicial Branch in Maricopa County is the fourth largest trial court system in the nation and, along with its 3,000 employees, is dedicated to providing a safe, fair and impartial forum for resolving disputes, enhancing access to services, and providing innovative, evidence-based practices that improve the safety of the community and ensure the public’s trust and confidence in the Judicial Branch. For more information, visit www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov.