

HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON JUDICIAL EDUCATION RADAR

A number of recent judicial education programs focus on recognizing, understanding and addressing human trafficking crimes – including 14 Minor Judiciary Education Board (MJEB) trainings for the 2019-2020 curriculum tailored to magisterial district judges, and a Continuing Judicial Education (CJE) seminar in November for trial and appellate judges.

Both of these programs were paid for using STOP Grant funds, a federal violence against women grant, see pages 4 and 5.

The Villanova Law Institute to Address Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE), in conjunction with MJEB Executive Director **Susan Davis** and Judicial Programs Administrator **Amy Kehner**, developed the MJEB trainings.

Superior Court President Judge **Jack Panella** was lead faculty for the four-hour CJE seminar, which featured a variety of presenters from prosecutors, to doctors and other judges.

RECOGNIZING SIGNS AND IDENTIFYING VICTIMS

Dr. Marita Lind from St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children in Philadelphia was invited to speak at the Nov. 7 CJE seminar about the commercial sexual exploitation of children, explaining to judges where and how it can occur.

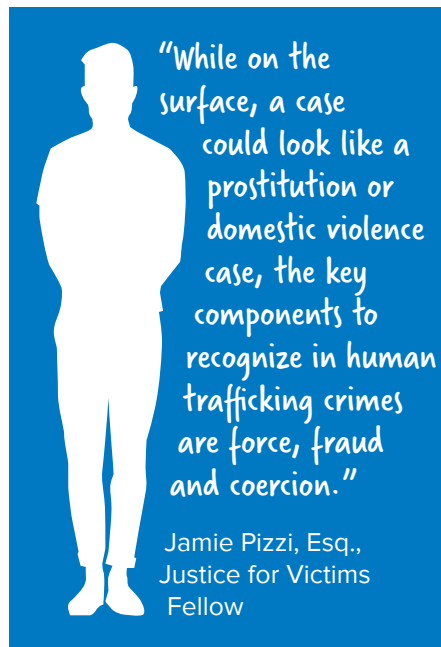
She spoke to the myriad of factors that contribute to vulnerability in child trafficking which are often taken into account when traffickers are recruiting their victims – this includes a potential victim’s age, family, community and medical factors.

Potential victims are often recruited in places like malls and jails, but it’s becoming increasingly prevalent for traffickers to target their victims online.

Jamie Pizzi, Esq., Justice for Victims Fellow at Villanova CSE Institute, presented at three of the October MJEB trainings.

In the MJEB training, Pizzi explained that in order to get justice for these victims, they first need to be identified as victims.

“Many victims don’t understand the difference between domestic violence and human trafficking, which leads to a lot of human trafficking victims thinking they were just in an abusive relationship,” Pizzi said at the MJEB training.



Law enforcement is beginning to understand the signs that could indicate when an individual who has been prostituted, is actually themselves a victim,” she said.

In fact, continually getting convicted of prostitution could point to underlying human-trafficking crimes.

“72 percent of human-trafficking survivors have already had prior court interaction,” Pizzi said.

While on the surface, a case could look like a prostitution or domestic violence case, the key components to recognize in human-trafficking crimes are force, fraud and coercion.

In the MJEB training, Pizzi went on to explain that traumatic responses are subjective and may vary between victims.

Like traumatic responses, coercion is also subjective and may depend on the tactics the abuser used – which is why some of the statute definitions are intentionally vague.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SAFE HARBOR LAWS

In the federal **Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)** enacted in 2000, a commercial sex act is defined as “any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person.”

Pizzi explained that anything of value could apply to housing, money, drugs, etc. – whatever the abuser may be holding over a victim.

Both program presenters outlined the details of **Act 105 of 2014**, which was the first comprehensive human-trafficking law in Pennsylvania.

“Our goal is to educate judges about the relatively new human trafficking law in Pennsylvania. It was adopted in 2014, but has taken quite a while for us and law enforcement to get used to it and figure out how to enforce it,” PJ Panella said when speaking about the CJE seminar.

In the MJEB session, Pizzi said the first conviction by a jury trial under this Act was in Lehigh County – debunking the myth that human trafficking just occurs in major metropolitan cities.

Both trainings also offered insight into Pennsylvania’s Safe Harbor Law (**Act 130 of 2018**), which aims to protect, not prosecute, child victims.

APPLICATION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING LAWS TO THE COURTS

Philadelphia Common Pleas Judge **Lori Dumas** created a specialty court called Working to Restore Adolescent Power (WRAP) Court in 2014, prior to the

passing of safe harbor legislation.

At the CJE seminar, she explained how WRAP court was designed to address the specialized needs of trafficked children in a compassionate, trauma-informed manner – a crucial aspect to understand in these types of cases.

Having heard one of the first human trafficking cases in Pennsylvania, Northampton County Judge **Stephen Baratta** also addressed some important issues for judges to prepare for and be aware of in these types of proceedings.

Some of those include understanding the sensitive dynamics of a human-trafficking trial; protecting victims from any pre-trial publicity; anticipating evidentiary objections; and reviewing the sentence

UPCOMING:

The Villanova CSE Institute will be presenting one-hour webinars covering topics similar to the MJEB trainings on Jan. 14 and Jan. 21 for interested county court staff. Additionally, their Survivor Symposium will be held on April 2, for which AOPC is offering scholarships to five interested judges and court staff to attend.

more INFORMATION

For more information visit cseinstitute.org

enhancements for certain human-trafficking charges.

Another issue judges face is Rule of Evidence 404(b), which may allow a defendant's prior bad acts to be brought up, but only to prove a material fact at issue – not to prove bad character.

Pizzi, in the MJEB session, had explained that using a victim's prior criminal record to discredit them is unfair because in many cases, that record is actually proof of their victimization.

Wrapping up the CJE seminar, Superior Court Judge **Mary P. Murray** discussed some of the main issues presented on appeal. [AOPC](#)

HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS MIGHT:

1. **Not be allowed to speak** to anyone alone or make independent plans
2. Not have access to their own **travel or ID documents**
3. Not be in control of their own **financial records, money or bank account**
4. Have **very few personal possessions** and limited clothing options
5. Work **excessively long/unusual hours** with little or no pay
6. Not be able to clarify their **address/living situation**

Saving time, paper and postage costs

On March 8, 2020, a new expungement process for both magisterial district and Common Pleas Courts will take effect.

The time-consuming nature of the existing expungement process requires county and magisterial district court staff to generate and mail thousands of paper expungement requests each month. AOPC/IT staff then review all of the requests and perform the final steps to accomplish expungement in the case management systems.

After review, it was determined that it is not necessary for AOPC/IT staff to perform this lengthy confirmation

process, and that courts should have the ability to complete the expungement process on their own.

The enhancement automates all the tasks that court users would traditionally need to perform to complete an expungement. Major benefits of this new process include significant savings in staff time, paper and postage costs, as well as reducing the overall time for completing the expungement process.

Expungement orders will now be treated like any other court order where court staff can independently take action without AOPC/IT involvement.

“This system enhancement will streamline the process by eliminating unnecessary passing of paper between the courts and AOPC/IT,” said **Russel Montchal**, AOPC/IT assistant director. “It allows the courts to select and process the cases to expunge directly within the case management system – eliminating the need to produce a Request for Expungement form.”

Magisterial district courts will also soon be allowed to expunge truancy offenses. The new process will be replicated in the Magisterial District Judge System to permit those courts to similarly expunge cases directly.

[AOPC](#)

How can **STOP Grant** help fund your project?

What is **STOP Grant**?

The STOP Grant is a federal violence against women grant that stands for Services, Training, Officers and Prosecutors (STOP).

The AOPC uses the annual funding to provide support and enhance court services for victims of domestic and sexual violence, human trafficking or stalking.

STOP Grant funds are frequently used to support court participation in coordinated community responses to foster collaborative efforts to combat violence.

Who might have access to **STOP Grant** funds?

- All AOPC departments and offices
- Judicial districts
 - Judges
 - Court administrators
 - Managers/supervisors of domestic relations
 - Probation and parole
 - Clerks and prothonotaries
 - Family legal services
- Professional PA associations where membership includes court/court-related staff:
 - Domestic Relations (DRAP)
 - District Attorneys
 - Pretrial Services
 - Chiefs of Police
 - Court Management (PACM)



In 2018, the federal Office of Violence Against Women (OVW) gave out **56 awards** totaling over **\$154 million.**

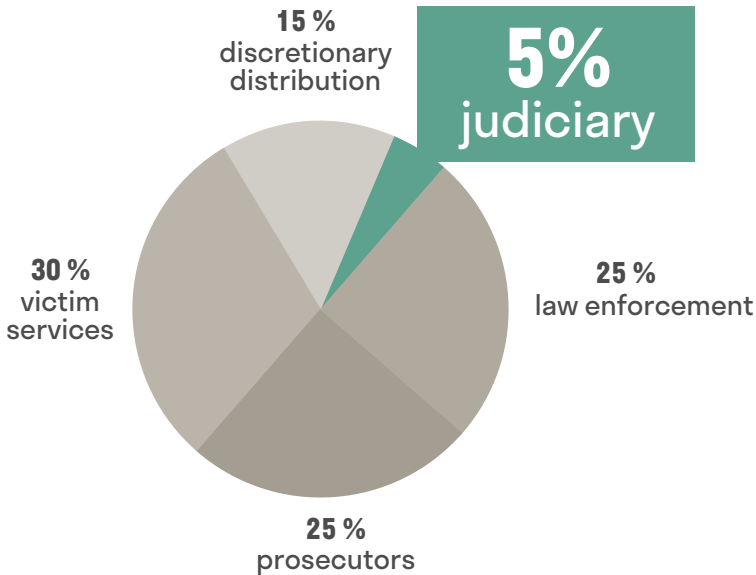
1 in 4 women and **1 in 7 men** experience severe physical violence by an intimate partner*



In Pennsylvania, **122 victims** died from domestic violence incidents last year



STOP Formula Grant distributions:



The OVW administers the STOP Grant and awards money annually to Pennsylvania. PCCD manages the award money and distributes five percent of the grant funds to the judiciary.

Some past AOPC initiatives funded by STOP Grant:

Trainings:

- Judicial scholarships to attend related training and conferences
- Trauma-informed reporting and interpreting in domestic violence/sexual assault cases
- Military and veteran-related domestic violence
- Addressing rural challenges and the impact of language barriers on marginalized victim populations
- Continuing education courses/seminars on:
 - Sexual and domestic violence
 - Human trafficking

PA ranks **11th**  in the volume of human trafficking calls *

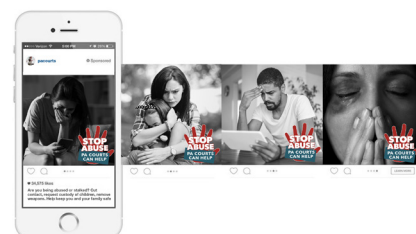
- PFA best practices



39,048
Protection from Abuse (PFA) orders were filed in PA in 2018

Projects:

- Protection order forms translated into 11 languages
- How to file for a protection order videos
- Elder Abuse brochures and posters
- Bench books and bench cards
- Review/assess policies and procedures
- Social media outreach campaign on PFAs



*Data from the National Human Trafficking Hotline in the U.S.

Have an idea? You aren't limited to past uses of the STOP grant. Contact us!

For more information, contact Amy Kehner at Amy.Kehner@pacourts.us.

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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

County collaboration leads to enhanced court security

In Indiana County, a unique collaboration between the courts, county commissioners and Sheriff's office has allowed for steady enhancements in court security.

A few years ago, Indiana County President Judge **William Martin** and Indiana County District Court Administrator **Christy Donofrio** sat down with their Sheriff and magisterial district judges (MDJ) to come up with long-term security goals for their courts.

Recognizing the fiscal restraints and their responsibility to provide equitable security to each court office, they gradually began phasing in parts of their plan – adding a little more to it each year.

Progress began with the installation of interior and exterior cameras (especially focused on parking areas) in all magisterial district courts, which the Sheriff's office monitors in real time through a state-of-the-art system in their office.

Court security enhancements evolved to better protect magisterial district court staff, including the ability for judges to conduct arraignments via video conference and two deputies that rotate between four of their MDJ offices.

"The deputy sheriff salaries come out of the Sheriff's budget, but it all comes from the county budget and our commissioners signed off on that, having recognized the need and the potential danger that was there, especially after what happened in Fayette County," President Judge William Martin explained.

In a rural county where MDJ offices are not always located near a police station, the Sheriff and commissioners soon recognized after active shooter drills that response time was a concern and eventually agreed to start with two deputies – a compromise from the four originally requested.

When discussing how they overcame some of the budgetary concerns involved, Donofrio and PJ Martin explained that none of this happened overnight.

"This all came as a result of communication – we communicate a lot with our Sheriff and commissioners, especially when it comes to things that are security-related," Donofrio said.

"Budget time wasn't the first time that security issues with commissioners came up... when you go to the commissioners, sometimes the answer is no. It's not a personal thing, but there's only so much money in the budget, and if they say no, come back later," PJ Martin added.

"The AOPC has also helped a lot through the years, with certain training and grant funds provided to us," Donofrio said. "Making sure we're securing each court equally has required us to manage that money."

With the upcoming relocation of one of their MDJs, she explained that they plan to use the funds they receive next year to secure that new building.

Referencing the ongoing progress of the MDJ Security Task Group, **Rob Granzow**, AOPC Judicial District Security administrator, assured counties that they aren't on their own.



"Our office is keenly aware of opportunities to enhance security for magisterial district courts, and are fully engaged in executing a road map to bring those resources to bear in a uniform manner statewide," he said.

As Indiana County continues to expand their already impressive security measures, they advised other counties looking to enhance their security to begin by first getting a plan together and gradually increasing communication with other county officials.

Their ongoing progress comes as a result, not of technology or extra funding, but of consistent communication and professional collaboration with county officials who share a mutual concern for safety.

"The most important thing was really having everyone in leadership, including the PJ, recognize that we have a responsibility to provide our citizens access to justice – and to us, that also includes safety," Donofrio said. **AOPC**



County representatives and judges from the Family Engagement Initiative

AOPC produces community-outreach campaign to help strengthen children, families and communities

Over the past few months, the Office of Children and Families in the Courts (OCFC) worked closely with AOPC/Communications to create a community-outreach campaign – *Families are Worth it*.

The campaign highlights the significant role family, close friends and community members play in helping children in the child welfare system grow up healthy and happy. The purpose of the campaign is to encourage community members to work alongside child welfare agencies and courts to support families.

Child welfare professionals, judges and lawyers recognize the benefits of

keeping kids safely in their own homes, neighborhoods, schools and places of worship. Focusing on the well-being of the child as well as the entire family is incredibly important in providing the tools children and families need to facilitate success.

As part of the campaign, 11 counties in Pennsylvania currently participating in The Family Engagement Initiative will use a customized video and poster to encourage community involvement – because communities help strengthen families and families help strengthen communities.

The video encourages anyone living or working in each of the 11 counties

to volunteer their time, be a mentor or support families in need by lending a helping hand with their skills and services.

At this time, participating counties include Beaver, Blair, Butler, Clinton, Fayette, Lackawanna, Northampton, Snyder, Tioga, Union and Venango.

“These counties are a part of a special initiative that furthers collaborative efforts between the judiciary and the child welfare agency to enhance meaningful family involvement in the child welfare system,” said **Sandy Moore**, director of OCFC.

Visit www.ocfcpacourts.us to watch the video. **AOPC**

How much money has AOPC intercepted from lottery prizes?

Last year, *AOPConnected* reported on a new law, known as the Lottery Intercept, that took effect in October 2018 requiring the Pennsylvania Lottery to first check with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) for any outstanding court judgements before awarding any winnings over \$2,500.

As a result of the lottery intercept process, the AOPC has intercepted

more than \$363,000 on 178 cases statewide between December 2018 and September 2019.

During the reporting timeframe, court-ordered obligations were found to exist for 105 people. The AOPC reported the total amount owed to the courts by notifying the Department of Revenue, which was then deducted from the prize amount and used to satisfy those obligations.

You may recall that all Pennsylvania Lottery winnings over \$2,500 were already subject to intercept by the Department of Human Services for child support obligations. The law that took effect last year added two more department checks to that process including the Department of Revenue for outstanding tax obligations and of course, the AOPC. **AOPC**

Government lawyer of the year award



(l to r): President Judge Emeritus Susan Gantman, Assistant Court Administrator Andrea Tuominen, Court Administrator Tom Darr, Judge Anne Lazarus

In November, the Government Lawyers Committee of the Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA) presented Assistant Court Administrator **Andrea Tuominen, Esq.** with the 2019 Government Lawyer of the Year Award.

The recognition is awarded to a government lawyer who is making a difference for the profession and for the people of Pennsylvania.

“I am delighted that my colleague and friend is receiving this well-deserved recognition,” said Court Administrator of Pennsylvania **Tom Darr**. “Andrea may not be the classic ‘government lawyer’ as a practitioner, but every day she combines her legal knowledge, administrative skill, astute intuition and personal warmth to drive initiatives, solve problems and guide staff in support of the judiciary. As my retirement signals the end of twenty-plus years working with her, nothing is more pleasing than to see Andrea honored.”

She joins fellow AOPC recipients **Gregory Dunlap, Esq.**, chief counsel (2001) and **Lisa A. Siciliano, Esq.**, Berks County deputy court administrator (2003).

“The importance of public service was imprinted on my heart and mind early on,” said Tuominen. “I consider myself privileged to have served so many years in support of the Judiciary, and with so many who have worked to maintain a strong and independent court system.” [AOPC](#)

Maintaining parent-child relationships in prison

To reduce the adverse effects a child experiences when their parent is incarcerated, Clarion County President Judge **James Arner** helped create and implement a prison program that arranges for inmates to have weekly visits with their children.

Developed in 2008, Kid Konnection aims to reduce a child’s sense of loss or abandonment. It also helps normalize the family’s situation by allowing inmates to dress in street clothes and providing age-appropriate toys during the visits.

“When we were thinking of starting our program, I met with the child psychologist who was conducting our child custody mediations and obtained advice on the needs of kids of different ages, and on the types and frequency of contact needed with their parents,” said President Judge Arner.

Adult and Juvenile Probation Services and Children and Youth Services

“We believe children have benefited from having continuing contacts with their incarcerated parents and believe we have helped maintain parent-child relationships for at least some of the inmates,” Judge Arner said.

(CYS) work with the warden to review applications for admission to the program and make recommendations to President Judge Arner.

“The program is performance and behavior based,” Clarion County Corrections Warden, Jeff Hornberger explained. “There are certain eligibility requirements that inmates must meet in order to participate in this program.”

Only inmates with children 12 years old or younger are eligible to participate,



and they must be taking parenting classes at the jail – having already completed at least two modules (roughly eight to 10 classes).

President Judge Arner explained that the behavior and attitudes of the inmates’ participating in this program tend to improve because they do not want to lose their visits, and they also now have an incentive to complete the parenting program. [AOPC](#)



(l to r):
Thomas Farrell
and Paul Killion

D-Board Chief Disciplinary Counsel retires

After 17 years as Chief Disciplinary Counsel, **Paul Killion, Esq.** will retire from the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania at the end of January.

During his time with the Disciplinary Board, he has managed the investigation and prosecution of all disciplinary cases in the commonwealth. Before his appointment in 2002, Killion maintained a private practice in Harrisburg for 17 years where he specialized in white-collar criminal defense cases.

Killion began his career with the U.S. Department of Justice in 1970 serving as a trial attorney. He also served as an Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) in Harrisburg and an economic crime coordinator in Boston, Massachusetts. In the early 80's, he was the director of the Medicaid fraud section in the Pennsylvania Attorney General's office.

"We have made dramatic improvements to the disciplinary system with the assistance of volunteer board members and a dedicated professional staff," said Killion. "These actions have helped immensely in our mission of protecting the public and maintaining the integrity of the profession. It has been most rewarding to participate in these achievements."

Paul will be succeeded by Thomas Farrell, Esq., partner at Farrell Reisinger & Comber, LLC in Pittsburgh.

"On behalf of the Court, I would like to thank Paul for his 17 years of commitment and dedication to ensuring the highest integrity of the attorneys practicing in this commonwealth," Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice **Thomas G. Saylor** said. "We wish him well in his retirement and look forward to welcoming Mr. Farrell as the new Chief Disciplinary Counsel."

Farrell has been in private practice for 19 years, during which time he defended criminal cases from capital murder to white collar crime, conducted internal investigations for municipalities and public authorities, handled complex civil litigation ranging from whistleblower cases to environmental Clean Air and Clean Water actions and represented professional athletes in congressional hearings.

He previously served as an AUSA in Pittsburgh and as an asst. federal public defender in the Eastern District of New York, after starting his career as a law clerk for Hon. Gustave Diamond of the Western District of Pennsylvania.

Farrell served as a hearing officer for the Disciplinary Board for six years and recently served on the Supreme Court's Investigating Grand Jury Task Force.

"I consider this appointment a great honor but also humbling. It'll be quite a challenge to live up to the standard of excellence Paul Killion established for this office, but I'm eager to contribute to the professionalism and integrity of the legal profession in Pennsylvania," Farrell said. [AOPC](#)

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Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

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Max Baer
Justice

Debra Todd
Justice

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Justice

Kevin M. Dougherty
Justice

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Justice

Sallie Updyke Mundy
Justice

Leadership changes in the Pa Courts

The new year will bring leadership changes to the AOPC and Supreme Court.

After more than 30 years of service, State Court Administrator **Tom Darr** has announced his retirement at year's end.

Tom began his tenure with the AOPC as director of legislative affairs and communications, advancing to director of administration soon thereafter. He was appointed deputy state court administrator in 1996 and state court administrator in 2015.

"Beginning with former Governor Dick Thornburgh, it has been a privilege to serve in two branches of Pennsylvania state government for more than 38 years," Darr said. "As is true with everyone who comes to Harrisburg with a new governor, the adrenalin to 'do good' is high. That was true for me in 1979 and has been a guiding principle through my much longer tenure with Pennsylvania's court system.

"I have been deeply gratified to work for six chief justices and so many Supreme Court justices whose dedication to the law and to public service has been inspiring and also an education for this non-lawyer. Their respective commitments to public service have been unequivocal in my experience."

Among his other significant contributions, during his time with the AOPC he focused on the development of the Judicial Computer System (JCS) by helping to encourage the legislature and successive governors to provide the JCS with financial support.

Tom also worked with representatives of the Judiciary's sister branches of government to create Pennsylvania's Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice, in the aftermath of illegal



(l to r): Terry Sachs, Geoffrey Moulton and Tom Darr

actions by two judges in Luzerne County.

On behalf of the Supreme Court and the late Chief Justice Ralph Cappy, Tom wrote the initial concept paper for development and design of the Pennsylvania Judicial Center, whose construction he supervised for the judiciary.

Geoff Moulton, Esq., current counsel to the Supreme Court, will succeed Tom as state court administrator. Geoff has devoted the bulk of his career to public service. Before taking his current position in 2018, he served as an appointed judge on the Pennsylvania Superior Court, as first deputy general counsel to Governor Wolf, and as an assistant U.S. attorney in Philadelphia.

In addition, he has been chief counsel to a U.S. Senator, taught for many years at Widener University Delaware Law School and represented media clients in private practice. Following his graduation from Columbia Law School in 1984, he served as a law clerk on both the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Terry Sachs, Esq., an experienced trial lawyer and accomplished appellate advocate, has been appointed by the Court to serve as Counsel to the Court.

Terry has more than 35 years of experience as a civil litigator, including 20 as a trial attorney.

She currently serves as shareholder and co-chair of the appellate and post-trial practice group at Marshall Dennehey Warner Coleman & Goggin in Philadelphia.

During her tenure in private practice, she has argued before the U.S. Supreme Court, and before all levels of the state and federal appellate judiciary in Pennsylvania including the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and the Superior and Commonwealth Courts.

In her new role, Terry will provide assistance and advice to the Court on a broad range of issues, primarily with respect to non-adjudicative matters. She will also serve as the Court's liaison to the Board of Law Examiners, the Continuing Legal Education Board, the Disciplinary Board, the Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts Board and the Lawyers Fund for Client Security Board.

Best wishes to Tom in his retirement and welcome to Geoff and Terry in their new roles. **AOPC**

Legislative roundup

by Damian J. Wachter, Esq.

The House and Senate will convene in voting sessions a few weeks during the remainder of 2019.

Comprehensive Election Code reforms

A number of Election Code changes were enacted in **Act 77 of 2019**, which the governor signed on Oct. 31. The act extended the voter registration deadline from 30 days prior to the election to 15 days. It allows voters to vote via absentee ballot up until 8 p.m. on the day of the election. Practically, depending on the delivery method chosen – mail or hand carry – voters will have to mark ballots so they are received by the election bureau on or before Election Day. Qualified voters who are not otherwise entitled to vote absentee are eligible under the act to vote by official mail-in ballot, falling into the same category as an absentee voter.

Perhaps most notably, Act 77 eliminated the straight-party voting option.

The provisions of the act apply to elections held on or after April 28, 2020, which is the date of the 2020 general primary.

Finally, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has exclusive jurisdiction to hear challenges to numerous substantive provisions of Act 77. This includes the elimination of straight-party voting and the provisions governing absentee and mail-in voting. Any such suit would have to be filed in 180 days.

School police officers

Act 67 of 2019, which became effective in August, removed language from law that granted school police officers with the same arrest powers exercised under authority of law or ordinance by the police of the municipality in which the school property is located. **House Bill 1881**, introduced by the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, seeks to restore that language, including the provisions that the action must be authorized by the court. The bill was reported from the House Education Committee and requires full House and Senate approval as well as the signature of the governor to become law.

District attorney vacancies

Senate Bill 902 requires that upon vacancies in the office of district attorney in fourth through eighth class counties, the Court of Common Pleas must appoint the first assistant district attorney (ADA) to fill the vacancy upon a showing that he/she meets the statutory qualification and eligibility requirements for district attorney. If the first ADA is unwilling or unable to serve or does not meet the statutory qualification and eligibility requirements, the Court of Common Pleas must appoint another competent person who satisfies the requirements.

Separate judicial ballots

Article V, § 15 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth requires that judicial retention questions be submitted to the electorate on a separate judicial ballot or in a separate column on voting machines. **Senate Bill 413** – a proposed constitutional amendment – seeks to remove the separate ballot/column language. The bill passed the Senate 49-0 on Oct. 22, and was referred to the House State Government Committee. The bill requires passage by the full House this session and by both chambers next legislative session in order to be submitted to the electorate for approval.

Coming Up:

It is still expected that legislation advancing reforms to the probation system will be considered in one or both chambers prior to the end of the year. Both House and Senate judiciary committees continue to work on amendments to the two reform proposals that have been introduced thus far – **Senate Bill 14** and **House Bill 1555**.

AOPC



[Damian Wachter, Esq. is the assistant director of Legislative Affairs.]

Karaoke, jokes and Eagles cheers: Philly's beloved 'jury duty lady' turns the courthouse waiting room into a giant party

This story is reprinted with permission from the writer and Billy Penn/WHYY. Read the full story online at billypenn.com.

By Michaela Winberg, Billy Penn

Imagine spending every single day in jury duty.

Like a civic-minded version of Bill Murray's adventures in Punxsutawney, you'd report each morning at 8 a.m. to Philly's Criminal Justice Center, then sit on hard benches and deal with what seems like endless waiting, before going home and starting all over again.

For many, that's a dreaded scenario. But for Tanya Covington, that's reality — and she wouldn't have it any other way.

Covington, 55, is an administrative officer for the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, but you might know her better by her common moniker: "jury duty lady." For 17 years, she's welcomed jurors into the waiting room each morning, and with microphone in hand guided them cheerily through their day of service.

It's not easy. As the emcee of civic duty, Covington has to put a smile on her face in a room where almost everyone is miserable. She's got to pronounce everyone's name correctly, and ensure no one freaks out over the sheer mundanity of the legal system.

Covington is a staple in Philly — so much so that total strangers recognize her and call her out on the street.

"I try to just throw my good vibes to them," Covington said. "If they receive them, fine. If they don't, it's like, I've gotta work a little harder."

It all starts with a venting session

The character of Philadelphia jury duty room is not unlike that of the rest of the city. To put it plainly, a lot of ridiculousness goes down.

Sometimes you've got a 7-foot fuzzy green mascot sitting shoulder to shoulder with you in the waiting room. Sometimes, the legal system creates budding friendships and brings impromptu rounds of the Eagles fight song. Sometimes it turns into a giant karaoke party.

It's not all Covington's doing, but she's often the woman running the show.



Tanya Covington is better known as 'jury duty lady'

When she first signed onto the gig, it wasn't such a humorous operation, she said. The collective attitude surrounding civic duty was a major downer.

"The first thing they want to know, even though they just got there, is when they leave," said Covington, a Maryland native who's now a loving grandmother and devoted Birds fan.

After dealing with the day-to-day ennui of so many Philadelphians for years, she felt the urge to get creative.

She slowly started incorporating some jokes into her morning routine at the courthouse. And they actually seemed to land. It felt to Covington like the moods of the public servants she shepherded were improving, and the days were getting better.

By now, she's got it down to a science.

Each day starts with a group venting sesh. She'll prime all the jurors with a depressing yet unavoidable truth: They're not going anywhere. Jury duty lasts all day, and they have no reason to expect an early dismissal.

"They're like, 'Ugh,'" Covington said. "And I'm like, 'Let it out, let it out. We're going to get this out of our system and we're going to have a good day.'"

She regularly refers folks to the free coffee and cakes available in the waiting room. She streams game shows on the TVs constantly.

"*Price is Right* comes on at 11," Covington said, three hours into duty and the exact time that folks in the waiting room need a pick me up.

Then there's the part of the job that calls for rattling off unfamiliar names. From her podium at the front of the waiting room, Covington is tasked with calling roll, pronouncing the names of every single juror before sending them on their way.

The key, she said: Don't be afraid to mess up.

“Don’t ask me where I got ‘Mary Louise’ from. That says ‘Mark Louis,’” Covington joked last week to a round of jurors. The crowd laughed with her.

She’s not always met with a warm response. Covington has to steel herself when people are in irreparably terrible moods generated from missing time at work or waiting around extra long.

“I’m just the messenger,” she said. “I can’t please everybody. But if I can please someone and get them OK with me, that makes me happy.”

Performing with a ‘captive audience’

Here’s the real tea about Covington: the Queen of the Courts is actually quite shy. During a one-on-one interview, her entertaining wit was almost overcome by her nerves.

“To be honest with you, she’s quiet,” said Patrick Martin, director of jury commission and Covington’s direct report. “She’s reserved. But when she goes out into the room, she’s a totally different person.”

The “jury duty lady” persona is all an act — Covington will say so herself. And unlike most performers, she’s got the benefit of a guaranteed group of spectators.

“This is like, I am performing,” she said. “I just have a captive audience. You’re not leaving!”

The waiting room suggestion boxes are also proof of her impact.

“It’s not uncommon to have positive comments about Tanya,” said Martin, her boss. “They say things like, ‘We need more people like her around here,’ and ‘She’s a breath of fresh air.’”

Covington’s favorite part? Meeting Philadelphians from all walks of life. No one is immune from judicial service, and she gets to greet them all.

“You’re all in one room. It’s like, ‘Who am I going to encounter that I can talk to?’” she said. “We don’t know each other from outside, but you always find common ground.”



Pennsylvania Commission on Judicial Independence hosts educational live-stream panel discussion



(l to r): Judge David Judy, Judge Carolyn Nichols, Judge Lois Murphy, U.S. District Judge John Jones, Judge Renée Cohn Jubelirer, Moderator Terry Madonna, President Judge Mary Hannah Leavitt, Judge Mia Perez, Judge John Cleland

In September, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court’s Commission on Judicial Independence hosted a live-stream, interactive panel discussion to educate students and the public about the work and the role of the courts.

The event offered students a unique opportunity to interact with Pennsylvania judges and justices from all levels of the bench via web and

Facebook live.

Dr. G. Terry Madonna, director of the Center for Politics and Public Affairs at Franklin & Marshall College and host of Pennsylvania Newsmakers moderated the panel discussion.

Madonna walked the panel through a fictitious DUI case as it progressed through each level of the bench, with

each judge explaining what their court’s role would be.

Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice **Max Baer** participated from the University of Pittsburgh School Of Law, while the rest of the panel connected from the Pennsylvania Judicial Center in Harrisburg.

Participating jurists included Commonwealth Court President Judge **Mary Hannah Leavitt**, Superior Court Judge **Carolyn Nichols**, Philadelphia County Common Pleas Judge **Mia Perez**, Montgomery County Common Pleas Judge **Lois Murphy**, McKean County Common Pleas Judge **John Cleland** and Dauphin County Magisterial District Judge **David Judy**.

Students from Penn State Dickinson Law, University of Pittsburgh School of Law, York College of Pennsylvania, Widener University Commonwealth Law School and Abington Heights High School participated in the panel discussion with the jurists via livestream, while the public connected via Facebook live.

A brief Q & A session followed the discussion where students were given the option of submitting questions to the panelists via social media. [AOPC](#)

Around the Judiciary



Judicial Conduct Board chair and Commonwealth Court Judge **Kevin Brobson** swore in Commonwealth Court Judge **Renée Cohn Jubelirer** as the appellate judge member of the Judicial Conduct Board.



AOPC/IT and Judicial District Operations spoke at the 57th annual PA Association of County Auditors conference. The three-day event was attended by over 60 auditors from across the state this fall.



(l to r): President of the Justinian Society, **Gregory Cirillo, Esq.** and **PJ Panella**

Pennsylvania Superior Court President Judge **Jack A. Panella** received the Justinian Society of Philadelphia's Outstanding Service Award. A special luncheon was held in his honor in September at the Union League in Philadelphia.



In September, the Ellwood City Area Historical Society sponsored a banquet in honor of Justice **Debra Todd** in her hometown of Ellwood City.



(l to r): Judge **Jacqueline Allen** and **William P. Fedullo**, chair of the Philadelphia Bar Association's Justice Brennan Distinguished Jurist Award Committee

Judge Jacqueline F. Allen, Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, was honored at Bench Bar in October where she received the 2019 Justice William J. Brennan Jr. Award. The Brennan Award recognizes a jurist who adheres to the highest ideals of judicial service.



(l to r): U.S. Circuit Judge **Theodore Mckee**, **Robert Heim, Esq.**, **Hon. Renée Cohn Jubelirer**, **Lynn Marks, Esq.** Photo credits: Sameer A. Khan

The Rendell Center for Civics and Civic Engagement hosted the Fair and Impartial Judiciary Symposium on Oct. 26 at Penn Law, where Hon. **Renée Cohn Jubelirer** spoke about the importance of an independent judiciary.



(l to r): Administrative Judge **Jacqueline F. Allen**, Judge **Shelia Woods-Skipper**, Judge **Lillian Harris Ransom** (Not pictured)

Philadelphia County's Mental Health Court celebrated its 10th anniversary in October.



Superior Court Judge **Alice Dubow** was honored with the Howard Lesnick Pro Bono Award in October. Her alma mater, Penn Law, presented her with the award for her sustained commitment to public service.



(l to r): President Judge **Kim Berkeley Clark**, Allegheny; Administrative Judge **Kim Eaton**, Allegheny; President Judge **Oliver Lobaugh**, Venango

The President Judges Symposium was held in September in State College.

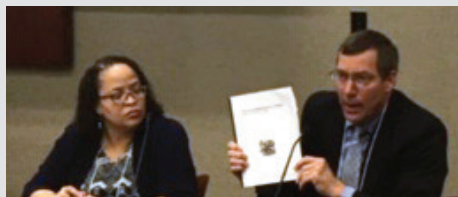


Judge **John Cherry** administered the oath of office to Dauphin County's first-ever class of 11 Court Appointed Special Advocates. These volunteers advocate for a child's best interest in court and help to limit further trauma to children in foster care.



(l to r): Col. Michelle Ryan - Army War College, Justice Kevin Dougherty, Justice Debra Todd, Maj. General Anthony Carelli - PA Adjutant General, Justice Sallie Updyke Mundy, Chief Justice Thomas G. Saylor, Lt. Colonel May Nicholson- Army War College.

In recognition of Veterans Day, the Court held a ceremony and light reception in honor of jurists who have served in the U.S. military at the PJC in November.



(l to r): Bennetry Herrmann, Spanish interpreter and Tom Gran, Spanish interpreter and teacher for the Berks County interpreter training program

In October, the AOPC held the second annual Language Access Coordinator Summit – providing an opportunity for language access coordinators around the state to gather, share their expertise and get tips from colleagues.



AOPC/IT trainers presented important updates of the magisterial district judge system to more than 60 Berks County magisterial district court staff. These annual workshops are held from September to October across Pennsylvania for magisterial district court staff in all counties.



Daniel R. Shuckers, Esq. retired prothonotary, Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania (2007) pictured with **Irene Bizzoso**, prothonotary of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, at the Widener Law Commonwealth Evening at the Capitol where she received the 2019 Excellence in Public Service Award.



(l to r): front row—Hon. John C. Uhler; Valerie Bender; Hon. John M. Cleland, chair; Hon. Jason J. Legg, Esq.; Kenneth J. Horoho, Jr., Esq.; Darren Breslin, Esq.; back row – Tom Darr, advisor; Hon. (ret.) Arthur Grim ; George D. Mosee, Jr., Esq.; Hon. James A. Gibbons; Robert L. Listenbee, Esq.; Hon. Dwayne D. Woodruff, Stuart Ditzen.

Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice members during a dinner function in early November.



Photo courtesy of Justice for Vets

In September, 50 Veteran mentors from 14 counties gathered for a Veterans Mentor Boot Camp in Harrisburg – a Justice for Vets event sponsored by the AOPC. The two-day program was the first-of-its-kind training offered in the state, and provided mentors the knowledge and skills needed to support veterans court participants throughout the program.

Transitions

NEW TO JUDICIAL BRANCH

VICTORIA R. CHRISTEN – BUDGET ANALYST – FINANCE
AMY L. DIMUCCIO – ASST TO THE COURT ADMIN – LAWRENCE
CHASE A. EMANUEL – COURT ACCESS PROGRAM ANALYST – ASSISTANT COURT ADMINISTRATOR
KELLY A. GAUGHAN – CCP JUDGE – PIKE
THOMAS J. LARKIN – DATA CENTER HARDWARE SPECIALIST – IT
JONATHAN A. MADDY – DISTRICT COURT ADMINISTRATOR – VENANGO
TRACI L. MCDONALD-KEMP – CCP JUDGE – WASHINGTON
SHAWN T. MCMAHON – CCP JUDGE – CAMERON/ELK
RYAN M. TIRA – CCP JUDGE – LYCOMING

RETIREMENTS/RESIGNATIONS

BARRY S. BLOUSE – DATABASE ADMINISTRATOR – IT
MARTHA J. DAVIDSON – DISTRICT COURT ADMINISTRATOR – ARMSTRONG
AMELIA J. DUFFY – ACCOUNTANT – FINANCE
KATHLEEN A. DURKIN – CCP JUDGE – ALLEGHENY
TIM FINN – MAG DISTRICT JUDGE – BEAVER
JASON A. HYERS – USER APPLICATIONS SPECIALIST – IT
LISA M. RAU – CCP JUDGE – PHILADELPHIA
ROBERT E. SIMPSON JR. – JUDGE – COMMONWEALTH COURT
STACY M. SNYDER – DEP CRT ADMIN- FAMILY DIVISION – YORK
SANDRA L. TROXELL – ASST TO THE COURT ADMIN – LAWRENCE

(continued)

PAUL G. URBANIAK – MAG DISTRICT
JUDGE – ERIE
JOHN MILTON YOUNGE – CCP JUDGE –
PHILADELPHIA

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AND ADVISORY GROUPS**

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COMMISSION FOR GENDER, RACIAL AND
ETHNIC FAIRNESS
LUCILLE MARSH, ESQ. – REAPPOINTED
- INTERBRANCH COMMISSION FOR
GENDER, RACIAL AND ETHNIC FAIRNESS
SHABREI M. PARKER, ESQ. – APPOINTED –
ORPHANS' COURT PROCEDURAL RULES
COMMITTEE
HON. IDA K. CHEN – REAPPOINTED -
CONTINUING JUDICIAL EDUCATION (CJE)
BOARD OF JUDGES
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REAPPOINTED - CJE BOARD OF JUDGES
HON. TERRENCE R. NEALON –
REAPPOINTED – CJE BOARD OF JUDGES

HON. KAREN Y. SIMMONS – REAPPOINTED
- CJE BOARD OF JUDGES
DUSTY ELIAS KIRK, ESQ. – REAPPOINTED
- CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION (CLE)
BOARD
JASON E. MATZUS, ESQ. – REAPPOINTED -
CLE BOARD
JAY N. SILBERBLATT, ESQ. – REAPPOINTED
- CLE BOARD
HON. MARC F. LOVECCHIO – APPOINTED
- CRIMINAL PROCEDURAL RULES
COMMITTEE
RILEY H. ROSS, III, ESQ. – APPOINTED
- CRIMINAL PROCEDURAL RULES
COMMITTEE
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– APPOINTED - ORPHANS' COURT
PROCEDURAL RULES COMMITTEE
KENNETH G. POTTER, ESQ. – CHAIR -
ORPHANS' COURT PROCEDURAL RULES
COMMITTEE
HON. EMIL A. GIORDANO (RET.) –
REAPPOINTED & APPOINTED VICE-CHAIR
- ORPHANS' COURT PROCEDURAL RULES
COMMITTEE

KENNETH G. POTTER, ESQ. –
REAPPOINTED - ORPHANS' COURT
PROCEDURAL RULES COMMITTEE
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– CHAIR - CRIMINAL PROCEDURAL RULES
COMMITTEE
WILLIAM R. CARROLL, ESQ. – VICE-
CHAIR - CRIMINAL PROCEDURAL RULES
COMMITTEE
HON. ALEXANDRA KOKURA KRAVITZ
– APPOINTED - MINOR COURT RULES
COMMITTEE
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- PENNSYLVANIA INTEREST ON LAWYERS
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- COMMITTEE ON RULES OF EVIDENCE
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PENNSYLVANIA IOLTA BOARD
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ADVISORY COUNCIL ON ELDER JUSTICE
IN THE COURTS



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