

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 2 WCCA rolls out changes | 10 PPAC update |
| 3 Celebrating the chief justice | 11 Leadership |
| 8 <i>Pro se</i> efforts continue in collaboration with CCAP | 12 Ten clerks of court retire |
| 9 Progress on e-filing | 16 People |

Three new *pro se* pilot projects on tap

An eight-member team is developing three pilot projects to provide live help to *pro se* litigants in three Wisconsin counties. The counties will be chosen from three different judicial districts.

"We are going to experiment with providing live services in a variety of ways, capitalizing on the resources available in a given district," said Ann Zimmerman, statewide *pro se* coordinator. "These programs can then be used as models for other districts to adapt for their own use."

One pilot project will involve providing services through the public library system, with training provided to the public librarians by staff from the State Law Library and local courts. Another project will involve using videoconferencing technology to connect *pro se* litigants with volunteers located in another county. The third project will involve developing a self-help clinic located in a county courthouse. The clinic will be staffed by volunteer lawyers and others, possibly with additional assistance from interested court members.

"Our intent is to make use of existing resources and creative ideas with track records in other states to help our state courts provide meaningful legal access to self-represented litigants while alleviating the burden of providing such assistance on court personnel," Zimmerman said.

The pilot projects came out of an action plan developed by the eight-person Wisconsin team that recently attended the Midwest Regional Conference on *Pro Se* Litigation at



Participating in the Midwest Regional Conference on *Pro Se* Litigation were (back row, left to right): Clerk of Circuit Court Trudy Schmidt, Burnett County; Atty. Marsha Mansfield, Madison; Atty. Jeff Brown, State Bar of Wisconsin; Judge Edward F. Vlack III, St. Croix County Circuit Court; and (front row, left to right): Atty. Ann Zimmerman, statewide *pro se* coordinator; State Law Librarian Jane Colwin; Atty. Bob Hagness, Judicare; and District Court Administrator Gregg Moore.

Drake Law School in Des Moines. The conference was presented by the American Judicature Society with funding support from the Chicago Bar Association, The Iowa State Bar Foundation, the State Justice Institute and Drake University Law School.

Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson appointed the team members to represent the state at the conference. Other participating states were Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, and Utah.

Each of the participating states designated one team member to serve on the advisory committee that developed the conference agenda. District Court Administrator Gregg Moore served on Wisconsin's behalf, helping to ensure that the conference topics were relevant to the concerns and interests of the teams. "I was very pleased with the conference agenda and how well our Wisconsin team worked together," Moore said.

The planning committee shaped a two-day conference that included a plenary session presented by St. Croix County Circuit Court Judge Edward F. Vlack III. Vlack focused on how to create written instructions and forms in an effort to assist the self-represented. "Our online interactive family law forms program was very well received by the other states," Vlack said. "I anticipate that many will use ours as a model as they begin creating their own forms programs." ■

For more information, contact Atty. Ann Zimmerman at (608) 836-1767 or ann.zimmerman@wicourts.gov.

Seven counties win grants for drug treatment/diversion

by Nancy M. Rottier, legislative liaison

Gov. Jim Doyle recently announced more than \$1 million in Treatment and Diversion (TAD) grants to seven Wisconsin counties and one Native American tribe. The counties and tribe estimate they may save up to \$4 million in future estimated jail housing costs because of the grants.

The seven counties receiving grants are: Burnett, Dane, Milwaukee, Rock, Washburn, Washington, and Wood. The grants are for the calendar year starting Jan. 1, 2007.

The TAD program is a new county alcohol and drug abuse alternative program created in the 2005-07 state budget that seeks to address the overwhelming need for substance abuse treatment in communities and in the state prison system. The Office of Justice Assistance (OJA) and the Departments of Corrections (DOC) and Health and Family Services (DHFS) collaborate to administer the program.

The grant proposals were developed at the county

see TAD on page 15



Fall
2006**Director's column: Biennial budget – a partnership focus**

Every even-numbered year at the behest of the Supreme Court my office submits state funding requests for the next two fiscal years to the governor and Legislature. These requests cover funding for the circuit courts, Court of Appeals, and Supreme Court and its agencies and departments. The budget planning process provides an opportunity for the court system to identify its priority needs and develop requests to address those priorities. However, because of state fiscal crises in recent years, funding for court system initiatives has been severely limited. This has resulted in fewer requests being submitted. As a result, the governor and Legislature were less likely to be aware of the pressing needs of the court system and the consequences of ignoring those needs.



A. John Voelker

For this biennial budget planning cycle, the chief justice and I decided to take a more proactive approach. I set up processes to make it easier for department managers, judges, and other court system employees to suggest “good ideas” to address needs. The Supreme Court’s Planning and Policy Advisory Committee’s (PPAC) Planning Subcommittee modified its planning timeline to better mesh with the budget development timeline, and took a more active role in budget development. The biennial budget survey was put online to make responding easier, which resulted in a higher response rate, particularly among judges. I

asked department managers to initially submit one or two paragraphs describing their ideas, rather than beginning by

see *Director's column* on page 19

WCCA rolls out changes

In late September, Wisconsin Circuit Court Access (WCCA), the popular Web site that provides quick and easy access to circuit court records, rolled out a number of changes designed to help viewers to interpret the information on the site.

The changes result from the recommendations of a committee appointed by Director of State Courts A. John Voelker. Comprised of circuit court judges (Gary L. Carlson, Taylor County; Charles F. Kahn, Jr., Milwaukee County; Dale T. Pasell, La Crosse County; and Ralph M. Ramirez, Waukesha County), prosecutors, defense attorneys, staff from the Consolidated Court Automation Programs (CCAP), clerks of circuit court (John Barrett, Milwaukee County; Carolyn Evenson, Waukesha County; and Jeffrey Schmidt, Ozaukee County), members of the media, law enforcement, legislators, and court staff (Deputy Director for Court Operations Sheryl A. Gervasi and District Court Administrators Gregg Moore and Kathleen M. Murphy), the committee reviewed the policy on what information is available on WCCA, how long that information remains on the site, and how it is presented.

Among the most visible changes will be the addition of executive summaries that will appear when accessing a criminal, traffic, forfeiture or a civil case filed with a restraining order.

“When you have charges that are dismissed but read in, deferred prosecutions, ‘filed-only’ cases, pardons, and so on, it becomes difficult to understand what exactly took place,” said Judge Gary L. Carlson, a committee member who participated in crafting the executive summaries. Carlson, a Taylor County Circuit Court judge, said the summaries – along with a glossary of legal terms – should help to ensure that visitors to the site correctly interpret the information that is presented.

Among frequently misinterpreted cases are criminal matters that are dismissed. Under the old system, the

dismissal might not have been immediately clear to the viewer. Under the redesign, the executive summary that pops up prior to the case history will read as follows:

All charges against John Doe in this case have been dismissed. These charges were not proven and have no legal effect. John Doe is presumed innocent.

In cases involving deferred prosecutions, the executive summary explains:

The deferred judgment agreement(s) on this case was fulfilled, and the charge(s) were dismissed. The defendant has not been convicted of the dismissed charges.

All of the executive summaries are accompanied by an admonition that discriminating against job applicants on the basis of conviction records may be a violation of state law, and that in general, employers may refuse to hire applicants on the basis of a conviction only if the circumstances of the conviction substantially relate to the job.

Another key change involves the length of time that certain records remain accessible on the site. The committee recommended that WCCA follow the minimum records retention rule developed by the Supreme Court, which will mean that certain cases that WCCA would have retained for 10 years in the past will be available for shorter periods. Small claims matters that have been dismissed, for example, will appear for two years and traffic and forfeiture cases will appear for five years. The exceptions are cases that include (1) an outstanding warrant, (2) a pending appeal, or (3) money is owed.

The committee’s full recommendations – which the director of state courts accepted – are available in a 42-page report at www.wicourts.gov/about/committees/docs/wccafinalreport.pdf that was issued in March 2006. ■

Looking back, moving forward

A celebration of Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson's 30-year anniversary on the Wisconsin Supreme Court, 10-year anniversary as Chief, and 50-year anniversary as a member of the bar drew about 1,200 people to the Capitol on September 6.

Opening the celebration was Judge Barbara Crabb, chief judge of the federal court in the Western District of Wisconsin. Crabb recalled meeting Abrahamson for the first time at the UW Law School, and noted that their careers had followed similar paths. The two women began practicing law at different firms but in the same building, and started their families during the same summer. Both, of course, ended up in the judiciary. "Like all of you who are here today," Crabb said, "I can say knowing her has enriched my life greatly."

Emcee Steven A. Levine, president of the State Bar, sounded a similar note. He recalled getting to know

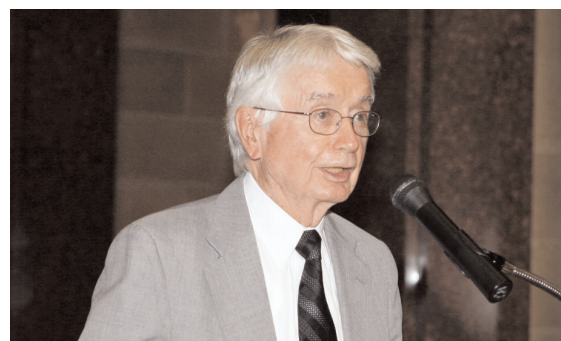
Abrahamson when they worked together on the Board of Bar Commissioners (which later became part of the Board of Bar Examiners). The Bar Commissioners often met at the Madison Club, which at the time did not admit unescorted women. That policy changed when Abrahamson questioned it, and the letter memorializing the change is displayed in a frame in her office.

The event (for which Abrahamson paid) featured good food, great music (courtesy of Atty. Jeffrey Bartell, an accomplished pianist), and lots of laughs – many courtesy of the Chief herself, who said, in thanking the UW Law School, Marquette Law School, and the State Bar for organizing the event, "This is a great celebration, coming as it does midway through my career."

As Madison's weekly newspaper *Isthmus* put it: "Shirley, you don't jest." ■



More than 1,000 people crowded into the Capitol Rotunda for the '50-30-10' event, leaning over railings on the upper floors when the first floor filled up.



Gov. Patrick J. Lucey, who appointed Shirley Abrahamson to the bench in 1976, shared his thoughts about placing the first woman on the Supreme Court. At the time of her appointment, Abrahamson was the only female judge in Wisconsin. She took the bench soon after Judge Olga Bennett lost her bid for reelection in Vernon County Court and Judge Vel R. Phillips lost her election bid in Milwaukee County. Shortly after Abrahamson's appointment, Judge Martha Bablitch was elected to the Wisconsin Court of Appeals, Judge Leah M. Lampone was appointed to the Milwaukee County Circuit Court, and Judge Moria Krueger was elected to the Dane County Circuit Court.

Remarks of Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson ■

My friends, I thanked Governor Lucey 30 years ago when he appointed me, and I repeat my thanks to him today. I am glad neither one of us has had second thoughts about our respective decisions. This is a great celebration, coming as it does midway through my career.

Thanks also to our hosts – the Deans of the State's two outstanding law schools, and Steve Levine and George Brown representing the State Bar. I am proud to say that I have taught at both law schools, and I am proud to be one of the 20,000 members of the State

Bar. I am especially pleased that a cow has come [a reference to a fiberglass cow on display in the rotunda], in light of my scholarly endeavors in the dairy industry. If you haven't seen the cows on the concourse, please do so. Thanks also to my long-time friend and colleague Judge Barbara Crabb and to the many people who organized this event. Thank you to all of you who have come to your capitol for this terrific party. And thanks to my husband of 53 years, Seymour Abrahamson – as usual, he does not have a

see Chief speech on page 4

Chief speech *continued from page 3*

speaking part at judicial functions.

Many people have sent flowers and I appreciate them all, but one arrangement came from Lavinia Goodell and her two sidekicks. Lavinia Goodell was the first woman to be eligible to practice law in the State of Wisconsin Supreme Court and I can only guess that her two sidekicks were the second and third women on the court, my good friends Ann Walsh Bradley and Janine Geske.

A 50-30-10 celebration is the occasion to look both back and to the future.

Looking back at my law practice, I think of my former senior law partners – the late Gordon Sinykin and the late U.S. District Court Judge James E. Doyle Sr. (the governor's father) – and the Doyle and Sinykin families. These two great lawyers took a chance on me and opened wide doors of opportunity for me. My partners gave me valuable lessons about practicing law. It was with great sadness that this year I lost two good friends, Dorothy Sinykin and Ruth Bachhuber Doyle.

Looking back at the court years, I have served with 19 justices. I have learned something from each of them – whether we agreed on cases or not. I learned from my colleagues the importance of keeping an open mind, of listening hard and of making the tough decisions after adequate reflection but with promptness. I learned from Bruce Beilfuss the importance of having a fair, even-handed chief justice presiding over the court. I learned from Bob Hansen about dysfunctional families and their needs and



Supreme Court Justices Jon P. Wilcox, Ann Walsh Bradley, N. Patrick Crooks, David Prosser Jr., and Louis B. Butler Jr.; Federal Judge Barbara Crabb; and Gov. Jim Doyle and First Lady Jessica Doyle joined the celebration.

those needs of children, the most vulnerable persons in our society. I learned from Janine Geske to pay attention to the human beings in the case, not merely to process cases by case number. I learned how to win the friendship of Roland Day by finding the cap to his favorite pen. I learned more about hunting and farming from Jon Wilcox than I ever thought I would know.

Jon Wilcox is the second senior justice on the court in terms of service. As you know, the chief justice position is held by the most senior justice. We call Jon Wilcox "Chief Justice in Waiting." Jon has gotten tired of waiting. Come on, stand up Jon. He is planning to retire at the end of this session and the Court will miss him. Let me take this opportunity to introduce my other colleagues, who have been very kind to come to the Rotarian speech earlier today: Ann Walsh Bradley, Pat Crooks, David Prosser, and our newest judge, Louis Butler. (applause)

I have learned from all my colleagues on the trial courts, on the tribal courts, and on the federal courts, the importance of undertaking and supporting innovative programs to improve our resolution of disputes. There have been two recurring themes in this court's approach to assuring access to justice: partnerships and cooperation.

These themes are evident in the Court's relationship with the legislative and executive branches of the federal, state and local governments, as we strive to work with all government units to improve the administration of justice. The



Speakers at the event included (from left) Dean Joseph D. Kearney, Marquette Law School; State Bar Executive Director George Brown; Dean Kenneth B. Davis Jr., UW Law School, and (rear right) Gov. Patrick J. Lucey.

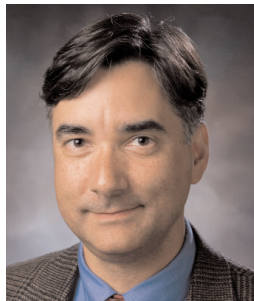
see Chief Speech on page 18

Four primary races determine clerkships

The September primary determined the outcome (barring any successful write-in challenge) in four races for clerk of circuit court where the candidates were from just one party. The winners will begin their terms of office in January 2007 and will serve four-year terms.

In **Dane County**, where two Democrats faced off, voters overwhelmingly chose Carlo Esqueda, a former Consolidated Court Automation Programs (CCAP) employee who is currently information systems coordinator for the Madison Police Department. Running against Esqueda was county social worker Robert Syring. Syring had challenged longtime Clerk Judith Coleman in 2004 and lost. Coleman is retiring after 16 years on the job (*see separate story, page 12*).

In **Marquette County**, Republican Shari Rudolph, who



Carlo Esqueda



Shari Rudolph

has served as deputy clerk in Portage County, prevailed over fellow Republican Pam Unger in the race to succeed Clerk of Circuit Court Mary Lou Schmidt, who is retiring after 22 years in office (*see page 12*).



Lonnie Wolf



Margaret M. Gebauer

In **Outagamie County**, where two Republicans were the only people in the race, Clerk of Circuit Court Lonnie Wolf faced off against Vickie Van Dinter in a rematch of the race that Wolf won two years ago. This time, Wolf took 58 percent of the vote.

In **Taylor County**, Margaret M. "Maggie" Gebauer ran unopposed as a Republican to succeed Clerk Yvonne "Bonnie" Bauer, who has served since 1986. Bauer's plans for retirement include a trip to Europe with fellow retiree Gail Gentz (*see page 12*). ■

NEW FACES

Ninth Judicial District hires *pro se* coordinator

The 12 northcentral Wisconsin counties that comprise the Ninth Judicial Administrative District now have their own *pro se* coordinator to assist in the development of programs designed to improve services to self-represented litigants.

Danial Lee Johnson, a community volunteer with a background in curriculum development, public relations, business development, and information technology, began work on September 18 on the two-year project, which is funded with a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice.

Johnson is a high profile member of the Stevens Point community, serving as vice president of the Stevens Point Area School District Board of Education and as a member of the board of the Boys & Girls Club. A non-lawyer, he became interested in the *pro se* issue when he attempted to handle a legal matter on his own.

Johnson will work closely with Chief Judge Dorothy L. Bain and Judge Gary L. Carlson, chair of the District Nine



Danial Lee Johnson

Pro Se Committee, to develop and implement a technology-based, district-wide system for educating and disseminating information to self-represented litigants. He said he initially plans to spend much of his time studying published reports on the challenges presented by people who represent themselves in court and the solutions that have developed across the country. He also intends to travel the Ninth District, which encompasses Florence, Forest, Iron, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon,

Menominee, Oneida, Price, Shawano, Taylor, and Vilas counties, to meet with judges, lawyers, clerks of circuit court, and others who might want to offer comments and suggestions. ■

Johnson will be based in the Wausau office of District Court Administrator Scott Johnson. He can be reached at (715) 842-3872.

Fall
2006

Interpretation committee will bid farewell to founding members

The Committee to Improve Interpretation and Translation in the Wisconsin Courts will welcome a few new members in October as terms end for several long-time members who first identified the critical need to provide qualified interpreters in court. Notably, Judge Elsa C. Lamelas, Milwaukee County Circuit Court, who has led the committee for seven years, will step down as chair. Succeeding Lamelas for a brief period will be Court of Appeals Judge Richard S. Brown, whose term will also end in 2007.



Judge Elsa C. Lamelas

Under Lamelas' leadership, this committee set standards for interpretation to ensure that people with limited English proficiency were not disadvantaged in court.

Since 1999, Lamelas, along with District Court Administrator Gail Richardson, Madison; Judge Mark A. Warpinski, Brown County Circuit Court; Court Commissioner James A. Drummond, Racine; Clerk of Circuit Court Diane Fremgen, Winnebago County; Atty. Franciso Araiza, State Public Defender's Office; Interpreter Debra Gorra; Bette Mentz-Powell, Wisconsin Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing; and MaiZong Vue, Department of Workforce Development, formed the core group of individuals who began the arduous work of implementing a Code of Ethics, creating a roster of interpreters, and developing a certification program.

New judges on the committee include Ramona A. Gonzalez, La Crosse County; Ralph M. Ramirez, Waukesha County; and Paul R. Van Grunsven, Milwaukee County. ■



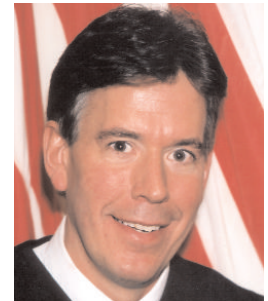
Judge Richard S. Brown



*Judge
Ramona A. Gonzalez*



Judge Ralph M. Ramirez



*Judge
Paul R. Van Grunsven*

WISCONSIN CONNECTS

Flanagan, Fleishauer participate in international seminar

Judges David Flanagan, Dane County Circuit Court, and Frederick Fleishauer, Portage County Circuit Court, joined a group of judges from across the United States who



Judge David Flanagan

were chosen to attend the second Sir Richard May Seminar on International Law & International Courts in The Hague, Netherlands.

The seminar, held September 24-29, was sponsored by the International Judicial Academy, the Open Society Justice Initiative, and the American Society of International Law. The

program featured lectures by international jurists, including prominent members of the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court, and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Last year, three Wisconsin judges were among the attendees. Supreme Court Justice Ann Walsh Bradley and Judges Mel Flanagan and Maxine A. White, Milwaukee County Circuit Court, joined a group of 20 U.S. judges chosen to attend the seminar. ■



*Judge
Frederick Fleishauer*

AWARDS

Wisconsin courts celebrate six 'Unsung Heroes'

Six of the 41 honorees chosen by the *Wisconsin Law Journal* for its inaugural Unsung Heroes Award are court employees. They will be honored at a November 10 luncheon at Milwaukee's Italian Community Center and featured in a special magazine to be published November 15. Meet the 2006 court winners:



Judith A. Coleman

Judith A. Coleman, Dane County Circuit Court. Coleman has been clerk of circuit court for Dane County since February 1990 and will retire at the end of her current term in December. She was appointed to the post just after receiving her master's degree from the UW La Follette School of Public Affairs, and much of her learning there has guided her management of the

office. In her 16 years as clerk, she has worked to develop a first-class management team, which enables the office to stay abreast of changes while maintaining high levels of customer service.



Cheree L. Coss

Cheree L. Coss, Marathon County Circuit Court. Coss has served as a circuit court clerk in Marathon County for six years, and has been a court staff member since 1999. As a court clerk, Cheree has worked primarily for Judge Raymond Thums, who is now retired, and for Chief Judge Dorothy L. Bain. Coss' duties include administering oaths to juries and

witnesses, handling and recording exhibits, keeping minutes of each hearing, and assisting the judge in the courtroom.

Rebecca Knutson, Milwaukee Legal Resource Center. Knutson is branch librarian at the Milwaukee Legal Resource Center (MLRC), the law library for Milwaukee County. She has been in state service for more than 17 years, the last six with the MLRC.

"While the Legal Resource Center provides services to judges, attorneys, and courthouse staff, I believe I was nominated because of the large amount of work we do with *pro se* litigants," Knutson said, adding that the MLRC annually serves several thousand people who are not represented by attorneys. "We distribute forms for the Family Court Commissioner's Office including divorce, paternity, and appeal forms, and assist people with other matters they are trying to accomplish without the aid of an attorney."

Bonnie Nagy, Racine County Circuit Court. Nagy is case manager for felony and traffic court in the Clerk of Circuit Courts Office. She began her career with Racine County 16 years ago as a deputy court clerk and moved into the District Attorney's Office as assistant office manager for three years before returning to the Clerk's Office.

"I have no idea what was submitted that got me nominated for this recognition," she said. "Whatever it was, I am truly humbled."

Nagy is known for her hard work and problem solving skills. "I ... seem to be the 'go to girl' when someone has any issue that needs taking care of," she said. "My door is always open."

Sherie A. Sasso, Wisconsin Supreme Court. Sasso began work as judicial assistant to Justice Ann Walsh Bradley on Aug. 1, 1995, the first day of Bradley's first term. Prior to joining the court staff, Sasso worked for more than 20 years at Lawton & Cates in Madison, first as a legal secretary and later as a litigation paralegal. In her role as a paralegal, she managed the firm's complex civil litigation and class action cases. Sasso also worked in Washington, D.C. for two years on Congressman Bob Kastenmeier's House Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties and the Administration of Justice in the mid-1980s as a staff assistant.



Sherie A. Sasso

Julie Tessmer, Wisconsin State Law Library, Madison. Tessmer is the deputy law librarian at the Wisconsin State Law Library, where she has worked for more than 20 years. A recent program she presented to the Law Librarians of Wisconsin, *Trading Spaces: Working Abroad*, led to her nomination as one of the Unsung Heroes of Wisconsin Law. In the presentation, Tessmer spoke about her experiences serving as a law librarian consultant on two Rule of Law projects conducted by the National Center for State Courts. In 2001, she traveled to the West African country of Nigeria to assess court library collections. In 2004, she worked a similar project in Serbia and Montenegro.

Justice is honored with humanitarian award

Justice Louis B. Butler Jr., who has served in three levels of the Wisconsin court system, was honored with the American Federation of Teachers (Local 212 - Milwaukee Area Technical College) Humanitarian of the Year Award in October.

Honored alongside Butler at a ceremony at the Radisson in Glendale were Lieutenant Gov. Barbara Lawton (Activist of the Year), and William Koepsel, Ph.D., a recently retired liberal arts instructor (MATC teacher of the year).

Milwaukee Atty. Peter Earle introduced Butler, who said he was honored by his selection for the award and gratified that many people turned out for the celebration. ■



Justice Louis B. Butler Jr.

Fall
2006

Pro Se efforts continue in collaboration with CCAP

by Ann Zimmerman, statewide pro se coordinator

In a continuing effort to improve the courts' response to the increase throughout the state in *pro se* litigation, I have been collaborating with the Consolidated Court Automation Programs (CCAP) on a number of initiatives. Here is a summary:

Sample resources available on CourtNet

Need wording for a sign explaining what your staff can, and cannot, help with? How about a flow chart showing the divorce process, or a handout on small claims? These items and more were available as of September on CourtNet, the court system's Intranet, under Publications and Manuals, on a page entitled "*Pro Se Assistance Resource Materials.*" (<http://courtnet.wicourts.gov/publications/prose.htm>).

This page provides court staff with model resource materials that have been developed by court personnel throughout the state to more effectively assist self-represented litigants. The materials are available either in PDF format or as Microsoft Word documents and can be downloaded and adapted for use in your county.

The wide variety of materials available here includes courthouse signs explaining the type of legal information and advice that can and cannot be given by court employees,

a handy flow chart on divorce actions, and pamphlets on a variety of topics ranging from *pro se* divorce to small claims actions. Additions to this page are welcome, and can be directed to me.

Pro se listserv for court personnel

Also in September, CCAP announced the implementation of a new e-mail listserv (pro-se@list1.wicourts.gov) for Wisconsin court personnel. This listserv is available to all court personnel (e.g., judges, court commissioners, district court administrators, clerks of circuit court, etc.) working with self-represented litigants. Participants may post procedural and policy questions and responses, and share information. The goal is an on-going e-mail discussion generated by members. I will also use the listserv from time to time to post national, state, and regional items of interest.

Membership in this listserv is voluntary. If you would like to participate, you will need to actively subscribe to the listserv. Information on how to subscribe to, and use, the listserv is available on CourtNet <http://courtnet.wicourts.gov/education/ccap/docs/listservprose.pdf>.

see **Pro se** on page 9

Looking for money? The Grant Info Center can help



The Grant Info Center (GIC) located on CourtNet (the court system's Intranet, which is available only to court employees) is a resource providing information on court-related grant funding sources and

opportunities. The GIC aims to position the court system to compete more effectively for grant funds and consolidate *ad hoc* efforts that are currently underway or contemplated.

This clearinghouse for information on grants positions the Wisconsin court system to seek funds from non-traditional sources to support innovative projects. In an effort to forge ahead with program initiatives without the support of traditional state funding, our court system (along with state agencies and courts across the country) has begun searching for appropriate alternative sources of funds, and the GIC gives us a better mechanism for disseminating information on available grants.

In addition to providing information, the GIC explains the court system's grant approval procedures, established in 1996 to ensure that proposed grant projects are consistent with the goals of the Wisconsin court system and that any

requirements for matching funds and auditing are properly addressed.

Finally, the GIC serves as a communication center where Wisconsin court employees can find advice for preparing proposals and researching potential funding opportunities, and can request application reviews. ■

We want to know if the Grant Info Center is a useful resource for you. Visit the site on Courtnet by clicking on the "Grant Info Center" tab on the left side of the main page. Please e-mail any comments or suggestions to Erin Slattengren in the Office of Court Operations at erin.slattengren@wicourts.gov.

Grant highlight: Wisconsin Treatment Alternative and Diversion (TAD) grants announced

Gov. Jim Doyle announced in late September that seven counties in Wisconsin will receive funding under the newly created TAD program administered jointly by the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance, Department of Corrections and Department of Health and Family Services.

Dane, Rock, Wood, Burnett, Washburn, Washington, and Milwaukee counties will receive funding to help provide alternatives to prosecution and incarceration for non-violent criminal offenders who abuse alcohol or other drugs. See separate article for details.

Others who have a grant announcement or project to highlight are asked to contact Erin Slattengren at erin.slattengren@wicourts.gov.

Committee works to develop e-filing rule

A committee working to develop a permanent proposed rule on electronic filing of court documents expects to wrap up its work in late fall. A permanent rule would pave the way for statewide expansion of e-filing by dealing with issues such as electronic signatures, notarization, and online payment. The Supreme Court could hear a petition on the matter in 2007.

Chief Judge Gerald P. Ptacek, Racine County Circuit Court, is the committee chair. Members of the committee include circuit court Judges Richard G. Niess, Dane County, and Mary K. Wagner, Kenosha County; Chief Information Officer Jean Bousquet; Court Commissioners David A. Flesch, Dane County, and John Plous, Kenosha County; Court of Appeals Chief Staff Atty. Peg Carlson; Clerks of Circuit Court Kristine Deiss, Washington County, and Gail Gentz, Kenosha County; Register in Probate Sally Lunde, Waukesha County; and members of the bar. Atty. Marcia Vandercook of the Office of Court Operations and CCAP Project Manager Andrea Olson staff the committee.

E-filing is currently testing in small claims cases involving two law firms in Kenosha and Washington



counties. The firms volunteered to participate in the pilot project, which was begun in March 2005 and will run

through July 1, 2007. The pilot will enable the courts to determine the costs and benefits of e-filing. Already, the clerks' offices report that staff is spending much less time keying in information and performing various other manual tasks. Many of the pilot cases are completely paperless, as the court commissioner simply calls up the file on the courtroom computer. As courthouses invest in wireless Internet access, attorneys, too, will be able to access the electronic case file in court.

Still to come in 2006: certain small businesses that frequently file small claims cases *pro se* will be asked to join the pilot to

help assess whether the system will meet the needs of self-represented litigants.

The earliest that statewide implementation might begin is after the next biennial budget is signed into law, which likely will be fall 2007. The project is expected to take several years to implement for all types of cases. ■

More information on the e-filing project is available at www.wicourts.gov/services/public/electronicfile.htm.

Pro se *continued from page 8*

I hope you'll join the listserv and find it to be a useful tool for communicating with your colleagues about *pro se* matters around the state.

Questions about using the listserv may be directed to Robbie Brooks at robbie.brooks@wicourts.gov.

Improvements in *pro se* data collection

It has been noted both nationally and locally that good data and trend analysis are necessary to better serve self-represented litigants and to meet the challenges posed by such litigation. Such data can be used to document the need for assistance programs, which is necessary to procure grant funding and to speak persuasively about the issue with local government officials, the Court, or the Legislature.

In addition to helping us speak with authority, good data also help us to design programs that meet actual needs and to effectively allocate and use resources. Therefore, I am currently working with CCAP to develop methods for better identifying cases involving self-represented litigants, and indicating the percentage of self-represented litigants in specific types of cases (including breakdown by case classification codes). We shall also gather data on the number of cases in which at least one litigant appears without an attorney.

When the pieces are all in place, we plan to enable a process to generate a custom report on *pro se*, which will allow specific *pro se* data collection both at the state and county level.

Online Self-Help Center enhancements

Another ongoing project that CCAP and I are working on involves implementing a series of improvements to the courts' existing online Self-Help Center (www.wicourts.gov/services/public/selfhelp/index.htm), based on the results of an online survey about the existing Web site, which will be launched on the courts' main Web page sometime in October.

A well designed and comprehensive self-help Web site can be a highly effective means of providing valuable information to self-represented litigants. It can also provide forms, instructions, and comprehensive user-friendly information about court procedures and available legal services with few marginal costs, other than ongoing updates and maintenance. Please be sure to complete the online survey about the self-help center to ensure that your ideas are considered while the site is being revamped.

I welcome your questions, comments and suggestions on these initiatives or any other *pro se* issues. ■

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Fall
2006

PPAC update

by Erin Slattengren, policy analyst

The Supreme Court Planning and Policy Advisory Committee (PPAC) has been tackling issues ranging from how to establish consensus on what constitutes a minimum plea colloquy, to improving videoconferencing and moving forward on pilot projects involving sentencing practices. Here is an update.

Plea colloquy research

The PPAC Subcommittee on Court Efficiencies, chaired by Judge Richard S. Brown, Court of Appeals, District III, and Judge Roderick A. Cameron, Chippewa County Circuit Court, was established to “examine the legal process and recommend ways to create a more efficient system by modifying or creating certain court procedures and policies while protecting the rights of litigants.” As part of this mission, the subcommittee examined the administration of plea colloquies.

Some judges have expressed frustration regarding the inconsistent administration of plea colloquies statewide and the impact of these varying procedures on the judicial process. The subcommittee conducted research to determine (1) if there was widespread dissatisfaction with, and/or differences of opinion regarding the proper administration of plea colloquies among judges and legal professionals, and (2) if so, recommend methods to improve efficiency and consistency of this process in Wisconsin courts.

The subcommittee surveyed judges, district attorneys, and defense attorneys to try to establish a consensus on what constitutes a minimum colloquy and what is considered a “standard practice.” Based on these findings, the subcommittee submitted recommendations for PPAC’s review. The recommendations are:

1. Develop a judicial education course/seminar on procedures surrounding the plea colloquy featuring a panel of judges who have differing approaches or opinions on this topic. Information from this report can and should be utilized to develop curriculum.

2. Refer to the Judicial Council exploration of the Federal Rule 11 approach and its effects on the system and the potential development of a similar Wisconsin Rule.
3. Request that the Court of Appeals keep statistics on cases related to Federal Rule 11 topic.

PPAC approved the final report and corresponding recommendations submitted by the subcommittee on August 10. To view the full report, visit the PPAC web page on the State Courts web site at: www.wicourts.gov/about/committees/ppac.htm and scroll down to the heading “Court Efficiencies.”

Judicial Conference breakouts: PPAC policy initiatives

In lieu of the traditional PPAC session at the Judicial Conference, PPAC has decided to invite some of its members to present sessions on policy areas that have been at the forefront of the PPAC agenda, including alternatives to incarceration and videoconferencing.

The Videoconferencing Subcommittee will present *Pathways, Potholes, Pitfalls and Possibilities: How do we make our way through the new video court landscape?* This interactive program will frame the issues raised by increasing use of video technology in court proceedings and work toward possible solutions to common problems.

The Alternatives to Incarceration Subcommittee will present *Setting the Foundation for Effective Justice Strategies*. This program will focus on locating available resources on court centered criminal justice programs, the role and importance of criminal justice coordinating councils, and an overview of the AIM Project (Assess, Inform, Measure). ■

For answer about PPAC, please contact Erin Slattengren in the Office of Court Operations at erin.slattengren@wicourts.gov.



Making use of the PPAC guide, Walworth County installed state-of-the-art videoconferencing equipment in its new courthouse. The Supreme Court made use of the technology when it sat in Elkhorn last March.

LEADERSHIP

Le Grand launches public outreach program

Roger Le Grand has been a La Crosse County Circuit Court judge for only about six months, but a lifetime of community involvement and 14 years as a family court commissioner have made him a strong believer that the public should get to know the local courts. An experience on Law Day 2006 underscored that belief, and led him to establish two new public outreach programs.

"Chief Justice Abrahamson came to La Crosse to give a speech, and she asked for a show of hands: 'How many of you have visited the courthouse?' and almost nobody had. And then she asked: 'How many of you know Judge Judy?' and every hand in the place went up," he recalled. "And I wondered why we allow Judge Judy to represent us to the public."

As he considered how to address this problem, Le Grand was assigned a volunteer law student, Sarah Fortune of Marquette Law School, to serve as a summer intern. "I said, 'let's get the public into the courthouse,' and she set up both programs. It worked great."

The first program is a brown bag lunch offered on the first Friday of each month. Le Grand publicizes the get-together, reserves a conference room, and talks with participants about topics related to the courts and the law. One Friday, Le Grand discussed efforts underway to safeguard access to justice; on another day, he focused on how family court operates.



Judge Roger Le Grand

"There's a lot of interest out there, and a lot of good questions and ideas," he said.

The second program, which he dubbed 'Summer Session' (and will re-dub 'Fall Session') is a morning-long visit to the courthouse. The session begins with an orientation in the courtroom, during which the group is seated in the jury box, and then the intern escorts the group to the other courts.

"Sara researches what's going on in each branch, so we have a sense for what would be interesting for them to watch," Le Grand said.

"Sometimes there's an interesting jury trial, sometimes there's very little to see and so we spend more time talking and touring the jail."

Le Grand publicizes the monthly sessions through the media, and individuals are asked to contact the intern to make a reservation. The three sessions held during summer attracted a total of 55 people. The group included senior citizens, parents with middle school children, and reporters.

"The group grew each time," he said. "In the third session, we had 25 people. I think that's about the maximum size we can accommodate."

Each session ends with a question-and-answer session. Le Grand hopes to continue the sessions throughout the year by making use of the system his intern established and with continuing help from volunteer organizers. Sessions are now planned for November 17 and December 15. ■

OBITUARY

**Judge John A. Decker
Wisconsin Court of Appeals
Milwaukee County Circuit Court**

Judge John A. Decker, the first chief judge of the Wisconsin Court of Appeals and a jurist whom the *Milwaukee Sentinel* once described as an "open, scholarly man, a hard worker with the reputation of being better prepared for a case than the attorneys involved in it," died August 16 in Brookfield. He was 91.

Born in Milwaukee in 1915, Decker was the first judge ever to receive the State Bar Lifetime Achievement Award. His lifetime of work in the law included 22 years as a Milwaukee County Circuit Court judge (1954-76) and six years on the Court of Appeals, District I. During five of those six years, Decker served as chief judge of the then-newly created Court of Appeals.

When Decker retired after one term on the Court of Appeals, the *Milwaukee Sentinel* praised him for having devised a smooth way for the new court to function. Decker once described the process of setting up the court as a "seemingly impossible task of establishing a court of 12

judges, 12 law clerks, four staff attorneys and 24 administrative, clerical and secretarial personnel in five locations in four different cities."

He brought to the chief judge role not only his experience on the trial bench but also a wealth of experience in the practice of law. Decker served as president of the Legal Aid Society and was an assistant Milwaukee city attorney prior to taking the bench. He was considered an expert in evidence.

Decker was preceded in death by his wife, Margaret. His son, Atty. John R. Decker, daughter-in-law Sandra Decker, and granddaughter Jennifer Decker survive him. ■



Judge John A. Decker

RETIREMENTS

Ten clerks of court to retire this year

by Jennifer Fay, court information intern

Wisconsin will lose about 150 years of experience in courthouses across the state as an unusually large number of clerks retire this year. All told, nine elected clerks of circuit court, along with the appointed clerk of the Supreme Court/Court of Appeals will step down. In 2004 – also a heavy year for retirements – seven longtime clerks of circuit court declined to seek reelection.

In **Brown County**, Paul G. Janquart is retiring at the end of his term, and looking forward to new challenges after nearly a decade as Brown County's clerk of circuit court and more than two decades as Green Bay city clerk.

The Brown County judges appointed Janquart, a Democrat, in 1997, to fill a mid-term vacancy. He was elected the following year. In 2004, he turned back a challenge from a political newcomer.

Janquart said his key interest as administrator of one of the court system's busiest clerk's offices (supporting the work of eight judges and four full-time court commissioners) has been developing technology skills among his staff. "I've really pushed training," he said. "I've exercised every training opportunity possible through CCAP."

One goal that he was not able to achieve, and that he encourages his successor to implement, is in-court processing, which involves creating, printing, and distributing court orders to the parties before they leave the courtroom. "In an era of dwindling resources, we need to find every opportunity to automate and streamline," he said. "I believe in-court processing should be implemented."

Janquart looks forward to keeping tabs on court initiatives from the comfort of his home and garden. He plans to tackle some landscaping projects, travel a bit (Canada and Hawaii are high on the list), and visit with his two grown children – a son who works at Sonic Foundry in Madison and a daughter who is a student at UW-Madison. Janquart's wife, a second-grade teacher in the Green Bay Public Schools, will join him in retirement in a year and a half.

In **Dane County**, Judith A. Coleman is retiring at the end of her term after 16 years in office. Succeeding her will be Democrat Carlo Esqueda, who emerged victorious from the primary and does not have opposition in the general election (*see separate story, page 5*).

Coleman has served as clerk of circuit court for Dane County since the judges appointed her in February 1990. She brought with her not only substantial knowledge of the courts (gleaned from 14 years as a juvenile court intake counselor) but also a master's degree in public policy and administration from the UW La Follette School of Public Affairs.

Together with her management team – comprised of her chief deputy and four court managers – Coleman has developed an office that is known for excellence. This year,

the *Wisconsin Law Journal* recognized her achievements with its 'Unsung Heroes' Award, to be presented November 10 in Milwaukee.

Coleman credits her management team and court staff for the smooth operation of the office, calling them "top notch individuals who have enabled us to keep on top of changes while maintaining high levels of public service."

In addition to serving the public, Coleman also has enjoyed the "intellectual challenge" that comes with the job. "I have never been bored," she said, adding that there is a "satisfaction that results from developing solutions to address an issue or legislative change."

During her tenure, Coleman also served as president of the Wisconsin Clerks of Circuit Court Association (WCCCA) from 2001 to 2003, and the CCAP Steering Committee and has worked on a variety of local and state issues such as the implementation of the centralized system for receiving and disbursing child support. She praised the work of her colleagues in the state court system and her counterparts in county government, and said that taking a leadership role on key issues has been "a pleasure and privilege."

Outside of work, Coleman values spending time with family, including her three grown children – one of whom is a foster child whom she raised for four years. In addition, Coleman also enjoys reading, doing light gardening, participating in Optimist Club activities, and traveling anywhere from Montana to Italy.

In thinking about retirement, Coleman said, "I'm excited about not knowing what I'm going to be doing," and said she looks forward to exploring many options and being in a position to try new things.

In **Forest County**, Tom Kalkofen was first elected clerk of circuit court in 1986, emerging from a field of three candidates. He brought an unusual background to the job: he had built furniture at a local mill for 21 years. When the mill suddenly closed, he looked for a new career and found it in the court system.

Kalkofen has seen and experienced many changes in his two decades as clerk. He said the greatest challenge he encountered was the switch from manual to electronic record-keeping, which he called "the greatest thing that has ever happened." When asked about his proudest accomplishment, Kalkofen thought for a minute before giving a simple reply: "just doing the job itself."

Clerks of the circuit court, he said, always have to be on their toes, keeping up-to-date on a multitude of legislative

see Retirements on page 13



Judith A. Coleman



Tom Kalkofen

RETIREMENTS *continued from page 12*

changes and maintaining a good working relationship with a variety of constituencies. "All of us clerks are in the same boat," he said. "We never run out of work."

Kalkofen learned to approach work with discipline through his service in the U.S. Army. He served in 1961-63 and was stationed in Germany.

After closing out his 20-year career with the courts, Kalkofen would like to travel more, especially in the West, but is quite certain that he and Mary Charlotte, his wife of 46 years, will continue to make Crandon their home. He is also looking forward to fishing and hunting. His four grown children and eight grandchildren will keep him busy as well; all live in Wisconsin.

In **Jefferson County**, Ken Schopen, who first took office in 1968, is retiring after a remarkable 38 years as clerk of circuit court. In his last election, the Republican faced a challenge but emerged a decisive winner.

To the new clerks coming into office, he has this to say: "You have to be able to treat people on a professional basis. Be honest, attend to people properly, and give them the service they are asking for. Be fair to everyone."

One of the highlights of Schopen's 38 years as court clerk was the opportunity to work alongside Terry Klein, who served as Schopen's chief deputy. "A person's efficiency is only as good as the employees that are working for you," he said. "I have been fortunate in that respect and have been thankful for everyone's assistance."

'Everyone' includes the attorneys, judges, and county employees with whom Schopen has enjoyed a cordial relationship through the years. He emphasized that cooperation has been key to the smooth functioning of his office.

Schopen also praised CCAP, and singled out for special praise the public access to circuit court records on the Internet and the clerk of courts Web page on the county site.

While he is taking his time deciding upon retirement pursuits, Schopen is considering a few requests from friends. He has been asked to do some work at the Fireside Dinner Theatre in Fort Atkinson, and hopes to volunteer both at the local hospital and St. Vincent de Paul. He and his wife, Ione (a professional at the art of rosemary, a Norwegian flower-painting technique), also will continue their involvement with the Besterheim Museum, a Norwegian museum in Iowa.

The Schopens look forward to spending more time with their two adult daughters, Renee and Rita, and their "grand-dogs" and "grand-cats."

In **Kenosha County**, after serving 18 years in office, Clerk Gail Gentz will retire at the end of the year. Gentz was elected to office in 1989 in a tough contest against a former clerk of circuit court, who also was a former pro baseball player. "A lot of people knew him, but in the end my experience carried the day," she recalled. "I won that race two-to-one." Throughout her tenure, Gentz never ever had another opponent.

Gentz was a courthouse 'outsider' who knew the system from 25 years of work in private law firms. She began her

career as a legal secretary and moved up to office manager. "I had a feel for the responsibilities of the job, but I had never worked in the office so I was able to come in with a fresh perspective," she said. "But even so, it wasn't easy."

Gentz's first act was to ask Court Operations staff Robert Brick and David Bubier (now retired), and District Court Administrator Kerry Connelly to conduct a study of office operations and recommend changes. "They came in at a time when the atmosphere in the office was very difficult," Gentz recalled. "The staff was under a lot of stress and trying to implement CSDS (a child support system). We were manually writing all the checks and it was kind of tough. So, I took that study and I really used a lot of it, which was a big help."

Over the years, Gentz has presided over numerous changes in the office and has actively served on statewide committees for the CCAP, the Wisconsin Counties Association, and the Office of Lawyer Regulation (she is a member of the district committee that covers Kenosha). She most recently achieved one of her proudest accomplishments: a move toward paperless operation.

Kenosha is one of two counties in the state (the other is Washington) that are participating in the e-filing pilot project, which enables certain small claims cases to be entirely paperless.

"I'm sad, in a way, to be leaving just now because I think in the next five years, we'll see major changes," Gentz said. "There are a lot of things on the cutting edge that really will help us to operate in a more cost-effective and efficient manner."

Gentz plans to stick close to home in retirement. She and her husband, Virgil (a onetime candidate for the state Assembly and current chairman of the Town of Paris) have much family in the area, including Gentz's brother, Mark Wisnefski, a county board supervisor. Gentz's three grown daughters live in the Milwaukee area, and she has five grandchildren who range in age from 11 to 2.

"We won't go far, although we do have a cabin on a lake near Crandon that we plan to enjoy," she said. "And I love to golf. I definitely plan to work on my golf game."

In **Kewaunee County**, Clerk of Circuit Court Lorraine Riemer has served for just six years, but brought to the job a wealth of experience as the county register in probate – a position she held from 1983 until her election as clerk in 2000.

Though her tenure has been relatively short, Riemer said she has enjoyed the position immensely – especially because of the people contact. "I love my job," she said. "I just like working."

Unlike many of the longer serving clerks, Riemer never had to run the office on a paper-based system. But she does recall the not-too-distant days of the tumbler from which names of jurors were selected, and deeply appreciates the development of the CCAP jury management software.

Riemer takes pride in managing an organized and

see **Retirements** on page 14



Kenosha County Clerk of Circuit Court Gail Gentz and her husband, Virgil.

RETIREMENTS *continued from page 13*

enthusiastic staff. Success does not come without a test, however. Like many of her fellow clerks, Riemer said her biggest challenge was “getting everything up-to-date” – clearing old accounts, tracking collections, and modernizing office practices.

In retirement, Riemer plans to stay in Kewaunee, where she was born and raised. She hopes to spend time with her five children and 10 grandchildren, all of whom live in Wisconsin, and to work with the elderly as a volunteer. When spring comes again, she will spend a bit more time in one of her favorite spots: the flower garden.

In **Marquette County**, Mary Lou Schmidt – whose selection as clerk of circuit court in 1984 ended a 66-year family dynasty in the office – will retire after 22 years on the job. Succeeding her will be Shari Rudolph, a Republican who has served as deputy clerk in Portage County, and who faces no opposition in the general election (*see separate story, page 5*).



Mary Lou Schmidt

Schmidt succeeded Robert Robinson, who served for 28 years. Robinson had taken over from his mother, Lucy Robinson, who had served for five years. Lucy, in turn, had succeeded her husband (Robert’s father) Sam Robinson, who had held the office for 33 years.

“You cannot imagine what a rare opportunity I had working as a deputy in an office where the clerk of circuit court was the last of a family dynasty,” Schmidt said. “The seven and one-half years I served as Bob’s deputy was a learning experience

extraordinaire, and prepared me completely to take over as clerk of circuit court.”

Initially appointed by Judge Donn Dahlke, Schmidt faced two opponents in her first election and also was opposed in two later races. “In all,” she said, “I ran for 11 terms and won them all.”

Schmidt said she would miss the challenge of working on child support issues and agreed with many of her colleagues who praised the advent of automation. “I praise the day that CCAP came to be,” she said. “When I think back to typing out court notices and filling in the blanks on all other court papers on the typewriter, writing receipts by hand and sitting up all night posting receipts and disbursements by hand.... It is now all done so easily and quickly...it’s like a miracle.”

On the not-so-pleasant side: tussling with the county board over staffing and wages. “I will not miss dealing with the county board,” she said.

In retirement, Schmidt plans to enjoy her house in the middle of the woods, and her work on genealogy. She also looks forward to watching her grandchildren’s sporting events (her older daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren live in Elkhorn; her younger daughter, son-in-law, and four grandchildren live in Delavan). “I also want to be able to visit with my brothers and their families during the week,” she said, “instead of always having to cram everything into weekends.”

In **Pepin County**, Clerk Rosemary Carlisle is retiring after 26 years on the job. Carlisle first ran for the office after the sitting clerk, John Simpson, had a debilitating stroke and was unable to continue in the job. The race to succeed Simpson drew three Republicans (Carlisle included) and four Democrats. Her work ethic and strong community ties helped push Carlisle to victory.



Rosemary Carlisle

Carlisle has never been one to shy away from a challenge, and tested herself by homesteading in Alaska, where she and her husband still own the 160 acres that they settled before the Draft Board summoned them back to Pepin County in 1950. They also lived for a time in Vancouver, Wash., where she worked for the USDA Forest Service.

Upon her return to Pepin County, Carlisle went to work in the law office of Dane Morey, and stayed there until her 1980 election as clerk. Morey, too, landed at the courthouse; he was elected circuit judge for Buffalo and Pepin counties in 1990 and retired in 2005.

Carlisle said she feels fortunate to have witnessed the immense changes that were ushered in by technology during her tenure. “We used to do everything by hand,” she recalled. “Every check, every docket entry – it was all written out.”

Though she is looking forward to retirement, Carlisle said she would miss her courthouse colleagues and working with the public. “I do enjoy all the people, and I always do the best I can for each person who comes through the door,” she said.

With their children grown, Carlisle and her husband continue to enjoy gardening and caring for their Australian Sheepadog and two cats on the farm. In retirement, Carlisle plans to continue to play the organ at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church and will spend more time traveling to see family.



Yvonne “Bonnie” Bauer

In **Taylor County**, Yvonne “Bonnie” Bauer, who has been clerk since her appointment in May 1986 (and who has never had an opponent), will retire at the end of this term and plans to spend more time at her recently built lake home. Succeeding Bauer will be Republican Margaret M. “Maggie” Gebauer, who has no opponent in the general election (*see separate story, page 5*).

Bauer began work in the office in 1980 as a part-time deputy clerk. She became chief deputy in 1981. Bauer began her career as a law office manager in Hayward.

Like most of her colleagues, Bauer said the biggest change she has witnessed in her two decades as clerk is

RETIREMENTS *continued from page 14*

automation. "One of the biggest challenges was being the pilot for CCAP," she recalled. "It was a long process, but, obviously, CCAP became the prize of the courts and the envy of many states."

One reason Taylor County emerged as an obvious choice to pilot CCAP was its enthusiastic and dedicated staff. Bauer called her staff "The greatest joy of my job."

Although Bauer said she plans on "not making a lot of definitive plans for retirement, except to enjoy life," she is sizing up a few options. Gardening and landscaping at the lake house, golfing, downhill skiing, reading, quilting, and scrap booking are on the list – as is travel. "My husband and I love to travel," she said. "We are trying to plan a trip with Gail and Virg Gentz to Europe some time next year."

She also plans to spend more time with family. She and her husband have a son, daughter-in-law and two granddaughters in Richland Center, and a son, daughter-in-law, grandson and granddaughter in Washington. ■



Supreme Court Clerk Cornelia Clark displays a plaque presented by Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson on behalf of the entire Court. All seven justices, and dozens of court employees, attended Clark's retirement party. The Chief is holding a photograph of Clark that will hang on the wall of the Clerk's Office.

TAD *continued from page 1*

level by oversight committees with broad representation by those involved in the criminal justice system, the social service system and the treatment provider network. These county oversight committees are similar in many respects to criminal justice collaborating councils (CJCCs), which were described in detail in the summer 2005 edition of *The Third Branch*.

In support of the governor's announcement, DOC Secretary Matt Frank said, "In the long run, by focusing on prevention and treatment in addition to effective law enforcement, combined with increasing the options we have available to hold offenders accountable, Wisconsin can enhance public safety and reduce future costs for the criminal justice system. We must take a comprehensive approach that brings together criminal justice, human services and community-based partners to address this issue as one that deals with public safety as well as public health." ■

TAD grant recipients

Dane County: The TAD program in Dane County is receiving \$163,725 to expand and coordinate current alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA) services in Dane County through the establishment of a day report and treatment (DART) program. Non-violent alcohol and drug abusers will enter the DART program as part of a bail agreement, undergo a risk and addiction assessment, and enter into four to six months of coordinated treatment, counseling, and skill-building sessions. The TAD initiative will also replace lost federal funding for the highly effective Drug Court Treatment Program and, through the establishment of a DART program, expand Dane County's pre-trial diversion program.

Milwaukee County: The county is receiving \$275,398 in Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) dollars to fund its TAD program. The money will fund six new positions, including five drug and alcohol diversion specialists who will screen offenders as they are booked and enter jail. Local justice officials estimate that approximately 75 percent of people booked into the Milwaukee jail have a substance abuse problem. In 2005, there were a total of 36,400 bookings.

Rock County: The county will receive \$156,814 to establish a program based on the successful Rock County Educational and Criminal Addiction Program (RECAP), a treatment program for jail inmates operated by the state Department of Corrections.

Washington County: The \$130,950 TAD grant will fund the hiring of two recovery support coordinators who will establish and administer treatment plans and recovery support services to offenders who have committed non-violent crimes related to alcohol and drugs. In an effort to maximize offender accountability, the client will be involved in all aspects of program and treatment planning, including the establishment of a recovery support team consisting of criminal justice officials, family members, and child welfare, mental health, and other social service providers where needed.

Wood County: The TAD grant of \$147,025 will be used to expand the current drug court pilot program established by the Wood County Criminal Justice Task Force in October 2004 and offer greater access to the court for those individuals most in need of alcohol and drug abuse treatment services. Once an offender is identified for the court, drug court counselors, in conjunction with the offender, will develop a treatment plan including drug and alcohol treatment services, training in education, employability and parenting skills, and emotional and mental health counseling.

Burnett/Washburn Counties and the St. Croix Tribe: The new TAD program will receive \$148,936 to combine resources, concentrate efforts, and offer comprehensive regional solutions to drug and alcohol problems that each community has struggled to overcome. The TAD initiative will create a new substance abuse court in Washburn County – similar to a court opened in Burnett County in July 2006 – and make use of offender time spent in jail to conduct drug abuse screening, needs assessments, and pre-treatment services.

Fall
2006

PEOPLE

“Learning ways of the world,” an October 7 *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* column by **Laurel Walker**, told the inspiring story of 18-year-old **Maria Ramirez**, daughter of **Renee Ramirez** and Judge **Ralph M. Ramirez**, who spent much of the summer living with a Muslim family in Cairo, Egypt, as part of an exchange program offered jointly by the U.S. State Department and AFS-USA. Maria, the column said, was one of 12



Maria Ramirez

teens to win a scholarship for the program, and the only teen from the Midwest to participate. While in Egypt, Maria studied Arabic and learned about the culture and customs from her hosts, who often found her attire – conservative by American standards – too revealing. The experience was life-altering, and convinced Maria to consider pursuing Middle Eastern studies as she begins her college career at UW-Madison

The Northwestern (Oshkosh) published a series of editorials in early September calling for an overhaul in the way district attorneys are selected and regulated. The newspaper argued that the conviction of former DA **Joe Paulus** – who is now serving a federal prison sentence – is evidence that the system needs to change. Among the editors’ ideas: a constitutional amendment to get rid of partisan DA elections, and an ombudsman – appointed by the Legislature – to handle complaints against prosecutors. The newspaper also wants to see all records made public in misconduct investigations against district attorneys.

When *The Monroe Times* ran an editorial headlined, “Stronger case still needed for second judge in county,” questioning whether a judge-need statistic of 1.75 really means the county needs a second judge (and a new courthouse to accommodate another judge), Court of Appeals (and former Green County Circuit Court) Judge **David G. Deininger** fired back. Deininger wrote a guest



Judge David G. Deininger

editorial under the headline, “For more reasons than the obvious, a second judge for the county is wise,” in which he explained the many tasks that a judge must perform outside of court – from preparing for upcoming hearings to considering motions that may require considerable legal research and analysis, to speaking to community groups and participating in local task forces.



Green County courthouse

The historic Green County Courthouse soon will no longer house the circuit court, following a 23-7 vote of the County Board on October 18 to build a new justice center next to the jail on the edge of town. The current courthouse has one elevator shared by court staff, the public, and prisoners, and an outside drop-off for inmates. “It’s a little scary,” Green County Circuit Court Judge **James R. Beer** was quoted as saying. “Inmates are dropped off in the parking lot, walked halfway around the courthouse in shackles and cuffs to the elevator, which is located at the handicapped entrance.”

In Green Lake County, the County Board on October 17 rejected a new \$22 million justice center on a vote of 11-10.

An Ozaukee County task force has been formed to assist in guiding the restoration of the county’s historic courthouse, completed in 1902. The engineers and restoration specialists working on the project were elated to discover intact numerous records – including original architectural drawings, original specifications, and records of the building committee. Improvements totaling about \$4 million have been recommended; to date, about \$80,000 has been raised. The county board has pledged to match the first \$250,000 in donations.

“Counties discuss regional jail” headlined a story in *Central Wisconsin Sunday* in late summer. The article related that Marathon, Portage, and Wood counties – which already have established a consortium to provide long-term care to people with disabilities – might begin talking about a regional jail. While officials acknowledged that such a development is a long way off, they said the time is right to take the first step by exploring a shared day reporting center. “I see this coming, and the idea will have to be addressed in the near future,” Wood County Board Chair **Lance Pliml**

see **People** on page 17

PEOPLE *continued from page 16*

was quoted as saying. "My guess is that a regional facility with shared resources will be more economical than doing it on your own. It might be time to erase the arbitrary boundary lines that were drawn a long time ago."

"Lost in translation," a five-page piece in the October-November edition of *Aqui! Milwaukee*, discussed the shortage of trained and certified language interpreters in the



Carmel Capati

Wisconsin courts, but pointed out that Wisconsin is ahead of many other states on this issue. Illinois, the article reported, has no certification program at all. The article quoted Interpreter Program Manager **Carmel Capati**, who said that interest in certification among potential interpreters is on the rise.

The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* told the story of the

Waukesha Juvenile Court's immensely successful Youth Accountability Panel in its October 9 edition. One night per month during the academic year, 10-15 teens who have been court-ordered to attend a panel discussion show up to listen to people like 45-year-old **Wes Gorsline** tell their stories. Gorsline has been wheelchair-bound since he was a teenager, when an accident after a night of bar-hopping left him paralyzed. "I was into a lot of delinquent behavior when I was a kid, so I think I can relate to them," Gorsline told reporter **David Doege**. "It's rewarding to know that some of these kids are going to listen to you and get back on the right track."

Cathy Warmington, who moderates the panels in her role as director of Wisconsin Community Services' Mediation & Restorative Justice Center, explained that the panels are a good alternative to victim-offender conferencing, because not all victims are able to meet face-to-face with the offender. This program also pairs each teen with an adult volunteer who helps the teen develop questions for the speakers and write an apology that the teen must read aloud at the meeting.

While the *Aqui! Milwaukee* article pointed out that Wisconsin is making strides, it also recounted some troubling incidents involving non-English speakers. Interpreter **Alexandra Wirth** told the magazine that she once listened to a 'lay' interpreter translate for a man charged with battery. "The interpreter translated battery as batería," she recalled. "Battery is aggression. Batería is a battery." As the defendant's confusion mounted, Wirth said, he began to insist that he did not have a battery, because he did not own a cell phone.

"Supreme Court chief justice blazes trail," a story in *The Post-Crescent* (Appleton) and the *Green Bay Press Gazette*, heralded Chief Justice **Shirley S. Abrahamson's** 30th anniversary on the state's top court. When asked how she hopes to be remembered, Abrahamson said "I hope I'm remembered as someone who made a difference in the administration of justice and opened access to the courts to all persons."

Racine County media coordinator **Mark Hertzberg**, photo director at *The Journal Times*, was featured in *Wisconsin Lawyer* magazine alongside his national-award-winning photographs from Racine County Circuit Court. Hertzberg's moving collection of courtroom photographs will be on display at the Wisconsin Judicial Conference in November.

Justice **N. Patrick Crooks** led an introduction to the Wisconsin court system for a group of newly elected African dignitaries on October 2. The U.S. State Department International Visitor Leadership Program sponsored the visit and provided French translators at the session.

Chief Judge **Dorothy L. Bain**, Marathon County Circuit Court, was inducted in the Wausau Noon Rotary Club on October 9, making the club the only Rotary in Wisconsin with members from all three levels of the Wisconsin courts. Bain joins Supreme Court Justice **Ann Walsh Bradley** and Court of Appeals Judge **R. Thomas Cane**, who are active members of the club. ■



Chief Judge Dorothy L. Bain (left) was inducted into the Wausau Noon Rotary Club on October 9, making the club the only one in Wisconsin with members from all three levels of court. Present for the induction ceremony were fellow Rotarians Tom Cane, Court of Appeals, District III, and Ann Walsh Bradley, Wisconsin Supreme Court.

Chief speech *continued from page 4*

themes are also evident within the judicial branch, where the Supreme Court and its administrative offices work closely with the trial courts, the tribal courts and the federal courts. This cooperative, partnership approach has accomplished much.

I learned from the late William H. Rehnquist, Chief Justice of the United States, who was on this platform 10 years ago to administer the chief justice's oath to me, that the chief justice must play an important role as a leader in improving the administration of justice and the chief justice must be a spokesperson for the courts and the people we serve. He remains one of my role models.

I have stood for election three times. In each election I have learned important lessons from my opponents, from the public whose support I have sought, from the one-way streets in Waukesha and the mall in the middle of downtown Stevens Point. Driving the state, especially in the winter, is not easy.

My message both on and off the campaign trail has always been that judges are to decide cases fairly, impartially and according to the facts and the law, not according to whim, personal ideology, prejudice, fear, the dictates of other branches of government or the latest public opinion poll. I, like Governor Lucey, have learned that the people of this state value a fair, impartial, non-partisan judiciary because such a judiciary ensures the integrity of the judicial process for all persons and ensures that the rule of law applies to each individual, to each business and to the government itself.



Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson was the final speaker. She talked about what she has learned from the 19 justices with whom she has served over her 30 years on the bench.



State Bar President Steven A. Levine, who served as emcee for the event, shared many laughs with all presenters (here, with State Bar Executive Director George Brown). Levine told of one oral argument before the Supreme Court in which he compared himself to Moses. "I was nearing the end of my argument, and I thought it would be a dramatic flourish to compare myself to Moses in the Old Testament when he appeared before the king of Egypt," he recalled. But the chief justice, he said, quickly put him in his place. "She leaned forward and she said, 'Counsel, I knew Moses. I served with Moses. Moses was a friend of mine. You are not Moses.'"

I have learned that being a neutral, fair and impartial judge does not mean sitting in this marble edifice in judicial isolation. I have learned that judges and lawyers must be out and about, communicating about our work with our many publics. The judicial branch relies upon the trust and confidence of the people, and we'll not retain that trust and confidence without the public understanding the role of the judicial system.

I have learned much.

Looking forward – I plan to learn every day something new from my colleagues in this state and our sister states, from lawyers and litigants, from the law schools, from the people of the state, and all of you – especially the Capitol Police and the maintenance people in this building: they know how to do a great job.

The Wisconsin Supreme Court and I remain committed to fulfilling the Court's responsibilities under the Wisconsin Constitution to provide an efficient, effective and fair system for resolving disputes. In some states the courts are under siege, as personal attacks are made on judges on the basis of their decisions. We've not reached that point in Wisconsin, and with your continued support we will never reach it. I hope you all will join us in supporting your judicial branch of government as it moves forward.

This has been a great celebration. I've enjoyed seeing you all. I will long cherish and remember this day. Thank you. Thank you. ■

Director's Column *continued from page 2*

submitting detailed requests. After reviewing the submitted ideas, Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson and I chose a focus for budget development: partnerships with counties and other justice stakeholders. We then met with each department manager, who, at our request, developed an initial proposal to make sure we had sufficient information to decide which proposals to forward to PPAC for their input and to the Supreme Court for their approval. The Supreme Court discussed the budget at length and approved it as submitted.

The following six budget requests forwarded to the governor and Legislature for the 2007-2009 biennium address the priorities identified. The budget also addresses one of the governor's major budget policies, "Support Local Government," and reaffirms the partnership between counties and the state in funding our circuit courts.

The centerpiece of this partnership budget is a new financial assistance program for counties that would provide additional state support of the circuit courts at a time when counties are struggling to stay under their levy limits and hold down property taxes. Under the request, the current circuit court support and guardian *ad litem* payment programs would be eliminated. In their place, a new circuit court services support payment program would be created, funded with 75 percent of court support services surcharge revenues collected by clerks of circuit court in the previous calendar year. These dollars would pass through to counties to provide them financial support for operating their circuit courts. Currently these revenues are deposited to the state's general fund.

The following additional requests, while modest, address the priorities identified through the planning and budget processes:

- In conjunction with the new financial assistance program, an auditor position and statutory changes are requested to institute a standardized program for the recording, reporting and auditing of annual county circuit court costs and revenues in order to obtain accurate revenue and expenditure data on county costs to operate the circuit courts.
- There continues to be a growing need to provide trained and certified court interpreters for non-English speakers and the hearing impaired. Additional county reimbursement funds are requested to reflect increasing demand and the higher reimbursement rates for certified interpreters. Statutory changes and associated reimbursement funding are also requested to require

court interpreters for all types of cases regardless of indigency.

- Two other requests would assist my office in providing needed help to counties and the circuit courts. A justice initiatives coordinator position would work with counties, circuit courts, and other justice system stakeholders to implement initiatives relating to assistance for self-represented litigants, alternatives to incarceration, and alcohol and drug abuse programming, three of the four priority areas identified by PPAC. A second request would allow us to institute an ongoing courthouse safety training program open to all courthouse employees. Courthouse security is the fourth priority area identified by PPAC.

- Finally, additional revenues are requested to allow the Consolidated Court Automation Programs (CCAP) to implement an electronic filing system for all circuit court case types in all counties and to fund future priority projects. A small pilot for e-filing small claims money judgment cases began in 2005 in two counties and has proven successful, but additional revenue is needed to expand beyond the current pilot. Significant benefits can result, including efficiencies in the county clerks of court offices (more help for counties), accuracy of data, and enhanced access to court information.



The road to enactment of a new state budget, expected next summer, will twist and turn through the Capitol.

One further point was made in the request to the governor. The court system is just part of a larger, interrelated justice system. Our courts cannot do their job when other justice partners, particularly the district attorney and public defender offices, lack resources. To that end, on behalf of the court system I urged the governor to support the district attorney and public defender offices' requests for proper staffing and funding. I also strongly urged the governor to update the State Public Defender indigency guidelines so that it once again can fully perform its mandated function of indigent defense. The chief justice's remarks to the Joint Finance Committee and her meetings with executive and legislative branch leaders will also stress these needs.

The road to next summer's enactment of the 2007-2009 biennial budget is long, and I shall continue to update you as the budget winds its way through the legislative process. I ask for the support of all the court system in helping make these needed proposals a reality. ■

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Shirley S. Abrahamson

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Bailiff training is the first ever

Four hundred people at 53 sites across the state participated in a first-ever statewide training session for jury bailiffs in September. The increasing availability of videoconferencing equipment made the training possible.

The day-long session, which originated from the Pyle Center on the UW-Madison campus and was viewed in courthouses and other locations around the state, was designed to help ensure that bailiffs have the tools they need to interact with jurors in a manner that reflects positively on the court system.

District Two Court Administrator Kerry Connelly steered the project as committee chair. District Five Court Administrator Gail Richardson, one of the courts' resident experts



District Court Administrator Kerry Connelly explains the jury bailiff training program to the Committee of Chief Judges.

on jury issues, was also involved. Chief Judge Gerald P. Ptacek, Racine County Circuit Court, and Judge Jean W. DiMotto, Milwaukee County Circuit Court, helped to develop the curriculum and conduct the training, as did Clerk of Circuit Court Diane Fremgen, Winnebago County; Deputy Clerk Susan Schaffer, Eau Claire County Circuit Court; and Deputy Bill Blumer, Dane County Sheriff's Department. Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson

offered welcoming remarks from the Green County courthouse, which she was visiting as part of her 72-county tour.

Funding for the project came in the form of a grant from the State Bar of Wisconsin and from contributions from local bar associations. ■



Judge Jean DiMotto, Milwaukee County Circuit Court, and District Court Administrator Kerry Connelly, Racine, practice their presentations at the Pyle Center in Madison as Judge Gerald P. Ptacek, who also taught at the training, looks on.