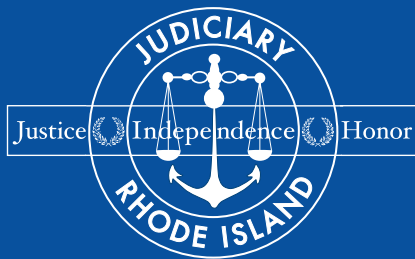


ANNUAL *Rhode Island Judiciary* REPORT 2016



RHODE ISLAND JUDICIARY

250 Benefit Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903
(401) 222-3266
www.courts.ri.gov

INTRODUCTION

To the Honorable Members of the General Assembly:

It is our pleasure to present to you the 2016 Annual Report of the Rhode Island Judiciary, pursuant to G.L. 1956 (2012 Reenactment) § 8-15-7. In the pages that follow, you will find caseload summaries and highlights of the programs that we utilize to provide access to justice to the litigants who come through our doors each day.

We hold ourselves accountable – to you as the appropriating authority and to our citizens as taxpayers – to provide streamlined and efficient services in the third branch of government. Faced with a \$1 million deficit at the beginning of the 2016 fiscal year, the Judiciary ended the year with a balanced budget, largely through turnover savings achieved by not filling positions as they became vacant. This approach is not sustainable in the long run, however, and affects our ability to provide consistent service.

The year 2016 marked the third year of the Judiciary's four-year project to implement its new case management system with an electronic filing component. In December of 2016, we added appeals in the Supreme Court and criminal cases in the Superior, Family and District Courts – a significant undertaking.

In a period when state government dollars are scarce, we are pleased to point to our case management and electronic filing project as one that has largely gone well. This project was undertaken with existing court staff who worked on the construction of the new case management system while maintaining the daily requirements of the existing system. Our Judicial Technology staff lost nights, weekends, and even holidays to meet aggressive timelines. We

identified subject matter experts within each of our six courts to help build our system. They, too, were invaluable. Their work ethic, determination, and commitment have been outstanding from day one of this project. The gratitude and pride of the Judiciary's administration in the staff members who have helped build the new case management system and implement new business processes cannot be overstated.

We are also grateful to the members of the Rhode Island Bar, who use our new system every day. There have certainly been training issues and growing pains as there are for any new product and business processes. However, the attorneys have been patient and professional as we work out the kinks in this massive project.

We are also pleased to report that with your support we have completed construction of the 5 courtrooms that were deliberately shelled when the Noel Judicial Complex in Warwick opened in 2006. These 5 courtrooms bring the total to 16 in that courthouse, and are helping us to take case volume pressure off the Garrahy Judicial Complex in Providence and the McGrath Judicial Complex in South Kingstown.

Respectfully submitted,



Paul A. Suttell
Chief Justice



J. Joseph Baxter, Jr.
State Court Administrator



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ANATOMY *of a* SUCCESSFUL TECHNOLOGY PROJECT

As the year 2016 drew to a close, the Rhode Island Judiciary took perhaps the biggest leap of all in the four-year implementation of its new case management system that began in 2013. In early December, a mere two months behind the original schedule, the information technology project went live with the conversion of Supreme Court cases and criminal cases in the Superior, District and Family Courts.

While mandatory electronic filing was already in place by that time for civil, domestic relations, workers' compensation and traffic cases, that capability was expected to follow for Supreme Court appeals and criminal cases in spring 2017. In the interim, documents filed for active criminal cases and appeals were scanned into the new case management system by court employees.



Panciocco

The conversion in December from the Judiciary's legacy case management system to Tyler Technology's Odyssey system involved data for a staggering 1.1 million criminal cases and 20,276 Supreme Court cases, according to Peter J. Panciocco, the Judiciary's director of technology.

The Judiciary began replacing its case



Court staff work on electronic filing and case management conversion.

management system in phases in 2014, as well as implementing eFiling, eCharging, ePayments and eCitations. The conversion of Supreme Court and criminal cases was the fourth phase of the multiyear project. Workers' compensation, civil and domestic relations cases were converted in two phases in 2014, while Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal Cases were converted in the third phase during 2015.

The original contract for this project was for \$5.9 million, with completion expected by the end of 2017.

SETTING THE EXAMPLE

"Over the course of these last three years, client leadership, technology staff, and subject matter experts from the courts

partnered with the Tyler project team to transform the Judiciary's operations from one almost completely reliant on paper to an almost paperless solution," Panciocco said.

Other key accomplishments included the Superior Court and Central Registry being able to collect money online for the first time; all online payments statewide began going through Tyler; and electronic criminal case information was piloted with authorized law enforcement agencies. In addition, the state was Tyler's first client to use the appellate case category and served as a model for court systems in Maine and Vermont, which chose the vendor after site visits to Rhode Island courthouses.

Also in December, the Judiciary upgraded the Public Access Portal to a new version called the Rhode Island Judiciary Public Portal. The Public Portal is the point of entry for electronic access to case information from the Rhode Island Judiciary's database, whether the user is at the courthouse or off site.

Remote viewing of the registers of action or docket sheets is now available to the general public, although case documents may only be viewed at the courthouses. Members of the general public will be able to make online payments and search hearings. Remote access for the general public does not require any registration.

With one year to go, conversion to the new case management system with the electronic filing component has been the single largest record-keeping project the Judiciary has undertaken in modern times. It is the culmination of 10 years of

planning, research, and designating funds for what is a transformation in the way lawyers, litigants, and court staff conduct business from the law office to the clerk's office to the courtroom. As the end of 2016 approached, the number of registered users in the electronic filing system had reached more than 7,400 – an increase of 1,400 from the prior year.

CONVERSION OVERVIEW

The conversion involves two separate systems. The first, the File & Serve electronic filing system, is operated by the Judiciary's partner, Tyler Technologies of Plano, Texas. File & Serve is designed to streamline customer interaction, and it provides attorneys with the ability and convenience to file case documents from anywhere with Internet access, any day and any time. Attorneys also have remote access to their own cases.

The second is Odyssey, the case management system, which is operated by the courts. Attorneys and law office staff have been trained to use File & Serve, which sends pleadings and other court documents into the case management system. Self-represented litigants have the option to use electronic filing as well, although it is not mandatory.

Documents in criminal cases and appeals were on the verge, as 2016 ended, of joining those in civil, traffic, domestic relations, and workers' compensation cases as being electronically filed and processed within the new system. In 2015, electronic filings averaged 1,700 to 1,800 daily Tuesday through Thursday. A year later, that same average is now consistent Monday through Friday, with slightly



State Court Administrator J. Joseph Baxter, Jr., second from left, thanks two Tyler Technologies project managers, right, for their work on the case management project.

more than 100 filings on weekends being typical.

The Supreme Court Office of Finance and Budget reviewed, tested, and confirmed more than 165,000 financial records for the conversion in 2016. It provided help desk support to court personnel regarding financial processes established in the new Odyssey system, and configured fee schedules for almost 2,000 offense codes. Those fees are automatically assessed based on offense, disposition, and date of offense.

The home page on the Judiciary's website (www.courts.ri.gov) provides a Self-Help Center with links to a comprehensive overview and specifics on "how to" use the new systems, user guides, online training sessions, notices, updates, and court rules.

WHAT'S NEXT

Looking ahead, Panciocco said mandatory

e-filing of criminal cases (except for self-represented litigants) was expected by the end of 2017; the Supreme Court will replace its legacy Attorney Portal with a custom Tyler application to provide self-service tools and streamlined management of attorney accounts; Family Court juvenile cases will convert to Odyssey, and the Superior Court jury commissioner's office will adopt the Odyssey jury management tool.

The Judiciary continues to upgrade its network infrastructure to support the new case management and electronic filing systems. It began replacing all network equipment in 2015 to enhance speed and security. Video conferencing has been modernized in the courthouses. As courtrooms in the 86-year-old Licht Judicial Complex in Providence have been renovated one-by-one, the infrastructure and technology have been updated to meet the modern demands of a system that will serve our citizens well.



ACCESS *to* JUSTICE: EFFICIENT COURT SERVICES

Our courts are constantly striving to gain efficiencies, not only by enhancing our technology capabilities but also by creating and enhancing specialty dockets or specialty calendars — a sort of laser approach to court filings. In some cases, these calendars address core life issues of individuals appearing before our courts, while on other dockets, courts have designed a caseload process to more efficiently handle cases.

SUPREME COURT APPELLATE MEDIATION

For more than 13 years, the Supreme Court's Appellate Mediation Program has offered litigants the opportunity to

resolve their pending appeals through this alternative form of dispute resolution. Appellate mediation saves time, expense and avoids the prospect of prolonged litigation.

In 2016, the program processed 165 cases, a 12-percent increase from the prior year. Approximately 47 percent of those cases were deemed eligible and were mediated. In 2016, two newly retired judges were added to the roster, bringing the program's total to seven retired judges who serve without further remuneration as mediators to guide the process and assist the parties in reaching their own resolution. The program's resolution rate remained

steady at 38 percent; its satisfaction rating improved from 85 percent to 97 percent of participants, indicating they would use the same mediator-justice again.

SUPERIOR COURT ADULT DRUG CALENDAR

Specialty calendars in the Superior Court include the domestic violence calendar, held weekly in Providence/Bristol County; the medical malpractice calendar, held weekly in Providence/Bristol County; the business calendar, held every day in Providence/Bristol and Kent Counties; and the Adult Drug Court calendar, held at regular intervals in Providence/Bristol and Kent Counties.

2016 saw an all-time high of admissions and graduates to the Adult Drug Court program, designed to divert nonviolent, first offenders from prison terms. Since its inception 10 years ago, this court has produced a 68 percent graduation rate and in 2016 saw a 75 percent graduation rate. In addition, the re-arrest rate has averaged approximately 10 percent over the past three years. This saves on incarceration costs and produces greater public safety for all while breaking the cycle of abuse by the participants in the program.

The Adult Drug Court (ADC) began as a pilot program in 2003 in Providence/Bristol County. In 2005, the program was expanded to operate statewide. Since January 2006, a total of 772 participants were admitted into the ADC program, 526 participants successfully completed the program and 202 participants have been discharged from the program. As of December 31, 2016, there were 171 active participants.

The Judiciary utilizes re-arrests as the definition for recidivism. The Department of Corrections tracks offenders released from a sentence at the Adult Correctional Institutions and defines recidivism as the percentage that return to prison as a sentenced inmate within the follow-up period. Based on the 2009 Recidivism Study produced by the Department of Corrections in June 2011, the one-year recidivism rate was 28 percent. Since then, the average one-year recidivism rate has dropped to 12 percent. Based on this comparison, the Judiciary believes that the Adult Drug Court is an effective diversion program that has a positive impact on future recidivism.

FAMILY COURT WOMEN'S SERVICES

The Family Court's piece of the effort to combat drug addictions can be found in its Family Treatment Drug Court, a statewide program based in the Garrahy Judicial Complex in Providence. The Family Treatment Drug Court was implemented in 2002 to serve families with newborns who were identified as substance-exposed during pregnancy. Eligibility criteria were soon expanded to include children up to age 18 in a substance-involved family. The goals and objectives of the Family Treatment Drug Court are: to protect children whose health and welfare may be adversely affected by parental substance use; enhance parental capacity to meet their children's needs, and expedite permanency for children in state care. This is accomplished by identifying substance-involved parents, developing comprehensive multidisciplinary case plans in collaboration with child welfare, helping participants access treatment and

other services, and measuring progress through intensive follow-up, service provider reports, repeated surveys, and frequent court supervision of court orders.

The program has expanded from 25 cases at a time to 45 cases. It provides trauma-informed practices and a peer-to-peer recovery coach who develops a long-term relationship (continuing after graduation) with program participants. The peer-to-peer recovery coach provides motivation for parents to engage (and re-engage if necessary) in services; reinforces progress and provides ongoing crisis intervention and support.

The Family Court is enhancing its assistance with restraining orders through the domestic violence calendar, seeking to take creative measures to promote victim safety and stability along with strongly discouraging continued violence and harassment. The domestic violence calendar victim advocate assists victims from the initial process in filing for a protective order until the disposition of the case. The domestic violence calendar staff focuses on cases where there are minor children in the home. The program goals are threefold: (1) to provide assistance to families of domestic violence; (2) to ensure that the best interests of children who are impacted by domestic violence are represented in custody and visitation decisions; and (3) to monitor batterer compliance with court orders to ensure victim safety.

The objectives are accomplished by court-based case management, outreach and legal advocacy to victims and ensuring victim safety by monitoring defendants'



Rossie Lee Harris, Jr., is sworn in as an Associate Justice of the Family Court.

compliance with court orders. Since the procedures in the domestic violence calendar are civil proceedings, victims of crimes are referred to the appropriate agency. Over the years, increasing numbers have come before this specialized calendar within the Family Court. The victim advocate acts as the link for victims of domestic abuse by making referrals to social service agencies, domestic violence agencies, support groups, child support enforcement, law enforcement and children's services.

YOUTH SERVICES

Beginning in the fall of 2016, the Family Court collaborated with the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) to create a trauma-informed court system. The Family Court has provided comprehensive trauma-informed trainings to its judges and magistrates, guardians ad litem and attorneys, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) social workers and volunteers, and court clerks. Additionally, similar trainings will also be offered to Family Court sheriffs

and DCYF social workers in early 2017. Stemming from national research as well as data provided by the DCYF, it is evident that many youths in placement have trauma histories that, if left unaddressed, may contribute to lengthier stays in care. The goal of this innovative project is to provide the identified children and their families with much-needed trauma-focused services in order to reduce the time these youths spend in care and help them to achieve permanency more expeditiously.

The court received funding from the

group homes, making the program more accessible throughout the state. This work also highlights the court's long-standing commitment to conduct high-quality research, in partnership with university-based investigators, in order to make court programs innovative and on the cutting edge of best practice.

DISTRICT COURT

The District Court's flourishing veterans treatment calendar served 88 veterans in 2016. The total number of graduates from inception in April 2011 through December 2016 is 254, particularly

The Family Court has a long-standing commitment to conduct high-quality research, in partnership with university-based investigators, in order to make the court programs innovative and on the cutting edge of best practice.

National Institutes of Health (NIH) to implement a prevention program called Date SMART. This program is focused on reducing dating violence and recidivism among court-involved adolescent girls. The award was received through the court's collaboration with Dr. Christie Rizzo, associate professor at Northeastern University and consultant to the court's Mental Health Clinic. To date, 11 Date SMART groups involving 65 girls have been conducted. These groups have met at the Family Court as well as at local

impressive given the intensity and length of the program. The veterans calendar continues to operate a toxicology lab in the Noel Judicial Complex in Warwick. In addition, the Veterans Court lab utilizes continuous alcohol monitoring devices (transdermal) and remote breathalyzers to help participants maintain sobriety.

In 2016, the District Court proposed modifications to its rules of procedure, including changing the burden of proof at a violation hearing to a preponderance



Members of the support team for the veterans treatment calendar at District Court, Warwick.

of the evidence. This change represents an increase from the lesser standard of reasonable satisfaction. Also in 2016, the District Court was selected by the Laura and John Arnold Foundation to pilot a new state of the art offender risk assessment tool. This tool is known as the Public Safety Assessment and is evidence based and race and gender neutral. Rhode Island will be one of just a few states that will implement the tool on a statewide basis.

The Pretrial Services Unit monitors all conditions of bail that are placed on a defendant by a District Court judge. Pretrial Services, with an office in each courthouse, handled 2,244 cases in 2016. The majority of these cases were ordered to mental health and/or substance abuse treatment as a condition of bail. During 2016, Pretrial Services continued to participate in the monthly Domestic Violence/Critical Case Review Meeting that identifies high-risk offenders.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT

In the fall of 2016, the Workers' Compensation Court instituted a mediation program. Cases pending at the trial level may be referred to the program by the trial judge with agreement of the parties. The mediation sessions occur at the court. The sessions are conducted by retired or active Workers' Compensation Court judges. The sessions themselves remain confidential among the mediator and the parties. If the mediation is successful, the outcome is reported to the trial judge who made the referral for final approval of any settlement that has been agreed upon. Of the first 10 cases referred for mediation, seven were settled before trial.

The Rhode Island Workers' Compensation Act established the Medical Advisory Board to "ensure that every person who suffers a compensable injury with resulting disability should be provided with high quality medical care and the opportunity to return to gainful employment as soon as possible with minimal dependence on

compensation awards." To this end, the Medical Advisory Board has promulgated protocols and standards of treatment for the most common work related injuries. Last year saw the creation of two new protocols, the Interventional Pain Management Treatment Protocol and the Traumatic Brain Injury Protocol. These protocols will assist healthcare professionals in the treatment of injured workers.

The year 2016 also saw the departure of Peter Pizzarello, M.D.

from the Medical Advisory Board. Dr. Pizzarello was a founding member of the Medical Advisory Board in 1992. He is one of the most respected orthopedic surgeons of his time and sat on the Governor's Task Force for the 1992 Workers' Compensation Reform, which established the Medical Advisory Board. Dr. Pizzarello's efforts in the early years after the Board's creation cannot be overstated. His expertise and vision were crucial to building the foundation which enabled the Medical Advisory Board to become a national model. The successes of the 1992 reform are due in no small part to those efforts.

RHODE ISLAND TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL

While the General Assembly and the Superior and District Courts in 2015

began examining ways to cut probation violation sentence rates, reduce corrections spending and find strategies to lower recidivism, the Traffic Tribunal has done its part to help restore driver's licenses for people released from prison.

In that same vein, the tribunal continued its annual efforts with Operation Stand Down to assist homeless and low-income veterans get their driver's licenses back. Veterans at the military-style encampment are given the opportunity to clear up

old fines and suspensions with judicial officers and staff who volunteer their time on the annual weekend.

The state's size can serve as a model to other jurisdictions, as previously noted in the report on judicial technology. One of the nation's largest states – California – has turned to the

smallest for innovation. Traffic Tribunal personnel have provided information and assistance to the California Superior Court as it considers shifting the adjudication of traffic infractions from criminal to a civil-based model like the one in Rhode Island.

Dispositions of speeding violations increased by 16 percent from 2015 to 2016, and similarly dispositions of chemical test refusals rose 15 percent over the same period.



Robert M. Ferrieri speaks after being sworn as Chief Judge of the Workers' Compensation Court.



ADMINISTRATION

FINANCE AND BUDGET

The Supreme Court's Office of Finance and Budget completed a bail reconciliation project in October 2016. The project team reviewed 7,351 bonds and closed out 2,033 of them, resulting in \$559,477 in bail funds forwarded to the General Treasurer's Division of Unclaimed Property. Approximately 700 bonds that were previously recorded in paper ledger books were entered into the case management system and another 200 bonds, totaling approximately \$150,000, were forfeited to the state general fund.

The office also completed a reconciliation of the restitution account that resulted in \$919,325 escheated to the Division of Unclaimed Property. The \$919,325

forwarded from this project represents unclaimed/undeliverable restitution payments to victims on 3,282 cases.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community outreach and public education are vital components of the Judiciary's efforts to promote access to justice through user-friendly courts, quality court services and accountability. The courts do this a number of ways across the state system. In May, the courts partnered with the Rhode Island Bar Association for the annual Law Day outreach event. Most court calendars are suspended that day, allowing judicial officers to pair with lawyers in visits to more than 30 schools throughout Rhode Island to talk about timely topics in the law that are relevant to the lives of students.

The Supreme Court's Office of Community Outreach and Public Relations promotes understanding of our judicial system through education programs in schools across the state, as well as media relations. The office promotes civic education in general and knowledge of the court system in particular through the national iCivics project founded by retired United States Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Upon her retirement from the Supreme Court, Justice O'Connor acted on her concerns that students were not learning how their government worked and how they could be successful citizens. In 2010, she founded iCivics as a teaching tool firmly rooted in the digital age, using an approach that makes civics education fun. Online video games and competitions are the program's mainstays. Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell is the state chairman of iCivics.

The use of the iCivics website in Rhode Island schools increased by 22 percent in 2016 from the previous year, according to the iCivics national office. There were 149 new teacher registrations in 2016, bringing the statewide total to more than 600 since 2011. Communities that showed exceptionally high participation growth in the project in 2016 included Middletown, West Warwick, Cranston, and Westerly. In fact, 7 out of 10 municipalities surveyed showed significant participation increases of at least 32 percent over the prior year.

The courts also participated in several on-site career fairs at schools across the state. And while in-school activities continued to receive the Judiciary's support, the office unfortunately had to suspend the scheduling of courthouse tours for school

groups in 2016 out of safety concerns attributed to a worrisome decline in the number of active sheriffs assigned to the buildings.

The Family Court hosted its 13th annual National Adoption Day in November 2016, a public event that drew hundreds of people to the Garrahy Judicial Complex. Rhode Island's celebration coincided with events held across the United States to draw attention to the adoption process and the large number of children available for adoption. The Court finalized 23 adoptions with 20 families. These festivities were supported by several community sponsors and agencies.



National Adoption Day is always festive at the Family Court.

The five Supreme Court justices and court staff take the appellate process on the road at least once a year by hearing oral arguments away from the Licht Judicial Complex in Providence in an initiative known as "Riding the Circuit." In 2016, the Supreme Court heard cases at Smithfield High School.

Public outreach is also one of the State Law Library's hallmarks. In April, the state law librarian spoke to the Government Lawyers Division of the Rhode Island Bar Association. In June, the law librarian presented a CLE at the Rhode Island Attorney General's office for members of the division entitled, "Making the

Rhode Island State Law Library your Reliable Resource." During the summer, several Brown University medical students taking the Forensic Psychiatry Didactic Series course were introduced to the legal system and reviewed a pathfinder prepared for them of relevant statutes and cases when dealing with forensics. The Law Library again

participated in the annual Bridge the Gap program for attorneys and continued throughout 2016 to welcome and instruct secondary school students across Rhode Island about the library in conjunction with the Office of Community Outreach and Public Relations.

The Workers' Compensation Court continued its outreach to educate adolescents about young workers' rights and injury prevention through the YES-RI (Young Employee Safety-Rhode Island) program. For over a decade Workers' Compensation Court judges and employees, along with lawyers and

safety engineers, have traveled to schools throughout the state to engage high school students through this educational initiative. The court continues to receive excellent feedback from school administrators and in many cases the court is asked to return year after year. Created by former Chief Judge George E. Healy, Jr. and

sponsored by the court, this valuable message to students is delivered with the additional help and participation of volunteer attorneys, insurers and safety professionals.



Promoted by the Judiciary, the use of iCivics as a civics education tool continues to flourish in classrooms across Rhode Island.

FACILITIES, OPERATIONS AND SECURITY

The department's mission to provide economical, efficient, and well-organized maintenance and security services to

all of the Judiciary with professionalism, courtesy, and proficiency continued with significant improvements to state court facilities that were completed over the past year.

The restoration of courtrooms and public spaces at the Licht Judicial Complex is ongoing. The Noel Judicial Complex, which opened in 2006, was constructed to include shelled space for future growth. This forward thinking was part of a 10-year plan and has come to fruition. Five new courtrooms from the shelled space were completed in 2016. These additional courtrooms will address the overcrowded



Courtroom 5 at the Licht Judicial Complex was renovated in 2016.

conditions at Providence County courthouses as well as the population growth in Washington County.

The security division has implemented several upgrades to the Judiciary's security systems. Among them are the automated shooter detection system added to all courthouse entry ways as well as the network for all security equipment, which has been transferred to a dedicated network separate from the Judiciary network. All network switches and servers are maintained by the Facilities, Operations and Security Division.

During the 2016 fiscal year, Facilities ordered 8,000 linear LED tubes of which more than 5,000 were installed. Each tube results in annual energy savings. This lighting replacement solution has resulted in noticeably brighter and crisper lighting in our courthouses, with reduced future maintenance costs. The tube replacement project reduces waste by keeping existing fixtures in place and only replacing the

inefficient components with more efficient internal components.

At the Noel Judicial Complex in Kent County, all parking garage fixtures have been replaced with fixtures that have integrated controls. These fixtures will turn off lighting when there is adequate daylight and dim during unoccupied periods. The motion sensors recognize activity and will brighten areas of travel from pedestrians and vehicles. This project saves energy with the LED efficient lighting, reduces hours with the controls, and increases security overnight by bringing attention to the area with very bright lighting should anyone enter the garage. It is estimated that the lighting operating cost for this area has been reduced by 80 percent.

The latest in LED technology has been installed at the Licht Judicial Complex in Providence. Exterior lighting has been replaced with exposed filament LEDs, which are reminiscent of Edison's lightbulb



Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell and J. Robert Weisberger dedicate the State Law Library in the name of the late Chief Justice Joseph R. Weisberger.

invention in the 1800s. These bulbs have a much warmer color and sparkle, and match the period of the building.

Since 2013, lighting replacement and retrofit projects have produced substantial annual electrical savings. Inventory has been standardized with more universal products that can be used in any of the court facilities, shortening lead times for replacement of older lighting equipment. The newer equipment has been shown to last much longer than products that were installed in the past.

The Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning division continues to strive for efficiency while maintaining comfort for Judiciary staff and the general public. The improvements realized over the past year have been part of a multi-phase plan that has contributed to the Judiciary's goal to become energy efficient while maintaining a positive impact on the

operating budget. The Garrahy Judicial Complex recently saw completion of a variable air volume project that filters and conditions air in the building's individual work spaces, courtrooms, and chambers on the fourth and fifth floors. This project has greatly improved the efficiency as well as overall occupant comfort in all spaces.

STATE LAW LIBRARY

In 2016, the State Law Library reinstated Westlaw for the Judiciary's intranet site, offering additional employees premier access to this digital research program. Many months were spent designing and creating the best interface for this group and selecting the best approach for rolling out the new program to users as well as providing training for efficient use.

As the library continued to restore and refresh its surroundings, red mahogany end caps were installed to the shelving in the stackroom with funds from The

Champlin Foundation Grant award. This new attractive carpentry completed the enhancement to the library's west side, location of its valuable microfiche, regional reporters and the Rhode Island Supreme Court briefs.

Embarking on a shared catalog model, the library joined with Roger Williams University Law School Library to collaborate on sharing a cloud-based catalog system, a partnership that will provide access to a host of resources for both libraries while controlling costs.

In June 2016, the library was the setting for a distinguished dedication ceremony honoring the late Chief Justice Joseph R. Weisberger and naming the library after him. The library's new name proudly reads "Joseph R. Weisberger Law Library." Many justices, court personnel, friends, family and former law clerks gathered to witness this celebration of service to the Judiciary by one of Rhode Island's most revered members of the bench. A plaque was unveiled by Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell and J. Robert Weisberger, the late chief justice's son, commemorating the years and courts in which Chief Justice Weisberger so graciously served with distinction. An archival exhibit of Chief Justice Weisberger's many writings, awards, and published works was compiled and displayed for those in attendance.

JUDICIAL RECORDS CENTER

The Judicial Records Center (JRC) provides secure storage for the semi-active, inactive, and archival records of the Rhode Island court system. The JRC also provides efficient reference services for the courts, members of the bar, and members

of the public who require court records for research purposes.

In 2016, the Records Center accessioned over 198,000 case files in 4,600 boxes. The JRC now stores more than 6.2 million case files in 119,330 cubic foot boxes, and 5,124 manuscript court docket, minute, and record books. The JRC staff responded to more than 147,000 requests for records during the year. These included more than 113,000 records that were viewed at the Records Center. Staff provided access to 77,000 case files for researchers for credit agencies and social policy institutes.

While the Judicial Records Center houses more than 30,000 cubic feet of active and archival court records in its Pawtucket facility, it also manages more than 80,000 boxes of semi-active case files through an offsite records storage vendor.

There were 7,631 archival requests for the pre-1900 court records in 2016. These include requests from genealogists as well as graduate students, lawyers, and professional historians. Scholars used the Judicial Archives to investigate a broad range of topics, including: treatment of African Americans in Colonial Rhode Island, coroner's inquests in 19th-century Rhode Island, the bar in Colonial and early federal Rhode Island, and domestic violence in Colonial Rhode Island. Professors of history and historical preservation from the University of Rhode Island and Roger Williams University conducted classes at the Judicial Archives for their students about the value of the court records as a research resource. The Judicial Archives is also cooperating with the State Archives through the

Secretary of State's Office to investigate the feasibility of establishing a joint State Archives and History Center.

LAW CLERK DEPARTMENT

The Supreme Court Law Clerk Department provides legal research and writing assistance to the trial judges and magistrates of the Rhode Island court system. These law clerks are based in the Providence, Kent, Newport, and Washington County courthouses, and in Cranston at the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal. They assist with the general trial and motion calendars and the special

criminal, and administrative law with increased efficiency by utilizing the new case management system. This new case management system promoted quick access to case pleadings and documents for the law clerks who were able to begin their assignments more quickly, as well as to keep track of additional filings. Also, law clerks were able to work remotely from one courthouse to another to assist other law clerks with caseloads as necessary.

During 2016, the Law Clerks enhanced electronic communication with the judges regarding the status of law clerk research

to offer the Bridge the Gap program for newly admitted attorneys in January 2016 and managed more than 3,500 approved courses and more than 300 active sponsor accounts in the 18-month period that ended on December 31, 2016.

The MCLE Commission worked with 43 chronically delinquent attorneys (some owing up to 10 years of credits) to assist them in setting up compliance plans.

Judicial education programming for calendar year 2016 included a variety of topics to enhance judicial excellence among veteran and newly appointed jurists in all state courts. Programming included one annual in-house conference held at the URI Narragansett Bay Campus, a four-part literature series, and attendance at the Rhode Island Bar Association annual meeting. Topics included sexual harassment training, diversity training, forensic evidence trends in the use of fentanyl, DNA technology, judicial research, and untested factual presentations in amicus briefs.

A number of state judges participated in nationally sponsored judicial education courses offered through the National Judicial College, Yale Law School, the Conference of State Court Administrators, the Conference of Chief Justices, Family Court sponsored conferences, annual bar admission conference, Boston University, George Mason University School of Law, Pawtucket Bar Association, Rhode Island Association for Justice, National Association of Women Judges, and the Rhode Island Community Mediation Center.



A scene from the dedication of the State Law Library as the Joseph R. Weisberger Law Library

The naming of the State Law Library for the late Chief Justice Joseph R. Weisberger pays tribute to one of the most revered members of the bench in the state's history.

calendars – the Business, the Asbestos, the Formal and Special Cause, and Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems (MERS) calendars. Law clerks also serve the Family and District Courts and the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal Appeals Panel. Additionally, law clerks after training can be appointed as guardians ad litem in Mary Moe proceedings. Overall, law clerks gain invaluable exposure to our legal system while serving the judiciary in promoting the administration of justice.

In 2016, the law clerks worked on case assignments encompassing civil,

and writing assignments to facilitate the tracking of case progress. Law clerks from the general trial calendar also assisted more with the special calendar assignments to balance workloads most efficiently.

MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

The Rhode Island Supreme Court Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Commission concluded its fourth full year of electronic filing on June 30, 2016.

In addition, the MCLE office worked with the Rhode Island Bar Association

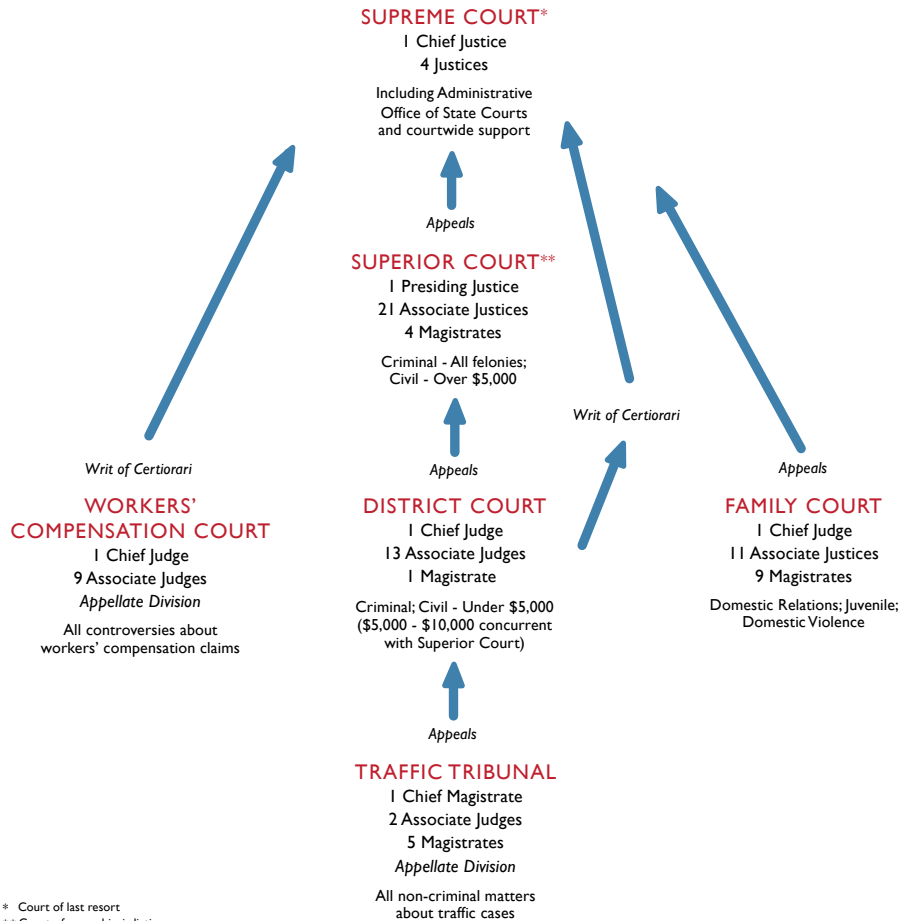
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TRAINING AND MONITORING UNIT

As an active member of the Violence Against Women Act Law Enforcement Training Committee, the director of the Supreme Court Domestic Violence Training and Monitoring Unit assisted in trainings for the Rhode Island State Police academy and the Rhode Island Municipal Police Training Academy. She was one of the trainers for the Portsmouth, Middletown and East Providence police departments' in-service trainings, and instructed at one of three regional dispatcher trainings that were presented by the Training Committee.

The unit reviewed 5,684 domestic violence/sexual assault forms during 2016. The Unit distributed 13,900 of its Victim Information and Safety Planning pamphlets in English, Spanish and Portuguese to law enforcement departments throughout the state.

NAVIGATING *the* COURT SYSTEM

Rhode Island Court Structure



* Court of last resort
** Court of general jurisdiction
All other courts have limited jurisdiction

COURT GOVERNANCE and ADMINISTRATION



The chief judicial officers of the six courts in Rhode Island's unified judicial system are, from left: Superior Court Presiding Justice Alice Bridget Gibney; Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell; Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal Chief Magistrate William R. Guglietta; Family Court Chief Judge Michael B. Forte; Workers' Compensation Court Chief Judge Robert M. Ferrieri; and District Court Chief Judge Jeanne E. LaFazia.



The administrators of the six courts in Rhode Island's unified judicial system are, from left, Ronald Pagliarini (Family Court); Joseph V. Conley (Superior Court); J. Joseph Baxter, Jr. (Supreme Court); Stephen C. Waluk (District Court); John F. McBurney IV (Workers' Compensation Court), and Steven Sao Bento (Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal).

SUPREME COURT



With Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell, seated, from left to right, Maureen McKenna Goldberg, William P. Robinson III, Francis X. Flaherty, and Gilbert V. Indeglia.

FAMILY COURT



Bottom, left to right: Karen Lynch Bernard, Debra E. DiSegna, Stephen J. Capineri, Michael B. Forte (Chief Judge), Lauren D'Ambra, John E. McCann III, and Patricia K. Asquith.
Top, left to right: Armando O. Monaco II, Jeanne L. Shepard, George N. DiMuro, Feidlim Gill, Lia N. Stuhlsatz, Sandra A. Lanni, Rossie Lee Harris, Angela M. Paulhus, Edward H. Newman, Paul T. Jones, Jr., and Charles J. Levesque.

SUPERIOR COURT



Bottom, left to right: Edward C. Clifton (retired), Patricia A. Hurst, Robert D. Krause, Alice Bridget Gibney (Presiding Justice), Melanie Wilk Thunberg, Michael A. Silverstein, and Netti C. Vogel.
Second row, left to right: Walter R. Stone, Kristin E. Rodgers, William E. Carnes, Jr., Jeffrey A. Lanphear, Susan E. McGuirl, Stephen P. Nugent, Daniel A. Procaccini, Allen P. Rubine, Bennett R. Gallo, and Brian P. Stern.
Top, left to right: John J. Flynn, Patrick T. Burke, Richard A. Licht, Luis M. Matos, Brian Van Couyghen, Sarah Taft-Carter, Joseph A. Montalbano, Patricia L. Harwood, and John F. McBurney III.
Not pictured: Maureen B. Keough

DISTRICT COURT



Bottom, left to right: Mary E. McCaffrey, William C. Clifton, Elaine T. Bucci, Jeanne E. LaFazia (Chief Judge), Madeline Quirk, Pamela Woodcock Pfeiffer, and Anthony Capraro, Jr.
Top, left to right: Joseph P. Ippolito, Jr., James J. Caruolo, Christine S. Jabour, Joseph T. Houlihan, Jr., Colleen M. Hastings, Stephen M. Isherwood, and Brian A. Goldman. Absent: Rafael A. Ovalles.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT



Bottom, left to right: Debra L. Olsson, Robert M. Ferrieri (Chief Judge), and Janette A. Bertness.
Top, left to right: Michael J. Feeney, Hugo L. Ricci, Jr., Dianne M. Connor, George T. Salem, Jr., and Robert E. Hardman.

RHODE ISLAND TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL



Bottom, left to right: Lillian M. Almeida, William R. Guglietta (Chief Magistrate), and Edward C. Parker.
Top, left to right: Joseph A. Abbate, R. David Cruise (resigned), Domenic A. DiSandro III, Alan R. Goulart, and William T. Noonan. Not pictured: Erika Kruse Weller.

RECOGNITION

New Judicial Officers in 2016



Honorable Michael B. Forte
Chief Judge
FAMILY COURT



Honorable Robert Ferrieri
Chief Judge
WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT



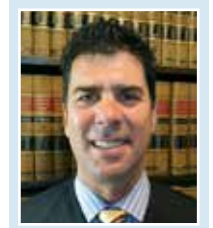
Honorable Maureen B. Keough
Associate Justice
SUPERIOR COURT



Honorable Rossie L. Harris
Associate Justice
FAMILY COURT



Honorable Lia N. Stuhlsatz
Associate Justice
FAMILY COURT



Honorable James J. Caruolo
Associate Judge
DISTRICT COURT



Honorable Brian A. Goldman
Associate Judge
DISTRICT COURT



Honorable Michael J. Feeney
Associate Judge
WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT



Honorable Erika Kruse Weller
Magistrate
TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL



Retirement
Honorable Patricia A. Hurst
Associate Justice
SUPERIOR COURT



CASELOAD DATA CHARTS

AT A GLANCE

JUDGES	EMPLOYEES	FACILITIES
65 Judges (5 vacancies) 25 Female 4 Minorities	FTE Count 723.3 Authorized 670.4 Average Filled	6 Courthouses (2 Administrative Buildings) 79 Courtrooms (4 Grand Jury Rooms, 2 Mental Health Courtrooms)
19 Magistrates (1 vacancy) 4 Female		

Total Filings in 2016 **167,504**

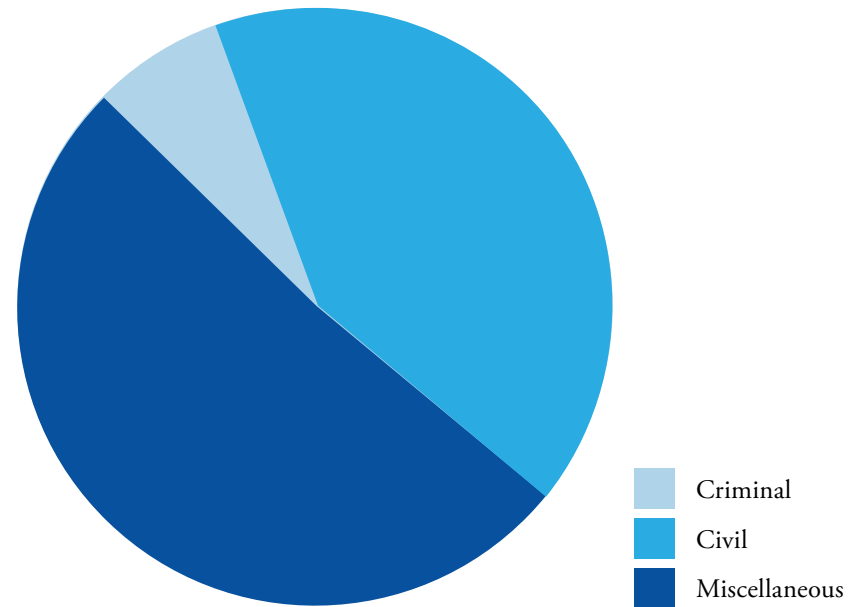
Total Dispositions in 2016 **163,678**



SUPREME COURT

2016 Appellate Caseload

Criminal	25
Civil	149
Miscellaneous	184
Total Filed	358
Total Disposed	352



NOTE: All figures are estimates generated from Odyssey operational reports.

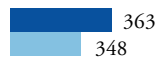
SUPERIOR COURT

2016 Superior Court Caseload

Felony



Misdemeanor



Civil



Total Filed = 13,739 **Total Disposed = 14,753**

NOTE: All figures are estimates generated from Odyssey operational reports.

*Civil dispositions include a mass dismissal of cases with no action in 5 years (n=3,567).

Adult Drug Court



Number of graduates since 2009 = 399

FAMILY COURT

2016 Family Court Caseload

Juvenile

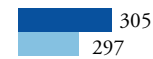
Wayward/Delinquent



Dependency/Neglect/Abuse



Termination of Parental Rights



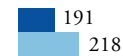
Adoption/Guardianship



Violations



Other



Domestic/Other

Divorce



Abuse



Miscellaneous



Child Support



Total Filed = 14,766** **Total Disposed = 11,516****

*Estimated figures are generated by Odyssey operational reports.

**Estimates calculated with figures from both the JMS system and Odyssey operational reports.

DISTRICT COURT

2016 District Court Caseload

Misdemeanor



Felony



Small Claims



Civil



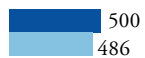
Abuse



Administrative Appeals



Mental Health Hearings



Total Filed = 56,445 **Total Disposed = 53,403**

NOTE: All figures are estimates generated from Odyssey operational reports.

Post Judgment Hearings



WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT

2016 Workers' Compensation Court Caseload

Employee Petitions to Review



Employer Petitions to Review



Lump Sum Settlement



Miscellaneous Petitions



Original Petitions



Petitions for Medical



Petitions to Enforce



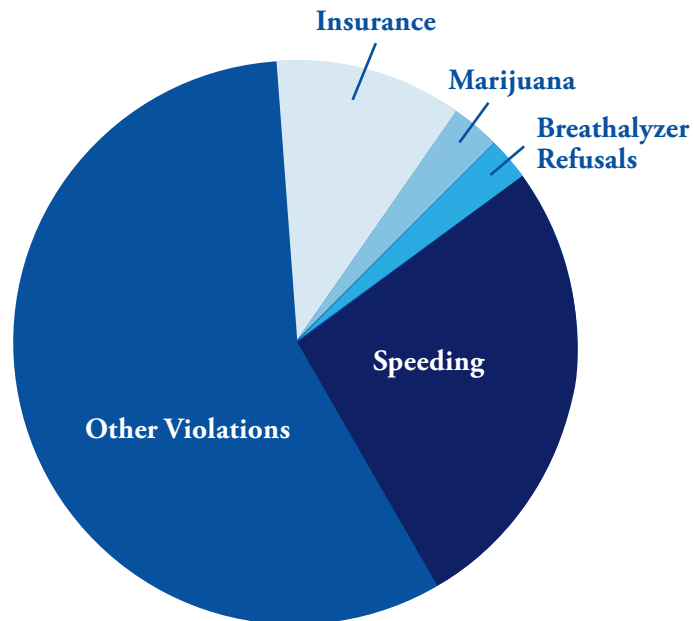
Total Filed = 7,616 **Total Disposed = 7,539**

RHODE ISLAND TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL

2016 Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal Caseload

Traffic Tribunal Summonses Issued	81,549
Total Summonses Disposed	79,224
Traffic Tribunal Violations	
Insurance	9,932
Marijuana	2,438
Breathalyzer Refusals	2,079
Speeding	26,926
Other Violations	59,454
<hr/>	
Total Violations	100,829

NOTE: All figures are estimates generated from Odyssey operational reports.



PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

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Page 20 – Supreme Court, Holly Hitchcock
Page 21 – Family Court and District Court, Craig Berke
Page 22 – Workers' Compensation Court, Craig Berke

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Office of Community Outreach and Public Relations