



Annual Report 2009

20th Judicial Circuit and
Ottawa County Probate Courts
Ottawa County, Michigan

www.miottawa.org/Courts

The 20th Judicial Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts 2009 Annual Report

Inspiring Public Trust

The theme of the 2009 Annual Report is “inspiring public trust” – a foundational principle of the Courts’ mission. The development of public trust in the Courts requires the essence of transparency, a culture of accountability, the ability to form meaningful relationships, quality service delivery and people of integrity. The Courts are committed to addressing these elements of trust through day-to-day practice, effective programming and vision.

The 2009 Annual Report contains caseload data that demonstrates the Courts’ accountability and reflects the work in which judges and Court staff are engaged. Various programs are highlighted throughout the Report that reflects effective, innovative programming and quality services while being responsible stewards of the taxpayers dollar. Honoring the significant partnerships with several organizations notes how such relationships enhance the quality of Court services. These community partnerships translate into effective programming and a continuum of service for clients within a culture of openness and transparency. All of this is a true reflection of the Courts’ integrity in the process of administering justice and inspiring public trust!



EDWARD R. POST
CHIEF CIRCUIT JUDGE – TRIAL DIVISION

CALVIN L. BOSMAN
CIRCUIT JUDGE – TRIAL DIVISION

JON H. HULSING
CIRCUIT JUDGE – FAMILY DIVISION

JON A. VAN ALLSBURG
CIRCUIT JUDGE – FAMILY DIVISION

MARK A. FEYEN
CHIEF PROBATE JUDGE – FAMILY DIVISION

STATE OF MICHIGAN



TWENTIETH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT
OTTAWA COUNTY

KEVIN J. BOWLING, JD
CIRCUIT COURT ADMINISTRATOR

July 13, 2010

Ottawa County Board of Commissioners
12220 Fillmore Street
West Olive, MI 49460

Dear Commissioners:

In many ways 2009 was a remarkable year for the 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts. Perhaps the most notable change in the justice system was the completion of the Ottawa County Courthouse in Grand Haven and the successful transition of many staff and offices without adversely affecting public access to the courts. As a result of your foresight, financial planning and leadership, the people of Ottawa County have a great facility where they can gather to peacefully resolve disputes, witness the constitution in action and see the rule of law prevail.

As information was gathered for this 2009 Annual Report, the theme of “Inspiring Public Trust” easily emerged. The important strategic planning efforts undertaken by the Circuit and Probate Courts has resulted in numerous improvements and efficiencies, all of which point to the Courts’ mission “*To administer justice and restore wholeness in a manner that inspires public trust*”.

People do not trust what they do not understand; consequently it is incumbent on the Courts’ to be accessible and transparent while educating the public about the purpose of courts and providing appropriate assistance when needed. As representatives of the judicial branch of government in Ottawa County, the judges and court staff educate and assist the public every day in courtrooms, clerks’ offices, the Juvenile Detention Center and the community. Special efforts like the Legal Self Help Center, Courthouse Learning Center and Drug Treatment Courts demonstrate the outstanding initiative, knowledge and abilities of court personnel who are genuinely committed to excellence in public service.

It is our pleasure to present the 2009 Annual Report of the 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts. Only through the cooperative efforts of all Ottawa County elected officials, the courts and county departments, will we be able to truly inspire public trust and build a better community for all.

Sincerely,

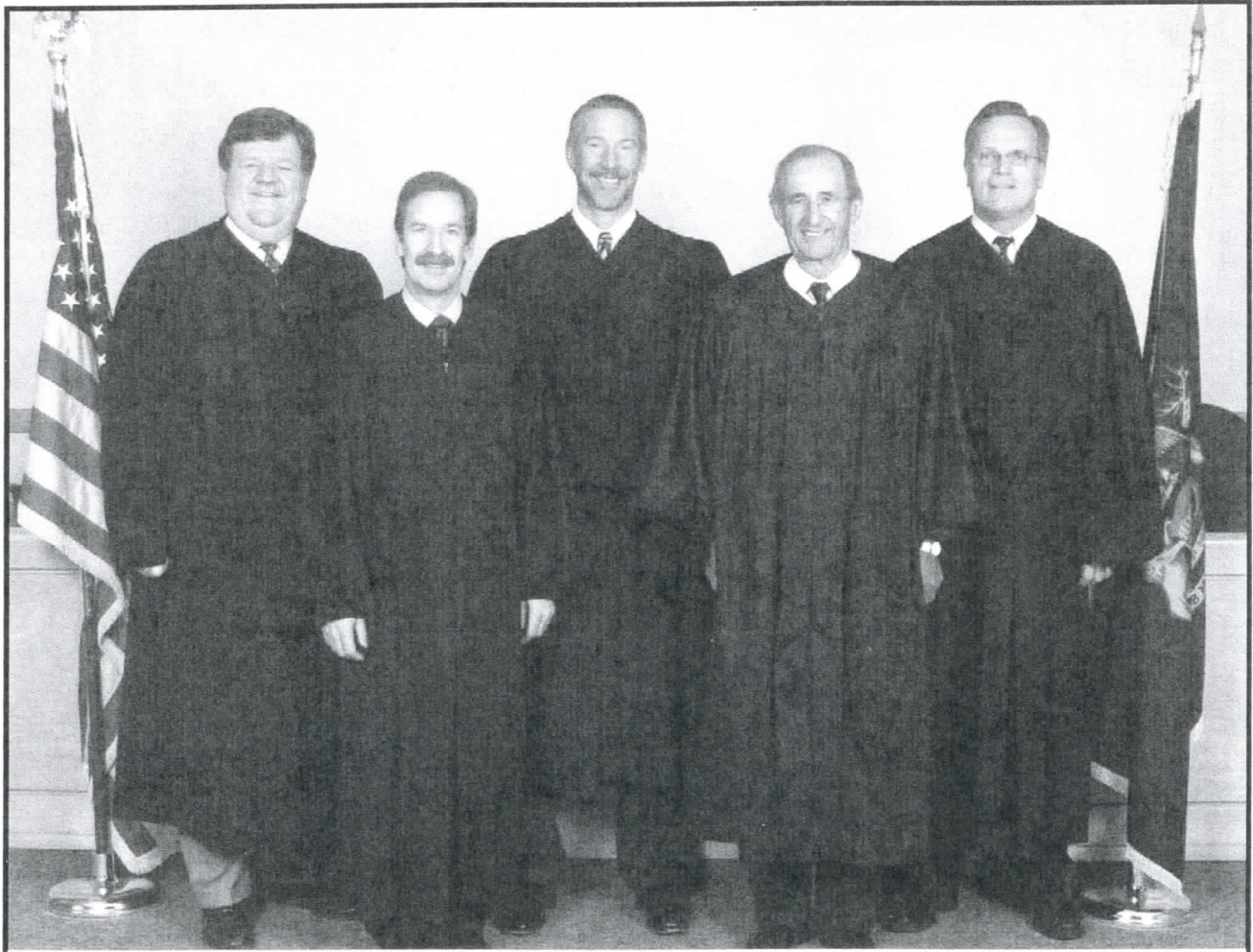
Edward R. Post

Hon. Edward R. Post
Chief Judge, 20th Circuit Court

Mark A. Feyen

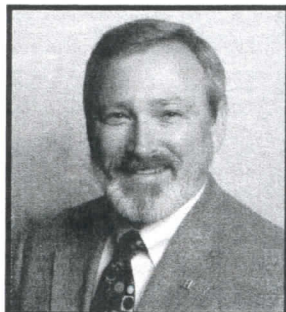
Hon. Mark A. Feyen
Chief Judge, Probate Court

20th Judicial Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Court Judges



From left to right: Hon. Edward R. Post— Chief Circuit Judge, Hon. Jon A. Van Allsburg — Circuit Judge, Hon. Jon Hulsing — Circuit Judge, Hon. Calvin L. Bosman — Circuit Judge, and Hon. Mark A. Feyen — Chief Probate Judge

The Circuit Court has four (4) elected judges who preside over the courtrooms, trials and a variety of civil and criminal hearings. The Probate Court has one (1) elected judge who handles all Probate matters and assists in the Family Division of the Circuit Court. The Chief Judges are selected by the Supreme Court for two year terms.



Circuit and Probate Court Administrator

The Court Administrator provides a clear vision and leadership for all Court employees. He is also responsible for all administrative functions, strategic planning, caseload, personnel and financial management of the Courts and is directly accountable to the Chief Judges.

Strategic Planning: The Blueprint of the Courts

In 2004, the 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts embarked on a rigorous and ongoing strategic planning process. At that time, the Courts developed their mission and vision statements, which continue to be the driving force of the Courts' daily operations. In 2008, the strategic plan was updated to reflect goals through 2010 including the revision of the Mission and Vision Statements. In addition, the Court identified several Values as they are foundational to the day-to-day function.

A mission statement expresses the fundamental purpose of an organization. The 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts express their mission as follows:

Mission Statement

To administer justice and restore wholeness in a manner that inspires public trust

A vision statement defines a preferred future of an organization. The Courts' vision statement reflects the Court's ideal as follows:

Vision Statement

As a leader among Courts we exemplify high standards for justice and public service.

Values Statement

As courts serving the public, we embrace the following values:

C = Collaboration
O = Operational Excellence
U = Understanding
R = Responsiveness
T = Transparency
S = Service

Although the Courts are driven by their mission, vision and value statements, the five dedicated strategic issue teams – Resources, Access to Courts, Efficient/Effective Services and Operations, Positive External Relations and Employee Opportunities and Satisfaction – keep the strategic plan alive on a daily basis. Through the efforts of each team, the Courts, the County and most importantly, the public, continue to benefit.

To administer justice...

Legal Self-Help Center: Helping Self-Represented Litigants

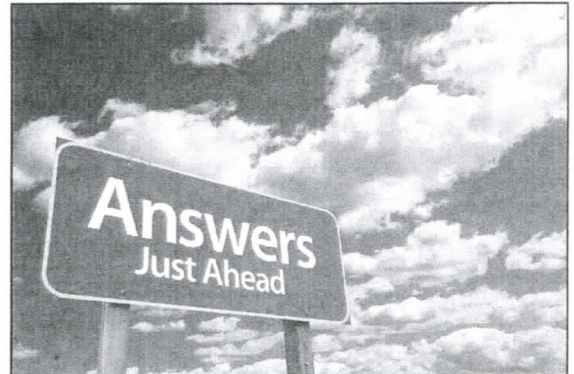
Establishing the Legal Self-Help Center has been a long, but satisfying journey for the “Access to Justice” team of the Circuit and Probate Court’s Strategic Planning initiative.

The goal of the Legal Self-Help Center is to assist self-represented litigants navigate the legal process by providing forms, instructions and information on Michigan court process. Additionally, staff is trained to recognize opportunities for referral to research, reference materials, private attorneys and related agencies such as Mediation Services and Legal Aid of Western Michigan.

The Center was opened in the Ottawa County Courthouse and supported by the County through the allocation of space and furnishings. A generous grant from the Zenko Family Field of Interest fund and the Marian A. and Ruth K. Sherwood Family Fund of the Grand Haven Community Foundation provided necessary initial funding for computers, staff training and operating supplies. As soon as the Center opened, the public began to arrive.

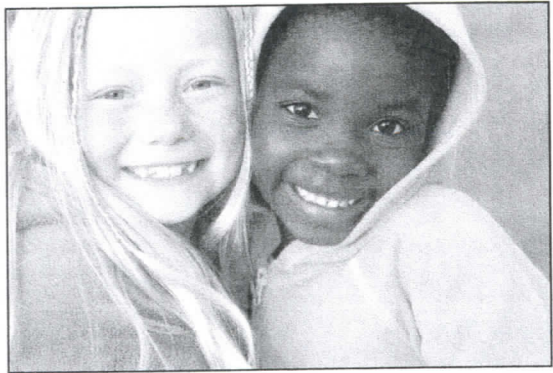
The Center is open several hours each day thanks to an enthusiastic and dedicated group of volunteers. The volunteer staff is a mixture of local attorneys and law students from Cooley Law School who are trained and assisted by Court staff. In the first six months of operation, the Legal Self Help Center served approximately 1,500 members of the public. Based on the intake data provided, 47% of the patrons live in the Holland/Zeeland area, 14% live in the Grand Haven/Spring Lake area, and the remaining 39% hail from numerous communities, including Marne, Allendale, Coopersville, Jenison and Hudsonville. Nearly two-thirds of the patrons reported income of less than \$30,000 per year.

The Legal Self-Help Center remains a work in progress as the “Access to Justice” team strives to improve court services for the citizens of Ottawa County and ensure access to the Courts by eventually including legal self help services in all Ottawa County court facilities.



Friend of the Court

Child support collection falls under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. The Friend of the Court office operates as a IV-D agency and a large part of the expense of operating the office (approximately 66%) is reimbursed by Federal funds through a State Cooperative Reimbursement Contract.

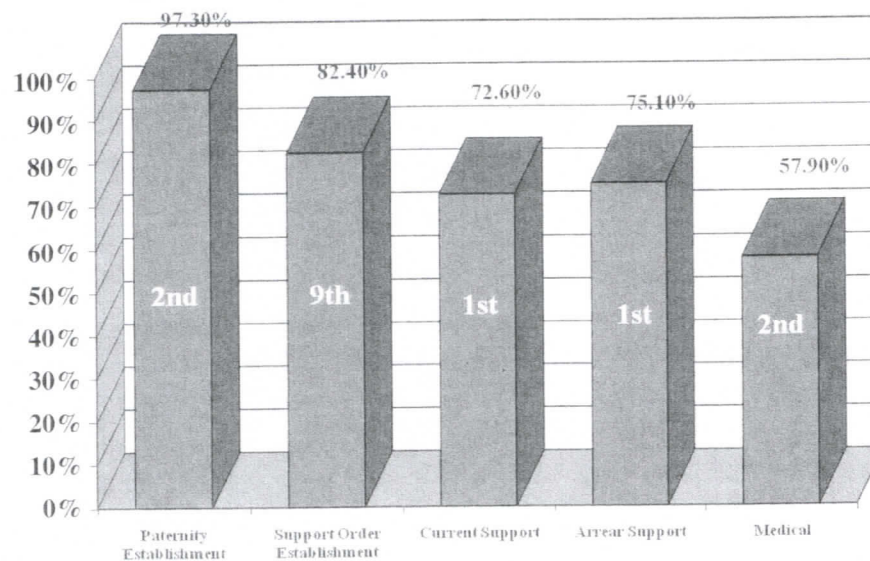


The Friend of the Court office also defrays operating costs by earning incentive dollars based on performance. As set forth in the 1998 Child Support Performance and Incentive Act, the performance of each IV-D agency is measured in five key areas. State child support enforcement programs across the country are measured in Paternity Establishment, Support Order Establishment, Collections on Current Support, Collections on Arrears, and Cost Effectiveness. Medical support establishment/enforcement is also measured, although it is not currently a factor that results in earned incentives. It is expected to be included as a performance factor in the future.

When the Friend of the Court office in Ottawa County measures itself against the sixteen (16) largest counties in Michigan, its performance is notable in all areas. This high performance not only helps secure child support for families and children in Ottawa County, but results in earned incentive dollars that reduce the amount of Ottawa County general fund dollars needed to fund the program. In 2009, the total Federal incentive dollars earned was \$311,511.

Additionally, the Friend of the Court was ranked as one of the top two large counties in Michigan in respect to cost effectiveness, collecting \$11.26 for every dollar spent.

Ottawa County Comparison to Large County 2009 Performance Levels



Court Management Program (CMP): Forty-three Successfully Complete

Several Circuit, District and Probate Court employees from five jurisdictions and two employees from the Ottawa County Clerks Office recently completed an intensive, nationally recognized program in court management. This program is offered through the National Center for State Courts – Institute for Court Management.

The Court Management Program (CMP) addresses the training needs of mid-level court managers. Phase I of the national program courses are open to all. The Concluding Seminar certification is only available to those who have successfully completed the five core courses of the program.

Phase I consists of five core courses:

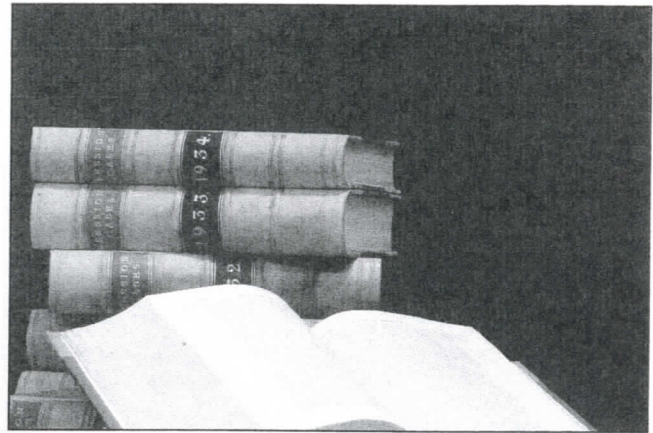
- Court Performance Standards: CourTools
- Fundamental Issues of Caseflow Management
- Managing Court Financial Resources
- Managing Human Resources
- Managing Technology Projects and Technology Resources

The Concluding Seminar is a weeklong course combining elements of leadership, management techniques and specific court issues in a program that provides participants with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to achieve their professional goals as court managers. Incorporating nationally recognized articles and books on leadership, management and court issues, this course expands upon and integrates court management competencies identified in the NACM Core Competencies.

Participants built upon the Phase I foundational courses and explored the roles and purposes of courts; dealt with the concepts of judicial independence and interdependence; became familiar with various leadership and management theories as they apply to courts; took time to recognize and appreciate their own conceptual and interpersonal skills, as well as those of others. In addition, participants developed new team building techniques and through interactive group work, understood the importance of good communication as they moved to higher levels of critical thinking.

Participants had to apply for the opportunity to participate in CMP and commit to class work and practical skill applications spanning a three year period. Each core seminar was two and a half days and the Concluding Seminar was a five day experience. The Concluding Seminar culminated in a formal graduation ceremony, attended by the Ottawa County Judges, and the awarding of “Certified Court Manager” certificates from the National Center for State Courts.

Conducting the CMP in Ottawa County was a direct result of the 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts’ strategic planning efforts. It required extensive coordination among many staff members and their collective efforts are gratefully acknowledged. Program costs were mostly funded by generous grants from the State Justice Institute.



CMP Certificate Recipients include:

Bob Alward	20th Circuit Court – Juvenile Detention
Kelly Aylsworth	20th Circuit Court – Trial Division
Jeff Bewalda	20th Circuit Court – Treatment Services
Nicole Bierema	20th Circuit Court – Juvenile Services
Kevin J. Bowling	20th Circuit Court – Court Administrator
Lyvanh Braak	58th District Court – Court Services Coordinator
Beth Burguard	20th Circuit Court – Treatment Services
Lori Catalino	Ottawa County Clerks Office – Asst. Chief Deputy Clerk
Jennell L. Challa	20th Circuit Court – Friend of the Court
Betty Claar	20th Circuit Court – Program Supervisor
Katrina Cooper	ImageSoft Technology (formerly 58 th District Court)
Christie Custer	20th Circuit Court – Treatment Services
Patty Dahlman	20th Circuit Court – Treatment Services
Penni DeWitt	Ottawa County Probate Court – Probate Register
Cindy Driver	58th District Court – Trial Court Specialist
Floyd Fonte	20th Circuit Court – Juvenile Services
Kathlyn Gould	20th Circuit Court – Trial Division
Kathryn Griffin	45th Circuit Court – St. Joseph County
Casey Henry	20th Circuit Court – Juvenile Services
Sue Hornacek	20th Circuit Court – Juvenile Detention
Kristie Keltie	20th Circuit Court – Friend of the Court
Jami Kordecki	14th Circuit Court – Muskegon County
Michelle Krieger	20th Circuit Court – Juvenile Detention
Karen Lamb	20th Circuit Court – Friend of the Court
Paul Lindemuth	20th Circuit Court – Juvenile Services
Tammy Lutz	20th Circuit Court – Juvenile Services
Lily Marx	20th Circuit Court – Juvenile Detention
Reyna Masko	20th Circuit Court – Friend of the Court
Sandra K. Metcalf	20th Circuit Court – Juvenile Services
Tom Miller	20th Circuit Court – Friend of the Court
Andy Park	20th Circuit Court – Juvenile Detention
Jodi Salacina	58th District Court – Director, Probation
Sherri Sayles	Ottawa County Clerks Office – Chief Deputy Clerk
Theresa Schaefer	20th Circuit Court – Trial Division
Eric Stevens	14th Circuit Court – Muskegon County
Rick Taylor	20th Circuit Court – Juvenile Services
Alma Valenzuela	58th District Court – Assistant Director, Probation
Sherry VanBemmelen	20th Circuit Court – Friend of the Court
Alan Vandenbosch	20th Circuit Court – Juvenile Services
Mark Westrate	20th Circuit Court – Juvenile Services
James Winkle	20th Circuit Court – Treatment Services
Josh Wise	20th Circuit Court – Friend of the Court
Peter Zeedyk	20th Circuit Court – Juvenile Services

Drug Treatment Courts Celebrate Their Five Year Mark

During the past five years, the Ottawa County Courts have stretched staff and resources to provide the community with outstanding services through the 20th Circuit Adult Drug Treatment Court, the 20th Circuit Juvenile Drug Treatment Court and the 58th District Sobriety Court. Hundreds of participants have been screened for legal eligibility and evidence of severe alcohol and drug addictions. Once admitted to these programs, participants are carefully monitored, frequently tested for use of illegal substances and required to participate in addiction treatment programs. In addition, participants are required to work or attend school, perform community service and pay court ordered restitution, fines, costs, etc. Many have successfully graduated and changed their lives, while others have relapsed and continue to struggle. For the judges, court staff, attorneys, probation officers, treatment providers and program participants, it is clear the Drug Treatment Court model works and changes lives. It is not a perfect program and improvements can be made, however, it has positively impacted the lives of many in our community.

The following is an excerpt from a recent publication of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. It demonstrates the brief experience with Drug Treatment Courts in Ottawa County is shared with many jurisdictions throughout the nation.

THE VERDICT IS IN...

In 20 years since the first Drug Court was founded, there has been more research published on the effects of Drug Courts than on virtually all other criminal justice programs combined.

The scientific community has put Drug Courts under a microscope and concluded that Drug Courts work. Better than jail or prison. Better than probation and treatment alone. Drug Courts significantly reduce drug use and crime and are more cost-effective than any other proven criminal justice strategy.

+ Drug Courts Reduce Crime

FACT: Nationwide, 75% of Drug Court graduates remain arrest-free at least two years after leaving the program.

FACT: Rigorous studies examining long-term outcomes of individual Drug Courts have found that reductions in crime last at least 3 years and can endure for over 14 years.

FACT: The most rigorous and conservative scientific “meta-analyses” have all concluded that Drug Courts significantly reduce crime as much as 35 percent more than other sentencing options.

+ Drug Courts Save Money

FACT: Nationwide, for every \$1.00 invested in Drug Court, taxpayers save as much as \$3.36 in avoided criminal justice costs alone.

FACT: When considering other cost offsets such as savings from reduced victimization and healthcare service utilization, studies have shown benefits range up to \$12 for every \$1 invested.

FACT: Drug Courts produce cost savings ranging from \$4,000 to \$12,000 per client. These cost savings reflect reduced prison costs, reduced revolving-door arrests and trials, and reduced victimization.

FACT: In 2007, for every Federal dollar invested in Drug Court, \$9.00 was leveraged in state funding.

+ Drug Courts Ensure Compliance

FACT: Unless substance abusing/addicted offenders are regularly supervised by a judge and held accountable, 70% drop out of treatment prematurely.

FACT: Drug Courts provide more comprehensive and closer supervision than other community-based supervision programs.

FACT: Drug Courts are six times more likely to keep offenders in treatment long enough for them to get better.

...and restore wholeness...

Sharing Their Talent With the Community:

Court Youth and ArtPrize!

When youth are placed in the Ottawa County Juvenile Detention Center, their artistic talents are frequently revealed. The 2009 year reflected clear evidence of this as they combined their artistic talents with the ability to give back to the community.

Under the direction of the Center's art teacher, Angie Briggs-Johnson, residents excitedly worked together to create a mural entitled "Crossroads" for the ArtPrize 2009 competition in Grand Rapids. Residents worked in various capacities on the mural, from determining a theme, design ideas, actual painting, title ideas and continual critiques throughout the design process.



The mural was hung at the venue of God's Kitchen in downtown Grand Rapids. When the mural was completed in early June, it had taken more than 80 hours to complete. The youth entitled their creation Crossroads. Ms. Briggs-Johnson reflected that, "We wanted a piece of art that reflected a little bit of everyone involved in its creation, so we began the work without a title, and when it was almost finished, we began to brainstorm ideas." The title suggestion was submitted by one of the residents because it depicted all of the youth who worked on it coming together from different places and experiences to the same 'crossroads'. In addition, the residents and staff created individual soup bowls that were auctioned by God's Kitchen as a fundraiser.

Assisting youth to appropriately connect with their community is important for youth who have challenges and are involved in the legal system. Through capitalizing on their strengths – their talent – the Court is able to teach the true meaning and value of community membership. The ArtPrize experience was a perfect example of this. "Crossroads" is currently on display at the Fillmore Complex, Juvenile Services Lobby.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

The 20th Circuit Court Trial Division continues to use innovative Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods in an effort to provide litigants with a variety of means to resolve disputes in lieu of court adjudication or formal court intervention.

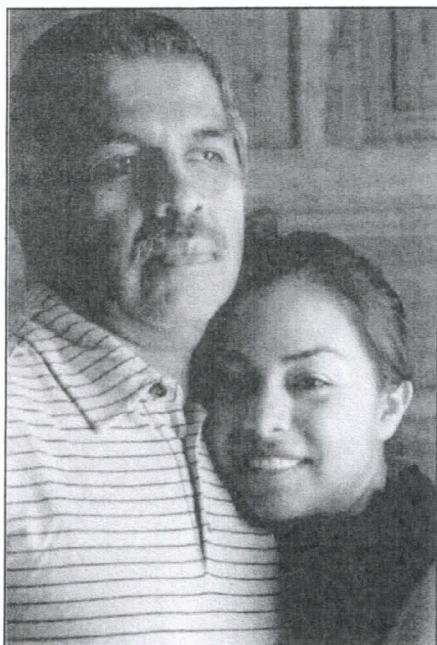
There are several types of mediation and one that is effectively used by the Trial Division to resolve monetary disputes is Case Evaluation. Case Evaluation consists of a panel of three attorneys who review a case and help in the settlement process by determining the realistic monetary value of a dispute.



In 2009 a total of 254 cases were scheduled for Case Evaluation. Of those cases, 88 were presented to the case evaluation panel, leaving 166 cases that settled prior to being heard by the case evaluation panel. Of the 254 cases, only 70 cases required placement on the court's trial calendar.

For more information, a copy of the Court's ADR Plan is available on the Ottawa County Website: www.miottawa.org/courts.

Helping Victims Through Their Court Experience



When a juvenile offender enters the 20th Circuit Court, Juvenile Services Division, the case is often prior to accompanied by one or more victims. To better support victims throughout the court process, Juvenile Services has implemented a new Victim Support Services Program. This program compliments the victim's rights statute implemented by the Prosecuting Attorney's Office.

The purpose of the Victim Support Services Program is to facilitate understanding and focus the attention on repairing the harm to victims of juvenile offenders while holding the offenders accountable for their actions.

The objectives of the program focus on opportunities to restore justice and include:

Increased contacts with victims through the use of letters, telephone calls, e-mails and face-to-face meetings. A court contact person assists in answering victims' questions on everything from restitution to court procedure.

Encouraged use of mediation by educating the victim and offender about the restorative benefits of mediation and interfacing with court staff and Mediation Services;

Increased competency development for offenders by the use of victim impact panels, community service, job search, service learning projects and pro-social events;

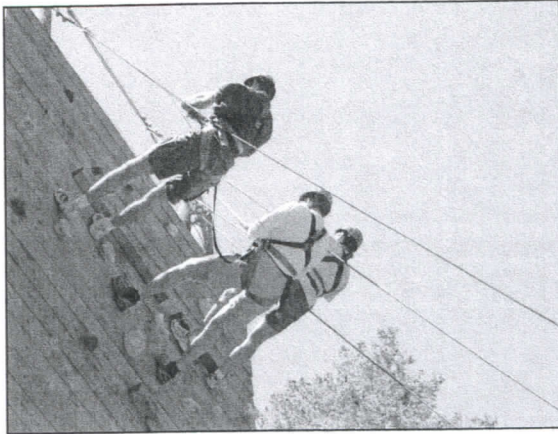
Increased offender referrals to community-based services such as mental health, substance abuse, financial planning, job search, vocational and educational opportunities;

Increased amounts of restitution collected for victims by providing oversight to the processing of juvenile cases and working with victims to provide accurate information to the court;

Increased awareness of the Crime Victim's Compensation Fund through the education of court staff and victims.

Juvenile Services is committed to providing exemplary judicial and social services to juveniles, their families, and victims of crime, recognizing victims often don't know where to go for help. The Victim Support Services Program is designed to improve the Court's response to victims through a balanced and restorative justice approach.

An Invitation to Challenge Yourself and Your Team!



Experiential learning and ropes courses have been popular throughout the United States for the past 25 years. Programs can be designed to meet a number of educational, developmental and recreational goals. They offer groups and individuals opportunity to learn about risk-taking, personal perceived limits, performance under pressure and how one gives/receives support from others. In addition, such courses can assist a person in learning how to work collaboratively with others and achieve more than they imagined.

The Juvenile Services Division of the 20th Circuit Court has operated and maintained the ropes course since it was built in 1995. The Course is annually inspected and certified for safety by Experiential Systems, Inc. in accordance with the Association for Challenge Course Technology, the Association for Experiential Education and the Climbing Wall Association. Juvenile Services staff are trained and certified in proper procedures, debriefing of groups and maintenance of the equipment used at the course.

The Course is comprised of high and low elements and is located in a wooded area behind the Ottawa County Administration Building at the Fillmore Street Complex. The high elements include: high ropes course, climbing tower and the pamper pole. The low elements consist of 13 ground-based challenge elements.

On the high ropes course personal achievement is the focus and participants may be asked to confront their personal fears and anxieties. The challenges can be physical and/or emotional in nature. The high element program involves the development and mastery of various technical skills to manage rope belay systems used to secure other climbers as they move through the course. Outcomes include exploring the fundamentals of trust, skill and coaching.

The low ropes course elements or group initiatives are designed to explore group interaction, problem-solving and leadership skills. Some of the observed outcomes include the enhancement of: cooperation, decision-making, self-confidence, positive risk taking, trust, leadership, goal setting, and teamwork. Ropes course programs may be used with youth or adults and in settings such as schools, colleges and businesses. Each program can be tailored to the needs of the group.

The Court is excited to announce the opening of the Juvenile Services' Ropes Course to external groups beginning spring 2010. For more information and to schedule your group, please contact:
616 -786-4100.

The Lighthouse Program: Exemplary Treatment Services for Adolescent Female Offenders



Although Juvenile Services addresses the needs of male and female offenders, the Court has increasingly become aware of the different needs these two populations manifest. Girls are definitely different than boys!

Approximately one-third of the juvenile cases filed with the Court involve adolescent female offenders. The tendency nationwide is to provide the same services for male and female offenders. However, research clearly indicates the needs are dramatically different and require significantly different responses to improve outcomes. For instance, girls are typically motivated more by relationships with others and thus, they respond better to a relationally-focused program. Girls enter the court system with different histories – usually long histories of trauma and abuse – and require appropriate, individualized, therapeutic interventions. Their motivations toward crime are different, and they are motivated toward change, differently. Some girls are also single, teen mothers and require different interventions.

The Lighthouse program is a 90 day residential treatment program in the Ottawa County Detention Center. It is specifically designed to meet the individual needs of adolescent female offenders and incorporates the Six Domains of Adolescent Development into a varied, dynamic program. Treatment approaches include participation in community-based activities that build skills. Due to the relational needs of the girls, the program is deliberately staff intensive and strives to engage appropriate adult female mentors from the community to partner with program staff toward building a strong sense of community with the girls.

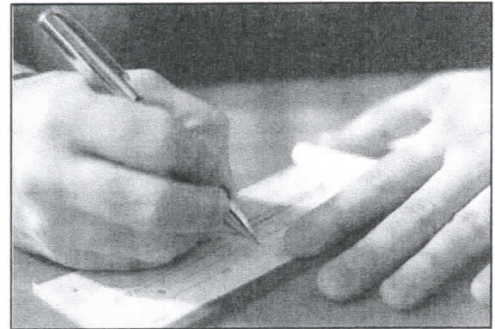
Some of the program beds are available to girls from other counties. A reasonable per diem rate allows the Court to offset program costs and provide a continuum of care as appropriate for all the Court-involved juveniles.

By meeting the needs of all youth who enter the Court's doors, the quality of life in Ottawa County is improved for all.

...in a manner that inspires public trust.

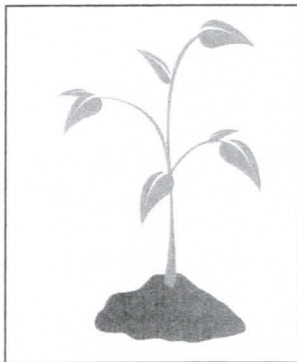
Felony Collections

During 2009, a total of \$883,618 was collected by the 20th Circuit Court in the form of fines, costs and restitution by persons convicted of a felony. Of that amount, \$454,598 (51.4%) represents restitution paid to crime victims. A large percentage of that restitution figure has been paid directly to Ottawa County residents and businesses. These numbers are remarkable considering the current state of Michigan's economy.



It remains the goal of the 20th Circuit Court to hold defendants accountable for their crimes against citizens of Ottawa County and to aggressively pursue those who are assessed monetary sanctions as a result of their criminal behavior.

Going Green



In 2004, the 20th Circuit Court and Ottawa County Probate Courts embarked on a rigorous and ongoing strategic planning process. Through this process, the "Going Green" project was initiated to assist the court in becoming increasingly environmentally friendly and to save dollars.

Several studies have reflected monies saved by turning off each computer at night; the impact of bottled water on our economy and our environment; the costs involved in recycling paper products; the feasibility of a County Swap (the equivalent of a County "Craig's List"); turning off all office lights; and other approaches to cost/environmental savings.

Information gathered through this initiative will be shared in the Court's electronic newsletter *The Court Communicator*. Copies are available to external agencies upon request.

Juvenile Services Continues to Measure the Value of Programming: The Community Report Card

For a number of years, the Court has looked at various methods to measure the performance of probation and other court programs. Recidivism is often used as a court performance measure, i.e., whether a probationer commits a new crime. However, recidivism does not provide a complete picture because the lack of a national measuring standard makes it an unreliable and almost an impossible method of measuring success or failure. To address this issue and more accurately measure outcomes, the Court has begun illustrating the restorative activities staff use with young people subject to the Court's jurisdiction.



In 2009, Juvenile Services began utilizing a nationally recognized Community Report Card model to measure and assess court supervision of juveniles. In addition, this Report Card provides a tool for court administration to evaluate programs and community-based interventions.

The following represent benchmarks and outcomes in four categories for the 743 cases closed during 2009:

Community Protection – enforcing court orders and monitoring youth to ensure a reduced risk to the community

- 91% had no new criminal charges while under court supervision
- 87% had no positive drug tests while under court supervision

Accountability – teaching youth about the impact of their crimes on victims and how to repair the harm

- 5,808 hours of community service were ordered
- 5,783 hours of community service were completed
- \$24,447 in restitution was collected
- 78% of restitution was paid in full

Competency – building skills in better decision-making and positive citizenship

- 692 youth participated in at least one competency development program.
- 90% successfully completed the competency development program.
- 93% were enrolled in school at the time of closure.

Overall – reflects the percentage of youth who successfully completed supervision with the Court

- 94% of the youth were identified as being successful at the time of discharge from court supervision.

Data will be tracked each year and shared with the community in the form of a Community Report Card.

Ottawa County Juvenile Detention Center Awarded National Accreditation



The Commission on Accreditation for Corrections (CAC) recently announced the accreditation of the Ottawa County Juvenile Detention Center. The award was presented in conjunction with the American Correctional Association 2010 Winter Conference in Tampa, Florida. In presenting the award, Lannette Linthicum, Chairperson of the CAC, and Harold Clarke, President of the American Correctional Association (ACA), complimented the facility on their professional level of operation and their success in completing the accreditation process. The agency is one of over 1,500 correctional organizations currently involved in accreditation across the nation and the only accredited detention facility within Michigan.

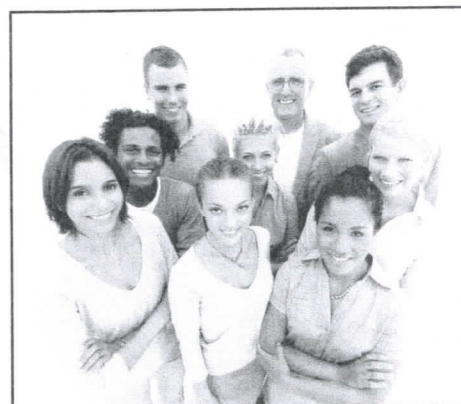
The accreditation program is a professional peer review process based on national standards that have evolved since the founding of the Association in 1870. The standards were developed by national leaders from the field of corrections, law, architecture, health care and other groups who are interested in sound correctional management. ACA standards address services, programs and operations essential to effective correctional management. Through accreditation, an agency is able to maintain a balance between protecting the public and providing an environment that safeguards the life, health and safety of staff and offenders. Standards set by ACA reflect practical up-to-date policies and procedures and function as a management tool for agencies and facilities throughout the world. The three-year accreditation award granted to the Ottawa County Juvenile Detention Center does not signal the end of their involvement in the accreditation process. During the award period, staff will work to improve any deficiencies identified during the audit and maintain continuous compliance with the standards.

Honoring Our Partners... A Tribute

20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts. An example of this is the Courts' Citizen's Council which represents several community members who meet on a regular basis to learn about the Courts and to be ambassadors of the Courts in the community.

The relationships are strong and collaborative. The result is exemplary services offered to those who enter the Courts.

The Courts recognize the contribution of these organizations and individuals. The following list of partnerships is offered with great honor and appreciation for the outstanding and special working relationships that help the Courts to inspire public trust within the Ottawa County community and beyond.



Honoring the 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts Citizen Council:

Gayle Kistler

Greg Steigenga

Tino Reyes

Richard Postma

Robert Dorton

Fred Leaske

Connie Corriveau

Chanda Miller

Jeanette Hoyer

Honoring 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts' Community Partnerships:

Michigan Department of Human Services
Ottawa County Sheriff Department
Ottawa County Fiscal Services Department
Ottawa County Department of Parks and Recreation
Ottawa County Human Resources Department
Ottawa County Community Mental Health
Bethany Christian Services
Catholic Charities of West MI
Barnabas Ministries
Ottagan Addictions Recovery
St. Patrick's Church
Michigan Department of Corrections
Children's Advocacy Center
SecureCare
Ottawa Area Center
Ottawa County Bar Association
Junior Achievement
Grand Valley State University
Ferris State University
Thomas M. Cooley Law School
58th District Court JAWS Program
Accurate Interpreters
Boys and Girls Club
Michigan Protection and Advocacy
El Centro
Lutheran Social Services
Tri-Cities Ministries
Ottawa County Planning
Ottawa County Planning and Performance Improvement Department
Holland Hospital/North Ottawa Community Hospital
Community Volunteers: Nathan Leach, David Schock
Michigan Department of Education/School Lunch Program

Ottawa Area Intermediate School District
Ottawa County Clerk's Office
Ottawa County Health Department
Ottawa County Prosecutor's Office
Ottawa County Administration
Circuit Court Records
Pathways of West MI
Michigan State University Extension
Lakeshore Coordinating Council
Holland Behavioral Health
First Presbyterian Church
Latin Americans United for Progress
Family Connections
BizStream
Mediation Services
Jenison Bible Church
Harbor Humane Society
Western Michigan University
Michigan State University
Baker College
Lakeshore Coordinating Council
Webster House and the Bridge
Urban Youth Ministries
Job Corps
Michigan, Works! Work First
Association for Experiential Education
Social Security Administration

Honoring 20th Judicial Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts' State and National Partnerships

State Court Administrative Office
Referees Association of MI
Friend of the Court Association
Michigan Association of Family Court Administration
Michigan Association of Circuit Court Administrators
Probate and Juvenile Register's Association of MI
Juvenile Justice Association of MI
State Judicial Institute
National Center for State Courts
National Association for Court Management

Caseload Trends.... Circuit Court

Trial Division	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	% Change (2008-9)
Appeals	68	64	51	45	48	+6.7
Criminal	1055	1169	1218	1127	1090	-3.3
Civil	468	512	567	630	600	-4.8
Total Trial Division Filings	1591	1745	1836	1802	1738	-3.5
Family Division (Includes FOC and Juvenile Services)	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	% Change (2008-9)
Divorce	1026	987	975	993	1057	+6.4
Other Domestic Relations	575	652	590	625	517	-17.3
Personal Protection Orders	666	661	645	695	836	+20.3
Delinquency (per SCAO 2008 - 2009; does not include Probation Violations)	2151	2197	2285	1500	1674	+11.6
Traffic	63	48	38	27	31	+14.8
Child Protective	115	109	74	101	79	-21.8
Adoptions	234	193	170	163	149	-8.6
Misc. Family	67	66	73	65	50	-23.1
Total Family Division Filings	4897	4913	4850	4169	4393	+5.4
Grand Total Filings & Reopened Cases	6488	6658	6686	5971	6131	+2.7

For additional caseload information see:

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/summaries.htm>

Caseload Facts – Trial Division

The Trial Division (Grand Haven) caseload includes appeals, criminal and civil cases. In addition, the Trial Division handles the domestic relations portion of the Family Division docket.

Judge Bosman and Chief Judge Post preside over all criminal cases and 80% of the civil cases. Judge Van Allsburg hears 20% of the civil docket, all appellate cases and 50% of the domestic relations case assignments. Judge Hulsing is assigned 50% of the domestic relations cases, and he shares the personal protection order petitions (adult and juvenile) with Judge Van Allsburg. In addition, Judge Hulsing conducts court two days per week at the Fillmore Complex with a mixed docket of juvenile and child protective proceedings.

From 2008 to 2009 the appeals, criminal and civil caseload (new filings and reopened cases) declined slightly by 3.5%. Individually, the appeals from administrative agencies, District and Probate Courts increased by 6.7%, while the criminal and civil filings decreased by 3.3% and 4.8% respectively. Petitions for personal protection orders represented the single largest change, increasing by 20.3%.

In addition to managing a diverse and relatively stable docket, the Trial Division is responsible for the public and judicial law libraries (including new acquisitions and maintenance). The Trial Division also manages an active collections program with defendants who are ordered to pay restitution, court costs, fines, fees, etc. The outcome of the collections program in 2009 was payment of \$883,618 to the Court. This represents a 5% decrease in collections from 2008, which was anticipated due to the severe national financial crisis. Approximately 50% of these payments are returned to victims of crime as restitution. Other payments cover statutorily mandated fees and partially reimburse the County for funds expended in the daily operation of the Court.

Caseload Facts – Family Division/Friend of the Court (FOC)

Throughout 2009, Friend of the Court staff handled a IV-D caseload of 11,626 cases, representing a 9% increase from 2008. As noted above, there was also a 6.4% increase in new divorce filings during 2009. To enforce court orders on these cases, more than 8,000 hearings were conducted, over 2,000 bench warrants were issued, and nearly \$31 million in child support payments was collected and disbursed to families in need. In addition to these enforcement efforts, staff directly assisted clients by scheduling approximately 3,500 appointments and meeting with 1,500 walk-in clients. To help ensure child support orders are updated to reflect significant changes in circumstances, staff conducted 2,347 case reviews and recommended modification where appropriate. These support reviews increased by 4% from 2008 to 2009. Based on federal child support performance measures the 20th Circuit FOC is one of the most effective operations in Michigan, collecting \$11.26 for every dollar spent.

Besides the child support enforcement efforts of the Friend of the Court, there were 250 cases in 2009 where the 20th Circuit Court ordered a special assessment regarding child custody or parenting time issues. In each of these cases, FOC staff conducted an extensive investigation and provided the Court with recommendations. Often, custody investigators were required to appear in court and testify regarding the investigation/recommendations.

Caseload Facts – Family Division/Juvenile Services

Court personnel, like most community leaders, understand children represent the future. As a result, when increased numbers of juvenile petitions arrived at Juvenile Services throughout 2009, a concerted effort was made to ensure appropriate programming was available for delinquent youth, family, caregivers and related agencies. To professionally assess and manage the surge in delinquency and traffic cases (e.g. +11.6% and +14.8% respectively), Juvenile Services staff provided a variety of services within the community, as appropriate. The relative proportions of the juvenile caseload, however, remained stable with drugs and alcohol continuing to be the largest segment of new juvenile petitions (454 cases). Still the 9% decrease from 2008 represents a positive trend in the community. The next highest number of new petitions was in larceny cases and this category also decreased from 2008 to 2009. The filing of 418 larceny petitions resulted in a 14% downward trend. Unfortunately, several other petition categories, including 571 cases, increased in 2009. These petition increases involved breaking & entering (+13%), assaults (+36%), malicious destruction of property (+55%), criminal sexual conduct (+6%) and arson (+200%). Petition categories with decreased filings include: weapons (-22%), probation violations (-9%), ordinance offenses (-8%) and miscellaneous (-2%) experienced a decrease in the number of petitions as well. The gender breakdown of the juveniles petitioned to court is 66% male and 34% female, representing a slight increase in delinquent activity by females (+3%).

When court-involved youth are on probation or otherwise ordered to receive treatment, there is a continuum of programs available designed to assist the youth and families in the remediation of offending behaviors. Programs include community-based treatment, community service, anger management, habitual offender group, sex offender program, intensive supervision, an experiential ropes course, gender-specific groups, individual/group/family counseling and more. In 2009, the Juvenile Services treatment program (Choice) made over 2,100 client contacts, providing counseling to 252 youth (+11%) and their families. The court also provided educational services through the Juvenile Justice Institute to 43 youth (-9%); residential placement alternative community support and supervision through the Juvenile Community Justice to 46 youth (+24%); and substance abuse treatment through the Juvenile Drug Treatment Court to 27 youth and families (-16%). During 2009, there were 663 detention admissions to secure detention in the Ottawa County Juvenile Detention Center (-6%), representing 10,091 days of service. Most secure detention beds are occupied by Ottawa County youth; however, beds are also rented to neighboring jurisdictions which have no local, secure placement options. Bed rental agreements accounted for \$383,232 of new revenue in 2009. In addition, the Court developed a female-specific residential program to address the needs of the court-involved, female

population. It is anticipated some beds within this program will be rented to counties and will generate additional revenue. The Court continues to explore methods of increasing revenue through contract and service arrangement with other counties.

Attorney Referee Activity

The Circuit Court Attorney Referees are independent hearing officers who are cross-trained to conduct hearings in the Juvenile Services Division and the Family Division of the Court. Based on the assigned docket, a Referee may hear testimony and recommend orders in cases involving juvenile delinquency, abuse/neglect, child support, parenting time, paternity and more. Overall, from 2008 to 2009 Referee hearings increased 18%. In the domestic relations area, child support and parenting time hearings conducted at the Ottawa County Courthouse in Grand Haven increased 24% and 19%, respectively. At the Fillmore Complex in West Olive, the overall increase in Referee activity was even more dramatic, increasing by 35.8% (i.e., 2,494 hearings in 2008; 3387 hearings in 2009).

Delinquency and Child Protective petitions are scheduled shortly after filing. Domestic Relations hearings are typically scheduled within two to five weeks after filing. In 2009, the Court's three Attorney Referees were assisted by three staff attorneys who volunteered to handle cases as needed. This was done to prevent case delays and provide more convenient service for litigants and attorneys.

Family Division/Juvenile Services (Fillmore Complex)

DELINQUENCY PROCEEDINGS	2006	2007	2008	2009	% Change (2008-9)
Preliminary Inquiries	562	1190	938	983	+4.8
Preliminary Hearings (Includes 35 Saturday Hearings)	188	202	154	167	+8.4
Pre-Trial Conferences	544	536	422	462	+9.5
Pleas of Admission/No Contest Hearings	134	177	145	587	+305
Original Disposition Hearings	95	54	37	211	+470
Dispositional Review Hearings	66	58	56	70	+25
Supplemental Dispositional Hearings	446	504	494	300	-39.3
Consents/Holds/Other	205	164	128	501	+291

CHILD PROTECTIVE PROCEEDINGS	2006	2007	2008	2009	% Change (2008-9)
Preliminary Inquiries	9	5	16	12	-25
Preliminary Hearings	78	44	44	28	
Release/Consent/Emancipation/ Emergency/Removal/Other	99	83	63	66	+4.8
Pleas of Admission/No Contest Hearings	10	0	0	0	0
Total Fillmore Complex Hearings	2439	3019	2494	3387	+35.8

For additional caseload information see:

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/summaries.htm>

Family Division (Grand Haven)

DOMESTIC/CIVIL PROCEEDINGS	2006	2007	2008	2009	% Change (2008-9)
Support Hearings	1232	1103	1037	1282	+24
Parenting Time Hearings	407	361	336	400	+19
<i>Pro Confesso</i> Divorce Hearings	474	292	348	105	-70
Paternity Arraignments	743	681	677	583	-14
Total Grand Haven Hearings	2585	2437	2398	2370	-0.1
ATTORNEY REFEREE HEARINGS	2006	2007	2008	2009	% Change (2008-9)
Grand Total	5024	5456	4892	5757	+18

Caseload Trends.... Probate Court

OTTAWA COUNTY PROBATE COURT	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	% Change (2008-9)
Estates, Trusts	408	332	399	386	366	-5
Civil, Other	10	19	9	17	13	-24
Guardians	208	180	221	186	205	+10
Conservators	75	65	58	58	80	+38
Admissions/Mental Commitments	302	270	300	273	242	-11
Grand Total Filings and Reopened Cases	1003	866	987	920	906	-2

For additional caseload information see:

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/summaries.htm>

Caseload Facts – Probate Court

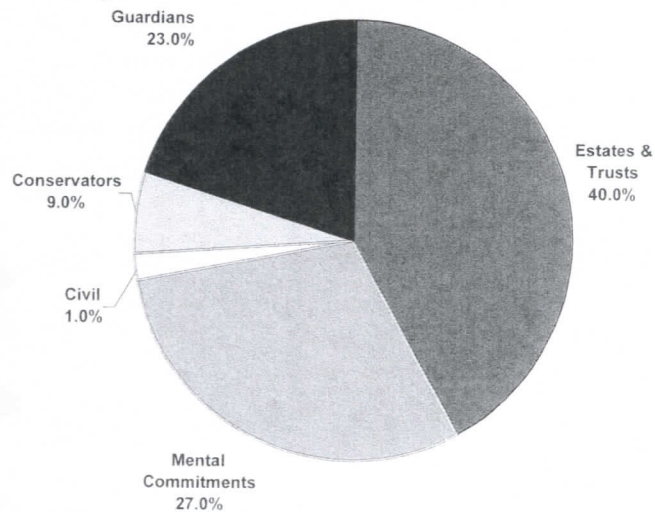
Ottawa County Probate Court provides services to many who need special consideration including the mentally ill, adults and minors in need of guardians or conservators and families of deceased individuals. The Probate Court has enhanced the Court's effectiveness by the use of mediation, interactive video technology (IVT), document imaging, video court recording, credit card payment capability and on-line case management.

During 2009 the Probate Court continued to experience a relatively stable caseload of approximately 7,000 open files. Among the new and reopened cases, guardianships and conservatorships represented the two growth areas (+10% and 38% respectively). Fifty-eight percent of the Probate caseload involves individuals needing the protection of the Court in guardianship, conservatorship and mentally ill cases. At the close of 2009, there were 310 adults and 375 minors with guardians appointed by the Court. In cases where individuals need assistance managing financial assets, there were 139 adults and 179 minors with Court appointed conservators. In addition to the regularly appointed guardians, there were 452 developmentally disabled individuals with guardians supervised by the Court.

The ability of the Probate staff to cope with the influx of new cases is aided by a document imaging system. Immediate electronic access to all 7,000 Probate files has allowed staff to become more efficient in processing cases. The imaging system also allows for more timely and effective public service for interested parties who are seeking case information. The Court has also made excellent use of a temporary employee who is able to assist with mandatory records retention requirements. In addition to these case processing efficiencies, the Probate Court strives to be more accessible to the public through its website, <http://www.miottawa.org/CourtsLE/Probate/>, where individuals can locate forms and instructions to guide them through a variety of Probate proceedings.

Ottawa County Probate Judge, Hon. Mark A. Feyen, handles all required Probate matters and assists the 20th Circuit Court by serving as Presiding Judge of the Family Division. He also is the assigned judge for the Adult and Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts.

Probate Court— Caseload Distribution



Financial Information

As an interdependent branch of government, the Courts generate revenue but do not operate like a for-profit business. Other than case filing fees established by the state legislature, the public is not charged for many court services. Instead, the Courts rely on the Michigan Supreme Court to pay for judicial salaries through a legislative appropriation and partially reimburse the County for Court-specific operating expenses through the Court Equity Fund.

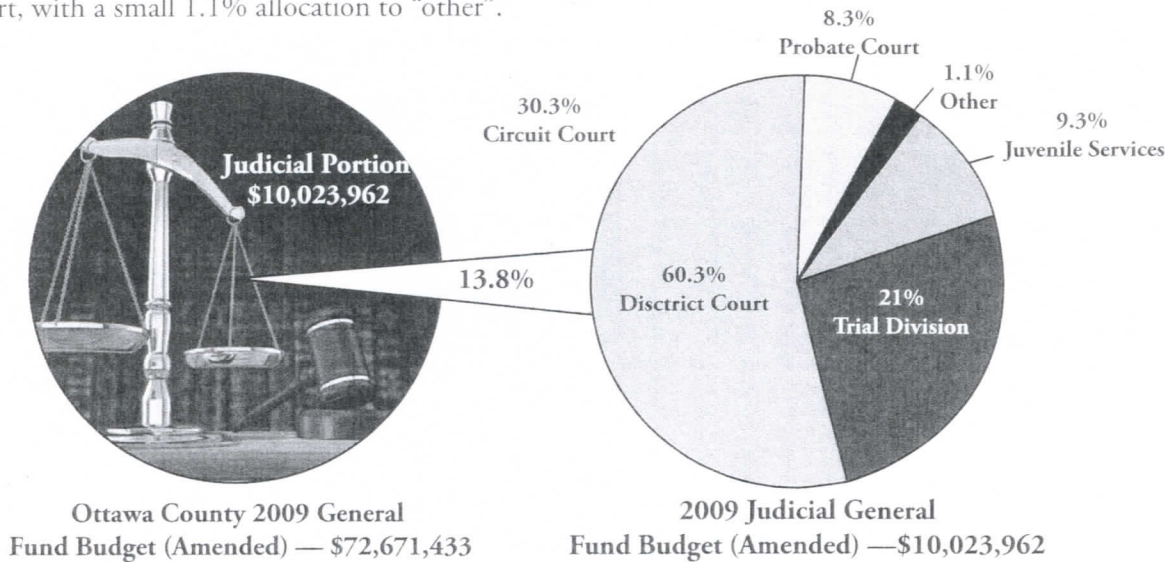
The Court Equity Fund, (MCL 600.151b), was established in October 1996 to provide limited funding for trial court operations. The fund is disbursed quarterly within the state fiscal year to county governments, based on a statutory formula that establishes each county's share. The formula includes two factors: the caseload activity of the circuit and probate courts and the number of judgeships in each county. The first factor, caseload, takes into account new cases filed for the most recent three years in the circuit and probate courts in the county and compares the county's proportion of these filings for the three years to the total filings for the state for the three years. The second factor compares the number of judgeships within the county to total judgeships for the entire state.

The revenue sources to the Court Equity Fund include state general fund appropriations and multiple sources of restricted revenue that originate from local trial court fees, costs and assessments. Each payment from the fund within the state fiscal year reflects the revenue deposits to the Court Equity Fund for the preceding quarter. Therefore, quarterly payments will vary, reflecting fluctuations in court revenues received. During the past five years, the Court Equity Fund disbursements to Ottawa County averaged \$1,138,547 per year. In 2009 the Court Equity Fund payment was projected to be \$1,071,718.

The Juror Compensation Reimbursement Fund was created as of January 1, 2003 to provide a source of reimbursement funding to trial courts for legislated increases in juror attendance compensation. Beginning October 1, 2003, jurors were compensated at higher rates (see MCL 600.1344) and trial court funding units could claim reimbursement biannually from the fund for the increased expense. During FY 2008, \$44,452 was paid to Ottawa County from this Fund.

Other Court expenses are paid in part by federal Title IV-D funds (for child support collection); the State's Child Care Fund (Family Division – Juvenile Services programming); and various state and federal grants (e.g., partial Drug Treatment Court funding). The substantial balance is paid through an appropriation line from the Ottawa County general fund.

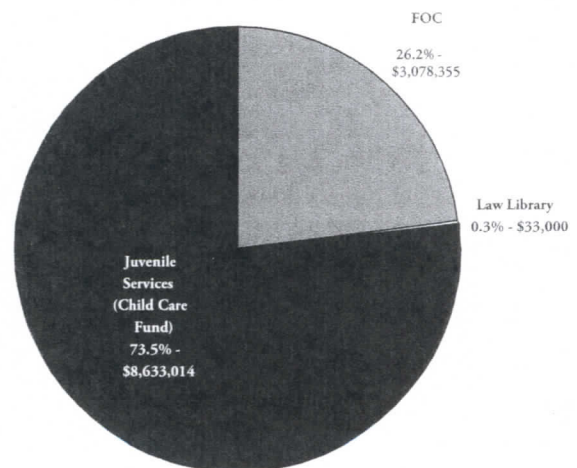
In FY 2009, the County general fund expenditure budget as adopted was \$72,671,443; the judicial portion was \$10,023,962 (13.8%). Of the 13.8% expenditure, the Circuit Court Trial Division was allocated 21%; Juvenile Services was allotted 9.3%; and Probate Court received 8.3%. The remaining 60.3% went to District Court, with a small 1.1% allocation to "other".



Ottawa County 2009 Special Revenue Funds Transferred to Circuit Court

Due to other funding streams, the Friend of the Court (FOC), Law Library and Child Care portion of the Juvenile Services budget are not reflected in the general fund budget allocations. For FY 2009, the 20th Circuit received special revenue funds amounting to \$11,744,369; representing a 4% reduction from FY 2008. These allocations were divided as follows: FOC received a revenue operating transfer of \$3,078,355; the law library received funding in the amount of \$33,000 and the Family Division – Juvenile Services received funding for child care programs of \$8,633,014.

Ottawa County 2009 Special Revenue Funds Transferred to Circuit Court

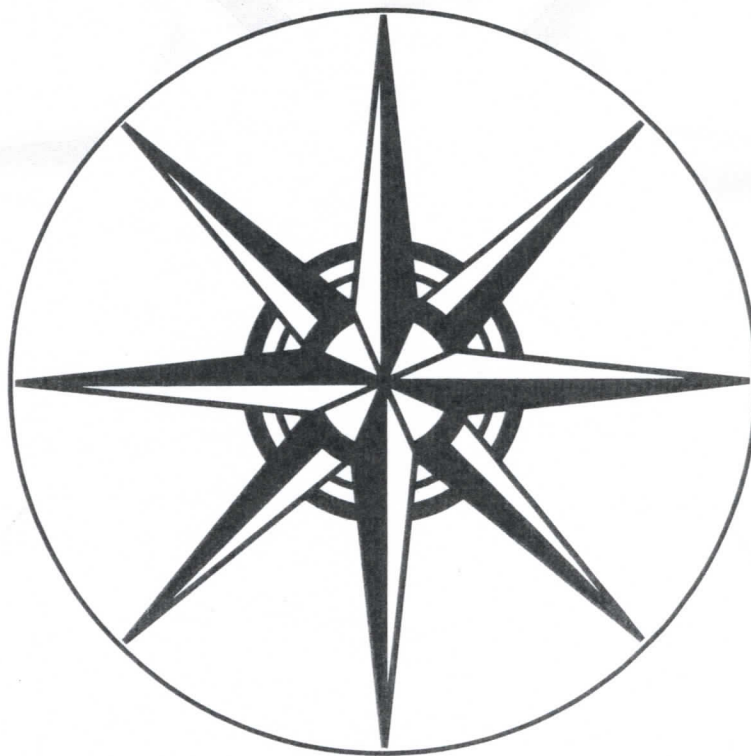


About the Cover. . . The Compass Rose

The Compass Rose has been guiding sailors for centuries. Regardless of whether we are seafarers, we still ask, “Where are we going?” We need a clear plan to guide us to our destination.

Through strategic planning, the 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts are determining the best path to their destination. The 2009 Annual Report is a reminder of why the plan and destination are important.

The judges and courts’ staff are in the business of pursuing justice – one case at a time. By doing so, we make life better for our community, state, nation and world. Perhaps these are lofty goals, but to do less would be a disservice to the rule of law on which our nation was built and to our own potential.



Quick Guide to the Courts

For Directions to the Courts:

www.miottawa.org/Courts



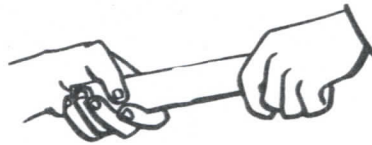
For General Information:

Call any office listed on this page



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- Call any office to pay by credit card
- Mail payments
- Pay in person



CIRCUIT COURT

Trial Division

414 Washington Ave., Room 300
Grand Haven, MI 49417
Phone: 616.846.8320
Fax: 616.846.8179

Friend of the Court

414 Washington Ave., Room 225
Grand Haven, MI 49417
Phone: 616.846.8210
Fax: 616.846.8128

Juvenile Services Division

12120 Fillmore Street
West Olive, MI 49460
Phone: 616.786.4100
Fax: 616.786.4154

Holland Satellite Office

12185 James. St., Suite 170
Holland, MI 49424

PROBATE COURT

12120 Fillmore Street
West Olive, MI 49460
Phone: 616.786.4110
Fax: 616.738.4624

Staff Facts

20th Judicial Circuit Court

4 Circuit Court Judges
113 Full Time Staff
4 Part Time Staff
17 Temporary Staff
4.5 Ottawa County Sheriff Deputies
10 Ottawa Area Intermediate School District
152.5 Total

Ottawa County Probate Court

1 Probate Court Judge
5 Full Time Staff
1 Temporary Staff
7 Total