

HEARSAY

GENESEE COUNTY
CIRCUIT AND
PROBATE COURTS
E-NEWSLETTER

a quarterly publication

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JUDICIAL SERVICE

APPRECIATED AND ANTICIPATED

A couple of familiar faces joined the circuit court bench since the last *Hearsay* edition. Anthony J. McDowell, formerly the director of the Friend of the Court, and Mary A. Hood, the soon-to-be former family division referee, join the circuit family division bench.



Like Judge McDowell, Judge Hood represents a familiar ascension to the family bench. She has served as a family division referee for over 22 years! Prior to this role, Judge

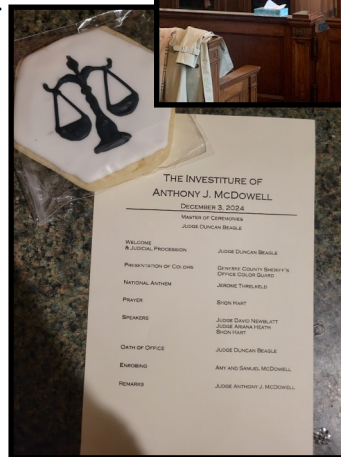
Judge McDowell was appointed by Governor Whitmer following the retirement of Judge John A. Gadola in August 2024. Judge Hood won the election to fill the seat vacated upon the retirement of Judge Celeste D. Bell.

“grassroots” progression within the court. He began his legal career as former Chief Judge Duncan Beagle’s law clerk. At the time, Judge Beagle was the presiding judge of the family division. Following his clerkship, Judge McDowell became the deputy director of the Friend of the Court, and ultimately the director. He served as director for over three years. Judge McDowell received his law degree from University of Toledo College of Law.

Hood worked as a magistrate for the 68th District Court. A graduate of University of Michigan-Flint and Flint Northern High School, Judge Hood has been a local attorney for over 33 years. She received her law degree from Thomas M. Cooley



Judge Tabitha M. Marsh administers the oath of office to Judge Hood on December 10, 2024



Judge McDowell took the bench in October 2024. He has since been appointed the presiding judge of the division by Chief Judge David J. Newblatt, effective January 1, 2025.

Law School. A “veteran” of the family division through her tenure as a referee, Judge Hood will embark on her new role as Judge in January 2025.

Judge Bell served in the civil-criminal division of the circuit court. She was appointed by former Governor Rick Snyder, and began

(Continued on page 4)

THE CHIEF SPEAKS

What is Justice? Although Plato famously asked and tried to answer this question in *The Republic*, philosophers have been debating it ever since without a definitive answer. As a judge, I define justice as any decision made by a judge or jury that prompts observers to say, “Yep, that’s justice all right.”

Here is how it works. People, corporations, organizations and even the government, rather than deciding disputes for themselves, must all come to court for a decision. Any kind of dispute—did someone commit a crime, must someone pay money, must someone take or refrain from an action, what is the proper role of government, is a man a father of a child, who should have custody, what are the terms of a divorce, are parents neglectful, how should estates be distributed and is someone in need of protection—can all be resolved by courts in the form of a judgment.

How do we get those judgments? In the matter of a civil

case, the raw materials of law and facts pertaining to a dispute are fashioned into claims which are codified in a Complaint. The Answer to that Complaint brings forth defenses and perhaps counterclaims. Pretrial litigation develops and refines claims and defenses through discovery and motion practice so the case can be reduced to only those which are legally recognized and supported by evidence. Only then can the case be tried and decided by the ultimate decision-maker—either judge or jury.

Who decides what the law is? The people in a democracy select legislators and appellate judges who determine the law so it can be applied by trial judges. This is true for both substantive law—what claims and defenses are recognized—and for procedure. It is also true for the rules of evidence, which promote relevance, authenticity, reliability and public policy.



How do we know what law to apply to a given situation? The bench and bar went to law school to learn to participate in a profession that ensures uniformity of practice. As such, prior to bringing a case, a lawyer should be able to assess and give an opinion as to a client’s likelihood of success in court before the case is filed.

Ideally, if lawyers all correctly predicted the end result, actually coming to court wouldn’t be necessary—litigants would save themselves the time and expense and agree to that result. Ah, if it only worked that way in the real world!

So why doesn’t it? I’ll sum it up in two words—human nature. Judgments aren’t determined by computers, but rather by judges, jurors, parties, attorneys and witnesses; all with different ideas, experiences, personalities, motivations and strengths and weaknesses. But I believe the most important insight is that humans understand things and are emotionally moved through

stories. This means that lawyers must be good storytellers if they want to prevail in trial.

I think it is helpful to think of trials as competitive storytelling according to set rules. As such, it can be thought of as just another medium of storytelling. For instance, movie directors are storytellers who are bound by certain conventions and limitations—camera technique, script structure, actor talent, audience expectations—who compete with each other over audience share. Trial lawyers are storytellers who are bound by the law—substantive, procedural and the rules of evidence—who compete with each other as to who can persuade the jury to side with their client.

I presided over a murder trial where the defendant was accused of shooting and killing the victim in the parking lot after a bar fight. Although there was one set of facts—the defendant retrieved a gun and brought it to where the victim was involved in another

(Continued on page 13)

ADMINISTRATOR CORNER

There is never an inopportune time to write about thankfulness. There is also never an inopportune time to be thankful. Think about it. All of us, from time to time, think of ourselves as a solo act. There may be times when a person can make a difference, a big difference, but really no one is a solo act. This is particularly true for a court.

The court is an institution comprised of judges, judicial and court staff. However, each is dependent upon the other to fulfill our mission to the community.

What is a court required to deliver? In its simplest of terms, a court is required to deliver a level playing field for litigants to have disputes resolved. I would add to that, the level playing field has to be supported by many offices within the court. The competency and attitude of the staff matters.

An attorney or litigant wants to file a new action at the court and where do they first go to

make this happen? With the filing system that exists today, most of the time, the filing is made at a point of public ac-



cess with a member of the court staff as the receiver of that filing and the first ambas-

sador for the court.

It is a very important contact that begins to shape the way that the citizen perceives the court and their chance of getting a fair decision somewhere down the line.

Do we want the citizen leaving with the impression that they were well received, the staff was helpful and the experience was not as bad as they thought it would be or even better, it was a good experience. Of course, the latter is our goal.

On January 5, 2024, the legal

(Continued on page 13)



Left to Right: Jennifer Hatch, Andrea Lacey, Quinton Burnett, Kindra Love, Sara Carroll



Left to Right: Morgan Mikkola, Holly McCarthy, Alycia Hyde

Friend of the Court

Quinton Burnett is a FOC specialist I. He recently relocated to Flint, after living in Fort Wayne, Indiana for the past 10 years.

Sara Carroll is a FOC caseworker. Sara previously worked for the Genesee County Friend of the Court as a caseworker, and after being home with her children for the past 12 years, she is back.

Jennifer Hatch is a FOC specialist I. Jennifer previously worked for Genesee Cut Stone & Marble Co.

Andrea Lacey is an attorney referee at FOC. Andrea previously worked for Ingham County as an assistant prosecutor.

Kindra Love is a FOC specialist I. Kindra previously worked for the Genesee County Treasurer.

Ashley Treadwell is a FOC specialist I. She previously worked in the service department of a local car dealership.

Juvenile Probation

Damion Jones is a social service worker with juvenile probation. Damion has worked for over 18 years in the human services field.

Kevin Wallace is a social service worker with juvenile probation. Kevin previously worked as a community health worker at GHS.

Juvenile Records Division

Alexander Skywinter is a juvenile court specialist I in the juvenile records division. Alexander previously worked for Oakland County.

Jill Bade is the supervisor in the juvenile records division. Jill formerly worked as a lead social services worker in juvenile probation. (not pictured)

Legal Records Division

Morgan Mikkola is a court operations specialist. Morgan previously worked in the juvenile records division.

Alycia Hyde is a court operations specialist. Alycia previously worked for 67th District Court.

Samonia Hickmon is a court operation specialist. Samonia previously worked for the State of Michigan. (not pictured)



Left to Right: Kevin Wallace, Damion Jones

Holly McCarthy is a public engagement specialist. Holly previously worked for the Genesee County Jail as a medical records clerk.



Alexander Skywinter



- Thank you to the courthouse holiday decorations team, who introduced new color themes, organized by court floors. It was completed in 2 hours and looks very festive.

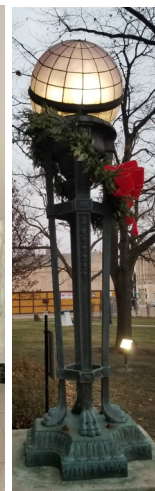
- Carla Edmundson
- Nichole Ruby
- Brianna Miller
- Judith Williams
- Emily Space
- Samuel Olson
- Aaron Labelle
- Jennifer Strauel
- Morgan Mikkola
- Patricia Umphrey
- Michelle Myers
- Heather Davis
- Mychael Davis
- Tricia Wright
- Barbara Menear

- Thank you to the facilities and operations staff who took such an interest in the hanging of the greens at the Saginaw Street entrance on a very cold day.
Izak
Steve
Nathan
Logan
Miller & George - "stopped by" to cheer them on.

- Circuit and Probate Court appreciation to Judge Michael Hatty, retired Chief Judge, Livingston County Circuit Court and Judge Richard Ball, retired Chief Judge, 54B Dis-

trict Court, East Lansing, for so ably serving the local courts.

Both judges are a pleasure to have on site, at GCBA meetings, judges' meetings and can be seen taking walks in downtown Flint.



Judge Ball



Judge Hatty



JUDICIAL SERVICE

APPRECIATED AND ANTICIPATED (CONT'D)

her judicial service in 2018. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Bell was chief assistant prosecuting attorney in the civil division, where she served as corporation counsel. Before that position she was Corporation Counsel for Genesee County.

Judge Gadola served in the Family Division from 2003-

2024. He was the presiding Judge of Family Division at the time of his retirement.

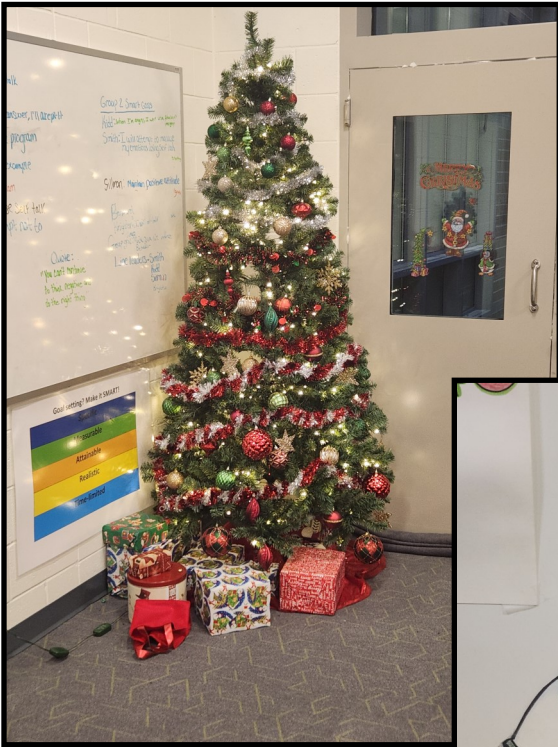
Congratulations to Judge McDowell, Judge Hood, and happy retirement to Judge Bell and Judge Gadola!



A reception honoring Judge Bell for her service was held on November 22, 2024 with delectable fare and flowers on the bench.

Pictured to the left: Julie Schriener, Robert St.Cin, Scarlett Younglove-Tagge, Brent Rocheleau, Rachel Greene

THE FIRST JJC HOLIDAY SEASON DECORATIONS



Pod B Christmas Tree – decorated by the youth.



Pod C Christmas Tree – decorated by the youth.



Drawing done by one of the JJC staff, Barakas Rushing.



Winner of the door decoration contest – Pod B.



The tree in the atrium.

TARIFFS



67th District Court Judge Mark C. McCabe writes "Ask the Judge" for the *Tri-County Times*.

Tariffs appeared in the December 3rd 2024 edition.

President-elect Donald Trump has been busy preparing for January 20, 2025, the day he takes office. In addition to nominating various people to his cabinet and other positions, he has proposed taking other actions including imposing a variety of tariffs on imported goods.

Recently he proposed a 25% tariff on imports from Mexico and Canada and a 10% tariff on Chinese goods on top of China's existing tariffs. His stated purpose is to impose the tariffs until these countries

stop illegal immigration and allowing fentanyl to come into the United States.

The word "tariff" is frequently used in world trade discussions, but its definition and history may not be well known.

Accordingly, I present the following, with help from historian Sarah Pruitt.

The common definition of a tariff is a tax which a country's government imposes on goods that are imported from other countries and paid by the importer.

The most common types of tariffs are "ad valorem" tariffs, which are a fixed percentage of the import's value, and "specific" tariffs, which are charged as a fixed amount on each unit of an imported good.

Tariffs have been used for hundreds of years to bring in revenue, protect domestic industries, and cooperate with or retaliate against other nations around the world.

In the United States, tariffs date back to our founding fathers, the Constitution, and legislation. "The Tariff Act of 1789," was the first substantive legislation passed by Congress.

Afterwards, a variety of tariff legislation was passed and tariffs became up to 90% of government revenue.

This all changed in 1913 with the enactment of the federal income statute, which then became the principal government income source

The president is also legislatively authorized to unilaterally impose tariffs.

For example, under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, the president may impose tariffs under certain circumstances involving national security. There are other similar tariff statutes.

Various commentators have written that Trump's proposed tariffs would cause inflation. Others say it will only increase prices.

Today, tariffs are primarily used as a tool to influence the policies and the actions of other countries as to our domestic industries and for trade negotiation leverage. Early reports indicate the tariff proposals might have a positive result.

We will wait and see.



CIRCUIT COURT JUROR PAYMENTS

Jurors in Michigan have been compensated for their time spent performing their civic duty since November 1968. Historically, jurors received paper checks for their service. These check payments took 3-4 weeks to process and reach our jurors.

In 2018, the Jury Management Office began using a new software program through Tyler Technologies. This provider offered kiosks which allowed the ability to check the juror in and disburse cash payments. While it took some time to navigate the new program and the

hurdles that Covid presented, eventually our jurors began receiving cash payments in 2021. Although this method expedited juror payments, it also presented many problems. Most recently, we were notified that the cash kiosks are no longer supported by our software provider, leaving us to look for an alternative.

Working with our vendor, their preferred method and the most up-to-date, is a payment card. Think--Debit Card! Jurors will be given a payment card upon check-in and will have access to their funds within 7-10 days of their jury service. The juror can simply swipe the payment card

anywhere Mastercard is accepted, including ATMs. If they wish, they can have the funds deposited into their bank account or request a paper check. Other options are offered, as well.

Our jury management system (JMS) is used by 15 counties in Michigan and across the United States. Many of our surrounding counties use the same payment card system, Court Funds, to disburse payments to jurors. I recently visited Livingston County Courts to observe their jury process. It was quite informative. Court Funds offers a variety of other court disburse-

ments like restitution, child support, bonds, witnesses and more.

The jury office and court-support teams will begin training soon. After a testing period, our experience will be shared with the 67th District Court to determine if the new method should be expanded.

We look forward to launching this new process and are optimistic that our jurors will be pleased! -kd

ADOPTION DAY RETROSPECTIVE

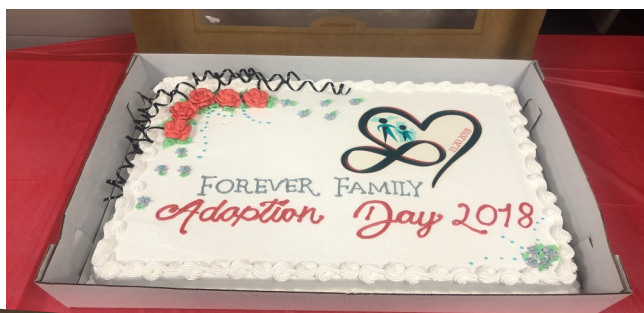


It's the only time of year the public is allowed to attend the hearings. Former adoptive parent, Regina Bush was the event speaker, as she shared her family's experience with adoption.

work tirelessly on behalf of children in foster care," explains Presiding Probate Court Judge, the Honorable Jennie E. Barkey.



Probate Court Judge Jennie E. Barkey and the adoptions staff celebrated Michigan Adoption Day on November 20, 2018 by confirming adoptions in public hearings for three families, which included a total of four children being adopted.



success.

Judge F. Kay Behm attended the event and shared a warm moment with one of the participants.

There was a magician that entertained the crowd with a magic show. The staff, Darious Baylock, Mary Anne Falk, Debbie Gray, Sheonna Hill



She made national news 20 years ago for a landmark transracial adoption case.

After the hearings a reception was held in the jury quarters for all of the family members, court staff and agency workers who worked together to make this day such a



Adoption Day 2018 was a joyous occasion for all of

the families – and several local media outlets (ABC12, WNEM5, and MLive/Flint Journal) covered the event as well. "This day marks the beginning of an exciting journey for those deserving children and families.

This celebration offers us an opportunity to take a moment to acknowledge what is important.

It is also a reminder to us of the importance of those who

and Fredricka Savage should be commended for their hard work in highlighting both the need and the joy in adopting a child. –sh



Adoption Day 2018 gives us a chance to recall the festive occasion that was presided over by Judge Barkey, with participation from former Genesee County Probate Judge, now United States District Court Judge F. Kay Behm.

RESOLUTION BY GOVERNOR WHITMER

November 26, 2024: Adoption Day

November 26, 2024

WHEREAS, approximately 10,000 children in Michigan live away from their families in foster care and, every year, an estimated 2,000 children in foster care have the goal of adoption and are legally ready to be adopted; and,

WHEREAS, during fiscal year 2024, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and contracted private adoption agency partners provided permanency for approximately 1,500 children through adoption; and,

WHEREAS, Adoption Day in Michigan was established by the Michigan Supreme Court and MDHHS in 2003; and,

WHEREAS, on November 26, 2024, many Michigan courts will celebrate Adoption Day by finalizing adoptions, holding special events for adoptive families, and providing educational materials for citizens regarding the adoption process;

THEREFORE, I, Gretchen Whitmer, governor of Michigan, do hereby proclaim November 26, 2024, as Adoption Day in Michigan.

LEGAL RECORDS DIVISION: REFLECTING ON A YEAR OF PROGRESS

Legal Records Division: Reflecting on a Year of Progress and Innovation

One year ago, the Legal Records Division was officially integrated into the Genesee County Circuit Court, marking a significant step toward modernizing and streamlining court operations. This transition has proven to be a success, with the division making remarkable strides in both its operations and public engagement.

As we reflect on the past year, the Legal Records Division has continued to adapt and grow, embracing new technologies, expanding its team, and strengthening its connection with the community it serves.

Improving Response Times

Over the past year, the Legal Records Division has made

significant improvements to its phone answering system. Previously, a common concern was that calls went unanswered, and messages were not returned in a timely manner. To address this, we have now appointed a dedicated staff member responsible for answering all calls and returning messages within 24 hours, ensuring better communication and responsiveness.

Advancing the Digital Transition

The Legal Records Division made substantial progress toward the digitization of case records. The move to e-filing and digital record storage has continued to gain momentum. The Legal Records Division now processes all Personal Protection Orders (PPOs) electronically. When a petitioner submits a PPO request, the

petition is uploaded into OnBase, automatically notifying the judge that the petition is ready for review. The judge can then examine the petition electronically and submit their decision through the system. Once a decision is made, the petitioner receives an email notifying them of the approval or denial of the PPO. Additionally, the petitioner can easily access and print the approval or denial from any computer. If the PPO is approved, the information is also routed into the Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN) for further processing.

Looking Ahead

As we look to the future, the Legal Records Division remains focused on expanding digital capabilities. Over 38,000 domestic files and more than 7,000 civil files were care-

fully reviewed to ensure they were scanned into OnBase before being shredded. This was a monumental project, but with the entire team working together, the Legal Division successfully completed it in under two weeks. The files were cleared to make room for scheduled renovations in the Legal Records Division, further positioning us for the transition to e-filing.

Continued improvements to the case management system and further e-filing integration will pave the way for an even more streamlined and efficient court process. The goal remains clear: to create a modern, user-friendly legal system that serves the needs of all stakeholders. –hd

geneseeLIVING

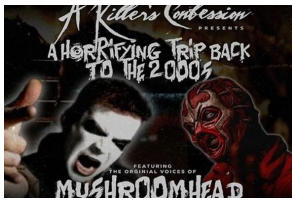
<https://www.exploreflintandgeneseec.org/>



Bicentennial Park Holiday Walking Night
Grand Blanc Parks & Recreation Creasey Bicentennial Park



9th Annual Trail of Lights
Robert Williams Nature and Historical Learning Center



A Killer's Confession Presents - A Horrifying Trip Back to the 2000's
The Machine Shop Concert Lounge



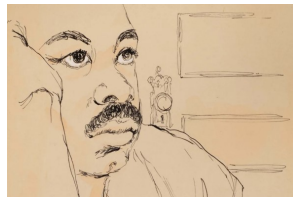
Adult Nite Skate
Recurring weekly on Friday until December 27, 2024
Rollhaven Skate & Fun Center



Beyond the Physical World: Abstraction from the Mott-Warsh Collection
Recurring weekly on Thursday, Friday, Saturday until January 25, 2025
MW Gallery



Christmas Holiday Magic at Crossroads
Crossroads Village and Huckleberry Railroad



Cliff Joseph and the Power of Art
Recurring daily until March 16, 2025
Flint Institute of Arts Museum + Art School (FIA)



Cosmic Christmas
Recurring weekly on Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday until January 5, 2025
Longway Planetarium



Discovery Zone: Under the Sea
Recurring weekly on Sunday,

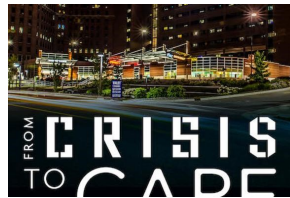
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday until January 31, 2025
Flint Children's Museum



FIA Friends of Modern Art films - Merchant Ivory
Recurring weekly on Sunday, Friday, Saturday until December 22, 2024
Flint Institute of Arts' Film Theater



Fine Arts Degree Candidates Art Exhibition
Recurring weekly on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday until January 31, 2025
Mott Community College Fine Arts Gallery



From Crisis to Care | The Evolution of Hurley Medical Center
Recurring weekly on Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday until June 22, 2025
Sloan Museum of Discovery



Latin Nights
Recurring weekly on Friday
XOLO Tacos & Tequila - Flint



Meditations in Gold: South Asian Jewelry
Recurring daily until February 2, 2025
Flint Institute of Arts Museum + Art School



Midday at MW: Daily Guided Tours
Recurring weekly on Thursday, Friday, Saturday
Mott-Warsh Collection Gallery



Pick of the Litter: Cats & Dogs in Art
Recurring every week day until January 3, 2025
Flint Institute of Arts Museum + Art School (FIA)



Queen: From Mercury with Love
Recurring weekly on Thursday, Friday, Saturday until January 4, 2025
Longway Planetarium

geneseeLIVING (CONT'D)



Rebels in Print
 Recurring daily until January 19, 2025
 Flint Institute of Arts Museum + Art School (FIA)



Skies Over Michigan - Live
 Recurring weekly on Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday until January 3, 2025
 Longway Planetarium



White Christmas Sing-A-Long
 FIM Capitol Theatre



Christmas at The Dort Center
 Dort Financial Center



Cosmic Colors
 Recurring weekly on Sunday, Saturday until January 4, 2025
 Longway Planetarium



Glassblowing Demonstrations
 Recurring weekly on Sunday, Saturday
 Flint Institute of Arts (FIA)



Historic House Tours at Stockton House Museum
 Recurring monthly on the 3rd Saturday
 Stockton House Museum



Holiday Craft Show at the Davison Farmers Market
 Davison Farmers Market



Holiday Pops
 Flint Symphony Orchestra (FSO)



Kids Drop & Shop – Kids Stay, YOU Sleigh!
 For-Mar Nature Preserve & Arboretum



Legend of the Enchanted Reef
 Recurring weekly on Sunday, Saturday until January 4, 2025
 Longway Planetarium



Perfect Little Planet
 Recurring weekly on Sunday, Saturday until December 22, 2024
 Longway Planetarium



Tuba Christmas & Carols Sing-Along
 Flint Farmers' Market



Whaley Historic House Museum Open Tours
 Recurring monthly on the 3rd Saturday
 Whaley Historic House Museum



Free Community Yoga
 Recurring weekly on Sunday until December 29, 2024

Prana Yoga Studio



Sunday Stroll - Winter Solstice
 Richfield County Park/BMX Track



Christmas at Crossroads Holiday Magic Drive Thru
 Crossroads Village and Huckleberry Railroad



Downtown Fenton Luminary Walk
 Fenton's Downtown Entertainment District



Franke & DawnE Karaoke
 Recurring weekly on Wednesday
 S & K Hometown Pub



WIP Wednesdays Workshop
 Recurring weekly on Wednesday
 Breads & Threads Handmade

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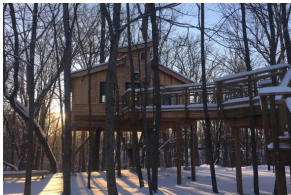


FIA Friends of Modern Art films - The Remains of the Day
Recurring weekly on Sunday, Friday, Saturday until December 29, 2024

Flint Institute of Arts' Film Theater



Holiday Bounce Bash
Mundy Sportsplex



Winter Break Camp: Winter Survival Skills
Richfield County Park/BMX Track



Flint Firebirds OHL Hockey
Dort Financial Center



Poets & Writers Night
Totem Books



Winter Break Camp: Animal Explorers
Richfield County Park/BMX Track



New Year's Eve 2024 - Ironsnake Masquerade Ball
The Machine Shop Concert Lounge



Books & Stars: Longway Planetarium's Book Club
Recurring monthly on the 1st weekday
Longway Planetarium



First Fridays at Longway Planetarium
Recurring monthly on the 1st Friday
Longway Planetarium



Gaia's Goods Metaphysical Marketplace
Recurring monthly on the 1st Saturday

Gaia's Goods



The Ultimate Doors
The Machine Shop Concert Lounge



Whaley Historic House Museum Open Tours
Recurring monthly on the 1st Saturday
Whaley Historic House Museum



Foraging for Native Plants
Robert Williams Nature and Historical Learning Center



Halestorm's Lzzy Hale and Joe: The Living Room Sessions
The Machine Shop Concert Lounge



10th Annual African American Film Series - MLK/FBI
Flint Institute of Arts' Film Theater



Flint ARTWALK
Recurring monthly on the 2nd Friday
Greater Flint Arts Council



Fun Home
Recurring weekly on Sunday, Friday, Saturday until January 19, 2025
Flint Community Players Theatre



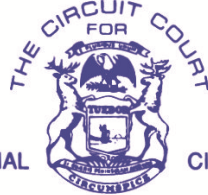
Gilded Game Night
Recurring monthly on the 2nd Friday
Whaley Historic House Museum



Second Friday | History of the Universe Series
Recurring monthly on the 2nd Friday until May 9, 2025
Longway Planetarium



Toolology



THE SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF MICHIGAN

Honorable Celeste D. Bell
 Honorable B. Chris Christenson
 Honorable Khary L. Hanible
 Honorable Ariana E. Heath
 Honorable Elizabeth A. Kelly

900 SOUTH SAGINAW ST., FLINT, MICHIGAN 48502
 810.257.3252

DAVID J. NEWBLATT - CHIEF JUDGE
 BARBARA A. MENEAR - COURT ADMINISTRATOR

Honorable Mark W. Latchana
 Honorable Anthony J. McDowell
 Honorable David J. Newblatt
 Honorable Brian S. Pickell
 Honorable Dawn M. Weier

CIRCUIT AND PROBATE COURT
 JUDICIAL ASSIGNMENTS

Please find below judicial assignments that are effective January 1, 2025, for the 7th Judicial Circuit and the Genesee County Probate Courts. The assignments are authorized by Local Administrative Order [2024-10](#) and Local Administrative Order [2024-04](#).

Family Division

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Judge Mary A. Hood | Courtroom 501 | 810.257.3230 |
| Judge Anthony J. McDowell | Courtroom 507 | 810.424.4476 |
| Judge Dawn M. Weier | Courtroom 515 | 810.257.3218 |

Criminal-Civil Division

| | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Judge B. Chris Christenson | Courtroom 308 | 810.257.3262 |
| Judge Khary L. Hanible | Courtroom 303 | 810.257.3270 |
| Judge Elizabeth A. Kelly | Courtroom 306 | 810.257.3257 |
| Judge Mark W. Latchana | Courtroom 305 | 810.257.3260 |
| Judge David J. Newblatt | Courtroom 300 | 810.257.3080 |
| Judge Brian S. Pickell | Courtroom 307 | 810.257.3238 |

Probate Court

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Judge Jennie E. Barkey | Courtroom 506 | 810.257.3550 |
| Judge Ariana E. Heath | Courtroom 504 | 810.257.3521 |

- Judge Heath will retain her existing juvenile docket but will not be assigned to new cases after January 1, 2025. Pending domestic cases will be reassigned to other family division judges, with limited exception for cases where substantial judicial involvement has occurred.

David J. Newblatt, Chief Judge
 Circuit and Probate Courts

December 18, 2024

CHIEF SPEAKS (CONT'D)

fight—there were two different stories. The prosecutor's was that the defendant was a villain with a beef who retrieved the gun to settle matters once and for all, thus turning what should have been merely a fistfight into a deadly encounter. The defense's story was that the defendant was a hero who was trying to protect other people from a dangerous aggressor. Although

each attorney was confined by the law and evidence, each had more than ample opportunity to tell their diametrically opposed stories to the jury through voir dire, argument and the questions they asked of the witnesses.

An impartial judge imposing law and rules created through the democratic process in a

courtroom open to the public; two zealous advocates competing through their legal skills and storytelling prowess; and the ultimate decision made by twelve impartial jurors? Yep, that's justice all right. —cjdjn

ADMINISTRATOR CORNER (CONT'D)

records division of the circuit court came into existence because of the forward thinking of Domonique Clemons, Genesee County Clerk-Register and Judge David J. Newblatt, Chief Judge. An agreement was struck which permitted the circuit court to assume administrative authority for the legal records division.

It was the court equivalent of the first spike being driven in the first railroad track!

The legal records division has been on the move ever since with new management stand-

ards, a greater emphasis on public engagement and being fully invested as part of the circuit court of the future.

I consider this to be a highly rewarding achievement that will only be more satisfying over time.

Likewise, the circuit court has followed the pattern of reorganization in juvenile records and specialty court services. Friend of the Court and Probate Court have also undergone review to align staff in ways that provide a path forward and job growth.

Every person who walks in the courthouse and goes to an office of the court or a courtroom is our customer.

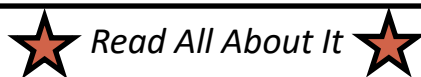
We have a higher duty to be respectful and courteous than most organizations, we are a judicial monopoly. There is nowhere other than a court to file a court case.

What happens in a court matters. The tone and clarity of its judicial decisions effect the lives of people.

Every person who works in a Courthouse has the opportuni-

ty to intersect with someone who does not want to be here, but has to be here.

I am thankful that the court works every day to make the experience positive and life changing. —bam



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