

# HEARSAY

GENESEE COUNTY  
CIRCUIT AND  
PROBATE COURTS  
E-NEWSLETTER

a quarterly publication

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## HONORARY EDITION:

JUDGE JENNIE E.  
BARKEY

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As Sam Olson, Probate Court Administrator, and I collaborated to dedicate *Hearsay* to our friend, colleague and longstanding jurist, Judge Jennie E. Barkey, as she continues with her knock-out punch to Round 2/Cancer, I thought of how I would describe Jennie to someone who had never met her.

It started with a chuckle and the descriptive phrases easily flowed. Who is part Saint Mother Teresa, part Auntie Mame, part any stand-up comedian that comes to your mind, unconventional in her caring and commitment, thoughtful beyond words, loyal to family, friends, the court and the community and a fearless warrior, the answer can only be Judge Jennie E. Barkey.

Looking back over the 7 years that *Hearsay* has been in publication demonstrates an abiding commitment to Adoption Day.

JEB is always good press for the January edition, having produced and participated in adoption day the November before. We have included several great photographs from those events that were included in previous editions, along with a few quotes from JEB. For those of us who know Judge Barkey, they are all vintage JEB.

Of course, there are the specialty courts over which she presides and those are referenced in this edition. We know that Veteran's Court is part of her DNA and Mental Health Court is as important to her as the daily run or walk.



A vignette of a different kind. One of the photos, and my personal favorite, was the day that JEB came to my office with a cake in her hand and told me that her brother, attorney Brian Barkey was a case evaluator in the law library and today was his birthday. Great, Happy Birthday, Brian. No, that was not enough.

She said "let's" go bust into the case evaluation in progress, sing happy birthday and she had someone with her dressed

up like a tiger to be the lead singer. Of course, it all made... no sense. In, we went.

The photo that you will see included in this edition captures the agony and ecstasy of the moment. Of course, Brian was not surprised. The attorney with the hand over his mouth is Mike Parillo. It is a perfect reaction – part laughter and part, I can't believe this is happening.

In any event, it was good for a laugh that day and many others. Once again, JEB went out of her way and her day to celebrate the birthday of her brother. I know that this was not the first time that her family was surprised and appreciated in unconventional ways.

One of the funniest episodes that I shared with

JEB was a very long time ago. Her son, Joseph, was young. He might have been 4 or 5 years old and JEB was the Friend of the Court. It was Halloween and Joey dressed up like one of the Blues Brothers.

The black suit, hat, sunglasses, handcuffed briefcase, the real deal. Judge Hayman was the Chief Judge and located on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor in the Judge Beagle space, pre-renovation. There

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## WHY JUDGE BARKEY HAS TO RETURN



*Left to Right: Judge Christenson, Judge Gadola, Judge Kelly, Judge Newblatt, Judge Beagle, Judge Pickell, Judge Bell, Judge Farah, Judge Behm, Judge Latchana (via Zoom)*



Judge Barkey has to return because, “As the energizer bunny, we miss her smile, attitude, sense of humor and above all else, her love for children. I also miss sharing old stories about our late fathers, who practiced law for over 50 years and had reputations as “working hard and playing hard.” - Judge Duncan M. Beagle ( a/k/a The Chief)



*Left to Right: Sue McVey, Alyssa Hunt, Nicole Johnson, Jennifer Michael, Debbie Cherry, Felisia Martin*



Judge Barkey has to come back because she is IRREPLACEABLE! - Judge F. Kay Behm



Judge Barkey has to return because, “I miss her positive outlook and it is much needed right now.” - Judge Elizabeth A. Kelly



Judge Barkey has to return because she’s our solid rock who motivates us like no other, especially on the fifth floor . . . not to mention that we just flat-out love and miss her and think she’s the coolest and best. - Judge Brian S. Pickell



Judge Barkey has to return to work because....I need her daily reminder that what we do here is fun. - Judge David J. Newblatt



## FAMILY TIME



*Left to Right: Roger Demock, Judge Barkey, Megan Demock, Dan Watt, Joe Demock*



*Fighter/Winner!*



*Fighter/Winner!*



*"I know you want to jump out and swim...not now!"*



*Joe and mom  
He was born on her birthday*



*Left to Right: Megan Demock, Judge Barkey, Joe Demock*

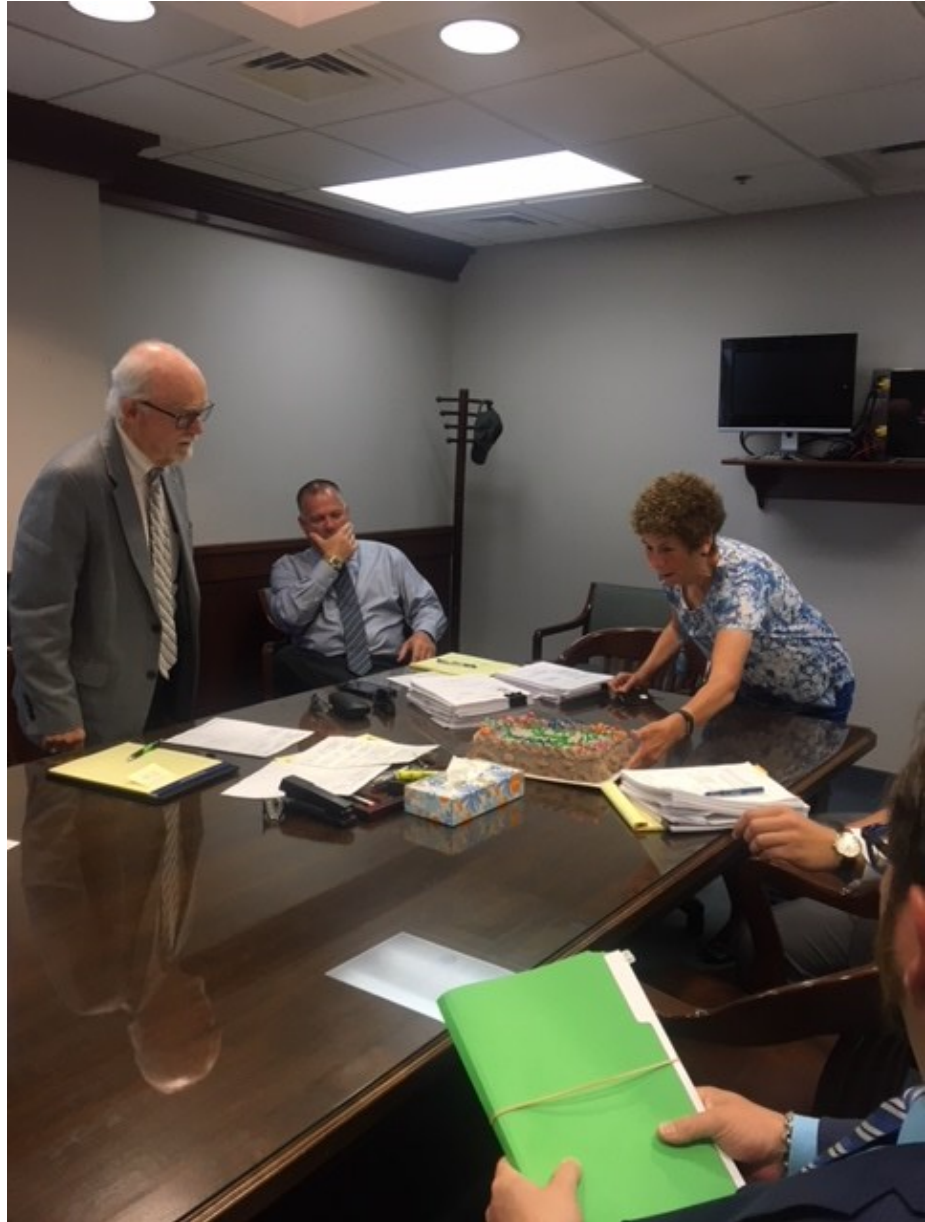
## CASE EVALUATOR HAS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION IN THE MIDDLE OF A CASE EVALUATION (READ ON!)

Published in the July,  
2018 edition of Hear-  
say

June 7, 2018 was scheduled to be a regular day of case evaluation in the law library. But, it was not to be. The case evaluator panel for the day was Mike Perillo, Christopher Scott and Brian Barkey.

One of the case evaluators had a birthday that day. The same case evaluator has a sister who presides on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the Courthouse.

The sister wanted to bust in on case evaluation, bring a birthday cake and a singer dressed up like a tiger to serenade her brother with birthday wishes. She really did it!





# ADOPTION DAY

Published in the January, 2019 edition of Hearsay



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.



Published in the January, 2018 edition of Hearsay

Probate Court Judge Jennie E. Barkey told those in attendance, "Family has absolutely nothing to do with genetics. It has to do with relationships that never, ever die."

"This celebration is to honor those who have opened their hearts and homes through adoption," Barkey explained. "We also recommit ourselves to providing support to all children who still need a home to call their own. We have a fundamental responsibility to ensure each child grows up knowing the love of a permanent family."



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Judge Barkey explains, "I love this day for a lot of reasons. The number one reason is that it's totally about family! Kids that have families have childhoods, which is a very rare commodity these days, but kids that have families have a chance. I'll fight for that chance for them until I can't fight anymore."

Published in the January, 2018 edition of Hearsay



"This celebration offers us an opportunity to take a moment to acknowledge what is important – family; and we encourage other individuals and families to consider adoption, as we celebrate the joy of adoption and express our thanks for adoptive parents throughout our community," commented Judge Barkey.

*Kids that have families have childhoods, which is a very rare commodity these days, but kids that have families have a chance. I'll fight for that chance for them until I can't fight anymore." - Judge Jennie E. Barkey*

## MENTAL HEALTH COURT

Published in the January, 2019 edition of Hearsay

### **Judge Barkey**

*Mental Health Court* targets offenders with a serious mental illness, serious emotional disturbance or a developmental disability.

It began in 2007 and offers offenders the opportunity to participate in court based treatment in lieu of jail or prison terms.

Intense judicial oversight is provided as well as treatment through Community Mental Health.

Other program features include drug testing referrals to community services such as clothing or housing resources, transportation assistance and assistance with obtaining employment. Currently there are 54 participants. **(Court Staff: Amber Gillean, coordinator; Gail Redmond, clerical support)**

*Veteran's Treatment Court* integrates the same principles as mental health court but focuses

on military veterans and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The program promotes sobriety, recovery and stability through a coordinated response that involves collaboration with the traditional partners found in mental health courts, as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs, volunteer veteran mentors and organizations that support veterans.

This court became operational in 2013. Currently there are 14 participants. **(Court Staff: Debbie Rice, coordinator)**

## ADMINISTRATOR CORNER

Published in the January, 2019 edition of Hearsay

On October 5, 2018, Judge Jennie E. Barkey was honored as Jurist of the Year at the Michigan Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) training conference held in Bay City. The Jurist of the Year is one of the annual Child Welfare Awards awarded by the FCRB to recognize individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service to Michigan's foster children.

Judge Barkey presides over a weekly post-termination review (PTR) docket on Monday mornings. This specialized docket is composed of recent termination cases with children in the foster care system. Judge Barkey oversees the docket and cases to help children achieve permanency quickly, preventing unnecessary delay in the process toward adoption. In 2017, there were 44 cases on the PTR docket, with a total of 64 kids adopted. So far in 2018, there have been 47 cases on the docket, with a total of 65 kids adopted.



Pictured: Ed Zobeck, SCAO, Chief Administrative Officer, Judge Barkey

Judge Barkey was nominated for the award by Vivek Sankaran, an attorney and professor from the University of Michigan Law School. Attorney Sankaran is an advocate for the rights of children and par-

ents in child welfare proceedings and is the director of the Child Advocacy Law Clinic.

In addition to Jurist of the Year, the Child Welfare Awards categories include: Foster Care Worker of the Year; Lawyer-Guardian Ad Litem of the Year; Foster Parent of the Year; and Parent Attorney of the Year. More information about the FCRB can be found at:

[www.courts.mi.gov/fcrb](http://www.courts.mi.gov/fcrb). —so

## THE NOTORIOUS JEB (CONT'D)

was a jury deliberation room adjacent to the courtroom.

Picture this: A delegation of attorneys from an Eastern European country were visiting Genesee County and contacted me about making a courtesy stop at the Circuit Court. It was arranged and of course, they would meet the Chief Judge.

None of them spoke English or did not speak it well. A translator was on board. Judge Hayman was running late. The delegation and I went to the jury deliberation room to await his arrival.

JEB showed up with Joey, dressed for Halloween to see Judge Hayman. As I earlier wrote, he was running late. Judge Hayman's secretary must have said that I was in the jury deliberation room and JEB came my way. Yes, Joey was with her.

The door to the jury deliberation opened, the Blues Brother entered, the entire delegation stood up, Joey was shocked but pleased and for just a minute, the visitors thought that Judge Hayman had arrived.

The translator could not translate quick enough to straighten all of this out! It was funny then, has been funny over the years and is funny as I write this. Joey has grown up, lives on the west coast, but is still a charmer.

And then, Sam reminded me about the time that Judge Barkey went to the home of woman at the end of life and presided over the adult adoption of her stepchildren. The woman succumbed later that day and Judge Barkey was thanked in her obituary.

Such a gesture was priceless to the family and a debt for which no payment was needed beyond the satisfaction of its judicial performance.

**DO NOT** bet against the strength and perseverance of the notorious JEB. You will lose.



*Read All About It*



Hearsay is now available on the Circuit Court website [www.7thCircuitCourt.com/hearsay-newsletter](http://www.7thCircuitCourt.com/hearsay-newsletter)

We want to hear from you! Send us an email letting us know what you would like to see in the newsletter and feedback on the current edition. You can also submit ideas and information about activity in your department. [hearsay@7thcircuitcourt.com](mailto:hearsay@7thcircuitcourt.com)