

GENESEE COUNTY CIRCUIT AND PROBATE COURTS E-NEWSLETTER

a quarterly publication

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MURALS OF THE HISTORIC GENESEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The feature article, "Murals of the Historic Genesee County Courthouse" is a re-print from the July 2017 edition. This article generated a great deal of response upon its distribution, many from veteran attorneys with fond memories of courtroom proceedings in these hallowed spaces.

As we begin to come out of the pandemic and edge back into the live courtroom experience, we are reminded of the importance of a courtroom and the unspoken message of respect that is communicated for legal proceedings.

I am also reminded of the partnership on this article with Janet Patsy, retired deputy circuit court administrator. The *Courthouse Square Project* (1998-2003) included construction of the west side of the Courthouse and restoration of the *Historic Genesee County Courthouse*. - bam

An intriguing mystery was to be solved, as the Courthouse Square Project (1998-2003) moved into the restoration phase. The Courthouse is graced with original murals that dignify and adorn two historical courtrooms. However, the identity of the muralist was unknown.

No obvious signatory marks or records identifying the artist could be found. A keen interest developed in discovering his identity. The historic renovation of the courtrooms, and their return to grandeur, made the quest more urgent. Many art institutes, archival sources, libraries and news-

paper articles were consulted. The murals were prominently featured in a 1926 newspaper account of the grand opening of the Courthouse. It was written that they were an "instant crowd pleaser with the touring public." The composition of the murals was extensively reviewed.

Notably absent from the article was any reference to the artistic contributor. A trip to the State Archives at the Michigan Historical Center in Lansing was made. Minutes from the 1925 and 1926 Genesee County

Board of Supervisors were on file and made reference to the courthouse construction. The name of the muralist was not included in the materials.

The Michigan State Capitol Historian, Kerry Chartkoff, was contacted, to draw upon her experience in discovering the identity of the muralist whose works adorn the Capitol Building in Lansing. For many years, the identity was unknown.

Ms. Chartkoff suggested sending out letters of inquiry to museums, historical societies and art institutes. Letters were sent to the Chicago Art Institute, Cranbrook Art Academy, Detroit Institute of Arts and others. Photo-

graphs of the courthouse murals were included. Hope began to fade, when responses were not forthcoming.

Shortly thereafter, and quite unexpectedly, an art conservationist from Chicago contacted the court. The caller inquired as to whether there were *Edgar Cameron* murals in the Courthouse. She was involved with the restoration of another Cameron mural in the Chicago area.

The Genesee County Courthouse was said to be mentioned in the biographical information of *Edgar Spier Cameron* in *Who's Who in Amer-*

ican Art. An immediate trip to the Flint Public Library and a rapid Internet search for similar works, confirmed that Cameron painted the murals.

Still unknown is how Cameron became associated with the mural project at the Courthouse. The 1920's were a rich period of growth for Genesee County, with industrialists and visionaries firmly imbedded in the community. One can only surmise that someone, somehow came across Cameron perhaps in their travels to Chicago.

There is something left to discover for the next caretakers of the Courthouse. -jep/bam



Muralist

Edgar Spier Cameron (1862–1944) was born in Ottawa, Illinois and studied in Chicago, New York and Paris. He returned to Chicago with his French-born artist wife, Marie Gelon. As an art critic for the Chicago Tribune (1890–1900), he participated in the World's Columbian Exposition and interpreted new art for the public. He won the Paris Exposition Silver Medal in 1900. His works were prominently displayed at a number of shows at the Chicago Art Institute.

Cameron had a wide range of interest in subject matter, including portraits, landscapes, genre and historical paintings. Some of his paintings resulted from travels to Belgium, Brittany and Paris. It is clear from the inventory of his work, that American history and landscapes were of special interest.

A portion of his artistic career was spent on mural commissions. He was one of the artists who worked on *The Chicago Fire* cyclorama prior to the 1893 World's Fair. A number of his murals remain intact in prominent buildings in Chicago.

One of his mural commissions (*right and below right*) merit further notice. The murals, now located at the Mead Public Library in Sheboygan, Wisconsin are particularly reminiscent of the murals in the courthouse.



Scenes (above and below) from Courtroom No. 3 depicting the trade importance of the Flint River and Native American presence in Genesee County.



"William Paine and Colonel Oliver Crocker with Native Americans in the Building of the First Dam on the Sheboygan River" (above) and "Sheboygan Industry and Education" (below)



Restoration of Courtroom No. 1



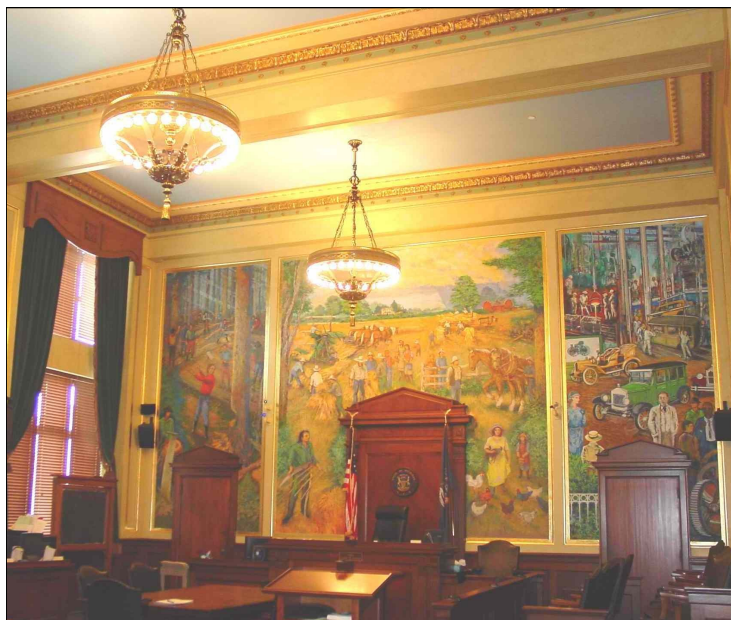
The murals in the third floor courtrooms were the showpieces of the Courthouse when it opened in 1926. The mural panels in Courtroom No. 1 represent the industries that provided economic growth in the region; lumbering, agriculture and manufacturing. Though painted in 1926, the mural was reminiscent of the monumental artistic works commissioned in the depression, under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration (WPA).



Air conditioning and suspended ceilings were introduced to the Genesee County Courthouse in the early 1970s. It was during this period that sections of the mural below the ceiling line were removed. The whereabouts of the removed mural pieces remain unknown. *(Left)*, is a picture of the courtroom as it appeared in the 1970s and until the mural was recreated



A 1926 black and white photograph and the remaining mural pieces above the ceiling line *(above)* provided the basis for mural recreation.



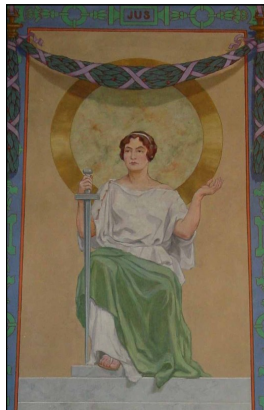
Restoration of Courtroom No. 2



Courtroom No. 2 was the only historical courtroom that remained true to its original appearance, except for over-painting the gold leaf ornamentation. As such, it remained more historically accurate in appearance.



The original chandeliers in this courtroom were cleaned and restored. Additionally, the sources of light within these fixtures were augmented to provide sufficient lighting for the courtroom occupants. Remarkably, this electrical upgrade did not alter their appearance. The restored fixtures also became a model for replication of eleven similar fixtures in the historic courtroom spaces. They are solid brass and copper.



The mural composition in Courtroom No. 2 reveals classical and allegorical themes. The muses at the upper corners represent symbolic figures of justice. The fasces, bundles of rods bound together around an ax, were emblems of authority in the Roman era. Common, Natural, Roman and Mosaic Laws are also noted.

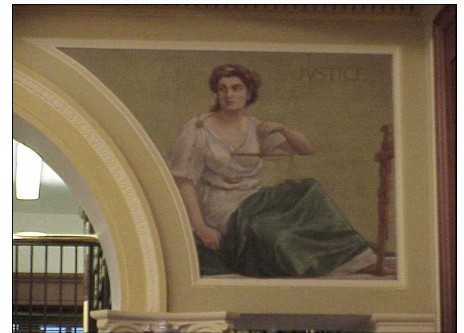
Murals Compared



Jurisprudence

A grouping of four murals in the Illinois Supreme Court Library in Springfield, offer striking similarity to the classical murals in Courtroom No. 2.

The four are painted to represent the ideals of: *justice, precedent, jurisprudence and knowledge.*

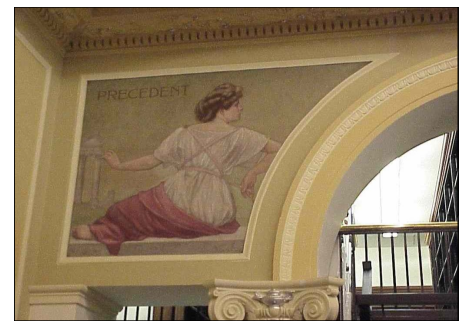


Justice



Knowledge

*Photo credit:
Chicago Conservation Center*



Precedent



The murals of Courtroom No. 2 feature depictions of *Mosaic Law (left), Natural Law (above) and The Codification of Roman Law by Justinian (right).*



Restoration of Courtroom No. 3



This was the largest courtroom. The original back wall was the Saginaw Street facade. The current back wall of the courtroom was added sometime thereafter. The added walls created an office for a court stenographer and two small private offices. The modernization of the mechanical systems changed beautifully proportioned spaces by adding suspended ceilings.

The courtroom features a mural depicting the crossing of the Flint River at Saginaw Street. *The Flint Daily Journal* described the mural in an article of November 7, 1926, as being the “most interesting from an historical point of view.” The crossing would later become the focal point of downtown Flint. The artistic expression also captured the culture and heritage of the Native Americans that were in the area. *Jacob Smith*, the founder of Flint, built his trading post near the crossing.



Significant effort was undertaken to return all third floor courtrooms to their original interior colors. No historic photographs were found to illustrate the original decorative scheme. By carefully removing layers of non-historic paint, original brush strokes were discovered. Each courtroom is a combination of several colors and glazing techniques. The *Dutch metal* cornice near the ceiling line was returned to its original luster. Gold leaf was reapplied to the raised panels.

A decorative stenciling pattern, unique to Courtroom No. 3, was revealed during the paint restoration process. A trompe l’oeil technique was added to the back wall to add dimension and perpetuate the overall decorative theme.

The “New” Mural

On the fifth floor, in a courtroom currently occupied by Judge Beagle, the newest courthouse mural can be seen.

With private funding from the Genesee County Bar Association, Genesee County Bar Foundation, the legal community and other benefactors, a mural that captured the development of Genesee County through its small cities and townships was conceived. The mural also depicts local leaders from various walks of life.

The mural was created by Stefan Davidek (1924-2016) and many other talented members of the Davidek family. When the mural was formally dedicated and received on September 28, 2007, it was a Davidek reunion, with many family members in attendance to celebrate and honor the work of the patriarch.

In retrospect, there was a sense that this would be the final monumental mural installation that would bear the recognizable Davidek sense of community and personal pride of familial accomplishment.

Note: Since the last mural installation, 2 early Davidek works were purchased from an auction in Lansing. They bear the name of “Stephen” Davidek, before he returned to the original spelling of his first name. In 2012, his family repaired the original frames and canvases. They now adorn the walls of the 5th floor courtroom, currently occupied by Judge Newblatt.

Davidek was very surprised to learn that the court had acquired the works. He was

a young man when they were done. His personal style was yet to be developed.

Davidek was influenced by the renowned murals of Diego Rivera, permanently installed at the Detroit Institute of Arts. He spoke about seeing them with his father and being awestruck by their content and magnitude. His style, in the early years, was reminiscent of Rivera.

Once again, we are reminded of a remarkable artist who brought murals to the Courthouse and the second remarkable artist who came 75 years later.

“Once again, we are reminded of a remarkable artist who brought murals to the Courthouse and the second remarkable artist who came 75 years later.”



THE CHIEF SPEAKS

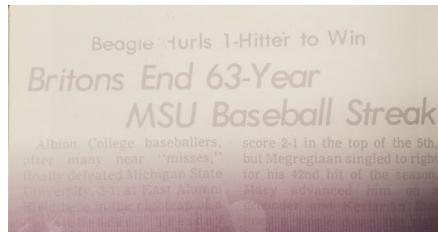


Photo credit: IO TRIUMPH! Fall-Winter Edition 2020-2021

The Chief Speaks article was given a “summer vacation.” As a surprise to the Chief, Hearsay is including, instead, a boys of summer article about an athletic achievement from his college days. We hope that you enjoy it!

Once upon a time in the sleepy college town of Albion, Michigan, there was a pretty good ballgame held. It was in 1970 and Chief Judge Duncan Beagle was the central figure in a showdown between Michigan State University and Albion College. Yes, Michigan State University.

Beagle was the senior, right-handed pitcher. He was quoted by his friend and fellow

alum, Kirk Heinze, who authored an article in the Albion College publication Io Triumphant!, as saying, “This will be my last game at Albion College.” Kirk went on to suggest that Beagle was thinking, “One more out and this Briton team gets a victory the ages.”

Top of the 7th inning, second game of a double header, Albion ahead 3-1. Two out, two runners on. One hitter walks, putting the tying run on base. Beagle limited the Spartans to one hit for the game. Albion had not beaten the Spartans since they last visited in 1907. Everybody wanted the win.

Back to the game – The batter gets a sharp grounder to the short-stop, the Spartan runners are on the move. After a fielder’s choice out, the game is over!

The dug out is emptied, the fans are on the field. For the first time in 63 years, the Britons have beaten the Spartans.

I do not relate these events nearly as well as the author. *Kirk Heinze* spent 31 years as a faculty member and admin-

istrator at MSU. After retiring, he hosted a weekly radio program, *Greening of the Great Lakes*, which aired on WJR 760.

As a fellow alum, I share this piece of history from Albion College. Albion was founded in 1835 and has a strong tradition of educational excellence. I want to acknowledge Judge F. Kay Behm, also a graduate of Albion College.-bam

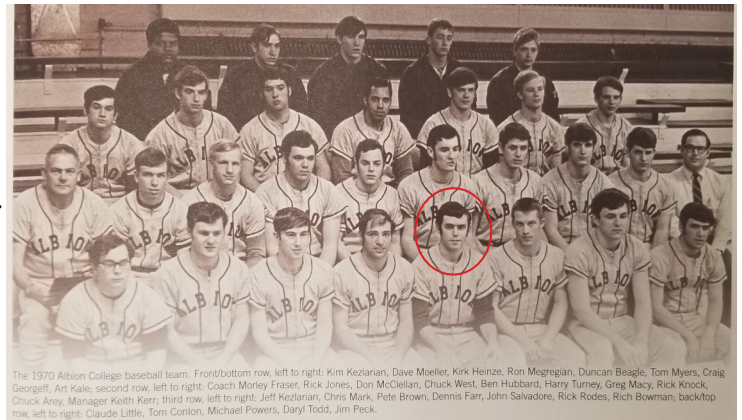


Photo credit: IO TRIUMPH!

Fall-Winter Edition 2020-2021

COURT ADMINISTRATOR CORNER

The past 16 months or so have been challenging for many. For court administrators and staff, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a dramatic, and ever-changing, shift in operations and management of court dockets. For many in the court system, the COVID-19 time period has been a whirlwind without a real sense of stability.

Fortunately the COVID-19 numbers in the area are declining significantly and there is a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel. While the last year and a half is one we’d all certainly like to put behind us, I wanted to take a look back at a year ago at this time to see where the world (and courts) found itself.



- The Probate and Circuit Courts had just begun the Return to Full Operations framework created by SCAO, and were in Phase One of Return to Full Operations, with the courts being closed on Fridays.
- Governor Whitmer issued her first executive order regarding

masks, which took effect on July 13, 2020.

- As of July 1, 2020, there were approximately 2,100 COVID-19 cases in Genesee County (the total figure to date is 33,600).
- In early July, several states were forced to postpone or reverse plans to reopen their economies due to record new COVID-19 cases.
- In April 2020, Zoom had over 300 million daily meeting participants.
- On July 1, 2020, the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed at 25,812.88 and Nasdaq closed at 10,058.77 (currently at

34,114.48 and 14,051.11, respectively).

- On July 4, 2020, the World Health Organization announced hydroxychloroquine was determined to be ineffective against COVID-19 based on interim trial results.

This look-back may provide some perspective from the past year, and some appreciation for what lies ahead. As the probate and circuit courts continue to plan for what “back to normal” will look like, an appreciation of the pre-COVID-19 days is strong for those in the courts who endured this rollercoaster of a year. —so

THE 4TH OF JULY

-LESSER KNOWN AND RELATED FACTS-



Congress made Independence Day an official unpaid holiday for federal employees in 1870. It was not until 1938 that it was changed by Congress to a paid federal holiday.



The Declaration of Independence was signed by 56 men from 13 colonies. Ben Franklin was the oldest at the age of 70. Thomas Jefferson, the lead drafter, was 33.



The only two signers to later serve as President were John Adams and Thomas Jefferson.



The stars in the original flag were in a circle so that all of the colonies would appear equal.



The first Independence Day celebration was in Philadelphia on July 8, 1776. This was the first day that the Declaration of Independence was read in public and the Liberty Bell rung.



John Adams and Thomas Jefferson died on July 4th in 1826, within hours of each other.



Ben Franklin wanted the turkey to be the national bird. Adams and Jefferson overruled him and recommended the bald eagle.



Every 4th of July, the Liberty Bell is tapped (not rung) 13 times in honor of the original colonies.



Yankee Doodle was a pre-revolutionary song originally sung by British military officers to mock the disheveled "Yankees" with whom they served during the French and Indian War.

The Yankee department was not up to the British standards. "Stuck a feather in his cap and called it macaroni" was a mocking comment about the lack of uniforms, wigs and style. –bam

JUNE 19, 2021

JUNETEENTH BECOMES THE NEWEST FEDERAL HOLIDAY

On June 17, 2021, President Biden signed the legislation to make Juneteenth a federal holiday, recognizing June 19 as the national day to commemorate the end of slavery in the United States.

Vice-president Kamala Harris introduced the President at the bill signing event and also signed the legislation in her capacity as president of the Senate.

The federal holiday recognizes the date of June 19, 1865 as the

actual end of slavery, well after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 was announced by President Lincoln.

Months later the 13th amendment was ratified, which abolished slavery in the final four border states not subject to President Lincoln's order. –bam



A FEW ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Genesee County Probate and 7th Circuit Courts would like to mention a few key individuals and departments who have contributed to the continuing operations of the courts during these challenging times.

There are *several* in the courts who have done and continue to do a wonderful job since March of 2020. Judges, office personnel, clerks' offices employees, administrators, technology coordinators, financial department staff and others have adapted to the "new normal"

to enable the important function of the court system to continue.

In early June 2021, jury trials resumed in the Circuit Court. The trials are being conducted with several safeguards in place to ensure the safety of case participants and jurors.

This undertaking demanded extensive planning and coordination among a number of individuals and departments. The courts would like to specifically acknowledge the efforts

of Ray Zanke and Genesee County Building & Grounds, Josh Freeman and the Board of County Commissioners.

The Department of Building and Grounds and its director, Ray Zanke, were integral in retrofitting the courtrooms in preparation for jury trials. The staff moved benches, tables, assisted in receiving deliveries, took requests for supplies, changed light bulbs, helped with adjustments at Harris Auditorium and all with the true spirit of cooperation.

The Board of Commissioners were generous to accommodate the courts in providing the space needed in Harris Auditorium to conduct juror reporting and jury selection.

A "thank you" is owed to Director of Administration Josh Freeman for making this possible. -so



In true form, Judge Barkey (again) defeated cancer and returned to the probate

court in June. As highlighted in the April 2021 *Hearsay* edition, the Notorious J.E.B. was battling cancer for a second time; and for a second time, she emerged cancer-free.

A big "thank you" is due to Judge Janelle Lawless. Judge Lawless served as a visiting judge with the probate court during Judge Barkey's prolonged medical absence, and did an excellent job assisting with the docket. As a former probate register, the retired Ingham County circuit court family division judge seamlessly took over the probate bench to preside over estate and trust motions, mental

hearings, and guardianships for the developmental disabled. We thank Judge Lawless for her time with the probate court, and wish her all the best in her retirement (and time with her new grandchild).

Assisting the probate court during Judge Barkey's absence has been a real team effort, and this writer would be remiss not to acknowledge others who have stepped up in Judge Barkey's absence:

- Judge Behm has served as the sole probate judge since Judge Barkey's absence in January 2021, and has served tirelessly during this time. She continues to apportion much of her duties to the probate court as Judge Barkey eases back onto the bench.

- Judge Latchana has taken over the veterans treatment court, adult mental health court, and juvenile mental health court programs for Judge Barkey, and continues to dedicate much of his week to these programs to ensure the much-needed structure continues for the participants.

- Judge Gadola took over the post-termination review docket, and continues to preside over this unique and challenging docket for the court.

- Judge Farah assisted with the mental docket and select protective proceedings for the probate court. He has been assigned to the probate court to handle the Flint Water cases, and is primed to hear an unprece-

dent number of petitions related to the potential settlement.

This writer would like to thank all the judges and offices who assisted the probate court during Judge Barkey's absence. The domino effect caused by her absence created additional cases for all judges – a "thank you" is in order to the entire circuit court bench.

Lastly, Judge Barkey's law clerk, Zach Huckabay, has had the pleasure of serving as a *de facto* law clerk for several judges during this time. Zach's multitasking skills and legal acumen were critical to keep the probate court moving forward. -so

2ND FLOOR DISPLAY CASES

Doreen Fulcher has been the savior of the 2nd floor display cases. For the past several years, she has taken on the task of changing out

the contents from time to time. Often the contents relate to holidays or other topics of interest to court users.

to an “*ensemble cast*” to continue the tradition.

If you are interested in helping, please let me know.

I will share names with Doreen and speak to your immediate supervisor about participation.

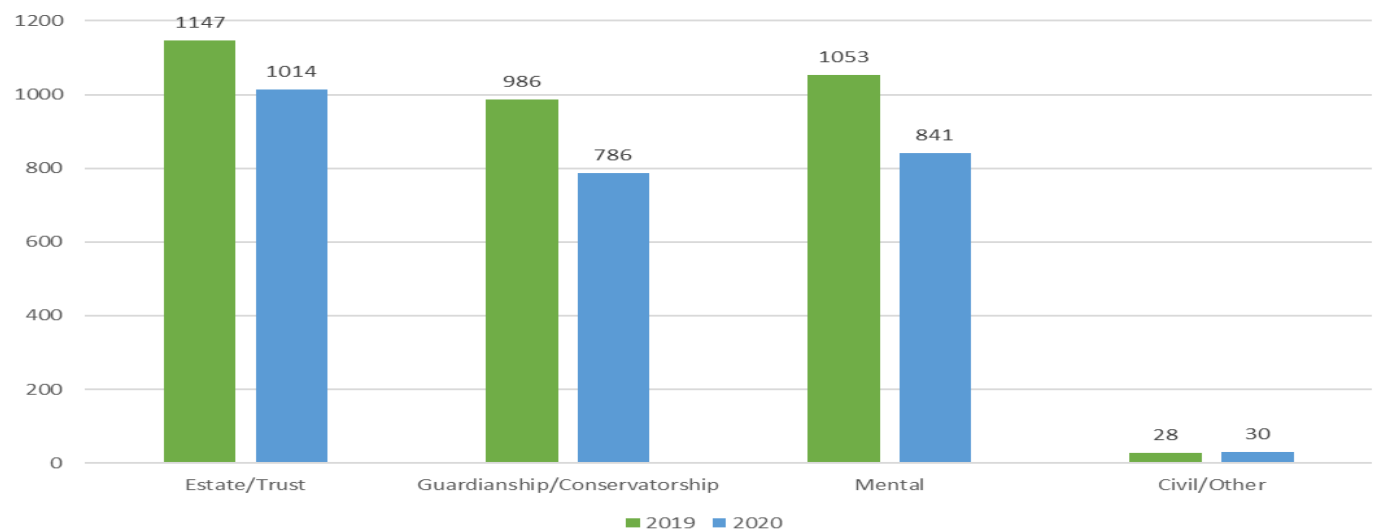
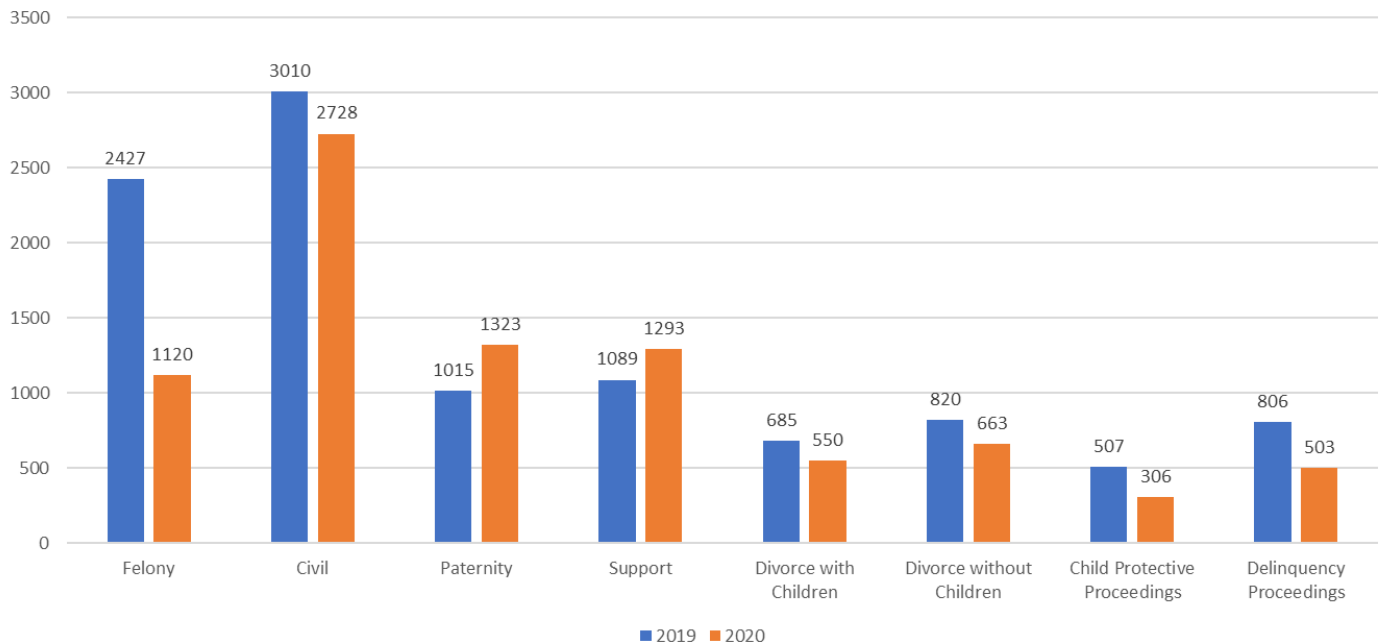
This is a creative project that can be a source of fun and appreciation. Please consider volunteering.- bam



Doreen has taken a position with the Probate Court and Sam Olson has agreed to let Doreen continue in this role. We need to move



Circuit Court New Case Filings
Pre COVID year - 2019
Full COVID year - 2020



THE ENTRAPMENT DEFENSE



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

The Entrapment Defense appeared in the June 15th, 2021 edition.

In 1982, charismatic automobile executive John DeLorean was charged in federal court with eight counts of cocaine trafficking after being caught in an FBI sting operation.

The allegations against him were that he became involved because he needed money for his then failing DeLorean Motor Company (the manufacturer of the DeLorean car featured in

the "Back to the Future" movies) and he could receive \$24 million in the venture.

Although the evidence against him seemed strong, including a video showing him with a suitcase full of cocaine proclaiming "it's good as gold." He was found not guilty by a jury Aug. 16, 1984.

The reason? The jury found that there had been entrapment as the improper actions of the FBI induced him to commit the crimes (including an informant telling him of possible death threats from Colombians if he didn't participate) and having no criminal record.

Full disclosure — 57 years ago I occasionally was his caddie when he played golf at the Bloomfield Hills Country Club.

Entrapment is a judicially created defense dating back to the 19th century.

There are two different tests for entrapment — the subjective test and the objective test.

The subjective test is used in federal court and a majority of state courts. Under this test, there are two requirements: (1) a showing by the defendant that the government induced them to commit the crime and; (2) establishing that the defendant was not predisposed to commit the crime prior to any government contact. A jury usually decides these issues.

Under the objective test (which is Michigan's test) entrapment is established if: (1) the police engaged in impermissible conduct that would induce a law-abiding

person to commit a crime in similar circumstances or; (2) the police engaged in conduct so reprehensible that it cannot be tolerated. A judge decides whether this test has been met.

The subjective test focuses on the defendant's state of mind while the objective test looks at the government's actions.

Michigan case law makes it clear that the defense of entrapment disincentivizes the use of governmental authority to manufacture a crime by a person who otherwise would not have committed it.

Entrapment is difficult to prove, usually unsuccessful, and not often used. However when shown, it's an absolute defense.



INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS

•Crossroads Village & Huckleberry Railroad

Join the Genesee County Parks in celebrating the Fourth at their annual Ice Cream Social.

There will be ice cream and lemonade for the whole family. Cost: Village Admission. For more information visit geneseecountyparks.org

List of fireworks displays across mid-Michigan

Thursday, July 1st:

- Bay City: From Wenonah Park at 10:12 p.m

• Chesaning: Showboat Park at dusk

Friday, July 2nd:

- Bay City: From Wenonah Park at 10:12 p.m.
- Lexington: From Tierney Park at 9:30 p.m.
- St. Helen: From the Saint Helen Airport about 10:30 p.m.

Saturday, July 3rd:

- Bay City: From Wenonah Park at 10:12 p.m.
- Caseville: From Caseville Beach at dusk

• Cass City: From Cass City Park at dusk

• Harrison: From the Clare County Fairgrounds at dusk

• Houghton Lake: From Houghton Lake State Airport at 10 p.m.

• St. Louis: In downtown St. Louis at 10:00 p.m.

Sunday, July 4th:

- Breckenridge: Downtown Breckenridge at dusk
- Clio: Shot off from Clio City Park at 10:15 p.m.

• Corunna: At McCurdy Park at dusk

• Flint: Atwood Stadium starting around 9:40 p.m.

• Lapeer: From Rolland-Warner Middle School at 10 p.m.

• Midland: From Dow Diamond at dusk

• Port Austin: At Port Austin State Harbor at 9:30 p.m.

• Saginaw: From Ojibway Island at dusk

• Sanford: Midland County Sanford Lake Park at 10 p.m. List

CIVIL CASE EVALUATION EMERGING FROM THE PANDEMIC

During the worst of the pandemic when many non-essential court operations were nearly shut down, the court moved to case evaluation using the zoom application.

Becky Gillette, ADR coordinator, quickly transitioned to zoom and arranged panels to work in this new way. Of course, the attorneys whose cases had been referred to case evaluation had to be brought on board and the exchange of summaries move to a new method.

Between October 7, 2020 and June 16, 2021, there were 547 cases scheduled for case evaluation and 264 zoom case evaluations were conducted.

Because Becky was the host of each of those case evaluation sessions, her time was more intensely devoted to the process.

With other foot traffic to the law library and phone calls at a low, it was manageable. It was challenging, but manageable by a dedicated court staff person, Becky Gillette.

After consulting with Judge Joseph J. Farah, Presiding Judge, Civil Division, I am announcing that case evaluation will return to in-person effective August 1, 2021.

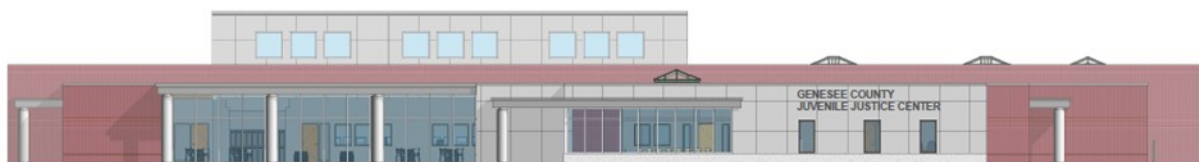
Becky has started to notice the cases and contact case evaluators. The early returns suggest that all are glad to return to the in-person sessions, where conversation and collegiality can be renewed.

This experience tells us that zoom was effective and saved

the day, in many instances. It also tells us that the social experience, even among adversaries, is a rich part of our legal tradition -bam



THE GENESEE COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION



County officials and Judges have long talked about the need for a replacement facility like the planned 48,500 square foot building. Some buildings on the grounds of the current Genesee Valley Regional Center (GVRC) are nearly 100 years old and county officials agree the building is inefficient, expensive to operate and doesn't meet the needs of the youth in the facility.



Judge John A. Gadola, Presiding Judge of the Family Division, is excited about what the facility means for the youth of Genesee County and the community. "The creation of the new Juvenile Justice Center has been a need in this County since my dad was a judge (Thomas L. Gadola). To have it finally be realistic is exciting for the court and the community. This means better outcomes for youth, improving public safety, while keeping youth close to home."

In 2019, with the full commitment of the County Board of Commissioners and all Eleven (11) Circuit Court and Probate Court Judges, Red-

stone Architects, Inc., a Bloomfield Hills company, was given a green light to design the new facility. Redstone Architects, Inc. is handling the architectural design and engineering services for the \$20-million building project.

Evidenced-based, trauma-informed, community-based services for court-involved youth have become the mission for the Genesee County Family Division, and funding priorities have been focused on this goal. As these services have been implemented, there was a need to design a building to address these goals.

The architectural design of the facility looks more like a school or community center than a jail—and that's by intention. The trauma-informed design offers ample natural light, softer colors, furnishings, and spaces that feel more like classrooms than

detention. At the same time, the design offers clear lines of sight and layouts that allow for efficient use of staff resources and strong supervision, as well as enhanced security.

"Redstone Architects is honored to work with Genesee County in designing its new, state-of-the-art evidence-based Juvenile Justice Center," stated Daniel Redstone, FAIA, NCARB, Principal-in-Charge. "The facility's design provides an environment that encourages mental and physical well-being in a secure environment and accommo-

dates both day-treatment and detention programs."

On Aug. 26, 2020 a local construction company, E&L Construction of Flint, was awarded the construction contract, and on Sept. 16, 2020 Genesee County officials and judges broke ground at the site of the future Juvenile Justice Center on Pasadena Avenue in Flint Township. Once completed, the building will provide a secure detention program when necessary, an alternate detention program for youth who can be supervised in the community, day treatment services to include education, family-treatment, and vocational support; and a residential treatment program for youth who are in need of more intensive support.

The Juvenile Justice Center will be completed in June of 2022. —ri





MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Michigan Problem-Solving Courts Help Lower Recidivism, Unemployment Rates

Programs address and treat underlying behavioral health, veterans issues

LANSING, MI, April 15, 2021 – During a [live-streamed virtual news conference](#), Michigan Supreme Court Justice Elizabeth T. Clement today announced the publication of the [FY 2020 Problem-Solving Courts Annual Report](#), highlighting the success of Michigan’s 199 problem-solving courts (PSCs). In particular, the report shows that graduates of adult drug court programs were nearly 2 times less likely to be convicted of a new offense within three years of admission to a program. Also worth noting during Alcohol Awareness Month, sobriety court graduates were more than 3 times less likely to be convicted of a new offense within three years of admission.

“Even during the pandemic, Michigan’s problem-solving courts have continued connecting with participants and delivering needed services to solve problems and save lives,” said Justice Clement, who serves as liaison to PSCs. “This new data reinforces the amazing work being conducted in these courts to give people who are struggling a second chance, to strengthen families, and to safeguard communities across the state.”

Justice Clement was joined via Zoom in today’s announcement by these PSC team members and partners:

- Judge Shannon Holmes, 36th District Specialty Court, Detroit
- Chief Judge Jocelyn Fabry, Tribal Court, Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Sault Ste. Marie
- David Wallace, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Huron County Prosecutor’s Office, Bad Axe
- Mark Witte, Executive Director, Allegan County Community Mental Health, Allegan
- Anthony Jackson, Graduate, 36th District Specialty Court, Detroit

Other key [report](#) findings:

- Drop in unemployment of 96 percent for adult drug court graduates and 86 percent for hybrid (drug/sobriety) court graduates.
- Mental health court (MHC) graduates on average—among adult circuit, adult district, juvenile—were 2-3 times less likely to commit another crime within three years of admission to a program.
- Drop in unemployment of 71 percent for adult district MHC graduates.
- Average of 97 percent improvement in mental health status among adult circuit, adult district, juvenile MHC graduates.
- Average of 96 percent improvement in quality of life among adult circuit, adult district, juvenile MHC graduates.
- Drop in unemployment of 81 percent among veterans treatment court (VTC) graduates.
- Michigan remains a national leader with 27 VTCs.

Problem-solving courts focus on providing treatment and intense supervision to offenders as an alternative to incarceration. These include drug and sobriety, mental health, veterans, and other nontraditional courts. The Supreme Court, through its State Court Administrative Office, assists trial court judges in the management of these courts by providing training, education, operational standards, monitoring, certification requirements, and funding. Find out more about PSCs [here](#).

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MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For First Time in History, Diverse Stakeholders to Develop Strategic Plan for Judiciary

Court is seeking qualified candidates to serve on Judicial Council

LANSING, MI, April 27, 2021 – For the first time in history, a diverse group of justice system stakeholders will develop a strategic plan for Michigan’s judiciary. Created by the addition of [Michigan Court Rule 8.128](#), the [Michigan Judicial Council \(MJC\)](#) will include judges, administrators, attorneys, county clerks, and the public. With a commitment for the MJC to be representative of Michigan’s diverse population and regions, the Court is seeking qualified applicants to serve.

“With nearly 600 judges, 242 courts, and more than 160 funding units, our judiciary is decentralized, complicated, and difficult to coordinate,” said Chief Justice Bridget M. McCormack, “The Judicial Council will play a critical role in consulting the public, bringing together a wide range of viewpoints, and developing a path forward that maintains judicial independence, expands access to justice, strengthens transparency, and increases efficiency.”

The Court is committed to an expansive outreach process designed to spur broad and diverse thinking about the future of Michigan’s judiciary. Outreach may include electronic surveys, virtual or in-person focus groups and community town halls, and participation in statewide and regional conferences. The MJC will also compile information gathered from other recent statewide planning and reform initiatives such as the Justice for All Task Force, Trial Court Funding Commission, and Michigan Joint Task Force on Jail and Pretrial Incarceration.

“Serious discussions are occurring every day regarding mental health, racial equity, access to justice, pretrial practices, the use of money bail, and equitable models for trial court funding,” Chief Justice McCormack added. “These conversations are crucial, but strategic planning for Michigan’s judiciary is essential to coordinate these programs, set priorities, collect standardized data, and provide guidance across jurisdictions statewide.”

The [MJC website](#) includes application instructions, and two application forms: one for judges and one for non-judges. The application deadline is **Friday, May 7, at 5:00 p.m.**

The MJC will convene in July 2021, and embark on a strategic planning process that will include visioning, analyzing trends, reviewing outreach data, and developing strategic goals and long-term strategies for advancing judicial branch reform and improvements.

(more)

Judicial Council to Develop First Strategic Plan for Michigan's Judiciary

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The State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) received a [State Justice Institute \(SJI\) grant](#) to fund the strategic planning process and will work with a consultant over the next year to design and lead an inclusive and comprehensive planning process that will result in a Strategic Agenda for the branch. Once complete, the MJC, along with other groups, will help build support for and implement the Strategic Agenda. The MJC will be involved in an ongoing strategic planning cycle for the judiciary.

Emphasizing the need for planning and coordination, in the grant application, SCAO highlighted a wide range of recent and ongoing initiatives:

- [Justice for All Task Force](#): Committed to providing all Michigan residents access to our civil justice system.
- [Diversity and Inclusion Committee](#): Assist SCAO with recruiting and hiring a diverse workforce and expanding diversity and inclusion training throughout the judiciary.
- [Michigan Joint Task Force on Jail and Pretrial Incarceration](#): Collecting data, developing recommendations, and implementing reforms to safely reduce county jail populations via non-jail alternatives.
- [MiFILE](#): Developing a statewide electronic filing system for filing and serving court documents online.
- [MI-Resolve](#): Online dispute resolution tool available to users across Michigan to resolve certain disputes.
- [Trial Court Funding Commission](#): Advancing the recommendations of the Trial Court Funding Commission to create a stable court funding system, uniform assessments, centralized collections, a uniform employment system, and providing for all the technology needs of the trial courts.
- [Virtual Courtrooms](#): By purchasing Zoom licenses for every judge in Michigan early in 2019, SCAO was able to give trial courts the tools they needed to continue service during the COVID-19 pandemic. SCAO established a virtual courtroom directory on its website that enabled the public to observe court proceedings across statewide. To date, Michigan judges have held nearly three million hours of virtual court hearings via Zoom and trial court YouTube videos have been viewed more than 35 million times.
- [Problem-Solving Courts \(PSCs\)](#): Michigan's 199 drug and sobriety, mental health, and veterans treatment courts have an impressive record of reducing recidivism and making a positive difference in the lives of thousands of state residents and their families.

For more information, visit courts.mi.gov/JudicialCouncil.

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MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Michigan Courts Log More Than 3 Million Hours of Zoom Hearings

Technology has enabled courts to remain accessible, operational throughout the pandemic

LANSING, MI, May 7, 2021 - The Michigan Supreme Court announced today that courts across the state have logged more than 3,000,000 hours of Zoom hearings since proceedings moved online more than a year ago. In other technology, the MSC's online [Virtual Courtroom Directory](#)—a tool that enables the public to search and access live-streamed or recorded court proceedings—has been used nearly 260,000 times since it was launched last year. Also, YouTube videos from Michigan courts have been viewed nearly 38 million times and trial court YouTube channels now have more than 110,000 subscribers.

"I am proud of how nimble, creative, and dedicated Michigan judges and court staff have been in both protecting public health and keeping the doors of justice open for our entire state," said Chief Justice Bridget M. McCormack. "Working remotely has helped us transform our judiciary into a more accessible, engaged, transparent, efficient, and customer-friendly branch of government that people can trust."

The Court gained recognition as a national leader at the beginning of the pandemic when it quickly pivoted to authorizing additional use of remote proceedings, provided training for judges and court staff, and implemented new technology to enhance both security and access. Statewide, nearly 1,000 judges and other courts officers are using Zoom licenses provided by the State Court Administrative Office.

Other ways the Michigan Supreme Court is ensuring access:

- Offering the nation's first statewide online dispute resolution tool ([MI-Resolve](#)).
- Developing a new application that enables courts to text parties regarding hearing dates and payments owed.
- Protecting secure access to data for our courts by partnering with industry to build a virtual desktop environment that allows judges and court staff to securely access case files.
- Providing guidance to courts on every aspect of holding jury trials that protect public health and the rights of parties—from *voir dire* to verdict.
- Improving access for self-represented litigants through [Michigan Legal Help](#) on issues ranging from evictions to unemployment insurance.

For more information about the judicial branch's response to COVID-19, visit www.courts.mi.gov/COVID19

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SUMMER WORD SEARCH

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