

# CIRCUIT COURT

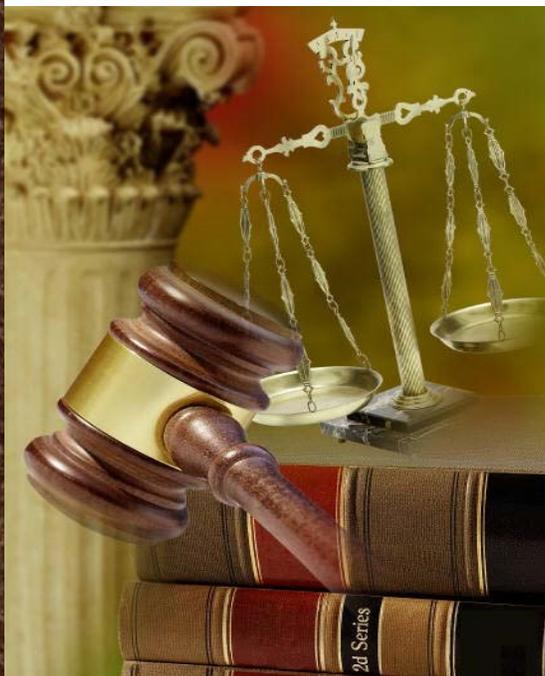
## VISION STATEMENT:

**The 17th Circuit Court will achieve excellence and be recognized as a leader by providing an accessible, effective, efficient, and innovative court operation.**



## MISSION STATEMENT:

**The 17th Circuit Court will provide a system of justice that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of matters brought before the Court.**



# CIRCUIT COURT

## CIRCUIT COURT AUTHORITY/ADMINISTRATION:

The 17th Circuit Court is the trial court of general jurisdiction in Kent County and has county-wide jurisdiction over all actions except those given by state law to another court, including:

- Criminal matters in which the potential sentence is incarceration of more than one year
- Domestic relations matters
- Personal protection orders
- Juvenile matters pertaining to delinquency or criminal activity
- Child protective proceedings
- Parental consent waivers
- Adoptions
- Emancipations
- General civil actions involving claims of \$25,000 or more
- Cases appealed from another court by an administrative agency
- Superintending control over other courts within the judicial circuit, subject to final superintending control of the Supreme Court
- Final decisions of the Circuit Court may be appealed to the Court of Appeals

Administratively, each multi-judge circuit has a chief judge appointed by the Michigan Supreme Court. The chief judge is the presiding officer and director of administration for the court. With the assistance of the Court Administrator, the chief judge develops and implements policies of the court; supervises caseload management; directs assignment of the court's business; supervises performance of the court's personnel; manages the court's finances; effects compliance with court rules and provisions of law.

## CIRCUIT COURT LOCATIONS:

*Court Administrator  
Andrew Thalhammer*

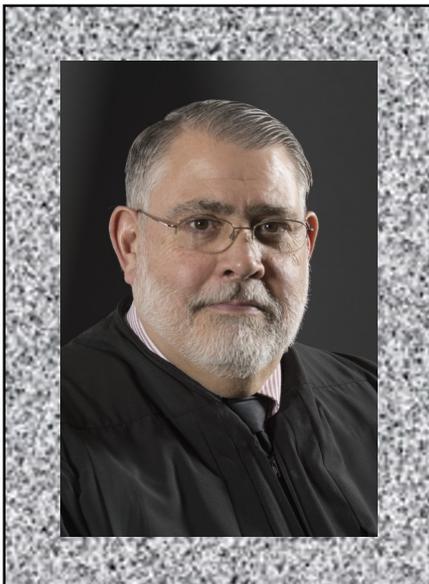
**COURTHOUSE**  
180 Ottawa Avenue NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

**FRIEND OF THE COURT**  
82 Ionia Avenue NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

**JUVENILE CENTER / DETENTION**  
1501 Cedar Street NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

**Court Website**  
[www.accesskent.com](http://www.accesskent.com)

# JUDGES



## MARK A. TRUSOCK

### CHIEF JUDGE

Judge Trusock graduated from Michigan Technological University (MTU) in 1974. After college, Judge Trusock worked for a large insurance company from 1975 to 1984. In 1983 he obtained a Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU) from the American College in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. In 1985 Judge Trusock graduated from the Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing, Michigan. For the next 21 years, he worked for the partnership of Lannen and Trusock. At Lannen and Trusock he worked with civil, criminal, family, juvenile and appellate cases in courts throughout the state of Michigan. Judge Trusock was elected in November of 2006 to fill a new judicial position. Judge Trusock is assigned to the Civil-Criminal Division of the Circuit Court.

Court Clerk - Renee Pegg  
Court Clerk - Tracy Kniffen-Oates  
Law Clerk - Matt Swiontek

Phone (616) 632-5008  
Fax (616) 632-5023



## KATHLEEN A. FEENEY

### CHIEF JUDGE PRO TEMPORE

Judge Feeney is the Chief Judge Pro Tem of the Kent County Circuit Court and the first woman either appointed or elected to that bench. She graduated with high honors from Michigan State University's Honors College and was the Outstanding Woman Law Graduate from the University of Illinois College of Law. Judge Feeney worked for Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith P.C., and Mika, Meyers, Beckett & Jones as well as the Michigan Court of Appeals' as Judge Jane E. Markey's judicial counsel before being appointed to the bench in 2000. In 2016, Judge Feeney received the Justice Marilyn J. Kelly Award for Outstanding Judicial Service from the State Bar of Michigan Family Law Section and was recognized as a 2018 Leader in the Law from *Michigan Lawyers Weekly*. She created the Truancy Court and helped establish the Courthouse Therapy Dog Program where comfort dogs are provided for children and vulnerable adults who are involved in criminal or domestic relations cases.

Court Clerk - Ronnell Fogg  
Court Clerk - Elizabeth Shearer

Phone (616) 632-5087  
Fax (616) 632-5096



## DEBORAH L. MCNABB

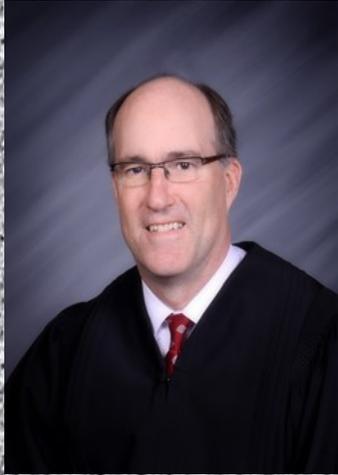
### PRESIDING JUDGE—FAMILY DIVISION

Judge McNabb was elected on November 1, 2016 to fill a new judicial position. She is the first woman to join the Kent County Circuit Court as the result of an election. Judge McNabb took the bench on January 1, 2017. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Alma College in 1984 and her Juris Doctor from DePaul University College of Law in 1987. Before taking the bench, Judge McNabb served as a Circuit Court Referee in the Family Division of the Kent County Circuit Court for over 25 years, including serving as Chief Referee from 2012-2016. Judge McNabb is assigned to the Family Division of the Circuit Court and was named Presiding Judge of the Family Division in January 2018. Judge McNabb serves on the Michigan Judicial Institute's Academic Advisory Committee and the Michigan Judge's Association Family Division Committee. She also is a governing council member of the State Bar of Michigan Children's Law Section.

Court Clerk - Gina Artale  
Court Clerk - Dort Maurice

Phone (616) 632-5219  
Fax (616) 632-5105

# JUDGES



## **Terence J. "T.J." Ackert**

Judge Terence J. "T.J." Ackert took the bench on September 1, 2015. A graduate of the University of Michigan and University of Toledo College of Law, he served clients throughout Michigan and the Midwest for thirty one years. He was affiliated as a Shareholder with the firm Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge, P.C. from 1984 to 2007, and then as a Member of Miller Johnson Snell & Cummiskey, PLLC from 2007 until 2015. For most of his private practice, Judge Ackert served as a business counsel and trial attorney advising closely held and family owned businesses in both transactional and litigation matters involving an array of industries including manufacturing, construction, technology, and start-ups. He received the distinction of being listed in Best Lawyers in America® for Business Organizations, Closely Held Companies and Family Business Law, Corporate Law and Mergers and Acquisitions Law. Judge Ackert has served on numerous business, civic and charitable boards, including President of the Grand Rapids Bar Association in 2013. Judge Ackert currently serves on the Tribal State Federal Judicial Forum. Judge Ackert is assigned to the Family Division of the Circuit Court.

Court Clerk - Sue DeYoung  
Court Clerk - Courtney Bryant

Phone (616) 632-5091  
Fax (616) 632-5092



## **PAUL J. DENENFELD**

Judge Denenfeld took the bench on August 10, 2009. He received his BA degree from Western Michigan University and his JD from the University of Cincinnati. Before taking the bench, Judge Denenfeld was a partner in the law firm Yates, LaGrand & Denenfeld, PLLC. Prior to that, he was the senior litigator with the Federal Public Defender office in Grand Rapids, and was the chief of the special litigation division of the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia. For nearly 10 years, he was a civil rights and civil liberties attorney in Detroit. Judge Denenfeld has also spent considerable time working on the rule of law in several former Soviet republics. Judge Denenfeld is assigned to the Family Division of the Circuit Court.

Court Clerk - Anna Blackford  
Court Clerk - Deb Morris

Phone (616) 632-5214  
Fax (616) 632-5212



## **PATRICIA D. GARDNER**

Judge Gardner received her B.A. from the University of Michigan in 1980. Thereafter, she attended University of Michigan Law School, graduating with a Juris Doctor Degree in 1983. Judge Gardner practiced general civil litigation from 1983-1988. Judge Gardner was a partner in a law firm, specializing in probate practice and family law from 1989-1996. She was appointed by Governor Engler to the Kent County Probate Court in January of 1997. In 21016 served as Presiding Judge of the Family Division of the Circuit Court and Chief Judge Pro Tem of the Probate Court. Judge Gardner is a member of the State Bar of Michigan, Grand Rapids Bar Association, Probate Judges Association, and Women Lawyers Association. Judge Gardner is active in the community serving on a number of non-profit boards.

Court Clerk - Shelley Lilly  
Court Clerk - Renee Marzean

Phone (616) 632-5070  
Fax (616) 632-5074

# JUDGES



## G. PATRICK HILLARY

Judge Hillary was elected in November of 2000 to fill the judicial position vacated by the retirement of Judge John P. Steketee, and started on the bench in January of 2001. He earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration in 1979 and his Juris Doctorate in 1983. Judge Hillary practiced law since 1983 and was a sole practitioner prior to being elected Probate Judge. Judge Hillary's private practice included experience in the area of business, corporate, real estate, wills/trusts, estate planning and family law. He served as presiding judge of the Circuit Court Family Division from 2004-2009. Judge Hillary has served on numerous boards in the community and created the Parents and Children Section of the Grand Rapids Bar Association. He also taught as Adjunct Professor at Davenport College and Thomas M. Cooley Law School. Judge Hillary participated as a member of the National Child Welfare Advisory Board in Washington D.C. which assisted in the enactment of laws to protect children brought into the United States without any adult supervision.

Court Clerk - Kristie Byrnes  
Court Clerk - Dianne Hill  
Court Recorder - Nicole Ludge

Phone (616) 632-5206  
Fax (616) 632-5084



## DONALD A. JOHNSTON

Judge Johnston obtained his undergraduate education at the University of Virginia, where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1966. Thereafter, he attended Wayne State University Law School, from which he obtained his Juris Doctor degree, Cum Laude and with Silver Key, in 1969. Upon graduating from law school, Judge Johnston took a position with the Kent County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, where he worked his way up from law clerk to Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney. On February 19, 1979, he was appointed Judge of the 61st District Court in Grand Rapids by Governor William G. Milliken, and was subsequently elected to six year terms on that Court in 1980 and 1986. His colleagues on the Court elected him Chief Judge Pro Tempore in 1979, and Chief Judge in 1981, 1982-3, 1984-5, 1986-7 and 1988-9. In 1988, Judge Johnston was elected Judge of the Kent County Circuit Court. On January 1, 2010 Judge Johnston became the Chief Judge of the 17th Circuit Court by appointment from the Michigan Supreme Court and re-appointed for two year terms in 2012 and 2014.

Court Clerk - Karen Reid  
Court Clerk - Keri Abraham  
Court Reporter - Becky Miner  
Law Clerk - Alana Burke

Phone (616) 632-5032  
Fax (616) 632-5036



## DENNIS B. LEIBER

Judge Leiber attended Aquinas College, where he graduated in 1969 with a double major in political science and history. From there he enrolled at Wayne State University Law School, where he won national recognition for oral advocacy and was awarded the degree of Juris Doctor in 1972. His work experience includes Grand Rapids, Michigan Assistant City Attorney 1973-1975, sole practitioner 1975-1977, and Assistant Kent County Prosecutor 1977-1988. He was first elected to the Kent County Circuit Court in 1988, and has been re-elected, unopposed, in 1994, 2000, 2006 and 2012. Judge Leiber was the first to be assigned to the newly created Family Division of Circuit Court and performed those duties for three years. He is assigned to the Civil/Criminal Division of the Circuit Court.

Court Clerk - Nicole Greenberg  
Court Clerk - Lisa Gibson  
Court Reporter - Bobbi Jo Huey  
Law Clerk - Danny Boocher

Phone (616) 632-5012  
Fax (616) 632-5016

# JUDGES



## GEORGE J. QUIST

Judge Quist took the bench on January 23, 2012. He received his BA from Hope College and his JD from George Washington University. Before taking the bench, Judge Quist was a magistrate and administrative law judge with the State of Michigan. In addition to 12 years experience as an adjudicator before taking the bench, Judge Quist was a civil litigator for 9 years. From January 2012 through May 2015, Judge Quist was assigned to the Family Division of the Circuit Court. As of June 1, 2015, Judge Quist is assigned to the Civil/Criminal Division of the Circuit Court.

Court Clerk - Stacy Dilworth  
Court Clerk - Deb Berkstresser  
Law Clerk - Maggie Richards

Phone (616) 632-5099  
Fax (616) 632-5016



## J. JOSEPH ROSSI

Judge Rossi was elected in November of 2016 and began judicial service on January 1, 2017. Judge Rossi attended the University of Notre Dame where he obtained a degree in English in 1988 and a Juris Doctorate in 1995. Between his undergraduate years and law school, Joe served as an infantry officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, including combat service in Operation Desert Storm and as a Special Operations instructor. Prior to his election he served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for eight years in Grand Rapids, as well as working at the private law firms Smith Haughey Rice and Roegge and Drew Cooper and Anding. His legal experience includes appearances in many Michigan Courts, as well as Federal Courts in Michigan, Ohio, Illinois and Indiana. Joe also continued to serve in the Marine Corps Reserve, where he was called to active duty twice in 2004 and 2007. His final tour was on the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon, where he worked under the Director of Global Special Operations and Counter-terrorism. Joe retired from military service in 2012 at the rank of lieutenant colonel. Joe's community service includes his parish finance council and several veterans and military support organizations. Joe serves in the Circuit Court's Specialized Business docket and in the Court's Civil-Criminal division.

Court Clerk - Lisa Baird  
Court Clerk - Denise Lange  
Law Clerk - Jeff Wells

Phone (616) 632-5020  
Fax (616) 632-5074



## PAUL J. SULLIVAN

A native of New Hampshire, Judge Sullivan received his undergraduate degree in Government from Georgetown University in 1969 and his JD from The Catholic University of America in 1972. In 1988 he was elected to the 61<sup>st</sup> District Court in Grand Rapids, serving as Chief Judge from January 1994 until his appointment to the circuit bench by Governor John Engler in March 1995. He served as Chief Circuit Judge for 6 years commencing January 1, 2004, and in the dual capacity of Chief Circuit and Probate Judge from July 2006 thru December 2007. Before taking the bench, Judge Sullivan was an Assistant District Attorney in Philadelphia PA and in private practice for 14 years with the firm of Roach, Twohey, Maggini & Brady. He is assigned to the Civil/Criminal Division of Circuit Court.

Court Clerk - Wendy White  
Court Clerk - Conni Mutchler  
Law Clerk - Rob Dordan

Phone (616) 632-5099  
Fax (616) 632-5016

# JUDGES



## **CHRISTOPHER P. YATES**

Judge Yates took the bench on April 22, 2008. He received his BA from Kalamazoo College and his JD and MBA from the University of Illinois. Before taking the bench, Judge Yates served as a law clerk to a federal trial judge and a federal court of appeals judge, then as an Assistant U.S. Attorney, then in the Office of Legal Counsel at the U.S. Department of Justice, and as the Chief Federal Public Defender for the Western District of Michigan. Most recently, he worked in private practice as a partner in two Grand Rapids law firms, Willey, Chamberlain & Yates and then Yates, LaGrand & Denenfeld. Judge Yates is assigned to the Court's Specialized Business Docket.

Court Clerk - Molly Norton  
Court Clerk - Bryan Ensing  
Law Clerk - Carmen Fillmore

Phone (616) 632-5026  
Fax (616) 632-5096



## **DANIEL V. ZEMAITIS**

Judge Daniel V. Zemaitis was elected November 2002 to fill one of the vacant Judgeships for Kent County. He started on the bench on January 1, 2003. Judge Zemaitis has lived on the Northwest side of Grand Rapids most of his life. He received his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in History from Marquette University. He received his Juris Doctor degree from Case Western University in 1977. Judge Zemaitis was the magistrate for the 59th District Court from 1990 to 2002, and in 1995 became Michigan's first Multi-District Court Magistrate by joining the 62A District Court. Judge Zemaitis was a Visiting Professor of History/Law at Grace Bible College from 1995 to 1997 and 1999 to 2002. He has served as an adjunct professor at Thomas M. Cooley School of Law by teaching Family Law. Judge Zemaitis is a member of many community organizations. Judge Zemaitis is assigned to the Family Division of Circuit Court.

Court Clerk - Kristen Brink  
Court Clerk - Tiffany Simpson

Phone (616) 632-5203  
Fax (616) 632-5212

# REFEREES

**ADAM C. KOMAR**  
Clerk - Kiersten Chulski  
Phone (616) 632-5170

**LYNN PERRY**  
Clerk - Kelli Klein  
Phone (616) 632-5148

**MARIE E. KESSLER**  
Clerk - Echo Matson  
(616) 632-5165

**CRAIG FREDERICK**  
Clerk- Brooke Alt  
Phone (616) 632-5104

**JOHN D. KMETZ**  
Clerk - Suzanne Kaldenberg  
Phone (616) 632-5150

**ARTHUR P. WINTHER**  
Clerk- Marie Bolen  
Phone (616) 632-5147

**MAUREEN GOTTLIEB**  
Clerk- Brenna Weber  
Phone (616) 632-5251

# HON. DONALD A. JOHNSTON RETIREMENT

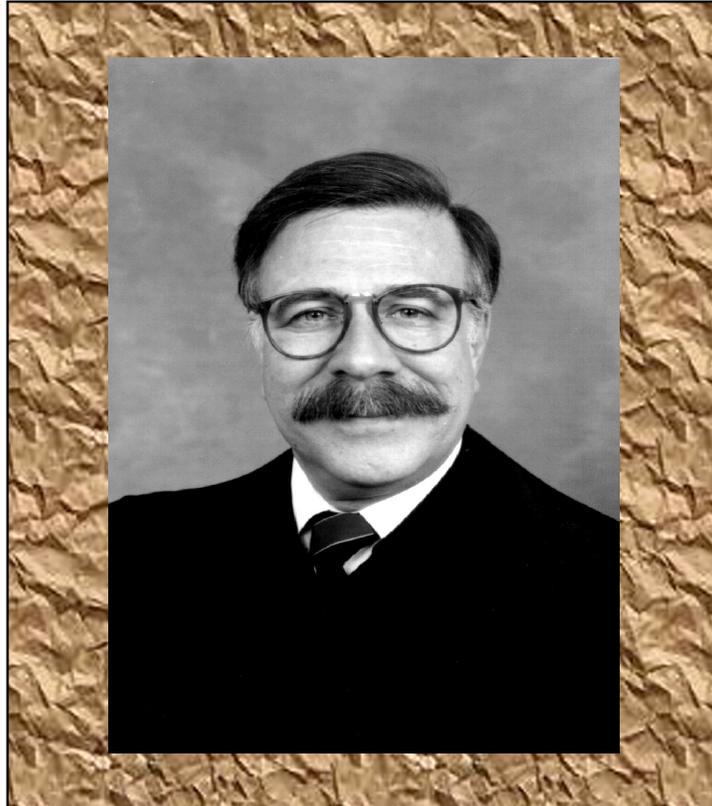


The late Judge Ty Gillespie of the 42<sup>nd</sup> (Midland County) Circuit Court used to say, “there are only three ways a judge can leave office, and two of them – death and losing an election – are decidedly unpleasant.” Viewed in that context, the third way – retirement – looks comparatively attractive, although in my case it is not entirely voluntary. The Michigan Constitution, Article 6, Section 19, Clause 3, prohibits a judge from seeking re-election after turning 70, and I am now 74.

Left to my own devices, I undoubtedly would have stayed on a bit longer. Our court is a model of efficiency, widely admired and emulated around the state, and regularly praised by the State Court Administrative Office. My job has been intellectually stimulating, if sometimes emotionally trying, and I have greatly enjoyed working with my colleagues on the bench as well as our very capable court administrators and valued employees, especially my outstanding chambers staff. It has been a distinct honor and privilege to work here; I will miss it all very much.

Still, after working 50 years in the local justice system – 10 years in the Prosecutor’s Office, 10 years as a District Judge, and now 30 years as a Circuit Judge – it probably is time to step aside in favor of some younger, perhaps smarter person. As the Preacher or Teacher (depending upon which translation one uses) who wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes observed thousands of years ago, “to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven” (3:1), after which he listed several examples. This is not one of the examples he listed, inasmuch as modern notions of retirement did not exist in Old Testament times, but we might well add, “a time to work, and a time to lay work aside.” The time has come for me to lay my work here aside, and wish everyone a fond farewell.

# HON. DENNIS B. LEIBER RETIREMENT



As I conclude forty-two years of service to the people of Kent County, first as an Assistant Prosecutor for twelve years and now in my thirtieth year as a Circuit Court Judge, I thank you for this opportunity to reflect. Please understand that in many respects my experiences are no different than several of my colleagues.

I have witnessed evil. I have heard the testimony of people who have suffered savage cruelty. I have spoken to children caught in the crossfire of warring parents' custody battles. I have seen the collateral damage caused by others who choose to live selfishly. I know the strain of living while a prisoner tried to hire a hitman to murder me and my family. However, I can also tell you of the power of forgiveness and its restorative healing not only to the offender but also to the one who was wronged. I am humbled to have had a necessary part in the lives of the people whose cases were assigned to me.

I am also grateful for that support my faith, my family and my friends give me every day. I remember the confidence then-Prosecutor David Sawyer had in me when I became his first appointee and his commitment and the work of so many volunteers in my election in 1988. I am aware of the dedication of my staff and their faithfulness to their responsibilities. I am ever mindful of my predecessors whose example I valued and my colleagues whose shared vision has made our court the standard for other courts to follow.

Abraham Lincoln said it best: "I like to see a man proud of the place he lives. I like to see a man live so his place will be proud of him." I am proud to have worked with you in Kent County and I hope you were proud to work with me also.

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

## CIRCUIT COURT BUDGET

UNAUDITED

	Appropriated	Expended	Increase over 2017
PERSONNEL COSTS	\$32,086,632	\$30,721,712	\$219,707
OPERATION COSTS	18,512,974	16,541,489	-814,541
CAPITAL OUTLAY	159,634	176,215	10,218
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$50,759,240</b>	<b>\$47,439,416</b>	

## 2018 REVENUES COLLECTED BY THE CIRCUIT COURT AND ITS DIVISIONS

State Grants	14,719,108
Federal Grants	4,407,846
Other Grants	172,203
Medical & Medicaid	182,754
Board & Care	340,255
Court Costs	1,337,321
Service Fees	503,515
Filing Fees	346,910
Certified Copy Fees	0
Name Search and Motion Fees	957,056
Other Fees	222,073
Overseeing Fees	44,470
Jury Fees	161,804
Collection Fees	123,974
Bond Forfeitures	89,573
Other Reimbursements	289,082
Penal Fines	15,075
Refunds/Rebates	5
Total Revenues Collected	\$23,913,024
Total 2018 County Contributions	\$23,526,392
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$47,439,416</b>

### STATE COURT EQUITY FUND

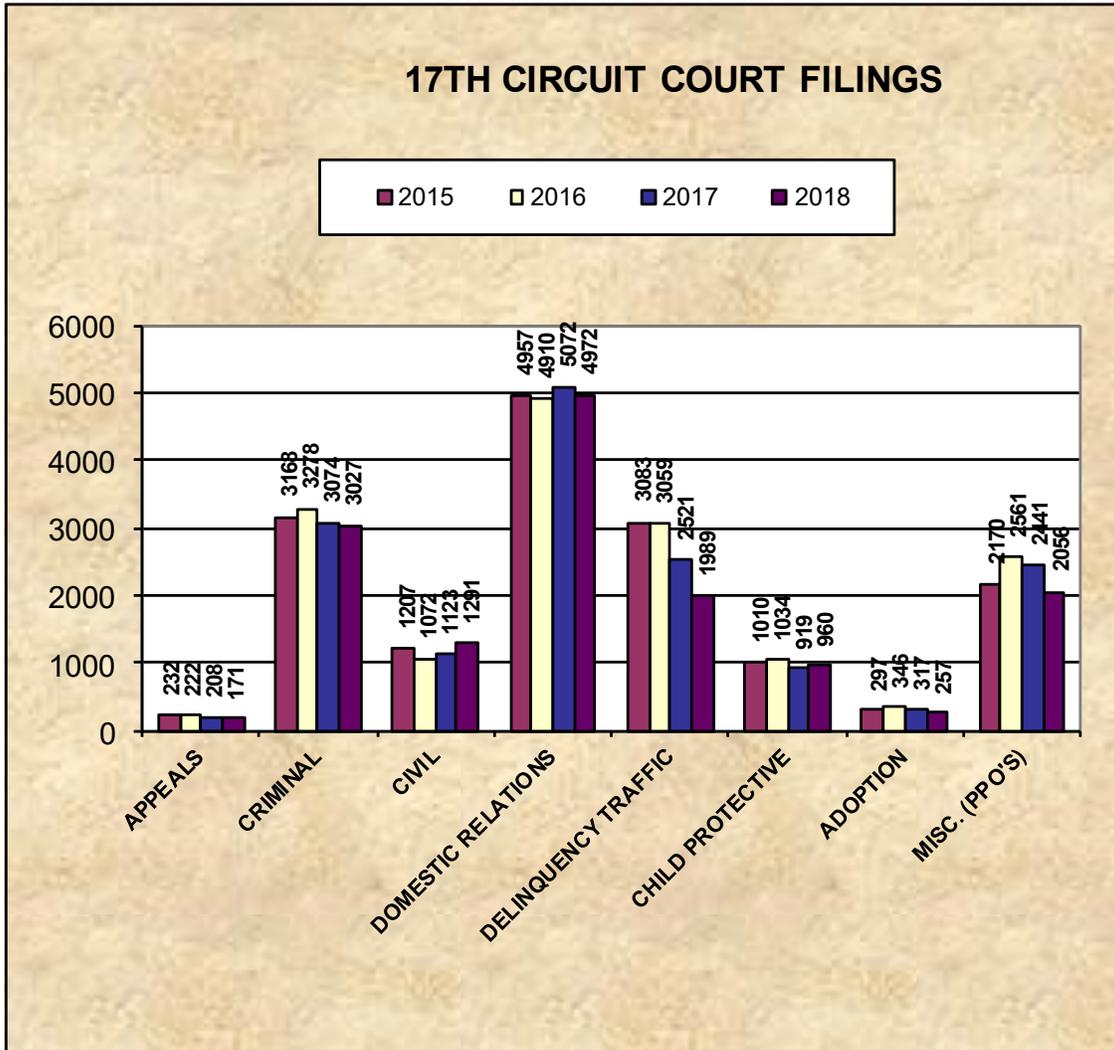
In addition to the above revenues, Kent County received \$3,083,430 during State Fiscal year 2017-2018 in Court Equity Fund monies. Pursuant to MCL 600.151(a) these funds are to be used for the operational expenses of the trial courts (Circuit, District, and Probate) and indigent legal assistance.

### ADMINISTERING COLLECTION OF PASS-THROUGH PAYMENTS

It should be noted that the 17th Circuit Court collects and accounts for victims' restitution. During the calendar year 2018, the Court collected \$2,134,058 in restitution. In addition to restitution, the Court assesses fines which, by law, are used to support local libraries. During the 2018 calendar year \$315,900 was collected. The Court also assesses Crime Victim Rights fees. These fees are collected for the State to help compensate and support victims of crime. In 2018, the Court collected \$215,649 in CVR Fees. The Court also collects State Minimum Costs which help the State with the costs of operating the Courts in the State of Michigan. During the calendar year the Court collected \$203,104 in State Minimum Costs.

# CIRCUIT COURT

## FILINGS

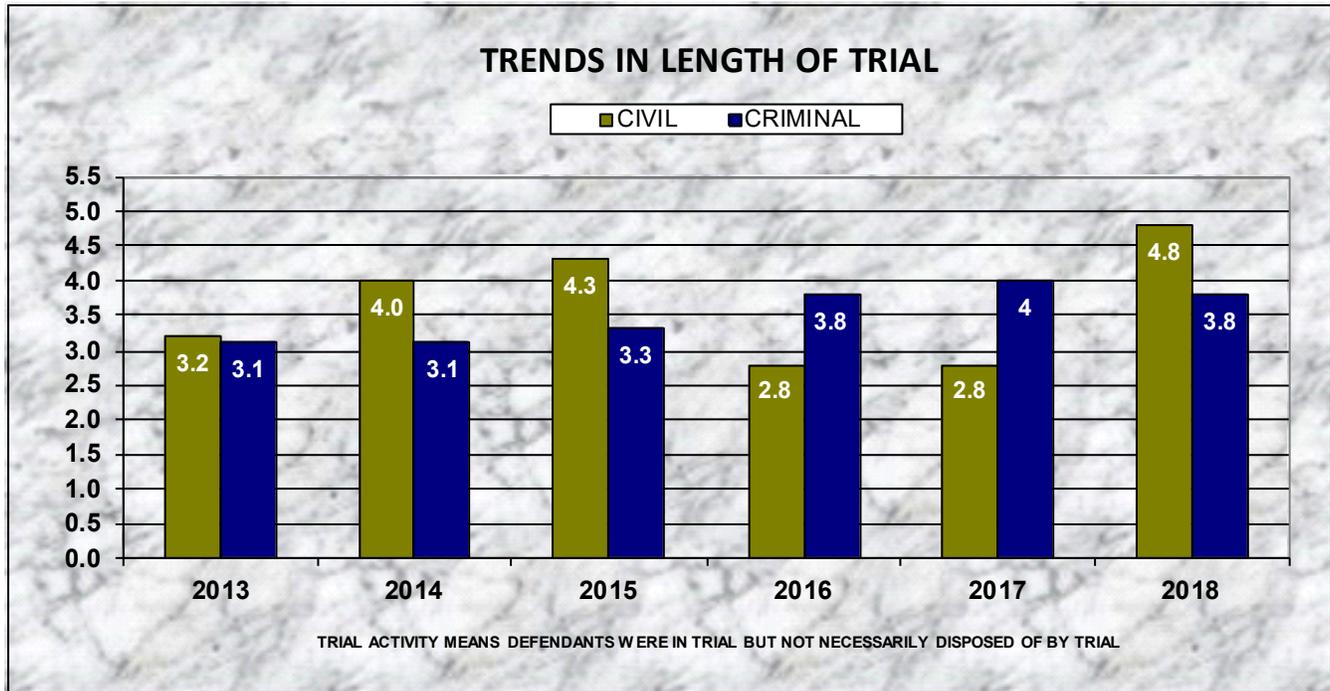
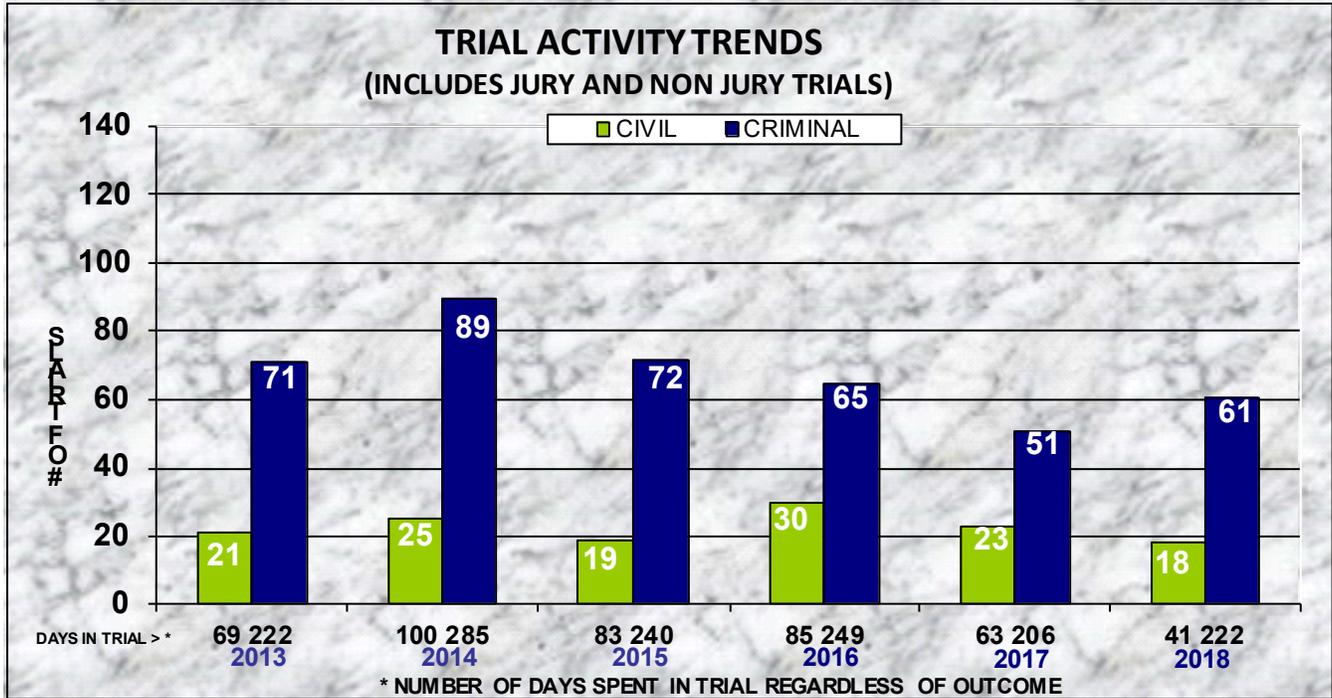


**TOTALS: 2015 (11,496) 2016 (11,634) 2017 (11,270) 2018 (10,234)**

**\*Miscellaneous represent: PPO's, emancipations, infectious diseases, safe deliveries, name changes, parental Waivers, out-of-county PPO's**

# CIRCUIT COURT

## TRENDS



# CIRCUIT COURT

## NEW FILINGS

### CIRCUIT COURT CRIMINAL FILINGS

CASE TYPE	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
NON-CAPITAL OFFENSES	3037	2971	2972	3054	2886	3027
CAPITAL OFFENSES	189	157	183	171	134	163
FELONY JUVENILE	0	0	0	0	0	5
EXTRADITION	47	40	38	53	53	63
<b>TOTAL OFFENSES</b>	<b>3273</b>	<b>3168</b>	<b>3168</b>	<b>3278</b>	<b>3074</b>	<b>3258</b>

### CIRCUIT COURT CIVIL FILINGS

CASE TYPE CATEGORIES	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
CIVIL DAMAGE SUITS	471	551	486	474	469	492
OTHER CIVIL SUITS	896	864	721	598	654	799
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1367</b>	<b>1415</b>	<b>1207</b>	<b>1072</b>	<b>1123</b>	<b>1291</b>

### CIRCUIT COURT APPEALS

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
APPEALS	205	221	232	222	208	171

### FAMILY DIVISION FILINGS

Case Type Categories	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Divorce w/o Children	1307	1296	1290	1244	1297	1249
Divorce w/ Children	1438	1319	1318	1276	1258	1211
Paternity	940	1024	973	739	767	792
Uniform Interstate Family Support Act	60	54	55	66	85	47
Support	911	949	916	832	908	927
PPOs/Stalking	512	543	595	815	699	556
PPOs/Domestic Relations	1443	1371	1426	1723	1707	1469
Other Domestic*	263	404	404	401	369	304
Adoptions	324	299	297	346	317	257
Miscellaneous Family**	115	116	112	352	388	442
Delinquency	2995	3227	2971	2699	2441	1913
Designated	8	10	8	3	7	5
Traffic	64	70	85	85	73	71
Child Protective	1016	1160	1009	1034	919	960
Personal Protection Order involving minor	27	26	37	23	35	31
<b>Totals</b>	<b>11,423</b>	<b>11,868</b>	<b>11,496</b>	<b>11,634</b>	<b>11,270</b>	<b>10,234</b>

\* Other domestic includes custody filings

\*\* Miscellaneous family filings consist of name change, safe delivery, emancipation of minor, infectious disease, parental waiver, voluntary foster care, juvenile guardianships and violations of out-of-county PPOs

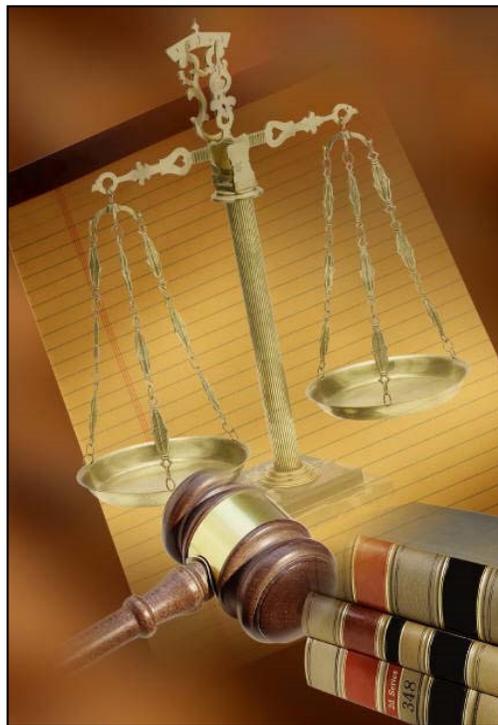
# CIRCUIT COURT

## SPECIALIZED BUSINESS DOCKET

The Kent County Specialized Business Docket (“SBD”) has been operating for seven years, and it handles cases under the permanent authority of Public Act 333 of 2012, which was amended by Public Act 101 of 2017. Since its inception in 2012, the SBD has been run by Judge Christopher P. Yates, who played a leading role in obtaining the 2017 amendments to the SBD governing statutes that have streamlined the operations of the Kent County SBD.

In 2018, the Kent County SBD accepted 255 new cases and closed 252 cases, resulting in a clearance rate of 98.8 percent. Judge Yates published 55 opinions on the SBD website, which can be found at [accesskent.com](http://accesskent.com). Judge Yates also published an article entitled *Restrictive Covenants: Burdens, Benefits, or Both?* in the September 2018 edition of the Michigan Bar Journal. The SBD closed 96 percent of its complex cases in 2018 within the two-year time guideline established by the State Court Administrative Office.

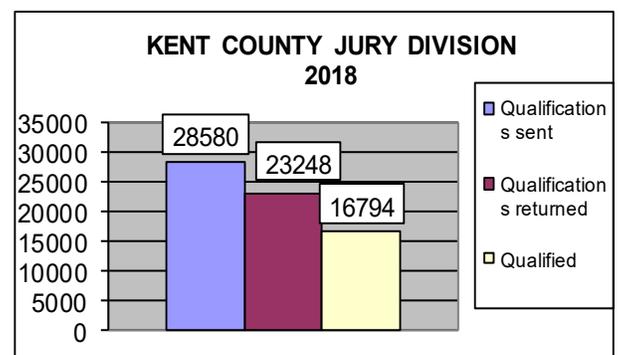
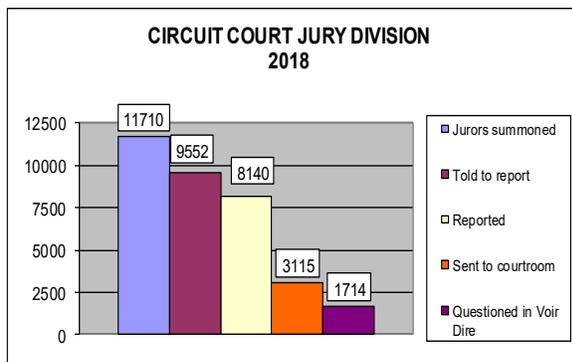
The Kent County SBD routinely seeks input on its performance. Comments and suggestions can be offered to Chief Judge Mark A. Trusock, Judge Yates, or the attorneys who serve on the SBD advisory committee for Kent County. By appointment of Chief Judge Trusock, those attorneys are: David Bevins, Esq., of Rhoades McKee; David Gass, Esq., of Miller Johnson; Patrick Geary, Esq., of Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge; and Lee Silver, Esq., of Silver & Van Essen.



# CASE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

## JURY MANAGEMENT

Jury Service is one of the most important duties that members of a free society are called upon to perform. The jury is an expression of the democratic idea that authority can be exercised most equitably only if people participate. The Jury Division of the Circuit Court plays an important role in this process by summoning and qualifying prospective jurors for Kent County. In addition, all other aspects of the Circuit Court's jury system are handled through this division. Jurors summoned and qualified for Circuit Court jury service are on-call for a week, or for one trial. Jurors may go to the County website ([www.accesskent.com](http://www.accesskent.com)) or call the Jury Information Line (866-215-3884) to determine whether or not they must serve on the week they are on call.



## ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) offers the parties a timely and affordable alternative to settle disputes and, thereby, avoid costly litigation. Kent County started a formalized ADR program in 1990 with Civil Case Mediation, which later became known as Case Evaluation. Court rules allow for parties to be ordered into facilitative mediation. Kent County implemented its court-ordered domestic relations mediation and civil mediation programs in 2004.

### PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:

- 60% of divorce mediations held will settle or settle in part.
- 60% of civil mediations held will settle or settle in part.
- 70% of those completing a mediation evaluation form will indicate satisfaction with the mediation process.

### PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES-2018:

- 73% of divorce mediations settled or settled in part.
- 61% of civil mediations settled or settled in part.
- 85% of those completing the divorce evaluation form indicated satisfaction with the process.
- 88% of those completing the civil evaluation form indicated satisfaction with the process.

### 2018 SUMMARY:

- 408 domestic mediations were held.
- 130 civil mediations were held.
- 172 case evaluation hearings were held. 47 cases had all parties accepting the award for a 27.3% settlement rate.

## CASEFLOW MANAGEMENT

The Case Management Department reviews pending civil and domestic relations cases and sends a no progress dismissal notice to the attorneys and parties when the matter languishes for more than 91 days. If the parties take no action, the judge may enter an Order of Dismissal on the action.

# COURT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

**GOAL: To assist the local Criminal Justice System by providing alternatives to incarceration.**

## PRETRIAL SUPERVISED RELEASE

Pretrial supervised release is the supervision of defendants out on bond pending their court hearing. This also includes Maximum Supervision (electronic monitoring) of selected defendants.

### **PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:**

- 85% of all defendants placed on pretrial supervised release will successfully complete program requirements.
- 80% of all defendants placed on Maximum Supervision will successfully complete program requirements.

### **PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES-2018:**

- 81% of the defendants placed on pretrial supervised release successfully completed program requirements.
- 86% of the defendants placed on Maximum Supervision successfully completed program requirements.

### **2018 SUMMARY:**

- 1914 defendants were placed on pretrial supervision.
- Approximately 133,000 jail bed days were saved by the use of pretrial supervision.
- 107 defendants were placed on Maximum Supervision.
- Approximately 11,000 jail bed days were saved by the use of Maximum Supervision.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE—ADULT/JUVENILE

Adult Community Service provides a community-based sentencing option in lieu of incarceration for the District and Circuit Courts of Kent County. The Juvenile Community Service Program provides a means for delinquent youth to make a form of reparation to the community for damages or injury inflicted as a result of their delinquency.

### **PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:**

- 80% of all offenders placed on adult community service will successfully complete program requirements.

### **PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES-2018:**

- 79% of the offenders placed on adult community service successfully completed program requirements.

### **2018 SUMMARY:**

- 2330 offenders were placed on adult community service.
- 167,000 hours of community service were performed by adult offenders.

# COURT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

## WORK CREW

Work Crew is a structured, labor-intensive form of community service for the more habitual, problematic adult offender, and participants are supervised by Court Services staff and perform group work projects primarily at Comp Renew.

### PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

- 70% of all offenders placed on Work Crew will successfully complete program requirements.

### PERFORMANCE OUTCOME-2018:

- 75% of the offenders placed on Work Crew successfully completed program requirements.

### 2018 SUMMARY:

- 360 offenders were placed on Work Crew.
- Offenders performed 22,500 Work Crew hours.

## DIVERSION

The Diversion Program provides case management and supervision services for offenders who are referred from the Kent County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. Upon successful completion of the Program, an offender will have the original charge dismissed.

### PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

- 85% of all defendants placed on the Diversion Program will successfully complete program requirements.

### PERFORMANCE OUTCOME-2018:

- 93% of the defendants placed on the Diversion Program successfully completed the program requirements.

### 2018 SUMMARY:

- 84 defendants were placed on the Diversion Program.
- \$17,500 was paid by defendants for restitution that was disbursed to victims.

## JUVENILE ELECTRONIC HOME MONITORING

The Electronic Home Monitoring Program allows certain select juvenile offenders to be confined in their own home rather than in an out-of-home placement, by the use of electronic equipment such as a "tether anklet".

### PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

- 60% of juvenile offenders placed on Electronic Home Monitoring will successfully complete the program requirements.

### PERFORMANCE OUTCOME-2018:

- 63% of the juvenile offenders placed on Electronic Home Monitoring successfully completed program requirements.

### 2018 SUMMARY:

- 159 juveniles were placed on Electronic Home Monitoring.

# COURT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

## PRETRIAL SCREENING / INVESTIGATION

In 2018, the Court Services Department continued to provide valuable information to the judiciary relative to release prior to the defendant's first court appearance. This information allows the judges to set a bond based on verified information about the defendant, while addressing important issues regarding risk of flight, safety to the community, prudent use of jail space, and early intervention concerning the problems of the defendant. During 2018, 5,000 bond reports were generated by the Pretrial Intake Investigation Unit.

## DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

In 2018, the Court Services Department generated and distributed approximately 580 jail bed reports to Court Judges, State Probation/Parole, the Office of Community Corrections, the Kent County Correctional Facility, and the Grand Rapids Police Department. The dissemination of accurate information to the criminal justice system is essential, both to prevent cases from becoming "lost" in a very complex system, and to assist in the management of jail beds available to the Courts.

# OFFICE OF COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

**GOAL:** To support and expand the use of community sanctions in order to provide rehabilitation opportunities for Kent County felony offenders, to promote the efficient use of jail/prison beds while protecting the community, and to examine the causes of repeated criminal behavior while facilitating collaboration among stakeholders and service providers.

Public Act 511, the Community Corrections Act, was passed in 1988 primarily to divert eligible non-violent/low-risk offenders from prison by placing them in community programs which provide the courts with a continuum of sentencing options. A secondary goal is to divert offenders from jail in order to free up jail space for the more serious offenders diverted from prison. Kent County first received P.A. 511 funding in 1990 and administers these funds through the Kent County Community Corrections Advisory Board. Additionally, the Community Corrections Advisory Board, through the Office of Community Corrections, is responsible for the development and implementation of the local community corrections plan.

### **PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:**

- Expend 100% of the Community Corrections grant.
- Maintain an overall program enrollment rate of 95% or greater.
- Maintain a 70% successful termination rate for all O.C.C. enrollees.

### **PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES-2018:**

- Program enrollment rate was 134%.
- 67% of enrollees successfully completed their program.
- 99% of the Community Corrections grant was expended.

### **2018 SUMMARY:**

- The OCC secured approximately \$1,101,220 in revenue through the County Jail Reimbursement Program.
- 1,897 offenders were served.

# PERMANENCY PLANNING

Children under 18 years of age who are suspected of being abused by their parents are referred to the Family Division of the Circuit Court by the Child Protective Services Unit of the Kent County Department of Human Services (DHS). Protective Services investigates all complaints of abuse and/or neglect in the County and determines which cases require court action.

The Court's role in the child welfare system in Kent County is to provide the judicial authority necessary for legal wardship and treatment, and to provide leadership to ensure that the service delivery system continues to function well. Children found by the Court to be neglected or abused are usually made temporary wards of the Court and placed under the general supervision of the Kent County DHS. Direct casework services for neglected children and their families are provided by the DHS or one of the private agencies under contract with the DHS. The judges assess the progress of each case at regular review hearings, an integral part of the case management system.

## CASA PROGRAM

**GOAL:** CASA of Kent County provides highly-trained volunteers to advocate in the best interest of abused and neglected children in family court proceedings.

The Court Appointed Special Advocate Program (CASA) is a program using carefully screened and specially trained volunteers appointed by the Judge to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in child protective proceedings. The role of the CASA volunteer as an independent voice for the children is to investigate, facilitate, monitor and advocate on behalf of children until they are in a safe, permanent home. The CASA volunteer has only one case at a time and remains with the children throughout the case until it is discharged by the Court. In 2018, 97 CASA Volunteers advocated on behalf of 194 abused and neglected children living in foster care.

*Individuals who are interested in becoming a CASA volunteer are encouraged to call  
or visit our website:  
(616) 632-5311  
[www.casakentco.org](http://www.casakentco.org)*

# ADOPTION

## ADOPTION DEPARTMENT

**GOAL:** To facilitate the legal process for children who need a permanent home and to streamline the adoption process for children and families.

The Adoption Department serves a diverse group of families and children who are in the process of an adoption or are seeking support and information concerning a completed adoption. Most of the children involved in these adoptions are either permanent wards of the court or are voluntarily released by their biological parents. Additional services are provided for adult adoptions and for children adopted in another country.

<b>ADOPTIONS FINALIZED</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Adult Adoptions</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Agency International Adoptions</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Direct Placement Adoptions (voluntary consent to a specific family)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Relative Adoptions</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Safe Delivery of Newborn Adoptions</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Permanent Ward Adoptions</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>Non-Relative Guardian Adoptions</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Agency Other Adoptions (voluntary release to private adoption agency)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Step-Parent Adoptions</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Delayed Registration-Foreign Adoptions</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>TOTAL ADOPTIONS</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>281</b>

# DELINQUENCY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

## INTAKE DEPARTMENT

The Intake Department plays a major role in the delinquency division of the Court. Intake decisions are the result of a process of assessment and information gathering. The Intake Department acquires its investigative authority from Section 11 of the Juvenile Code.

The intake process begins with a referral sent by a police agency to the Prosecutor's Office or City Attorney's Office. An assistant prosecuting attorney reviews the complaint for legal sufficiency, determines the precise charge, and then refers it to the Intake Department. The Intake Supervisor screens certain cases with subsequent diversion to other counties and to other agencies and programs that deal with certain types of delinquent activity, such as shoplifting, alcohol abuse, and family problems. Other cases receive a letter of warning from the Court. The majority of cases are assigned to Intake probation officers who contact the youth and parents for a preliminary inquiry and decide what type of response should be made to the referral. Intake probation officers assess the seriousness of the offense and the youth's prior court and/or police record. They review prior or present community agency involvement. A special emphasis is placed on evaluating home behavior, parental control and parent/child relationships. School matters such as performance and behavior are evaluated. On certain offenses, the Prosecutor's Office is contacted for case input. In addition, Intake probation officers evaluate damage and loss, and an appropriate court response to the victim of the law violation.

If formal court involvement is not necessary or required by law, the Intake probation officer has a number of options. A case may be diverted for counseling or special services related to the specific law violation (e.g. shoplifting, alcohol or drug use, or family problems). A case may be held in order to monitor the situation and reassess it at a later date. Certain stipulations may be required such as paying restitution to a victim or successfully completing a certain number of community service hours in the Court Work Program. The Intake probation officer may determine, after the preliminary inquiry, that the presenting problem of the law violation has been handled appropriately and no other services are necessary. These cases are termed "adjusted". A petition is authorized if the Intake probation officer determines that formal court action is necessary, or if specific intake guidelines or Michigan laws require it. The case is then transferred to the Probation Unit for assessment and intervention purposes, in preparation for a formal court hearing.

INTAKE STATISTICS	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Juveniles Referred	2064	2047	1888	1689	1450
-Cases assigned to intake staff	1214	1046	881	936	857
-Cases adjusted	506	472	554	393	410
-Cases to community probation	465	446	407	469	437
-Cases to consent calendar	144	147	115	107	103
-Cases transferred to county of residence	150	131	141	140	99
-Cases dismissed by prosecutor	54	62	55	79	95
-Diverted by Intake Supervisor	717	672	631	512	393
-Petitions received from other counties	102	77	86	75	140
Restitution Collected	\$10,030	\$12,665	\$14,939	\$10,218	\$7,584

# DELINQUENCY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

## **CRISIS INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

**GOAL:** To prevent status offenders from being held in Detention without a court order, and to reduce the number of status offenders or youth involved in minor law violations from becoming court wards.

The Crisis Intervention Program is a short-term family counseling program for families with youth between the ages of 12-17 who have runaway from home, are truant from school or have other related school problems, are experiencing family conflicts due to adolescent development issues, are beyond parental control, and/or commit minor law violations. The Crisis Intervention Program also provides assistance in the filing of petitions for the emancipation of minors.

### **PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:**

- 90% of all status offenders admitted to Detention without a court order will be released within 6 hours of admission.
- 85% of all status offenders or juveniles involved in minor law violations who receive Crisis Intervention services will be diverted from formal court wardship for at least 120 days.

### **PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES-2018:**

- 100% of all status offenders admitted to Detention without a court order were released from Detention within 6 hours of admission.
- 91% of all status offenders or juveniles involved with minor law violations who received Crisis Intervention services were diverted from court wardship for at least 120 days.

### **2018 SUMMARY:**

- 341 juveniles and their families were served by the Crisis Intervention Program.
- 93 juveniles were released from Detention after Crisis Intervention involvement.
- 63 status offenders were diverted from formal court involvement.
- 2 status offender petitions were authorized for formal court involvement.

## **YOUNG DELINQUENT INTERVENTION PROGRAM (YDIP)**

**GOAL:** To prevent further delinquency by intervening early with very young offenders.

The Young Delinquent Intervention Program is a home based service (including counseling, mentoring, and pro-social activities) to children and their parents of young offenders 11 years and younger who have broken the law. This program operates under the reality that the best indicator for future delinquent behavior is the age of onset for delinquency, and that the earlier the intervention in the lives of high-risk youth, then the greater the potential for preventing further acts of delinquency. The court contracts for the provision of these services with D.A. Blodgett for Children.

### **PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:**

- 75% of all young offenders in treatment will successfully complete their treatment objectives.
- Less than 10% of all young offenders will have a new law violation while in treatment.
- Less than 5% of all young offenders who successfully complete treatment objectives will have a new law violation within 12 months of discharge from court wardship.

### **PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES-2018:**

- 78% of all the young offenders in treatment successfully completed their treatment objectives.
- 5% of the young offenders in treatment had a new law violation while in treatment.
- 5% of all young offenders who successfully completed treatment objectives had a new law violation within 12 months of discharge from court wardship.

### **2018 SUMMARY:**

- 18 young offenders were served.

# DELINQUENCY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

## TRAFFIC UNIT

The Traffic Unit processes misdemeanor juvenile traffic offenses that are committed in Kent County, as well as those committed by Kent County residents in other counties. Most juveniles are required to appear in person to respond to the charge(s). A small number are given the option to respond via mail. When the traffic violation is for a juvenile who already is on probation, the Traffic Referee coordinates traffic actions with the juvenile's probation officer. In 2018, the juveniles (and adults responding to their juvenile tickets) paid \$9,115.70 in fines and fees.

## CONSENT CALENDAR

**GOAL:** To reduce recidivism by diverting low risk juvenile offenders from the formal court docket.

The Consent Calendar is a diversion program provided by court rule that allows for the informal processing of appropriate cases. Consent calendar cases are typically placed under informal supervision of the Court for approximately 90 days. No case may be placed on the Consent Calendar unless the juvenile and the parent agrees to this decision. Failure to comply with the requirements of the Consent Calendar or subsequent law violations most often result in the juvenile's transfer to the formal calendar. If the juvenile successfully completes the Consent Calendar, the court may then destroy all records of the proceedings.

### PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

- 80% of all juveniles placed on the Consent Calendar will successfully complete the requirements of the program.

### PERFORMANCE OUTCOME-2018:

- 89% of all the juveniles placed on the Consent Calendar successfully completed the requirements of the program.

### 2018 SUMMARY:

- 103 juveniles and families were served.
- Juveniles were on the Consent Calendar an average of 149 days.
- \$1,132 was collected from juveniles on the Consent Calendar and paid directly to victims.

## ADOLESCENT SEX OFFENDER TREATMENT PROGRAM (ASOTP)

**GOAL:** To prevent further sexual victimization

The Adolescent Sex Offender Treatment Program provides assessment and treatment services to juvenile sex offenders, ages 8-17.

### PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:

- 75% of all the juvenile sex offenders in treatment will complete treatment objectives.
- Less than 10% of all the juvenile sex offenders in treatment will re-offend sexually while in treatment.
- Less than 5 juvenile offenders who complete their treatment objectives will re-offend sexually within one year of treatment completion.

### PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES-2018:

- 90% of the juvenile sex offenders accepted into treatment completed their treatment objectives.
- 1 juvenile sex offenders re-offended sexually while in treatment.
- 3 juvenile sex offenders re-offended sexually within 1 year of completion of their treatment objectives.

### 2018 SUMMARY:

- 73 juvenile sex offenders were referred to the program.
- 61 assessments were completed.
- 54 juvenile sex offenders completed treatment.

# DELINQUENCY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

## COMMUNITY PROBATION

**GOAL:** To reduce further delinquency.

Community Probation is a unique and non-traditional way of providing decentralized and personalized supervision to juveniles and their families. Community Probation places much emphasis on developing cooperative and coordinated relationships with law enforcement, and on providing services and treatment plans that enhance the balanced and restorative justice concept (community safety, competency development, and accountability).

Community probation officers are assigned to specific neighborhood areas and only receive cases from these areas. They also have established offices within these geographical assignments. Probation officers are expected to have at least weekly personal contact with the youth assigned to them and are required to work a certain number of non-traditional hours each month (i.e. nights and weekends).

Surveillance monitoring is an intensive supervision option available to probation officers for juveniles who need such monitoring. The surveillance officer assists the probation officer by supporting the parents and school officials with holding the youth accountable while residing in the community. The surveillance officer typically has random contact with the juvenile on a daily basis.

### PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:

- Less than 10% of the cases assigned to community probation will be referred by the police for a new felony law violation while on community probation.
- Less than 15% of cases that are discharged successfully from community probation will commit a new law violation and again be referred to the court.
- 80% of parents surveyed immediately after their child is discharged from community probation will indicate satisfaction with the work of the probation officer assigned.

### PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES-2018:

- 6% of the juveniles assigned to community probation were involved with a new felony law violation while on community probation.
- 14% of the cases discharged successfully from community probation committed a new law violation and were again referred to the court.
- 91% of the parents surveyed after discharge from community probation indicated satisfaction with the work of the probation officer assigned to their child.

### 2018 SUMMARY:

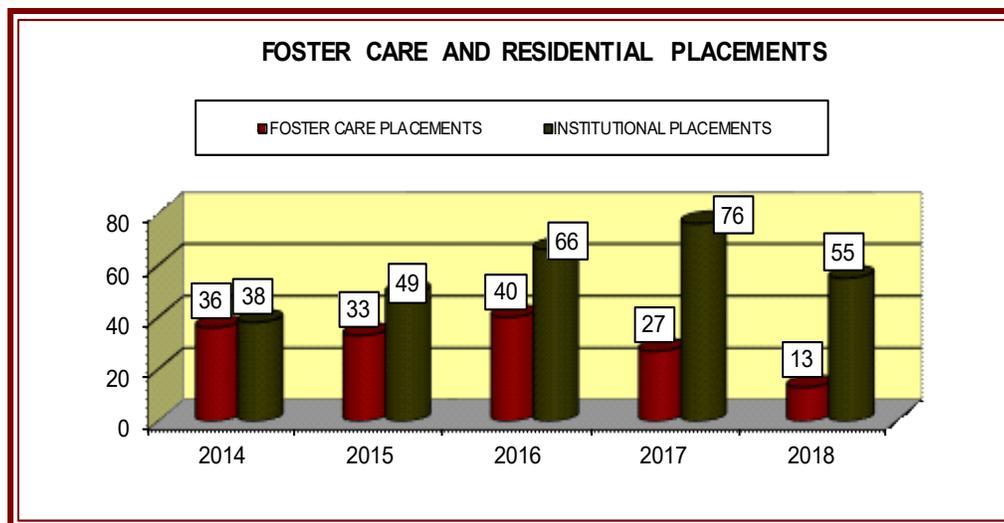
- 437 juveniles were placed on community probation.
- 804 juveniles were served by community probation.
- 20,111 face-to-face contacts were completed by probation officers with juveniles on community probation.
- 5,219 night and weekend hours were worked by probation officers.
- Over 1,893 contacts were made by probation officers with their community police officers.
- 436 juveniles placed on probation were discharged.

# DELINQUENCY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

## OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

### FOSTER CARE AND INSTITUTIONAL PLACEMENT

Even though the Court places a high priority on working with juvenile offenders in their own homes, some situations require the Court to order the juvenile placed in either foster care or residential institutional placement. Foster care more closely reflects a family home setting, while institutional placement is more restrictive and provides a specific type of treatment modality. The average per diem cost of foster care is approximately \$89. Institutional placement is much more expensive and depending on the type of institution averages about \$200 per day.



# DELINQUENCY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

## JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY

**GOAL:** To provide a safe and secure environment for juveniles admitted to Detention.

The function of Detention is to provide temporary care for youth requiring secure custody pending court evaluation and disposition, or pending transfer to another jurisdiction or agency. Detained youth are those whose offenses are so serious that release would endanger public safety or the welfare of the child.

The Detention Facility, which has a bed capacity of 69, currently employs 102 staff (includes school, medical, mental health personnel, etc.) with the majority of that workforce being Youth Specialists.

The Facility's staff training/orientation program is extensive in its coverage of training issues and, in addition to its own staff, offers training to other court staff and County employees. The State's Division of Child Welfare Licensing mandates training in 9 specific areas, and requires at least 24 hours of training annually for each Detention youth specialist employee. Kent County Juvenile Detention met these requirements in 2018.

The Detention Center provides a cognitive behavioral training (CBT) concept for its behavioral management for our residents. This cognitive learning model is designed to change adolescents value and belief systems by getting them to examine their thinking before making choices. The goal is to help reduce recidivism by teaching residents to make rational choices, and maintain this thinking ability after the leave Detention.

Although Detention is not a treatment facility, one of the six units within this facility is utilized as a short-term residential program for Kent County residents who have been ordered to an institutional placement. This four month treatment program, known as the Delta Program, is staffed by the Detention youth specialists and provides services offered to the Detention residents, as well as off-site activities with the primary focus of productive reintegration into their community.

The facility continues to offer a year-round school program. The Lighthouse Academy provides classes Monday through Thursday. Community consultants as well as Detention staff provide Friday classes which include topic areas such as Youth Empowerment, Therapeutic Communication, Physical Education, Yoga, Art Therapy, Health Education (public topics and AIDS, safety, sexual awareness), Life and Social Skills. These Friday classes offer residents a chance to deal with issues that contributed to their coming to the facility, as well as teaching them skills that will help them make better decisions.

# DELINQUENCY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

## JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY

DETENTION FACILITY STATISTICS									
	Males			Females			Totals		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
<b>Admissions</b>	712	749	637	303	362	274	1015	1111	911
<b>Releases</b>	709	741	634	301	369	270	1010	1110	904

DAYS OF CARE PROVIDED						
	Days of Care			Average Daily Census		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
<b>Totals</b>	21,613	21,569	20,052	56	59	57

PER DIEM COST OF CARE		
2016	2017	2018
\$280	\$307	\$333



# FRIEND OF THE COURT

FRIEND OF THE COURT— DAN FOJTIK

***MISSION: TO SERVE THE COURT AND THE FAMILIES OF KENT COUNTY TO ENSURE CHILDREN ARE SUPPORTED, BOTH FINANCIALLY AND EMOTIONALLY.***

As set forth in the 1998 Child Support Performance and Incentive Act, state child support enforcement programs are measured in five key areas: Collections on Arrears, Total Collections, Paternity Establishment, Cost Effectiveness and Order Establishment. The following rankings represent how the Kent County Friend of the Court measured in 2018 against the eleven (11) largest counties in Michigan, excluding Wayne County. Those factors, and Kent's rankings, are as follows:

	<u>KENT COUNTY RANKING</u>
• <b>COLECTIONS ON ARREARS</b>	<b>#1</b>
• <b>COLLECTIONS ON CURRENT</b>	<b>#2</b>
• <b>PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT *</b>	<b>#2</b>
• <b>ORDER ESTABLISHMENT *</b>	<b>#7</b>

\* Performance in these two areas is not controlled by the Kent County Friend of the Court office.

## **COLLECTION ON CURRENT SUPPORT (Child, Spousal, Medical and Birthing Expenses):**

The Friend of the Court (FOC) employs a wide range of enforcement remedies and innovative strategies to improve the reliability of child support payments. Emphasis is placed on having realistic child support orders, reducing unpayable child support debt and intervening early when parents begin to struggle to make payments.

### **PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:**

- Collect 80% of total court ordered child support that was charged.

### **PERFORMANCE OUTCOME-2018:**

- 76% of court ordered child support charged was collected.

### **2018 SUMMARY:**

- \$77,353,102 (Total current support distributed)
- \$100,713,058 (Total support charged)
- \$100,615,740 (Total collections including current and arrears)

# FRIEND OF THE COURT

## INCOME WITHHOLDING

With income withholding, payments are deducted from the payer's check and sent to the Michigan State Disbursement Unit (MiSDU) in Lansing. When a payer changes jobs and/or fails to advise the FOC of new employment, the computer system checks the state Data Warehouse and automatically sends an Income Withholding Notice (IWN) to the source of income.

### PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

- Collect 75% of child support collections by withholding order.

### PERFORMANCE OUTCOME-2018:

- 76% was collected via income withholding order.

### 2018 SUMMARY:

- \$76,005,566 was collected via income withholding.

## SHOW-CAUSE HEARINGS AND BENCH WARRANTS

When payments are not made regularly and the payer does not work with us to make payments or remedy his or her inability to pay, we may schedule a show cause contempt hearing. At the hearing, case managers attempt to resolve the non-payment or present the case before the Court for a determination of contempt. If a person does not appear for the hearing, a Bench Warrant may issue.

### PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

- 80% of those ordered to jail as a result of a contempt hearing will pay out within two weeks.
- 85% of the bench warrants handled by FOC deputies will be resolved without arrest.

### PERFORMANCE OUTCOME-2018:

- 90% of those who were ordered to jail as a result of a contempt hearing paid and were released within two weeks.
- 92% of the bench warrants handled by FOC deputies were resolved without arrest.

### 2018 SUMMARY:

- 30 payers were found in contempt and ordered to jail.
- 750 warrants were resolved without arrest.

## TAX OFFSET

A commonly used enforcement remedy is the interception of a payer's state and federal tax refunds.

### PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

- 90% of cases qualifying for a tax offset are submitted.

### PERFORMANCE OUTCOME-2018:

- 100% of cases qualified for a tax intercept were submitted.

### 2018 SUMMARY:

- \$3,882,293 was collected from the Federal tax offset program.
- \$370,825 was collected from the State tax offset program.

# FRIEND OF THE COURT

## LICENSE SUSPENSION

The FOC may petition to suspend a payer's driver, occupational, and/or recreational (hunting/fishing) license(s). Suspension of driver license is automatic if a payer fails to appear for a scheduled show cause hearing. Our goal in suspending licenses is to encourage the payer of support to resolve the non-payment that led to the suspension, and to obtain a conditional order to encourage future payments.

### PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

- 85% of the court ordered amount will be collected on conditional license suspension orders.

### PERFORMANCE OUTCOME-2018:

- 87% of the court ordered amount was collected on conditional license suspension orders.

### 2018 SUMMARY:

- \$20,716,446 was collected on cases with a conditional license suspension order.

## LEINS AND GARNISHMENTS

The law allows the FOC to place a lien against property owned by the payer of support when an arrearage has accrued. Garnishments may also be served against a delinquent payer's inheritance.

### PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

- 80% of cases submitted for a lien or garnishment are ordered or perfected.

### PERFORMANCE OUTCOME-2018:

- 100% of cases submitted for a lien or garnishment received one.

### 2018 SUMMARY:

- 4 real estate liens was placed for a potential future collection and \$10,086 was collected.
- 18 liens/garnishments were placed against inheritances and \$104,992 was collected.

# FRIEND OF THE COURT

## HEALTH CARE

The Health Care Unit has two main objectives. One is to enforce court orders to maintain health care insurance. The other is to enforce court orders related to uninsured health care expenses.

### PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:

- 65% of cases have orders with health care provisions.
- 90% of cases with health care reimbursement accounts received payment.

### PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES-2018:

- 86% of cases with orders have health care provisions.
- 89% of cases with health care reimbursement accounts received payment.

### 2018 SUMMARY:

- 25,336 orders have a health care provision included.
- 565 cases with health care reimbursement accounts received payment.

## PARENTING TIME

The primary function and statutory duty of the Parenting Time Unit is to secure compliance with parenting time and physical custody orders. This is accomplished through education, assisting parents with modification of their orders, or helping in other ways to prevent future violations. Also, the FOC continues to manage the Access and Visitation Grant that allows payment for supervised parenting time and for therapeutic reintroduction on specific cases through the contract agencies.

### PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

- 90% of parenting time complaints resolved prior to a contempt hearing.

### PERFORMANCE OUTCOME-2018:

- 85% of parenting time complaints were resolved prior to a contempt hearing.

### 2018 SUMMARY:

- 1,849 formal written parenting time complaints were received.
- 72 hearings were scheduled on parenting time violations.
- 40 families were afforded parenting time through the Access and Visitation Grant.

# FRIEND OF THE COURT

## SUPPORT REVIEW

Support reviews are commenced when a client submits a written request and is eligible for a review (every three years or if there has been a significant change in circumstances), by court order or upon FOC's own initiative. Friend of the Court is statutorily required to complete support reviews within 120 days after notice of the review is sent, but it is Kent County's goal to complete all support reviews within 90 days.

### **PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:**

- 90% of all support reviews will be completed within 90 days.

### **PERFORMANCE OUTCOME-2018:**

- 96% of all support reviews were completed in 90 days.

### **2018 SUMMARY:**

- 3,659 support reviews were completed.

## RESPONSIBLE PARENT PROGRAM

The Responsible Parent Program was established in 2016. Case managers in this program actively partner with potential employers and placement agencies to assist payers who need a job. They also conduct outreaches within the community to help payers who are often reluctant to engage with the Friend of the Court. Once a payer is referred to the program, the case manager schedules an appointment with the payer to identify any barriers that make it difficult to comply with the child support order. Once identified, the case manager can make appropriate referrals for job placements and searches, determine whether a case qualifies for a support review to ensure that charges are based on ability to pay, and/or provide information about parenting time issues and services.

### **PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:**

- 90% of the eligible payers who are referred to the program will be scheduled for a first appointment within 14 days.

### **PERFORMANCE OUTCOME-2018:**

- 90% were scheduled for a first appointment within 14 days of the referral.

### **2018 SUMMARY:**

- 417 payers were scheduled for a first appointment within 14 days of the referral.

# FRIEND OF THE COURT

## EARLY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Early Engagement Program was created in June of 2017. The goal of this program is to provide information about the Friend of the Court to clients who have not had contact with the office previously to:

- A. Break down barriers to communication.
- B. Provide accurate information and clarify expectations.
- C. Provide early access to the Responsible Parent Program.
- D. Provide information about the availability of facilitated parenting time when appropriate.
- E. Ensure that all provisions of the support order are understood.

We do this by reaching out to parents with a new case at the Friend of the Court by phone within two weeks of processing the initial order. We review the order prior to contacting them and answer any questions they may have about their order or the information that was included in the new case packet. If we are not able to reach the clients by phone, we send an email or letter providing information on ways to contact the Friend of the Court office to let them know we are available to answer questions they may have.

### PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:

- Make contact in 90% of new cases.

### PERFORMANCE OUTCOME-2018:

- Contact was made with one or both parties in 88% of the new cases.

### 2018 SUMMARY:

- Contact was made in 1,651 new cases.

## CLIENT COMMUNICATION

It is important that clients are able to communicate effectively with us. During 2018, we received 93,603 phone calls, of which 92% were resolved at first contact without transferring callers. We also received 155,948 letters, faxes and emails. The State of Michigan maintains a website that is easily accessed 24 hours a day by cell phone, computer or other device to find case information including payments and balances. Case managers are also available for walk-in clients, two days a week, as well as by appointment.

It is also important to provide clients with important case information and to anticipate questions. With this in mind, we email clients reminders about court dates, provide information about updated processes, and inform them of job opportunities and other events in the community.

## EDUCATION

We provide the parties in all new cases basic information about the Friend of the Court. This information includes contact information and general information about child support, parenting time and health care. We continuing to update and enhance a series of entertaining orientation videos to help our clients understand the Friend of the Court processes better. We also maintain forms and other information on our website and in our lobby.

# FRIEND OF THE COURT

## CUSTODY/PARENTING TIME EVALUATIONS

Custody and parenting time evaluations are initiated after a written order is received from the Court. The purpose of an evaluation is to gather information regarding the best interests of the children as defined in the (12) best interest factors of the Michigan Child Custody Act and to complete a written report and recommendation for the Court.

### **PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:**

- 90% of all Court requested custody and parenting time evaluations will be completed within 90 days from the date the Court ordered the referral.

### **PERFORMANCE OUTCOME-2018:**

- 92% of all Court requested custody and parenting time evaluations were completed within 90 days of the date the Court ordered the referral.

### **2018 SUMMARY:**

- 582 total evaluations completed in 2018.

## MEDIATION AND CONCILIATIONS

Mediations are conducted on request of the parties or by court order. The mediator assists the parents in reaching agreements on the issues of custody and parenting time. If the parties reach an agreement during mediation, they may sign an agreement prepared by the mediator, which is then entered as an order by the Court. Conciliations are conducted on the request of either party for the purpose of creating a temporary order regarding custody, parenting time and child support while a case is pending. If the parties reach an agreement regarding these issues, they may sign a stipulated order prepared by the conciliator. If the parties do not reach an agreement, the conciliator may issue a proposed order to the Court.

### **PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:**

- 90% of mediations and conciliations will be scheduled within 60 days of being requested.

### **PERFORMANCE OUTCOME-2018:**

- 98% of mediations and conciliations were scheduled within 60 days.

### **2018 SUMMARY:**

- 381 mediations and conciliations scheduled in 2018.

# FRIEND OF THE COURT

## GRIEVANCES

In an effort to assure that the FOC is responsive to the concerns of clients, the FOC Act provides a grievance procedure for complaints about FOC operations or employees. A grievance may not be used to change or object to a FOC recommendation, or to disagree with a referee's recommendation or a judge's decision. Once a grievance has been received, the FOC must investigate and respond within 30 days or issue a statement explaining why a response is not possible within that timeframe. The Kent County FOC has always been receptive of these types of formal complaints. Rather than being considered a negative reflection of office performance, it is a good way to measure customer satisfaction and help improve services where necessary.

### **2018 SUMMARY:**

- 11 grievances were received in 2018.
- 100% were responded to within 30 days of receipt.

## CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) was created by the legislature to assist citizens and the FOC office with issues concerning office operations and employees. Although having a CAC was initially mandatory, the legislature eliminated this requirement and currently only two counties statewide have one, Macomb and Kent. Minutes from its meetings are submitted to the County Board, while sub-committees review actual grievances. There were no grievances filed directly with the CAC in 2018; however, all 11 grievances received by the FOC were forwarded to the CAC for their review. Of note, the CAC agreed fully with the response of the FOC on 11 grievances.

# CLERK'S OFFICE / CIRCUIT COURT DIVISION



**LISA POSTHUMUS LYONS - COUNTY CLERK, CLERK OF THE COURT**  
**AMY MOILANEN - CHIEF DEPUTY CIRCUIT COURT CLERK**

The Circuit Court Division of the Kent County Clerk's Office is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Courthouse. With a staff of 22.5, the office opens, maintains, tracks and stores all cases filed in the civil, criminal and family divisions of the Circuit Court. Court files are open to the public and may be viewed in the Clerk's Office between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Our office collects and distributes state mandated costs, court-ordered fines, cost, restitution, crime victim rights fee, and other assessments. In 2018, we collected over \$3,900,000 for Kent County. In addition, the Clerk's Office handles bonds posted in criminal cases, which often can be applied against court-ordered assessments at the conclusion of the case, thereby increasing the Clerk's collection activities.

Throughout 2018, the Clerk's Office managed the receipt and filing of 11,468 new cases. Additionally, over 3,000 formal juvenile delinquency and neglect/abuse cases are processed through our office. The Clerk's Office continues to provide e-filing in lieu of traditional mail or hand delivery to the Clerk's Office for cases assigned to the Court's Specialized Business Docket. The Community Archive Center (CARC) continues to provide much needed storage space for approximately 40+ years' worth of the Circuit Court's oldest civil, domestic, and criminal case files. This offsite storage includes microfilm duplicates, steno notes and docket books from as far back as the 1800's. The most recent files reside within the Kent County Courthouse.

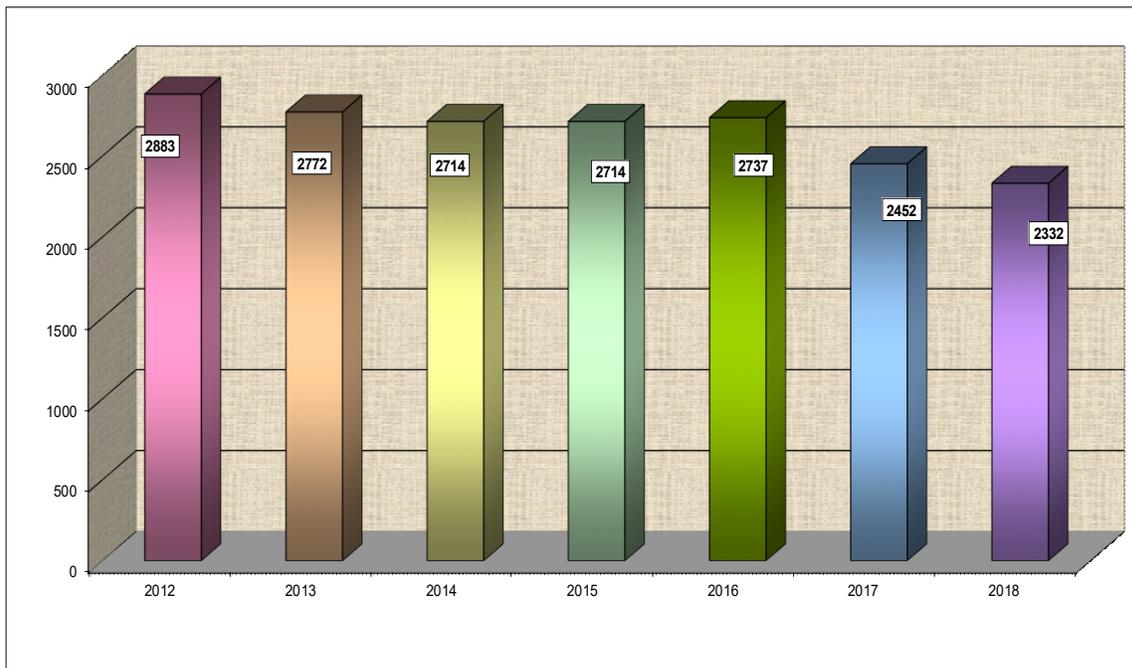
The County Clerk remains committed to providing access for the public and attorneys to these records and services through a technology initiative that began with the Register of Deeds and Vital Records Divisions in 2003. The Clerk's Office Courtside currently offers online services to request certified divorce decrees and motion calendars for scheduling pro confesso hearings with referees and motion hearings with all judges.

Lisa Posthumus Lyons has served the residents of Kent County as the County Clerk/Register of Deeds since January 1, 2017. As the Clerk/Register, she is committed to continually updating office technologies and procedures so that services can be most efficiently and accurately provided.

# CIRCUIT COURT PROBATION

*Jon Timmers, Area Manager*  
*Tom Halsted, Program Manager*

The Michigan Department of Corrections - Kent County Probation Office is the second largest probation office in the State of Michigan. The office is located at 82 Ionia Avenue, Suite 100. Supervising the 2,431 felony probationers in Kent County are 39 probation agents. In addition to the agents, four supervisors and seven support staff ensure that the needs of the Court are met. Agents are responsible for providing presentence investigations to the Court, supervising probationers in the community, referring probationers to appropriate programming, providing the Court with information regarding the probationer's progress, and making certain that the financial obligations to the Court and victims are met by the probationer.



## PRESENTENCE REPORTS COMPLETED

The chart shows the number of presentence investigation reports completed each year from 2012 through 2018. The probation office has several specialized caseloads and, while being supervised, probationers may be assigned to substance abuse, sex offender, electronic monitoring, SAI, veteran, TASC (Treatment and Support Court), low risk reporting, or interstate caseloads. Probationers must comply with their conditions of probation. To monitor this, agents have ongoing contact with probationers' family members, employers, teachers, and counselors. Through referrals to a variety of programs, such as substance abuse treatment, vocational and educational programs, electronic monitoring, psychological counseling, and community service/work crew, probationers are provided the necessary tools with which to make positive changes in their lives and become responsible, contributing members of the community.

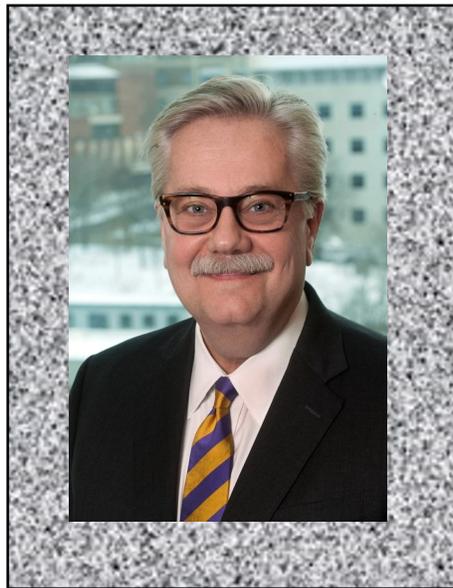
PROBATE COURT CHIEF JUDGE LETTER

# PROBATE COURT

## MISSION STATEMENT

*The mission of the Kent County Probate Court is to provide an accessible, efficient, and person-centered venue to secure the peaceful and sound resolution of matters, where every individual is treated with dignity and respect.*

The Probate Court is a trial court of statutory jurisdiction in Michigan. It has exclusive jurisdiction over matters relating to: the estates of decedents; trusts; guardianships of developmentally disabled persons, legally incapacitated adults, and minors; conservatorships for protected adults and minors, protective orders; accounts of other fiduciaries; and petitions for hospitalization of mentally ill persons. The Probate Court also has jurisdiction over a myriad of other types of civil actions, in particular where an estate, trust, fiduciary or ward is a party. By the nature of the matters within its jurisdiction, the Probate Court is primarily concerned with the protection of incapacitated individuals and their assets and the proper transfer of assets at death.



## **JUDGE DAVID M. MURKOWSKI**

was born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In 1979, he graduated cum laude from Marquette University where he was awarded the university's Outstanding Student Service Award, and the Polanki College Achievement Scholarship. In 1979, Judge Murkowski was also inducted into the National Jesuit Honor Society. He attended Western Michigan University's Thomas M. Cooley Law School and was an honor roll graduate in 1983. Judge Murkowski served as law clerk to the Michigan House of Representatives Civil Rights Committee, and worked as a solo practitioner in Grand Rapids until 1993 when he joined the law firm of Dilley & Dilley. There, he specialized in criminal defense, juvenile neglect and delinquency, and probate law. He served as managing partner of Dilley, Dilley, Murkowski & Goller until 2006 when he was appointed to the Kent County Probate bench to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of the Honorable Janet A. Haynes. In December 2007, the Michigan Supreme Court appointed Judge Murkowski to serve as the Chief Judge of the Kent County Probate Court commencing January 1, 2008. Judge Murkowski served as the President of the Michigan Probate Judges Association (MPJA) in 2017 and is a current member of the Judicial Council of the Judicial Section of the State Bar of Michigan. He has previously served as a member of the Executive Committee of the Kent County Family and Children's Coordinating Council. Judge Murkowski has lectured for the Michigan Judicial Institute (MJI), ICLE's Probate and Estate Planning Institute, the American Geriatric Society (AGS), the Michigan Probate Judges Association (MPJA), the Western Michigan Estate Planning Council, and the Grand Rapids Bar Association. Judge Murkowski is a chapter author of *Michigan Probate Litigation: A Guide to Contested Litigation, 2nd Ed.*, a contributor to the *Michigan Probate Benchbook*, associate editor of *Inter-Com*, a journal publication of the Michigan Probate Judges Association, and was a contributor to the drafting of the Michigan Trust Code. He currently serves on the Legislature Drafting Subcommittee of the Governor's Mental Health Task Force. Since 2014 Judge Murkowski has received the Judicial Contributions in Law and Aging Award by Elder Law of Michigan, has been selected as a Leader in the Law by Michigan Lawyers Weekly and was elected as a Fellow of the Michigan State Bar Foundation.

# PROBATE COURT

## CASELOAD AND CASEFLOW

The number of new filings in the Kent County Probate Court increased 8% in 2017 as compared to 2016, and reflected a 13% increase in case filings when 2018 is compared to 2016.

NEW FILINGS	2016	2017	2018
Unsupervised Estates	784	840	878
Supervised Estates	1	1	0
Small Estates	344	381	382
Trusts	78	79	85
Guardianships – Legally Incapacitated Adult	469	505	480
Guardianships - Minor	221	233	214
Guardianships – Developmentally Disabled Person	160	193	156
Conservatorships – Legally Incapacitated Adult	183	183	171
Conservatorships - Minor	46	46	53
Mentally Ill – Petitions for Hospitalization	2183	2250	2086
Mentally Ill – Petitions for Transport for Exam	270	292	264
Mentally Ill Cases for Other Counties	1484	1745	2033
Civil and Other	1523	1614	1956
<b>Total:</b>	<b>7746</b>	<b>8362</b>	<b>8760</b>

The nature of many probate cases is such that they often continue for many years. While administration of most estates of deceased persons is completed within a year, guardianships and conservatorships for minors often continue until the child is 18 years old, and the vast majority of guardianships and conservatorships for adults continue for the lifetime of the protected individual. Thus, a fluctuation in the number of new filings does not necessarily equate to a commensurate decline in the number of active matters requiring ongoing Court monitoring and supervision.

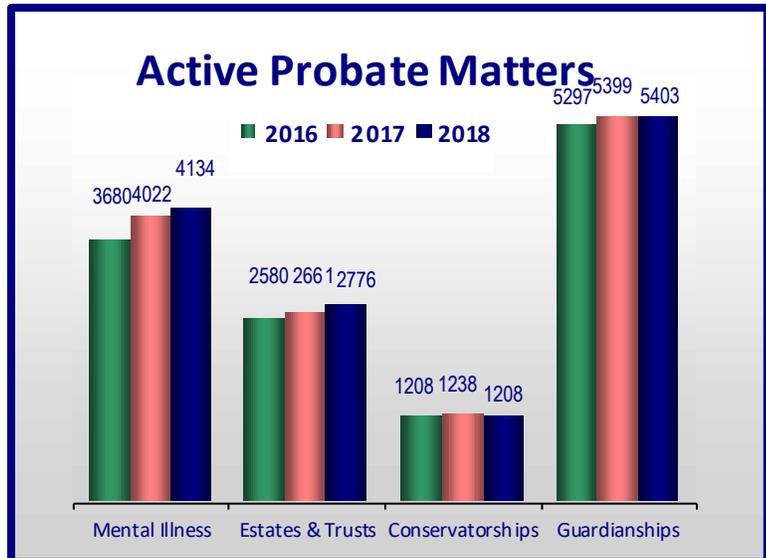
ACTIVE CASES	2016	2017	2018
Estates and Trusts	2580	2261	2776
Guardianships – Legally Incapacitated Adult	2357	2425	2395
Guardianships – Minor	1233	1168	1136
Guardianships – Developmentally Disabled Person	1707	1806	1872
Conservatorships – Legally Incapacitated Adult	863	883	850
Conservatorships - Minor	345	355	358
Mentally Ill	2196	2277	2101
Mentally Ill Cases for Other Counties	1484	1745	2033
Civil and Other	1529	1627	1970
<b>Total:</b>	<b>14,294</b>	<b>14,947</b>	<b>15,491</b>

Cases involving the involuntary hospitalization of mentally ill persons are a significant portion of the docket of the Probate Court. Until 3/4/14, Judge Murkowski and his court recorder, as well as a Kent County assistant prosecutor, traveled twice each week to our three local psychiatric facilities- St. Mary's Pine Rest, Forest View, and St. Mary's Psychiatric Medical Unit (PMU), for hearings on petitions for involuntary hospitalization. Effective 3/4/14, these hearings are conducted via videoconferencing, thus saving the time and expense of travel. Because Kent County has developed into a regional psychiatric treatment center providing over 293 adult inpatient beds, residents of other counties are frequently hospitalized here and the Kent County Probate Court arranges for and conducts the necessary hearings. This involves a significant dedication of judicial and staff time and resources.

# PROBATE COURT

## CASELOAD AND CASEFLOW

The State Court Administrator's Office sets guidelines for how long probate matters should take to resolve. In 2018 the Kent County Probate Court met or exceeded those state time guidelines for disposition of all contested matters. In particular, 99% of all mental illness proceedings were disposed within 14 days (guidelines call for 90% within that time). Those few cases which took more than 14 days usually involved demands for jury trials or independent psychological evaluations by the respondents. Guidelines call for 75% of all guardianship, conservatorship and protective order proceedings to be disposed of within 90 days, and the Kent County Probate Court achieved a disposition rate of 99% of those cases within 90 days.



## GUARDIANSHIP PROGRAM

A large portion of the caseload of the Court involves guardianships and conservatorships for legally incapacitated or developmentally disabled adults. In the majority of these cases, a family member or friend is appointed to act as guardian or conservator for the ward. However, in many cases there is no family member or friend who is suitable and willing to serve. In those cases it is often in the ward's best interest that a professional be appointed. In Kent County we are fortunate to have the Kent County Guardianship Program, developed by the Kent County Department of Health & Human Services and Probate Court to provide guardianship and conservatorship services for adult Kent County residents who have no one else to serve them. For more than 25 years the Program had been operated by DHHS and managed by employees of DHHS. When state DHHS administration (not local DHHS) significantly decreased staff time committed to the operation of the Program in 2015, Mercy Health Saint Mary's and Spectrum Health, frequent users of the Program for patients at their hospitals, approached the Probate Court to discuss how they could assist the Program so professional guardians could be more readily available. Beginning 10/1/15, Kent County took over the Guardianship Program from DHHS, with placement of the Program at the Probate Court, and the two hospitals each agreed to provide funding of \$50,000 per year for 3 years to assist with the payment of guardian fees for indigent cases and also underwrite the services of the Guardian Monitor who manages the Program. In 2018 both hospitals committed to continuing to support the Program with annual funding of \$50,000 per hospital per year for 3 additional years. When a ward is indigent and has no other means to pay the fee of the guardian, the Program pays a modest monthly fee (currently \$60) for the services of a professional guardian. Funding to pay for the Program and these fees in 2018 came from 4 sources: Kent County (approximately \$167,000), the Kent County Senior Millage (approximately \$135,500: wards must be over the age of 60 and meet residency and income requirements), the State of Michigan (approximately \$43,000) and Mercy Health Saint Mary's and Spectrum Health (approximately \$20,000 after payment of \$80,700 for the cost of the Guardian Monitor). This funding permits the Program to pay for guardians for indigent wards. As of the end of December, 2018 there were 44 guardians in the Program serving a total of 974 wards. It is anticipated that this Program will continue to grow to meet the increasing need for professional guardians for vulnerable adults in our community. We are grateful for the steadfast support of Kent County and all of our community partners in keeping this Program alive and strong.

# PROBATE COURT

## ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTORY

**KENT COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
180 OTTAWA AVE NW, SUITE 2500  
GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503**

### **Judge**

#### **Suite 9500C**

Chief Judge David M. Murkowski	- Fax	(616) 632-5074
Secretary/Clerk - Jeana Stillwagon	- Phone	(616) 632-5428
Court Recorder - Aimee Cory	- Phone	(616) 632-5428
	- Phone	(616) 632-5424

### **Probate Register**

#### **Suite 4400**

Probate Register - Martha Irwin	- Fax	(616) 632-5152
	- Phone	(616) 632-5422

### **Probate Court Clerk**

General	- Fax	(616) 632-5430
Probate Manager - Debora Sanchez	- Phone	(616) 632-5440
Erna Ingram	- Phone	(616) 632-5417
Lorah Edmondson	- Phone	(616) 632-5420
Rhonda Brown	- Phone	(616) 632-5418
Catherine Waters	- Phone	(616) 632-5421
Sandy Rickert	- Phone	(616) 632-5432
Austin Fry	- Phone	(616) 632-5423
Andrew Oeffner	- Phone	(616) 632-5432
	- Phone	(616) 632-5426

### **Mental Health Division**

Karen Noorman	- Phone	(616) 632-5425
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### **Guardianship Specialist**

Kalee Redder	- Phone	(616) 632-5416
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