



# MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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## **2017 Year in Review: Increased Efficiency, Better Access, and Improved Service to the Public are Highlights**

LANSING, MI, December 15, 2017 – During the past year, the Michigan Supreme Court and State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) continued steady progress to increase efficiency, make court services more accessible, and improve service to the public. Highlights include judicial reductions to match the workload, launch of the statewide e-filing initiative, and efforts to improve the management of problem-solving courts.

“While the names on the doors changed, our basic mission to make sure that courts are impartial, efficient, and accessible did not,” said Justice Bridget M. McCormack. “In 2017, we continued to focus on measuring performance to improve outcomes, implementing technology to increase access, and reengineering courts to make them more efficient.”

Highlights from the past year include:

- **[Changes in Court Leadership and Membership](#)** - In January, the Justices unanimously chose colleague [Stephen J. Markman](#) to serve as Chief Justice. In May, Gov. Rick Snyder appointed Court of Appeals Judge [Kurtis T. Wilder](#) to succeed retiring Justice Robert P. Young, Jr. In November, the Governor appointed [Elizabeth T. Clement](#) to fill the vacancy left by Justice [Joan L. Larsen](#), who was appointed to the federal appeals bench.
- **[Recommending Judicial Reductions](#)** – State Court Administrator Milton L. Mack, Jr., [testified](#) before a legislative committee regarding recommendations to make sure the number of judges matches the workload. Mack recommended further reductions, adding to the 31 judicial seats that have already been eliminated. Such reductions have already saved taxpayers nearly \$20 million since 2011.
- **[Statewide E-Filing Moves Forward](#)** – After signing a [contract](#) earlier in the year, in August, SCAO launched the statewide e-filing initiative. Based on extensive discussions with local trial courts, the roll-out plan features implementation of all pilot courts by early 2018 and then implementation of model district, circuit, and probate courts. E-filing is expected to increase access and boost convenience for filers while helping courts increase efficiency.
- **[Supporting Michigan Problem-Solving Courts](#)** - Based on the Governor’s budget recommendations and legislative approval, SCAO granted more than \$20 million to Michigan problem-solving courts for the fiscal year beginning in October. SCAO also published standards and best practice [manuals](#) (Adult Drug Court, Adult Mental Health Court, and Veterans Treatment Court), reported [data](#) on effectiveness, and worked for passage of legislation requiring state certification of all problem-solving court programs.

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- **[Training Veteran Mentors](#)** – The Supreme Court hosted a two-day [training program](#) and graduation ceremony at the Michigan Hall of Justice in October conducted by the national organization, Justice For Vets. More than 60 veteran mentors from 12 Michigan counties took part. Chief Justice Stephen Markman and Justice Bridget McCormack participated in the swearing-in and graduation ceremony to honor the vets who give their time to help fellow vets in Michigan’s 24 veterans treatment courts. Justice McCormack also penned a [guest column](#) about veteran mentors in these courts that was published in the *Detroit Free Press* in conjunction with Veterans Day.
- **[Justice Wilder Launches U.P.’s 1<sup>st</sup> Mental Health Court](#)** – Justice Kurtis Wilder attended the kickoff [ceremony](#) for the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Mental Health Court in October. Comprised of the district and circuit courts in five Eastern U.P. counties, this new mental health court is the first to be established in the Upper Peninsula. Statewide, the latest data show that graduates of these courts are much less likely to reoffend and are better able to return to jobs and family.
- **[Success Stories from Michigan Courts](#)** – The Court released reports highlighting the successful efforts of judges who lead [problem-solving courts](#) and [business courts](#) statewide. Another report highlighted successful collaborations between [tribal, state and federal courts](#).
- **[Making History \(Twice\) through Court Community Connections](#)** - In April, the Court traveled above the 45<sup>th</sup> Parallel for the very first time to hear oral argument at [Petoskey High School](#) during its 20<sup>th</sup> biannual “road trip.” In October, the Court heard oral argument in Detroit for the first time at [Cass Tech High School](#). Court Community Connections is a public education and outreach program aimed mainly at high school students in communities throughout Michigan. In April 2018, the Court will hear oral arguments for the first time in the U.P. when it travels to Sault Ste. Marie.
- **[Promoting Reunification and Adoption in Michigan](#)** - In June, the Court hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual [Michigan Reunification Day](#) to promote and celebrate the hard work of families, courts, and child welfare professionals to return foster children to their homes. Statewide, the Court engaged five counties in coordinating their own local events. As part of November Adoption Month events, the Court hosted its 15<sup>th</sup> Annual [Michigan Adoption Day](#) event at the Hall of Justice and helped coordinate celebrations in more than 30 Michigan counties.
- **[Celebrating Hall of Justice Milestone](#)** – In early October, the Court marked the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the dedication of the Michigan Hall of Justice in Lansing by inviting judicial and state leaders, state employees, and members of the public to celebrate the milestone at an on-site “[Food Court](#)” of local food trucks.