Michigan Court of Appeals Annual Report 2011

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Table of Contents

Introduction 1

In Memoriam 2

Court Performance 3

Judicial Chambers 7

Clerk's Office.....10

Research Division.....13

Court Highlights 17

Organizational Chart 20

Directory.....21

Introduction

The Michigan Court of Appeals was created by the Constitution of 1963, Article VI, Section 1, and began operation in 1965 with a bench of nine judges. The Legislature increased the size of the bench to 12 judges in 1969, to 18 judges in 1974, to 24 judges in 1986, and to 28 judges in 1993. The Court is divided into four geographic districts for election purposes and has office locations in each of those districts: Detroit (District I), Troy (District II), Grand Rapids (District III), and Lansing (District IV). The judges of the Court sit in panels of three statewide, regardless of their election district, to decide cases submitted on case call with oral argument.

At present, in addition to the judges, approximately 170 staff members work in the Court's four district office locations. The number of staff positions has decreased dramatically over the past ten years due to budget constraints. During that period, the Clerk's Office has seen a 33% reduction in its personnel while the Research Division has shrunk by 26%. Despite those reductions, the Court has increased its efficiency as reflected by the positive improvements in almost every performance measure. The Court has reduced the average time on appeal in opinion cases from 653 days to 445 days during this time period. In the time-sensitive appeals involving the custody of children or the termination of parental rights, the average disposition time went from 321 days ten years ago to 222 days at the close of 2011. The delay reduction in those case types is especially significant considering that more than half the time is spent in transcribing the lower court proceedings, preparing the appellate briefs, and obtaining the lower court record—actions that are largely outside the Court's control. In another performance category, the Court has also improved the percentage of all cases that are 18 months or younger at disposition from 66.92% in 2002 to 92.53% by the end of 2011.

The judges and staff who make up the Court of Appeals work hard to effectuate its mandate: "[T]o secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of every action and to avoid the consequences of error that does not affect the substantial rights of the parties." MCR 1.105

As the Chief Judge, I am grateful to my judicial colleagues and the dedicated staff of this Court for their many contributions made on a daily basis to serve the public.

Chief Judge William B. Murphy

In Memoriam

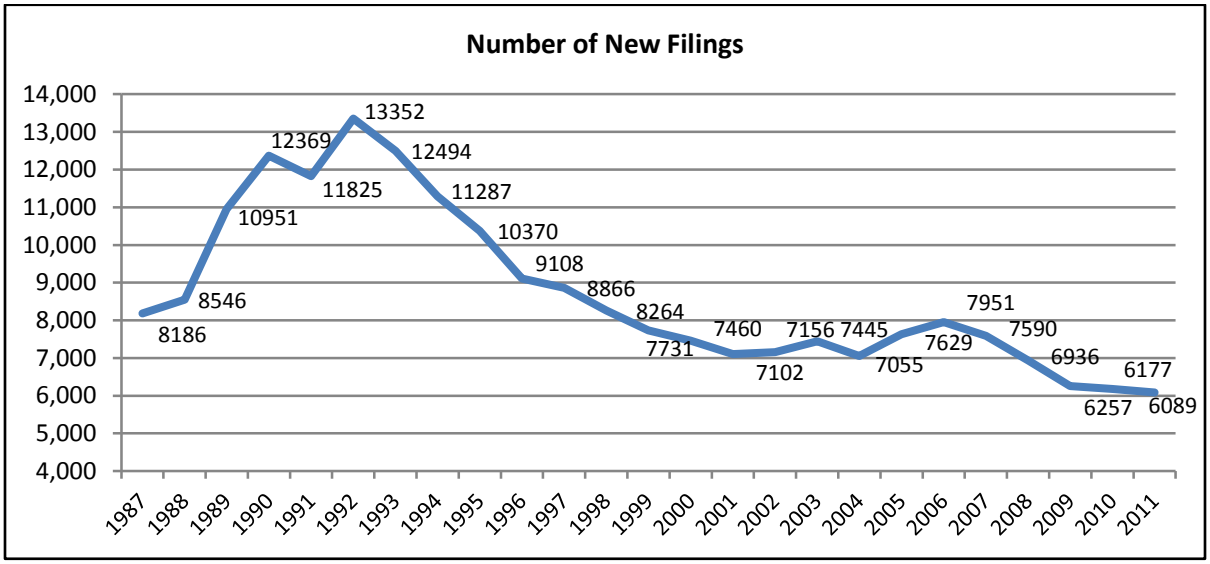
Henry "Hank" Henson, age 75, passed away on November 17, 2011. Hank's professional career began in the U.S. Air Force in 1959 where, as a Captain in the Strategic Air Command, he programmed the first automated war games systems. After leaving the military, Hank attended Wayne State University Law School, earning his J.D. in 1968. Hank combined his legal knowledge and computer skills by working for the Judicial Data Center of the Michigan Supreme Court from 1972 to 1978. He began working as an Assistant Clerk in the Michigan Court of Appeals' Data Processing Department (now Information Systems Department) on January 13, 1978. Hank was instrumental in developing, implementing, or refining many of the Court's early technologies, including word-processing systems, statistical modules, automated case call and motion docket programming, case management lists, and the computer mainframe and terminals. Hank retired from the Court on February 1, 1996.

Court Performance

Filings

In 2011, there were 6,089 new filings with the Court. Of those, approximately 52% were by right, 47% were discretionary, and 1.5% were "other" (e.g., original actions). Roughly 54% were civil and 46% were criminal.

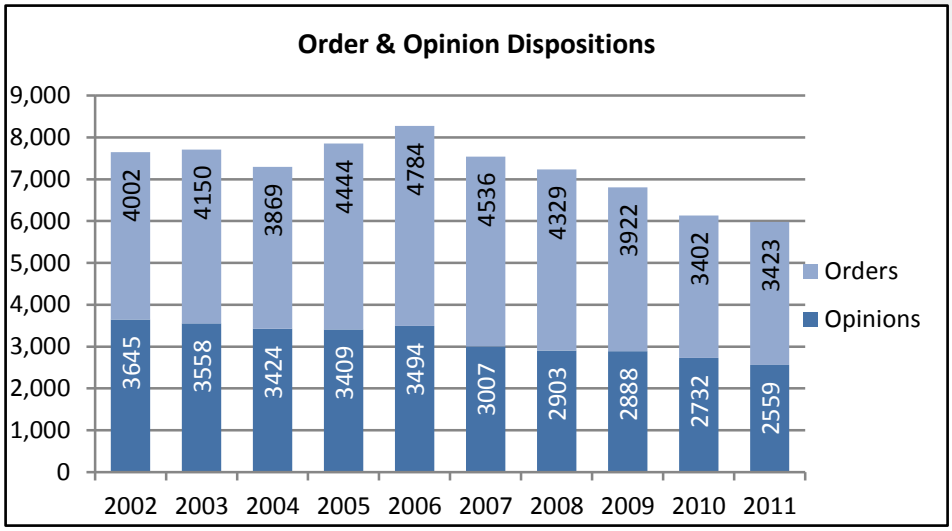
The number of new filings in 2011 continued the downward trend of recent years and represented the lowest number since 1980. The line graph below shows the number of new filings over the past 25 years.



Dispositions

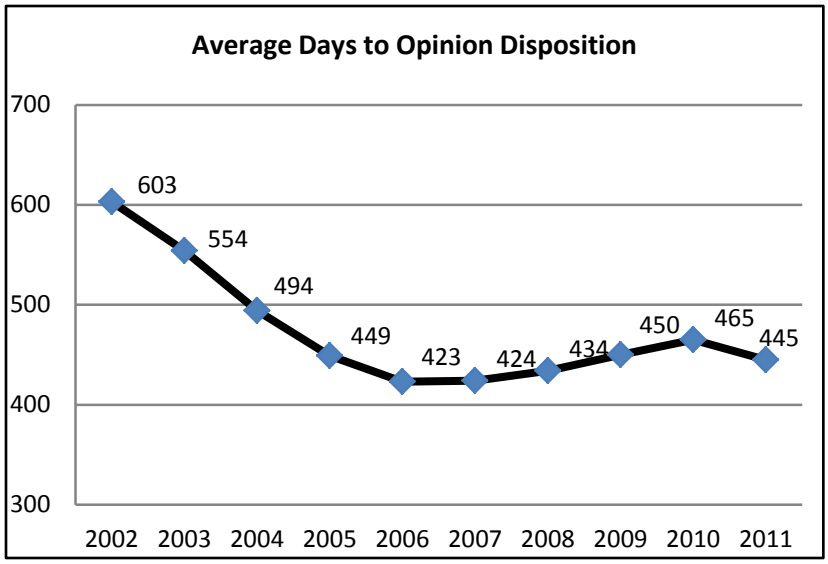
Cases filed with the Court of Appeals are resolved by order or opinion. Dispositions by order usually occur in discretionary appeals, while dispositions by opinions typically occur in appeals by right or in discretionary appeals that have been granted. Dispositions by opinion take longer because of the time frames under the court rules for transcript preparation, briefing, and record transmission, and because they generally receive reports on the relevant facts and applicable law by staff attorneys, are scheduled for oral argument, and are submitted for plenary consideration to three-judge panels.

In 2011, the Court issued 2,559 opinions and 3,423 dispositive orders for a total of 5,982 dispositions. This is slightly below 2010's dispositions of 2,732 by opinion and 3,402 by order (6,134 total) and substantially below prior years' numbers. However, in 2010 and 2011, the Court operated with a reduced staff of central research attorneys due to budget cuts (see Research Division section) and had two less judges.[1] The bar graph above shows the number of order and opinion dispositions since 2002.



Delay Reduction

In 2001, it took 653 days on average for the Court to dispose of a case by opinion. Recognizing that such delay was unacceptable, the Court voluntarily undertook an ambitious plan in 2002 to reduce the delay in dispositions so that 95% of all cases would be decided within 18 months. Under the delay reduction plan, the average time to disposition by opinion dropped to 603 days in 2002, 554 days in 2003, 494 days in 2004, 449 days in 2005, and 423 days in 2006. Thus, between 2001 and 2006, the average time to disposition of opinion cases was reduced by 230 days, and the number of all cases decided within 18 months rose from 67.6% in 2001 to 86.3% in 2006. Unfortunately, due to stagnant or reduced budgets from



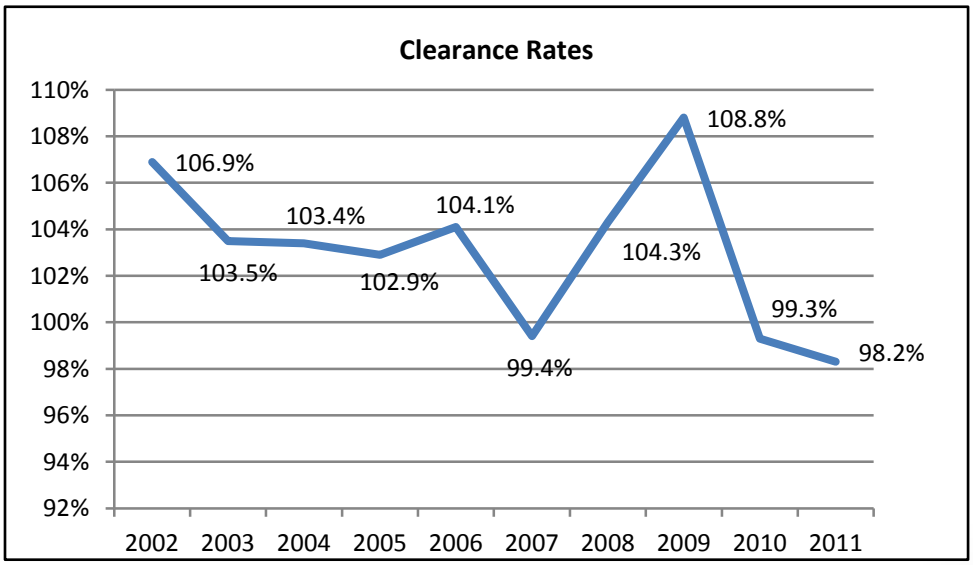
[1] The Court is statutorily authorized at 28 judges. However, the vacancies created by Richard A. Bandstra's retirement on January 8, 2011, and Brian K. Zahra's elevation to the Michigan Supreme Court on January 14, 2011, were left unfilled and so the Court operated with 26 judges for the entire year.

2007 through 2010, the number of central staff attorneys employed by the Court was drastically reduced. This resulted in the production of far fewer reports in cases for case call. Although case call panels began hearing cases without research reports to compensate for the reduction of reports from central staff attorneys, the progress in reducing the delay reversed itself and the delay began to increase: 424 days in 2007, 434 days in 2008, 450 days in 2009, and 465 days in 2010. **In 2011, the average age of opinion cases at disposition reversed this three-year trend and decreased to 445 days.** The Court expects to continue in that downward direction in upcoming years. The line graph on the previous page illustrates the average time to opinion disposition of all case types from 2002 through 2011.

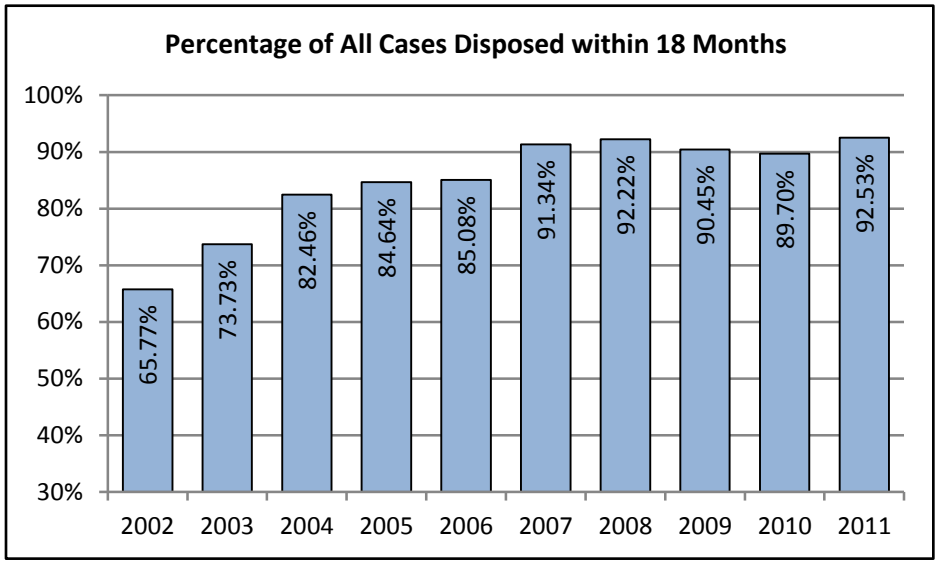
The Court also separately tracks the average disposition times of various matters expedited by statute, court rule, or court order. In 2011, the average disposition time of all expedited cases was 229 days. For child custody and termination of parental rights (TPR) appeals, the average disposition time was 222 days. This is a vast improvement over the disposition times before the delay reduction effort began. In 2001, the disposition times were 351 days and 325 days for all expedited cases and custody/TPR appeals, respectively.

Performance Measures

The Court of Appeals tracks three primary measures of performance. The first measure is clearance rate, which reflects the number of cases disposed of compared to the number of new cases filed. In 2011, the Court posted a clearance rate of 98.24%, disposing of 5,982 cases during the same period when 6,089 cases were filed. This is the lowest level in many years, and resulted from having fewer central staff attorneys to produce reports for case call due to budget cuts and the vacancies of two judgeships, which meant having one less case call panel per month. The line graph below shows the Court's clearance rate for the past ten years.



For the delay reduction effort that began in 2002, the Court set a goal of disposing of 95% of all cases (i.e., by opinion or order) within 18 months of filing. This is the second measure used by the Court to track its performance. In the first year of delay reduction, 65.77% of all cases were disposed within 18 months of filing. For just opinion cases, only about one-third were disposed within that time period. In 2011, 92.53% of all cases and 82.80% of opinion cases were disposed within 18 months. The bar graph below shows the percentage of all cases disposed within 18 months for the years 2002 through 2011.



Judicial Chambers

Judges of the Court of Appeals

Although statutorily authorized at twenty-eight judgeships in 2011, the Court of Appeals operated with twenty-six judges for the year. The judgeship positions are divided into four districts for election purposes but the judges sit statewide in panels of three, rotating with two other judges with equal frequency and among the three courtroom locations (Detroit, Lansing and Grand Rapids). Published opinions of the Court of Appeals are controlling across all four districts and are reviewable by the Michigan Supreme Court on leave granted.

Pictured From Left to Right (Year of joining the bench indicated in parentheses)

First row:

Jane E. Markey (1995), E. Thomas Fitzgerald (1991),
Chief Judge Pro Tem David H. Sawyer (1986), Chief Judge William B. Murphy (1988),
Kathleen Jansen (1989), Joel P. Hoekstra (1995), Peter D. O'Connell (1995)

Second row:

Pat M. Donofrio (2002), Patrick M. Meter (1999), Kirsten Frank Kelly (2001),
Michael J. Talbot (1998), Stephen L. Borrello (2003), Donald S. Owens (1999),
Kurtis T. Wilder (1998), William C. Whitbeck (1997), Christopher M. Murray (2002)

Third row:

Cynthia Diane Stephens (2008), Douglas B. Shapiro (2009), Jane M. Beckering (2007),
Elizabeth L. Gleicher (2007), Amy Ronayne Krause (2010), Michael J. Kelly (2009)

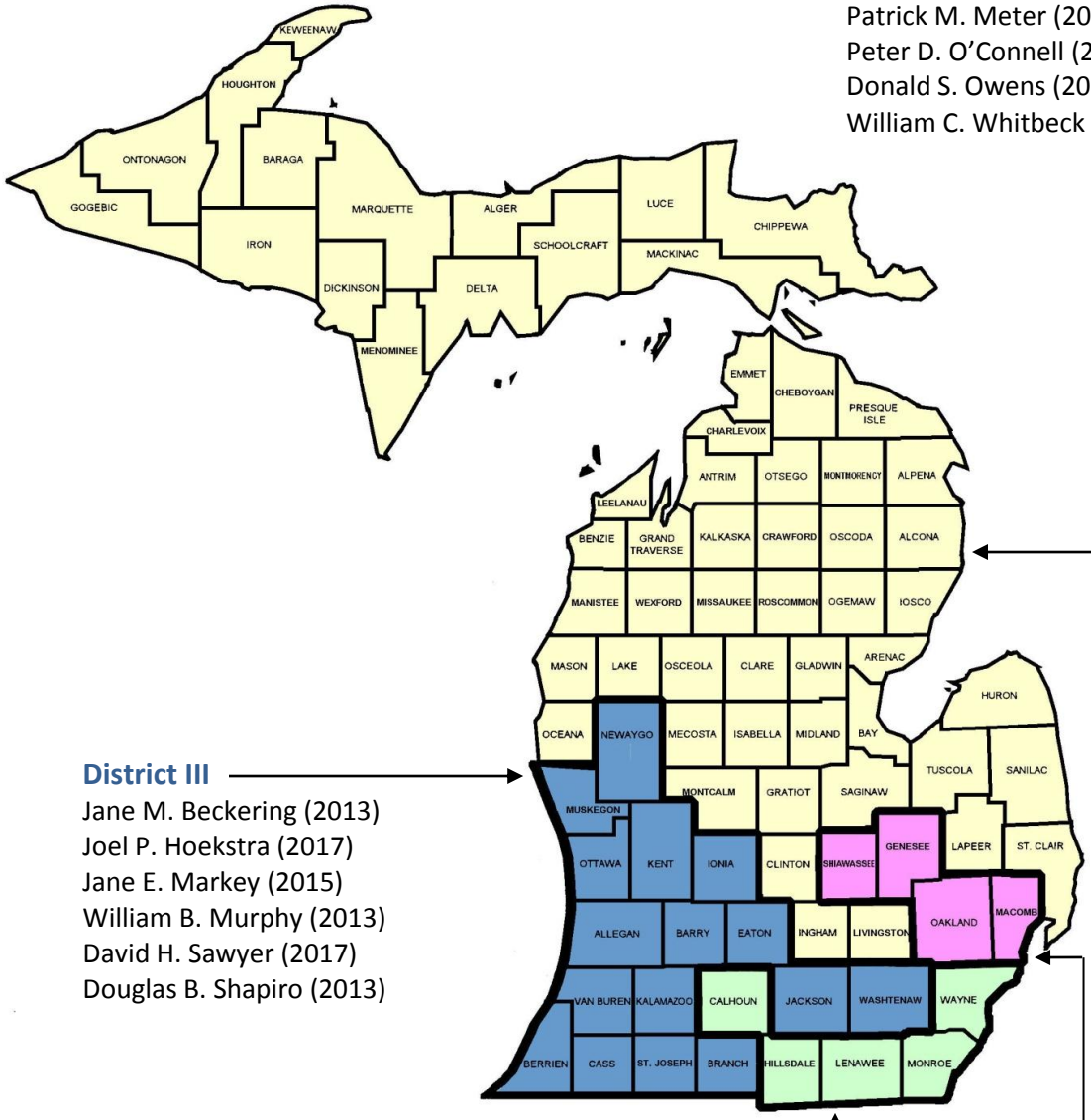
Not Pictured:

Mark J. Cavanagh (1989), Karen M. Fort Hood (2003), Henry William Saad (1994),
Deborah A. Servitto (2006)

Judges by District in 2011

Year that Current Term Expires Indicated in Parentheses

District IV
Stephen L. Borrello (2013)
Michael J. Kelly (2015)
Amy Ronayne Krause (2013)
Patrick M. Meter (2015)
Peter D. O'Connell (2013)
Donald S. Owens (2017)
William C. Whitbeck (2017)



District III
Jane M. Beckering (2013)
Joel P. Hoekstra (2017)
Jane E. Markey (2015)
William B. Murphy (2013)
David H. Sawyer (2017)
Douglas B. Shapiro (2013)

District I
Karen Fort Hood (2015)
Kirsten Frank Kelly (2013)
Christopher M. Murray (2015)
Cynthia Diane Stephens (2017)
Michael J. Talbot (2015)
Kurtis T. Wilder (2017)

District II
Mark J. Cavanagh (2015)
Pat M. Donofrio (2017)
E. Thomas Fitzgerald (2015)
Elizabeth L. Gleicher (2013)
Kathleen Jansen (2013)
Henry William Saad (2015)
Deborah A. Servitto (2013)

Judicial Assistants

The Judicial Assistants (JAs) perform a wide variety of secretarial and administrative tasks to assist the judges in operating the judicial chambers in a confidential and professional manner. A few examples of these tasks include scheduling and maintaining the judges' calendars, preparing files for motion dockets and case calls, submitting and tracking votes and memos concerning motion docket and case call matters, docketing the receipt and transmission of lower court records, proofreading and cite-checking opinions, typing bench memoranda, draft opinions, and original correspondence, and monitoring various case management lists.

On May 18, 2011, the JAs from each district gathered at the Hall of Justice in Lansing for an all-day meeting to learn new technology and share ideas to facilitate more efficient operations in the judicial chambers. It was an opportunity to exchange information, as well as meet with individuals from the Clerk's Office, Information Systems, Finance, and Human Resources.

Law Clerks

Each judge employs a single law clerk to assist him or her in handling the huge volume of motion docket and case call matters assigned to the judge. The law clerks read the appellate briefs of the parties and the staff reports written by Research Division attorneys, conduct independent research on the issues, and review the lower court files and transcripts to recommend appropriate resolutions of the issues and dispositions of the appeals. The law clerks also rewrite draft opinions written by the Research Division to reflect the judge's writing style or to add statements of facts and analyses of the legal issues. Further, the law clerks assist the judges in drafting concurrences and dissents, as well as those opinions where publication is recommended by the Research Division attorneys. In 2011, the law clerks also collectively prepared bench memoranda for approximately 300 civil appeals that were assigned directly to the judges without the benefit of reports from the Research Division. The judges were assigned these cases without reports as a way of advancing the Court's delay reduction efforts in the face of declining staffing levels in the Research Division.

Clerk's Office

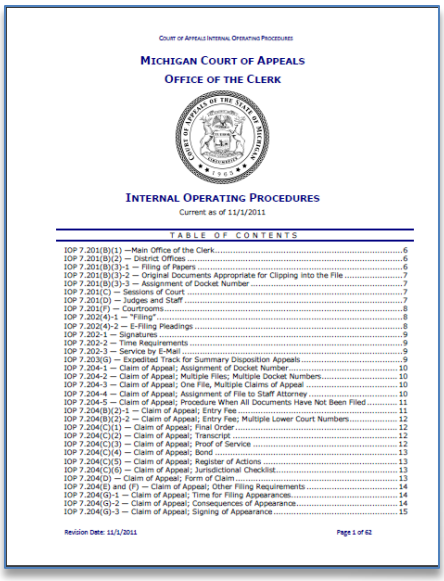
Overview

There are Clerk Offices in Detroit (District I), Troy (District II), Grand Rapids (District III), and Lansing (District IV). The district offices open new case files, docket incoming filings and correspondence, field inquiries by phone or at the public counters, review all filings for jurisdiction and compliance with the court rules, monitor numerous management lists to ensure that cases proceed without undue delay, process motions for submission to the judges, track the return of signed orders, and send the orders to the pertinent attorneys, parties, trial court judges, and staff. The Lansing Clerk's Office also schedules matters onto case call and releases the judges' opinions resolving those appeals. Lastly, the Clerk's Office is the public face of the Court in that it communicates with the general public, counsel of record, the parties, prospective litigants, lower courts or tribunals, and media representatives on case-related matters.

Since 2002, the staff of the Clerk's Office has been reduced by one-third (from 48 to 32 total employees) due to budget cuts. Although new filings have decreased during the same period by about 15%, the Clerk's Office staff has improved its efficiency through technology enhancements, creative processes, hard work, and positive attitudes.

Internal Operating Procedures (IOPs)

The IOPs were initially developed in 1998 by a task force of judges, court personnel, and appellate practitioners. The IOPs track the numbering system of the court rules and reflect the evolving practices and procedures of the Clerk's Office to implement the requirements of the Michigan Court Rules. The IOPs are updated continuously to reflect new practices or procedures that are occasioned by changes to the court rules or Court policy. The IOPs are available to the public on the Court's website.



Court of Appeals Internal Operating Procedures

MICHIGAN COURT OF APPEALS
OFFICE OF THE CLERK

INTERNAL OPERATING PROCEDURES
Current as of 11/1/2011

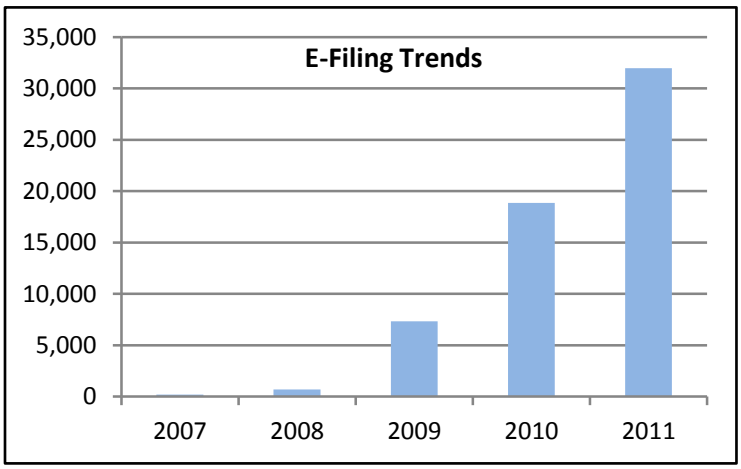
TABLE OF CONTENTS

IOP 7.201(B)(1) —Main Office of the Clerk....6
IOP 7.201(B)(2) — District Offices....6
IOP 7.201(B)(3)-1 — Filing of Papers....6
IOP 7.201(B)(3)-2 — Original Documents Appropriate for Clipping into the File....7
IOP 7.201(B)(3)-3 — Assignment of Docket Number....7
IOP 7.201(C) — Sessions of Court....7
IOP 7.201(D) — Judges and Staff....7
IOP 7.201(F) — Courtrooms....8
IOP 7.202(4)-1 — "Filing"....8
IOP 7.202(4)-2 — E-Filing Pleadings....8
IOP 7.202-1 — Signatures....9
IOP 7.202-2 — Time Requirements....9
IOP 7.202-3 — Service by E-Mail....9
IOP 7.203(G) — Expedited Track for Summary Disposition Appeals....9
IOP 7.204-1 — Claim of Appeal; Assignment of Docket Number....10
IOP 7.204-2 — Claim of Appeal; Multiple Files; Multiple Docket Numbers....10
IOP 7.204-3 — Claim of Appeal; One File, Multiple Claims of Appeal....10
IOP 7.204-4 — Claim of Appeal; Assignment of File to Staff Attorney....10
IOP 7.204-5 — Claim of Appeal; Procedure When All Documents Have Not Been Filed....11
IOP 7.204(B)(2)-1 — Claim of Appeal; Entry Fee....11
IOP 7.204(B)(2)-2 — Claim of Appeal; Entry Fee; Multiple Lower Court Numbers....12
IOP 7.204(C)(1) — Claim of Appeal; Final Order....12
IOP 7.204(C)(2) — Claim of Appeal; Transcript....12
IOP 7.204(C)(3) — Claim of Appeal; Proof of Service....12
IOP 7.204(C)(4) — Claim of Appeal; Bond....13
IOP 7.204(C)(5) — Claim of Appeal; Register of Actions....13
IOP 7.204(C)(6) — Claim of Appeal; Jurisdictional Checklist....13
IOP 7.204(D) — Claim of Appeal; Form of Claim....13
IOP 7.204(E) and (F) — Claim of Appeal; Other Filing Requirements....14
IOP 7.204(G)-1 — Claim of Appeal; Time for Filing Appearances....14
IOP 7.204(G)-2 — Claim of Appeal; Consequences of Appearance....14
IOP 7.204(G)-3 — Claim of Appeal; Signing of Appearance....15

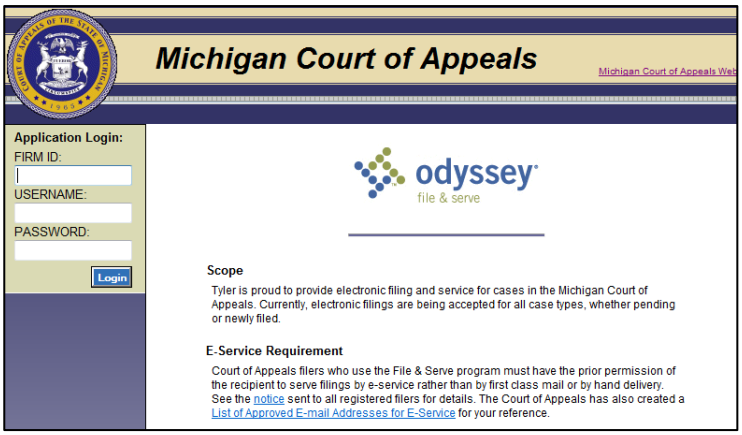
Revision Date: 11/1/2011 Page 1 of 62

E-Filing

In 2006, the Court deployed an electronic filing system through a third-party vendor (Wiznet Inc., now Tyler Technologies, Inc.) that the public can use to initiate an appeal, file all pleadings and forms with an electronic cover sheet (including proof of service) and electronically serve all filings on opposing parties. Fees may also be paid through the e-filing system. E-filing is voluntary for all case types. Mandatory e-filing may be implemented once Tyler completes system updates in 2012. Despite being voluntary, almost half of the active appeals contained one or more e-filed documents at the end of 2011. The graph below shows how e-filings have risen over the last 5 years. From 2009 to 2011, the number of e-filings increased by more than four times.



When electronic documents are received and docketed, a link to the document is created in the Court's case management system from which the judges and staff can immediately access the document from any location connected to the Court's network.



At present, the e-filing system is available for use around the clock (with the exception of periodic maintenance). E-filings received by 11:59 PM on a business day are docketed for that business day. E-filings received between 12:00 AM and 11:59 PM on a Saturday, Sunday, or court holiday are docketed for the following business day. A document that is not successfully e-filed on or before 11:59 PM on its due date is docketed the following business day unless the e-filing system, as acknowledged by Tyler, is inaccessible or incapable of receiving documents on the due date.

Training and best practices documents are available on the Court's website that provide guidance to users in creating the most useful PDF documents for e-filing, ensuring that the e-filings meet the technical requirements of the system, and conforming to the requirements of the Michigan Court Rules.

Retirement of Chief Clerk Sandra Mengel

On January 31, 2011, Chief Clerk Sandra "Sandy" Mengel retired after thirty-two years of distinguished service with the Court. Sandy's career began as a staff attorney with the Prehearing Division in June 1979. One year later, she was selected by the late Judge John H. Gillis to be his law clerk. From February 1981 to July 1992, Sandy supervised the Detroit Prehearing office, overseeing as many as eighteen staff attorneys at one point. Sandy became the Assistant Clerk in charge of the Detroit Clerk's Office in July 1992, was elevated to Deputy Chief Clerk in February 1998, and was unanimously selected by the judges of the Court to be the sixth Chief Clerk of the Court on February 5, 2001. During her many years and various positions with the Court, Sandy touched the lives of countless judges, co-workers, attorneys, and litigants with her warmth, competence, concern, and kindness, and she played an integral role in every aspect of the Court's current identity and operation.

Larry Royster, the Court's Research Director since 2001, was selected to succeed Sandy as Chief Clerk of the Court. He also continues to serve as the Research Director.

Retirement of Lansing District Clerk Hannah Watson

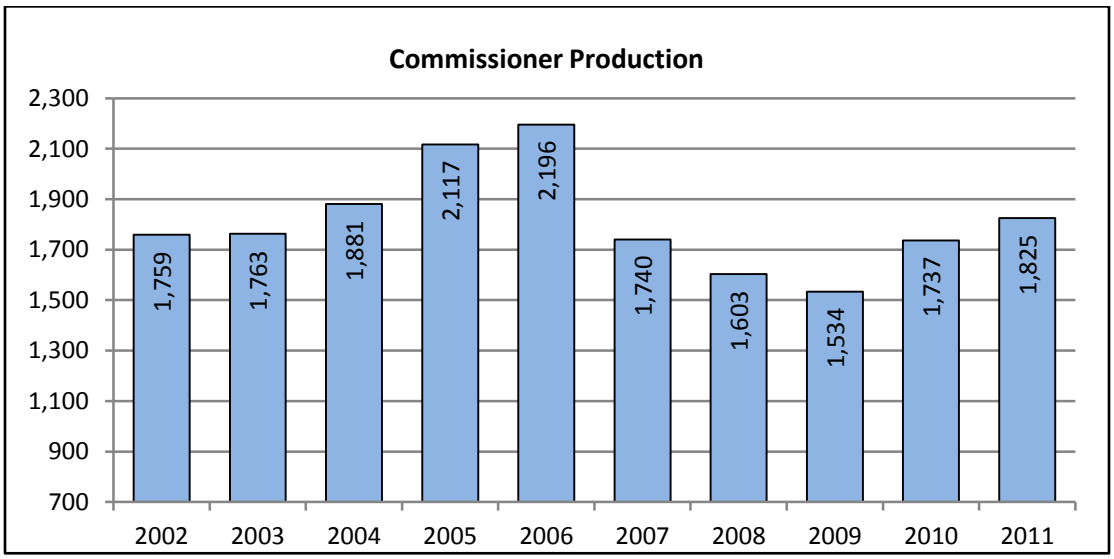
On January 21, 2011, judges and staff gathered to honor Hannah Watson in a special celebration. She retired after 22 years of service to the Court in her roles as a prehearing attorney, special research attorney, case screener, assistant clerk, and Lansing district clerk. Among various speakers at the celebration, Sandy Mengel commended Hannah on carrying out her duties with respect, kindness, diligence, thoroughness, and good humor. Hannah made many significant contributions to the Court that greatly benefited the parties and attorneys who appeared before it, such as the manuals for non-represented litigants and the comprehensive training sessions for practicing attorneys that were held at multiple locations statewide. Hannah also played an integral role in the early testing and development of the Court's e-filing system.

Research Division

Commissioners

The commissioners are experienced central staff attorneys whose primary functions are to prepare written reports in (1) discretionary matters such as applications for leave to appeal, (2) motions to withdraw as counsel or to remand, and (3) complaints for writs of habeas corpus, superintending control, and mandamus. The commissioners also review incoming emergency applications and work closely with the judges to resolve priority matters on an expedited basis. The commissioners are located in each of the four district offices—Detroit, Troy, Lansing and Grand Rapids.

In 2011, the commissioners prepared reports in 1,825 leave applications and miscellaneous matters. The graph below shows the production of commissioner reports for the past ten years.

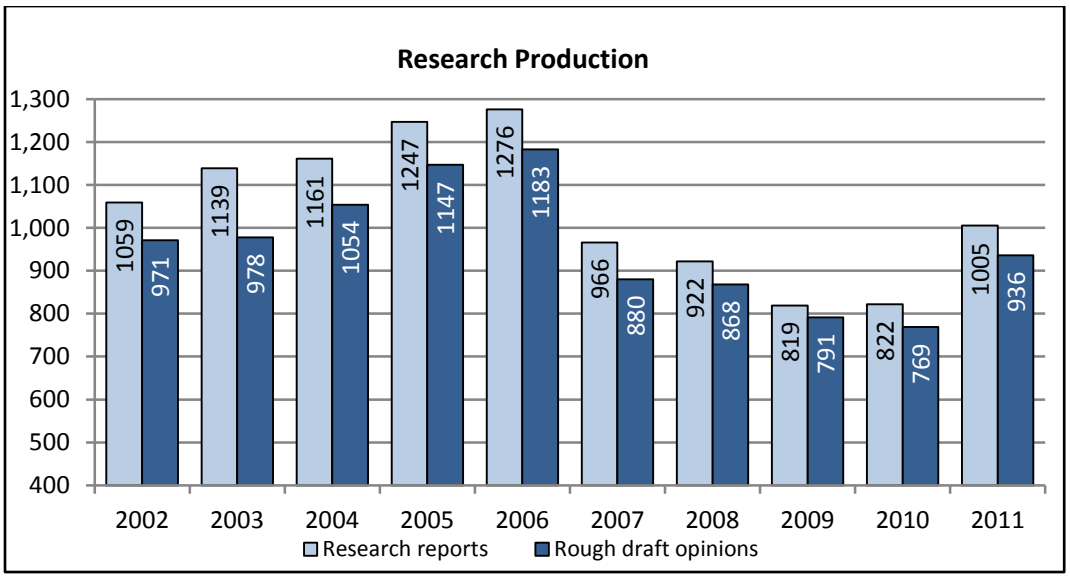


Research, Senior Research and Contract Attorneys

Research attorneys are typically recent law school graduates who are hired for a period of one to three years. Although these graduates are primarily recruited from in-state law schools, the Research Division also made on-campus recruitment visits in 2011 to Howard University Law School in Washington, D.C., and the University of Notre Dame Law School in Indiana. In addition, many students from other out-of-state law schools were interviewed at the Research offices in Detroit, Lansing, and Grand Rapids. In 2011, the research staff represented the law schools of Michigan State University, Thomas M. Cooley, University of Michigan, University of Detroit Mercy, Wayne State University, Boston College, Boston University, Drake University (Des Moines, IA), Chicago-Kent (Chicago, IL), Howard University, Loyola University (Chicago, IL), Northwestern University (Chicago, IL), Notre Dame, University of Illinois, University of Minnesota, University of Toledo, and Suffolk University (Boston, MA). Most research attorneys ranked in the top 5 to 10% of their graduating classes.

The research attorneys prepare research reports in cases that are determined to be easy to moderately difficult.[2] The reports are confidential intra-Court documents that contain a comprehensive and neutral presentation of the material facts, a recitation of the issues raised by the parties, a summary of the parties' arguments, a thorough analysis of the law and facts on each issue, and a recommendation as to the appropriate disposition. In cases involving non-jurisprudentially significant issues, such that a published opinion is not required, the attorneys also prepare rough draft opinions to accompany the reports. The judges and their law clerks are responsible for preparing those opinions where publication is recommended, as well as editing, refining, or rewriting the rough draft opinions provided by the staff attorneys.

In 2011, the research attorneys prepared 1,005 reports and 936 rough draft opinions for case call. The number of reports is higher than recent years despite there being a historically low number of research attorneys in 2011 due to budget constraints (20.08 attorneys instead of the normal 30 attorneys). The reason for this is that the average day evaluation of the cases in 2011 was lower than in prior years. In 2011, the average day evaluation for cases prepared by research attorneys was 3.63 days. Compare that to the average day evaluations of 4.30 days and 4.44 days for 2009 and 2010, respectively. The graph below compares the number of reports prepared by research attorneys for 2002 through 2011.



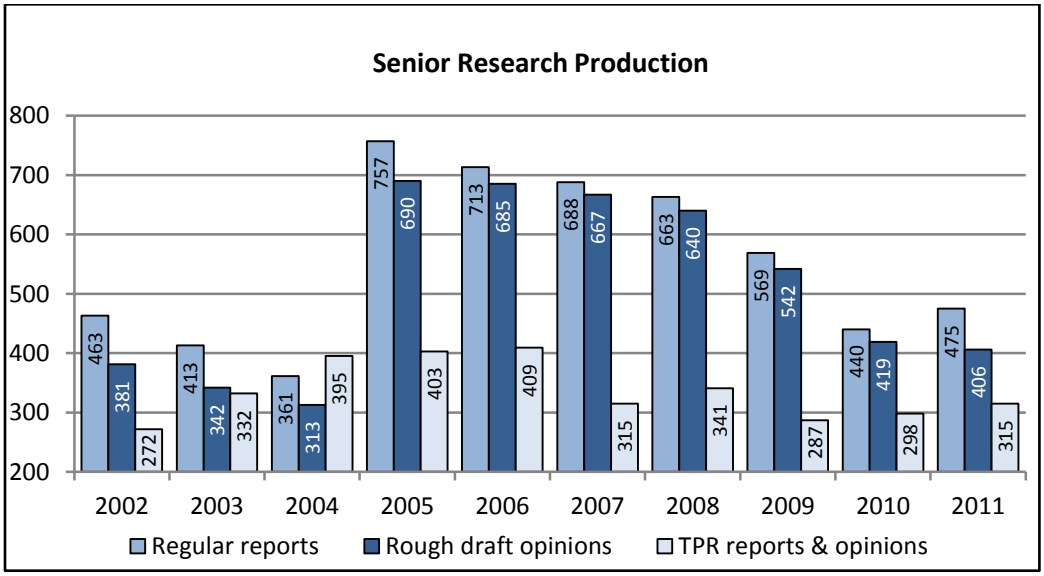
Senior research is comprised of experienced attorneys whose backgrounds typically include research, judicial clerkships and private practice. Unlike with the research attorneys, the

[2] When cases are ready for reports from the Research Division, an experienced staff attorney reviews the lower court records and appellate briefs and, based on established criteria, assigns day evaluations to them. The day evaluations represent how long it should take an average research attorney to complete reports in the cases. They are given in whole numbers only (i.e., no fractions of a day). Research attorneys generally work on cases that are evaluated at six days or lower, and are expected to complete the reports within the day evaluations of the cases, as measured on a monthly basis.

tenure of the senior research attorneys is not for a limited duration. The primary function of senior research attorneys is to prepare research reports in the longer or more complex cases for case call, as well as in termination of parental rights appeals. The content of these research reports is the same as those prepared by the research attorneys, but the cases are typically more difficult in nature.[3] The main office of senior research is located in Detroit, but several attorneys are housed in Lansing and Grand Rapids.

Contract attorneys, as their title indicates, work for the Court on a contractual basis, primarily preparing reports and rough draft opinions in routine termination of parental rights (TPR) appeals. In 2011, the contract attorneys also prepared reports and rough draft opinions in a number of routine criminal and civil appeals. Most of the thirty or so contract attorneys previously worked for the Court in research, senior research, or the commissioner offices. They now work from their homes and are not otherwise engaged in the practice of law. The contract attorneys' production of reports and opinions is included with the production of senior research because their work is largely reviewed and edited by a supervising attorney in that office. The value of the contract attorney program to the Court cannot be overstated. In 2011, 476 TPR appeals were filed. Without the assistance of the contract attorneys in preparing the vast majority of reports and rough draft opinions in the routine TPR appeals, these cases simply could not be processed as quickly and efficiently. Moreover, if staff attorneys were required to process the TPR appeals, there would be significant delay in the dispositions of other case types.

In 2011, the senior research attorneys and contract attorneys prepared 475 research reports and 406 rough draft opinions in regular civil and criminal appeals, and 315 reports and opinions in TPR appeals. The graph below compares the production numbers for the past ten years.



[3] Senior research attorneys generally work on cases that are evaluated at seven days or more (see footnote 2, *supra*). They have higher production requirements than the research attorneys and are expected to complete the reports in about 25% less time than the day evaluations.

The lower production numbers in 2002 through 2004 were primarily due to the senior research attorneys working exclusively on the largest cases. The higher production numbers in 2005 through 2009 reflect that senior research attorneys worked on a larger percentage of shorter, less time-consuming cases. For the past two years, the senior research attorneys have worked on a balanced mix of shorter and longer cases.

Due to budget constraints, the staffs of research and senior research have been lower in the past few years compared to the early- to mid-2000s. The table to the right lists the average number of research and senior research attorneys on staff for 2002 to 2011.

	Number of Research Attorneys	Number of Sr. Research Attorneys
2002	28.5	16.6
2003	32.0	15.3
2004	31.8	13.0
2005	30.3	15.1
2006	28.0	14.8
2007	23.0	14.4
2008	22.4	14.1
2009	23.5	13.3
2010	20.8	11.6
2011	20.1	15.2

Court Highlights

National Center for State Courts Study

At the invitation of the Court of Appeals, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) conducted a study that assessed the Court's operational efficiencies and use of technology. During two visits in late January and early March, a project team from the NCSC conducted interviews with judges and numerous staff members from the Clerk's Office, Research Division, Judicial Chambers, and the Information Systems Department. The project team also observed various functions and user procedures related to the Court's case management system. In July 2011, the NCSC issued a final report that included several recommendations for improving court operations, such as moving more quickly to mandatory e-filing and a paperless environment and providing more judicial feedback to the staff attorneys regarding the quality of their reports. But the report's bottom-line assessment was favorable, as summarized in the following paragraph:

> Our overall observations, based upon the information gathered during the site visits as well as from other sources, are that the Michigan Court of Appeals stands out as a well managed and smoothly functioning appellate court, especially in a period of shrinking budgetary resources. We were genuinely impressed with the dedication and commitment of the individuals with whom we met and their readiness to consider alternative processes and make adjustments to existing procedures. The Court uses technology effectively and has implemented several very good applications. [Doerner, J. & Webster, L., *Michigan Court of Appeals: Assessment of Operations & Technology* (National Center for State Courts, Final Report July 2011).]

Ace Award

The Ace Award is named after Donald L. ("Ace") Byerlein, who served as court administrator from the Court's inception in 1965 until his retirement in 1997. Mr. Byerlein was known for being conscientious, dedicated, loyal, selfless, upbeat, civil, and possessed of a "can-do" attitude. In 1998, the Court created the annual Ace Award in honor of Mr. Byerlein as a way to recognize current Court employees who possess those same qualities. The Ace Award is given to an outstanding employee (or employees) who was nominated by his or her peers and selected by a committee of judges and administrators.

On June 29, 2011, Kathy Donovan, Technology Training Specialist with the Information Systems Department in Lansing, was presented with the Court of Appeals' Ace Award in recognition of her work at the Court. Those who nominated Kathy

described her as being knowledgeable, hard- working, and cheerful in her work with each department across the Court. She is committed to improving the end-user perspective for many of the technology initiatives at the Court. Whether training employees, analyzing business requirements, or troubleshooting our information systems, Kathy is positive and enthusiastic. Pictured with Kathy on the previous page are "Ace" Byerlein (left) and Chief Judge William B. Murphy (right).

Prior Ace Award honorees include:

Year	Ace Award Recipient(s)	Office Location
2010	Matthew Johnson, Docket Clerk	Troy
2009	Anna Campbell, Judicial Assistant	Detroit
2008	Martha Sutton, Judicial Assistant *-and-* Claudette Bexell Frame, Judicial Assistant	Lansing Lansing
2007	Rebekah Neely, Programmer (awarded posthumously)	Lansing
2006	Bob Kwiatkowski, Lead Court Officer	Detroit
2005	Thomas Rasdale, Assistant Clerk	Lansing
2004	Carol Abdo, PC Network Specialist *-and-* Bobbie Dembowski, Commissioner Assistant	Lansing Lansing
2003	Elizabeth Gordon, Research Support	Lansing
2002	Suzanne Gammon, Judicial Assistant	Saginaw
2001	Mark Stoddard, District Commissioner	Grand Rapids
2000	John Pratt, Court Officer	Lansing
1999	Deborah Messer, Judicial Assistant	Petoskey
1998	Mary Lu Hickner, Deputy Clerk	Lansing

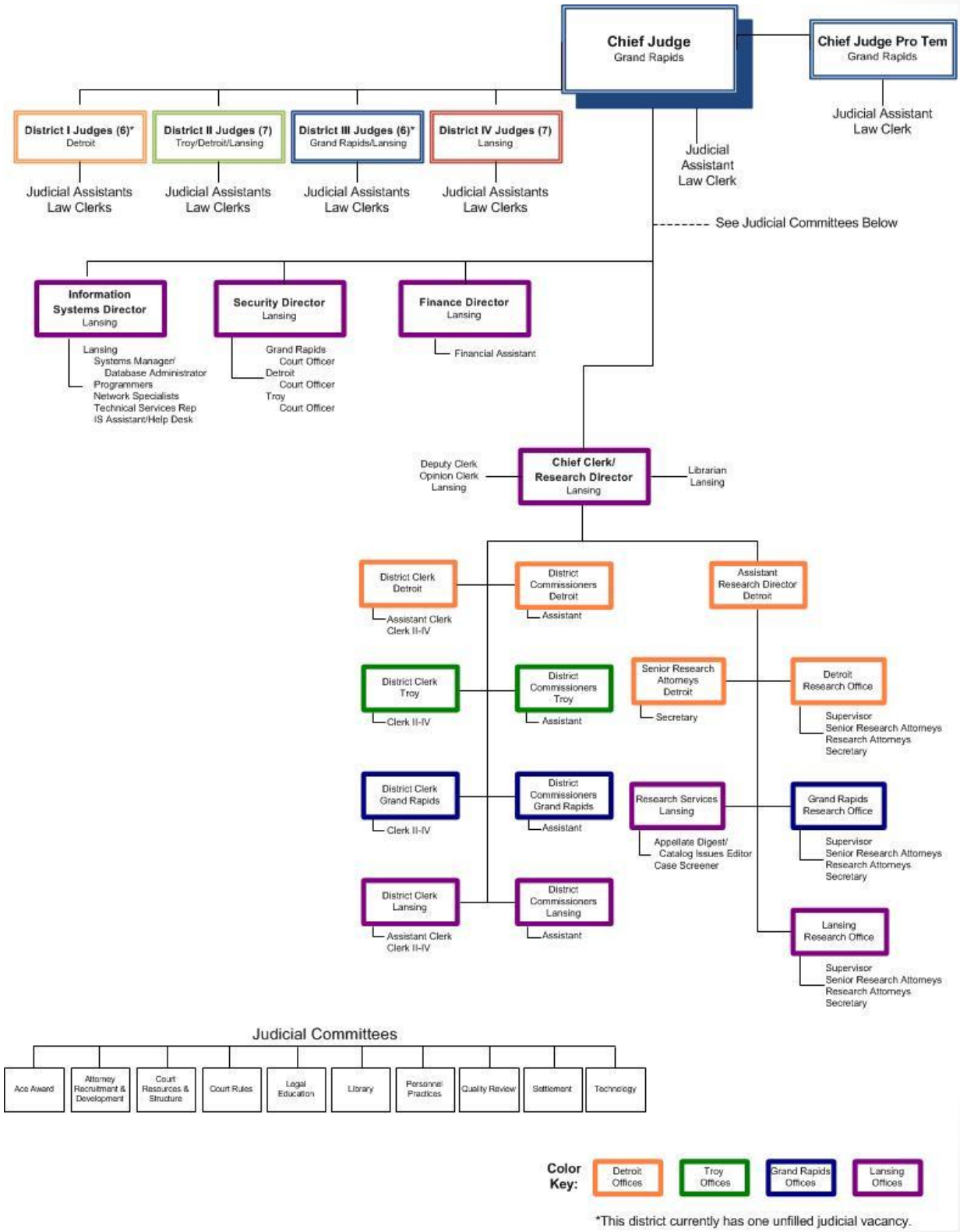
Service Recognition

In June of every year, the Court recognizes current employees who have celebrated a five-year incremental anniversary with the Court during the preceding twelve months. Service recognition ceremonies are held at each of the Court's four locations (Detroit, Troy, Lansing, and Grand Rapids) in which the recognized employees are awarded lapel pins and certificates that indicate the individual's specific years of service. Immediately following the ceremonies, the Court also recognizes the contributions of all employees to the effective operation of the Court with a brief party and social gathering. Pictured below are employees from the four district locations who were recognized for their service to the Court.

Grand Rapids Office Move

In October 2011, Judge Hoekstra, Judge Markey, Judge Beckering and their staffs moved from the Law Building to the 3rd floor of the Grand Rapids State Office Building. The new space enables the judges and their staff to be in the same building as the Clerk's Office and Research staff.

Organizational Chart



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District II – Troy

Angela DiSessa, District Clerk
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District III – Grand Rapids

Lori Zarzecki, District Clerk
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District IV – Lansing

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