

# Full Court Press

Newsletter of the District of Columbia Courts

April 2012

*Open To All, Trusted By All, Justice For All*

## DC STUDENTS VISIT HISTORIC COURTHOUSE FOR CIVICS DAY

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office

Students from the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington made a special visit to the Historic Courthouse. The students were treated to a field trip focused on civics education, and they quickly learned that the day's lesson wasn't being taught from an old, heavy American History textbook.

Spearheaded by Court of Appeals Chief Judge Eric T. Washington, the DC Courts has partnered with two civics education organizations, iCivics and the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). Both share the same goal: provide our nation's students with a revamped, high-quality curriculum that teaches the importance of civics in a student-friendly way.

The NCSC curriculum, "Justice Case Files," is a series of graphic novels designed to help educate students about how courts work and to remind them of the critical role courts play in our democratic society.

The second curriculum, iCivics, is a web-based education project that features game-based learning of important civics topics. The program is the vision of former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who has expressed concern that students are not getting the information and tools they need to understand how our government institutions work together to preserve our freedom and de-



Stacey Sublett (Court of Appeals) assists a student acting as a judge in a mock trial.

Photo by Katherine Dabney

mocracy, and that civics teachers need better materials and support. The curriculum for both the Justice Case Files and the iCivics programs meet most state education requirements.

Andre Mura, litigation counsel at the Center for Constitutional Litigation, kicked off the day by reading the "Justice Case Files" novel, "The Case of Stolen Identity," with the students. Students took turns reading aloud and reviewing what happened on each page. The students were also given a coloring workbook that complemented the Justice Case File they had read.

Chief Judge Washington spoke to students, thanking them for coming to the Historic Courthouse and for being so active in the first exercise. He introduced Daniel Guzmán, a Court of Appeals law clerk. Daniel guided the students through the iCivics game, "Supreme Decision." In the game, the students were tasked with helping the fictional Supreme Court justices make up their minds and influence the outcome of a case. At stake in the hypothetical case was the suspension of a student who violated school dress policy by wearing his favorite band's t-shirt. The students weighed each point in the argument, and decided that that the schools' suspension of the student was an unconstitutional violation of his right to freedom of speech.

After lunch, the students filled a courtroom and studied a hypothetical case. Students broke off into groups of attorneys, judges, clerks, and jurors and participated in a mock trial with the help of Court of Appeals' law clerks Dania Ayoubi and Stacey Sublett. After much deliberation, the jury found the defendant guilty in the case of a stolen iPod, concluding the day's activities.

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# TWO NEW ADDITIONS TO THE DC COURT OF APPEALS BENCH

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office

On consecutive Fridays in February, Judge Corrine Beckwith and Judge Catharine Easterly became members of the District of Columbia's highest court. At both ceremonies, Judge Beckwith and Easterly were celebrated by colleagues new and old, who spoke highly of each judge's integrity and humility.

**Judge Beckwith's** ceremony was held on February 3rd in the Historic Courthouse's ceremonial courtroom. Her former colleagues at the DC Public Defender Service (PDS), Andrea Roth and James Klein, took turns sharing stories that exemplified the qualities that make Judge Beckwith a perfect fit for the bench. Following their remarks, Judge Beckwith was sworn in by Superior Court Judge Maribeth Raffinan, another former PDS colleague. Judge Beckwith was robed by her mother and father.

Judge Beckwith was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She received her bachelor's degree from Kalamazoo College, where she served as editor of the college newspaper and graduated with honors in English in 1985. After receiving her master's degree in journalism from the University of Illinois in 1987, Ms. Beckwith worked as a newspaper reporter at the Midland Daily News in Midland, Michigan. Judge Beckwith changed course in 1989 and enrolled in the University of Michigan Law School. After receiving her law degree in 1992, she served as a law clerk to Judge Richard D. Cudahy on the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in Chicago and then for Justice John Paul Stevens on the Supreme Court of the United States.

Prior to her appointment to the Court of Appeals, Judge Beckwith spent her legal career as a public defender. She first worked as an appellate attorney at Michigan's State Appellate Defender Office in Detroit. She also taught a criminal appellate practice course at Wayne State University Law School and volunteered as an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union.

Judge Beckwith returned to Washington in 1999, and until December 2011 worked as a staff attorney and then a supervising attorney in the Appellate Division at PDS.



*Judge Easterly receives some help with her new robe from her daughter.*

Photo by Tom Feeney Jr.

**Judge Easterly's** ceremony was held in the ceremonial courtroom on February 10. Timothy O'Toole, a former PDS colleague of Judge Easterly, spoke highly of her ability to take on not only the task in front of her, but the systemic issues of justice as well. Gabrielle Tenzer, an attorney in New York City and a good friend of Judge Easterly, spoke of her steadfast approach to law, and predicted that Judge Easterly would be the ideal judge to fill out the Appeals bench. She was sworn in by DC Court of Appeals Chief Judge Eric T. Washington, and was robed by her husband and daughter. Judge Easterly was born in Boston, Massachusetts, but spent most of her childhood in Richmond, Virginia. She received her B.A., *cum laude* and with distinction in History, from Yale College in 1992, and her J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1996.

After graduating from law school, Judge Easterly worked as an appellate public defender, first at the Legal Aid Society of Nassau County, New York, and then at the Office of the Appellate Defender in New York City. She then joined the New York firm Stillman and Friedman, P.C. as an associate. In 2003 Judge Easterly joined the Special Litigation Division of the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia, where she worked until her appointment to the Court of Appeals.



*Judge Beckwith's proud parents prepare their daughter's new judicial robe.*

Photo by Tom Feeney Jr.

# JUDGE MCCABE'S INVESTITURE CEREMONY

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office

On February 24th former Magistrate Judge John McCabe became the newest Associate Judge on the Superior Court bench. Judge Milton Lee gave the oath of office, and Judge McCabe was robed by his mother.

Judge McCabe was nominated by President Barack Obama in July 2011 and confirmed by the Senate on November 18, 2011. But Judge McCabe's career as a judge began back in October 2002, when then Chief Judge Rufus King appointed him a Magistrate Judge. Until December 2010, he worked in the Family Court on cases involving children in the foster care system. He also served as Co-Chair of the Family Court Training Committee. Last year he began working in the Criminal Division handling misdemeanor trials, arraignments, and preliminary hearings. He also served as the Deputy Presiding Magistrate Judge and the Alternate Chairperson of the District of Columbia Commission on Mental Health.

Judge McCabe was born in New York City and was raised in New Jersey. He graduated from Duke University in 1980, with a B.A. in economics. In 1986, he graduated from Tulane University Law School.

Judge McCabe was an associate at a law firm in Atlanta, Georgia from 1986 to 1989. He moved to DC in 1989, and was an attorney for the Legal Aid Society until 1990. From 1990 to 1998, Judge McCabe was an Assistant Corporation Counsel with the Office of the Corporation Counsel (now the Office of the Attorney General) in DC. He was the first Chief of the Domestic Violence Section of the Office, defended the District of Columbia in civil matters, and handled child abuse and neglect matters.

From 1998 to 2002, Judge McCabe was an Assistant United States Attorney in the District of Columbia, where he served in the misdemeanor, felony, appellate, grand jury, and homicide sections.



*Judge McCabe is robed by his mother.*

Photo by Leah Gurowitz

Judge McCabe is also a volunteer tutor and mentor with the Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter School, the Abramson Scholarship Foundation, and Community Club at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. He is an active participant with the D.C. Road Runners Club and D.C. Triathlon Club, and is a member of the rock and roll rhythm and blues band "Deaf Dog and The Indictments," with other Superior Court judges. He contributes guitar, vocals, and is most famous for his onstage cartwheels. His band nickname, affectionately, is "Cartwheel McCabe."

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Civics Day is part of a larger effort by the DC Courts to promote civics education and understanding of the court system in DC. The students from the Boys and Girls Club learned the importance of civics and left the courthouse inspired to become active participants in our democracy. The goal is to use the two civics curricula and inspire students to learn through a combination of critical thinking, technology and most importantly, fun.

"During my time as Chief Judge, I have spoken with many of our young people about the role ordinary citizens can play in furthering the best interests of our communities and in preserving the democratic institutions that ensure our freedom," said Chief Judge Washington. "Those conversations have led me to conclude that Justice O'Connor's concerns about the lack of civics education resources are real, even here in the Nation's Capital, and that we need these innovative approaches to teaching civics education."



*A student from the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington reads a Justice Case File.*

Photo by Katherine Dabney

## YOUTH LAW FAIR 2012

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office

**“Privacy Awareness: Managing Social Media Networks,”** was the topic at the 13th annual Youth Law Fair, as hundreds of students filled the third floor atrium of the Moultrie Courthouse on March 24, 2012. Students came to the 2012 Youth Law Fair to discuss their behavior in the cyber world, as well as to participate in mock trials.

The Youth Law Fair is sponsored by the Superior Court and the DC Bar Association. The event aims to provide area youth with a positive experience with various aspects of law, resulting in a better appreciation for the judicial system, the law, and how both impact their communities. It is a free, full-day educational event at the Superior Court that brings students, lawyers, judges, and educators together to explore current issues facing teens.

Judge Melvin Wright, now in his 13th year coordinating the event, opened by thanking the students who came to participate, as well as the parents and volunteers. Superior Court Chief Judge Lee Satterfield then spoke to the audience about the pros and cons of modern technology, and implored the young men and women to be cognizant that what they publish online has the same, if not heavier, consequences as what say or do in person.

After the remarks, Curtis Etherly, Vice President for Public Affairs and Communications with Coca-Cola Mid-Atlantic, kicked off a “youth speak out” session. Etherly walked between rows of participants with a microphone, sparking conversation and engaging the youth by asking questions that addressed many of the systemic issues that come with posting videos, pictures, and words on platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. The students were candid in response, and a flowing dialogue provided a wealth of information to all in attendance.

Mock trials on internet privacy followed the speak-out session, with participating students filing into third floor courtrooms. Students took on the roles of the various actors in a typical court case. Volunteer attorneys prepped the students, allowing them to play the parts of prosecutor, defense attorneys, judges, and witnesses. Superior Court judges sat next to the student judges and guided them as they conducted the courtroom proceedings, ruling on motions and objections. After both sides wrapped up their arguments, a jury of students deliberated on the cases, and returned with their verdicts.

The students returned from the courtrooms and were provided lunch, then settled in for a final speak out session with Curtis Etherly. The students reflected on the lessons learned in the courtroom, and a lucky few walked away with prizes. Students who attended the 2012 Youth Law Fair gained invaluable experience and a greater understanding of how our judicial system works, making this year’s event another success.



*In both pictures above and below, Curtis Etherly, Vice President for Public Affairs and Communications at Coca-Cola Mid-Atlantic, engages students in a question and answer session regarding how they behave and what they post on the internet.*

Photos by Tom Feeney Jr.



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# A PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THE LESSONS OF THE HOLOCAUST

By Anne Merrill, Editorial Director, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



*Left to right: Alfred Traum, a Holocaust survivor; Josie Traum, Holocaust Museum Tour Guide; Judge Breslow's mother Karen; Josie Traum's mother, Fanny Aizenberg, a Holocaust survivor; and Magistrate Judge Julie Breslow*

When Magistrate Judge Julie Breslow attended a court training session at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum with a group of her Superior Court colleagues, she expected to learn about Holocaust history and the role of the judiciary in Nazi Germany. She did not expect to learn about her own family's connection to this history. But that's precisely what happened after a Museum tour last year, organized as part of the 2011 Judges and Senior Managers Spring Conference.

Breslow's tour guide was a Holocaust survivor named Josiane Traum, who as a young Jewish girl in Belgium during World War II was hidden at a convent in the town of Bruges. She later stayed with a Christian family in Brussels. As the Museum tour progressed, Traum explained how she was reunited with her parents after the war. Her father had gone to London in 1940 to volunteer in the British Army. Because he was a tailor, they placed him in a factory making British uniforms. Her mother survived nearly three years at Auschwitz. In 1949, when Traum was ten years old, the family moved to New Jersey where her mother's aunt was living.

Breslow found Traum's personal story so compelling that she shared it with her mother, Karen, that evening on the phone. "My mom said, 'I know that story!'" Breslow recalls. "My mom grew up in Paterson, New Jersey, and remembers meeting a girl from Belgium who had been hidden by some nuns. Her name was Josie Ann."

In fact, all those years ago, Breslow's grandmother hosted a birthday party for Traum, who had recently moved to the neighborhood and was about the same age as her daughter Karen. She gathered as many children as she could for the party, including

Karen and her brother. The two families left Paterson shortly thereafter and lost touch.

Upon learning of this shared history from her mother, Judge Breslow contacted Traum through the Museum and organized a luncheon reunion for the two families. In attendance were Breslow and her mother as well as Traum and her husband and mother. They shared stories

and swapped photos from their time in Paterson.

For Traum, as a Holocaust survivor, this connection was particularly meaningful. "When I first came to this country with my parents after the war, we had no connections. I don't have many memories from that time," she says. Reuniting with Karen and her family reconnected her with a part of her history.

For Breslow, this personal connection underscored the relevance of the lessons of the Holocaust to her own life. "It was a thought-provoking, amazing day," she says of her time at the Museum. "I was really struck by the fact that German judges in the 1930s were asked to swear an oath to the Nazi Party. And that they all did, with the exception of one.

"We'd all like to think that something like that would never happen here, but in fact judges played a role in our treatment of Japanese Americans during World War II and of African Americans during the civil rights era," she continued.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's programs for judges are designed to prompt reflection like Breslow's on individuals' professional responsibility in safeguarding democratic values. By studying the influences and decision-making of their historical counterparts in Nazi Germany, participants gain fresh insight into the choices they make and the ethical challenges they may encounter at work. Nearly 3,000 judges participate in the program each year. The Museum also offers similar programs for civil servants, lawyers, doctors, police, and the military. For more information, visit [www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org).

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2012

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office



Judge Laura Blackburne of New York (middle) is joined by her son-in-law, DC Superior Court Judge Robert Rigsby (left), and daughter DC Court of Appeals Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby (right).



Brenda Clarke, Identity Consolidation Clerk, performs a saxophone instrumental at the Courts' 2012 Black History Month Variety Show.

Photos by Tom Feeney Jr.

“Black Women Paving The Way To Greatness,” was the theme for this year’s DC Courts’ Black History Month. Through performance and literature, court employees and officials honored the most influential African American women in our nation’s history.

The DC Courts kicked off Black History Month with a step show on January 27. “Stepping Into Black History Month with the Divine Nine,” featured members of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity from Morgan State University. On the first Friday of February, the DC Courts hosted the students of Thurgood Marshall Academy who performed a spirited show of spoken word, dance, and freestyle rapping.

The next event was a true family affair that featured the first African American “mother-daughter” judicial pair in the United States. Judge Laura Blackburne, mother of DC Court of Appeals Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby, spoke of the black women in history, and drew parallels to her own life.

The Black History Month finale featured court employees on stage performing at the 2012 Variety Show. Single acts, duets, and groups spanned various genres and artists from different eras, and as DC Courts tradition, put on a resounding show.

## ***A TRUE SUPERIORITY COMPLEX ON THE COURT..***

DC Superior Court law clerks participated in the APABA-Educational Fund Basketball Tournament this winter. Their team name was “The Superiority Complex,” and they won the tournament, which raised almost \$4,000 in scholarships and grants for the Asian Pacific American Bar Association Educational Fund!

There were twelve teams that participated in the tournament, including teams from law firms, government agencies, public interest organizations and law schools.

Congratulations to the law clerks who played in the tournament: Andrew Tyler, Ali Kargbo, Alexander Berg, Emile Thompson, Randal Seriguchi, Jr., Michael Huang, Jackson Nichols, and Lloyd Liu.



# WORK LIFE BALANCE: NEED HELP GETTING THROUGH THE DAY?

By Jeannie M. Adams, Director, Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division

You've got a lot going on, but fortunately you have access to resources to help you get through the day! The Court's Work Life Balance Committee has a web page on the intranet (under announcements) with the resources to help you. The web page provides links to a range of personal services from catering and party planning, to airport transportation, gifts, floral arrangements, pet sitting, errands and much more.

On our web page you will find information about the Work Life for You (WL4Y) Program, a court-sponsored benefit designed to help you and your family better manage work and life responsibilities. As a court employee you have discounts to over 4 million brand name products and services through WL4Y, including electronics, travel, fitness, entertainment and more. Help with financial and legal planning, taxes, pet care and home improvements are just a few of the many services offered. Need help researching colleges? Specialists are available to guide you through the process and help you find the college that best fits your family's needs. By the way, did you know the deadline for federal financial aid is fast approaching? To check the deadlines in your state go to <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>.

The WL4Y Program can also help you find quality affordable care for your family and the best solution for an aging love one. WL4Y includes emergency back-up care for your dependents when your primary care provider is not available. Court employ-

ees are eligible for emergency back-up care five times annually per dependent. For more information, you can easily access the WL4Y Program by going to the WLB web page on the intranet or directly to [www.worklife4you.com](http://www.worklife4you.com).

To register, please use "dccourts" for both the screen name and password. You can change both once you are registered.

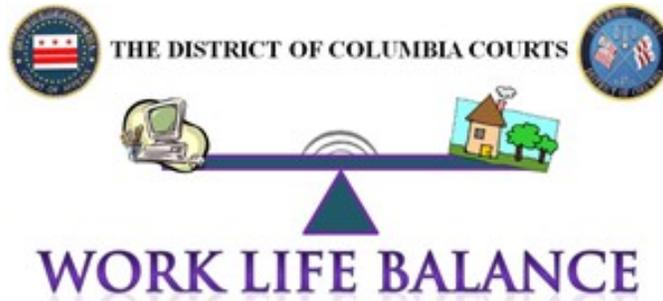
In addition to the many discounts offered through the WL4Y program, ATT, Verizon Wireless and T-Mobile offer discounts to court employees on cell phone plans and accessories. Phone plan discounts can be as much as 15% and up to 25% off accessories. More information about each company's discounts is available on our web page or by going directly to the company's

web site.

Need some fun during the day? You can also break up the work day and learn something new and fun by signing up for a one hour hand dancing class on Wednesdays at noon and Monday evenings at 5:30pm.

Interested in carpooling? Now you can sign up for carpooling on the WLB web page and make your daily commute a little less stressful and save money at the same time! Some postings are already listed, so check it out today!

Stay tuned to the intranet Courtwide News page for new resources and information.



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## DC COURTS LAUNCH NEW WEBSITE

By Tom Feeney Jr., Communications Assistant, Executive Office

The District of Columbia Courts are proud to announce the launch of the newly redesigned [www.dccourts.gov](http://www.dccourts.gov), which went "live" on Monday, March 26 2012. The new website promises to be more user-friendly and interactive, with a greater focus on improving the availability of important court-related information to the public and to legal professionals.

The redesigned website features a modern and colorful design, with organized drop-down menus running horizontally across the top of the page, as well as a scrolling gallery of images that link to timely court news. An improved feature of the new website includes the [Criminal Division Calendars Online page](#), where visitors to the page can see the cases that judges are presiding over on a daily basis. This feature will be expanded to include other court divisions throughout the year.

Being accessible to all persons and ensuring public trust and confidence are chief priorities for the DC Courts. With the launch of our new website, the Courts' are improving our communication with the public, and ensuring that we continue to move towards our Vision: 'Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All,' said Anne Wicks, DC Courts' Executive Officer.

Other features include [Court Cases Online](#), which allows users to search for case docket entries in civil, criminal, tax, probate (large estates and small estates), domestic violence, wills and foreign estate proceedings. Users can also search for [D.C. Court of Appeals opinions](#) and [stream appeals oral arguments](#) in real-time. The [media homepage](#) has also been redesigned to better feature recent media coverage, press releases and advisories, court-wide events, social media links, and contact information.

## **Congratulations to Dr. Michael Barnes, Chief Psychologist, Family Court Social Services Division**

Dr. Michael Barnes has been selected to receive the 2012 American Psychologist Association's Distinguished Contributions to the Field of Psychology. This highly coveted award is bestowed upon individuals whose hard work, dedication and contributions advance the field of human behavior and behavioral health. Dr. Barnes will be honored by his psychology colleagues from around the world at the 2012 APA Convention in Orlando, Florida this summer.

Dr. Barnes' accomplishments in the field of psychology are far reaching as are his contributions to the Superior Court, Family Court, the Court Social Services Division and the District of Columbia. Some of these contributions and accomplishments include, but are not limited to:

- Revolutionizing the Child Guidance Clinic;
- Launching the Division's juvenile sex offender program, a community-based model;
- Overseeing the process of securing national accreditation for CSSD's Doctoral Internship program;
- Collaborating with Howard University and other local universities to expand the breadth of internships for graduate and doctoral level students;
- Co-leading the Division's efforts in launching the first-ever Behavioral Health Court for juveniles in DC.

## **East of the River Community Court Honored**

The New York based Center for Court Innovation sponsored the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of Community Courts in Washington DC this winter. A reception at the Court of Appeals titled "Community Court Excellence 2012" honored DC's East of the River Community Court (ERCC) and the four judges who have presided in that court, as well as representatives from all the criminal justice partners who made the ERCC such a success. It was a wonderful event and congratulations to all.



*(Left to Right) Court of Appeals Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby, New York Judge Alex Calabrese, Julius Lang from the Center for Court Innovation, Superior Court Community Court Judges Robert Rigsby, Craig Iscoe, Ann Keary, Noel Kramer, and Russell Canan.*

## **April is Court Security and Emergency Preparedness Awareness Month at the DC Courts**

The 2011 Court Security and Emergency Preparedness Awareness Month features a series of presentations, workshops, and training sessions that are aimed at heightening employee awareness of the importance of security. The goal of the month is to impress upon court employees that everyone has a part to play in maintaining security. The Court Security Committee is committed to getting this message of personal responsibility across, collaborating with both public and private entities to make this year's programs relevant, interesting, and informative.

**Matthew G. Olsen, Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, was the keynote speaker for Court Security Month.** He spoke in the Board of Judges Conference Room on April 12 to an audience of court employees.

Please check below to see a schedule of remaining security awareness events:

- **Information Technology: Make Sure You Are Protected!**  
April 26, 12:30, 1:30 p.m., Room 3300
- **Information Fair**  
April 18, 11:00am Moultrie Courthouse - Third Floor Atrium
- **Enhance your SmartPay Purchase Card Account with Added Security**  
April 20, 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM and 2:30PM - 4:00PM Gallery Place– RM 621