



# Full Court Press



Newsletter of the District of Columbia Courts

June 2017

## 2017 Judicial and Bar Conference

Friday, April 7th marked the 2017 Judicial and Bar Conference at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center where hundreds of DC judges, Bar leadership and active members of the legal community gathered to discuss topics pertaining to this year's theme, "Justice for All?: Bias and Discrimination in the 21st Century."



Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby (left) and Chief Judge Morin (right).

Chief Judge Robert Morin. DC Bar President Annamaria Steward then followed with remarks on the state of the DC Bar. Chief Judge Morin noted what a pleasure it has been to partner with Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby after knowing her for 20 years and his commitment to continue to work together for the continued advancement of the DC Courts.

The call to order and State of the Courts reports were given by DC Court of Appeals Chief Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby and DC Superior Court

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## Superior Court Judges Participate in Perspectives on Poverty Law Panel

On Friday, June 9th, Superior Court Associate Judges Julie Becker, Danya Dayson and Maribeth Raffinan joined the Washington Council of Lawyers to discuss 'Perspectives on Poverty Law from the Bench.' Topics in the conversation included how poverty impacts the justice system, and the role of pro bono and public-interest attorneys in expanding access to justice. Panel moderator, Chinh Le, Legal Director at The Legal Aid Society of DC prompted the judges to talk about their backgrounds, challenges and mistakes that



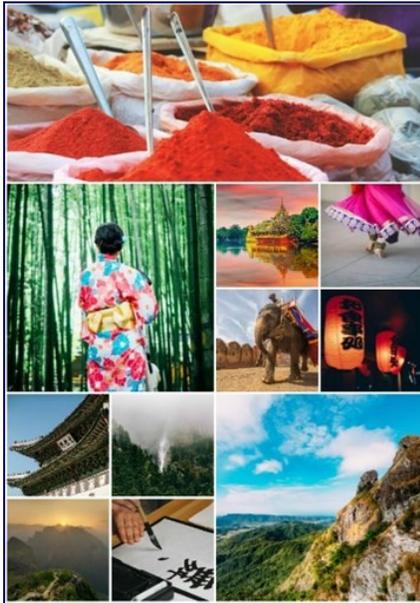
From left to right: Judges Danya Dayson, Maribeth Raffinan, and Julie Becker.

brought them to where they are today. The judges also highlighted the complexities of transitioning from advocate to judge and the learning curve that accompanied that. Judge Dayson was vocal about the improvements that the judges on the bench at Superior Court are committed to, mentioning the great deal of coaching, training and transitional support that is provided within the walls of the Courthouse.

*Open To All Trusted By All Justice For All*

# DC Courts Celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

May is chosen to celebrate the rich heritage and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) living in the United States. The heritage of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders encompasses a broad area, including the continent of Asia and the Pacific Islands of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. These regions cover over 50 countries and territories and hundreds of languages and ethnicities.



**ASIAN AMERICAN  
PACIFIC ISLANDER  
HERITAGE MONTH**

FRIDAY, MAY 12  
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM  
JURORS' LOUNGE

MARTIAL ARTS  
FINE ARTS  
NATIONAL ORIGIN ATTIRE  
LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

workforce and the appreciation for an inclusive work environment.

DC Courts employees gathered Friday, May 12th to celebrate, for the first time in Court History, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. The AAPI committee put together a dynamic

event, complete with a diverse spread of food and cultural artifacts from various Asian countries as well as a martial arts presentation.

Two US historical events, coinciding in May, inspired the first congressional resolution in 1978 for a week-long observance. In May of 1843, the United States saw the arrival of Japanese immigrants. Chinese workers heavily contributed to the completion of the transcontinental railroad, which was completed in May 1869. In 1992, Congress extended the observance for the remainder of the month.

Artifacts that were on display varied by country. Attendees were able to view items such as Japanese Geisha dolls and objects from India's Diwali Festival of Lights. Employees joined in on the martial arts demonstration and learned a series of self-defense techniques which they safely executed in pairs. With the juror's lounge filled to capacity, with standing room only, the event was obviously a hit.



As a court system that strives to be *Open to All*, the DC Courts' special emphasis programs and observances advance the cultural education of a diverse

If you didn't make it this year, make sure you mark your calendar for next year's event!

## Historic Collection of DC Marriage Licenses

The DC Superior Court's Marriage Bureau has a display of seven historic marriage licenses, including President Grover Cleveland, two presidents' daughters, two former mayors of DC, and Richard and Mildred Loving.

No. **420276** Application for License

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, ss:  
I, **Richard Perry Loving**  
applicant for the issuance of a Marriage License to the persons named herein, do solemnly swear (affirm) that the answers to the following interrogatories are true, to the best of my knowledge and belief: So HELP ME GOD.

	MALE	FEMALE
Name	<b>Richard Perry Loving</b>	<b>Mildred Delores Jeter</b>
Age	<b>24</b> years	<b>18 July 22, 1957</b> years
Color	<b>White</b>	<b>Indian</b>
Relationship	<b>None</b>	
Former marriages	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>
Residence	<b>Passing, Va.</b>	<b>Passing, Va.</b>

WITNESSES:  
Subscribed and sworn to before me this **24th** day of **May**, 19**60**

Officiating Clergyman: **HARRY M. HULL, Clerk**  
By **Harold R. Rymer** Deputy Clerk

**420276**

resented them as they appealed the case through the court system.

The Lovings did not attend the arguments at the Supreme Court. Their attorney, however, conveyed

June 12 marked the anniversary of the Loving case. Fifty years ago, June 12, 1967, the US Supreme Court issued its decision in Loving v. Virginia. This decision held that states could not ban interracial marriage; the Court said that such laws violated the Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses of the 14th Amendment.

In June 1958, Mildred and Richard Loving married in DC because the Commonwealth of Virginia would not issue them a marriage license. They returned home to Virginia and a month later the police raided their home and arrested them, saying their DC marriage certificate was invalid. They were sentenced to prison, but given the option of having their sentence suspended if they left Virginia for 25 years. They moved to DC and ultimately Mrs. Loving wrote Attorney General Robert Kennedy for help; he referred them to the ACLU, which rep-

Mr. Loving's message: "Tell the Court that I love my wife, and it is just unfair that I cannot live with her in Virginia." The Supreme Court agreed with him in its June 12, 1967 ruling: "Marriage is one of the 'basic civil rights of man,' fundamental to our very existence and survival. ... To deny this fundamental freedom on so unsupportable a basis as the racial classifications embodied in these statutes, classifications so directly subversive of the principle of equality at the heart of the Fourteenth Amendment, is surely to deprive all the State's citizens of liberty without due process of law."

For more information about the Loving case, [click here](#); to read the Supreme Court's opinion in the case, [click here](#). To see the collection of historic marriage licenses, visit the Marriage Bureau in room JM-690 of the Moultrie Courthouse.

### DC Court of Appeals Chief Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby Meets with Judges from Argentina



The Academia De Intercambio Y Estudios Judiciales, with coordination by the Federal Judicial Center in Washington, DC met with Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby (center) in the Court of Appeals to learn about the Court, its jurisdiction, and the Historic Courthouse. The Chief Judge and the Argentinian leaders also discussed the Court's new appellate mediation program.

# Values Spotlight: Multi-Door Dispute Resolution

## Exploring Transparency and Respect



### Two waves of Values Change Teams creating positive change in the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division.

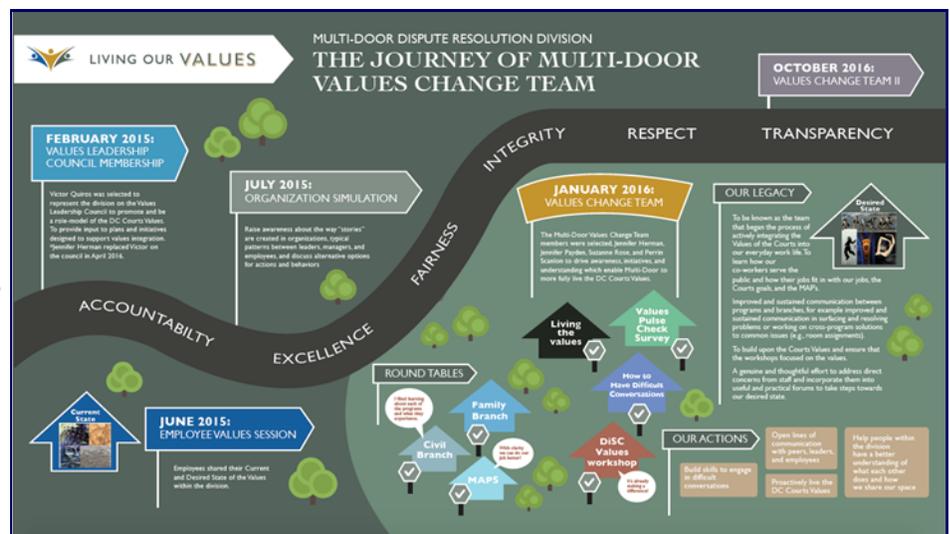
#### Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division Values Team 1.0

February 2016 marked the kick-off meeting of Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division's Values Change Team (VCT). This group of four employees (Jennifer Herman, Jennifer Payden, Suzanne Rose, and Perrin Scanlon) was brought together with a very clear mandate of tailoring the court-wide values initiative to the unique needs and nuances of Multi-Door as well as exploring how to bring the values to the day-to-day activities within the division over the course of 2016.

The group concluded that focusing on increasing transparency and connection within and between Multi-Door branches would support the division to more fully live the values. As a result, the group organized and launched a series of "roundtable" discussions, hosted and facilitated by members of this VCT. All Multi-Door employees were invited to attend though attendance was not mandatory.

These roundtable discussions were geared toward sharing the focus areas and priorities of each of the branches with the intention of increasing transparency across the division. After the last in the series of the program-focused roundtables, one attendee commented, "I liked learning about each of the programs and what they (the program employees) experience." Based on feedback from pulse survey data, the VCT also knew that Multi-Door employees had questions about how they "connected" to Management Action Plans (MAPs). Consequently, they designed a roundtable session on the topic of MAPs in order to heighten awareness about how employees connect with and contribute towards Multi-Door's MAPs. Positive feedback was also heard from this session with one employee saying that the MAPs roundtable provided clarity so that "we can do our job better."

In Q4 2016, the Multi-Door's Values Change Team 1.0 formally concluded their year-long assignment by presenting their "journey" and a summary of their work and key outcomes to the entire division, shown in the visual below.



# Probate Resolution Division Values Team

## Respect within the Multi-Door Division

### Values Change Team Team 2.0

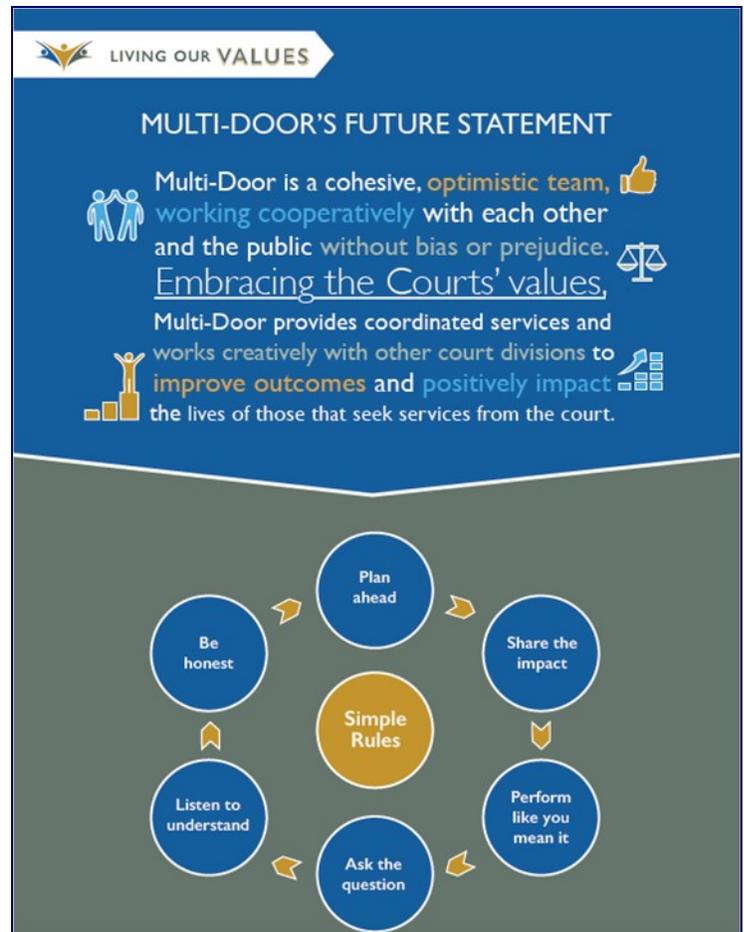
Joan Burrell, Edouard Haba, Dan Nau, and Andre Randall were selected to build on the solid foundation began by VCT 1.0. This team's first decision was to conduct a second visual explorer exercise to compare the current state of living the values to how the division employees described it during the first visual explorer exercise held in June 2015.

Results of this activity were startling, in a positive way. The current state pictures were significantly more positive during the second visual explorer activity, and the images themselves pointed more towards being in the process of growth and transition versus fragmentation as described in 2015. In the 2017 session, staff and managers described feelings of being a part of a journey or in a period of transition instead of feeling fractured (as they had previously).

Stemming from input gathered during this workshop, the VCT 2.0 developed Multi-Door's "future statement" to reflect what the division and its employees aspire to be. The VCT 2.0 also gathered supporting recommendations detailing how to make the division's future statement come to life. One recommendation, *how to improve our processes, to be more transparent and operate more seamlessly*, was and still is instrumental to bring the future statement to life.

Consequently, the VCT 2.0 conducted a workshop with the entire Multi-Door Division to identify guiding principles that the division would use to simplify and improve processes and communication while living the values. These principles are known as "simple rules" and are so important to the division employees that they have committed to having a printed copy placed at their desks to serve as a daily re-

minder of what each individual employee has committed to doing in support of living the values more fully each day.



**NOTE:** Correction from last Full Court Press. In the previous Full Court Press article about the Probate Values Team, Ms. Carla Gales was erroneously left off the list. We apologize for the oversight and do thank her for her continued support and valued contributions to the team.

## DC Courts Values



### ACCOUNTABILITY

We take responsibility for our conduct and are answerable for our performance.

### EXCELLENCE

We provide the highest quality of service in everything we do.

### FAIRNESS

We are impartial in our actions, decisions and treatment of others.

### INTEGRITY

We demonstrate the highest standards of ethical behavior.

### RESPECT

We treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and understanding.

### TRANSPARENCY

We are open in our processes and communicate our actions and decisions clearly.

## Landlord and Tenant Branch Opens New Conference Center

Last month, the Landlord and Tenant Branch of the Superior Court Civil Division opened its new Conference Center in Room 208 of Court Building B, at 510 Fourth Street, NW. The Center will offer shared meeting space for negotiations between landlords, tenants, and legal service providers that will support litigants scheduled before the Court on possession of real property complaints. The Court strives to offer the best service to those in all divisions of our court and to increase access to justice by ensuring that there are resource centers and mediation services available to those without attorneys. This Center will provide room for just such activities.



*Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All*

## Ukrainian Court Delegation Visits DC Superior Court



A delegation of a dozen Ukrainian judges and court professionals visited the DC Superior Court on Monday and Tuesday, June 12 and 13, to learn about how the Court utilizes mediation and how our problem solving court programs operate. The delegation is pictured with Superior Court Chief Judge Robert Morin (*fifth, left to right*).

## New Domestic Violence Unit Deputy Director



Rita Blandino has been promoted to the position of Deputy Director of the Domestic Violence Unit. She began her career with the Courts as a Legal Claims Examiner with the Crime Victims Compensation Pro-

gram in 2006 and joined the Domestic Violence Unit in 2015 as Branch Supervisor. Ms. Blandino has over 15 years of domestic violence experience and prior to joining the Courts she served in several organizations such as Women Empowered Against Violence (WEAVE), AYUDA, and Safe Horizon. She is highly respected in the domestic violence community for her dedication and work ethic. While at WEAVE she managed the processing of civil protection orders in the Domestic Violence Intake Centers and developed a pro bono program with area law firms to provide access to legal services for litigants.

Ms. Blandino received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy, Politics, and Law from the State University of New York at Binghamton and a Masters degree in Public Administration with a concentration in Government Management from George Mason University. She is currently completing a Management Certificate from the National Center for State Courts' Institute for Court Management. She is also a graduate of the DC Court's Management Training Program Class of 2014.

Ms. Blandino brings extensive experience collaborating with domestic violence organizations and stakeholders to the Deputy Director position. She has implemented technological advancements in the Domestic Violence Unit to improve operations, customer service, and performance management. Ms. Blandino has served as a member of the Court's Values Leadership Council and has chaired the Hispanic Heritage Month Committee. Her engaging personality and collaborative management approach foster employee motivation and productivity.

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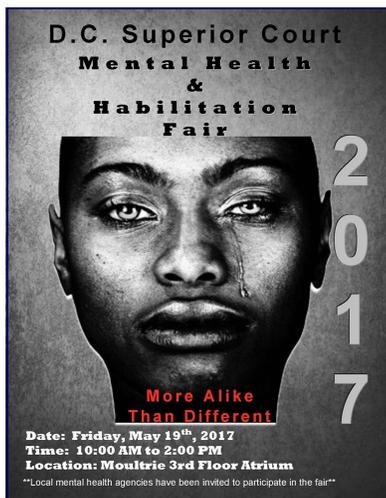
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### *2017 Judicial and Bar Conference—continued from front cover*

The conference's signature event was a keynote address delivered by Sherrilyn Ifill, President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

Ms. Ifill is nationally recognized as an advocate in the areas of civil rights, voting rights, judicial diversity, and judicial decision-making. During her remarks, Ms. Ifill highlighted the importance of understanding that racial injustices and prejudices remain a reality in our justice system, sharing that her dream that "...any judge, state or federal, will be taught how to manage their biases...should not be optional for judges, it should be required." She received a standing ovation at the conclusion of her remarks, and Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby continued the praise, saying "That was a powerful message that challenged us not to just keep working but to work even harder as we try to ensure and maintain the rule of law."

# Mental Health and Habilitation Awareness



During the week of May 15-19, the DC Courts hosted a series of events as part of Mental Health Awareness Month organized by the DC Superior Court Family Court. The goal of the events, which included a Mental Health and Habilitation Fair on Friday, May 19, was to raise awareness of the services available to DC residents.

The concluding Fair presented an opportunity for the community and court employees to get information from various mental health providers regarding what services they provide and how to access services in the community. Members of the public as well as other government agencies attended.

## Mental Health and Habilitation Facts

- Mental illness and intellectual disability are often interchanged incorrectly. They are not the same disorder. Mental illness affects a person's thinking, mood, and behavior, whereas those with an intellectual disability experience limitations in intellectual function and difficulties with certain skills.
- Intellectual disability can be caused by any condition that impairs development of the brain before birth, during birth or in the childhood years. Several hundred causes have been discovered, but in about one-third of the people affected, the cause remains unknown. The three major known causes of intellectual disability are Down syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and Fragile X syndrome.
- Between 70% and 90% of people with mental illnesses experiences a significant reduction of symptoms and an improved quality of life, with proper care and treatment.
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was first passed in 1975, but has since been amended by Congress several times. IDEA ensures that students with disabilities have access to free and appropriate education just like all other children. Schools are required to provide special education in the least restrictive environment. That means schools must teach students with disabilities in general education classrooms whenever possible.
- Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide (over bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and obsessive compulsive disorder) .