

February 2012

Bar News

DEPARTMENT 1 LONG TIME EMPLOYEE RETIRES

After 32 years with Department 1, Pierce County Superior Court, Randy York (court reporter) has retired. She will be missed by all of us who worked with her and appreciated her skill as a reporter and a team member. Randy intends to spend time volunteering for her favorite groups, especially the Vashon Island Pet Protectors and the Susan Komen foundation. Judge Orlando has hired Shaun Linse as his new official reporter. Please stop by and say hello to her.

GUARDIAN AD LITEM TRAINING

GAL training is scheduled on the third Thursday of each month. February training is Thursday, February 16, 2012 at 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm in Courtroom 411 (Judge Orlando's Courtroom) County-City Building. Janice Pitt from DSHS will give a presentation on the Department's new Safety Model. This presentation is important for Family Court GALs as they are mandated reporters of abuse/neglect.

PRO BONO SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE PROGRAM: 2011 END OF THE YEAR REVIEW

Thank you to the many volunteer Pro Bono Officers for your dedication and participation in the 2011 Pro Bono Settlement Conference Program. Pierce County Superior Court is proud of the success of this program and your efforts are why it is a major success. The 2011 Pro Bono Settlement Conference Program accepted 207 cases into the program in 2011. Of these cases, 117 settlement conferences were held and 59 cases were settled. As a comparison, in 2010, the program accepted 115 cases into the program, with 75 cases held and 32 cases settled, through December 2010.

It is unlikely with current budget issues that we will be able to fund a Pro Tem Judge Program in the near future. Thus, your continued service to the Court and those they serve is of vital importance. Fifty families and many more children have been able to move on with their lives in a timely manner due to your efforts! Superior Court intends to continue the success of the Pro Bono Settlement Conference Program in 2012. Thank you for your effort and giving so generously of your time to help our Superior Court and the citizens of Pierce County.

2012 PANEL ASSIGNMENTS

Effective January 1, 2012, Superior Court implemented longer rotation panels. This change impacted the number of departments that are designated as civil and criminal, as well as increased the assigned rotation to one year in length. Below is a reference list of which departments are assigned to which panel:

Judge Orlando	FAMILY COURT 2012
Judge Stolz	CRIMINAL PANEL- CDPJ January 1- June 30, 2012
Judge Larkin	CRIMINAL PANEL- DRUG COURT 2012
Judge Chushcoff	CRIMINAL PANEL (<i>Presiding Judge</i>)
Judge Hogan	CRIMINAL PANEL- SAU/TU1 Pre-Assigned Department

Judge Buckner	CRIMINAL PANEL
Judge Fleming	CRIMINAL PANEL
Judge Tollefson	CRIMINAL PANEL- CDPJ July 1-December 31, 2012
Judge Murphy	CIVIL PANEL
Judge Johnson	CIVIL PANEL
Judge McCarthy	CRIMINAL PANEL
Judge Arend	CIVIL PANEL
Judge Nelson	CRIMINAL PANEL
Judge Serko	CIVIL PANEL
Judge Felnagle	JUVENILE COURT 2012
Judge Martin	FAMILY COURT 2012
Judge Culpepper	CRIMINAL PANEL- SAU/TU1 Pre-Assigned Department
Judge Grant	CRIMINAL PANEL
Judge Lee	CRIMINAL PANEL- SAU/TU1 Pre-Assigned Department
Judge Van Doorninck	JUVENILE COURT 2012
Judge Cuthbertson	CRIMINAL PANEL- SAU/TU1 Pre-Assigned Department
Judge Hickman	CIVIL PANEL

COURT INFORMATION DESK VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Pierce County Superior Court, District Court and Tacoma Municipal Court are seeking volunteers to work at the information desks on the 1st and 2nd floors of the County City Building. The goal of this project is to assist building visitors in finding what they need and to provide general information to anyone visiting the building. Volunteers are requested to make a minimum commitment of 5 hours per week. Volunteer service is contingent upon successfully passing a background check. The program was funded by a grant from the State Administrative Office of the Courts. If you are interested in this program or know of someone who might be, please contact Mary Madden at Pierce County Superior Court; (253) 798-2991 or email at mmadden@co.pierce.wa.us

The following is submitted by Judge Ronald Culpepper for possible inclusion in the Feb. Bar News:

WATCH PBS MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2012

While Mississippi native Douglas Blackmon was Atlanta Bureau Chief for the Wall Street Journal he researched what was sometimes called “debt peonage”, sometimes “convict leasing”. He gave it a more direct and accurate title in his excellent book Slavery by Another Name, winner of the 2009 National Book Award and the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction. Brutal, forced unpaid labor did not end with the Emancipation Proclamation or the 13th Amendment; for thousands of African-Americans (and a few others) it continued well into the 20th century while the federal government and often the judicial system looked the other way.

The system of forced labor was fairly simple and operated with a veneer of legality. Usually young and poor African-Americans would be arrested on some minor charge, such as vagrancy “the crime of having no dough”. After an inevitable conviction, frequently by a local justice of the peace paid by “commission”, fines and court costs would be imposed. The now guilty, poor unemployed defendant would have no way of paying the legal financial obligations and face time in jail. However, the costs could be paid on the defendant’s behalf by a local farmer, turpentine distiller, logger or someone needing physical laborers and the defendant would now be bound to repay his obligations through his unpaid labor. Since it was criminal to default on these obligations, the debtor could be manacled and chained until his debt was paid and be beaten, whipped, or otherwise disciplined for refusing to work.

Although this system enslaved probably tens of thousands, Blackmon provides some particularly horrible examples. Green Cottenham, the 22 year old son of former slaves, was arrested for vagrancy in Shelby County, Alabama in March of 1908. He was swiftly convicted, fined, and looking at a year in jail. The county sold him the next day to the Tennessee Coal, Iron, and Rail Company, a subsidiary of J.P. Morgan’s U S Steel, the first billion dollar corporation. He labored in a mine near Birmingham until he was mistreated and worked to death. In his most interesting and provocative chapter Blackmon discusses the moral, ethical, and legal responsibilities of those who benefitted from the slave labor available to them, some of whom built fortunes on the backs of their slave laborers.

Slavery by Another Name is an excellent book and an important corrective to histories indicating slavery and injustice ended with the Civil War. PBS is presenting a documentary based on the book Monday, February 13th. Anyone interested in learning about this unhappy chapter in American history should tune in.