

October 2011

FAMILY LAW CASES: A REPORT FROM THE BENCH

How well are we handling family law cases in Pierce County? Statistics show that we are really doing well this year to date. For instance in 2011 to date, 96% of all domestic cases filed have resolved within 18 months. This is an improvement over 2010 when only 93% of the cases resolved within that time period. In 2011 we referred fewer domestic cases to administration (290 dropped to 249) and increased the number of those that were timely tried from 84 cases to 104 cases. Overall 2011 filings of domestic cases are up to 3292 from 3125, but our resolution rate for those cases is also up: 103.31% compared to 96.74% last year. These statistics include all the domestic cases, not just those assigned to the family law departments, but we do think our family law departments that handle all relocations, non parental custody and modifications, plus all dissolutions and residential schedule cases where a GAL was appointed prior to 90 days before trial, is working well to assist all departments achieve these record numbers. Judge Elizabeth Martin will be taking over FAM 1 from Judge Kathryn Nelson who is completing her two year term this year, and will join then presiding family law Judge James Orlando.

GUARDIAN AD LITEM TRAINING

GAL training is scheduled on the third Thursday of each month. October training is Thursday, October 20, 2011 at 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm in Courtroom 315 (CCB); Jim Cathcart, GAL and attorney, will give a presentation on how GALs can survive giving testimony in Court.

GAL APPOINTMENTS

When a GAL is appointed on a family law matter, please call the GAL to provide current contact information for all parties. Phone numbers for all GALs are available on the registry posted on the Superior Court website, www.co.pierce.wa.us/superior.

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