

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE LACKAWANNA BAR ASSOCIATION
BY THE PRESIDENT JUDGE OF THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
THE HONORABLE MICHAEL J. BARRASSE

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS 2018 REPORT

6962 civil cases filed, including 31 medical malpractice cases.

2759 criminal cases filed.

1956 family cases filed, which includes 527 divorces and 470 custody cases.

228 summary appeals.

608 miscellaneous filings: PFA contempt, expungements, etc.

959 PFAs.

In our Adult Probation Department there were:

1371 Sentencings.

1019 PSIs Ordered.

690 Gagnon II Hearings.

2040 Cases on Active Supervision (401 are ARDs).

302 Defendants on Pre-Trial Services Supervision.

412 Defendants on the COLOR Drug Testing System.

Treatment Court Totals:

DUI Court 140.

Drug Court 113.

Domestic Violence Court 77.

IP/RIP Court 139.

Veterans Court 41.

Mental Health Court 59.

Total number on supervision in our Treatments Courts is 569.

IN ORPHANS' COURT, there have been:

22 Accounts to Court

76 New Adoptions

64 New Guardianships, Appointments of Guardians

101 Relinquishments/Terminations

1537 New Estates

- In January of 2018 the new Public Access Policy of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court took effect. This rule, regarding case records filed in and maintained by the appellate and trial courts, has been fully implemented by all court departments in Lackawanna County. A Local Rule sets forth all requirements and procedures.
- In February and March of 2018, the Sheriff's Office in conjunction with the Human Resources Department and the Court Security Committee developed and implemented an "active shooter" training for over 900 County employees. 12 day-long trainings were held at Marywood University with the classes taught by deputy sheriffs specially certified in active shooter preparedness. Thank you to Sheriff McAndrew, Justin MacGregor and Judge Mazzoni who headed up this very important training.
- The new Guardianship Tracking System (GTS) took effect this past year. It requires the tracking and auditing of Guardianship cases in each County throughout the Commonwealth. Thank you to Register of Wills/Clerk of the Orphans' Court, Fran Kovaleski, and her office for all their work on this important project.

- The County Commissioners moved forward with authorizing the purchase of a building located at 1360 Wyoming Avenue, directly behind the Prison. This new justice center will house Central Court, Pre-Trial Services, the Booking Center and related entities. A committee consisting of a representative of each department that will be housed at the new center has been meeting to review blueprints and discuss the many practical issues which need to be decided. Thank you to Judge Jarbola who is chairing this committee.
- This past May, as part of the Law Day ceremonies, the Bar Association dedicated two courtrooms in honor of former prominent jurists who served Lackawanna County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Courtroom # 3 was dedicated in honor of former Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice Michael Egan and Courtroom # 6 was dedicated in honor of former Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice George Maxey.
- In October, Central Court was expanded so that hearings are held on Friday of each week, in addition to the regular Monday thru Thursday docket. This expansion has allowed for greater case flow efficiency of the criminal docket. Senior MDJ Ted Giglio has been appointed to serve as the Magistrate on Fridays.

- The Court in conjunction with Clerk of Judicial Records, Mauri Kelly, continues to explore various options regarding the development of electronic filing for attorneys, litigants and court users. We hope to make significant progress toward this goal in 2019.
- In order to better resolve issues regarding information technology as it relates to the court, a dedicated IT employee has been assigned to handle all technology related issues which arise within the court system.
- The long awaited UCM (Unified Case Management) system will be implemented this spring to better coordinate the sharing of case files and information between the Adult Probation Department, the District Attorney's Office and the Prison.
- In the near future, the Yondr cell phone sleeve system will be expanded to the main Courthouse. This has been used in the Family Court building since 2017 and has been very effective in preventing the use of cell phones and recording devices in court hearings.

- On Tuesday, January 8th, the new Lackawanna County Government Center at The Globe was officially opened. This facility will house all Family Court Judges, their staff, Family Court Administration, Domestic Relations and related court departments. We look forward to providing safe, efficient and effective space to serve the attorneys, litigants and families who have cases in our Family Court. Within the space of Family Court are dedicated offices for the law library, Pro Bono and North Penn Legal Services.
- On January 17th at 3:30 pm all members of the Bar Association are invited to a meeting with the staff of Pro Bono that will be held in the Jury Lounge of the main Courthouse. The purpose of this meeting is to encourage attorneys to commit to pro bono service this year. An invitation by the President Judge has been mailed to all members.
- As always, the Court looks forward to working with each of you as we continue to strive to provide equal access to justice for all we serve. Thank you for all your good work.