

Judicial Branch News

Three New Judges Appointed



Judge Erin Otis



Judge Michael Blair



Judge Todd Lang

On September 29, Governor Doug Ducey appointed former Commissioner Erin Otis, and two attorneys, Michael Blair and Todd Lang, as judges on the Maricopa County Superior Court Bench.

Judge Otis, who will assume a Criminal Department calendar in November, served as a Superior Court Commissioner since 2012. As a Commissioner, she presided over Family and Criminal Department calendars. Prior to joining the Court, she worked as Deputy County Attorney in the Maricopa County Attorney's Office for nine years.

She received her Juris Doctorate, Master's and Bachelor's degrees from Arizona State University.

Judge Blair, who assumed a Family Department calendar in October, was a partner at Baird, Williams & Greer, where he had practiced commercial, real estate, and construction litigation since 2000. He also served as a Judge Pro Tempore for the Maricopa County Superior Court and on the Arizona Commission on Judicial Performance Review.

He earned his Juris Doctorate and Bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University.

Judge Lang, who will assume a Family Court Department in November, was an Assistant United States Attorney for the Civil Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Phoenix. Previously, he served as Executive Director of the Arizona Citizens Clean Elections Commission and as Chief Counsel for the Arizona Attorney General's Office, Consumer Litigation Unit. In 2012, he received the Arizona State Bar member of the year award.

He received his Bachelor's degree from Oberlin College and his Juris Doctorate from Cornell University.

The three judges will fill the positions created by the retirements of Judges Roland Steinle, Richard Gama and Crane McClennen.



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Judicial Branch News

The Judicial Branch News is an online newsletter published by the Media Relations Department.

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Committed to excellence and the principles inherent in the rule of law...
every person, every day, every time.

Judge James Beene



Judge James Beene

What do you like the most about your current assignment?

I was a prosecutor for the majority of my career as a lawyer, so I like being back in the criminal courtroom, conducting morning calendars and presiding over trials.

What advice would you give a new lawyer?

Be prepared! Don't walk into a courtroom unless you know what will be going on in that proceeding and what your position is on the issues before the court. Also, know the rules of evidence and procedure.

What do you think has changed the most in the legal profession since you attended law school?

The technological advances in the legal profession that have been made since I graduated from law school in 1991.

What is your favorite thing to do when you are not working?

Hanging out with my family. Eating good food and drinking good wine.

What piece of advice would you give your 20 year-old self?

Relax. Focus on others more and not so much on yourself.

If you weren't a judge, what would you be?

First violin for the Emerson String Quartet.

Judge Roger Brodman



Judge Roger Brodman

What do you like the most about your current assignment?

My background is in civil litigation. I spent 24 years as a civil litigator and I am delighted to be addressing civil issues.

What advice would you give a new lawyer?

If you want to try cases, go work as a prosecutor or a public defender for a few years before going to private practice.

What do you think has changed the most in the legal profession since you attended law school?

The increase in juvenile/family law cases. When I started practicing, maybe 10-20% of judges did family law or juvenile law. Now, half do.

What is your favorite thing to do when you are not working?

Exercising or watching/playing sports.

What piece of advice would you give your 20 year-old self?

Beware of any career that bases compensation on billable hours.

If you weren't a judge, what would you be?

A college engineering professor.

Attention Judges

Each month, the Judicial Branch News will highlight a Judge(s) for its *Behind the Bench: Judge Q-and-A*.

Judges please keep checking your inbox for your *Q-and-A*. **(And please don't hit the delete button.)**
Thank You!

Judicial Branch Leaders Appointed as President and Vice President



Judge Janet E. Barton

The National Association for Presiding Judges and Court Executive Officers (NAPCO), formerly the National Conference of Metropolitan Courts (NCMC), elected Presiding Judge Janet E. Barton of the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County as President and Judicial Branch Administrator Ray Billotte as Vice President.

As president and vice president of NAPCO, Judge Barton and Mr. Billotte will lead an independent, nonprofit, education and research organization comprised of chief/presiding judges and court executives in state and local trial courts who are committed to enhancing the effective administration of justice in general, limited and specialized courts. The organization has worked to improve the administration of justice in America's state trial courts for more than five decades.

"I am honored and flattered by this appointment. NAPCO's past leaders and executive board have worked hard to establish NAPCO as the preeminent national organization for presiding judges and court executive officers," Judge Barton said. "I look forward to working with them to continue their efforts in that regard."



Ray Billotte

Judge Barton and Mr. Billotte were elected during NAPCO's First Annual Trial Court Leadership Conference on September 25-28 in Cleveland, Ohio. The conference brought together presiding judges and court executives from across the country to discuss challenges faced by state and local trial court leaders; to propose solutions and to enhance team skills among judges and administrators.

"The creation of NAPCO is an important step in helping presiding judges and court executive officers develop and improve their leadership skills," noted Mr. Billotte. "The organization provides a valuable forum for court leaders to work collaboratively to advance the efficiency and effectiveness of our nation's trial courts."

Mr. Billotte is the first vice president of the newly formed NAPCO. Prior to his officer position in NAPCO, he was a board member of the National Conference of Metropolitan Courts (NCMC) and its Strategic Planning Committee, which was instrumental in creating NAPCO.

Employee Anniversaries

5 Years

Katherine Cooper, Superior Court Judge
 Vanessa Rios, Judicial Clerk Senior
 Debbie Gilliland, Human Resources Specialist
 Karla Clanton, Adult Probation Officer
 Nicole Villalpando, Judicial Clerk
 Vallee Peek, Judicial Clerk Senior
 Autumn Cunliffe, Adult Probation Officer
 Lori Horn Bustamante, Superior Court Judge

10 Years

Miranda Boger, Adult Probation Officer Supervisor
 Tracy Gorr, Adult Probation Officer
 Karen Mullins, Superior Court Judge
 Alejandro Guzman, Trades Generalist
 Christopher Whitten, Superior Court Judge
 Liberty Torres, Surveillance Officer
 Eriberto Espinoza, Juvenile Detention Officer Supervisor
 Keri Madrid, Adult Probation Officer
 Kevin Peters, Surveillance Officer
 Melody Dalle Nogare, Juvenile Detention Officer
 Penne Garrett, Procurement Supervisor
 Wateka May, Adult Probation Officer
 Mark Brain, Superior Court Judge
 Varay Bronson, Juvenile Detention Officer

15 Years

Beatriz Rodriguez, Adult Probation Officer
 Therese Ludwig, Judicial Clerk Supervisor
 Jackie Chagolla, Surveillance Officer,
 Mary Aguirre, Judicial Clerk Supervisor,
 Tania Newman-Juarez, Adult Probation Officer
 Tracy Daly, Juvenile Probation Officer Supervisor
 Deborah Kabanuk, Juvenile Probation Officer
 David Udall, Superior Court Judge
 Kimberly Clah, Juvenile Probation Officer
 Shane Neil, Adult Probation Officer Supervisor
 Artis Gunn, Judicial Clerk
 Marilyn Adkison, Judicial Clerk Associate
 Adriana Garcia Bloom, Adult Probation Officer

15 Years (Continued)

Amy Barnes, Adult Probation Officer
 Christopher Cross, Adult Probation Officer
 David Pixley, Adult Probation Officer
 Elissa Collier, Adult Probation Officer
 Julie Lovejoy, Adult Probation Officer
 Marc Ulibarri, Adult Probation Officer
 Melinda White, Adult Probation Officer
 Merci Hernandez, Administrative Assistant
 Ricardo Hernandez, Adult Probation Officer
 Rosemarie Lewis, Adult Probation Officer
 Sonia Cruz, Collections Supervisor
 Tatiana Torres, Adult Probation Officer

20 Years

Maricela Acosta, Judicial Clerk Senior
 Debra Parker, Business/Systems Analyst - Sr/Ld

25 Years

Brenda Hott, Case Administrator
 Joanne Vogds, Judicial Clerk Associate

32 Years

Jose Arenas, Juvenile Detention Officer

38 Years

Peter Anderson, Finance Manager

Excellence in Diversity



Judge George Foster

On October 20, the Arizona Black Bar presented Superior Court Judge George Foster with its Excellence in Diversity Award at the Hayzel B. Daniels Scholarship Dinner.

Judge Foster, who was appointed to the Bench in 2003, has presided over Criminal, Juvenile, Civil and Family Department calendars. He also worked as a Superior Court Commissioner from 1999 to 2003.

Prior to joining the Court, he worked in private practice for 16 years and served as a law clerk to Hon. David S. Nelson in Federal District Court in Boston, Mass.

He earned his Juris Doctorate from Boston College School of Law and his bachelor's degree, magna cum laude, from City University of New York.

The ABB Excellence in Diversity Awards recognize attorneys, law firms, corporations, academic institutions and other agencies who go above and beyond to promote, implement and advance diversity and inclusion in the Arizona legal profession.

Emmy Award Winner



Clara Colmenero receives two Emmy Awards.

Superior Court would like to congratulate the newest member of the Media Relations department, Multimedia Journalist Clara Colmenero, for recently being recognized by the Rocky Mountain Southwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. She was awarded Emmy's in two categories this year: Human Interest News Single Story and Business/Consumer News Single Story.

In 2014, she proudly accepted her first Emmy Award for her work as a Multimedia Journalist at Univision Arizona.

New Employee Orientation



Presiding Judge Janet E. Barton delivers the oath of office to incoming Judicial Branch employees.

AmeriCorps Members



Presiding Judge Janet E. Barton swears in the latest group of AmeriCorps volunteers.

Investiture Ceremony



Arizona Supreme Court Justice Ann A. Scott Timmer (left) delivers the oath of office to Judge Kristin Culbertson (right).

30 Years of Service



Left to Right - Commissioners Terri Clarke, Jerry Bernstein, Veronica Brame and Margaret Benny. Friends and colleagues hosted a celebration for Commissioner Bernstein at the Southeast Regional Facility in Mesa, AZ.

Maricopa County acknowledged Commissioner Jerry Bernstein's 30 years of service as a County employee.

Commissioner Jerry Bernstein started in 1986 as a Deputy Maricopa County Attorney and served in that capacity until his appointment as a Commissioner by former Presiding Judge Barbara Mundell in 2007.

Meet the New Emergency Services Planner



Richard Sczerbicki

Richard Sczerbicki has been named the new Judicial Branch Emergency Services Planner.

Officer Sczerbicki has more than 44 years of law enforcement and security experience, including Chief of Security for the Arizona Supreme Court, Supervising Special Agent with the Arizona Attorney General's Office and as a Maryland State Trooper. He also spent the last two years with the Judicial Branch Security Department.

He has a BS Degree in Criminal Justice, MS Degree in Security Management and has trained state and local law enforcement, security, and regulatory agencies from around the country. He was also a National Academy Instructor for Federal Law Enforcement, State, and local programs.

Officer Sczerbicki will manage the Judicial Branch disaster preparedness programs and assume the role as primary instructor for Emergency Services, Active Shooter Training, Personnel Security Awareness, and other security-related courses.

By Sean Gibbs
Director of Security

Maricopa County Service Awards

Judicial Branch employees with 30 years of service were honored by Maricopa County for their dedicated service.

The celebration took place on October 12 at the Security building in Downtown, Phoenix.



**Sherry Smithee - 30 Years
Superior Court**



**Randy Tirado - 30 Years
Adult Probation**



**Alan Dyal - 30 Years
Adult Probation**



**Doug Frantz - 30 Years
Adult Probation**



**Kim Boettcher - 30 Years
Adult Probation**



**Kim Law-Woods, 30 years
Juvenile Probation**



**Elizabeth Forton - 30 Years
Adult Probation**

New Leadership in the Criminal Department Administration

Our goal in sharing our biographies, beyond the obvious connection of a name to a face, is to form connections with you -- our colleagues. As professionals working for the Superior Court often times it can be difficult to have meaningful interactions because of busy schedules. In an attempt to forge an atmosphere of comradery it is our hope that you will find commonalities that spark a future conversation and a mutually respectful working relationship.



Christopher G. Bleuenstein, Ph.D.

Christopher Bleuenstein serves as the Criminal Court Administrator since his appointment to the position last month. Prior to that he served as a Deputy Criminal Court Administrator for eight (8) years. Chris started his career in the court system in 1991 as a Deputy Clerk taking in filings at Summit County Probate Court in Akron, Ohio. This was the same year he graduated with a B.A. in Political Science. In 1994 he became an Assistant Court Administrator for a Juvenile Court in Ohio and also graduated with an M.A. in Political Science. He also holds an M.P.A (2003). In 2004 he was appointed as a Trial Court Administrator for two judicial districts in northeastern North Dakota. He moved to Arizona in 2007 when he was hired as a Special Projects Administrator to assist with the planning of the South Court Tower. Dr. Bleuenstein became a Fellow of the Institute for Court Management through the National Center for State Courts in 2009 and earned his Ph.D. in Public Policy and Public Administration in 2010. Chris has a passion for traveling and has been to four of the seven continents.



Shari Andersen-Head, M.P.A., M.S.H.R.

Shari Andersen-Head serves as a Deputy Criminal Court Administrator, where she manages the areas of Master Calendar, DUI/Drug Court, Probation Violation Court, Critical Calendar Coverage, Post-Conviction Relief (PCR), Restoration of Civil Rights, and the Criminal Department Information Desks. She holds a B.S. in Business Administration and graduated summa cum laude from Webster University with sequential M.S. degrees in Public Administration, as well as, Human Resources. Ms. Andersen-Head has more than twenty years of experience within the Superior Court, working in the Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Court, Adult Probation, and the Criminal Court Department. When not working, you can find her pursuing her passion of nutrition and wellness where she holds a certification as a consultant.



Carol Thompson, J.D.

Carol Thompson serves as a Deputy Criminal Court Administrator, where she manages the areas of the Initial Appearance Court (within the 4th Ave. Jail), the Regional Court Center (RCC) downtown, Early Disposition Court (EDC) downtown, Not Guilty Arraignment (NGA), Initial Appearance by Summons, and the Bond Forfeiture Court. She started in this position on October 10th. Carol graduated with a B.A. in English in 1994 and completed her J.D. in 1997 at the University of Illinois, College of Law (Urbana-Champaign). After law school, Carol began her career at the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Continuing to pursue her passion for legal research and writing, she also worked as a legal editor for the Commerce Clearing House (CCH), located in Riverwoods, Illinois and Lexis Nexis. Ms. Thompson also served as a law clerk for the Honorable James E. Graves, Jr. at the Mississippi Supreme Court. In addition to her public service she has management experience in the corporate sector. Prior to accepting the position of Deputy Criminal Court Administrator, Carol held the position of Legal Forms Production Coordinator in this courts Self-Service Center. Carol relocated from Naples, Florida and has resided in Arizona for one year. Carol's passions are entrepreneurship and investing.

*By Christopher Bleuenstein, Ph.D.
Criminal Department Administrator*

Adult and Juvenile Probation Celebrate Diversity



Adult and Juvenile Probation employees host a diversity fall festival that included cultural food booths and fun activities.

2ForYou Brown Bag



On October 19, the Judicial Branch hosted a 2ForYou Brown Bag session featuring Presiding Judge Janet E. Barton and Judicial Branch Administrator Raymond Billotte.

During the program, Judge Barton and Mr. Billotte shared the Mission, Vision and Values of the Judicial Branch. Employees who attended were given the opportunity to renew their commitment to working in public service and to collectively affirm their commitment to the Judicial Branch by taking an oath of office delivered by Judge Barton. Following the oath, Mr. Billotte handed out coins, displaying the new court logo and mission to employees.

Here is a list of upcoming brown bag sessions (11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.):

October 31st - Northeast RC, Multi-purpose room
 November 4th - EBC, 3rd floor, Cordova Room
 November 7th - SEF - Judge's Dining Room
 November 16th - NW RC - Jury Assembly

