

Court Information Release



United States District Court
Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
219 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60604

Release Date:
June 22, 2010

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CHIEF JUDGE JAMES F. HOLDERMAN PROVIDES HIS ANNUAL “STATE OF THE COURT” ADDRESS

CHICAGO – Following a long-standing annual tradition, Chief Judge James F. Holderman, on Tuesday, June 22, 2010, spoke at a luncheon sponsored by the Chicago Chapter of the Federal Bar Association and provided insight into the state of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, its workload, and its operations of the past year.

Civil case filings increased 6.2% in 2009 over 2008, to a total 8,305, which is the highest annual civil case filing total in the last five years. The number of criminal felony defendants charged in 2009 dropped 1.2% to a total of 1,046 as compared to a total of 1,059 felony criminal defendants charged in 2008. The number of defendants charged with felony immigration violations rose 41% to a total of 126 defendants charged in 2009 compared to 89 defendants charged in 2008. Bankruptcy case filings rose 27.9% in 2009 to 52,663 cases compared to 41,168 bankruptcy case filings in 2008. As for efficiency, the court in 2009 continued to remain in the top 10% of U.S. District Courts across the country with a median time from filing to disposition of civil cases of 6.2 months.

The court began 2009 with only a single vacant district judgeship created by former Judge Mark Filip’s resignation in March 2008. During the 2009 calendar year, Judges Robert Gettleman, David Coar, and Elaine Bucklo took senior status. In February 2010, Judge Blanche Manning also took senior status. Consequently, there are five district judge vacancies currently open, with a sixth to occur at the end of July when Judge Wayne Andersen retires. This is the most district judge vacancies that the court has experienced in its 191 year history.

There were significant changes for the magistrate judge bench in 2009 as well. Magistrate Judge Martin Ashman and Magistrate Judge Arlander Keys shifted to recalled status, and have maintained active judicial calendars. These changes in status opened two magistrate judge positions on the court. An additional magistrate judgeship was created for the court’s Eastern Division in 2009. In the past few weeks, the three magistrate judge vacancies were filled, and the court was very pleased to welcome new Magistrate Judges Sheila Finnegan, Jeffrey Gilbert, and Young Kim to our magistrate judge bench.

The court was also pleased to welcome new Chief Probation Officer Kristine Phillips in May 2010. Chief Phillips has served in the district's probation office for over 20 years and takes over for former Chief Probation Officer Richard Tracy, who retired May 1, 2010. The district also has a new United States Marshal, Darryl McPherson, whose nomination by President Obama was confirmed by the United States Senate on May 28, 2010. Marshal McPherson previously served as a Deputy U.S. Marshal in Chicago for over a decade.

As of June 1, 2010, the court had over 25,000 registered e-filers, which is 18% more than a year ago. The daily rate of document filing is up 15% to a total of 867 electronic documents filed with the court per day compared to the daily filing average of 733 electronic documents a year ago.

Chief Judge Holderman spoke of various other initiatives of the Clerk's Office and the court's judges. He thanked his fellow judges and members of the court's bar for their work in providing justice and access to justice in the court over the past year. He stated that he is looking forward to addressing the challenges of continuing to provide justice in the best way possible in the year to come.

**PREPARED TEXT FOR THE
“STATE OF THE COURT” ADDRESS ON JUNE 22, 2010
by Chief Judge James F. Holderman**

Good afternoon. Welcome to the 2010 “State of the Court” address. I would specifically like to thank the Chicago Chapter of the Federal Bar Association, President Scott Mendeloff, and the other officers, directors and members for this invitation. I am grateful to have the opportunity to continue this annual tradition. I also appreciate Scott’s suggestion to reschedule my “State of the Court” remarks that were previously set for May 19th. I apologize for any inconvenience. I know some of you, like my wife Paula, were going to skip my address on May 19th, to hear Justice Sandra Day O’Connor. Heck, I even preferred to hear her on that day.

The “State of the Court” is, in a word, “Good.” I know I said the same thing the last three years, and I hope I am able to say it each year I give this address, because the “State of the Court” remains “Good” only due to the efforts and dedication of the people in this room.

To provide a more detailed analysis, I will discuss the “State of the District Court” in three main areas:

1. The first is what I call “Core Court Functions” including key court personnel changes, caseload trends, and procedures as well as advancements in e-filing, court services, and information technology.
2. The second area is “Court Security and Courthouse Construction,” the changes that have taken place during the past year continue underway; and
3. The third is “Court Initiatives” to provide better access to justice in our court, to provide better justice when access is obtained, and to provide public education and information about court processes in our District, as well as assisting other courts, both other district courts and courts of appeals, along with building better relations with other branches of government in our country and with judiciaries of other countries elsewhere in the world.

These key functions and initiatives could not be achieved without you, the people in this room who are members of our court's bar, the officers of the court. I have often said that I believe we have some of the finest lawyers in the country appearing in our court and as your Chief Judge my belief is even more fervently held. All the judges on our court appreciate the job you do for your clients to further justice in our district.

During my time as Chief Judge, which will be four years in eight days, I have had tremendous support from my colleagues on the bench. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate their hard work, advice, wisdom, assistance, and friendship. When I speak with other Chief District Judges from around the country, as I did at the annual Chief District Judges Meeting in D.C. in April, I feel blessed by the collegiality we have on our district court, and the mutual respect we judges on our court share for one another.

I feel equally blessed to have the excellent people we have working in our Court's Clerk's Office. I would like to recognize some of the key supervisory personnel of our Clerk's Office and other Court Department Heads. Of course, Mr. Michael W. Dobbins is the Clerk of Court. Mike, who could not be here today, has worked in the United States Court system for 35 years. He is an outstanding Clerk, and his advice is not only sought here and in Washington, D.C., but by judicial systems in other parts of the world.

With us are some of the top managers of our District Court's Clerk's Office: Ms. Nellie Finch, Operations Manager; Ms. Donna Carey, Administrative Services Manager; and Mr. Ted Newman, Judicial Support Manager. The fourth Clerk's Office Manager, Mr. Mark Tortorici, the Systems Manager, also could not be with us because he is out in Rockford conducting a network assessment of the new courthouse.

Joining us is our Court's new Chief Probation Officer, Ms. Kristine Phillips. Chief Phillips has served in the Probation Office since 1989 and had been in her position as Deputy Chief U.S. Probation Officer since 2000, before being selected to replace Chief Richard L. Tracy, who retired as of May 1, 2010. Chief Phillips's probation officers have the responsibility of preparing pre-sentence reports for every criminal defendant our judges sentence and monitoring the post-incarceration conduct of over 2,500 offenders during their supervised release. Under Chief Phillips, I am confident the Probation Department will continue to carry on the same tradition of excellence. We appreciate their work.

Also here is our Chief Pretrial Services Officer, Ms. Ann Marie Carey. Chief Carey's pretrial services officers monitor pretrial defendants out on bond and provide the key informational reports to allow us judges to determine when pretrial bond is appropriate. We appreciate the excellence of her department during her tenure as Chief.

Chief Carey and Chief Phillips, in addition to assisting with job placement and skill building opportunities, have implemented a number of new programs such as the "Planning for Tomorrow" informational presentations to defendants and their families to better acclimate to prison life, and to better assimilate back into society when their prison terms are concluded, or the "Makin' It Work" four-day training course for offenders, which addresses barriers to employment, what one needs to know to get a job and keep a job, interviewing skills and resume writing. And, of course, the continuing "Helpful Hanger" program, which provides business attire to people re-entering the work force. All of these programs provide great assistance and reduce recidivism. I will discuss our district's new cooperative Reentry Program further in a few minutes.

Before I leave Chief Philips and Chief Carey, I should mention that their offices also continue to do double-duty when called upon in conducting the criminal background checks on prospective jurors when requested by our judges.

We are also honored to have present United States Marshal Darryl McPherson, our newly appointed U.S. Marshal for the Northern District of Illinois. He will be publicly sworn-in on July 9th in the Parsons Ceremonial Courtroom, Room 2525, of the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse. You are all invited. Marshal McPherson served as a Deputy U.S. Marshal in Chicago since 1999. He headed the protection task force for Judge Lefkow. In 2007, he was promoted to the position of Deputy U.S. Marshal Senior Inspector. Additionally, he has served on the U.S. Marshals Service Great Lakes Fugitive Task Force, and he has been active in the community, serving as chair of the Security Advisory Committee of the Union League Boys & Girls Club, as a mentor for at-risk youth in the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation “Badges for Baseball” program, and as a member of the steering committee of the Black and Hispanic Achievers Program. We could not have asked for a finer person to fill this position. I am confident he will do an excellent job.

Additionally, I would like to recognize and introduce my chambers staff to provide you the faces to put with the names of the people with whom you may be in contact when working with my chambers. First, our Court Information Officer, Mr. Joel Daly, who needs no introduction to the Chicago legal community. With the high-profile cases our Court continues to have, we are thankful and honored to have a man of Joel’s stature working with our court.

Next, Ms. Alyce Mobley-Morris is my Courtroom Deputy, who not only deals with my public caseload, but also the non-public caseload responsibilities traditionally addressed in our District by the Chief Judge. The non-public cases, or what I call “the secret stuff,” such as grand juries and

electronic surveillance matters, as well as under seal qui tam matters, are virtually a full docket in themselves. Alyce does an excellent job.

Mr. Larry Collins is my Administrative Assistant, who keeps the programs and facilities at our Chicago Courthouse running smoothly; without him we could not accomplish what we do.

Many of my staff members perform double-duty, as does my court reporter, Ms. Colleen Conway, who not only handles my courtroom, but also volunteers her court reporting services to other judges when they are in need of a court reporter. Colleen also assists other court reporters in our building by organizing various continuing education seminars to enhance their expertise.

Also, I'd like to recognize my two outstanding law clerks, my Executive Law Clerk, Ms. Amy Rettberg, and my Senior Law Clerk, Ms. Marron Mahoney. They assist the court in numerous ways and help me in addressing the legal issues of my case load, both in public cases and non-public cases.

Additionally, I would like to recognize my two terrific judicial assistants, Ms. Margaret Winkler and Ms. Gabriela Kennedy. Peggy and Gaby are the pleasant and efficient voices on the phone who assist you when you call my chambers.

I appreciate everyone's excellent work very much.

If any of you ever have any questions with which you think my chambers can assist you, you can contact any of these folks and they will be happy to help you.

I. CORE COURT FUNCTIONS

A. Key Court Personnel Changes

I now turn to our court's new judges and our judicial vacancies.

Over the last two months, our Court has had the honor and privilege of being joined by three outstanding new Magistrate Judges, Sheila Finnegan, Jeffrey Gilbert, and Young Kim.

Magistrate Judge Finnegan came to us from heading Mayer Brown's Chicago litigation practice, Magistrate Judge Gilbert was a key part of Reed Smith's Chicago regulatory litigation group, and Magistrate Judge Kim was an Administrative Judge with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Judges Finnegan, Gilbert, and Kim join a Magistrate Judge bench that continues to do an excellent job with Judge Sid Schenkier continuing to serve as the Presiding Magistrate Judge. Also, both Magistrate Judges Martin Ashman and Arlander Keys, who reached retirement age in the past year, agreed to stay on in recalled status. We are thrilled that they have done so.

As for our district judges, we presently have 17, of our designated number of 22, active district judges on board. We are blessed to have the assistance of 14 senior judges. If no new district judges are confirmed by August 1, 2010, and it appears they will not, we will be down to 16 active judges and have 6 vacancies on our court – more district judge vacancies than our court has ever experienced in its 191 year history.

Starting in March 2008 with the vacancy created by Mark Filip's departure on March 9, 2008, we have not had a single vacancy filled. Judge Robert Gettleman, Judge David Coar, Judge Elaine Bucklo, and Judge Blanche Manning have all assumed senior status; and on July 31, 2010, Judge Wayne Andersen will be retiring from the bench. To date we have more than 60 months – that's five years of judicial time with the continuing vacancies on our district judge bench.

As you are aware, President Obama on February 24, 2010 nominated Illinois Appellate Justice Sharon Coleman and attorney Gary Feinerman to our district bench. In mid-April, The Senate Judiciary Committee unanimously approved those nominations, have been waiting for a vote by the full Senate. Also during this past April, President Obama nominated Assistant U.S. Attorney Edmond Chang to a judgeship with our court. His nomination has not yet moved through the Senate

Judiciary Committee, and he is the third individual to be nominated to fill one of the six vacancies that I talked about. Senator Durbin assured me that we will have new judges on our court as promptly as the nomination and confirmation process will allow.

I appreciate Senator Durbin's efforts to fill our vacancies and those in the other district courts of Illinois. It will be difficult for us in Northern Illinois to be down six active judges and working at less than 80% active district judge capacity as of August 1st, but we will endeavor. Also by that date, if there are no further confirmations, the Central District of Illinois will only have 1 active judge out of five positions, and will be working at 20% active district judge capacity. So, we in Illinois need to have the confirmation process move forward.

As for our Bankruptcy Court bench, that has remained steady this passed year at full strength. We have a great group of judges on that bench. Chief Judge Carol Doyle remains at the helm of that court. Because of the economic times, our bankruptcy judges face an ever-increasing case load. In fact, 2009 saw a 28% increase over 2008 , with 52,663 new bankruptcy cases commenced. Most of this growth has occurred in Chapter 7 dissolution filings.

B. Caseload

Speaking of caseloads, as for the district court's caseload, the total civil filings in 2009 increased, up 6.2% of the 2008 level - for a total of 8,305 civil case filings in 2009. I predict that for 2010 we may see further changes, perhaps an even greater increase next year in civil case filings, resulting from the economic times in which we live. Actual numbers, of course, are not yet available. We will have wait and see.

As far as efficiency is concerned, our court, in 2009, continued to remain in the top 10% of U.S. District Courts across the country with a median time from filing to disposition of civil cases of 6.2 months.

On the criminal side, 2009 saw 1,046 defendants against whom felony cases were commenced, which was a slight 1.2% decrease below the number reported for 2008 of 1,059. As in most years, fraud and drug-related offenses account for roughly two-thirds of the court's criminal cases. A category that has grown in recent years are criminal cases involving immigration offenses, which were up 41% in 2009 over 2008 with a total of 126 felony defendants charged with immigration violations in 2009 as opposed to 89 in 2008. Immigration cases account for 12.0% of felony defendants commenced in 2009.

C. Electronic Filing And Information Technology

1. Electronic Filing and Electronic Record Maintenance

We are now in our fifth year since the conversion to mandatory electronic filing in 2005. As of June 1, 2010 there were over 25,500 registered electronic filers in our district as, which is about 18% more than we had a year ago.

On a daily basis, attorneys are currently e-filing an average 867 electronic documents every day, which is a 15% increase over the daily average was 733 documents a year ago. It appears that the bench and bar in our district have, for all intents and purposes, successfully made the conversion to electronic filing.

2. Information Technology

a. Courtrooms

By mid-August 2010, nineteen of our courtrooms will have brand new sound systems, and eight out of those nineteen will have integrated evidence presentation technology installed. This hopefully will assist you in presenting your cases in our courtrooms.

b. Transcripts

Regarding transcripts, we have had a recent beneficial innovation for attorneys wishing to order transcripts of court proceeding. Developed by our court's systems staff and introduced in January of 2010, lawyers can order transcripts through the court's web site. It is markedly more efficient for attorneys than the previous methods for ordering transcripts.

c. Website

As for the court's website, www.ilnd.uscourts.gov, both the on-line version and mobile version, which went "live" a little over a year ago, we have received good feedback. We can always improve, and if you have a suggestion, please e-mail me and let me know.

I appreciate the efforts of Mark Tortorici, and the key folks under him in our Systems Department.

II. COURT SECURITY AND COURT CONSTRUCTION

A. Security

The U.S. Marshal's Service, which includes the CSOs, are responsible for all security at the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse not just the persons in the Courthouse, taking over all the duties previously performed by the Federal Protective Service at the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse. This program is a part of a pilot program in 5 districts across the country. It is good to have one federal agency to look to for the safety of all of us.

The U.S. Marshal's Service, under the direction of new U.S. Marshal McPherson, is also still overseeing the security systems installed in each of our judges' homes to protect us and our families there. We appreciate their diligence.

In addition to my other responsibilities as chief judge, I chair the Court Security Committee and am personally committed to ensuring the safety of every person who works in or comes to the courthouses both here and in Rockford. I consider it my number one job as chief judge.

B. Construction in Our District Courthouses

1. Everett McKinley Dirksen U.S. Courthouse

Anyone who has looked at the east side of the courthouse is aware of the General Services Administration's construction project, one of which is to update the heating and air condition system. Frankly, anyone whose been around the Dirksen Courthouse, as I have, over the last forty years, knows the heating and air conditioning has never been right. So its about time to fix it. Also, renovation of the fire alarm system, overhead lighting and public restrooms in the Dirksen Courthouse is also underway. Work on all the floors from 17 and below has progressed nicely. Most of the work is being done in the evenings and with little or no disruption to the court.

But starting next month with the 17th floor, and at three-month intervals for the next three years judges chambers and courtrooms will rotate to temporary facilities that have been constructed on the 10th floor while the renovations by GSA's contractor, Turner Construction, take place on each floor 17 through 25.

2. Stanley J. Roszkowski United States Courthouse

GSA's construction of the Stanley J. Roszkowski United States Courthouse in Rockford is scheduled for completion near the end of the 2010. We expect to be conducting business in the new courthouse by Spring 2011. You are all invited to the ground breaking when it is scheduled.

III. OTHER COURT INITIATIVES

A. The Seventh Circuit E-Discovery Pilot Program

We completed Phase One on May 1, 2010. We presented information about it at the Seventh Circuit Bar Association Annual Meeting and Judicial Conference on May 3rd and at the 2010 Civil Litigation Conference, sponsored by the Judicial Conference Advisory Committee on Civil Rules, at Duke University Law School on May 10th. It has been the subject of both national and international attention. We are moving to Phase Two on July 1, 2010 with an expanded scope, more webinars, and greater outreach. I encourage you to educate yourself about the pilot program, employ the procedures, and encourage other lawyers and judges to do the same. More details are available at the Seventh Circuit Bar Association's website (www.7thcircuitbar.org).

B. Reentry Program

Also on the new initiative front, in April 2010, our district launched its first Reentry Program under the direction of Judge Joan Gottschall and Judge Ruben Castillo. It is for people recently released from prison. The program targets offenders with substance abuse issues who are also at medium to high risk of re-offending in the community based on the Risk Prediction Index. The Reentry Program began with ten cases. The Federal Judicial Center plans to study the effectiveness of such programs across the federal system and our district will be a part of that study.

C. Local Patent Rules

Another thing that's new within the last year, for those of you who practice in the patent law area, are our new Local Patent Rules that went into effect October 1, 2009. A committee of judges and lawyers headed by Judge Matt Kennelly drafted the rules. We appreciate the efforts of the seven lawyers on the drafting committee: Allan Sternstein of Dykema Gossett; Bradford Lyerla of Marshall, Gerstein & Borun; Edward Manzo of Cook Alex; Dean Monco of Wood Phillips; Michael

Padden of Howrey; Marshall Seeder of Reed Smith; and Paul Vickrey of Niro, Scarvone, Haller & Niro.

D. Pro Bono Service

In addition to the items I have mentioned to make the justice more available to all in our court, we judges from time to time over the years have called upon you, our Trial Bar members, for your professional assistance, and you have generously given of your professional time *pro bono* to assist us in bettering our court processes and furthering access to justice in our court for those who can not afford counsel.

We judges appreciate your *pro bono* efforts and to say “thank you,” as we have done for the past ten years, in conjunction with the Chicago Chapter of the Federal Bar Association, we set aside an afternoon each year to acknowledge those members of our bar whose *pro bono* efforts are worthy of special recognition.

1. May 26, 2010 Awards Ceremony

At the ceremony "Awards for Excellence in Pro Bono Service" were presented by our judges to twenty-five area attorneys for their contributions in helping those most in need of assistance through *pro bono* work before the District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

2. Access to Justice

As for further continuing initiatives providing access to justice, we continue to carry-on, with funding assistance from the Chicago Bar Foundation, our court's *Pro-Se* Help Desk operated by attorneys Catherine Caporusso and Deanne Medina. We also have our *Pro Se* Settlement Assistance Program, overseen by attorney Laurie Wardell of the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law, which also includes the prison civil rights area, handled by the Prisoner Assistance Program, headed by attorney Jim Chapman. In 2009, the Settlement Assistance Program provided

assistance in forty-eight civil cases: twenty were employment related cases, twenty-three were prisoner cases, and six were other types of cases. Of these cases 48 cases, only 9 did not settle.

Attendance at the court-sponsored training sessions of the Settlement Assistance Program and subsequent appointment as settlement counsel provides credit towards becoming a member of the Trial Bar. During 2009, the Settlement Assistant Program had seventy-five volunteer lawyers.

We, through these initiatives and others, continue to strengthen and support the valuable public service you provide to promote access to justice in our court.

C. Media

Turning now to providing access to information about justice in our court, as you know, consistent with our court's tradition, we have had some high-profile trials, court proceedings, indictments, and sentencings this past year, a trend that will certainly continue. Our attempts to keep the public informed and to assist the media in covering these and other cases will continue and we are always open to suggestions. The media personnel have, for the most part, cooperated, and the vast majority are appreciative of our need to balance the public's right to know with other concerns, such as safety, privacy and the right of each party in each case to a fair trial.

We will continue to try to assist them in reporting the news happening in our court.

D. Our Court's Outreach Programs

1. National Judicial Involvement and Assisting Other Courts

Many of our judges in addition to their work here in our district continue to be involved on a national level.

a. MDL

For example, in addition to handling our own assigned cases in the Northern District of Illinois, as of May 1, 2010, 14 of our judges also are presiding over 850 additional cases assigned to us by the U.S. Multi-District Litigation Panel.

b. U.S. Judicial Conference

Additionally, several of our judges serve on national advisory committees to the United States Judicial Conference, the governing body of the U.S. Courts. For the past 2 ½ years, retiring Judge Wayne Andersen has been a member of the Judicial Conference and Chair of the District Court Committee. We appreciate his work.

c. Voluntary Work with Other Courts

Moreover, several of our judges also volunteered this past year to serve by designation on other federal courts, at both the trial and appellate levels. In doing so, we judges not only assist those other courts with their case loads, but again it helps us stay attuned to how we can do things better, which is helpful to you and to us here in our district.

2. Education Programs

Regarding educational programs, almost all of the judges of our court have continued to volunteer their time on a variety of continuing legal education programs put on by various Bar Associations and Inns of Court, or continue to teach at various law schools. We encourage our judges to participate in such endeavors. Not only are these programs good for bench/bar relations, but we judges always learn something that makes us better at our job.

3. Visitors to Our Court

Also, our court is constantly being visited by people ranging from young school children from the Chicagoland area to judges and dignitaries from foreign governments. We encourage this also.

As for the experiences we provide to school children and young adults, I consulted with and appointed a court annexed committee of educators who helped us develop uniform education programs. We placed these materials on our website to enhance the students' field trips from their schools to the Courthouse. I believe it is important that students, who are the future of our country, fully understand the judiciary's proper role in our government. These educational materials are designed to help that understanding.

As I mentioned, we are visited by foreign judges and dignitaries, who come to learn more about our procedures and legal concepts, such as Judicial Independence, the application of the principles of the Rule of Law we have in our country, and about our Constitution and its bedrock doctrine of Separation of Powers. This past year, judges and other dignitaries from Australia, Russia, China, Korea, Ireland, Italy, and Israel came to visit our Dirksen U.S. Courthouse and spoke with judges of our court. There is no question that these discussions have developed better relations for our country around the world.

4. Home-Front Government Relations

Turning to home-front government relations, this past year our Chicago courthouse hosted several different Congressional hearings for House and Senate members and the United States Sentencing Commission. This experience not only aided the public and those other governmental bodies, but also enhanced relations within our own governmental branches.

Our court also, this past year, provided facilities for the United States Court of Claims and for more than a dozen different federal agency administrative law judges at various times throughout the year to assist them in better serving the public.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I hope this gives you each some insight into our judges' and court's work this past year. We have a number of new initiatives and programs on the horizon to better serve the public and the bar in the coming year. I look forward to reporting to you on those next year. Until then, I assure you that our court will continue its mission to administer justice by upholding the Constitution and the Rule of Law for all people.

As the judges of our court know, I consider that my role as chief judge is to provide each judge all the support and assistance that I can, in every way I can, to allow them all to administer justice in the best way they can.

It is an honor and privilege to serve as our court's chief judge. I thank our judges and each of you, who work for the court, along with all the members of our court's bar, for your assistance this past year, and I look forward to working with you on the challenges of the year to come.

Thank you.