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Justice of the Peace Court Management Analyst Charlotte Walsh Named 2023 Judicial Branch Employee of the Year

Charlotte Walsh, Justice of the Peace Court Management Analyst III, has been named the Judicial Branch Employee of the Year for 2023.

Charlotte, who has been with the Justice of the Peace Court for more than 34 years, started as a clerk in 1989, worked her way up through the ranks to Judicial Case Processor – where she oversaw the clerical staff – and then to Management Analyst III. During that time Charlotte established herself as an expert on court operations and systems, allowing her to lead cross-functional teams and improve a variety of court processes. She is also well known for her love of data. “When the court has a process that needs to be developed, or a programming issue, Charlotte is usually the first one to know there is something that needs to be fixed and she moves to fix it,” wrote her nominator. This was particularly helpful during the COVID pandemic as the court had to be nimble in the way it was conducting business to keep all involved safe. “She makes system changes just ‘happen’...she makes sure that the court is producing quality work and she is always creative in finding solutions,” wrote her nominator.

Charlotte is also known as a team player and is always willing to work with others in the Justice of the Peace Court, as well as with other courts and with outside agencies. Charlotte’s contributions may not be visible to the general public, but her work is well known to both court management and her peers and is critical to the court’s everyday operations.

“You are very lucky if you have Charlotte as a supervisor,” wrote one co-worker. “She not only has the time and patience to explain things; she is always open to new ideas. Charlotte has been an absolute joy to work with. She will always give you the ‘pat on the back’ for a job well done.”

Her nomination concluded with this tribute, “On a personal level, Charlotte is a very understanding person who always puts everyone ahead of herself. Charlotte is, in many ways, the life blood of the Justice of the Peace Court. She has worked diligently to transfer as much knowledge as she can to assist in maintaining the long-term viability of our organization.”

The Delaware Judiciary congratulates Charlotte on this well-earned achievement, and also wants to recognize other employees who also were nominated for the Judicial Branch Employee of the Year Award including:

MaryPat Fitzpatrick, Superior Court (former) Chief Deputy Prothonotary (who has since become Human Resources Advisor II). MaryPat is described by her co-workers as “a breath of fresh air who always brightens everyone’s day.” Her dedication is unmatched and her willingness to often stay after work hours to make sure everything is accomplished and running smoothly is just one example of how MaryPat goes above and beyond. She is also adept at deescalating sometimes tense situations that arise in the courthouse. On one occasion, a litigant came into the Prothonotary’s office struggling to speak English, explaining he was deaf and expressing frustration after being sent to several different places. After working closely with the litigant, MaryPat was able get clearance to allow him to bring his cell phone into the courthouse to communicate, worked with him to figure out where he needed to go, and

then arranged to get a court interpreter to help him address his questions with the proper court. “It is a great example of showing how MaryPat will do anything to help others whether that’s co-workers, judicial officers or even the public,” wrote her nominator.

MaryJarrell Little, Court of Common Pleas Human Resources Manager I. MaryJarrell, who has been with the Court of Common Pleas since 2007, is the longest serving Lead Human Resources Professional in the Delaware Judiciary with over 16 ½ years of consecutive service. Her knowledge of State of Delaware Human Resources policies and procedures is unparalleled, and she serves as a subject matter expert not just for the Court of Common Pleas but for other courts as well. MaryJarrell led the efforts for the Court of Common Pleas to transition 150 employees from the merit system to the Judicial Branch, making it as seamless as possible for the Court’s employees. She demonstrates impressive communication, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills in all aspects of her work and is an invaluable asset to the court.

Ramona Monsen, Court of Chancery Deputy Court Administrator. For nearly 50 years, Ramona has served the State of Delaware, starting with Superior Court in June of 1974, before moving to the Court of Chancery in 1998 as a Judicial Secretary, then an Administrative Officer in 2005, and was named to her current post in 2020. The length of Ramona’s tenure alone is noteworthy but Ramona is also an adept utility player who fills gaps in the organization as needed and is a font of historical knowledge for the Court. Court of Chancery’s Court Administrator Tamara Burton said Ramona is always “there to answer questions and assist where she can,” most recently stepping in to assist the Operations Manager during a vacancy. She has also been a key player in assisting the Court of Chancery in working with the Judicial Information Center on a new e-file system. “When I first arrived at the Court in 1989, she immediately made me feel comfortable and at home in my Wilmington chambers,” said former Chancellor William Chandler. “I soon learned that she was a veritable gold mine of information about all the courts and administrative personnel.” Chancellor Kathaleen St. J. McCormick described Ramona as the Court’s “standard bearer for decades.” And former Chief Justice and Chancellor Leo Strine said, “For a half century during which the Court of Chancery has been at the forefront of remarkable developments in our State’s and nation’s history, Ramona Monsen has been central to shaping Chancery’s culture of service and excellence.”

Debbie Grossman, Administrative Office of the Courts Office Manager. Debbie is always going above and beyond for the employees at the Administrative Office of the Courts and the public. One co-worker commented, “I do not know what I would do without Debbie,” while another added, “She is the contact that I always put on my Out of Office when I am going to be out.” As Office Manager, Debbie is required to be a jack of all trades, and she is able to multitask various responsibilities simultaneously while always maintaining a courteous, modest, and friendly manner. What really sets Debbie apart, however, is how proactively she takes on new challenges. Debbie never wants to be idle and is always looking to actively learn new skills. Once she has completed her work, it is not unusual to receive an email from Debbie asking if there is anything else that she can do to assist. In this way, Debbie has assumed more and more responsibilities within the office and expanded her role. When assigned a new task, whether verifying credentials during the annual bail registration, helping with invoicing for the Court Interpreter Program, redirecting callers to the right resource, or learning how to use Adobe Pro to create ADA accessible PDF forms, Debbie does so thoroughly and diligently. She does not hesitate to ask questions and confirm deadlines, to make sure that she is meeting and mastering task expectations. “It is a pleasure to work with Debbie,” wrote her nominator.

Karen Stokes-Minus, Family Court Civil Judicial Operations Manager. Karen began her career with Family Court in 1990 in New Castle County as a Clerk of Court. She was later promoted to a Judicial Case Processing Supervisor, and she has been the Civil Judicial Operations Manager (JOM) in New Castle County since 2011. Family Court benefits daily from Karen's wealth of institutional knowledge of the intricacies of more than a dozen case types that are processed by her unit. She oversees a very large team that consists of ten direct reports, which are a mixture of front-line supervisors and judicial case managers. Of the four supervisors she oversees, there are over twenty staff that report to them, with each unit specializing in different case types that include very serious emergency filings. Despite managing one of the largest teams in Family Court, Karen sets high standards for quality work and customer service. She is frequently called upon to assist with attorney and litigant inquiries on cases as well. Karen always strives to look at the big picture and has a good understanding of how the work her unit performs fits into the overall mission of Family Court, and takes seriously the impact her unit's work has on all other areas of the court and the public we serve. Karen's skills were especially noteworthy in 2023 as she was able to address issues before they turned into bigger problems. Even while her own unit was short-staffed, she provided assistance to other areas of the Court when necessary. She empowers her supervisors to do the same for their direct reports. "Karen puts her staff, the Court, and litigants first in everything she does," wrote her nominator.