

SUPERIOR COURT



PRESIDENT JUDGE JAN R. JURDEN

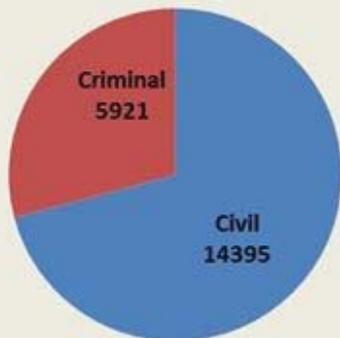
The mission of the Superior Court is to serve the public by providing fair, prompt and well-reasoned decisions in all matters coming before the Court. Our core values remain **Unity, Neutrality, Integrity, Timeliness, Equality, and Dedication.**

As Delaware's court of general jurisdiction, each year the Superior Court handles thousands of civil and criminal cases. Similar to preceding years, FY 2017 was an extremely busy year for the Superior Court. The Court experienced a 21% increase in civil filings with 14,395

filings received. While the Court saw an 8% decrease in criminal filings at 5,921, the criminal cases filed are increasingly complex and include an unprecedented number of First Degree Murder cases - 36 in FY17 alone, and many multi-defendant, multi-count, gang participation and criminal racketeering cases. Because of the number of defendants and attorneys involved in such cases, they often present significant logistical and scheduling challenges.

Superior Court experienced a 44% increase in criminal trials during FY 2017. Trial by jury continues to be the bedrock of our criminal and civil justice systems. Every week, hundreds of jurors are summoned for service in the Superior Court and the Court of Common Pleas in all three counties. In an effort to use technology to increase efficiency and make the process easier for prospective jurors, the Court will soon unveil a new web service which will, among other things, enable ju-

**NUMBER OF SUPERIOR COURT FILINGS
BY TYPE FY 2017**

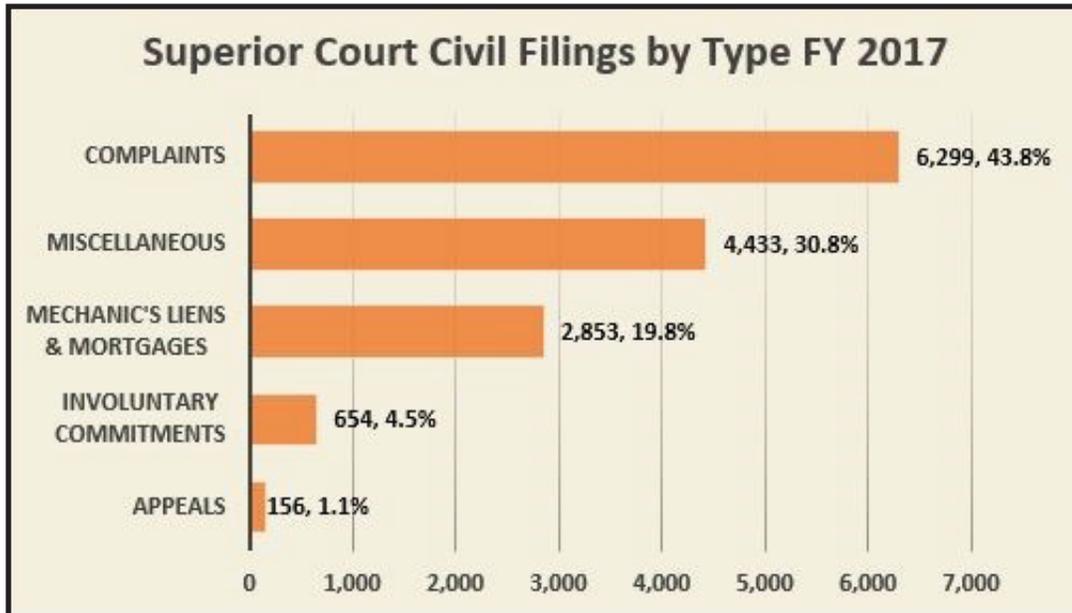


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rors to respond to the summons and juror questionnaire online and request rescheduling or excusal without having to call or report to the Courthouse. We continue to explore ways to minimize juror inconvenience and make the process more efficient and less stressful.

The Superior Court's highly successful Complex Commercial Litigation Division (CCLD), now in its seventh year, saw a 30% increase in filings in FY17. These cases include commercial claims with an amount in controversy of \$1 million or more. Parties filing CCLD cases can expect trial date priority and, if requested, expedited scheduling. The CCLD judges are Judge William C. Carpenter, Jr., Judge Mary M. Johnston, Judge Eric M. Davis and Judge Paul R. Wallace.

The Court's large Asbestos docket is managed by Judge Calvin L. Scott and Judge Ferris W. Wharton, with the assistance of Special Master Mathew F. Boyer, Esq., in New Castle County. During FY17, there were 152 filings, 42 dispositions and 1,222 cases pending.

The Superior Court has a number of problem solv-

ing courts which strive to improve outcomes for the participating individuals, reduce recidivism and improve public safety. These include Mental Health Court (MHC), Veterans' Treatment Court (VTC), and Reentry Court.

The MHC judicial officers are Sussex County Resident Judge T. Henley Graves; Kent County Commissioner Andrea Maybee

Freud; New Castle County Judge Andrea L. Rocanelli and Commissioner Kathleen L. Mayer. The Mental Health Court, launched in 2008, is a past recipient of the Governor's Team Excellence Award.

Our Veterans' Treatment Court (VTC) continues to grow and has been recognized by Veterans' organizations for its highly successful efforts in reducing recidivism and improving outcomes. The presiding VTC judges are Resident Judge William L. Witham, Jr., a retired Delaware Army National Guard Colonel, Judge Richard F. Stokes, a former Captain in the United States Air Force, and Judge Paul R. Wallace, a former United States Marine. Commissioner Bradley V. Manning assists with VTC in New Castle County. In FY17, in Kent County, VTC presented awards to three deserving persons/organizations instrumental in making this treatment court successful: the Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs, Cecilia Gonzalez, Veteran Justice Outreach Specialist, and Sgt. James Hooper, USA, Retired. In Sussex County, the VTC recognized Jessica Finan, Executive Director of the Home of the Brave Foundation, for her work on behalf of homeless veterans. Community representatives donated a wall mural honoring all

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branches of the military and a framed picture of an eagle, which are displayed proudly in the Sussex County Courthouse.

Our Reentry Court operates in New Castle County. The presiding judge is Judge Charles E. Butler. Reentry Court works in collaboration with Probation Officers and staff from the Wilmington Achievement Center, the Delaware Center for Justice and the Treatment Access Center to provide services to city residents who are reentering society after a prison sentence. Reentry Court meets regularly with program participants and service providers to emphasize those positive changes necessary to avoid a return to prison. In Reentry Court, the judge is an active participant in the offenders' supervision so that rewards and sanctions are delivered quickly and particular difficulties faced by former offenders can be addressed before they become critical issues resulting in re-incarceration.

The Superior Court continues in its efforts to improve the administration of civil and criminal justice in order to better serve the public. Our efforts include: training and education on evidence-based best practices, greater and smarter use of technology, and collaboration with the Bar, other courts, agencies, and stakeholders on innovative ideas to ensure equal justice for all, reduce recidivism, and improve public safety. By way of just one example, this past March, several of our employees participated in Crisis Intervention Team Training, learning methods to better manage mental health

crisis encounters and de-escalate crisis situations to enhance the safety of the public and court staff.

The Court also engages with the community. For example, Commissioner Lynne Parker developed and oversees a program each summer for high school students, affording them an opportunity to spend a week with the Court. These students observe civil and criminal trials, motions, pleas and sentencing, and shadow judicial officers. This program provides a unique opportunity for interested students to learn more about our justice system.

With the support of the Chief Justice and the assistance of the Administrative Office of the Courts and the Judicial Information Center, the Superior Court continues to explore the use of technology to improve efficiency in all departments, and to ensure that our jury courtrooms are equipped with state of the art technology that meets the needs of our litigants. In addition, a project team is also in the process of updating a critical platform, which enables the Court to generate automated sentencing orders.

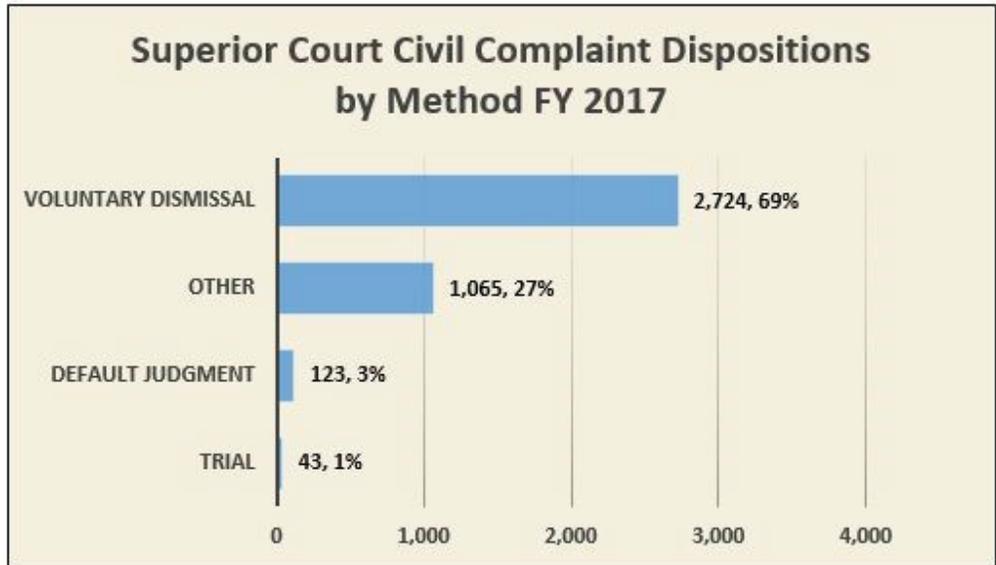


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We continue to review our criminal and civil court processes and forms in an effort to reduce redundancy, expedite processing, and standardize our processes. We are developing training manuals to reduce learning curves for new employees, and a training guide outlining step-by-step procedures for all processes used in criminal cases. This training guide will not only enable new criminal case managers to learn their duties and responsibilities faster, but educate them as to the purpose and importance of the procedures in the everyday functioning of the Court. This work will also be instrumental in ensuring a smooth transition to electronic filing in criminal cases which we hope to implement in 2019.

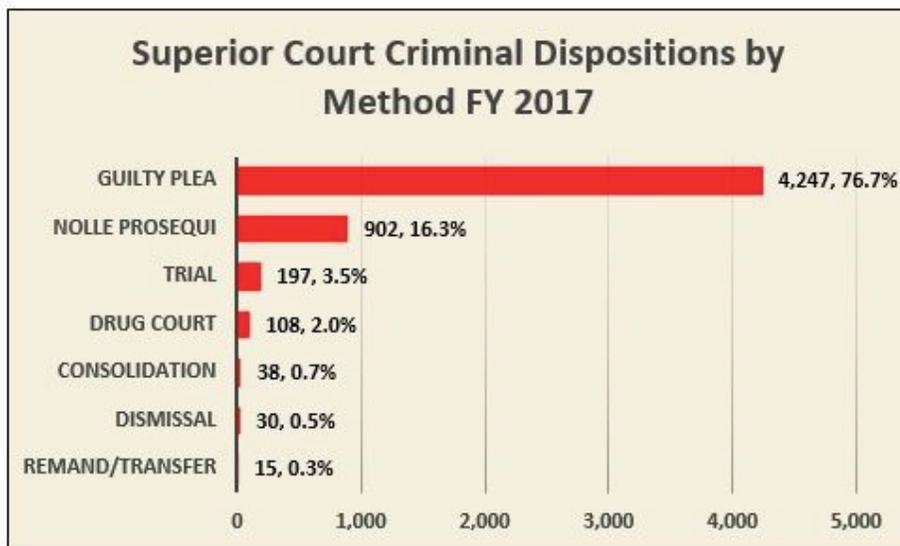
The Superior Court recently unified our financial case management system statewide. In the past, all three counties entered financial information into the Judicial Information Center (JIC) Accounting system. This process allowed only Superior Court to



access the financials, which resulted in limited information sharing, thereby creating delays in the acceptance of payments for court fines, costs and restitution. Under this new process, financials will be entered into the Delaware Criminal Justice Information System (DELJIS). Because DELJIS is an integrated criminal justice system, the new process enables the Superior Court to notify individuals when payments are due, more efficiently monitor payments, and refer cases with unpaid costs, fines and restitution to the Office of the State Court Collections Enforcement (OSCCE) in a timelier manner.

Each year the Superior Court issues thousands of orders and opinions which are published on the Court's website: <http://courts.delaware.gov/opinions>. We continually update our website in our ongoing concerted effort to keep the Bar and public informed and to make the court system easier to navigate.

The Superior Court is fortunate to have extremely hardworking, dedicated and loyal staff who work tirelessly to maintain the level of superb service



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that litigants deserve. The Court is proud of our employees and the significant contributions they make.

Our Chief Court Security Officer in Kent County, Joe Sanchez, was awarded the Chief’s Citation from Capitol Police on April 13, 2017. Chief Sanchez is the first civilian to be awarded this prestigious citation.

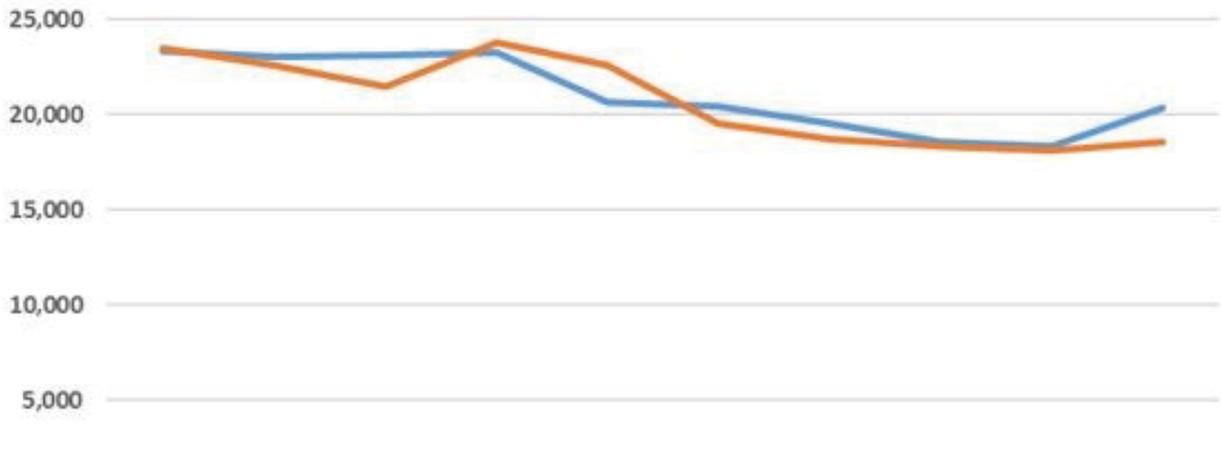
Our Court Administration Office continues to experience exciting and positive change with the addition of our new Deputy Court Administrator in New Castle County, Kristin Dangelo, who has served the courts for over 15 years, and our new Controller, Sheila Kumpf, who has served the State for 10 years. The new members of our Court Administration Office add additional energy, fresh perspectives and a wealth of experience to our extremely hard-

working administrative team. Our former Controller, Roger Kling, retired in July 2017 after 17 years of service.

In April 2017, the Court said farewell to our colleague and friend, the Honorable Robert B. Young, who retired after 12 years of dedicated service on the bench as a Superior Court Judge in Kent County. And, on June 1, 2017, the Court welcomed the Honorable Noel Eason Primos, who, before joining the bench, practiced with the law firm of Schmittinger & Rodriquez in Dover for over 24 years.

Notwithstanding staggering caseloads, staff turnover, limited resources and fiscal constraints, our Court continues to work hard to provide exemplary service to the people we are honored to serve. ♦

Superior Court Civil & Criminal Filings & Dispositions by Fiscal Year



	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Filings	23,292	23,035	23,124	23,265	20,616	20,397	19,504	18,540	18,291	20,316
Dispositions	23,450	22,602	21,435	23,752	22,544	19,527	18,663	18,354	18,100	18,544

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SUPERIOR COURT COMMISSIONERS

Standing (left to right):

Commissioner Lynne M. Parker
Commissioner Andrea Maybee Freud
Commissioner Bradley V. Manning
Commissioner Alicia B. Howard
Commissioner Katharine L. Mayer

The **Honorable Katharine L. Mayer** was formally sworn in as Commissioner of the Superior Court of Delaware on July 11, 2016. Prior to her appointment, Commissioner Mayer worked as a litigation partner with McCarter & English.

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Front Row (L-R): Judge William C. Carpenter, Jr., Resident Judge T. Henley Graves, President Judge Jan R. Jurden, Resident Judge Richard R. Cooch, Resident Judge William L. Witham, Jr.

Middle Row (L-R): Judge Diane Clarke Streett, Judge M. Jane Brady, Judge Mary Miller Johnston, Judge E. Scott Bradley, Judge Richard F. Stokes, Judge Calvin L. Scott, Jr., Judge Robert B. Young (Retired), Judge John A. Parkins, Jr.

Back Row (L-R): Judge Abigail M. LeGrow, Judge Ferris W. Wharton, Judge Vivian L. Medinilla, Judge Eric M. Davis, Judge Charles E. Butler, Judge Paul R. Wallace, Judge Andrea L. Rocanelli, Judge Jeffrey J. Clark.



The **Honorable Noel Eason Primos** was formally sworn in as a Judge of the Superior Court of Delaware on June 1, 2017. Prior to his appointment, Judge Primos practiced law for over 24 years with the Dover, Delaware, law firm of Schmittinger and Rodriguez. Judge Primos filled the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Robert B. Young.