

SUPERIOR COURT



SUPERIOR COURT



PRESIDENT JUDGE JAN R. JURDEN

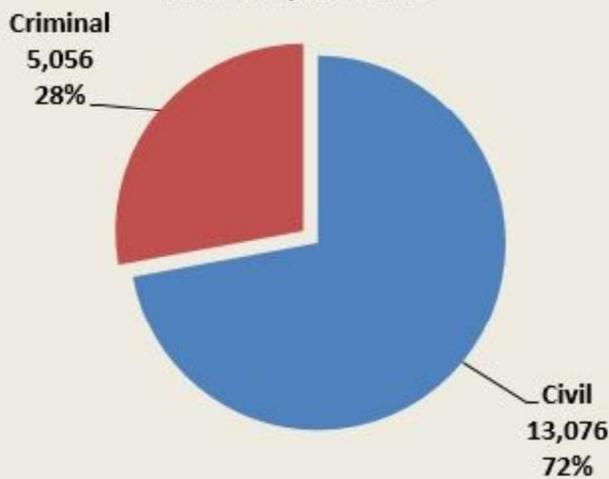
The mission of the Superior Court is to serve the public by providing fair, prompt and well-reasoned decisions in all matters coming before the Court. Our core values remain Unity, Neutrality, Integrity, Timeliness, Equality, and Dedication.

As Delaware's trial court of general jurisdiction, each year the Superior Court handles thousands of civil and criminal cases. Similar to preceding years, FY18 was a busy year for the Superior Court. The

Court had 13,076 civil filings and 5,056 criminal filings. Thirty-nine First Degree Murder cases were filed in FY18, and many complex multi-defendant, multi-count, gang participation and criminal racketeering cases were filed as well. Because of the number of defendants and attorneys involved in such cases, they often present significant logistical, staffing and scheduling challenges.

Superior Court experienced an increase in criminal trials during FY18. 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 has enhanced its Jury Management system. We now offer an online Juror Qualification Questionnaire and jurors have the ability to request excusals and postponements online. Because such requests are made in real time, jury staff are able

**NUMBER OF SUPERIOR COURT FILINGS
BY TYPE, FY 2018**



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to review and grant or deny requests quickly. 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 eighth year, saw a 3% increase in filings in FY18. 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

Court (MHC), Veterans' Treatment Court (VTC) and Reentry Court.

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, courts, agencies and stakeholders on innovative ideas to ensure equal justice for all, reduce recidivism, and improve public safety. By way of example, our staff attends

Access to Justice Committee meetings; is assisting with the conversion of the law libraries to self-help centers; is coordinating with the Administrative Office of the Court to ensure clear and understandable signs in the courthouses and that Court forms are translated into Spanish; and is adopting and implementing national best practices and bench books for our Problem Solving Courts.

In an effort to enhance employee security, Court staff

attended *The Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events* training, which provides strategies and guidance for surviving an active shooter event.

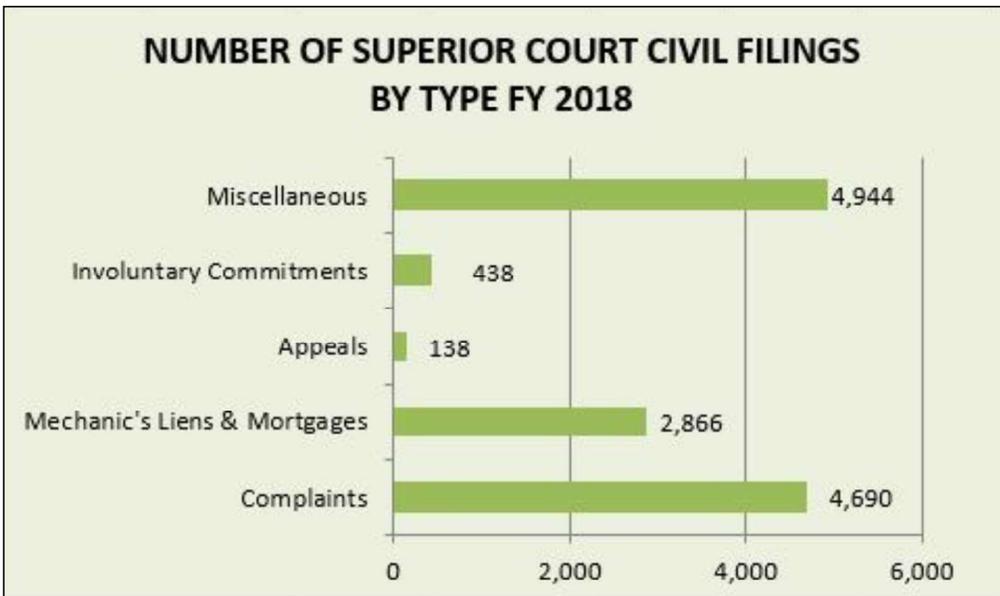
The Court's large Asbestos docket is managed by Judge Ferris W. Wharton and Judge Jeffrey J Clark, with the able assistance of Special Master Matthew F. Boyer, Esquire. During FY18, there were 132 filings, 708 dispositions and 11,429 cases pending.

The Superior Court has a number of problem solving courts that strive to improve outcomes for the participating individuals, reduce recidivism and improve public safety. These include Mental Health

In FY18, the Superior Court held its fifth annual summer program for high school students. This week-long program affords students an opportunity to observe civil and criminal trials, motions, pleas and sentencings, and to shadow judicial officers. This program not only provides a unique opportunity for interested high school students to learn more about our courts and how they operate, but also about potential careers in the civil and criminal justice system.

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**NUMBER OF SUPERIOR COURT CIVIL FILINGS
BY TYPE FY 2018**



judges are Judge Mary M. Johnston, Judge Eric M. Davis, Judge Paul R. Wallace and Judge Abigail M. LeGrow.

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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 Bar and litigants. This remains a top priority.

We continue to review our criminal and civil court forms and processes in an effort to reduce redundancy, expedite processing, and standardize our processes. We are also developing training manuals to reduce learning curves for new employees. For example, the criminal division is developing a training guide outlining step-by-step procedures for all processes utilized in criminal cases. This training guide will enable new case managers to learn their duties and responsibilities more quickly and will 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 e-filing in criminal cases which we hope to implement in late 2019.

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

Court Security Officer (CSO) Erika Bradley was selected as Superior Court's Employee of the Year and the Judiciary's Employee of the Year. CSO Bradley was presented with the Delaware Award for Excellence and Commitment in State Service by Governor John Carney on May 7, 2018.

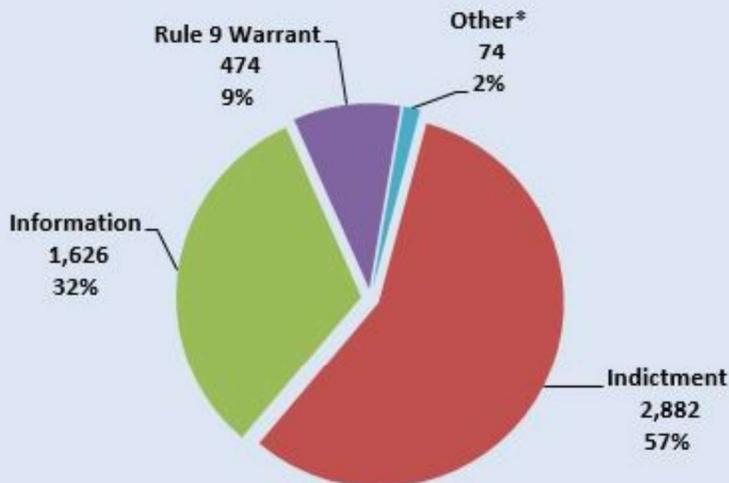
In December 2017, Sharon Agnew, who served as the Prothonotary in New Castle County for over 40 years, was awarded the prestigious Government Service Award by the Delaware State Bar Association.

This award is presented in recognition of dedicated and distinguished contributions to the Administration of Justice.

In December 2017, the Honorable M. Jane Brady retired after 12 years on the bench as a Superior Court Judge. On March 30, 2018, Resident Judge T. Henley Graves retired after serving 29 years as a Superior Court Judge, including a stint as acting President Judge and 18 years as Resident Judge of Sussex County.

Lisa Robinson, our Deputy Court Administrator (DCA) in Kent County, retired in February 2018 after 27 years of service with the Superior Court. Ms. Robinson served the Court in many

NUMBER OF SUPERIOR COURT CRIMINAL FILINGS BY TYPE FY 2018



*Includes appeals, transfers, reinstatements, and severances.

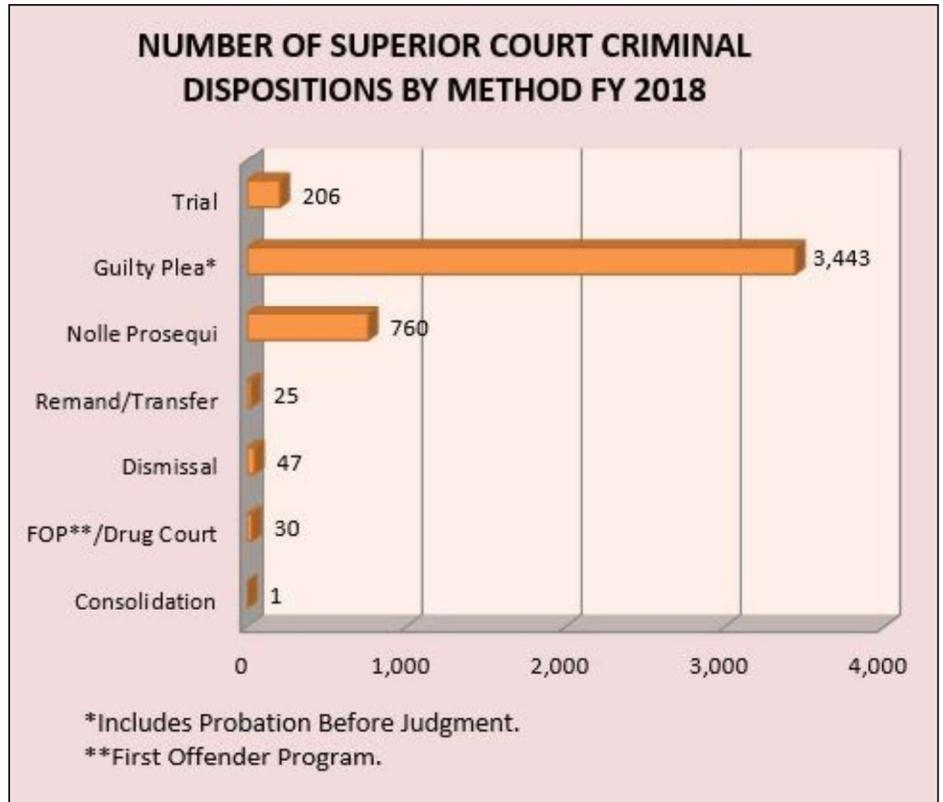
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roles over the course of her career, including Senior Court Clerk, Civil Supervisor, Chief Deputy Prothonotary, Prothonotary and Deputy Court Administrator. Melanie Ewing-Lahutsky is now the DCA in Kent County. She previously served as the Chief Investigative Services Officer in Kent County. Ms. Ewing-Lahutsky has 24 years experience with the Court.

On April 27, 2018, the Superior Court welcomed Judge Sheldon K. Rennie. Prior to joining the Superior Court bench, Judge Rennie served as a Judge on the Court of Common Pleas.

Notwithstanding heavy caseloads and staff turnover, our Court continues to work hard to provide exemplary service to the people we are honored to serve. ♦



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SUPERIOR COURT



SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES

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

Middle Row (L-R): Judge Eric M. Davis, Judge Diane Clarke Streett, Judge Mary Miller Johnston, Judge E. Scott Bradley, Judge Calvin L. Scott, Jr., Judge John A. Parkins, Jr., Judge Charles E. Butler

Back Row (L-R): Judge Noel E. Primos, Judge Jeffrey J. Clark, Judge Andrea L. Rocanelli, Judge Paul R. Wallace, Judge Vivian L. Medinilla, Judge Ferris W. Wharton, Judge Abigail M. LeGrow, Judge Sheldon K. Rennie.

The **Honorable Craig A. Karsnitz** was sworn in as a Judge of the Superior Court on October 3, 2018. Prior to his appointment, Judge Karsnitz was a partner at the law firm of Young Conaway Stargatt & Taylor LLP. Judge Karsnitz fills a vacancy created by the retirement of the Honorable T. Henley Graves.

SUPERIOR COURT



SUPERIOR COURT COMMISSIONERS

Standing (left to right):

Commissioner Lynne M. Parker
Commissioner Andrea Maybee Freud
Commissioner Bradley V. Manning (*currently a
Judge on the Court of Common Pleas*)
Commissioner Alicia B. Howard
Commissioner Katharine L. Mayer

SUPERIOR COURT

IN MEMORIAM

The HONORABLE NORMAN A. BARRON



The Honorable Norman A. Barron, 75, served on the Delaware Superior Court from 1989 until 2001. He also served as the first Chief Magistrate of the Delaware Justice of the Peace Court from 1980 to 1988.

Judge Barron was born and raised in South Orange, New Jersey and graduated from Hamilton College in 1964. After college, he served in the United States Navy and was honorably discharged in 1968 as a full Lieutenant.

Judge Barron received his law degree from Emory University and worked as a Delaware Deputy Attorney General and Chief Deputy Attorney General before being appointed Chief Magistrate by Governor Pierre S. du Pont. Judge Barron then briefly served as an Assistant Public Defender before being appointed to the Superior Court by Governor Mike Castle. He presided over many high profile cases and earned the reputation as a law-and-order judge. In 2000, he received the Chief Justice's Annual Award for Outstanding Judicial Service.

“Judge Barron was a brilliant jurist with a great command of the law, civil and criminal. He was particularly interested in and adept at handling capital and other complex criminal matters. Judge Barron also had a realistic view of how to mesh that knowledge with common sense ... He taught me how to effectively try a criminal case and hopefully to do justice. He also taught me how to apply the law and at the same time retain a sense of humanity. He was my friend and confidant. I miss his intellect, wit, charm and sense of humor. The world is a better place because of his service to others.”

— Retired Judge Charles H. Toliver, IV

“Judge Barron will long be remembered for his great sense of humor and his dedication to duty. He was my ‘mentor’ when I joined the Court in 1992 (just as he had been, as a Deputy Attorney General, when I joined the Attorney General’s Office eighteen years earlier).”

— Resident Judge Richard R. Cooch