



1984

Rhode Island Report on the Judiciary 1983-1984

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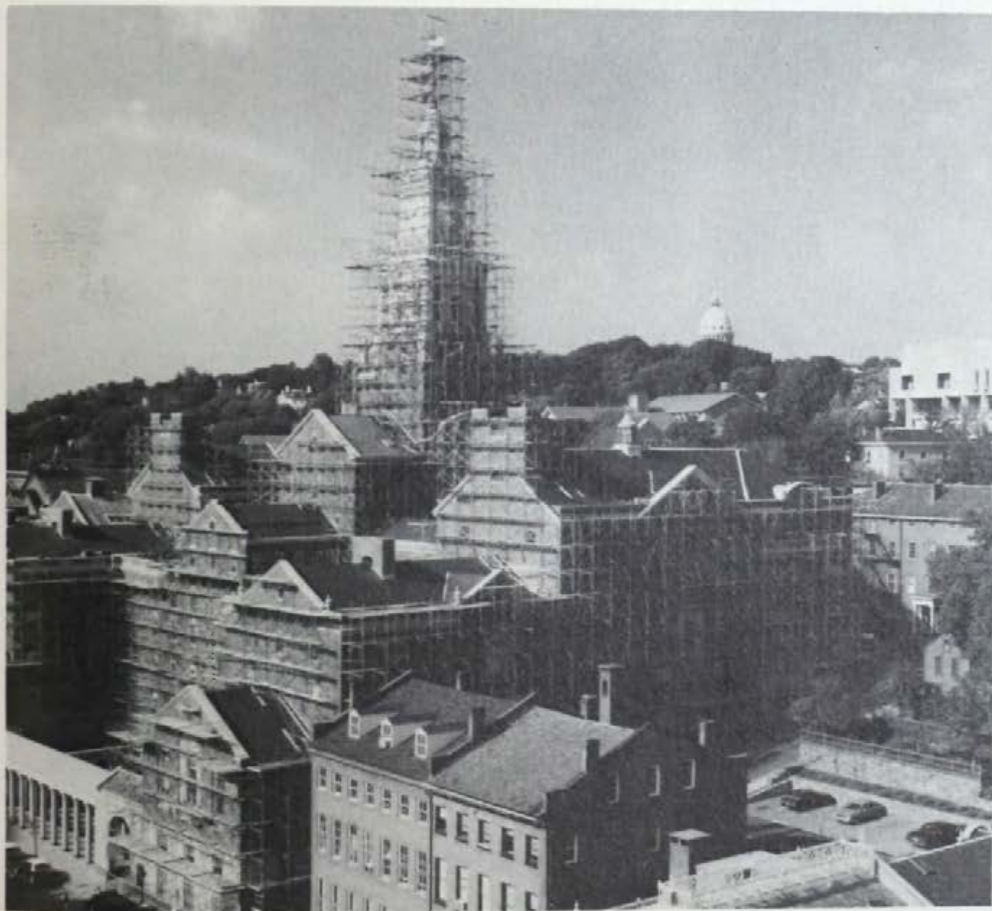
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STATE OF
• RHODE ISLAND
REPORT ON THE JUDICIARY



1983-1984



TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF
THE RHODE ISLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

I am pleased to report continued progress in the state courts. Through the efforts of our judges, administrators, and court staff — with the support and cooperation of the legislative and executive branches — the judiciary is now better housed, better equipped, and better managed. These advances are based on steady improvement over the last 15 years, but the progress made in the first five years of the 80's is particularly noteworthy.

Now many of these advances are threatened. The courts' workload is becoming more difficult and varied. The people of Rhode Island, as individuals and jointly through their legislators, have asked the courts to do more for them. More stringent criminal laws and longer jail sentences discourage pleas and bring more cases to trial, while expanded civil jurisdiction in such areas as small claims, domestic abuse, the environment, and administrative appeals have increased the courts' role in disputes between individuals. Additionally, after a few years of slight decline, total caseloads began to rise again in 1984.

So far the judiciary has adapted to these changing demands and has also made real progress in modernizing its facilities and operations. On the whole, the courts have continued to reduce the number of pending cases and the average length of time taken to dispose of cases.

In order to effectively handle the courts' work within the time frames established for disposing of cases, it has been necessary for the court to take a more active role in the management of cases. This management role requires qualified personnel and information systems to supply the judge and litigants with timely information on which decisions can be based. Gone are the days when all that was necessary was a judge, a courtroom clerk, and a court stenographer. It has been my policy to use modern technology to support our management initiatives, thus keeping our need for additional personnel to a minimum. The administrative office has implemented a five-year program of purchasing the necessary computer equipment. This will peak with a cost for purchase and maintenance of equipment at about \$500,000 in fiscal 1985.

The courts have also had to increase expenditures to expand and improve their buildings. After 50 years of no capital spending by those agencies charged with providing and maintaining court facilities, the judiciary has had to initiate a large building and renovation program. Some of the photographs in this report show conditions in the Providence County Courthouse that are being corrected. As a result, annual rental costs have risen 78%, to 2 million dollars, in the last three years.

Unfortunately, increases in court staff and budgets have not kept pace with increases in the demands placed upon them. Judicial expenditures have grown more slowly than state spending as a whole, and in the 1983 fiscal crisis the courts spent even less than they had the previous year. The judiciary's small share of the state budget, never more than 1.5%, has recently fallen to 1.36%.

I am proud of the efforts and sacrifices made by the judges and judicial staff in the last few years, but they cannot be expected to make up for the neglect of the past and meet the demands of the future without an equitable share of the state budget. There is no lobby or powerful interest group that will serve as an advocate for the needs of the courts, but the public's right to justice requires a strong and effective court system. This right can only be effectively secured if the executive and legislative branches of government provide the judicial branch with the necessary resources.

It is imperative that, when decisions are made concerning the allocation of funds, the judicial system receive the highest priority.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Bevilacqua Chief Justice,
Supreme Court

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This report covers calendar years 1983 and 1984

Pursuant to Chapter 8-15 of the Rhode Island General Laws as amended by Chapter 247 of the 1975 Public Laws, this report was prepared by the:

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF STATE COURTS

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This hallway in the Law Library was damaged by leaking roof drains in the Providence County Courthouse.



Cracks like this one in the Providence County Courthouse's clock tower show the need for major renovation.

RHODE ISLAND COURT STRUCTURE

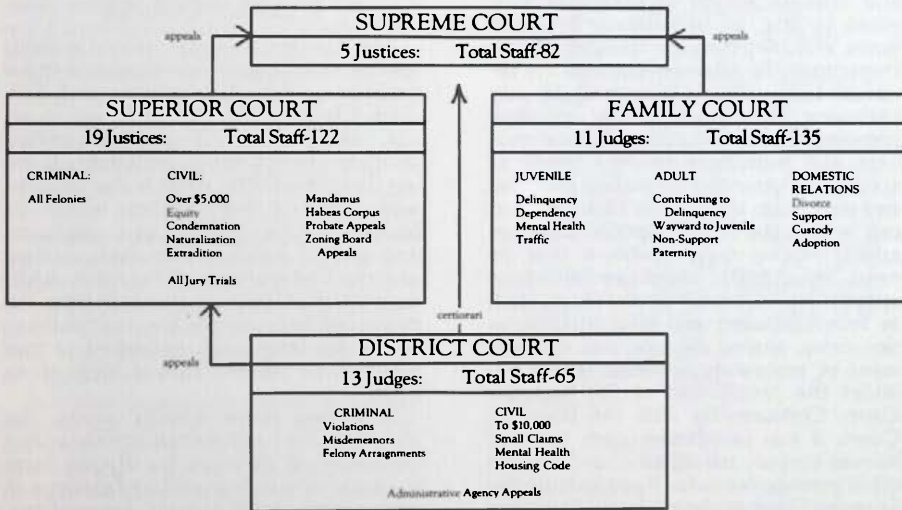
Rhode Island has a unified court system composed of four statewide courts: the District and Family Courts are trial courts of special jurisdiction, the Superior Court is the general trial court, and the Supreme Court is the court of review.

The entire system in Rhode Island is state-funded with the exception of Probate Courts, which are the responsibility of cities and towns; and the Providence, Warwick and Pawtucket Municipal Courts, which are local courts of limited jurisdiction. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is the executive head of the state court system and has authority over the judicial budget. The Chief Justice appoints a state court administrator and an administrative staff to handle budgetary and general administrative functions. Each court has responsibility over its own operations and has a chief judge who appoints an administrator to handle internal court management.

SUPREME COURT

The Supreme Court is the highest court in the state, and it not only has final advisory and appellate jurisdiction on questions of law and equity, but it also has supervisory powers over the other state courts. Its area of jurisdiction is statewide. It has general advisory responsibility to both the Legislative and Executive branches of the state government and passes upon the constitutionality of legislation. Another responsibility of the Supreme Court is the regulation of admission to the Bar and the discipline of its members.

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court also serves as the executive head of the entire state court system. Acting in this capacity, he appoints the State Court Administrator and the staff of the Administrative Office of the State Courts. This office performs personnel, fiscal,



Staffing and jurisdictional organization of the Rhode Island Courts.

and purchasing functions for the state court system. In addition, the Administrative Office serves a wide range of management functions, including long-range planning; the collection, analysis, and reporting of information on court case-loads and operations; the development and implementation of management improvement projects in specified areas; the supervision of facilities; and the application for and administration of grants for the court system.

The State Law Library is also under the direction of the Supreme Court. The library's primary function is to provide reference materials and research services for the judges and staff of the courts. However, it also serves the general community as the only comprehensive law library in the state.

SUPERIOR COURT

The Superior Court is the state's trial court of general jurisdiction. It hears civil matters concerning claims in excess of \$5,000 and all equity proceedings. It also has original jurisdiction over all crimes and offenses except as otherwise provided by law. All indictments by grand juries and informations charged by the Department of Attorney General are returned to Superior Court, and all jury trials are held there. It has appellate jurisdiction over decisions of local probate and municipal courts. Except as specifically provided by statute, criminal and civil cases tried in the District Court can be brought to the Superior Court on appeal where they receive a trial de novo. In addition, there are numerous appeals and statutory proceedings, such as redevelopment and land condemnation cases, zoning appeals, and enforcement of arbitrators awards, which are under the jurisdiction of the Superior Court. Concurrently with the Supreme Court, it has jurisdiction over writs of habeas corpus, mandamus, and certain other prerogative writs. Appeals from the Superior Court are heard by the Supreme Court.



Map of the State of Rhode Island showing the Superior and Family Courts

FAMILY COURT

The Family Court was created to focus special attention on individual and social problems concerning families and children. Consequently, its goals are to assist, protect, and if possible, restore families whose unity or well-being is being threatened. This court is also charged with assuring that children within its jurisdiction receive the care, guidance, and control conducive to their welfare and the best interests of the state. Additionally, if children are removed from the control of their parents, the court seeks to secure for them care equivalent to that which their parents should have given them.

Reflecting these specific goals, the Family Court has jurisdiction to hear and determine all petitions for divorce from the bond of marriage and any motions in conjunction with divorce proceedings, such as motions relating to the distribu-

tion of property, alimony, support, and the custody of children. It also hears petitions for separate maintenance, and complaints regarding support for parents and children. The Family Court also has jurisdiction over those matters relating to delinquent, wayward, dependent, neglected, abused or mentally defective or mentally disordered children. It also has jurisdiction over adoptions, child marriages, paternity proceedings, and a number of other matters involving domestic relations and juveniles.

Appeals from decisions of the Family Court are taken directly to the state Supreme Court.

DISTRICT COURT

Most people who come to or are brought before courts in this state have contact initially with the District Court. This court was established to give the people of the state easy geographic access to the court system and to provide speedy trials in settling civil disputes involving limited claims and in judging those accused of lesser crimes. The District Court has statewide jurisdiction and is divided into eight divisions.

Specifically, the jurisdiction of the District Court for civil matters includes small claims that can be brought without a lawyer for amounts under \$1,000 and actions at law concerning claims of no more than \$5,000. In 1981 legislation also gave the District Court concurrent jurisdiction with the Superior Court for civil actions at law between \$5,000 and \$10,000 with transfer to the Superior Court available upon demand of either party. This court also has jurisdiction over violations of municipal ordinances or regulations.

In criminal cases, the District Court has original jurisdiction over all misdemeanors where the right to a jury trial in the first instance has been waived. If a defendant invokes the right to a jury trial, the case is transferred to the Superior Court.

Unlike many limited jurisdiction courts, the District Court does not handle traffic violations, except for a very few of the most serious offenses.

Appeals from District Court decisions in both civil and criminal cases go to the Superior Court for trial de novo. In actual practice, this right to a new trial is seldom used, and District Court dispositions are final in 96.7% of all criminal cases and 98.5% of all civil cases. An additional category of minor offense, called violations, was created by the Legislature in 1976. Decisions of the District Court on violation cases are final and subject to review only on writ of certiorari to the Supreme Court.

Since October 1976, the District Court has had jurisdiction over hearings on involuntary hospitalization under the mental health, drug abuse, and alcoholism laws. The District Court also has jurisdiction to hear appeals from the ad-



Map of the State of Rhode Island Showing the Divisions of the District Court

judicatory decisions of several regulatory agencies and boards. The court also has the power to order compliance with the subpoenas and rulings of the same agencies and boards. In 1977, this court's

jurisdiction was again increased to include violations of state and local housing codes. District Court decisions in all these matters are only subject to review by the Supreme Court.

1983-1984 IN THE RHODE ISLAND COURTS

JUDICIAL BUDGET COMPARISON

The chart below compares the judicial budget with the total state budget for the last five fiscal years. For the first four years the figures shown are actual expenditures, but for the 1984-85 fiscal year the figures are the amounts allocated by the Legislature.

During this period the courts have kept their expenses within the limits set by the legislature, and the judicial budget has increased more slowly than the state budget as a whole. This is demonstrated by the decline in the judicial share of the state budget as shown on the chart. Court expenditures actually went down in the

1982-1983 fiscal year, when about \$700,000 of the judicial allocation was returned unspent in response to the state's fiscal crisis.

This austerity has hurt the courts by causing a reduction in support staff and by the slow filling of judicial vacancies. Although the judiciary has made administrative and procedural changes to improve efficiency, and funding levels have been gradually improved, the courts continue to suffer from staff and program cutbacks, and have not regained the budget share they had in the 1980-1981 fiscal year.

	1980-1981	1981-1982	1982-1983	1983-1984	1984-1985
STATE BUDGET	1,067,094,750	1,134,540,620	1,170,913,932	1,241,831,166	1,352,427,691
Increase	93,730,212	67,445,870	36,373,312	70,917,234	110,596,525
JUDICIAL BUDGET	15,522,977	16,165,979	15,819,883*	17,282,692	18,454,858
Increase	3,158,688	643,002	-346,096*	1,462,809	1,172,166
JUDICIAL SHARE	1.45%	1.42%	1.34%	1.39%	1.36%

*2.14% decrease (\$703,892 saved from original allocation)

The narrative that follows gives a brief overview of activity in the Rhode Island State Courts during the past three years. The programs and events described are only meant to be representative of the many activities and accomplishments of these years.

This part of the report has been di-

vided into four main sections, one for each of the state courts. However, since there are many centralized or co-operative activities in the state court system, a program described in a section on one court could have involved another court or the entire system.

SUPREME COURT

1984 COURT TERM MOST SUCCESSFUL IN HISTORY

The 1984 court year was the most successful in Supreme Court history. Dispositions reached an all time high, with 665 appeals disposed, and dispositions exceeded filings by 52 cases. In addition, at the end of the court year there were 647 appeals pending, which was an 8% drop in one year. This was only the second time in eleven years that the court year has ended with fewer cases pending than at the beginning.

The outstanding results for 1984 were the culmination of a six year effort by the court to increase dispositions and reduce the backlog of pending appeals. The focus of this effort has been on implementing new procedures for disposing of cases in an expedited manner. Since the program was initiated in 1979, total dispositions have gone up by 39%, and the number of cases disposed without a full opinion has risen by 75% from 276 to 482.

One example of the impact of the new procedures has been the dramatic change in the disposition of criminal appeals following the implementation of the new fast-track process. In 1979, before this process was in effect, only about 18% of the appeals in this category were disposed before oral argument on the merits. In contrast, the percentage increased to over 50% in 1983 and 1984 with the new process. In addition, criminal dispositions have consistently been higher, since the fast-track procedure was implemented, and as a result, over a five year period the court has reduced the number of pending criminal appeals by more than 50%. Between 1979 and 1984 the number of pending criminal appeals dropped from 137 to 61.

The other major procedural change has been the screening of all civil appeals

and the scheduling of a conference for those with a potential for settlement or disposition by a show cause order.

In addition to experimenting with ways to expedite the processing of cases, the court has also addressed the issue of what types of cases should properly be brought as appeals of right. The first category scrutinized by the court was discretionary petitions for certiorari. In 1979, following a recommendation in the National Center for State Court's study of the Rhode Island appellate process, the court adopted stringent standards for granting review in these cases. Prior to this the court was granting review in between 55% and 71% of the petitions filed, but was granting the relief sought in only about 35% after full briefing and argument. In contrast under the new policy the court has granted certiorari during the past three years in only 12% to 19% of the cases seeking such review.

Two other areas the court has scrutinized have been domestic relations appeals and appeals from the Workers' Compensation Commission. Because of a tremendous increase in the number of appeals in these two categories, the court sought legislation to address the problem. For example, between 1979 and 1981 appeals in domestic relations cases rose by over 250%. At the urging of the court, legislation was passed in 1981 eliminating appeals as a right in cases involving the modification of support. Likewise, in response to a similar rate of increase in Workers' Compensation appeals during 1983, legislation was passed and went into effect in mid-1984 eliminating an automatic right of appeal in these cases. Appeals from the Workers' Compensation Commission are now by petition for certiorari.

Based on what was achieved in 1984, the outlook for the future is very promising. It is anticipated that filings will drop due to the change in legislation affecting Workers' Compensation cases,

and if the court can maintain the current disposition rate, dispositions may exceed filings by as much as 100 cases in the 1985 term.

However, despite the positive results, there is still a need to monitor what happens and to address problems as they arise. For example, one area which still is a bottleneck is the number of cases with both briefs filed awaiting oral argument. At the end of the 1984 term there were 303 appeals in this status, and 163 of them, or over 50%, had been pending at this stage for more than a year. The court will be addressing this as a priority in 1985.

LEGISLATION PASSED TO CONTROL THE INFLUX OF WORKERS COMPENSATION APPEALS

During the 1983 court year the Supreme Court was inundated with appeals from the Workers' Compensation Commission. Prior to this, appeals from the Commission had averaged around 31 cases per term. However, in 1983 the number jumped to 95, which was an increase of 300%. As a result of the influx of appeals, dispositions for the 1983 term fell below the number of cases docketed, and the pending caseload climbed to 704. This was the second time that the caseload had risen above 700.

In addition, a review of disposed appeals from the Commission suggested that the majority of these cases were without merit. Of the 65 cases in this category disposed on the motion calendar, 60 (or 92%) affirmed the decision of the Commission and were disposed by show cause order.

To address the problem, the court sponsored legislation eliminating an automatic right of appeal from Commission decisions and requiring instead that review be sought by petitioning the court to grant certiorari. This legislation was passed and became effective May 7, 1984. The immediate effect of the legislation was evident. At the end of the

1984 term there were 77 appeals filed from the Workers' Compensation Commission, which was 25% less than had been projected.

UNIFORM RULES OF EVIDENCE COMPLETED

In December, 1980, Chief Justice Joseph A. Bevilacqua of the Rhode Island Supreme Court announced the appointment of a Special Committee to Develop Uniform Rules of Evidence. The mandate of the committee was to assist in formulating rules of evidence which would apply to proceedings in all state courts.

The committee appointees are broadly representative of the legal community and include members of the judiciary and representatives of the Department of the Attorney General, the Public Defender, the private bar, and the General Assembly. Associate Justice Florence K. Murray of the Rhode Island Supreme Court was asked by the Chief Justice to serve as committee chairperson.

Professor Eric D. Green of the Boston University School of Law serves as consultant to the committee, and attorney Bruce E. Vealey is staff attorney.

The Rules of Evidence Committee has met monthly for the past four years. Recently, a tentative draft of the proposed Rhode Island Rules of Evidence was completed and distributed to the committee for review. A final review of the proposed rules will take place at a series of committee meetings scheduled for the latter part of January, 1985. Following final approval by the committee, the proposed Rules will be submitted to the Supreme Court.

The members of the committee have discussed the process which the court should use so that members of the judiciary and the bar can review and comment on the proposed rules prior to their adoption. However, the committee has made no recommendations, and the Supreme Court, as of this date, has not made any final decisions on this question.

**ASSOCIATE JUSTICE
FLORENCE K. MURRAY
NAMED WOMAN JUDGE OF
THE YEAR BY THE NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN
JUDGES**

Associate Justice Florence K. Murray was named Woman Judge of the Year by the National Association of Women Judges. The award was presented at the organization's sixth annual conference in October, 1984. Justice Murray was honored for her achievements in judicial education programs at the state and national level and for her extensive involvement in community, state and national education and civic activities.

Past recipients of this award include U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and Chief Justice Rose Elizabeth Bird of the California Supreme Court.

Justice Murray has received numerous other honors, including the National Conference of Christians and Jews Brotherhood Award in 1983 and the Silver



Supreme Court Justice Florence K. Murray was honored by the National Association of Women Judges as "Woman Judge of the Year."

Shingle Distinguished Alumni Award from Boston University Law School. She also holds honorary degrees from nine universities.

**WALTER J. KANE RECEIVES
NATIONAL RECOGNITION
FOR COURT IMPROVEMENT
EFFORTS**

Walter J. Kane, State Court Administrator since 1969, has received the National Center for State Courts' Distinguished Service Award. The award was presented to him by Supreme Court Associate Justice Joseph R. Weisberger at the June, 1984 State Judicial Conference.

Other recipients of this national award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to court administration, include U.S. Chief Justice Warren Burger, U.S. Senator Howell Heflin and National Steel Corporation Chairman George Stinson.

Since his appointment as State Court Administrator, Walter Kane has been involved in numerous statewide and national court improvement efforts. He was chairman of the Conference of State Court Administrators in 1978 and 1979. He was also chairman of the Conference's Advisory Committee to the National Center for State Courts Statistics and Information Management Project. From 1980 through 1982 he headed a National Center Task Force to develop national standards for jury selection. He also served as a member of the Conference of Chief Justices' task force that developed and proposed federal legislation to establish a state justice institute. This act was passed in November, 1984.

**THE STATE LAW LIBRARY
ADDS NEW VOLUMES AND
IMPROVES CATALOGUING**

During the past two years, the State Law Library has acquired more than 3,000 new volumes, including significant additions to the treatise and reference



Lawyers who rely on the State Court Law Library will be temporarily inconvenienced as it is renovated in 1985.

collections. In addition, the library has been able to address its space problems through the acquisition of a significant number of volumes in microfiche and ultrafiche formats, including the official state reports, current state session laws, and various segments of the National Reporter System. Also during this period the Kent County Law Library collection has doubled in size with the addition of a complete Federal library, among other acquisitions.

For the past two years, the State Law Library has participated in the OCLA on-line cataloguing network in cooperation with the Department of State Library Services. As a result of this project, the

library staff has been able to catalogue and classify the treatise, reference and loan library collections. The classification of these collections according to the Library of Congress classification system will facilitate use of the collection by library patrons.

Looking to the future, the renovation of the Providence County Courthouse will bring needed physical improvements to the State Law Library. According to project plans, the library will receive air conditioning, carpeting, new furnishings, and improved lighting. All these changes will greatly enhance the library environment for study and research.

ADMINISTRATION

MAJOR COURTHOUSE IMPROVEMENTS INITIATED

During 1983 and 1984 the Administrative Office of State Courts initiated several major projects to improve court facilities. They included the renovation of the Providence County Courthouse,

which was constructed over fifty years ago and is a historic landmark of the College Hill area of Providence, and construction of a modern building to replace inadequate court facilities in Washington County.

For the Providence project, Space Management Consultants, Inc. of Seattle,

Washington, a firm with a national reputation in courthouse design, was hired to plan the reallocation of space within the building, and Robinson, Green and Berretta of Providence, Rhode Island was chosen as the architect.

The renovation of the Providence County Courthouse will be in phases. The first phase will involve rehabilitating the building exterior by replacing the slate roof and gutters, installing new insulated windows, repointing the brick walls, replacing the flagstone in the courtyards, and replacing all external iron work. The total cost of phase one is estimated to be five million dollars.

During phase two the heating and air conditioning systems in the building will be upgraded and the plumbing and electrical service will be improved. The cost for these improvements is estimated to be in excess of five million dollars. There is also a third phase planned which will involve reorganizing interior space.

The Public Building Authority has ac-

quired the courthouse and has secured funding for the first phase of the project by issuing bonds.

Another major project initiated in 1983 and 1984 was the planning of a new court facility in Washington County for the District, Family and Superior Courts. The current facility in West Kingston is over 100 years old and requires major repairs. The building is also too small to meet the current and future needs of the three courts. In addition, the Family and District Courts have been holding some of their sessions in part of the Westerly Town Hall.

When the new courthouse is constructed, all court sessions will be in one facility. The planned location for the building is a site adjacent to the South County Government Center. The structure will be modern in design, and it will accommodate the future needs of the courts. Construction is planned to begin in the summer of 1985, and it will be completed by the fall of 1986.



Staff from the State Court Administrative Office, State Division of General Services, Dimex Construction Company, and the architectural firm of Robinson, Green, Berretta review renovation plans for the Providence County Courthouse.

Smaller scale improvements were also made in 1983 and 1984. In June, 1983 the Kent County Superior Court Clerk's Office moved to a new office at the south end of the Kent County Courthouse. The new office was designed to provide a larger space for the main office and an area for records storage. Also in March, 1984 work was completed on renovations to the Fifth Division of the District Court which is located in the Pawtucket City Hall. The clerk's office was expanded and the judge's chambers and courtroom were redesigned.

CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM CHANGES FOCUS

The Court's Continuing Education Committee was appointed in 1979, and since then it has fostered a variety of in-service education programs for both judges and support employees.

During 1983 and 1984 the committee focused on developing training programs for specific employee groups. One group targeted was court supervisors, and in November, 1983 a seminar was held on improving management skills. The seminar was organized by the Institute for Court Management, and it was conducted by Gilbert H. Skinner who is the president of a Michigan based management consultant firm. Mr. Skinner lectured on topics including leadership, working in groups, communications, time management and the role of managers. The program was very well received, and as a follow-up several management committees were formed to apply what was learned. A benefit of holding such a program in Rhode Island was that 30 employees were able to attend at the same expense as sending six employees to a similar program out-of-state.

Also, in June, 1983 the education committee and the Administrative Office of State Courts co-sponsored a program with the National Center for State Courts on Computers and Office Automation.

Judges and court personnel from across the country attended the seminar to observe the use of data and word processing in the Rhode Island Courts and to exchange information on court automation.

The judicial education program has also included an annual judicial conference. A highlight of the 1984 conference was a presentation by the Honorable Marilyn Loftus, a justice of the Superior Court of New Jersey and chairperson of the New Jersey Task Force on Women in the Courts. Judge Loftus discussed gender bias in the New Jersey courts, and her remarks precipitated the appointment of a Rhode Island Task Force to examine discrimination against women in the Rhode Island court system. The Honorable Joseph F. Rodgers, Jr. and the Honorable Paul P. Pederzani, Jr., both of the Superior Court, also made presentations at the 1984 judicial conference on the rights of victims and witnesses.

The judicial education program has also financed programs for the judges of the District, Family and Superior Courts. The education committee is planning to expand on judicial education by providing quarterly seminars for judges in addition to the annual judicial conference and the judicial conferences held by each of the courts.

Another focus of the court education project has been the production of videotapes for instructional use. Several videotapes were prepared to demonstrate court procedures to Superior Court clerks. Videotapes were also made of conferences held by the American Bar Association and by the Department of Attorney General. In addition, a videotape was prepared of the appellate arguments in the Claus von Bulow case.

MEDIA ACCESS TO COURT PROCEEDINGS SANCTIONED

During 1983 and 1984 the Supreme Court continued to allow access to court proceedings by photographic and record-

ing media. This continued coverage was the result of Media Committee recommendations to the Supreme Court following a period of evaluation carried out during and following the one year pilot project.

In their report the committee noted that no significant disruption of proceedings had resulted from the presence of the media in courtrooms. In response, the Supreme Court decided to issue an order giving the media open access to judicial proceedings. However, because of possible unforeseen problems, the justices put an eighteen month limit on their order. Also, since they did not anticipate the need for further study of the issue, they disbanded the Media Access Committee and agreed that future decisions regarding media access would be handled by the court and the Judicial Advisory Board.

In the order extending the experimental period, the Supreme Court justices suggested that the media use the privilege of filming trials and hearings to enhance public education. A local television station has since made significant efforts toward this educational goal by recording an appellate argument by a member of the bar and by producing a documentary report on court procedures.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAM REDUCES THE COST FOR INDIGENT DEFENSE

In November, 1982 the Office of the State Court Administrator signed a contract with the Public Defender's Office to provide representation to indigent parents in dependency, neglect, and abuse cases. The purpose of contracting with the Public Defender for this service was to reduce the cost to the court for representation by court-appointed counsel. Private attorney billings for this caseload had been growing at such a rate that by 1982 they accounted for almost one half of all expenditures courtwide for defense of indigents. By contracting with the Public Defender it was estimated that the

cost could be reduced substantially, and in addition to the savings, defendants would benefit from the high quality of representation provided by the Public Defender.

At the end of six months of operation the Public Defender program exhibited significant results. For example, the Public Defender's Special Unit was accepting 85% of all referrals at arraignment. This meant that an average of 14 new cases per month were being assigned to the Public Defender program, while only two new cases were receiving court-appointed counsel. According to the contract the unit was supposed to take 3 out of every 4 referrals, but in fact, the actual number they were accepting was higher.

Under the contract the Special Public Defender Unit also agreed to accept all of the cases scheduled for review, except in special circumstances. The percentage of reviews reassigned to this unit steadily increased over the six month period.

Although the court did not receive the full savings that were projected in the first six months of the program, some savings were achieved. Prior to the Public Defender program, courtwide expenditures for indigent defense were averaging \$45,000 per month. In comparison, during January and February of FY '83 when the contract was in effect, the billings dropped to \$32,000. This drop occurred despite a substantial increase in the rate of billings for indigent defense in Superior Court. Without the Special Public Defender Unit it was estimated that the average billings per month for defense of indigents would have been in excess of \$50,000.

As a result of the savings and the overall success achieved under the temporary contract, the legislature established the program as a permanent unit in the Public Defender's Office in 1983. The funds to sustain the Public Defender Unit were transferred out of the court's budget for indigent defense and into the budget of the Public Defender.

Since the program became a permanent part of the Public Defender's Office,

the Unit has been accepting about 90% of the caseload which was previously assigned to private counsel. Conflict cases in which private counsel must be retained account for the remaining 10%. The Family Court has been very satisfied with the program both for the high quality of representation provided and for the reduction in the cost of indigent defense.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON LEGAL REFERENCE AND RESEARCH NEEDS PLANS IMPROVEMENTS TO LIBRARY SERVICES

On July 13, 1983, Chief Justice Bevilacqua announced the appointment of an Advisory Committee on Legal Reference and Research Needs. The committee is chaired by Associate Justice Thomas F. Kelleher. The committee's charge was to develop a long-range plan to improve the overall quality of legal reference services provided by the State Law Library and its branch libraries. The membership of the committee was selected to represent the various segments of the legal community which rely upon the resources of the State Law Library and which have an interest in the growth and improvement of library services.

The committee was divided into four subcommittees which each evaluated one of the following areas: collection development, facilities and staffing, computerized legal research, and financing. At the end of 1984, the committee was considering a number of recommendations to the Chief Justice. The most significant of these were the following:

1. introduction of the Westlaw computerized legal research system;
2. an increase in the professional staff of the library;
3. opening of the library for evening hours;
4. some form of direct assessment on attorneys to support the law library book budget.

RIJSS

During 1983 and 1984 the Rhode Island Judicial Systems and Sciences (RIJSS) Office continued expanding on the variety of computer services it provides to the court system. The trend during these two years has been to replace manual tasks and record-keeping with automation wherever possible. The system now provides case tracking for Family Court, computer generated documents for District Court, civil and criminal case record keeping for Superior Court, an accounting system for the Central Registry, and a statewide warrant system for both the Parole Board and all state courts.

The on-line warrant system went into operation in 1983. This system allows on-line inquiry on the status of all warrants which have been executed or quashed, and it also prints all official warrants. Eventually this system will interface with local police departments through the state police RILETS system. This planned system will be capable not only of automatically issuing and quashing warrants but also of updating criminal history files at the Bureau of Criminal Identification.

In August of 1983 on-line PROMIS went into operation in the Superior Court and the divisions of the District Court in Providence County. PROMIS is a model criminal case tracking system which was developed in Washington, D.C. Rhode Island purchased the software and tailored it to our own needs. In January, 1984, after the data entry personnel were fully trained and a thorough audit had been completed, the Superior Court discontinued its manual record-keeping and began relying totally on the automated system. The system now produces all court docket sheets and calendars, and eventually it will produce forms such as judgments and court notices. It also will produce statistics on all court activity.

During 1984 the automatic printing of notices was added to the Supreme Court system. This system has also replaced all

manual record keeping, calendar preparation and statistical reports for the court. Another recent development has been the on-line Attorney Registration System which keeps track of all registered attorneys. Once a person has passed the Bar examination and paid the required fee, his/her name is entered into the registration file.

Another development during 1984 was the automation of certain District Court documents including executions, citations, and evictions. These computer generated documents replace the need for preprinted forms and allow for changes without a reprint of the form. RIJSS also will be automating some Superior Court court documents in the near future. It is estimated that computerization of documents will save the state thousands of dollars in annual printing costs.

In the past, the Central Registry experienced problems in tracking defendants owing restitution. The manual task of compiling reports on defendants who owe money and whose probation is close to expiration was time consuming and complex. However, once probation has expired, there is no longer any way to enforce payment. In response to this problem, RIJSS began automation of the Central Registry in June, 1984. The new accounting system now provides Probation and Parole with current information on delinquent payments.

Some possible plans for 1985 include replacing the computer mainframe in the Kent County Courthouse with one that can handle word processing. RIJSS also intends to expand the PROMIS system to provide the district courts with misdemeanor case tracking, docketing and statistical capabilities. Plans are also underway to develop a case tracking system for the Reciprocal Unit in Family Court.

SENTENCING STUDY COMMITTEE REVISES THE BENCHMARKS

The Sentencing Study Committee was first established in 1979 in response to a growing concern over unwarranted disparity in sentencing. The committee is chaired by Supreme Court Associate Justice Thomas F. Kelleher, and members include judges from each of the state courts and representatives from the Attorney General, the Public Defender and the public.

The committee's first objective was to determine whether there was in fact disparity in sentencing in Rhode Island. To accomplish this, an experiment was conducted, and judges of the District and Superior Courts were asked to impose sentences in fourteen hypothetical cases. From the results of the experiment, it was evident that there was a potential for unwarranted disparity, and the committe



Supreme Court Justice Thomas F. Kelleher has served as chairman of the sentencing study committee for 6 years.

concluded that guidelines would be the best way to address the problem.

A subcommittee of Superior Court judges and representatives of the Attorney General and Public Defender was named and given responsibility for developing the guidelines. The guidelines which were proposed covered the most frequent types of cases handled by the Superior Court and provided sentencing ranges based on the fact pattern of the offense. It was anticipated that judges would sentence within the given range unless there was some significant factor justifying departure. When judges sentenced outside of the range, they were expected to explain the reason on the record.

In January, 1982 the proposed guidelines were approved as formal court policy by Superior Court, and the study committee was appointed as a permanent body with responsibility for monitoring use of the guidelines and for periodically revising or expanding on them. The policy required that the guidelines be used by all of the judges and that specific reasons be recorded for deviating from them.

After the guidelines had been in effect for one year, the committee conducted a study on their impact. The study included personal interviews with both judges and attorneys who utilized the guidelines. It also included an examination of sentences imposed since the implementation of the guidelines.

Based on the results of the study, the Sentencing Committee concluded that the sentencing guideline project had been a success. The study indicated that the guidelines were being used and taken seriously. Most attorneys and judges stated that they referred to the guidelines as a starting point for sentencing, and there was an overall feeling that the guidelines had been instrumental in bringing about greater consistency in sentencing. Data collected on particular offenses supported the contention that variation in sentencing was dramatically reduced after the guidelines were

adopted. For example, sentences for armed robbery ranged from less than jail to 15 years to serve in 1978 and 1980. However, in 1982 under the guidelines the lowest sentence given was 3 years to serve and the highest was 10 years. Although the interviews and data collection indicated that the guidelines had brought about greater uniformity in sentencing, there was agreement that specific guidelines should be revised and additional guidelines established.

After the guidelines had been in effect for a second year, the Sentencing Study Committee conducted a follow-up study. This study also involved a review of actual sentences and a compilation of questionnaire results from judges and attorneys. From the data collected it was apparent that although the guidelines were still widely accepted, some of the guidelines did not reflect actual sentencing practices.

In several instances the recommended sentences were higher than most of the sentences imposed. In addition, some guidelines were unclear as to what offense was covered. For example, data indicated that the guidelines for drug offenses were too high, and also that there should be a separate guideline for breaking and entering without consent of the owner.

Consequently, the committee embarked upon a program of proposed changes to the guidelines. Copies of the proposed changes were circulated to the defense bar, who were then invited to a public hearing in June, 1984 to offer their comments. After the hearing, further revisions were made to the proposal.

The revised guidelines have been submitted to the Superior Court judges for their consideration. If accord is reached on the revisions, the committee will then prepare a new sentencing monitoring form. The committee will retain its monitoring role in an effort to continually revise and improve the guidelines.

COMMITTEE FORMED TO EXAMINE GENDER BIAS IN THE COURTS

In the fall of 1984 Chief Justice Joseph A. Bevilacqua appointed a Committee on the Treatment of Women in the Courts. The committee was named in response to two presentations which increased the court's awareness of a potential problem.

The issue of bias against women in the court was first highlighted for the judges at the 1984 Judicial Conference by the remarks of Judge Marilyn Loftus of the New Jersey Superior Court. Judge Loftus is chairperson of a task force which surveyed 1,000 lawyers in New Jersey and reported that women lawyers, litigants and witnesses do not fare as well as their male counterparts in the court system.

The second factor which was influential in the formation of the committee was a report by the Rhode Island Bar Association Committee on Sex Discrimination. That committee distributed a questionnaire to the state's lawyers, and based on the responses the committee reported that there was reason for concern about the effects of discrimination.



Superior Court Justice Corinne P. Grande, Chairwoman of the Court Committee on Women in the Courts reviews with a committee staff member a Bar Journal article announcing the Committee's goal to identify gender bias in the courts.

To begin its exploration of gender bias in the court, the committee has decided to distribute questionnaires and encourage individuals to submit confidential written statements describing their own experiences. The committee will be studying several areas of potential bias including discriminatory behavior towards women attorneys, litigants, witnesses and jurors, bias in judicial decision-making, and bias in the wording of forms and correspondence.

The twenty-two member committee is chaired by Associate Justice Corinne P. Grande of the Superior Court and includes seven judges, two of whom are women, ten lawyers of whom seven are women, and five court personnel, one of whom is a woman.

There are ten adjunct members of the committee, including Presiding Justice Anthony A. Giannini of the Superior Court, Chief Judge Edward P. Gallogly of the Family Court, Chief Judge Henry E. Laliberte of the District Court, and the presidents of the state and local bar associations.

Chief Justice Bevilacqua expects the committee to report its findings to him within a year.

PERMANENT ADVISORY BOARD FOR COURT-APPOINTED COUNSEL ESTABLISHED

A special study committee was named in 1980 to review the way court appointment of counsel is handled. The study was initiated in response to the growing cost of appointed counsel and the lack of uniformity in the standards and policies being applied to court appointments.

In February, 1981 the committee submitted a final report of its findings and recommendations. As one of its suggestions, the committee proposed the establishment of an advisory board. The Board would be responsible for working out in detail the system for court appointment of counsel and for overseeing the

system once it is operating.

The following year the Supreme Court appointed a second committee to review the recommendations of the original committee and to draft rules of court for putting a plan for appointment of counsel into effect. The second committee endorsed the recommendations of the original study committee with a few revisions.

In response to the final recommendations, the Supreme Court has signed an Administrative Order creating a permanent advisory board for court-appointed counsel.

WORD PROCESSING USE INCREASED COURTWIDE

During 1983 and 1984 the number of offices using word processing in the court system greatly increased.

For example, in early 1983 the Supreme Court Law Library introduced word processing. The library staff has used the system mainly for preparing

lists of newly acquired books for distribution to judges and attorneys, for updating a bibliography of Rhode Island Supreme Court opinions organized by subject, and for drafting synopses of court opinions.

The Office of the Disciplinary Counsel also introduced word processing in 1983 to streamline the handling of complaints. All orders and notices to disciplined attorneys and all form letters to complainants are prepared using word processing. In addition, some of these applications have been transferred to data processing for even greater efficiency. A data processing program has been designed for the Disciplinary Counsel's Office which will automatically generate form letters for each case after the basic information has been entered.

The Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Chief Justice has also introduced word processing for more efficient preparation of orders, reports, memos, letters and conference calendars.

Some of the Superior Court secretaries



Information Systems Specialist Brenda O'Brien, at left, tests some word processing training procedures with the help of fellow RIJS staff members.

have also been trained in word processing and have found the functions of the system extremely useful, especially for the drafting and editing of judges' decisions.

SUPERIOR COURT

CIVIL CASE DELAY REDUCTION PROGRAM ENTERS PHASE II

A civil case delay reduction program was instituted in Providence Superior Court in 1980 to reduce delay in bringing a civil suit to trial. The project was supervised by Dean Ernest C. Friesen of the Whittier Justice Institute. The project team conducted an in-depth analysis of the civil case system, recommended changes, and introduced the first phase of this two part program.

The first stage of the case management plan was implemented between 1980 and 1982. Trial certainty was the primary objective. Stage I focused on reducing the pending civil caseload through an extensive audit and eliminating the oldest 18% of the backlog. In addition, all civil trials were suspended for a two week period in 1982 to conduct status conferences for over 500 of the oldest assigned cases. As a result, the majority of these cases settled, and the remainder went to trial during the next few months. The success of Stage I was evident in the control exercised by the court in managing the civil caseload.

Stage II of the plan is currently in effect. The primary goal now is to reduce the number of pending assigned cases to a level where court control of civil cases from filing forward is feasible. Although the Justice Institute projected that this could be achieved with a pending caseload of 2,400 in 1984, a severe shortage of judicial resources on the Superior Court bench prevented this from happening. Despite the loss of several judges for a lengthy time period, efforts are con-

One of the goals for word processing in 1985 is to train users in the special features of the system, such as footnotes, numbering glossary, dual column, column move and column delete.

tinuing to reduce the civil case inventory. It is anticipated that Stage II of the Justice Institute's plan will be accomplished within the next two years.

WASHINGTON COUNTY BEGINS AUTOMATION OF CIVIL CASES

As part of the effort to standardize case management procedures in all of the counties, Washington County was selected as the first out-county site for implementing an automated civil case management system. The conversion from a manual system began in August, 1984, and when it is completed Washington County will be the first out-county to automate record keeping for both criminal and civil matters.

Eventually, the civil system in Washington County will produce the same reports as those available in Providence County. These include court calendars,



Telephone lines connect most court locations to central court computers, so Linda Parsons in the Washington County Superior Court can use the statewide Civil Case Information System.

notices, and statistical reports.

The effort to standardize procedures statewide will continue, and it is anticipated that the automation of civil record keeping will be introduced in both Kent and Newport counties in the near future.

DELAY REDUCTION EFFORTS FOCUS ON DRUNK-DRIVING CASES AND MAJOR FELONIES PENDING IN THE OUT-COUNTIES

During 1984 the Superior Court conducted two special projects to reduce delay in the disposition of criminal cases.

One involved the transfer of seventy-three drunk driving cases from Newport County to Providence. The cases were transferred in February, 1984 and all have been handled by Presiding Justice Anthony A. Giannini. So far 78% (or 57) of the cases have been disposed. Of the rest, three cases were disposed at another level, two were returned to Newport County, and 15% (or 11) remain to be tried.

The other project involved a special effort to dispose of major felony cases pending in the out-counties. At the beginning of the 1984 summer period fifty capital cases from Kent, Newport and Washington Counties were selected to be transferred to Providence County for trial. Immediately after the cases were identified, eight of them were disposed by plea. Another eleven of the cases were returned because there was discovery outstanding or they were not ready for trial for another reason. Finally, thirty-one cases were transferred to Providence by Presiding Justice Giannini.

In order to ensure the success of the project, all the judges assigned for the summer in Providence County were available to hear both criminal and civil matters, and priority was given to reaching the serious criminal cases.

The results of the project were impressive. Twenty-one of the transferred

cases (67%) were disposed during the summer period. The ten cases which were not disposed were returned to the county where they originated and were reassigned for trial with priority.

FOUR NEW JUDGES APPOINTED TO THE SUPERIOR COURT

There were four judicial appointments to the Superior Court in 1984. The appointees filled the vacancies created by the retirement of Associate Justices William M. Mackenzie, John S. McKiernan and Arthur A. Carrellas and by the death of Associate Justice James M. Shannahan. Justice McKiernan served on the Superior Court for 26 years from 1956 to 1982, and Justices Mackenzie and Carrellas both served for 24 years from 1959 to 1983.

The new appointees to the Superior Court include the Honorable Thomas J. Caldarone, Jr., the Honorable Alice Bridget Gibney, the Honorable Richard J. Israel, and the Honorable Paul P. Pederzani, Jr.

Associate Justice Thomas Caldarone graduated from the University of Rhode Island with a major in industrial engineering and received his law degree from Boston University. He served as an assistant attorney general in 1975 and 1976, and in 1977 he was named Director of the Department of Business Regulation.

Associate Justice Israel graduated from Brown University and Yale University Law School. He became an assistant attorney general in 1969. He was elected Attorney General in 1970, and he was reelected to this office in 1972. From 1975 until his appointment to Superior Court, he was associated with the law firm of Levy, Goodman, Semonoff and Gorin.

Associate Justice Gibney graduated from Rhode Island College and received her law degree from Catholic University of America. She was associated with the law firm of Anderson, Henning and



Honorable Thomas J. Caldarone, Jr., Associate Justice Superior Court

Anderson from 1972 to 1978, and in 1978 she was named Assistant U.S. Attorney. She returned to private practice in 1979 and joined the law firm of Boyer, Reynolds and DeMarco where she specialized in Workers' Compensation law. In



Honorable Alice Bridget Gibney, Associate Justice Superior Court

1982 she was appointed to the Workers' Compensation Commission by Governor Garrahy.

Associate Justice Pederzani graduated from Providence College and Boston College Law School. He was admitted to



Honorable Richard J. Israel, Associate Justice Superior Court



Honorable Paul P. Pederzani, Jr., Associate Justice Superior Court

the Rhode Island Bar in 1952, and he is a member of the American, Rhode Island and Washington County Bar Associations. He was a past president of the Washington County Bar Association. Justice Pederzani was legal counsel to the Rhode Island Recreational Building Authority from 1971 to 1980 and legal coun-

sel to the Narragansett School Committee from 1974 to 1980. He was Town Solicitor for the Town of Exeter in 1962 and 1963, and he was clerk and acting judge of the former second district court in 1969. In 1980 he was appointed to the District Court, where he served from 1980 to 1983.

FAMILY COURT

REDUCTION OF DELAY

For the past several years the Family Court has made it a priority to dispose of cases expeditiously. To accomplish this the court has given special attention to certain categories of cases including juvenile criminal, dependency/neglect/abuse, termination of parental rights and contested divorce.

For juvenile criminal cases the court has adopted a guideline of 90 days from date of filing to disposition. According to statistics prepared at the end of October, 1984, this goal is being achieved. The statistics show that these cases are being disposed at an average of 47 days from filing. They also show that 84% of the juvenile criminal cases on the trial calendar have been pending less than 90 days. Furthermore, this figure should improve since one additional juvenile hearing date has been scheduled weekly in one of the counties that is experiencing a slight backlog.

To expedite dependency/neglect/abuse and termination of parental rights cases, the court has assigned one judge to hear such matters on a daily basis in Providence. Additionally, the court has initiated a system whereby at arraignment all persons receive a pre-trial date on the first Monday of the following month. If the case is not settled at this point, the judge sets a trial date and resolves any other problems that may cause delay in the trial, e.g., discovery, notice to appropriate parties, etc. When

this system was established in September of 1982, 70% of these trials were more than 90 days old. In comparison at the present time only 23% of this caseload has been pending over 90 days. Moreover, the median processing time for this caseload is currently fifty-two days from date of filing to adjudication, which is in marked contrast to 1982 statistics which showed a median processing time of 117 days.

The court has also attempted to reduce the time required to hear contested divorce cases. The court has established a guideline of one year from the date of assignment to the continuous contested calendar for disposing of these cases. At the beginning of the court session in September, 1983, 57 (9.8%) of the 580 cases on the contested calendar were over one year old. As of December 1, 1984, 13 (2.6%) of the 497 cases on the contested calendar were over one year old. Of equal significance, only 29% of the present contested calendar is more than six months old as compared to 41% of the contested calendar as of September, 1983.

Thus, the court has made significant gains in reducing the processing time for all categories of cases. This has been due in part to the availability of more detailed statistics and to the experimentation with a variety of scheduling techniques. However, the primary reason has been the dedication of the judges in using the statistics and techniques to process the caseload more expeditiously.

INCREASE IN JURISDICTION

In 1982, the legislature passed the domestic abuse prevention act which allows a person suffering from domestic abuse to file a complaint with the Family Court requesting an order to protect him/her from further abuse. Upon the filing of a complaint under this act, the court may enter any temporary orders it deems necessary to protect the plaintiff. In cases where a temporary order is granted without notice, the matter must be set down for hearing on the earliest possible date and may be given precedence over other matters.

This legislation has had a significant impact on the court workload. In 1983 there were 541 complaints of this type filed, and in 1984, the filing rate rose to 981. In addition, most of the plaintiffs represent themselves, and they are unfamiliar with filing procedures. Thus, without giving legal advice, clerks must assist with the filling out of the forms. Because of the time this was consuming, the court requested the assistance of the Women's Center in organizing a volunteer program to provide clerical assistance to plaintiffs filing cases in Providence.

Judicial hearing time has also been affected by this new statute. Because the plaintiffs are requesting temporary orders, judges must put aside other matters on their calendars to examine the complaint and affidavit. If granted, the matter must be set down for hearing within 30 days, and such matters take precedence over other matters on the calendar. Also, most of the parties appearing at such hearings are not represented by counsel and are unaware of court procedure, which adds significantly to judicial hearing time.

The jurisdiction of the court was also increased in 1982 as a result of the Informed Consent for Abortion statute. If a pregnant woman less than eighteen years of age has not married and if neither of her parents or guardians agree to consent to the abortion, or if she elects

not to seek the consent of either of her parents or guardians, a judge of the Family Court must conduct a hearing to authorize the abortion. In 1983 the court received 110 such filings, and in 1984, there were 132 cases filed. Because of the nature of these complaints, immediate attention must be given to the hearing of this caseload. Judges are assigned on a monthly basis to hear these matters and must give them priority over other cases on their daily calendars.

The domestic abuse and the informed consent for abortion statutes have significantly added to judicial hearing time, and no additional judicial or support personnel have been appointed to handle this workload. The court is exploring the feasibility of adding a master and supporting personnel to address this new caseload.

FAMILY COURT COLLECTIONS INCREASE AND CASE PROCESSING IS STREAMLINED IN THE RECIPROCAL UNIT

The Family Court Reciprocal Office has streamlined its operation, and as a result the number of petitions filed has decreased. In the past the Bureau of Family Support filed two petitions if support and paternity were both at issue in a case. However, during 1983 this procedure was changed, and the two actions are now combined in one petition. Likewise, in the past when the Bureau of Family Support filed a support petition, and there was already a divorce action in the court, the support petition was handled separately by the Reciprocal Unit. Now the procedure has been changed, and the two actions are combined in the divorce petition.

Following these two changes in filing procedures, the number of petitions dropped from 3,714 in 1982 to 2,430 in 1983, and the number filed in 1984 was 2,773.



Nancy Lussier in the bookkeeping section of the Family Court Collections Division uses automated systems to keep track of child support owed and paid by non-custodial parents.

Also developments which occurred in 1980 and 1981 affecting child support payments have significantly increased collections for 1983 and 1984. Legislation passed in 1980 gave the court the power to enforce support payments by garnishing the wages of delinquent parents. Also starting in 1981 the court initiated a project to attach the income tax refunds of parents with support payments in arrears. Along with these two developments, the court has become more efficient in handling payments and keeping track of delinquent accounts through the computerization of all bookkeeping in the Reciprocal Unit. As a result of these various improvements, collections rose from \$6,057,319 in 1982 to \$7,368,648 in 1983, an increase of 22%. It is anticipated that 1984 collections will surpass \$8,000,000.

In addition, in 1984 the wage garnishment law was revised to further increase collections. Thus, it is expected that within the next three years, collections should rise to \$11,000,000 or \$12,000,000, almost double what they were in 1982.

CASA PROGRAM EXPANDS

The Court Appointed Special Advocate program was established by the Family Court in 1978, as a pilot project providing lay volunteers as advocates for neglected and abused children. The project was originally funded by a block grant from the Governor's Justice Commission.

The Rhode Island legislature recognized the accomplishments and benefits of the CASA program and allocated state funds to continue and expand the operation of CASA in 1982. Initially state funding for the program was limited to Providence County.

The CASA staff in Providence currently includes twelve full-time employees: three secretaries, two social workers, two program coordinators who supervise the 200 CASA volunteers, and five attorneys. The CASA program is presently representing approximately 1,300 children in foster care.

Of the 80 CASA programs throughout the United States, the Rhode Island program is unique in that it matches each volunteer with a staff attorney to provide children in care the best representation possible. The CASA's primary objective is to ensure that every child who comes into foster care has a permanent placement as soon as possible. Permanency is generally accomplished by a successful reunification with the child's natural family. However, where reunification is not feasible, CASA continues to monitor the child's progress toward adoption or independent living.

In addition to providing excellent representation for Rhode Island's abused and neglected children, the CASA program has succeeded in saving Rhode Island taxpayers substantial sums of tax dollars. The program has now effectively replaced the prior system of appointing private attorney Guardians ad Litem in Providence County. In addition, in calendar year 1983, the use of CASA volunteers resulted in a net savings of approximately \$500,000. This figure represents

the comparable cost of paying private Guardians ad Litem for services now provided by VCASA's.

As a result of the CASA program's success in 1982-1983, the Rhode Island legislature allocated additional money so that the program could be expanded to Kent County. The funding will add three new positions to the staff, a lawyer, a program coordinator, and a secretary. The new staff will have an office in the Kent County Courthouse, and it is anticipated that the county program will begin operation in January, 1985.

TWO NEW JUDGES NAMED TO THE FAMILY COURT

In January, 1984 the Governor appointed two new judges to the Family Court. They were Associate Justices Pamela M. Macktaz and John E. Fuyat. They filled two vacancies on the court left by the retirement of Justice Jacob J. Alprin and by the death of Justice Angelo G. Rossi.

Justice Macktaz is a magna cum laude



Honorable John E. Fuyat, Associate Justice Family Court

graduate of Suffolk University and a cum laude graduate of Suffolk University Law School. She was admitted to the Massachusetts Bar in 1967 and to the Rhode Island Bar in 1970. In 1973 she was appointed by the Governor to serve as a member of the Parole Board and from 1979 to 1984 she was the elected chairperson of the board. In addition, Justice Macktaz has been very active in civic activities. She has served on the boards of the Legal Aid Society of Rhode Island, the Woonsocket Chamber of Commerce, Woonsocket Family and Child Service, Woonsocket Head Start, the Woonsocket Y.M.C.A., and the Road Counselling program. Before her appointment to the judiciary, Justice Macktaz was in private practice in Woonsocket.

Justice Fuyat is a graduate of Providence College and Suffolk University Law School. He was admitted to the Rhode Island Bar in 1970. He is a member of the Rhode Island Bar Association and the American Trial Lawyers Association. He was formerly solicitor of Warwick, and before his appointment to the judiciary, he was legal counsel to the Senate Majority Leader.



Honorable Pamela M. Macktaz, Associate Justice Family Court

BENCHBOOK WRITTEN

In December, 1982 the National Center for State Courts received a \$33,700 grant from the Champlin Foundation to prepare a benchbook for the Rhode Island Family Court. The Chief Judge designated Associate Justice Carmine DiPetrillo to be the Family Court liaison with the National Center's project director, Mr. David Steelman.

The benchbook is designed to give the Family Court judges a step-by-step checklist of procedures relating to all types of cases within the court's jurisdiction. Additionally, the benchbook lists important state and federal appellate decisions affecting each segment of this jurisdiction.

After preliminary discussions with Justice DePetrillo, Mr. Steelman first developed a table of contents listing the topics to be included in the benchbook. This was then reviewed and approved by the Family Court judges. Next Mr. Steelman began developing the various checklists, along with accompanying appellate decisions. As each checklist was drafted, it was forwarded to Justice DiPetrillo for comments. Where necessary the checklists were rewritten, and the revised versions were then circulated to the Family Court judges. All sections were also reviewed at periodic meetings



Family Court Justice Carmine R. DiPetrillo holds a final draft of the new, three-volume Family Court Benchbook.

of the court.

It is expected that the benchbook will be completed and printed by January, 1985. Because of the size of this book, it will be separated into three volumes — Domestic Relations, Juvenile and Adult Criminal.

To assist with the updating of the benchbook, the National Center has entered the text of each volume on word processing. A diskette with the texts will be turned over to the Family Court so that updates can be made to the various volumes as new appellate decisions are issued and changes occur in procedures. Justice DiPetrillo will be assisted by a law clerk in overseeing the update process.

JUVENILE RULES REVISED

In 1981, the State Court Administrator's Office engaged the services of Professor Robert Kent of the Cornell University Law School to prepare rules of juvenile procedure for Family Court. These rules will govern proceedings involving delinquency, waywardness, dependency, neglect and abuse of children, and involuntary termination of parental rights. The rules will also incorporate by reference the Superior Court Rules of Criminal Procedure for criminal cases involving adults which are under the jurisdiction of the Family Court.

As another phase of the project, Professor Kent has prepared statutory revisions to eliminate any conflicts between the proposed rules and existing statutes.

Several drafts of the rules have been reviewed at meetings with the judges, staff, public defenders and prosecutors. As a result of these meetings and a number of new appellate decisions affecting juveniles, certain rules were still being revised as late as October, 1984.

It is anticipated that the rules will be approved and signed by the Family Court judges by early 1985. They will then be forwarded to the Supreme Court for review and adoption.

DISTRICT COURT

SMALL CLAIMS JURISDICTION INCREASED

During the 1983 session the legislature revised the law governing small claims by increasing the maximum amount for such claims from \$500 to \$1,000. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in small claims filings which has been offset by a drop in regular civil filings.

As an example of how the new law has affected the workload of the District Court, the total number of small claims filed for 1984 was 12,087, which is an increase of 3,612 cases, or 43%, from the number filed in 1982. At the same time regular civil filings for 1984 totalled 18,759, which was 3,866 fewer cases than were filed in 1982.

Previously, small claims cases in the Sixth Division of the District Court were handled by a single judge and were scheduled daily. However, to provide more resources for this growing caseload, the procedure has been changed, and all small claims are now scheduled on Thursday afternoons. This allows for the three judges assigned to the Sixth Division to be available to hear small claims.

The increase in jurisdiction for small claims has made it possible for more people to take advantage of the simplified proceedings used for these cases. In addition, lawyers are not required for small claims, and the cases are usually resolved more quickly.

NEW JUDGES APPOINTED TO FILL TWO VACANCIES IN THE DISTRICT COURT

In 1984 two new District Court judges were appointed to fill the vacancies created when Associate Judge Edward Plunkett retired and Associate Judge Paul Pederzani, Jr. was appointed to the Su-



Honorable Robert K. Pirraglia, Jr., Associate Judge District Court

perior Court. Judge Plunkett retired in 1983 after serving on the District Court for 21 years, since 1962. He has continued to serve the court in a senior judge



Honorable Francis J. Darrigan, Jr., Associate Judge District Court

status. Judge Pederzani was elevated to the Superior Court in January, 1984. He had been a judge of the District Court since 1980.

The new appointees were the Honorable Robert K. Pirraglia, Jr. and the Honorable Francis J. Darigan, Jr. Judge Pirraglia graduated from Providence College and from George Washington University Law School. He was admitted to the Rhode Island Bar in 1969. He served as legal counsel to the Rhode Island Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services and chief counsel for the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. He was appointed special assistant to Governor Garrahy in 1977, and from 1979 to 1982 he was the Governor's legal counsel. Judge Pirraglia has been involved in many civic activities. These include appointment as chairman of the Johnston Bicentennial Commission and vice chairman of the Rhode Island Heritage Commission. He has also achieved fourth degree in the Knights of Columbus.

Judge Darigan is also a graduate of Providence College. He received a master's degree from the University of Rhode Island in public administration and a law degree from Suffolk University. He was admitted to the bar in 1971. He became legal counsel to the Department of Transportation in 1975, and in 1979 was named legal adviser to the Governor's Energy Office. Judge Darigan has been active on various commissions and in civic activities. He was on the board of the Justice Resource Corporation and the Elmwood Community Center. He was a member of the Governor's Task Force on Drunk Driving, and he is presently a member of the Committee on Women in the Courts. Judge Darigan was a member of the Providence City Council from 1970 to 1974.

AUTOMATION ASSISTS CLERKS' OFFICES

Screening calendars that are easier to update, warrant information that helps



Alice Albuquerque of the District Court uses one of the automated systems that helps speed clerk's office operations.

collect overdue costs and fines, and judgment executions that can be issued in volume are some of the benefits that the District Court has realized through automation.

The Sixth Division in Providence has been using word processing to speed up the paper flow. Word processing makes it easier to revise and update documents and eliminates repetitive typing. In addition, the divisions of the District Court in Providence County use the Criminal Information System they share with the Superior Court and the Attorney General to prepare and maintain calendars for felony screening conferences. Through another application the clerks' offices have eliminated much of the paperwork involved in processing small claims and regular civil cases by automating the forms for executions of judgments.

All divisions statewide have access to a warrant system that can automatically issue or quash warrants. This system also includes an updated file of all warrants issued statewide. By checking for outstanding warrants on defendants who come before the court, the District Court clerks' offices have been able to identify individuals who owe the court money and collect some of these overdue funds while the defendants are in court custody.

STANDARDIZED ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES PLANNED

Following the recommendations of the State Bureau of Audits, the District Court has been developing uniform accounting procedures and forms to improve the handling of fines, costs, and bail. In addition to tightening the audit trail on all receipts and their transmittal to the state controller, the new procedure will help the court monitor the many different types of payments it receives. More information will also be available on money that is owed to the court to improve collections.

A Senior Auditor at the Bureau of Audits has worked closely with the Chief Clerk of the District Court and the Ad-

ministrative Assistant to the Chief Judge in examining how money is handled in each division. The auditor met with each of the Supervising Deputy Clerks and studied the staffing and workflow arrangements in each office. Variations in the amounts of money and the number of transactions for each division were also considered.

Beginning early in 1985 the new procedures will be in place. All divisions will follow the same general principles for handling money. New ledger forms will be used to detail transactions, and new checking methods will be used to reconcile bank accounts and deal with bad checks. Supervisors and employees who take in money will attend a series of training sessions so they will be familiar with the new procedures and forms.

COURT DIRECTORY

SUPREME COURT

JOSEPH A. BEVILACQUA, Chief Justice
 THOMAS F. KELLEHER, Associate Justice
 JOSEPH R. WEISBERGER, Associate Justice
 FLORENCE K. MURRAY, Associate Justice
 DONALD F. SHEA, Associate Justice

SUPERIOR COURT

ANTHONY A. GIANNINI, Presiding Justice
 EUGENE F. COCHRAN, Associate Justice
 RONALD R. LAGUEUX, Associate Justice
 EUGENE G. GALLANT, Associate Justice
 JOHN E. ORTON III, Associate Justice
 THOMAS H. NEEDHAM, Associate Justice
 JOHN P. BOURCIER, Associate Justice
 JOSEPH F. RODGERS, JR., Associate Justice
 CLIFFORD J. CAWLEY, JR., Associate Justice
 CORINNE P. GRANDE, Associate Justice
 ALBERT E. DeROBBIO, Associate Justice
 DOMINIC F. CRESTO, Associate Justice
 ANTONIO S. ALMEIDA, Associate Justice
 FRANCIS M. KIELY, Associate Justice
 ERNEST C. TORRES, Associate Justice
 PAUL P. PEDERZANI, JR., Associate Justice
 THOMAS J. CALDARONE, JR., Associate Justice
 ALICE BRIDGET GIBNEY, Associate Justice
 RICHARD J. ISRAEL, Associate Justice

FAMILY COURT

EDWARD P. GALLOGLY, Chief Judge
 EDWARD V. HEALEY, JR., Associate Justice
 WILLIAM R. GOLDBERG, Associate Justice
 CARMINE R. DiPETRILLO, Associate Justice
 ROBERT G. CROUCHLEY, Associate Justice
 JOHN K. NAJARIAN, Associate Justice
 THOMAS F. FAY, Associate Justice
 JOSEPH S. GENDRON, Associate Justice
 HAIGANUSH R. BEDROSIAN, Associate Justice
 JOHN E. FUYAT, Associate Justice
 PAMELA M. MACKTAZ, Associate Justice

DISTRICT COURT

HENRY E. LALIBERTE, Chief Judge
 CHARLES F. TRUMPETTO, Associate Judge
 ORIST D. CHAHARYN, Associate Judge
 PAUL J. DEL NERO, Associate Judge
 ANTHONY J. DENNIS, Associate Judge
 VICTOR J. BERETTA, Associate Judge
 ROBERT J. McOSKER, Associate Judge
 VINCENT A. RAGOSTA, Associate Judge
 JOHN A. CAPPELLI, Associate Judge
 MICHAEL A. HIGGINS, Associate Judge
 ALTON W. WILEY, Associate Judge
 FRANCIS J. DARIGAN, JR., Associate Judge
 ROBERT K. PIRRAGLIA, Associate Judge

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

SUPREME COURT:

250 Benefit St., Providence, R.I.
 Walter J. Kane, Administrator,
 State Courts/Clerk 277-3272
 Ronald A. Tutalo, Administrative
 Asst. to Chief Justice 277-3073
 Robert C. Harrall, Deputy
 Administrator, State Courts 277-3266
 Brian B. Burns, Chief Deputy Clerk 277-3272
 John J. Manning, Business Manager 277-3266
 Kendall F. Svengalis, State
 Law Librarian 277-3275
 Frank J. Sylvia, Security Supervisor 277-3296
 Sophie D. Pfeiffer, Chief Appellate
 Screening Unit 277-3297
 Susan W. McCalmont, Judicial
 Planning 277-3382
 Rhode Island Judicial Systems
 & Sciences (RIJS) 277-3358
 William A. Melone, Judicial
 Education Officer 277-3266
 Linda D. Bonaccorsi, Employee
 Relations Officer 277-3266

Thomas A. Dorazio, E.E.O.
 Officer 277-3266
 Frank A. Ciccone, Court Records
 Center 277-3274
 James W. McElroy, Central Registry 277-2074

SUPERIOR COURT:

250 Benefit St., Providence, R.I.
 John J. Hogan, Administrator 277-3215
 Leslie D. Lemieux, Chief Supervisory
 Clerk 277-2622
 Joseph Q. Calista, Clerk 277-3250
 Alfred Travers, Jr., Jury Commissioner 277-3245
 Charles Garganese, Civil
 Assignment Clerk 277-3225
 Thomas P. McGann, Public
 Contact Officer 277-3292
 Bonnie L. Williamson, Criminal
 Scheduling Office 277-3602

KENT COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

Ernest W. Reposa, Clerk 822-1311
 222 Quaker Lane
 West Warwick, R.I. 02893
 Raymond D. Gallogly, Associate
 Jury Commissioner 822-0400
 222 Quaker Lane
 West Warwick, R.I. 02893
 Thomas G. Healey, Criminal Scheduling
 Officer 277-6645
 222 Quaker Lane
 West Warwick, R.I. 02893

WASHINGTON COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

Edgar J. Timothy, Clerk 783-5441
 1693 Kingstown Road
 West Kingston, R.I. 02892

NEWPORT COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

John H. McGann, Clerk 846-5556
 Eisenhower Square
 Newport, R.I. 02840

FAMILY COURT

1 Dorrance Plaza, Providence, R.I.

Charles E. Joyce, Administrator/Clerk 277-3331
 Joseph D. Butler, Deputy Court
 Administrator 277-3334
 John J. O'Brien, Master 277-3360
 Dolores M. Murphy, Chief Juvenile
 Intake Supervisor 277-3345
 Howard F. Foley, Chief Family
 Counselor 277-3362
 Raymond J. Gibbons, Supervisor of
 Collections 277-3356
 Mary A. McKenna, Fiscal Officer 277-3300
 George J. Salome, Chief Deputy Clerk
 (Domestic Relations) 277-3340
 Janet Diano, Principal Deputy Clerk
 (Juvenile) 277-3352
 Mary M. Lisi, CASA/GAL Director 277-6853

JUDICIAL COUNCIL:

1025 Fleet National Bank Building
 Providence, RI 02903
 Charles J. McGovern, Chairman
 Girard R. Visconti, Secretary 331-3800

DISTRICT COURT

1 Dorrance Plaza, Providence, R.I.

SIXTH DIVISION DISTRICT COURT

Joseph Senerchia, Administrative
 Assistant to Chief Judge 277-6777
 Gerard J. Bouley, Chief Clerk 277-6703

FIRST DIVISION DISTRICT COURT

Dorothy E. Chapman, Supervising
 Deputy Clerk 245-7977
 516 Main Street
 Warren, R.I. 02885

SECOND DIVISION DISTRICT COURT

Frances J. Connelly, Supervising
 Deputy Clerk 846-6500
 Eisenhower Square
 Newport, R.I. 02840

THIRD DIVISION DISTRICT COURT

James A. Signorelli, Supervising
 Deputy Clerk 822-1771
 222 Quaker Lane
 West Warwick, R.I. 02893

FOURTH DIVISION DISTRICT COURT

Frank J. DiMaio, First Deputy Clerk 783-3328
 1693 Kingstown Road
 West Kingston, R.I. 02892

FIFTH DIVISION DISTRICT COURT

Robert Kando, Supervising
 Deputy Clerk 722-1024
 145 Roosevelt Avenue
 Pawtucket, R.I. 02865

SEVENTH DIVISION DISTRICT COURT

Donald L. St. Pierre, Supervising
 Deputy Clerk 762-2700
 24 Front Street
 Woonsocket, R.I. 02895

EIGHTH DIVISION DISTRICT COURT

William W. O'Brien, Supervising
 Deputy Clerk 944-5550
 275 Atwood Avenue
 Cranston, R.I. 02920

DISCIPLINARY BOARD:

250 Benefit Street
 Providence, R.I. 02903
 Leonard A. Kiernan, Jr., Chairman
 Frank H. Carter, Disciplinary Counsel 277-3270

CASELOAD STATISTICS

RHODE ISLAND SUPREME COURT

APPELLATE CASEFLOW

CASE TYPES	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
CRIMINAL					
Added	116	96	97	103	91
Disposed	<u>112</u>	<u>117</u>	<u>122</u>	<u>117</u>	<u>107</u>
Pending	151	130	105	82	65
CIVIL					
Added	304	342	328	391	349
Disposed	<u>245</u>	<u>269</u>	<u>334</u>	<u>340</u>	<u>399</u>
Pending	392	465	459	519	465
CERTIORARI					
Added	139	134	124	122	129
Disposed	<u>132</u>	<u>127</u>	<u>132</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>112</u>
Pending	84	91	83	87	104
OTHER					
Added	49	71	43	45	43
Disposed	<u>55</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>47</u>
Pending	14	17	19	16	12
ALL CASES					
Added	608	643	592	661	612
Disposed	<u>544</u>	<u>581</u>	<u>629</u>	<u>619</u>	<u>665</u>
Pending	641	703	666	704	646

RHODE ISLAND SUPREME COURT

DISPOSITION DETAIL

MANNER AND STAGE OF DISPOSITION

1980 1981 1982 1983 1984

BEFORE ARGUMENT

Withdrawn	137	133	115	109	91
Dismissed	34	42	57	105	102
Petition Granted	4	14	11	5	8
Petition Denied	102	117	115	77	83
Other	18	13	5	11	6
TOTAL	295	319	303	307	290

AFTER ARGUMENT ON THE MOTION CALENDAR

Withdrawn	*	*	*	5	4
Affirmed	*	*	*	86	143
Modified	*	*	*	2	
Reversed	*	*	*	18	16
16G Affirmed	*	*	*	9	12
Other	*	*	*	10	14
TOTAL	43	57	96	130	189

AFTER ARGUMENT ON THE MERITS

Withdrawn	7	1	3	4	4
Affirmed	130	135	137	115	102
Modified	10	9	15	13	13
Reversed	50	44	67	50	67
Other	9	16	8		
TOTAL	206	205	230	182	186

TOTAL DISPOSITIONS

544 581 629 619 665

AVERAGE TIME TO DISPOSITION

13.1 mos. 12.3 mos. 13.05 mos. 13.9 mos. 14.7 mos.

MEDIAN TIME TO DISPOSITION

* * * 8.9 mos. 10.4 mos.

RHODE ISLAND SUPERIOR COURT

CRIMINAL CASEFLOW

FELONIES	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
PROVIDENCE/BRISTOL					
Cases Filed	2,505	3,302	3,014	2,997	2,898
Cases Disposed	<u>2,232</u>	<u>2,543</u>	<u>2,912</u>	<u>3,107</u>	<u>2,788</u>
Caseload Increase/Decrease	+ 273	+ 759	+ 102	-110	+ 110
Total Pending Cases	890	1,418	*	*	1,647
Cases Over 180 Days Old	388	707	*	*	1,049
% Over 180 Days Old	(43.6%)	(49.8%)	*	*	(63.7%)
KENT					
Cases Filed	621	697	753	648	697
Cases Disposed	<u>532</u>	<u>508</u>	<u>648</u>	<u>438</u>	<u>768</u>
Caseload Increase/Decrease	+ 89	+189	+105	+ 210	-71
Total Pending Cases	146	164	*	*	273
Cases Over 180 Days Old	45	41	*	*	110
% Over 180 Days Old	(30.8%)	(25%)	*	*	(40.3%)
WASHINGTON					
Cases Filed	332	331	345	363	355
Cases Disposed	<u>491</u>	<u>272</u>	<u>281</u>	<u>508</u>	<u>323</u>
Caseload Increase/Decrease	-159	+59	+64	-145	+32
Total Pending Cases	93	160	*	*	80
Cases Over 180 Days Old	45	83	*	*	25
% Over 180 Days Old	(48.4%)	(51.9%)	*	*	(31.3%)
NEWPORT					
Cases Filed	209	246	288	224	315
Cases Disposed	<u>207</u>	<u>172</u>	<u>288</u>	<u>192</u>	<u>425</u>
Caseload Increase/Decrease	+ 2	+74	+0	+32	-110
Total Pending Cases	106	134	*	*	88
Cases Over 180 Days Old	82	67	*	*	9
% Over 180 Days Old	(77.3%)	(50%)	*	*	(10.2%)
STATEWIDE					
Cases Filed	3,667	4,576	4,400	4,232	4,265
Cases Disposed	<u>3,462</u>	<u>3,495</u>	<u>4,129</u>	<u>4,245</u>	<u>4,266</u>
Caseload Increase/Decrease	+ 205	+1,081	+271	-13	-1
Total Pending Cases	1,235	1,876	*	*	2,088
Cases Over 180 Days Old	560	898	*	*	1,220
% Over 180 Days Old	(45.3%)	(47.9%)	*	*	(58.4%)

RHODE ISLAND SUPERIOR COURT

CRIMINAL CASEFLOW (cont.)

MISDEMEANORS	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
PROVIDENCE/BRISTOL					
Cases Filed	398	533	662	394	538
Cases Disposed	<u>908</u>	<u>388</u>	<u>747</u>	<u>440</u>	<u>422</u>
Caseload Increase/Decrease	-510	+145	-85	-46	+116
Total Pending Cases	146	381	•	•	413
Cases Over 180 Days Old	79	111	•	•	214
% Over 180 Days Old	(54.1%)	(29.1%)	•	•	(51.8%)
KENT					
Cases Filed	159	118	161	190	180
Cases Disposed	<u>108</u>	<u>137</u>	<u>162</u>	<u>119</u>	<u>167</u>
Caseload Increase/Decrease	+51	-19	-1	+71	+13
Total Pending Cases	67	46	•	•	78
Cases Over 180 Days Old	32	18	•	•	34
% Over 180 Days Old	(48.7%)	(39.1%)	•	•	(43.6%)
WASHINGTON					
Cases Filed	77	111	159	151	86
Cases Disposed	<u>337</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>83</u>	<u>223</u>	<u>72</u>
Caseload Increase/Decrease	-260	+14	+76	-72	+14
Total Pending Cases	44	67	•	•	17
Cases Over 180 Days Old	23	25	•	•	3
% Over 180 Days Old	(52.3%)	(37.3%)	•	•	(17.6%)
NEWPORT					
Cases Filed	138	106	161	299	199
Cases Disposed	<u>144</u>	<u>83</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>415</u>
Caseload Increase/Decrease	-6	+23	+88	+236	-216
Total Pending Cases	73	99	•	•	124
Cases Over 180 Days Old	54	59	•	•	28
% Over 180 Days Old	(73.9%)	(56.9%)	•	•	(22.6%)
STATEWIDE					
Cases Filed	772	868	1,143	1,034	1,003
Cases Disposed	<u>1,497</u>	<u>705</u>	<u>1,065</u>	<u>845</u>	<u>1,076</u>
Caseload Increase/Decrease	-725	+163	+78	+189	-73
Total Pending Cases	330	593	•	•	632
Cases Over 180 Days Old	188	213	•	•	279
% Over 180 Days Old	(56.9%)	(35.9%)	•	•	(44.1%)

RHODE ISLAND SUPERIOR COURT

MANNER OF DISPOSITION

FELONIES	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
PROVIDENCE/BRISTOL					
Plea	1,685	2,095	2,375	2,530	2,355
Dismissal	416	342	389	488	360
Trial	<u>131</u>	<u>106</u>	<u>148</u>	<u>89</u>	<u>73</u>
Total	2,232	2,543	2,912	3,107	2,788
KENT					
Plea	415	400	557	367	685
Dismissal	89	85	82	57	71
Trial	<u>28</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>12</u>
Total	532	508	648	438	768
WASHINGTON					
Plea	300	234	252	433	295
Dismissal	163	26	21	62	22
Trial	<u>28</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>6</u>
Total	491	272	281	508	323
NEWPORT					
Plea	150	136	238	166	367
Dismissal	46	28	35	25	45
Trial	<u>11</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>13</u>
Total	207	172	288	192	425
STATEWIDE					
Plea	2,550	2,865	3,422	3,496	3,702
Dismissal	714	481	527	632	498
Trial	<u>198</u>	<u>149</u>	<u>180</u>	<u>117</u>	<u>104</u>
Total	3,462	3,495	4,129	4,245	4,304

RHODE ISLAND SUPERIOR COURT

MANNER OF DISPOSITION (cont.)

MISDEMEANORS	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
PROVIDENCE/BRISTOL					
Plea	604	277	397	260	311
Dismissal	270	105	343	130	100
Trial	34	6	7	50	11
Total	908	388	747	440	422
KENT					
Plea	85	81	110	89	112
Dismissal	17	50	46	26	48
Trial	6	6	6	4	7
Total	108	137	162	119	167
WASHINGTON					
Plea	212	74	65	161	49
Dismissal	122	18	17	55	11
Trial	3	5	1	7	12
Total	337	97	83	223	72
NEWPORT					
Plea	36	62	41	50	283
Dismissal	107	21	28	11	130
Trial	1	0	4	2	2
Total	144	83	73	63	415
STATEWIDE					
Plea	937	494	613	560	755
Dismissal	516	194	434	222	289
Trial	44	17	18	63	32
Total	1,497	705	1,065	845	1,076

RHODE ISLAND SUPERIOR COURT

CIVIL CASEFLOW

CIVIL ACTIONS	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
PROVIDENCE/BRISTOL					
Total Cases Filed	5,159	5,542	5,224	5,351	5,156
Trial Calendar Summary					
Cases Added	2,094	2,064	2,043	2,179	1,895
Cases Disposed	<u>4,596</u>	<u>2,150</u>	<u>2,293</u>	<u>2,053</u>	<u>1,846</u>
Caseload Increase/Decrease	-2,502	-86	-250	+ 126	+ 49
Pending at Year End	4,597	4,707	4,522	4,638	4,687
KENT					
Total Cases Filed	1,054	1,054	989	943	969
Trial Calendar Summary					
Cases Added	478	496	433	406	320
Cases Disposed	<u>385</u>	<u>411</u>	<u>233</u>	<u>241</u>	<u>455</u>
Caseload Increase/Decrease	+ 93	+ 85	+ 200	+ 165	-135
Pending at Year End	620	611	811	923	788
WASHINGTON					
Total Cases Filed	495	694	501	444	580
Trial Calendar Summary					
Cases Added	164	178	177	283	204
Cases Disposed	<u>117</u>	<u>259</u>	<u>130</u>	<u>194</u>	<u>346</u>
Caseload Increase/Decrease	+ 47	-81	+ 47	+ 89	-142
Pending at Year End	322	241	288	377	133
NEWPORT -					
Total Cases Filed	450	467	498	501	589
Trial Calendar Summary					
Cases Added	132	137	157	159	160
Cases Disposed	<u>104</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>208</u>
Caseload Increase/Decrease	+ 28	+ 65	+ 82	+ 72	-48
Pending at Year End	163	169	251	290	164
STATEWIDE					
Total Cases Filed	7,158	7,757	7,212	7,239	7,294
Trial Calendar Summary					
Cases Added	2,868	2,875	2,810	3,027	2,579
Cases Disposed	<u>5,202</u>	<u>2,892</u>	<u>2,731</u>	<u>2,575</u>	<u>2,855</u>
Caseload Increase/Decrease	-2,334	-17	+ 79	+ 452	-276
Pending at Year End	5,702	5,728	5,872	6,228	5,772

RHODE ISLAND SUPERIOR COURT

MANNER OF DISPOSITION TRIAL CALENDAR ONLY

CIVIL ACTIONS	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
PROVIDENCE/BRISTOL					
Verdicts	187	198	•	116	91
Judicial Decisions	<u>171</u>	<u>113</u>	<u>•</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>68</u>
Total Trials	358	311	264	181	159
Dismissed/Settled/Other	<u>2,948</u>	<u>1,839</u>	<u>1,971</u>	<u>1,872</u>	<u>1,687</u>
Total Disposed	3,306	2,150	2,235	2,053	1,846
KENT					
Verdicts	19	42	19	9	34
Judicial Decisions	<u>53</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>85</u>
Total Trials	72	95	37	35	119
Dismissed/Settled/Other	<u>313</u>	<u>316</u>	<u>196</u>	<u>206</u>	<u>336</u>
Total Disposed	385	411	233	241	455
WASHINGTON					
Verdicts	5	9	10	5	12
Judicial Decisions	<u>18</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>7</u>
Total Trials	23	38	32	37	19
Dismissed/Settled/Other	<u>94</u>	<u>221</u>	<u>145</u>	<u>157</u>	<u>327</u>
Total Disposed	117	259	177	194	346
NEWPORT					
Verdicts	4	15	4	12	9
Judicial Decisions	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>40</u>
Total Trials	15	21	19	31	49
Dismissed/Settled/Other	<u>89</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>159</u>
Total Disposed	104	72	75	87	208
STATEWIDE					
Verdicts	215	264	•	142	146
Judicial Decisions	<u>253</u>	<u>201</u>	<u>•</u>	<u>142</u>	<u>200</u>
Total Trials	468	465	352	284	346
Dismissed/Settled/Other	<u>3,444</u>	<u>2,427</u>	<u>2,368</u>	<u>2,291</u>	<u>2,509</u>
Total Disposed	3,912	2,892	2,720	2,575	2,855

RHODE ISLAND FAMILY COURT

JUVENILE CASEFLOW

JUVENILE FILINGS	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Wayward/Delinquent	5,624	5,536	5,065	4,373	4,731
Dependency/Neglect/Abuse	636	647	519	632	636
Termination of Parental Rights	201	297	266	329	259
Other	662	795	845	948	1,080
Total Filings	7,123	7,275	6,695	6,282	6,706
Total Dispositions	*	*	*	*	5,767
Caseload Increase/Decrease	*	*	*	*	+ 939

JUVENILE TRIAL CALENDAR RESULTS

Cases Added	2,823	2,719	2,682	2,636	3,107
Cases Disposed	2,815	2,918	2,734	2,705	3,032
Caseload Increase/Decrease	+8	-199	-52	-69	+75
Total Pending	634	436	384	315	390
Pending Wayward/Delinquent Cases Over 90 Days Old	232	66	46	32	40
Average Time to Disposition for Wayward/Delinquent Cases	110.6 days	69.6 days	71 days	61.3 days	66.3 days

DOMESTIC RELATIONS CASEFLOW

DIVORCE PETITIONS FILED	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Providence/Bristol	3,163	3,240	3,217	3,039	2,999
Kent	925	922	896	828	834
Newport	542	501	502	413	438
Washington	561	565	522	474	502
STATEWIDE TOTAL	5,191	5,228	5,137	4,754	4,773

CONTESTED DIVORCE CALENDAR RESULTS

Cases Added	*	*	*	*	802
Cases Disposed	*	*	*	*	898
Caseload Increase/Decrease					-96
Total Pending	473	644	565	576	480
Cases Pending Over 180 Days	127	279	154	164	149
Cases Pending Over 360 Days	37	101	37	59	10
Average Time to Disposition	*	*	*	*	226.4 days

RHODE ISLAND DISTRICT COURT

CRIMINAL CASEFLOW

MISDEMEANORS	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Cases Filed	31,944	33,475	33,665	29,720	30,114
Cases Disposed	31,522	32,469	33,457	28,651	28,461
Caseload Increase/Decrease	+ 422	+1,006	+ 208	+1,069	+1,653
Total Pending Cases	*	1,595	1,671	1,511	1,934
Cases Over 60 Days Old	*	321	352	471	480

MANNER OF DISPOSITION

MISDEMEANORS					
Pleas	*	18,480	18,944	17,180	16,006
Filed	*	4,649	4,181	3,592	3,494
Dismissed	*	7,436	7,758	5,783	6,837
Trials	*	553	565	652	623
Cases Appealed	411	457	278	281	344
Cases Transferred	321	632	934	558	514
TOTAL	732	1,089	1,212	839	858

FELONIES

Charges Filed	7,878	8,584	8,064	7,981	8,116
Charges Disposed	7,905	9,060	8,299	7,993	8,271

MANNER OF DISPOSITION

Charged	1,227	2,127	3,468	4,472	4,831
Not Charged/Dismissed	6,678	6,933	4,831	3,521	3,440

CIVIL CASEFLOW

REGULAR CIVIL	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Cases Filed	23,308	23,689	22,625	19,758	18,759
Cases Disposed	20,174	20,016	18,842	16,040	13,688

MANNER OF DISPOSITION

Defaults	12,122	11,375	12,262	9,609	7,754
Settlements	4,372	4,926	3,519	3,556	2,823
Judgments	3,680	3,715	3,061	2,783	3,031
Transfers	*	*	*	92	80
Appeals	441	473	485	406	339

SMALL CLAIMS

Cases Filed	7,796	8,383	8,475	10,850	12,087
Cases Disposed	5,860	6,248	5,893	7,213	7,791

MANNER OF DISPOSITION

Defaults	4,096	4,316	3,984	4,143	4,531
Settlements	1,132	1,047	1,170	1,841	1,983
Judgments	632	885	739	1,229	1,277
Appeals	65	67	115	103	116