

1979

## District of Columbia Superior Court

H. Carl Moultrie I

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.law.edu/lawreview>

---

### Recommended Citation

H. Carl Moultrie I, *District of Columbia Superior Court*, 28 Cath. U. L. Rev. 717 (1979).

Available at: <https://scholarship.law.edu/lawreview/vol28/iss4/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by CUA Law Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Catholic University Law Review by an authorized editor of CUA Law Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact [edinger@law.edu](mailto:edinger@law.edu).

# DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SUPERIOR COURT

*H. Carl Moultrie I, Chief Judge, Superior Court of the District of Columbia\**

The Superior Court of the District of Columbia was created by an Act of Congress in 1970. This legislation, the Court Reform and Criminal Procedure Act of 1970,<sup>1</sup> consolidated the three existing trial courts—the Court of General Sessions, the Juvenile Court, and the Tax Court—and transferred jurisdiction over local matters formerly handled by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia to a local forum which would handle, for the first time, all local cases. This forum, the Superior Court, having full jurisdiction over all local criminal and civil matters regardless of complexity or amount in controversy, is the only unified court system in the United States.

The goal of the Court Reorganization Act was to eliminate backlogs and to allow for speedier processing of criminal cases, as well as to move the District of Columbia toward Home Rule.<sup>2</sup> Because of an increased case load, it became necessary to increase the number of judges available to efficiently dispose of cases. Toward this end, forty-four judges were authorized for the Superior Court.<sup>3</sup>

At this time, some eight years after the establishment of the Superior Court,<sup>4</sup> the transition from a fragmented municipal court system to an effective urban court is largely complete. The reorganization is finished, and the unified court now operates in five divisions. Concurrent with the establishment of the Superior Court, planning was underway for a single court structure to obviate the need for judges, jurors, court support staff, attorneys, witnesses, and the general public to shuttle between seven differ-

---

\* Judge Moultrie wishes to acknowledge the assistance of his law clerks, Deborah A. Robinson and Edward Varrone, and former Director of the Evaluation, Research and Special Projects Division, Nancy Wynstra, in the preparation of this article.

1. Pub. L. No. 91-358, 84 Stat. 473 (1970) (current version in D.C. CODE ANN. §§ 11-101 to 2504 (1973)).

2. See H.R. REP. NO. 91-907, 91st Cong., 2d Sess. 25, 33-34, 49-50 (1970) [hereinafter cited as H.R. REP. NO. 91-907].

3. At the date of this writing there are 42 active judges and two vacant positions.

4. The effective date of the Act was February 1, 1971, see D.C. CODE ANN. § 11-101 (1973).

ent buildings.<sup>5</sup> In May 1978, the court relocated in a new building that is a model of modern courthouse design. With the opening of the new courthouse, all judges and courtrooms and most of the support functions are located under one roof. This development has had the positive effect of enhancing the efficiency and dignity of court operations. A further indication that the court is moving into a new stage in its history was the installation in June 1978 of the first Chief Judge of the Superior Court.<sup>6</sup>

The task now facing the court is to move from this transitional period, to consolidate the major gains already made, and to focus on the implementation of improved management techniques. This is essential in order for the court to be able to dispose of a large and growing case load both expeditiously and fairly.

#### I. RECENT CHANGES IN SUPERIOR COURT OPERATIONS

A major step in the effort to improve Superior Court operations was taken on January 1, 1979, when Mr. Larry Polansky assumed the position of Court Executive Officer. The position of Court Executive was created as part of the 1970 court reorganization with the objective of placing the nonjudicial management of the courts in an administrative office.<sup>7</sup> Mr. Polansky brings to this position substantial experience in court administration and in the use of automated data processing techniques in court operations. With the installation of a Court Executive Officer, the Chief Judge and the other administrative judges need no longer be involved in day-to-day administration and are therefore able to focus more clearly on overall planning and policy implementation.

A principal responsibility of the Court Executive is to identify areas in which the use of modern management techniques will assist the court in improving its operations. In this effort, Mr. Polansky will be assisted by a new Director of Data Processing Operations.<sup>8</sup> The Superior Court was one of the first courts in the nation to utilize computers in an effort to

---

5. See H.R. REP. NO. 91-907, *supra* note 2, at 37.

6. The Honorable H. Carl Moultrie I succeeded the Honorable Harold H. Greene, who, as Chief Judge of the Court of General Sessions, became the first Chief Judge of the Superior Court in 1971.

7. See H.R. REP. NO. 91-907, *supra* note 2, at 42. See also D.C. CODE ANN. § 11-703 (1973). The position of Court Executive Officer is not unique to the District of Columbia. Virtually every state has a court executive, or court administrator, as do many larger regional or municipal court systems. See 5 NATIONAL CENTER FOR STATE COURTS, SURVEY OF JUDICIAL SALARIES (January, 1979); ABA COMM. ON STANDARDS OF JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION, STANDARDS RELATING TO COURT ORGANIZATION, § 1.41 (1974); NATIONAL ADVISORY COMM. ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE STANDARDS AND GOALS, COURTS, Chap. 9 (1973).

8. This position is vacant at the date of this writing.

achieve more efficient court operations, and efforts are currently being made to expand computer support to divisions of the court not presently automated.<sup>9</sup> In addition, attention is being given to long-range planning to upgrade current computer operations. This continuing effort to improve computer operations, initiated in 1977, has already had a significant impact on court operations. Special computer systems have been installed in the Central Violations Bureau and the Adult Probation Office, and as described in detail in Part III, other data processing innovations are planned.

Another step designed to identify procedures that needlessly stall court operations is the Court Delay Reduction Project. This program, which is funded by federal grants amounting to approximately \$300,000, will make an eighteen month in-depth study of the case flow in the three major divisions — Criminal, Civil, and Family — with the goal of identifying and changing procedures presently causing delay. This project will also involve the development by judges of time goals for processing every type of case through every stage of litigation and the implementation of procedures to monitor case processing in accordance with developed time standards.

The court assignment policy has also been recently changed. Beginning in September, 1978, judges were assigned to a particular division for a three month period.<sup>10</sup> It is believed that this longer assignment period affords an opportunity for a judge to maximize his or her talents in a particular area and gain experience in areas where experience may be lacking. This assignment program also, it is felt, increases the efficiency of each judge and the entire court.

The longer assignments are made in conjunction with the designation of one judge from each division as the administrative judge of that division. The administrative judge assists in the day-to-day operation of his particular division and works closely with court support personnel and the judges assigned to the division on particular projects. This innovation has already led to an improvement of court operations; by focusing on divisional problems, the administrative judges have assisted in reducing backlogs and have experimented with many new and potentially effective procedures.<sup>11</sup>

A major structural change took place on October 1, 1978, with the transfer of the Central Violations Bureau from the Superior Court to the D.C. Department of Transportation. The Central Violations Bureau handles

---

9. See Part III and accompanying text *infra*.

10. Although it allowed for some flexibility, the previous system assigned judges for one month periods.

11. See Part II *infra* for a discussion of activities of each division of the court.

non-criminal traffic offenses (citations) and parking violations. This change allows for administrative processing of minor traffic cases with the result that scarce judicial resources will be freed from essentially non-adjudicatory tasks and made available for the more important task of case processing. The change also reduces the demands on Superior Court data processing resources,<sup>12</sup> allowing for increased automation of other court support functions.

Two projects have been undertaken to improve court operations and assist the public in transacting its business before the court. The court has received grant funding for, and is currently developing, a comprehensive bench book. This publication will contain detailed explanations and guides for all of the statutory and high-volume units of the court, as well as guides for special assignments and special procedures. Upon completion, the bench book will minimize the problem, encountered in a rotation assignment system, of different judges employing different procedures. Uniformity of procedure, regardless of which judge is sitting in a particular assignment, is vital to the smooth functioning of court support personnel and, more importantly, is of major benefit to litigants.

A second publication, developed in cooperation with the D.C. Bar, is an information pamphlet entitled *A Guide to Offices of the District of Columbia Superior Court*. This pamphlet, available in both English and Spanish, is designed to assist the general public in transacting business with the Superior Court. Since the court exists to serve the public, making available information on how to use the court is a vital part of serving the people of the District of Columbia.

## II. ACTIVITIES OF THE DIVISIONS OF THE COURT

The Superior Court organization consists of five operating divisions: Civil, Criminal, Family, Probate, and Tax.<sup>13</sup> In addition to these operating divisions, there is a Social Services Division, headed by a Director of Social Services. The director has charge of all social services for the Superior Court.<sup>14</sup>

### A. Criminal Division

Judge Tim Murphy, Criminal Division Head, has made several changes in court procedures. The underlying goal of these reforms, implemented

---

12. For example, parking tickets and minor moving violations will no longer be processed on the Superior Court computer.

13. See D.C. CODE ANN. § 11-902 (1973).

14. *Id.* at § 11-1702.

as of September, 1978, was to reduce the number of cases pending before the court.

Most of the changes involved misdemeanor case processing. All misdemeanor cases are now set for a Rule 17.1 pretrial conference within thirty days of arraignment.<sup>15</sup> The conferences are held by the Calendar Control Judge and trial dates are set at this time. Under this new procedure, fewer cases are set for trial on each day. At the outset of the program, regular gaps were placed in the trial calendar so that old cases not previously reached could be set for trial. All motions are now heard by one of the misdemeanor trial judges. As each case is brought to trial, a back-up jury case is set for each trial judge so that a case is always ready for trial.

These changes had an immediate positive impact by reducing the serious misdemeanor case load. As of September 1, 1978, 2,952 serious misdemeanor cases were pending disposition; this was reduced to 2,248 by November 30, 1978. This reduction was achieved even though the number of new filings and reinstatements<sup>16</sup> remained basically constant and two misdemeanor trial judges were ill for a good part of the time. It is to be noted that the percentage of cases disposed by court proceedings<sup>17</sup>—as opposed to disposition prior to court adjudication<sup>18</sup>—increased. This statistic is particularly significant in light of the court's objective to afford trials to everyone, thereby avoiding a situation where the court dispenses wholesale justice. An important by-product of this improved scheduling is the savings in cost and time, since it requires fewer attorney and witness appearances. Law enforcement agencies project that the savings will amount to approximately \$17,000 per day.<sup>19</sup>

The traffic calendar is another area in which improved scheduling has had a positive impact on case backlog. In September, 1978, a Traffic Calendar Control Court was established for serious traffic cases. As part of an experiment with more individual calendar assignments for the court, two judges are now assigned to handle the traffic jury calendar.<sup>20</sup> On Septem-

---

15. SUP. CT. CRIM. R. 17.1. Formerly, such status hearings were not utilized for misdemeanor cases.

16. "Reinstatement" is a procedural term that encompasses: cases in which a defendant is arrested on a bench warrant; motions for new trials; Rule 105 cases in which one judge handles all cases against a particular defendant; judicial summonses; mental observation cases; mistrials; and reversals.

17. *E.g.*, jury trials, bench trials, pleas, dismissals.

18. *E.g.*, no papers, *nolle prosequi*, defendant absconded, and proceedings under Rule 105.

19. See LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION, A CROSS-CITY COMPARISON OF MISDEMEANOR CASE PROCESSING (1978).

20. Under prior proceedings, all traffic cases were initially handled in traffic court. At

ber 1, 1978, 2,010 serious traffic cases were pending. By November 30, 1978, the goal of reducing the pending case load below 1000 was reached, with 951 cases pending. This almost 53 percent reduction in three months was accomplished with a slight increase in the number of cases disposed of by court proceeding.

### *B. Civil Division*

Beginning in September, 1978, the major effort in this division, with Judge James A. Belson serving as division head, has been the reduction of the backlog of Civil II cases.<sup>21</sup> Two actions were taken as part of this effort.

The first action involved a change in the procedures for daily assignment of Civil II cases and the operation of the Civil Calendar Control Court. Most of these changes address administrative details involving set times for the call of the motions calendar, trial times, and carry-over cases. A one-half hour "on call" procedure for counsel has also been established.

The second action was a three month effort to effect settlement of Civil II cases. Beginning in October, 1978, approximately 1,500 Civil II jury cases were called for settlement conferences. The conferences were held at a rate of five per hour for six hours daily. One judge was assigned to handle these settlement conferences. Settlement was effected in an average of thirty-seven cases per week under this program.

A change in the rules of the Landlord-Tenant Court, effective February 15, 1979, reflects another effort both to expedite the flow of litigation and to conserve judicial resources. New Landlord and Tenant Rule 11-I provides for entry of consent judgments by the Interview and Judgment Clerk without judicial approval in certain circumstances. Under this new procedure, which was developed by the Rules Committee with assistance from the Advisory Committee on Civil Rules as well as the District of Columbia Bar Association's Landlord and Tenant Subcommittee and landlord and tenant practitioners, the Landlord and Tenant Judge will no longer have to devote a major portion of his day to routinely reviewing a substantial number of consent judgment agreements. Since approximately half of all cases coming before the Landlord and Tenant Judge were disposed of by consent decree over the past few years, a mechanism channelling the vast majority of these agreements to the Landlord and Tenant Interview and

---

the initial hearing, if an individual demanded a jury trial, the case would be transferred and added to the misdemeanor calendar.

21. Civil II cases are those less complex civil cases which are not assigned to a particular judge. *See* SUP. CT. CIV. R. 40-II. The Civil II calendar, therefore, operates under a general assignment as opposed to an individual assignment calendar system.

Judgment Clerk will realize a large savings in court time and judicial resources in the Landlord and Tenant Court. The Landlord and Tenant Judge will therefore be able to process pending Landlord and Tenant cases requiring court action expeditiously and perhaps be able to assist with other court calendars, such as Civil II.

In practice, the procedure employs the use of a consent judgment *praecipe* signed by both the tenant and landlord and reviewed by the Interview and Judgment Clerk. The clerk first ascertains that the consent judgment was executed by the tenant after the complaint was filed, that the tenant has received a copy of the consent judgment *praecipe*, and that the tenant understands the nature and consequences of his agreement. If all of these conditions are met, the consent judgment, or any other order by consent continuing a case or ordering monies deposited into or disbursed by the court registry, is entered by the clerk without judicial approval.

After an agreement is reached, a stay of execution issues until all parties fulfill the terms of the agreement. Once a tenant completes payment of rent and the other conditions of the decree are satisfied, a permanent stay of execution is entered by the clerk. If the tenant fails to pay, the clerk can vacate the stay and issue a writ of execution, after notice to the tenant. All proceedings before the Interview and Judgment Clerk are on the record. Standard forms are provided for use under the new rule.

### C. Family Division

Under the direction of division head Judge Joyce Hens Green, two programs were initiated as part of an effort to reduce case backlog and bring the pending case load of the Family Division under manageable control. Also, several changes have been initiated with respect to juvenile cases.

The first of the two programs was a review of all neglect cases transferred from the old juvenile court at the time of court reorganization. It was discovered that no systematic review had occurred since that time; accordingly, the last week in December was set aside for the purpose of calling as many of those cases as possible. As a result of this project, children under court supervision were formally brought into the system, thereby allowing for subsequent review of their cases. Hundreds of *pro bono* appointments of counsel were made in those cases necessitating continued review and law students were often appointed to represent parents in these cases. Consequently, many motions for termination of parental rights, often long delayed, are being filed, to be followed by adoption proceedings in appropriate cases.

The second program designed by the Family Division to reduce backlog

was a special voluntary settlement conference program for domestic relations cases. This program, held in February and April of 1979, provided a vehicle for litigants to arrange a settlement conference before a judge in cases in which the litigant believed the conference could lead to a resolution of the entire action. Conferences were arranged on a "first-come, first-served" basis. If the conference led to a settlement, an uncontested trial was held on that day, thereby bringing the action to a final resolution. This program was carried out on an experimental basis, and, as a result of the success of the program and its favorable reception by many domestic relations practitioners, a future settlement conference program will be held.<sup>22</sup>

For the first time since 1956, the domestic relations financial statement form has been revised. The revised form, now in full use, provides a tool to enable the litigant to carefully reflect on financial matters relevant to support, such as food, clothing, transportation, education, expenses, *et cetera*. The use of this form significantly reduces the amount of time required to take testimony on financial matters because the litigant has already considered his or her financial position. Also, since the statement must be filed prior to pretrial motions hearings and pretrial conferences, it may result in increased settlements.

A great deal of attention has also been paid to the needs and concerns of juveniles. Recent changes have included a revision of intake procedures,<sup>23</sup> thereby shortening the time between arrest and presentation before the intake judge, the signing of an interstate compact on juvenile social service matters, and a greater use of law students in supervision of juveniles on probation or under suspended commitments. The division has also improved scheduling of juvenile cases with the purpose of reducing the processing time of juvenile cases, thereby allowing for quicker disposition and implementation of rehabilitative programs.

Of particular note is the new interstate compact on exchange of social services for juveniles. Entered into by the juvenile courts of the Washington Metropolitan Area in October, 1978, the agreement provides for supervision of juveniles on probation by a court in the jurisdiction of the child's residence. The compact formalizes the relationship between the various probation departments in the area and allows for consistent handling of inter-jurisdictional cases and the cooperation of all courts in the metropolitan area in dealing with the problem of juvenile delinquency.

---

22. For the February program, seven cases were scheduled for conference; of these, all but two were settled. Eight cases were set for the April conference; of these, six were settled.

23. Intake procedures in juvenile cases correspond to adult arrangements.

#### *D. Probate Division*

In the interests of administrative efficiency and the responsiveness of the court to public needs, the Fiduciary Office has recently been transferred from the Civil Division to the Probate Division. This reorganization will result in some reassignment of personnel and, hopefully, improved operation of the Fiduciary Office. Experience has shown that the needs and concerns involved in the administration of the "living estates" of those under conservatorship or guardianship, as well as *inter vivos* trusts, do not significantly differ from those involved in the administration of probate estates. The structural reorganization reflects a recognition of this fact.

#### *E. Social Services Division*

The Social Services Division is the arm of the court administering necessary ancillary social service programs. The Social Services Division consists of the Adult Branch, Juvenile Branch, Intrafamily Offense, Neglect and Conciliation Branch, and the Special Projects Branch.

The Special Projects Branch is responsible for testing, evaluating, and implementing new and innovative programs of supervision in the adult and juvenile probation area. Recently, several new changes were instituted in this branch, the purpose of which was to augment, or provide alternatives to, traditional supervised release programs for adults and juveniles.

The Community Service Program, implemented in December, 1978, is an alternative to the regular supervised probation of selected adult defendants. Participants are required to make restitution to the community in the form of a specific number of hours of service in selected community programs. The program is administered by one probation officer assisted by five Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA) volunteers, who have the primary responsibility for developing community service placements and supervising defendants' performance of community service. The placements accommodate a variety of individual abilities, with some requiring few or minimal skills, and others utilizing clerical, construction, or other skills possessed by particular defendants.

Defendants eligible for the program are those without prior felony convictions and no more than three prior convictions of any kind, who are convicted of a misdemeanor, traffic offense, or a non-violent felony. Participation is limited to defendants having no apparent need for regular probation supervision, exhibiting no apparent mental or emotional problems, and posing no physical threat to the community. A suggested number of hours of community service are provided for each offense and

the period of community service lasts for a year. Successful completion results in termination of probation.

A second new program is the Juvenile Restitution Program. This program is a two year experimental diversion program funded by a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. The Superior Court was one of fifty city-wide courts across the nation chosen to participate in this program. Part of this experimental program will include a national evaluation of the effectiveness of juvenile restitution as an alternative to incarceration or regular juvenile probation. The District of Columbia is one of eight cities chosen to participate in this evaluation. If the program is successful, there is an option for an additional year of grant funding.

The program will operate closely with a variety of community groups. The Southeast Neighborhood Settlement House, the Shaw Mental Health Center, and the Center for Community Justice have already agreed to be responsible for supervising the restitution/community service portions of the program.

The Juvenile Restitution Program, in which participation is voluntary, is aimed at juvenile offenders who would otherwise be either incarcerated or placed on regular probation. Participants under the age of sixteen will make restitution in the form of community service to charitable organizations, schools, or other community agencies. Juveniles sixteen or older will make restitution either by a monetary payment to the victim or by community service. An important component of the program is finding jobs and providing appropriate training.

It is anticipated that the Juvenile Restitution Program will provide an important sentencing alternative for juvenile offenders as well as a vehicle for employment training and experience. As employment placement is often very difficult for juvenile offenders, it is anticipated that the program may be an important factor in preventing future criminal behavior. A significant supplementary benefit of this program is that grant funds will flow almost entirely to community groups throughout the city which are closely involved in providing services to juvenile offenders participating in the restitution program.

Two other new programs have also been implemented. The Adult Restitution Program is an alternative to incarceration for adult offenders. The program will operate under the direction of Inner Voices, Inc., an ex-offender association, supplemented by two Social Services Division staff members, who will provide counseling and supportive services. Restitution is made by defendants either by monetary payments to the victim or

by community service. The Narcotics Treatment Unit, formerly part of the Narcotic Pre-trial Diversion Program, is a special treatment program for probationers with drug-related problems. Defendants will be referred to this program for intensive supervision and counseling.

### III. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The major challenge confronting the Superior Court is the implementation of management techniques which will improve the quality and celerity of dispensing justice. Toward this end, a number of innovations in the operation of the court system are being considered.

#### *A. Promulgation of Operation's Manuals*

A series of procedural manuals detailing the operations of each of the divisions of the Superior Court is a necessary support tool in allowing the court to continue to dispose fairly and expeditiously of its steadily increasing case load.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, such manuals would provide a foundation for continuity in court operations.

#### *B. Expansion of the Use of Technology*

Maximizing the use of technology to achieve a more efficient automated information retrieval and management system is a goal of highest priority. The current status of the court's data processing operations has been examined, and the development of long-range plans for the upgrading and expansion of these operations undertaken. It is hoped that in addition to maintaining statistics and improving the court's recordkeeping capabilities, wider use of computer technology will enhance the productivity of court personnel. Furthermore, increased use of computer technology must also be sought as a vehicle for improving the quality of services made available through the court's library, as further detailed below. Commitment of the court to utilization of modern computer technology, as well as the expertise which the Court Executive brings to this effort, should insure that the Superior Court will become a model for the application of automated data processing techniques to court operations.

---

24. An examination of the Superior Court's case files for 1977 and 1978 illustrate the court's steadily increasing case load:

	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>
Misdemeanors:	12,872	13,395
D.C. Code Cases:	3,380	3,695
Traffic:	6,019	6,389
(jury demandable traffic cases)		
Juvenile:	5,750	5,882

While computer technology can be costly, its benefits mandate that the court increase its use. It should be noted that actual costs can be reduced by securing grant funding for certain projects. The court has already received funding for the design and implementation of an on-line juvenile information retrieval system, which will be shared by the juvenile prosecutor's office.

### *C. Library Services*

Plans are underway to evaluate presently available library services with a view towards increasing the Superior Court Library's value to the court system. Several areas warrant attention. First, a procedure must be formulated to collect and store written opinions, and to ensure access to such opinions. Under this procedure, all written opinions, accompanied by a brief abstract and appropriate key words or phrases, would be submitted to the library for filing and indexing. The feasibility of microfilm will be considered in this regard.

A second area to be considered in attempting to upgrade the library is the development of a file of sample pleadings. Such a central file could be of great assistance to members of the bar. Alternatively, each of the judicial divisions could maintain sample pleadings, making them available to the bar.

Finally, the court must develop long-range plans for the utilization of an automated information retrieval system. In maximizing the use of available technology in this area, it is hoped that the quality of service provided by the bar will be enhanced, and the actions of the members of the bench will become even more informed.

### *D. Citizen's Advisory Committee*

Creation of a Citizen's Advisory Committee<sup>25</sup> is seen as an essential step for involving the community in the operation of the court. The Advisory Committee should be composed of a broad spectrum of District citizens groups to insure that the committee is representative of the community. Both the community and the court would benefit from the creation of a mechanism for the exchange of ideas and concerns.

### *E. Review of the Present Budget Process*

The efficiency of the present budgeting procedures must be closely scru-

---

25. This concept is still in the planning stages, but it is expected that such a committee could provide a different and important perspective for evaluations of court problems and programs. Further, it could provide invaluable assistance in planning and implementing programs designed to benefit the general public.

tinized, and the necessary modifications made, to insure maximum efficiency of Superior Court operations. The budget represents a plan for meeting projected financial requirements. For it to be effective, the court must develop models for obtaining the best estimates for judicial and support services and facilities. A feature of the budgetary model will be the inclusion of the administrative divisions in the forecasting of financial needs. Most importantly, the model will consider both the political climate and prevailing fiscal realities in generating sound, detailed statements of the court's financial needs.

#### *F. Use of the Individual Calendar System*

As the desire of the bench, bar, and community for expeditious resolution of disputes increases, the court must explore means of using the time of all parties more efficiently. Toward this end, the court plans to experiment with the use of the individual calendar system in Civil II domestic relations and juvenile cases, and the Family Division,<sup>26</sup> directing the clerk to assign more civil and family cases to a single judge for all purposes.<sup>27</sup>

#### IV. CONCLUSION

While the Superior Court has been unable to solve all the problems it faces, arising primarily from the high volume of criminal and civil litigation attendant to its location in an urban area, the challenges inherent in a combination of high case loads and low resources are being solved more successfully than in most other metropolitan areas. The court is committed to the goal of an efficient, fair, and impartial system of justice, and is constantly seeking new means to achieve this goal in view of the government's fiscal constraints.

---

26. At present, the individual calendar system is routinely used only in Civil I and the Felony Branch of the Criminal Division.

27. SUP. CT. DIV. R. 40-1(e) provides for assignment of a civil case to a single judge "for good cause shown." The judge so assigned becomes responsible for the scheduling and the conducting of all further proceedings in the case.

