MINNESOTA STATE COURTS

2001-2002 ANNUAL REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE

Minnesota's judges and court personnel strive to provide the public with a judicial branch that is accessible, fair, consistent, responsive, free of discrimination, independent, and well managed. Committed to this vision, we continue to focus our work on four strategic areas: Children's Justice, Access to Justice, Technology, and Public Trust and Confidence.

We have made significant and exciting progress in 2001-2002:

- We continue to aggressively seek better ways to protect our most needy children through the Children's Justice Initiative and the creation of a statewide Guardian ad Litem system.
- We are ready to roll out the Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS), which will serve as the anchor tenant of the new CriMNet integrated criminal justice information project.
- We have begun to collect data statewide that will help us assess any racial bias in our system and work to eliminate it.
- And we are targeting the problems that bring people into the courts in the first place through our specialty courts, local initiatives, and community cooperation.

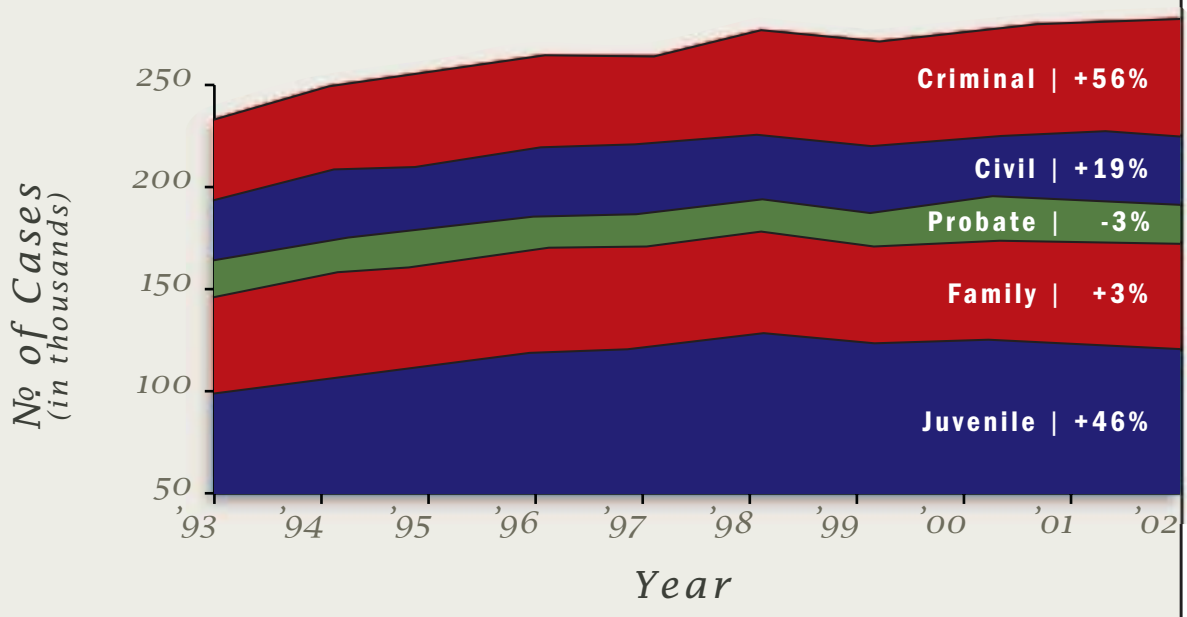
Kathleen A. Blatz, Chief Justice

Our overriding responsibility and focus remains the constitutionally prescribed mission to resolve disputes brought to our courts. Minnesota's judiciary handled more than 4 million cases in 2001 and 2002, and continues to try to keep pace with increasing caseloads. Five new judgeships granted by legislators in the last biennium takes us one step closer to doing so, and for that we are thankful.

Just as the work of previous years has laid a foundation for this progress, so, too, will these efforts form the backbone of our future. We will continue to strive for a justice system that wisely uses resources, meets the highest standards of fairness and accountability, and effectively provides leadership and access to justice.

Kathleen A. Blatz

Statewide Major Case Filings 1993 - 2002



CHILDREN'S JUSTICE

The Minnesota Judicial Branch recognizes the links between childhood maltreatment and juvenile delinquency, and adult crime. For too many children, the child protection system has become a feeder system into our adult criminal courts. Nearly 80 percent of our nation's prison inmates have had contact with the child protection system. In response, Minnesota has taken an organized approach to reforming the system.

Working "through the eyes of the child"

Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz and the Minnesota Department of Human Services Commissioner kicked off the Children's Justice Initiative in April 2001. The five-year effort seeks to improve child protection case processing and outcomes, and provide permanent homes for maltreated children—through reunification or placement with another family—in a more timely manner.

Lead judges in participating counties have formed teams of people from the juvenile courts, social services departments, county attorneys' and public defenders' offices, court administration, Guardian ad Litem programs, and others involved in child abuse and neglect cases. Each team studies how its county currently processes child protection cases. Using national best practices guidelines, the teams implement changes to better meet the needs of children. By 2005, all 87 counties in the state will have participated in the country's first statewide child protection court reform effort.

Children's Justice Initiative Participating Counties

2001:

Carver	Otter Tail
Chippewa	Ramsey
Crow Wing	Stearns
Faribault	St. Louis (Duluth)
Hennepin	Washington
Kanabec	Appellate Courts
Olmsted	

2002:

Aitkin	Nicollet
Blue Earth	Sherburne
Brown	St. Louis (Hibbing/ Virginia)
Clay	Todd
Itasca	Waseca
Kandiyohi	Yellow Medicine
La Qui Parle	
LeSueur	
Mille Lacs	
Mower	

In its first year, the Children's Justice Initiative counties worked on the following:

- Meeting state and federal timelines for finding permanent homes for children.
- Issuing orders at each hearing, so parties are aware of timelines and expectations, minimizing confusion and keeping cases on track.
- Holding pre-hearing conferences to identify and resolve issues early in the case.
- Appointing public defenders earlier, so they can more effectively represent their clients.
- Implementing a policy of "no continuances," thereby reducing delay.
- Producing a video for parents, children and others that explains the child protection system and procedures in plain English, making the system more user-friendly and understandable.
- Eliminating "cattle call" hearings where all cases are scheduled for the same time, allowing more time per hearing.
- Coordinating vertical representation, so judges, social workers, public defenders and Guardians ad Litem stay with the same family and are familiar with the case.
- Adjusting schedules to reduce delays, and improving the uniformity of reports.

Shining light into the process

On July 1, 2002, the judiciary allowed public access to child protection hearings and records statewide to shine light into the process, improve accountability, and help us do a better job for abused and neglected children. The Supreme Court order mandating public access followed a three-year pilot project in 12 counties.

According to the National Center for State Courts, the pilot project led to a slight increase in attendance at hearings by extended family members; showed no harm to children; enhanced professional accountability; and showed that media were responsible in their coverage of these cases. The Court's action has since led to local and national media coverage of child protection issues.

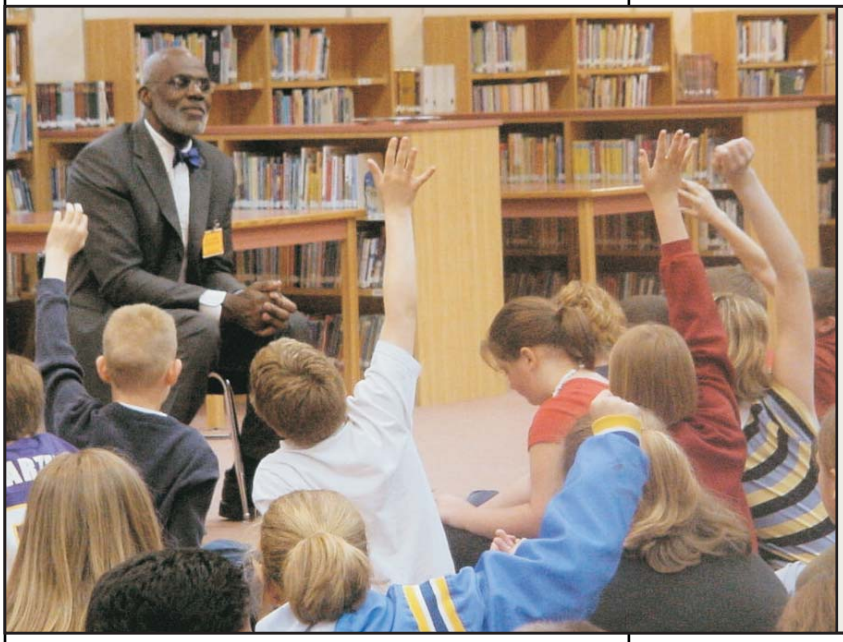
Opening lines to children

In September 2002, Washington County's Children's Justice Initiative began training volunteers for its new Kids Call and Child Protection Voluntary Mediation programs. Kids Call volunteer attorneys provide immediate information about legal proceedings by telephone to children who have been placed outside the home on a 72-hour health and welfare hold. Upon request, Child Protection Voluntary Mediation more quickly resolves child protection and termination of parental rights cases in a non-adversarial manner. It is expected to improve court order compliance and increase cooperation between the family and county Department of Community Services.

and oversight; judicial district administered; and locally operated.

To help fill the gap in the meantime, Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz initiated a Pro Bono Challenge for Kids project in summer 2001 to recruit attorneys and law firm personnel as volunteer Guardians in Hennepin and Ramsey counties. During two phases, the Challenge recruited 195 volunteers. During an upcoming third phase, the Challenge will recruit volunteers from local corporations.

Minnesota has become a national role model because it requires Guardians to undergo extensive training prior to their first appointment, attend continuing education



Supreme Court Justice Alan Page answers students' questions about the court sytem at Christa McAuliffe Elementary School in Hastings, MN.

Building a stronger system

In the past, Minnesota's Guardian ad Litem system has consisted of a patchwork quilt of nearly 60 different programs that provide trained volunteers or other paid professionals to represent the best interests of abused and neglected children in court. In 2000, 40 percent of abused children had no Guardian, or advocate, though state and federal law required it. Because of the efforts of judges and court staff, legislative funding and the Pro Bono Challenge for Kids, that gap has closed to 20 percent. Our goal is to reach 100 percent coverage on abuse and neglect cases by 2005, as resources and budget allow.

We are building a Guardian ad Litem system that is state funded, supervised and supported with consistent training

programs, and conduct investigations and evaluations according to preset standards.

Responding more quickly

The judiciary has taken steps to make sure our most needy children are not waiting for permanent homes. Updates to court rules require district courts to provide transcripts to the higher court in the case of an appeal within 30 days instead of the usual 60 days. The Court of Appeals is required by court rules to issue its opinions on child protection cases within 60 days, compared to the 90 days required by statutes. The Supreme Court has initiated an internal policy of expediting child protection cases as well.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Each Minnesota judge handles nearly 8,000 cases each year, and if the last 25 years are any indication, judges will continue to see substantial caseload growth. Since 1975, major caseloads have increased more than 700 percent. As a result, we understand the importance of working efficiently and effectively by addressing the problems that lead to crime and increasing citizens' access to justice.

Dealing with DWI faster

Hennepin County District Court began handling the new felony level DWI cases in 2002 under the Expedited DWI program. The court has been expediting misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor alcohol-related offenses since 2000. The program has led to a higher percentage of case dispositions in a shorter amount of time, allowing people to begin healing and recovery sooner.

Program results show that more than 81 percent of the DWI cases are resolved within 45 days and 96 percent within 75 days. The number of days from first appearance to case resolution decreased 40 percent (from 38 days prior to the start of the program to 23 days after). Implied consent trials decreased 73 percent in the same time frame.

Studying potential race bias

The Minnesota Supreme Court's Implementation Committee on Multicultural Diversity and Racial Fairness in the Courts is overseeing a statewide court race data collection project, which is the first of its kind in the country. Since early 2002, every court in Minnesota has collected self-reported race data at the first court appearance in traffic, criminal and juvenile cases. The goal is to understand whether bias enters into decisions made in the criminal justice system, and to address those problems, so everyone is treated fairly.

Fighting alcohol, drug use

St. Louis County

St. Louis County District Court launched the state's newest adult drug court in 2002 to address the nearly 80 percent of defendants who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of their offense. The drug court, similar to those in Hennepin and Ramsey counties, provides early chemical dependency assessments and identification of addiction, closer and more intensive supervision, and frequent unscheduled drug tests and meetings with the judge. Such courts have reduced court processing time and increased drug defendants' accountability.

Dodge County

In November 2002, Dodge County implemented a juvenile drug court, modeled after one in Ramsey County, but designed to address issues unique to rural Minnesota. The program has gained widespread community support. In addition to providing the usual benefits of drug court, Dodge County's courts have received grants and worked with local organizations to create services that ensure the success of participating youth and their families.

Statewide

Nearly 275 criminal justice and community leaders from across the state met to pioneer new ways of addressing chemical use and addiction amongst juveniles. The Supreme Court sponsored the July 2002 conference, *Ending the Disconnect, Advancing the Dialogue: Innovative Judicial Interventions for Chemical Health*. Conference participants heard about chemical health issues from national leaders, talked to colleagues across the system and together, focused on solutions to the challenge chemical use poses for the courts.

Hennepin County Drug Court Judge Robert Lynn (left) and U.S. Congressman Jim Ramstad (center) recognize one of many people who contribute to the success of Drug Court during a June 4, 2001 ceremony in Minneapolis.

Addressing family needs

In 2001, the Hennepin County Family Court reduced delays by more than 30 percent and significantly increased the satisfaction of the parties, their attorneys and the court. Now, a meeting is held within seven days of case filing between the parties and their lawyers, and the judicial officer assigned to the divorce case. During the meeting, parties resolve initial

property division, support allocation, and child custody issues. Deadlines are also set for the remainder of the case.

Ensuring greater efficiency

In 2001, the Third Judicial District worked with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of scheduling and calendaring practices while making the most of existing resources. Among the NCSC's recommendations were to work with attorneys and public defenders to dispose of cases as soon as possible after the case is initiated; to widely use "best practices" already employed in one or more counties of the district; and to encourage realistic and early plea agreements when possible.

Reducing litigation costs

Ramsey County District Court launched a two-year reduced-cost litigation pilot project in 2001. It is designed to save certain civil litigants time and money by scheduling trials within shorter timeframes and limiting pre-trial "paper battles" that delay court proceedings. Cases are assigned to a single judge who manages them to reduce the cost of hearings, motions and required conferences. A scheduling conference is held within 30 days, the period of discovery is limited to no more than 75 days, and a trial date is set within 150 days. Telephone and interactive video conferencing is also encouraged. Parties and the judge must agree that a case is suitable to participate.

Repairing communities

In 2000, the Eighth Judicial District began using circle sentencing, an alternative sentencing process that requires the defendant to meet with a community group that may include the victim, Native American tribal representatives, social services and legal system representatives, and others from the community. The circle discusses the crime, its impact, and an appropriate punishment. The circle then meets periodically to help the defendant avoid crime in the future, provided the offender complies with the circle's recommendations.

Court of Appeals Judge G. Barry Anderson meets with a group of constituents represented by State Rep. Dan Dorman of St. Paul during their March 11, 2002 visit to the State Judicial Center.

Since 2000, 18 Kandiyohi County youth have participated in the process. Twenty volunteers were trained by restorative justice experts from Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, the Minnesota Restorative Justice Campaign and St. Cloud State University. The program is now working with new computer software in cooperation with the Department of Corrections to track how well restorative justice programs are working.

Yellow Medicine County started a similar program in September 2002. In one of the program's first cases, the victim and offender came face to face to make amends in the circle. The victim has since stayed involved in the process to make sure the young offender "makes something of his life."

Reforming the jury system

In December 2001, the Minnesota Supreme Court Jury Task Force issued its final report on District Court jury service and practice (view it at www.courts.state.mn.us). The report recommends changes and innovations in the areas of jury service and orientation, the jury selection process, juror privacy during voir dire, efficient jury trial conduct, enhancing juror understanding, jury deliberations and discharge, juror stress, and development of district juror treatment plans.

Among the Task Force's recommendations were:

- Implement a "two day/one trial" term of service as part of a pilot project.
- Train court employees to effectively communicate with jurors, and provide more uniform juror orientation information statewide.
- Minimize interruptions to jury time in trials and eliminate unnecessary court delays.
- Provide feedback to jurors following their service.

Addressing mental health needs

Hennepin and Ramsey Counties' District Courts have developed problem-solving courts meant to address mental health issues early and decrease repeat court appearances, which lead to heavier caseloads and greater taxpayer expense. The voluntary mental health courts provide options for offenders, including treatment instead of jail time or allowing defendants to erase minor crimes from their records if they agree to treatment.

Hennepin and Ramsey district courts are also studying how mentally ill defendants are adjudicated. As a result, Hennepin County Community Court now has a liaison from County Children, Family and Adult Services in the jail and courtrooms. The liaison provides recommendations to the court for defendants suspected of having significant mental illness. The ultimate goal of the project, funded by the State Justice Institute, is to recommend improvements to the entire criminal court.

Increasing access through court innovations

Washington County

In July 2002, the Washington County District Court Self-Service Center opened to improve citizens' access to the courts, save time, and increase customer satisfaction. Over the last decade, courts across the country have seen an increase in self-representation by litigants. In addition to Washington County, other Minnesota counties like Hennepin and Stearns have developed self-service centers to address this need.

Washington County's Center will provide:

- Written information: court forms with instructions; brochures; information about obtaining legal assistance, mediators and interpreters; and copyrighted legal forms.
- Equipment: a coin-operated copier; computers to access court records; typewriters; space to complete court forms; and a TV/VCR to view videos about divorce, arraignment rights, and a judge's opening statement for Conciliation Court.
- Staff services: instruction and assistance with Conciliation Court, civil harassment, unlawful detainer (eviction) actions, name changes, and criminal expungements.

Dakota County

In July 2001, Dakota County District Court initiated self-help sessions on family law matters once a month in Hastings, Apple Valley, and West St. Paul. The sessions provide family court forms, information about legal resources, Internet access, photocopy machines, and assistance from volunteer attorneys. The courts worked with the Dakota County Law Library and Bar Association to initiate the program.

Simplifying court processes for citizens

In July 2002, Sherburne County District Court transformed its case processing to increase accountability, shorten time to case resolution, and simplify the court process for citizens. The changes include:

- Adopting "one judge-one case" calendars for certain cases, under which one judge oversees a case from beginning to end. The result is greater continuity, fewer court delays, and better and earlier dispute resolutions.

Judge Richard Ahles celebrates his 60th birthday by wedding 19 couples free-of-charge at the Stearns County Courthouse on Valentine's Day 2002.

- Assigning one court clerk to each judge, so they can work together more efficiently. Clerks will become familiar with cases they oversee, and attorneys and litigants need only contact one person with questions about their case.
- Establishing in-court electronic calendars and computer-generated orders, so judges and clerks can avoid scheduling conflicts and court participants can receive a copy of their court order before they leave the courtroom. This eliminates extra visits to the court administrator's office.
- Initiating a barcode file tracking system, which will reduce court delays.
- Hiring a fine screener and collector who will provide a one-stop location for citizens to pay fines or negotiate payment schedules.

Reducing case delay

Washington County District Court adopted a new Differentiated Case Management Plan for felony and gross misdemeanor cases in July 2002 meant to decrease the time to disposition. Under the plan, judges require prosecutors, defendants, and defense counsel to appear in court to develop pretrial schedules that meet the specific needs of the case. The plan ensures sufficient time to prepare and present cases without rescheduling hearings because of conflicts with other court appearances, inadequate time to conduct evaluations and investigations, insufficient hearing notices or the unavailability of witnesses.

Improving quality of service

In 2002, Hennepin County District Court became one of the first courts

Meeting victims' needs

In November 2000, Hennepin County District Court began a new innovation to help domestic violence victims. Domestic Violence Court was designed to handle a higher volume of cases quickly and effectively while providing greater accountability for the offender and the system.

Since its creation, it has expedited domestic abuse cases and conviction rates appear to be rising. In addition, a 2002 study reported that victims whose cases were heard in Hennepin County Domestic Violence Court were favorably impressed with the court process.

The study reported:

- 87 percent of respondent victims were satisfied or very satisfied with how the judge treated them.
- Victims' satisfaction levels with how judges treated them were at least as favorable as their satisfaction with their own advocates.

More than 70 percent of victims were satisfied with case outcomes. Satisfaction was unrelated to the outcomes of the cases in which the victims were involved.

in the country to begin using the Baldrige Award Program assessment, established by Congress in 1987 to raise awareness about the importance of quality and performance excellence.

As it prepares for the transition to state funding, the district has conducted self-assessments in each of the Baldrige categories to identify areas for improvement and strategies to implement change. The categories are leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, information and analysis, human resources, process management, and business results.

The process has already enhanced the relationships between the court's judges and court managers. It will also help the court work smarter, and improve efficiency and public service.

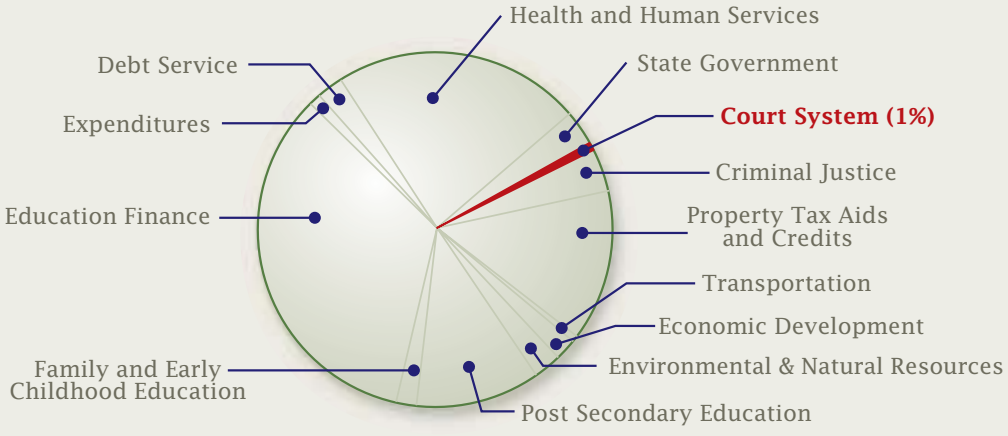
Closing the language gap

Rule 8 of the General Rules of Practice, which governs the appointment of court interpreters, was amended in March 2002 to allow greater flexibility when scheduling sign language interpreters. The courts continue to monitor responses to sign language interpreter requests and collect response data, and plan to report results to the Supreme Court in early 2003. The data will be used to ensure that the needs of the deaf and hearing impaired community are being met by the courts.

In addition, the courts collected data on all interpreter requests (both spoken and sign language) between July 2001 and February 2002. The data was distributed to each judicial district and was used to assess future interpreter needs.

The State Court Administrator's Office will help courts and judicial districts develop plans for meeting the needs of people with Limited English Proficiency, as required by guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Justice in June 2002.

Where Minnesota's General Fund Dollars Go 2000-2001 Biennium



TECHNOLOGY

When the current Judicial Branch automated case management system was built, Jimmy Carter had just completed his presidency and the Court of Appeals did not yet exist. Times have changed and our computer system cannot keep up. It is out-of-date, poorly integrated and difficult to use. It was built to warehouse - not retrieve - data, hampering policy evaluations or public requests. For example, a 2001 Legislative Auditor's report said that about 62 percent of chronic offenders are convicted in multiple counties. However, "information on criminal activity is scattered among several databases, making it difficult to compile a complete criminal history of each offender."

But we are poised to initiate major change. The Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS) will serve as the anchor tenant of the state's new CriMNet integrated criminal justice information project.

Preparing to roll out MNCIS

MNCIS will link court records across the state and significantly improve the collection, storage, retrieval, tracking, and sharing of court information.

Early in 2003, Carver County District Court unveiled MNCIS, put it to use for the first time and tested critical CriMNet linkages. MNCIS will soon be implemented in five additional pilot counties. Eventually, all 87 counties in the state will use the system to link court records.

Also in 2002, the MNCIS Project Team and Supreme Court Information Technology Division unveiled Court Web Access, which provides the courts with Web access to statewide, comprehensive information on criminal court cases. It allows access to non-confidential adult felony and gross misdemeanor defendant information in one, multiple or all counties statewide through a single search. Court Web Access was released internally to court personnel and will soon be available to other criminal justice agencies.

Saving time in traffic court

Washington County

Washington County District Court collaborated with law enforcement agencies in 2001 to launch a new virtually paperless Automated Citation System, believed to be the first of its kind in the country. Police officers use mobile data terminals and printers in their squad cars to issue citations. Ticket information is sent electronically to police computers, and then is forwarded to court computers along with driving records and officers' notes. The only paper produced is given to the driver as a record of the violation.

The system is expected to:

- Reduce time from ticket issuance to court filing from as many as 12 days to within 24 hours.
- Automatically schedule and better manage court dates to reduce overcrowded traffic court calendars.
- Reduce staff time once required to enter data and manually file paper citations.
- Decrease human errors that resulted from multiple data entries.

Hennepin, Ramsey counties

Hennepin and Ramsey counties designed ViBES (Violations Bureau Electronic System), which was installed in Ramsey in 2001 for parking tickets and in Hennepin in 2002 for all citations. ViBES links court and law enforcement computers, and allows for:

- Credit card payments of tickets by phone and eventually the Internet.
- Tickets that include multiple charges, decreasing court staff time required to process individual citations.
- The sharing of unpaid ticket information with state and county offices, which could allow unpaid fine deductions from tax refunds and driver's license suspensions.

Connecting the trial environment

Sherburne County District Court unveiled the first state-of-the-art trial environment in the Minnesota Judicial Branch in spring 2002. The e-courtroom makes the court more connected, efficient and accountable. Flat-screen monitors allow court participants to easily view evidence, photographs, videos, and computer presentations. Interactive television links the courtroom to an adjoining witness/victim room for off-site testimony and to the Sherburne County Jail Video Visitation Center.

Improving access to resources

In 2002, the courts began providing more than 200 court forms online, which will increase citizens' access to justice. Other information added to the Judicial Branch web site includes Minnesota attorney registration information in a searchable index and the Minnesota Rules of Court. Visit the site at www.courts.state.mn.us

PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

While most Minnesotans have confidence in the state's judiciary as an institution, they remain concerned about the timeliness and cost of bringing cases to court and the judiciary's treatment of persons of color. Nearly 40 percent of Minnesotans say they know little or nothing about the court system, and nearly half say they think the courts are out of touch with their communities.

The Judicial Branch is committed to assessing public perspectives and educating citizens about the system and its challenges. Judicial Branch outreach programs reached more than 40,000 people in 2001-02, in addition to citizens who met judges as they visited schools and service organizations.

Investing in the next generation

Legal Expo

The judiciary assists the bar associations of Hennepin and Ramsey counties in planning the annual Legal Expo in Brooklyn Center, MN. Minnesota judges team up with law enforcement agencies and other members of the legal community to discuss legal issues pertinent to young people such as race bias, law careers, family law, and students' rights. More than 600 students participate annually.

Traveling oral arguments

In an effort to demystify the court system to Minnesotans, the Supreme Court takes its oral arguments into schools across the state. Nearly 5,000 students participate annually.

Twice a year, the Court hears oral arguments of actual cases in a school and then opens the program to questions from students in attendance and watching via live cable television. Attorneys from local bar associations volunteer to review case briefs and prepare students for oral arguments.

The Court visited Mankato in spring 2001, Coon Rapids in fall 2001, Hastings in spring 2002 and Bloomington in fall 2002. The Bloomington program was also broadcast online. In Mankato, the visit included a community-wide dinner attended by nearly 500 people who represented a cross-section of the local community. The event offered justices and local judges an opportunity to meet the people they serve and to learn about the challenges and innovations of the justice system in that community.

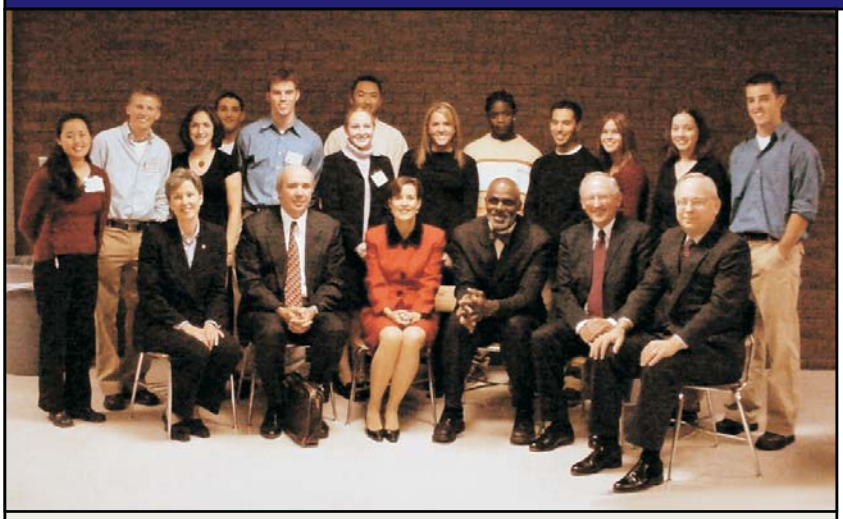
Minnesota Constitution Day

More than 23,000 Minnesota students participated in the 2001 - 2002 Minnesota Constitution Day programs, during which judges and attorneys went "back to school" to teach students about the Judicial Branch, the state Constitution, and the importance of citizen participation in government. The visits featured an educational videotape about the court system and curriculum guides that are available to teachers online at www.courts.state.mn.us

The 2001 event included a program at the Minnesota History Center, in which Supreme Court Justices met with 350 Twin Cities students. Co-sponsored with the State Historical Society, the program gave students the opportunity to see the original state Constitution, which was temporarily removed from the state archives. In 2002, Supreme Court Justice James Gilbert kicked off the event by speaking to 200 refugee and immigrant students from Abraham Lincoln High School in Minneapolis.

The program commemorates the anniversary of the ratification of the Minnesota Constitution.

Ramsey County District Court Judge Edward Wilson speaks with a student at the 2002 Legal Expo, an educational program for high school students held in Brooklyn Center, MN.



Students from Thomas Jefferson High School in Bloomington, MN met with the Minnesota Supreme Court during the Court's Oct. 8, 2002 visit. Members of the Court, pictured left to right in the front row, are Justice Helen Meyer, Justice James Gilbert, Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz, Justice Alan Page, Justice Paul Anderson and Justice Russell Anderson

Keeping in touch

Since 1999, Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz has conducted "Court Innovations Tours" in different judicial districts, which allow her an opportunity to learn from the experiences of jurors, litigants, and concerned citizens across the state. They also allow the Chief Justice to meet with trial court judges and local attorneys, increase public awareness of the judiciary's challenges, and highlight local court innovations.

Tours include community events, information meetings with local organizations, and panel discussions highlighting new justice initiatives. In 2001, the Chief Justice toured Southeast Minnesota's Third District and in 2002, the Fourth District (Hennepin County).

Opening our doors

Since fall 2001, more than 4,500 people have toured the Minnesota Judicial Center in St. Paul, met with judges or justices, and viewed oral arguments. Visitors have included students, judges from countries including Russia and Armenia, legal professional groups, and legislators and their constituents.

Nearly 1,500 people visited the Judicial Center during a public open house to celebrate Law Day in May 2002. Visitors received guided tours, met judges and justices, attended an information fair about law-related topics with nearly 20 different organizations, and learned about court history. The event was recognized as one of the best Law Day Activities nationwide by the American Bar Association.

Other Law Day events included:

- Supreme Court Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz joined Bob Stein, Executive Director of the American Bar Association, to moderate a "Dialogue on Freedom" discussion with Ethiopian immigrant and American students at South High School in Minneapolis.
- The Hennepin County District Court joined other organizations to provide legal information to the public at an Access Information Fair in downtown Minneapolis.
- Ninth District counties connected via interactive television with Supreme Court justices and Court of Appeals judges who spoke about the importance of law in citizens' lives and fielded questions from participants. The district also gave court tours, held panel discussions and mock trials, and set up information kiosks.
- Kanabec County court staff presented a mock trial for third-grade students.

Bridging the cultural gap

Members of the public met with judges, police, prosecutors, public defenders, and others in the criminal justice system to discuss how the system and communities of color can better work together. The 2002 Criminal Justice Forum at the Ramsey County Courthouse was cosponsored by the Judicial Branch, the Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, and the Dakota County Bar Association. Forum attendees heard judges explain how the judiciary works and then listened to criminal justice representatives talk about their roles in the system using a hypothetical scenario.

Redistricting

In 2001, Supreme Court Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz appointed a special redistricting panel to redraw Minnesota's congressional and legislative voting districts to reflect 2000 Census data. The panel included Court of Appeals Chief Judge Edward Toussaint, Jr., Court of Appeals Judge Thomas Kalitowski, Hennepin District Court Judge Heidi Schellhas, Waseca District Court Judge Renee Worke, and St. Louis District Court Judge Gary Pagliaccetti.

The panel held public hearings in Marshall, St. Cloud, Detroit Lakes, Duluth, Rochester, and St. Paul before issuing its final redistricting plan on March 19, 2002. The panel's work received widespread recognition as being fair to the state's major political parties, as well as to urban, rural, and suburban interests. No appeal of the panel's work was filed.

Supreme Court Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz and Twin Cities students examine pages from the original state Constitution at a 2001 Constitution Day program at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul.

The Minnesota Supreme Court hears oral arguments at the University of Minnesota Law School in 2001 as part of its public outreach and education programs.

Utilizing technology

In 2001, Hennepin County launched a weekly cable television program called "Meet Your Court" to increase public understanding of the courts and the broader public policies facing the judiciary. Program guests have included Supreme Court justices, judges and other elected officials; court managers; attorneys; representatives from governmental agencies, and public interest and community organizations; and the media.

"Meet Your Court" airs on Metro Cable Network/Channel 6 in the seven-county metro area. For more information, please visit www.courts.state.mn.us/districts/fourth/

SUPREME COURT

Seven justices make up the Minnesota Supreme Court, the state's court of last resort. The Court hears appeals from the Minnesota Court of Appeals, the Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals, and the Tax Court. Justices hear attorney and judge discipline matters and all first-degree murder conviction appeals from the district courts. The Court also oversees the administration of the Judicial Branch by having justices serve as liaisons to the 10 judicial districts in Minnesota and to various boards and task forces that set policy and study justice system issues.

Supreme Court Justices

Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz
1998 - Present
Associate Justice
1996 - 1998

Associate Justice Alan Page
1993 – Present

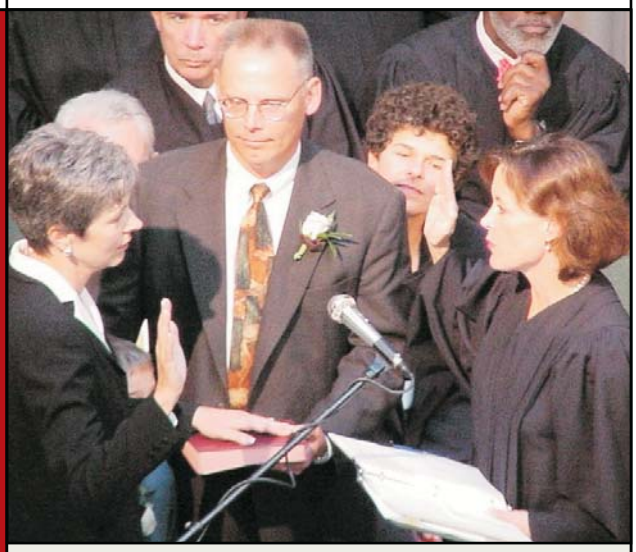
Associate Justice Paul Anderson
1994 – Present

Associate Justice James Gilbert
1998 – Present

Associate Justice Russell Anderson
1998 – Present

Associate Justice Helen Meyer
August 2002 – Present

Associate Justice Sam Hanson
September 2002 – Present



Supreme Court Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz (right) swears in Helen Meyer to the Supreme Court during a Sept. 3, 2002 ceremony in St. Paul as Meyer's husband, Jan Halverson, looks on.

Saying farewell, welcome

Justice Joan Ericksen Lancaster, who became a Supreme Court Justice on September 8, 1998, resigned from the Court on June 14, 2002 to become a U.S. District Court Judge in Minneapolis. She was replaced by Justice Helen Meyer, who joined the Court on August 5, 2002.

Justice Meyer founded Meyer and Associates in 1996 in St. Louis Park, MN. Her civil trial practice included mediation and arbitration work. Prior to that, she was a partner in the Pritzker and Meyer law firm in Minneapolis and was also an associate attorney with the law firm of Schwebel, Goetz, Sieben and Hanson in Minneapolis. She graduated from the University of Minnesota and William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul.

Justice Edward Stringer, who was appointed to the Court in September 1994, retired from the bench on August 31, 2002. He joined the Twin Cities law firm of Briggs and Morgan, P.A. Governor Jesse Ventura appointed Court of Appeals Judge Sam Hanson to fill the vacancy.

Justice Hanson was sworn in on September 3, 2002. He previously served on the Court of Appeals for two years. From 1966-2000, he was an attorney and partner at Briggs and Morgan, where he specialized in civil litigation and regulated industries. He served as the firm's president from 1988-1993. He also worked as a law clerk for Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Robert Sheran (1965-1966) and for Hennepin County District Court Judge Douglas Amdahl (1964-1965). He graduated from St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN, and earned his law degree with honors from William Mitchell College of Law.

Supreme Court Justice Paul Anderson speaks with participants in the Urban Youth Intern Program during their stop at the Judicial Center in St. Paul in July 2002.

Supreme Court Dispositions 2001-2002

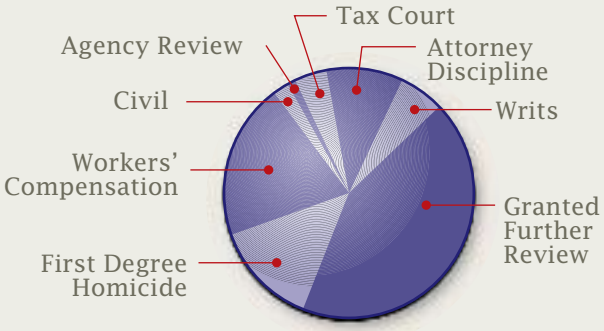
Disposition	2001	2002
PFR Denied	594	583
Affirmed	74	98
Modified	1	1
Reversed	39	51
Mixed	8	11
Dismissed	12	14
Other	57	60
Total Dispositions	**785**	**818**

Justice Page speaks to National Press Club

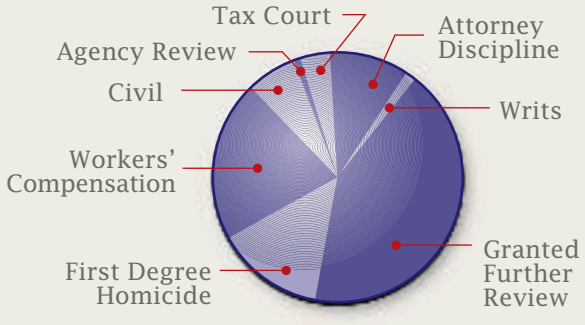
Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Alan Page was the featured speaker at the National Press Club's Newsmaker Luncheon November 15, 2001, in Washington, DC. His remarks, *Judicial Independence vs. Judicial Selection: Due Process in the Balance*, were broadcast live on C-SPAN and Minnesota Public Radio. Hundreds of public radio affiliates carried the speech in a re-broadcast December 19, 2001. Read the speech at www.courts.state.mn.us

Supreme Court Filings 2001-2002

2001	
Workers' Compensation	43
Civil	5
Agency Review	2
Tax Court	9
Attorney Discipline	21
Writs	12
Granted Further Review	88
First Degree Homicide	30
	210



2002	
Workers' Compensation	42
Agency Review	1
Civil	13
Tax Court	7
Attorney Discipline	21
Writs	2
Granted Further Review	83
First Degree Homicide	27
	196



COURT OF APPEALS

The Minnesota Court of Appeals was created in 1983 to hear appeals from the state's district courts and other agencies. The Court's 16 judges work in rotating three-judge panels and hear cases in St. Paul, as well as in cities throughout Greater Minnesota. The Court strives to provide Minnesotans with impartial, clear, and timely appellate decisions made according to law.

Changing hands

The Minnesota Court of Appeals saw many changes in 2002. Despite the changes and an increase in filings, the Court remains a national model of efficient case processing and delay reduction. It has also become one of the more diverse appellate courts in the country, with nearly one-third of its judges being women and three judges of color.

In May 2002, Judge David Minge was sworn in to replace Judge Gary Crippen, who was one of the founding members of the Court. Judge Minge was a scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, DC, a fellow in the W. W. Kellogg Foundation Food and Society Policy Program, and a lecturer at the University of Minnesota, Morris. He represented Minnesota's Second Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1993-2001. He worked with the Nelson, Oyen, Torvik, Minge and Gilbertson law firm in Montevideo, MN, taught at the University of Wyoming College of Law in Laramie, WY, and worked with the Faegre and Benson law firm in Minneapolis. He graduated from St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN, and the University of Chicago Law School.

Judge Natalie Hudson joined the Court of Appeals in June 2002. Prior to her appointment, she worked as an assistant attorney general in the Minnesota Attorney General's Office since 1997. Before that, she served as the St. Paul City Attorney; the assistant dean of student affairs at Hamline University School of Law in St. Paul; an associate attorney at the law firm of Robins, Kaplan, Miller and Ciresi in Minneapolis; and a staff attorney with Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, Inc. in St. Paul. She graduated from Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ, and the University of Minnesota Law School.

Judge Wilhelmina M. Wright was sworn in September 2002 to replace Judge Sam Hanson, who was elevated to the Supreme Court. Judge Wright had served as a Ramsey County District Court judge since November 2000. Prior to that, she was an assistant U.S. Attorney in Minneapolis since 1995. She was also an associate attorney with the law firm of Hogan and Hartson in Washington, DC, and Houston, TX, and served as a law clerk for U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Damon Keith in Detroit, MI. She graduated from Yale University and Harvard Law School.

Reappointing a leader

On March 13, 2002, Governor Jesse Ventura reappointed Judge Edward Toussaint, Jr., as Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals. Chief Judge Toussaint joined the Court of Appeals in March 1995 and became chief

Court of Appeals Judges

Chief Judge Edward Toussaint, Jr.
1995 – Present

Judge Harriet Lansing
1983 – Present

Judge R. A. "Jim" Randall
1984 – Present

Judge Thomas Kalitowski
1987 – Present

Judge Robert Schumacher
1987 – Present

Judge Roger Klaphake
1989 – Present

Judge Randolph Peterson
1990 – Present

Judge James Harten
1992 – Present

Judge Bruce Willis
1995 – Present

Judge Gordon Shumaker
1998 – Present

Judge G. Barry Anderson
1998 – Present

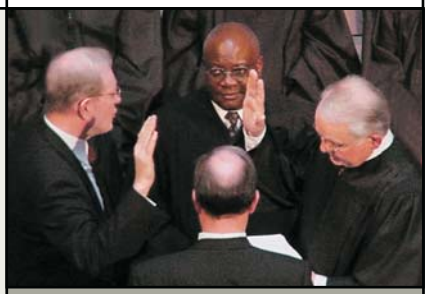
Judge Jill Flaskamp Halbrooks
1998 – Present

Judge Terri J. Stoneburner
2000 – Present

Judge David Minge
May 2002 – Present

Judge Natalie Hudson
June 2002 – Present

Judge Wilhelmina Wright
September 2002 – Present



Retiring Court of Appeals Judge Gary Crippen (right) gives the oath of office to his successor, Judge David Minge, during a May 15, 2002 ceremony in St. Paul as Court of Appeals Chief Judge Edward Toussaint, Jr., looks on.

During a March 13, 2002 ceremony, Governor Jesse Ventura, Supreme Court Justices, and other guests applaud Edward Toussaint, Jr., on his reappointment as Chief Judge of the Minnesota Court of Appeals.

judge the following April. He was a Hennepin County District Court Judge from 1992-1995 and a Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals judge from 1987-1992. He also served as a Workers' Compensation Court judge, claims counsel for American Family Insurance Group, an attorney for N.E.W.S. Realty and a junior high school science teacher in Chicago. He graduated from Chicago State University and DePaul University College of Law in Chicago.

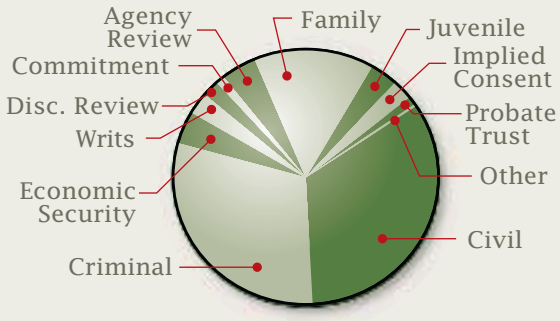
Thanking a friend, colleague

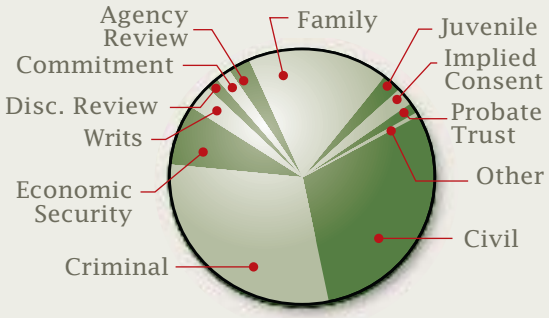
The Minnesota Court of Appeals honored the life of one of its founding members—Judge Daniel F. Foley, who died on August 17, 2002 at the age of 80. Gov. Rudy Perpich appointed Judge Foley to the Court of Appeals when it was created in 1983. Judge Foley wrote more than 1,200 opinions for the Court, where he served until his 1991 retirement. Prior to that, he served as a judge in Southeast Minnesota's Third Judicial District from 1948-1966. He grew up in Wabasha, MN, graduated from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul and earned his law degree at Fordham University in New York.

"In the early days of the fledgling court, Dan Foley's legal experience, his judicial experience, his good judgment, his good humor and his steadfastness both put the court together and held the court together," said Court of Appeals Judge Harriet Lansing in her eulogy to Judge Foley. "He was not just a founding member of our court, he was the court's foundation. He was our cornerstone when we faced unsettling forces from within and without. In the bright days when the skies were clear he was all bluff and laughter, and in the dark days he was oak and rock."

Court of Appeals Filings 2001-2002

2001	
Family	332
Juvenile	74
Implied Consent	54
Probate Trust	15
Other	3
Civil	748
Criminal	676
Economic Security	100
Writs	57
Disc. Review	43
Commitment	30
Agency Review	94
	2226





2002	
Family	370
Juvenile	48
Implied Consent	49
Probate Trust	30
Other	5
Civil	648
Criminal	635
Economic Security	166
Writs	66
Disc. Review	38
Commitment	34
Agency Review	62
	2151

Court of Appeals Dispositions 2001-2002

Disposition	2001	2002
Affirmed	1057	1009
Modified	21	33
Reversed	266	245
Mixed	145	177
Dismissed	480	482
Other	146	149
Total Dispositions	**2115**	**2095**

DISTRICT COURTS

The more than 2 million cases per year that are filed in Minnesota's Judicial Branch begin in the district courts. These courts handle a wide variety of civil and criminal matters. Minnesota is divided into 10 judicial districts in which 274 judges work.

Continuing a fundamental transformation

The administration of Minnesota's courts is undergoing a transformation, which will shift administrative and financial responsibilities to one statewide funding source. This will transition the judiciary from a collection of nearly 100 counties and districts to a single Judicial Branch that delivers consistent and equitable judicial services statewide.

Court operations in all 55 counties in the Fifth, Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth judicial districts transferred to state funding in 2000. In July 2001, the Guardian ad Litem and court interpreter programs became state funded. In this next biennium, Districts 1-4 will make the transition.

During this transformation, we will continue to provide efficient, cost-effective and quality service to Minnesotans, and transition seamlessly into a state-funded Judicial Branch.

Legislative Auditor: State's judges among hardest working

Minnesota's judges on average handle 49 percent more case filings per judge compared to judges in comparable states, according to a Legislative Auditor's 2001 report about the district courts. Other findings included:

- Minnesota judges handled 73 percent more criminal filings per judge than the median number for judges in comparable states.
- From 1990-1998, major criminal cases increased 48 percent and major juvenile cases nearly doubled. Major cases require about 80 percent of judicial time.
- Cultural and language differences substantially or moderately affect the court's ability to process cases today compared with five or more years ago.
- Minnesota's district courts perform well in case processing time compared to courts in other states.

The entire report can be viewed at www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/2001/pe0102.htm

2000 – 2001 Chief Judges

First District: Judge Leslie Metzen

Second District: Judge Lawrence Cohen

Third District: Judge Gerard Ring

Fourth District: Judge Kevin Burke

Fifth District: Judge Bruce Gross

Sixth District: Judge Gary Pagliaccetti

Seventh District: Judge William Walker

Eighth District: Judge Gerald Seibel

Ninth District: Judge Lois Lang

Tenth District: Judge R. Joseph Quinn

2001 – 2002 Chief Judges

First District: Judge Richard Spicer

Second District: Judge Lawrence Cohen/
Judge J. Thomas Mott

Third District: Judge Gerard Ring/
Judge Renee Worke

Fourth District: Judge Kevin Burke

Fifth District: Judge Norbert Smith

Sixth District: Judge Gary Pagliaccetti

Seventh District: Judge Vicki Landwehr

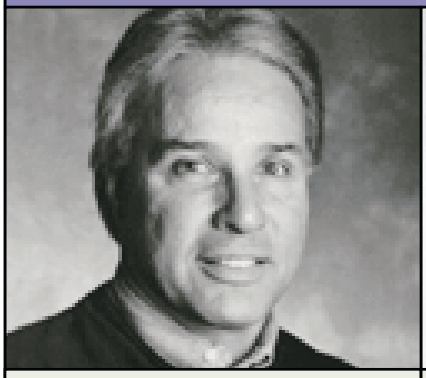
Eighth District: Judge Steven E. Drange/
Judge Gerald Seibel

Ninth District: Judge Dennis Murphy

Tenth District: Judge R. Joseph Quinn

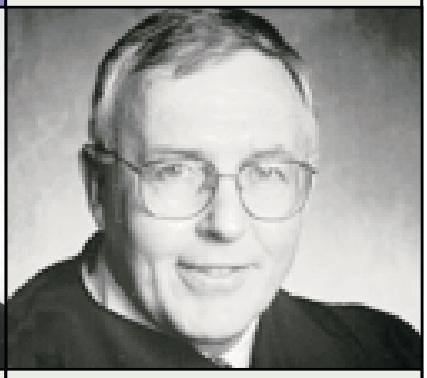
CURRENT DISTRICT COURT CHIEF JUDGES

7th District: ***Judge Vicki Landwehr***



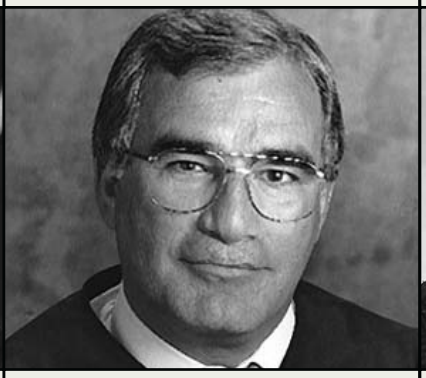
1st District: ***Judge Richard Spicer***

4th District: ***Judge Kevin Burke***



8th District: ***Judge Steven Drange***

2nd District: ***Judge J. Thomas Mott***

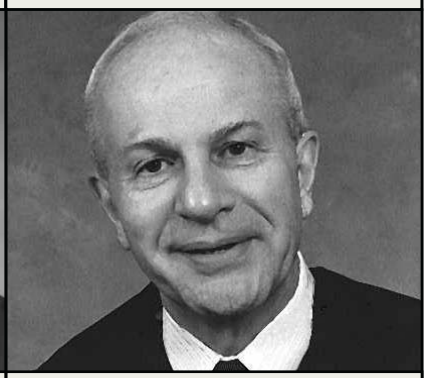


5th District: ***Judge Norbert Smith***

9th District: ***Judge Dennis Murphy***

3rd District: ***Judge Renee Worke***

6th District: ***Judge Gary Pagliaccetti***



10th District: ***Judge R. Joseph Quinn***