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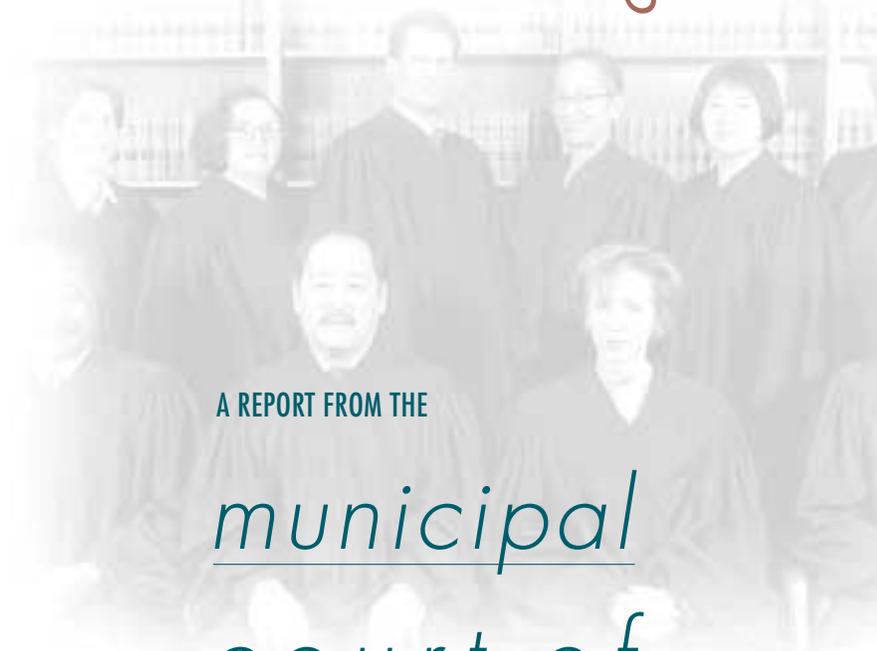
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1999-2000



A REPORT FROM THE

*municipal  
court of  
seattle*

# About the Municipal Court of Seattle

## Mission Statement

- ▶ The Municipal Court of Seattle is committed to excellence in providing fair, accessible, and timely resolution of alleged violations of the Seattle Municipal Code in an atmosphere of respect for the public, employees, and other government agencies.
- ▶ The Municipal Court of Seattle values and recognizes its employees.
- ▶ The Municipal Court of Seattle is a contributing partner working toward a safe and vital community.

## Cases Heard by the Court

By nearly every measure, the Municipal Court of Seattle is the largest limited-jurisdiction court in Washington. The Court is authorized by the State of Washington to handle all violations of the Seattle Municipal Code. The Court's 10 elected judges and six appointed magistrates hear a wide variety of cases. These include:

- ▶ criminal offenses, such as domestic violence, Driving While Intoxicated (DWI), shoplifting and trespass;
- ▶ traffic infractions, such as speeding, red light violations or failure to yield;
- ▶ parking tickets; and
- ▶ a range of other offenses ranging from jaywalking to drinking in public, and from dog leash violations to littering.

**Judge Jean Rietschel,**  
*Presiding Judge*

**Yolande E. Williams,**  
*Court Administrator*

### COVER PHOTOS

Lower left: Painting out graffiti is one of many tasks performed as part of offenders' community service hours.

Upper left and center: Model for the new Justice Center.

Right: Court staff members Cynthia Ford (left) and Sauncy Hurst look up license records to help people attending one of the monthly driver's license counseling sessions at the Central Area Motivation Program.



## How To Reach the Court

The court is located in downtown Seattle in the Seattle Justice Building, on Fifth Avenue between James and Cherry Streets. Public access to the building is at the Fifth Avenue entrance. Hours of operation are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

### Mailing Address:

Municipal Court of Seattle  
Seattle Justice Center  
600 Fifth Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104-1900

The Court's Web site offers online payment of parking tickets and traffic citations, and access to information about a specific ticket or case. Site visitors can also find information about Court locations, scheduling a hearing, jury service, and career and volunteer opportunities.

**General Information: 206/684-5600**

**Web site: [www.cityofseattle.net/courts](http://www.cityofseattle.net/courts)**



## *A Message from the Presiding Judge*

**Judge Jean Rietschel** “**May you live in interesting times**” is said to be an ancient curse. Serving as the Presiding Judge of the Seattle Municipal Court can be an experience of living in interesting times. I stepped up to the position in the aftermath of mass arrests made during the World Trade Organization (WTO) meetings in November 1999. My predecessor, Judge Helen Halpert, moved on to Superior Court after setting up arraignment hearings for 589 WTO defendants within a three-day period. I was left with the task of supervising the scheduling of the future hearings of these 589 WTO-related cases. Although many were ultimately dismissed, the Court spent nearly three months processing these cases. My second year as presiding judge started with scheduling the 150 cases filed following the WTO anniversary protests. February 2001 brought the earthquake and the resulting closure

of the Dexter Horton building for one week.

In looking at what the Court has achieved since 1999, I see a much more positive meaning in our “interesting times.” I am referring to our efforts to direct the Court’s focus to its users and to the broader community. The full bench has established four key priorities:

1. Develop outreach programs to improve public trust and confidence in the courts;
2. Increase the overall effectiveness of Court operations;
3. Develop plans to recruit and train a highly skilled workforce; and
4. Design the new Justice Center to improve service delivery to Court users.

In terms of outreach to the public and improving the Court’s effectiveness, I believe there have been improvements on several important fronts. The Court has:

- ▶ Worked with community organizations to develop and initiate programs to make it easier

for citizens with suspended driver’s licenses to regain their licenses, including a special driving court one night per week;

- ▶ Expanded its community outreach, offering monthly drivers’ license status counseling sessions at one of its community magistrate sites and supporting license counseling sessions at the Central Area Motivation Program community offices and with the Northwest Legal Employment Labor Opportunity program;
- ▶ Established mitigation by mail and online payment of infractions;
- ▶ Created a mental health court for cases involving mentally ill offenders; and
- ▶ Developed alternatives to confinement such as work crew and electronic home monitoring.

As presiding judge I have:

- ▶ Developed the leadership of the Court by establishing regular bimonthly meetings of the Executive Committee, attending with the Executive Committee a three-day national seminar on

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## The Presiding Judge’s Committees

**In representing the Court, Judge Rietschel has served on numerous committees: the King County Public Defense Study, the Adult Justice Operations Master Plan (AJOMP) Advisory Committee, the District and Municipal Courts Judges Association (DMCJA) Courts Helping Courts program, the**

**Washington State Bar Association Court Rules Committee, and the Washington State and City of Seattle Domestic Violence Fatality Review committees. She is also the co-chair of the AJOMP Misdemeanor Work Group and the chair of the regional Relicensing Summit.**

Trial Court Leadership, and encouraging the Judges to increase their participation at conferences and continuing education symposia;

- ▶ Attended staff meetings in each Court division to share the Court's plans for the future and to listen to employee concerns;
- ▶ Worked with the Mayor's Office to fill a vacant seat on the bench; and
- ▶ Engaged in open discussions with the City Council and the Mayor in support of Court programs.

Seattle Municipal Court considers thousands of cases annually, and has hundreds of employees, dozens of attorneys and 16 judicial officers. The presiding judge also represents the Court in meetings with other branches of the City of Seattle, regional and state government, as well as in meetings with judges from other jurisdictions. On a daily basis, the presiding judge must consider innumerable details. These include case-flow management (overseeing the timely management of cases from filing to disposition) and calendar management

(assigning judges to particular calendars).

Most of the achievements listed above are the result of the efforts of a large number of dedicated people, both inside and outside the Court. The Court was able to get through the experience of the 1999 WTO and the 2001 earthquake due to the professionalism and extraordinary support of its staff. I have also had the distinct pleasure of working with Court Administrator Yolande E. Williams during her first 18 months at the Court, and want to acknowledge the leadership and

skill she has demonstrated in all our accomplishments.

I am confident that together, the Court and its employees can continue improvements that will enhance the progress we have made. We will continue to work toward making the Seattle Municipal Court more effective, more responsive to citizens' needs, more accessible and in every way a better public institution.

Sincerely,

**Judge Jean Rietschel**  
*Presiding Judge*



The Judges of the Municipal Court of Seattle — Front row, left to right: Honorable Fred Bonner; Honorable Ron A. Mamiya; Honorable Theresa B. Doyle; Honorable Michael S. Hurtado. Back row, left to right: Honorable Anne Levinson; Honorable Jean Rietschel, Presiding Judge; Honorable Arthur R. Chapman; Honorable Judith M. Hightower; Honorable C. Kimi Kondo; Honorable George W. Holifield.



## *Introduction from the Court Administrator*

**Yolande Williams** After I was selected as Court Administrator in October 1999, I quickly learned that the Municipal Court of Seattle has long considered itself a court that is involved with the community. It is the court with which Seattle citizens are most likely to have contact. During 2000, an estimated 500,000 people had some interaction with the Court when they paid a ticket, appeared for a magistrate hearing, were a defendant, victim or witness in a criminal trial, or served on jury duty. Many other people were more indirectly involved with the Court. There were students who watched or participated in mock trials with Seattle Municipal Court judges, court watchers in the Public Safety Building, law students who were mentored by judges, and judges and court employees who served on City, regional or state committees. The Court had even been scheduling magistrate hearings in

Neighborhood Service Centers for five years by the time I arrived. Truly, the Seattle Municipal Court thought of itself as a community court.

The definition of a community court is widely debated. However, there is general agreement on at least four characteristics. A community court: (1) takes a greater role in problem solving, (2) tends to consider the person who is before the court rather than the case before it, (3) often uses community service as a sentencing option, and (4) focuses more on successful outcomes than solely on completing cases. The community court approach can also be more labor intensive. It requires more judicial time for additional hearings, more probation staff for closer treatment monitoring, and support staff to update cases and monitor compliance with other court obligations. But we are finding that this increased level of effort provides long-term solutions to the community, victims and defendants.

During the past two years, the Seattle Municipal Court has initiated programs, such as its driving calendar and mental health court, that embody the community court philosophy. The Court has also expanded its efforts in partnering with the community to provide community service opportunities for more defendants. The Court has made itself more accessible to the public by making its Internet site easier to use and by expanding the services available through this site. We have initiated mail-in magistrate hearings for increased convenience

for people who can't attend in-person hearings or who may live out of town. Previously the Court was involved with the community; now it is becoming engaged with the community.

The Court has an ambitious agenda for enhancing its connection with the community. The programs and initiatives we expect to pursue during the next two years include the following:

- ▶ Implement "universal cashiering" throughout the Puget Sound region, so any court may accept payments for any other participating court;
- ▶ Partner with the community-based service providers who will be located in the new Justice Center;
- ▶ Have an on-site Department of Licensing representative in the Justice Center to assist citizens with driver's license related issues;
- ▶ Increase the use of alternatives to jail, such as work crews and electronic monitoring; and
- ▶ Replace the Court's computer-based case management system to improve and update services.

In addition to these initiatives, I have two general goals for the Court: to enhance customer service to the citizens and to improve the effectiveness of Court operations. I am committed to fostering courtesy and respect to the public and among



Court employees as we do our work. We are constantly striving for excellence in the provision of Court services through employee training, development and team building. At the same time, we are working to insure that what we do adds value in the delivery of services to the public. Our aim is to continue making incremental improvements in every aspect of the Municipal Court of Seattle on behalf of the whole community.

It is to the community that we dedicate this report. My hope is that the highlights presented here will show how we are serving the City's citizens in new ways.

**Yolande E. Williams**  
*Court Administrator*

## *Initiatives To Make Justice More Accessible*

Many people appearing before the Court face a variety of challenges. For some, it may be hard to understand court procedures, or to

put together the funds to pay fines, or to get to the courthouse. In 1999 and 2000, the Court undertook initiatives to address these challenges and help citizens to move more easily and quickly through the court system.



Court staff offer help at the driver's license counseling sessions held monthly at the Central Area Motivation Program. Court staff members, from left, Rosie Ard, Cynthia Ford and Sauncy Hurst access Court and licensing records to help inform people about their case and license status.

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### Naqem Abdulhaqq,

Relicensing Program Coordinator

**“It’s a horrible feeling to see a police car behind you when you’re driving without a license,”** said Naqem Abdulhaqq, relicensing program coordinator for the Central Area Motivation Program (CAMP). Naqem knows that feeling firsthand—he drove without a license for nearly

**eight years. Naqem also knows how hard it can be to get a suspended license back, especially without someone like him to help.**

**Each month, Naqem has 50 or more new clients who want to get their driver’s license reinstated. Naqem must first find out why the license was suspended. For example, the person might have unpaid tickets in several courts, need**

**insurance to be relicensed or need to pay for a previous accident. Naqem works out payment plans with courts, collection agencies, insurance companies or other creditors. It is then up to the client to keep up on the payments.**

**It’s easier to solve these problems if the person has an income. But Naqem doesn’t turn anyone away for lack of a job. “I refer them to our**

## Helping Drivers Get Their Licenses and Cars Back

### The Challenge

Some people whose drivers' licenses have been suspended for failure to pay traffic fines continue to drive, then have their cars impounded. But payment in a lump sum of all outstanding traffic tickets may not be economically possible for everyone.

A 1993 Washington state law authorized the Department of Licensing to suspend the driver's license of an individual who fails to pay or respond to a traffic ticket. The aim was to encourage drivers to take care of their tickets by requesting a hearing or paying a fine. By 1998, according to a Seattle newspaper's study, nearly 259,000 people throughout the state had their licenses suspended because of unpaid citations. However, many not only ignored their unpaid fines but also continued to drive.

A 1998 law addressed the problem of these unlicensed drivers. It authorized the local police to impound the vehicle of anyone who is stopped while driving with a suspended license. In 1999, the first full year this law was in effect, Seattle impounded 5,096 vehicles.

Public defense agencies and community activists criticized the impounds as unfairly affecting drivers who could not pay their outstanding tickets in a lump sum as required. In a 1999 survey of 184 people with suspended licenses, the average person had \$2,095 in unpaid fines and a monthly income of \$810.

### What the Court Did . . . Time Payments

The Seattle Municipal Court first addressed the ability-to-pay issue in December 1998. The Court adopted a policy to allow time payments for individuals who had a "license hold." A license hold comes about after an offender has failed to pay a

citation. The Department of Licensing then sends a notice to the offender indicating that his/her license will be suspended unless the citation is paid.

If the offender does not make the payment, the license is suspended. The license hold prevents the driver from getting the license back until the fine is paid and the court releases the hold.

Under the new policy, the Seattle Municipal Court releases a license hold when an offender signs an agreement to make time payments and makes a down payment on unpaid fines. This policy made many individuals eligible for relicensing (reinstating driving privileges) even before the vehicle-impound program began.

The Court began taking time payments as a one-month pilot program. The response was so encouraging—500 people signed up



**[CAMP] job developers or job training programs," said Naqem. "When they become employed, I will pick them up again."**

**CAMP began its relicensing program in early 1999. "We advertised for two months," said Naqem. "Since then, it's been all word of mouth. People come here from all over the state."**



Naqem Abdulhaqq guides more than 50 people each month in the relicensing process.

**The demand for Naqem's services is high. "We're supposed to cut off at 50 people a month, but I usually wind up with 60 or 65," explained Naqem. And many cases require more than a month to resolve.**

**For all the effort, there are rewards. "People come up to me in grocery stores and show me their licenses," said Naqem. Their smiles bring him joy.**

that first month—the Court quickly made the program permanent.

### Results

- ▶ The Court's collection agency releases 125 license holds per week.
- ▶ The Court releases an additional 125 license holds per week with time payment agreements.
- ▶ The rate of compliance on time payments is approximately 75 percent. Without the time-payment option, many of these payments would not have been made at all.

### The Challenge

The relicensing process can be difficult for a driver to understand and navigate.

### What the Court Did . . . License Counseling

The Court, with assistance from the City Council, has attempted to bridge the information gap by reaching into the community in a variety of ways.

- ▶ In June 2000 the City Council created a licensing ombudsperson position in the Court. The ombudsperson works with citizens to explain and resolve licensing problems, and acts as a liaison between the citizen and the Court and other government agencies.
- ▶ The City Council also provided funding for community agencies

to do license counseling. To expand access to such counseling, the Court has contracted with three community agencies—Central Area Motivation Program (CAMP), Northwest Legal Employment Labor Opportunity (LELO) and Apprenticeships and Nontraditional Employment for Women (ANEW).

- ▶ Court clerical staff attend relicensing orientation sessions at the CAMP headquarters and with LELO several days each month. CAMP and LELO work with clients to become relicensed. The clerks assist CAMP and LELO license counselors, informing offenders about unpaid fines and making time payment arrangements.

### Results

- ▶ Approximately 100 people get license counseling at CAMP and LELO each month. The counseling approach will be evaluated along with the driving court in late 2001.

### What the Court Did . . . Suspended Licenses Calendar

In November 2000, the Court began a one-year pilot project to determine whether the counseling approach actually results in driver relicensing. The Court created a specialized calendar (a group of cases set for a specific time and court), dedicating one evening per week to hearing only Driving While License Suspended third-degree cases. The Court's licensing ombudsperson and license counselors from CAMP, ANEW and LELO are available in the courtroom to advise offenders about the steps to becoming relicensed.

### Results

- ▶ This one-year pilot program will be evaluated in November 2001. So far, defendants have responded very favorably to the approach and services provided by the driving court.



Groundbreaking for the new Justice Center. The building is scheduled to open in the fall of 2002.

## The Challenge

The social and economic obstacles to maintaining a valid driver's license apply to citizens throughout the Puget Sound region. Seattle drivers may have tickets in other jurisdictions that don't allow for time payments.

### What the Court Did . . .

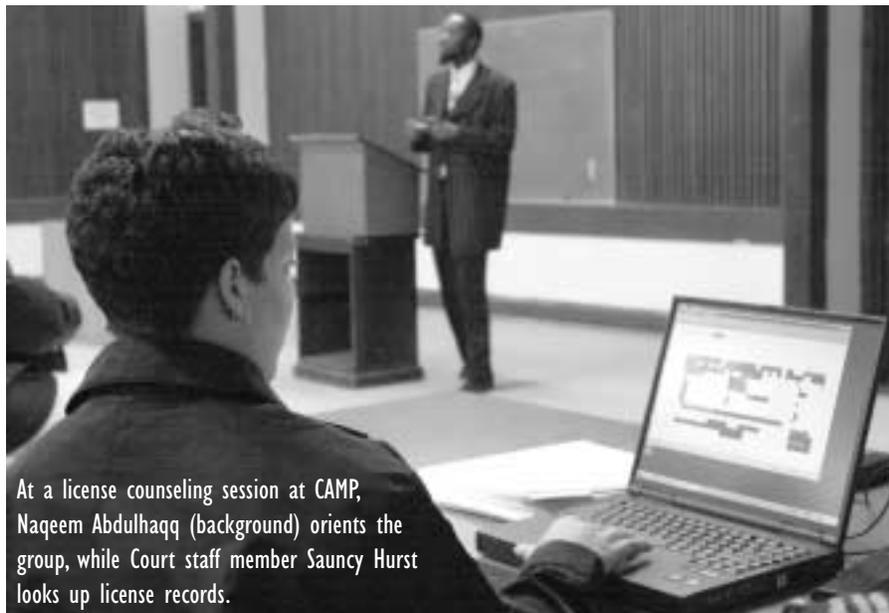
#### Relicensing Summits for Regional Cooperation

The Seattle Municipal Court was a pioneer in establishing time payments as a method of helping drivers get relicensed. Recognizing that the payment issue extends beyond Seattle, the Court hosted relicensing "summit meetings" in November 1999 and January 2000 to begin a regional dialogue. The summits drew participants from King, Pierce and Kitsap counties. Among those attending were judges and staff of district and municipal courts, police, prosecutors, local and county government staff, personnel from the state Department of Licensing and Department of Corrections, and representatives of community-based organizations.

#### Results

The summits set up work teams to study a number of possible initiatives. These include:

- ▶ providing educational programs,
- ▶ expanding the courts' presence in local communities,
- ▶ making time payments more available,



At a license counseling session at CAMP, Naqeem Abdulhaqq (background) orients the group, while Court staff member Sauncy Hurst looks up license records.

- ▶ simplifying Department of Licensing forms and printing them in multiple languages,
- ▶ improving communication among the community, courts and Department of Licensing, and
- ▶ pursuing more affordable insurance options.

## Improving Accessibility of Locations and Payment Methods

### The Challenge

The downtown courthouse is not a convenient location for a magistrate hearing for individuals who live or work outside of downtown or who live out of town.

The Court began conducting magistrate hearings in 1973 in the downtown courthouse. The goal of magistrate hearings is to provide accessible justice for citizens with traffic, parking or other infraction

offenses. Magistrates provide informal, one-to-one hearings in an office setting. Magistrate hearings are scheduled throughout the day. Waiting times are usually less than 15 minutes. However, the downtown location was not accessible for everyone.

### What the Court Did . . .

#### Magistrate Hearings in the Community

In 1995 the Court partnered with the City's Department of Neighborhoods to hold magistrate hearings in Neighborhood Service Centers. Initially, the hearings were offered at two centers. As of 2000, magistrate hearings take place in five service centers: Ballard, Columbia City, West Seattle, Lake City and Promenade 23. Hearings are held one day per week in each location. All the locations are listed on the tickets, which are used to request a magistrate hearing. Citizens select the location they prefer.

## Results

- ▶ In 2000, 25 percent of magistrate hearings were held in a Neighborhood Service Center.

### **What the Court Did. . .**

#### **Mail-in “Hearings”**

In September 2000, the magistrates launched a further outreach effort that gives citizens the opportunity to settle cases by mail. Citizens requesting a mitigation hearing may choose to send an explanation letter instead of having an in-person hearing. (At a mitigation hearing, the violator admits committing the offense but offers an explanation—the “mitigating” circumstances.) A magistrate reads the letter, makes a determination on the case, and notifies the offender of the case disposition by mail. If a fine is owed, the letter includes a payment notice.

## Results

- ▶ The Court now receives 800 requests per month for mail-in “hearings.” The mail-in option provides an alternative to an in-person hearing along with increased convenience for some citizens.

### **The Challenge**

Paying fines by mailing a check or going downtown to the courthouse is not convenient for everyone.

In 1997 the Court began accepting payment of certain fines and fees by credit and debit card at the courthouse and at several City Neighborhood Service Centers. The same year, the Court also began accepting credit card payments over the Internet using a procedure that required a cashier to manually enter payments at the Court. In 1998, the court set up the capability to take credit card payments by telephone through an interactive voice response system. The Court was the first governmental agency in the city of Seattle to offer the opportunity to pay obligations by credit card over the telephone.

### **What the Court Did. . .**

#### **Payments by Telephone, Round-the-Clock**

In 2000, the Court fully automated Internet payments so payments are posted in real time. Both the phone and the online payment options are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Individuals can also use both the telephone voice response system and the Court’s Web site to



obtain information about their tickets and/or cases without needing to wait until business hours to speak to a customer service representative.

## Results

- ▶ In 2000, the Court received 19,028 fine and fee payments by phone, totaling \$900,000, and 7,633 payments through the Court’s Web page, totaling more than \$300,000.
- ▶ Telephone and Internet payments are increasing each year.

## **Assuring Appropriate Results for Mentally Ill Defendants**

### **The Challenge**

Typically, mentally ill offenders are processed through the court system without much attention to their mental illness. They often spend more time in jail than other offenders. Eventually they are returned to the streets, perhaps having lost housing and financial benefits while in jail, and still without connections to needed mental health services or help to comply with their court-ordered obligations.

### **What the Court Did. . .**

#### **Mental Health Court**

In March 1999, the Seattle Municipal Court became one of a handful of

In 1997, the Court began accepting credit card payments over the Internet.



courts across the country to create a Mental Health Court (MHC) dedicated solely to dealing with mentally ill offenders. The MHC is based on “therapeutic jurisprudence.” This approach is designed to address the long-term needs of the defendant, the victim and the community. The same judge, attorneys and Court staff follow an offender’s case from the first hearing all the way until court-ordered obligations are complete. They work to find ways to address the underlying mental illness issues that have brought the individual into the criminal justice system.

The key issue for the MHC is whether the alleged criminal behavior is related to or caused by mental illness. MHC defendants may have any type of charge except

Driving Under the Influence. The most frequent charges are assault, theft, harassment, trespass and property damage. The defendants may have any type of serious mental illness, be developmentally disabled, have a brain injury or suffer from dementia. The defendant may be a first-time offender or have a lengthy record.

Defendants who opt into the MHC and enter into a disposition of their case are engaged with the MHC for up to two years. Their sentence or diversion agreement (an agreement to dismiss charges if the defendant complies with certain conditions) includes treatment obligations for this entire time. The MHC team works to ensure that defendants have housing or shelter when they are released from jail and have immediate access to treatment programs. The defendants are then monitored by dedicated probation staff who have expertise with mentally ill offenders. Review hearings are held as often as

needed to keep the defendant on track.

## Results

- ▶ During 2000, the MHC saw 464 individuals with 721 cases, each requiring multiple hearings. More than two-thirds of the defendants also had drug or alcohol addictions. An overwhelming number were homeless. Nearly 80 percent of MHC defendants have had at least one prior case in Seattle Municipal Court.
- ▶ The warrant rate for failing to appear for MHC cases is extremely low. This appears to be a benefit of the MHC approach of immediate monitoring, “wrap-around” services, personal knowledge about the defendants and next-day hearings.
- ▶ More than two-thirds of all defendants who opt into the MHC continue to be successfully engaged in treatment at the end of their first year.

## The Court’s Workload in a Nutshell – 2000

- » **The Court processed more than 568,000 newly filed tickets and criminal complaints.**
- » **Offenders were ordered to perform 20,400 hours of community service, the equivalent of one person working full-time for nearly 10 years.**
- » **An average of 650 individuals a day came to the Court to pay fines or seek help from customer service clerks.**
- » **More than 2,700 Seattle citizens served on jury duty at the Court.**
- » **More than 48,000 people had magistrate hearings.**
- » **More than 11,000 of these people chose a neighborhood center for the hearing.**
- » **The Court conducted hearings every day of the year except New Year’s Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.**



Painting out graffiti is one of many tasks performed as part of offenders' community service hours. In 1999 and 2000, the Court imposed more than 50,000 hours of community service.

## Forming Partnerships with Community Agencies and Volunteers

### The Challenge

The Court may impose community service hours as part of a sentence or offer this option in lieu of a fine. But until recently, there was no coordinated method for matching offenders with community agencies that have volunteer opportunities.

### What the Court Did...

Community Service Program Coordinator

Area nonprofit agencies and offenders alike have benefited since the Court hired a community service program coordinator in September 2000. The coordinator is a probation counselor who matches nonprofit and government agencies that have volunteer opportunities with offenders who are to perform community service. Approximately 75 agencies are currently participating.

The Court staff interview offenders to determine their interests and abilities, then match them with the

David Kageyama,

Director of Resource Development,  
Senior Services

**David Kageyama had a problem. He needed to get the 100,000 tickets to Senior Services' annual raffle sorted. But his temporary worker wasn't making much progress. At an \$11-per-hour rate, David was looking at a larger a bill than he wanted.**

**Then he remembered reading that community service hours were part of the sentence in some criminal cases. "I called the Court and asked if my work was something they could do- and they said yes," said David.**

**Robert Lee, the Court's community service program coordinator has been a big help. "Robert knows what work I**



David Kageyama uses community service defendants for important tasks that would burn out his agency's volunteers.

**have and informs the defendants," said David. "He tells me about the defendants and their schedules, and sends me some paperwork."**

**Scheduling can be a challenge. "Some defendants I can never reach," said David. "Others agree to a schedule, then fail to show up. The people who do come can be real gems,**

**though." He estimates that about half the referrals actually come to work at his agency.**

**Initially some agency staff members were concerned about having defendants working in their office. The worry was short-lived. "Now staff members come to me to ask if they can use one of my defendants to do a project!" said David.**

**After using community service defendants for nearly six months, David gives the program a thumbs up. "I would absolutely recommend it," he said. "Nonprofits always have mailings or sorting that need doing but can burn out volunteers. We try to use volunteers for more substantive work. This program is a very good deal for us."**

agencies' needs. Offenders are assigned to a specific agency and serve a predetermined number of hours. The agency monitors participation and notifies the Court when the hours have been completed or if the offender fails to complete an assignment.

## Results

- ▶ During 1999 and 2000, the Court imposed 50,000 hours of community service.
- ▶ Organizations as diverse as the American Heart Association, local food banks and a graffiti control program have benefited from the labor of offenders working off

community service hours. The duties have ranged from clerical support to warehouse labor to graffiti removal.

Nonprofit agencies interested in offering community service opportunities may contact Robert Lee at 206/684-7826.

## The Challenge

Some aspects of monitoring probationers are time consuming and don't require a counselor's skills. The Court also wanted a way to offer volunteer opportunities within the Court to citizens.

## What the Court Did...

### Volunteer Program in the Probation Division

The Probation division's volunteer program welcomes caring individuals to help supervise selected cases. Depending on a volunteer's inclination and skills, he or she may be assigned as a case manager or case assistant. Case managers monitor active deferred prosecution cases to ensure compliance with court-ordered treatment, may have in-person contact with probationers, consult with treatment agencies, and write progress reports for the judges. Case assistants perform the clerical functions involved in monitoring

## Pat Dow,

Probation Volunteer

**Pat Dow's husband saw a newspaper ad for probation volunteers and told Pat he thought she might enjoy the work. He was right.**

**"I just love it!" said Pat, who has volunteered with probation for three years. Pat serves as a case manager, so she has direct contact with probationers. "I supervise about 60 DWI deferred prosecution defendants," she explained. "I find that if I lay out my expectations in the initial interview, the clients get off to a good start and do what is required of them."**

**To start that first interview, Pat asks about something unrelated to the case, such as where they went to school or**



Pat Dow makes use of her life experience and people skills in her volunteer role as a probation case manager.

**what their job is. "Once they start talking, they want to tell me their whole life story," said Pat. Often, part of their story is how lucky they were to be stopped for drunk driving.**

**"Many people tell me the officer did them a favor because they didn't know they**

**had a problem with alcohol," said Pat. "One young man was even grateful to the judge who put him in jail for 30 days. He said the experience brought his family closer together."**

**Pat enjoys her volunteer job so much that she and her husband plan their vacations around her volunteer day. "I get to use my brain and life experiences," said Pat.**

**Pat is at the probation office one day a week for about eight hours. According to Pat, prospective volunteers need good organizational and people skills. "You need to be comfortable talking to people," she added.**

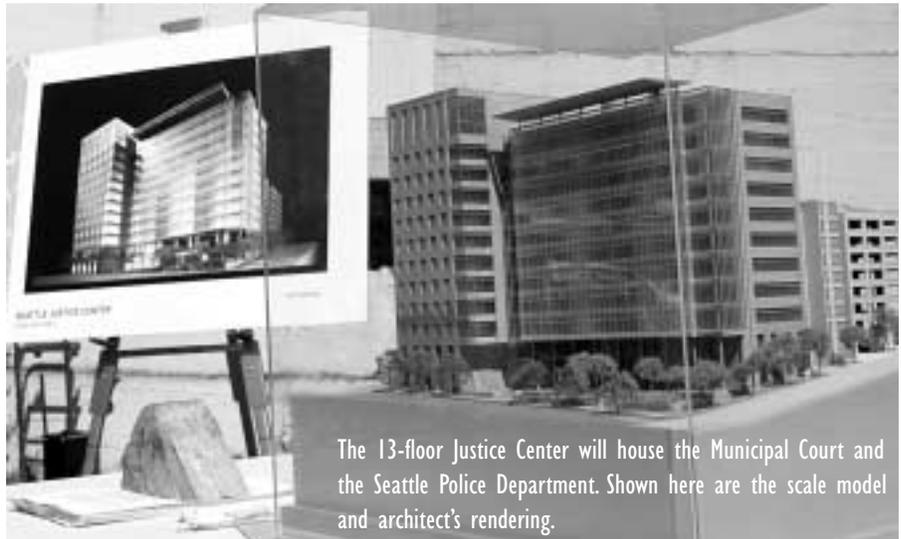
**Pat has appeared in court twice in her role as a volunteer. Was she nervous? "Not at all," said Pat, "I was on the right side of the law."**

cases. These duties may include sending letters to probationers, writing dismissal reports and maintaining files. Volunteers are asked to commit to serving between four and six hours per week for one year.

## Results

- ▶ The Court averages 25 volunteers per year, who, as a group, contribute approximately 300 hours of service per month.
- ▶ The Court's volunteer program has been a popular placement for college students seeking an internship in a criminal justice agency.

New volunteers are most welcome! Contact Kathy Fadden, volunteer coordinator, at 206/684-7803, or fill out the online volunteer application on the Court's Web site (go to [www.cityofseattle.net/courts](http://www.cityofseattle.net/courts) and click on "Volunteer Opportunities.")



The 13-floor Justice Center will house the Municipal Court and the Seattle Police Department. Shown here are the scale model and architect's rendering.

## *Building for Tomorrow*

In 1999 and 2000, the Court took several steps to develop the facilities and staff skills needed to serve the public into the future.

## **Creating a Facility to Meet Future Needs**

### *The Challenge*

The Court's current home, the Public Safety Building, has outlived its usefulness. It is too small to contain all the courtrooms and Court services, is expensive to

maintain, is not seismically stable, and is difficult to use efficiently or to remodel.

### **What the Court Did... New Seattle Justice Center**

On July 19, 2000, Seattle Municipal Court Presiding Judge Jean Rietschel joined Mayor Paul Schell, Councilmember Richard Conlin and Acting Police Chief Herb Johnson in turning the first shovelfuls of earth at the site of what will be the Seattle Justice Center. Many Court staff were involved in the programming and design process for the Court's Justice Center space and will continue to be involved during

Presiding Judge Jean Rietschel and Court employees who have 30 plus years of service help to break ground for the New Justice Center. From left: Toni Brooks, Judge Rietschel, Barbara Robertson, Sally Adams, Helen Black. The Justice Center site is on Fifth Avenue between James and Cherry Streets in downtown Seattle.



construction and transition to the new building.

The Justice Center is part of a new Civic Center campus, which the City is developing. This campus will also include a new City Hall and other existing City-owned buildings. The 13-floor Justice Center is expected to open in the fall of 2002. It will house both the Seattle Municipal Court and the Seattle Police Department, but will act as two buildings with separate entrances, elevators and floor space.

In addition to reuniting all Court operations under one roof, the following aspects of the new Justice

Center will be of particular interest to the public.

- ▶ The new building will provide improved public amenities. These include: a children's waiting room for visitors' children, attorney-client conference rooms, wheelchair accessible jury boxes and witness stands, a dedicated file viewing room where citizens or attorneys can review case files, a more comfortable jury waiting area, and four high-speed elevators serving the court floors.

- ▶ Community-based service providers will have office space in the new Justice Center. This will make their services more readily available to the individuals who need them.
- ▶ The Justice Center will be efficient and environmentally friendly. For example, an innovative window system will capture heat in the winter and improve ventilation in the summer. Much of the roof will be planted with grass to improve building insulation and reduce stormwater runoff.

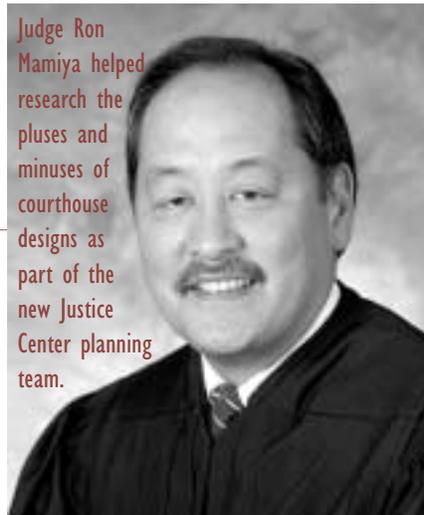
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## Honorable Ron Mamiya,

Bench Representative,  
Justice Center Planning Team

**Judge Ron Mamiya came in on the "ground floor" of planning the new Justice Center. He is the bench representative on a planning team formed in late 1997. "I jumped at the chance to help when Ken [Klimusko] asked me," said Judge Mamiya. Mr. Klimusko was the Court Administrator until his death in November 1998.**

**"The Public Safety Building has outlived its usefulness," said Judge Mamiya. "The City is fortunate to have a Mayor and City Council willing to support a building with the public's interests in mind. And Ken had the vision to head us in the right direction."**



Judge Ron Mamiya helped research the pluses and minuses of courthouse designs as part of the new Justice Center planning team.

**To start, that direction was to go to California, Virginia and Ontario where the planning team toured a variety of courthouses. "Every building has good and bad aspects," said Judge Mamiya. "We learned what we liked and what we didn't."**

**For example, they had to stand in the street while waiting to enter the too-small lobby of a San Francisco courthouse. This experience inspired the generous queuing space in the new Justice Center.**

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**Of course, the building can't have everything that everyone wants. "We had a budget," explained Judge Mamiya. "But we worked hard to come up with a design to satisfy most people and still meet our obligation to use scarce resources efficiently."**

**Judge Mamiya would "absolutely" help plan a courthouse again if given the chance. "This has been fun," he said. "We've had a great team of programmers, architects, project managers and court staff."**

**He also looks forward to one final task. "I would pay good money to push the button that blows up the Public Safety Building," he said with a smile.**



Presiding Judge Jean Rietschel speaks at the groundbreaking for the new Justice Center. This building will reunite all Municipal Court functions under one roof.

## Developing the Work Force of the Future

### *The Challenge*

The changes in laws and advancements in technology of recent years have put more demands on Court employees. The Court's work force must continually

develop the skills to meet these new demands.

### What the Court Did... Focus on Problem-Solving Skills

Court employees must either have or attain problem-solving and computer skills to deal with increasingly complex issues. Employees at all levels need to analyze issues and new circumstances, and then devise solutions. During 1999 and 2000, the Court took steps to enhance training opportunities for current employees and to recruit employees with the skills required to meet the challenges of the future. These steps included:

- ▶ Developing an extensive leadership training program;
- ▶ Forming a Training Steering Committee and Process Improvement Committees; and
- ▶ Expanding recruiting efforts to fill vacant positions through such strategies as contacting local military bases and professional organizations.

## *Toward a Safe and Vital Community*

Our Report to the Community highlights the Seattle Municipal Court's 1999 and 2000 efforts to address issues important to our community. These initiatives aim to increase access to justice, measure effectiveness, increase accountability, provide adequate and efficient space for the Court and the public, and build the work force to meet our community's needs into the future.

The judges and staff are committed to providing excellent service to citizens who depend on the Court. We also have a commitment to work toward a safe and vital community in partnership with other government agencies and community organizations. In short, as Presiding Judge Rietschel said, the Court is taking steps to be "in every way a better public institution."

If you have questions, we invite you to visit the Court's Web site at <http://www.cityofseattle.net/courts> or to call the Court at 206/684-5600.

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**General Information: 206/684-5600**

### **Mailing Address:**

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**Web site: [www.cityofseattle.net/courts](http://www.cityofseattle.net/courts)**

