



1978

Rhode Island Report on the Judiciary 1978

Follow this and additional works at: <http://helindigitalcommons.org/lawarchive>



Part of the [Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

"Rhode Island Report on the Judiciary 1978" (1978). *Library Archive*. Paper 42.
<http://helindigitalcommons.org/lawarchive/42>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the HELIN State Law Library at HELIN Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Library Archive by an authorized administrator of HELIN Digital Commons. For more information, please contact anne@helininc.org.

STATE OF
RHODE ISLAND
REPORT ON THE JUDICIARY



1978

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RHODE ISLAND	
COURT STRUCTURE	1
District Court	1
Family Court	2
Superior Court	3
Supreme Court	3
1978 IN THE RHODE ISLAND	
COURTS	4
Judicial Budget	5
SUPREME COURT	
Court Delay Reduced	7
Appellate Dispositions Increased	7
Justice Weisberger Elected to Supreme Court	8
Screening Unit Added to Court Staff	8
Planning Council Studies Improvements	9
Courthouse Security Strengthened	9
Rule Changes Assist Bar Disciplinary Board	10
Law Library Saves Space with microfilm	11
Judicial Council Comments on diverse subjects	11
Fewer Bar Admissions	12
Legislative Enactments	12
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE	
Judicial Complex Construction Planned	13
SJIS Sets Up Network of Terminals	14
College to Store and Catalogue Old Records	16
Federal Grants Total \$543,340	16
SUPERIOR COURT	
Criminal Case Dispositions Increased	18
Justice Murray Appointed Presiding Justice	19
Staff Meetings Held on Administrative Policies	19
Court Returns to Bristol County	20
Action Initiated on Receiverships	21
New Judicial Appointee Is From District Court	21
Jury Management Improved	21
Alterations Add Courtroom In Providence	22
FAMILY	
Intake Improved	23
Divorce Cases Disposed	24
Sharp Rise In Abuse And Neglect Cases	25
CASA Program Supports Child Placements	25
Information System to be National Model	26
Retired Veteran Judge Is Succeeded By Judge Fay	26
Fire Allows Better Office Arrangement	27
New Rules Drafted	27
Alcoholism-Drug Awareness Encouraged	28
New Building Planned to Court's Needs	28
DISTRICT COURT	
Misdemeanors Disposed Within 90 Days	29
More Administrative Agency Cases Filed	30
Rules Amended to include Equity Powers	30
Manuals Distributed and Updated	30
New Complex to House Sixth Division	31
Well-Known Attorney Appointed to Court	31
Bail Project Interviewed Defendants	32
COURT DIRECTORY	
33	
CASE LOAD STATISTICS	
Supreme Court	35
Superior Court	36
Family Court	37
District Court	38

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

250 Benefit Street

Providence, R. I. 02903

WALTER J. KANE, Administrator State Courts

WILLIAM A. MELONE, Editor

MICHAEL SCANLON, Art Director



TO: THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE RHODE
ISLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Submitted herein is the seventh annual report produced by the Administrative Office of State Courts.

I am proud to report that the state courts have reversed the pattern of growing backlogs and lengthening delays that had been troubling us in recent years. Despite the fact that the number of cases brought to the courts has continued to generally increase, both the number of cases awaiting final disposition and the average time taken to dispose of these cases have been reduced in 1978. Each court has developed new procedures and systems to increase its rate of dispositions, and this progress has been achieved without additional judgeships in any court. Our judges and all court employees have responded to the problem of increasing caseloads with resourcefulness and commitment that has now met this challenge. In the sections of this report on each of the courts and in the statistics on the last pages, the progress made in meeting those goals is described in more detail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph A. Bevilacqua". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Joseph A. Bevilacqua
Chief Justice, Supreme Court

RHODE ISLAND COURT STRUCTURE

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

The entire court system in Rhode Island is state-funded with the exception of Probate Courts, which are the responsibility of cities and towns, and the Providence and Pawtucket Municipal Courts, which are local courts of limited jurisdiction. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, as the Executive head of the state court system, has general supervision over all courts and provides administrative services for the system through the State Court Administrator. Each court has responsibility over its own operations and has an administrative judge who appoints an administrator to handle internal court management.

DISTRICT COURT

Most people who come to or are brought before courts in this state enter, at least initially, the District Court. This court was established to give the people of the state easy geographic access and reasonably speedy trials to settle civil disputes in law involving limited claims and to judge those accused of lesser crimes. It has state-wide jurisdiction and is divided into eight divisions so it can hear cases close to where they originate. Most felony arraignments are brought in the District Court.

Specifically, its jurisdiction in civil matters includes small claims that can be brought without a lawyer for amounts under \$500 and other actions at law concerning claims of no more than \$5,000. It also hears cases on violations of municipal ordinances or regulations.

In criminal cases, it has original jurisdiction over all misdemeanors where the right to a jury trial in the first instance has been waived. The District Court is not designed or equipped to hold jury trials. If a



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

defendant invokes the right to a jury trial, the case is transferred to the Superior Court.

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

Since October, 1976, the District Court has had jurisdiction formerly exercised by the Superior Court over hearings on involuntary hospitalization under the mental health, drug abuse, or alcoholism laws. The District Court now also has jurisdiction to hear appeals from the adjudicatory decisions of several regulatory agencies or boards. This court also has the power to order compliance with the subpoenas and rulings of the same agencies and boards. In 1977, this court's jurisdiction was again increased to include violations of the state and local housing codes. District Court decisions in all these matters are only subject to review by the Supreme Court.

FAMILY COURT

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



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

have given them.

Reflecting these specific goals, the Family Court has jurisdiction to hear and determine all petitions for divorce from the bond of marriage and any motions in conjunction with divorce proceedings relating to the distribution of property, alimony, support, and the custody and support of children; separate maintenance; complaints for support of parents and children; and those matters relating to delinquent, wayward, dependent, neglected or mentally defective or mentally disordered children. It also has jurisdiction over adoptions; child marriages; those matters referred to the court in accordance with the provisions of Section 14-1-28; responsibility for or contributing to the delinquency or waywardness of neglected children under sixteen years of age; desertion, abandonment or failure to provide subsistence for any children dependent upon such adults for

support; truancy; bastardy proceedings, and custody of children; and a number of other matters involving domestic relations and juveniles.

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

SUPERIOR COURT

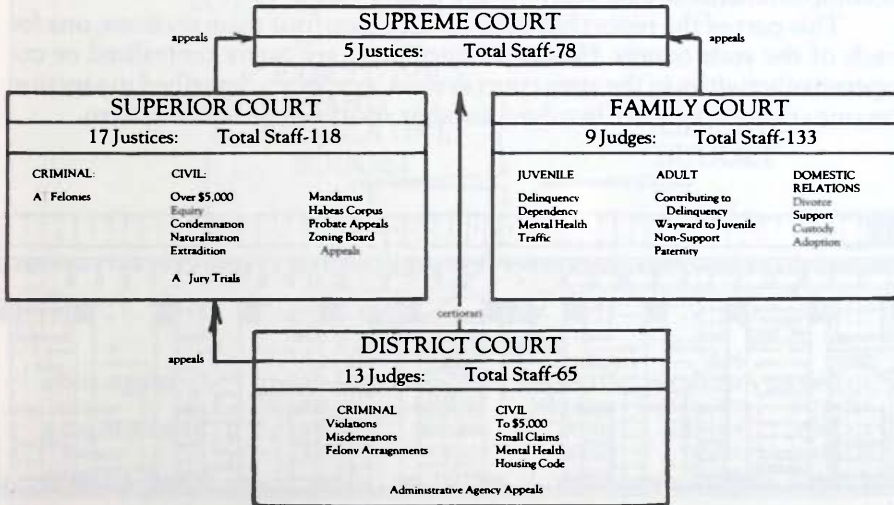
The Superior Court is the state's trial court of general jurisdiction. It hears civil matters concerning claims in excess of \$5,000 and all equity proceedings. It also has original jurisdiction over all crimes and offenses except as otherwise provided by law. All indictments found by grand juries or brought under information charging are returned to Superior Court, and all jury trials are held there. It has appellate jurisdiction over decisions of local probate and municipal courts. Except as specifically provided by statute, criminal and civil cases tried in the District Court can also be brought to the Superior Court on appeal where they receive a trial *de novo*. In

addition, there are numerous appeals and statutory proceedings; such as highway re-development, and other land condemnation cases. Concurrently with the Supreme Court, it has jurisdiction of writs of habeas corpus, mandamus, and certain other prerogative writs. Appeals from the Superior Court are heard by the Supreme Court.

SUPREME COURT

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

The Chief Justice of the Supreme



Court also serves as the executive head of the entire state court system. Acting in this capacity, he appoints the State Court Administrator and the staff of the Administrative Office of the State Courts. This office performs personnel, fiscal, and purchasing functions for the state court system. In addition, the Administrative Office serves a wide range of management functions, including consolidated, long-range planning; the collection, analysis, and reporting of information on court caseload and operations; the develop-

ment and implementation of management improvement projects in specified areas; and the application for and administration of federal grants for the court system.

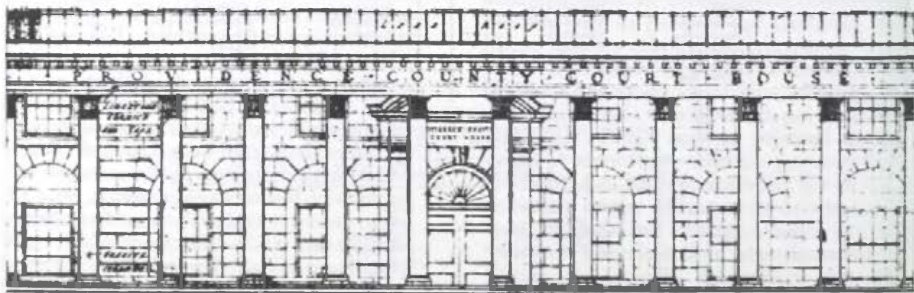
The State Law Library is also under the direction of the Supreme Court. This library provides an integrated legal reference system. Its first responsibility is to provide reference materials and research services for judges and staff of all courts. However, it also serves the general community.

1978 IN THE RHODE ISLAND COURTS

The words and statistics that follow give a brief overview of activity in the Rhode Island State Courts during the past year. The programs and events described are only meant to be representative of the many activities and accomplishments of that year.

This part of the report has been divided into four main sections; one for each of the state courts. However, since there are many centralized or cooperative activities in the state court system, a program described in a section on one court could have involved another court or the entire system.

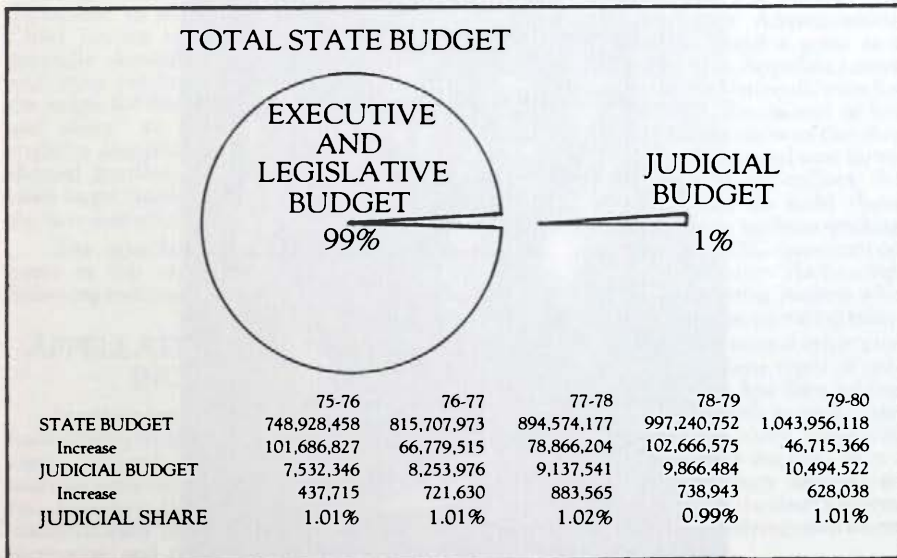
*The colonnade
of the Providence
County Court-
house from the
construction
drawings from
the office of
Jackson, Robert-
son, & Adams,
Architects.
Drawing by C. W.
& F. G. B., June
8, 1931*



JUDICIAL BUDGET

The court budget request for the 1979-80 fiscal year was presented to the Governor's Budget Office in the fall of 1978. This budget limited any increases to the target levels set in the Governor's guidelines for budget preparations. However, these increases were further reduced by the Governor's Budget Office.

The state courts present a unified budget to the Governor each year. The Governor's Budget Office usually makes some adjustments to this budget before including it in the total state budget as submitted to the Legislature. The chart below compares the judicial budget with the total state budget for the last five fiscal years. For the first three years shown, actual expenditures are used. The figures used for 1978-79 are the amounts allocated by the Legislature, and the 1979-80 figures are from the Governor's budget recommendations.



SUPREME COURT

The number of new appellate cases docketed continued to increase in 1978. Procedures recently instituted in response to this growing caseload have helped raise Supreme Court dispositions by 15%. Additional measures have been taken and others are being planned as the court moves to close the gap between cases docketed and cases disposed annually.

The Supreme Court has joined with the other state courts in a coordinated effort to meet time-to-disposition goals for criminal cases and, as these goals are being met, attention is being turned to decreasing delays in processing civil cases. This court supports the trial courts' accomplishments in these areas and assists with procedural and organizational changes that are required.



*Seated: Chief
Justice Joseph A.
Bevilacqua.
Standing:
Justices Thomas
F. Kelleher, John
F. Doris, Joseph
R. Weisberger,
and Alfred H.
Joslin. (Photo.,
Neal Davis)*

COURT DELAY REDUCED

In January of 1978, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court called a Court Conference on Speedy Trial to bring judges and other justice agency leaders together to plan ways to reduce court delays and pending case backlogs. The previous year the Judicial Planning Council had adopted a set of goals for reducing the time to disposition for criminal cases to specified numbers of days. Each of the four state courts was given a different target that considered the nature of that court's jurisdiction. At the January conference, a review was made of steps the courts had already taken to achieve these goals. Information was also presented on successful efforts in other jurisdictions to implement similar time-to-disposition limits.

The courts have all made commitments to reducing delay, and they have made significant progress toward meeting the Planning Council's goals. In a letter sent in September to all state court judges, the Chief Justice reviewed statistics that generally showed increasing dispositions and fewer pending cases. He commended the judges for their "personal commitment and effort" to reduce delay. Caseflow statistics compiled at the end of the year showed continued progress, and in some cases target limits were being met ahead of the two-year schedule originally set.

The specific achievements of each court in this area are described in the following sections of this report.

APPELLATE DISPOSITIONS INCREASED

In recent years, the Supreme Court has been steadily increasing the total number of cases disposed of annually. The 15% increase achieved in 1978 is the largest so far. However, the number of new cases docketed each year also has been steadily increasing, and there are still more cases

docketed than disposed of each year. Consequently, the backlog of pending cases has continued to grow.

Present plans for increasing dispositions all focus on methods to improve the court's ability to identify docketed cases that do not require full written opinions. The court is using several approaches to handle more cases with summary procedures or other preliminary disposition methods. This course follows the general recommendations in a report on the "Rhode Island Appellate Process" done in 1977. The study specifically suggested the use of informal settlement conferences. This tool has been effective in saving court time and increasing dispositions in several appellate courts around the nation. The parties in selected cases meet with a single justice and discuss options for resolving their disputes or other ways to dispose of cases, before briefing and oral argument.

Plans have been made to test the usefulness of pre-argument hearings to this state's appellate court. The Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration has awarded Rhode Island a grant as a demonstration state in an Appellate Justice Project being run by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). Provisional orders have been drafted for the court so that they may begin this experiment and new forms have been developed to collect the information necessary to hold these hearings. A staff attorney has been working with the court and the NCSC consultant on this project since September. The hearings will be conducted by sitting Justices who will take this extra duty on a rotating basis.

The court has used several other procedures for increasing some types of preliminary dispositions. It has been adding several cases to each monthly hearing calendar by issuing orders to show cause why these cases should not be disposed of in a summary fashion. Summary dispositions have been increasing, and the court has been getting assistance in identifying cases where

such action is appropriate from the Administrative Assistant to the Chief Justice and the attorneys of the Appellate Screening Unit. The Administrative Assistant helps the court with its motion calendar and presents reports on motions for summary action made by either party in a case or *sua sponte* by the court. More motions are being placed on this calendar and many more dispositions are coming from it. The Screening Unit reports on cases briefed and ready for argument. One of their considerations in these reports is the appropriateness of using "show cause" orders and dispositions by court order.

JUSTICE WEISBERGER ELECTED TO SUPREME COURT



Justice Joseph R.
Weisberger
(Photo., M.
S. Nolan)

The Honorable Joseph R. Weisberger was elected to the Supreme Court by the Legislature during their 1978 session. The Legislature acted to fill the position on the court vacated when Justice Paolino retired

near the end of 1977. Justice Weisberger had been a Superior Court Justice for 22 years, serving as Presiding Justice for the last 6 of those years. He has earned a national reputation as a judicial leader and scholar. Some of the positions he has held in national professional organizations include: Chairman of the National Conference of State Trial Judges; Member, Board of Directors of the National Center for State Courts and faculty member of the National Judicial College.

A graduate of Brown University, he served in the Navy during World War II where he attained the rank of Lieutenant Commander before returning to take a degree at Harvard Law School. He was elected to the State Senate for two terms and served as minority leader.

SCREENING UNIT ADDED TO COURT STAFF

For three years, the Appellate Screening Unit had been supported by federal grants as an innovative program that uses staff attorneys to help appellate justices more efficiently dispose of pending appeals. Because it has demonstrated its value to the court in a number of ways and has contributed to the court's success in increasing annual dispositions, the salaries of the three attorneys in this unit were funded by the state in the court's 1978-1979 budget. They will continue to play an important role in the court's efforts to deal with its rising caseload.

During the 1978 court year, the unit's attorneys prepared reports on about 140 cases pending argument and subsequently heard by the court. The reports are designed to give the justices a brief but comprehensive preview of cases prior to oral argument. The court also uses these reports to help identify cases that can properly be dismissed by court order. In these cases, the court issues "show cause" orders to allow abbreviated arguments by

the parties. In 1978, 27 "show cause" orders were issued in cases reported on by the unit.

The Screening Unit attorneys also provide general staff services to the court. In August, they prepared a special report required for an emergency hearing on a petition before the court. In September, the chief of the unit assisted in preparations for a seminar to orient new law clerks; she has also been named to the Executive Board of the National Committee for Appellate Central Staff Counsel and has participated in several seminars at the national level.

PLANNING COUNCIL STUDIES IMPROVEMENTS

The Judicial Planning Council (JPC) was formed in 1977 by an order of the Supreme Court which authorized it to establish priorities for court improvements, develop programs to effect these improvements and prepare an annual judicial plan. The JPC was formed following provisions of the federal legislation governing the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) and the Council reviews all proposals for LEAA funding of court projects. The JPC has nine members: the Chief Justice and one other Justice of the Supreme Court, the judicial heads of the three state trial courts, the Attorney General, the Public Defender, the State Court Administrator, and the head of the Division of Field Services in the Department of Corrections.

In their second annual plan, which was presented in July of 1978, the JPC presented a review of progress made by all courts toward the reduction of delay goals set by the Council the previous year. The plan also reviewed court improvement needs and set objectives for meeting some of these needs in eight specific program areas: court facilities improvement, reduction of delay, security improvement, changes in rules and statutes, continuing education and training, information systems improvement,

planning and education, and public information improvement.

During the year, the JPC studied court operations in several areas to help develop improvement objectives and to monitor progress toward objectives already set. The Council received statistical caseload and pending case reports from all courts which showed clear progress in reducing backlogs and time to disposition for criminal cases. The JPC also studied continuing education requirements for judges and other personnel. Other studies were commissioned by the JPC on: payment of indigent defense costs, sentencing, issuance and cancelling of warrants and space utilization in the Providence County Courthouse. A three-member Judicial Planning Unit serves as staff to the JPC and conducts most of the studies for the Council.

COURTHOUSE SECURITY STRENGTHENED

The Judicial Planning Council has made improved courthouse security one of its goals. In 1978, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court called attention to specific weaknesses in physical security provisions at some court locations and expressed concern over the lack of trained security personnel. At the direction of the Judicial Advisory Committee plans for tightening security at the busy Providence County Courthouse were put into effect and arrangements were begun for closer cooperation between the courts, the Sheriff's Department, the Division of Public Buildings, and the Division's Capitol Police.

In 1978, threats to the safety of several judges and losses in court buildings by fire, vandalism and theft pointed out the need for greater security. Responding to this need, plans were made to: better secure court buildings against illegal entry and vandalism, improve facilities and methods used to control prisoners brought to court and monitor traffic into court buildings to keep out weapons or other dangerous

material. Phase I and II of an implementation schedule for these plans was completed during this year. This involved the installation of a sound entry detection system in the Kent County Courthouse, a special electronic access control system on the Providence County Courthouse door used around the clock by the Bureau of Criminal Identification, and external lighting for several locations. During this phase, a new electronic lock system was purchased for the Providence County Courthouse, and metal detectors were also purchased for planned access monitoring.

Security improvements are planned to continue in 1979. An identification card program will be set up for all courthouse employees. These cards are necessary for the operation of planned security measures and will allow security to be tightened without inconvenience to employees. The schedule also calls for set up of a public access monitoring system at both entrances of the Providence County Courthouse. There are also plans to add trained security personnel where necessary at court locations. These personnel would be assigned from the state Division of Public Buildings.

RULE CHANGES ASSIST BAR DISCIPLINARY BOARD

Early in 1978 the Supreme Court reviewed the operating experience of the Disciplinary Board for the Bar during its first two full years of operations. The court then made some adjustments in the rules that govern the procedures used by this Board to deal with complaints against attorneys. These changes and some internal organizational improvements made by Chief Disciplinary Counsel who serves as staff to the Board have allowed the Board and the Court to reduce the time taken to complete action on a complaint. Consequently, during the year, the Board has been able to greatly increase the number of complaints it has considered. The Board's

effectiveness has also been improved as the members of the Bar have become more aware of its responsibilities and familiar with its procedures.

The court's actions had three significant effects. If an attorney does not respond to a complaint as requested by the Board, that matter may now be referred directly to the Supreme Court where "show cause" orders have been used to bring these attorneys in to explain their actions. The nine member Board can now divide itself into three member subpanels that conduct disciplinary hearings and report to the full Board. Members find it easier to arrange frequent meetings for these small subpanels, and, since all three panels operate simultaneously, the Board can consider many more petitions for disciplinary action. The third change supports this increased Board activity by using a provision already in the rules that allows the use of special assistant disciplinary counsels who present petitions for disciplinary action to the hearing panels. The court has been appointing attorneys to serve in this capacity.

All complaints to the Disciplinary Board are received by the Chief Disciplinary Counsel who investigates formal complaints and prepares reports on each one for presentation to the Board. The great majority of complaints are found not to involve violations of the Bar's standards of professional conduct. However, the Counsel usually works informally to resolve many of these complaints to the mutual satisfaction of clients and attorneys involved. Often complaints arising from misunderstandings or a lack of communication can be handled without a formal complaint being filed.

If the Board, after receiving a petition from the Counsel and holding hearings, decides that discipline is required, it transmits the full record in the matter to the Supreme Court with a recommendation for discipline. Through the Administrative

Assistant to the Chief Justice, the court has been working with the Board to assure these matters are given attention without delay. All actions of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel, the Board, and the Court in considering discipline of attorneys are completely confidential. If the Court decides that public discipline is warranted, it takes action and makes the matter one of public record. During the 1978 court year, 10 attorneys were publically censured and 2 were suspended from the practice of law.

LAW LIBRARY SAVES SPACE WITH MICROFILM

During 1978, the State Law Library continued to update and enlarge its collection of law series and related text books. However, budget restrictions and increasing book prices kept total acquisitions lower than previous years, thus only about 1400 new volumes were purchased. New series acquired included the *Media Law Reporter* and the *Military Justice Reporter*. Additional texts were purchased on sentencing, immigration law, copyright law, major trial practice, and many other subjects.

The library has taken a major step to deal with its space problems. It has purchased from the West Publishing Company a microfilm system called ultra-fiche. With this system, the library will replace over 2,400 large volumes of older case law reports with 10 small file boxes. The reports that will be replaced contain cases previous to 1939, and although they are seldom referenced, the microfiche copies can be easily accessed with portable readers or a larger reader printer that can make multiple full-size copies of any page. The readers display single pages larger than actual size with easy-to-read black type on a white background. The library plans to take advantage of additional space saving ultra-fiche editions of other state and federal reporter series as they become available.

Progress has been made in a long-range

project to recatalogue the library's holdings and to replace old file cards with a more complete catalogue arranged by author, title and subject in conformity with universally applied Library of Congress standards. By the end of the year, new cards had been prepared for all volumes in the loan library and all reference services and texts. Cataloguing has now begun for the older volumes shelved in the gallery.



The State Law Library in the Providence County Courthouse has an open design that, while interesting architecturally, has caused space problems as the library's collection has expanded. (Photo., M. Scanlon)

JUDICIAL COUNCIL COMMENTS ON DIVERSE SUBJECTS

The Rhode Island Judicial Council exists to study the organization and administration of the state's judicial system. It consists of six members of the Bar appointed by the Governor to three-year terms. They meet regularly and submit a report to the Governor annually.

During 1978, the council considered several matters including: due process guarantees for grand juries, court rules of evidence, specialization of attorneys, and scheduling of cases on the Superior Court's new summer calendar. In their annual report to the Governor, they made comments and recommendations on each of

these subjects. This report suggested that the Attorney General seek to reform grand jury procedures to improve confidentiality and to allow witnesses to have counsel present. On rules of evidence, citing the advantages now gained by all state courts using parallel rules of civil procedure modeled on the federal court rules, the report recommended similarly uniform rules of evidence again following the federal model. The council expressed their concern over the growth of unregulated advertising of legal services and supported the development of "appropriately administered standards of specialization". Finally, they welcomed the Presiding Justice's plans for full summer sessions of the Superior Court as an "important reform", but suggested different summer scheduling practices,

allowing attorneys to conveniently plan for their appearances.

FEWER BAR ADMISSIONS

The Office of the Clerk of the Supreme Court acts as the registrar and secretariat for the State Board of Bar Examiners. It is responsible for issuing and receiving application forms and for maintaining application files. All arrangements for the bar examinations that are given twice a year are made by this office.

For the first time in recent years, there was a slight decline in the number of candidates sitting for the state bar exam in 1978. The 179 law students who took the exam were 6 percent fewer than the previous year. Of these, 136 achieved passing scores.

LEGISLATIVE ENACTMENTS

In 1978, the General Assembly passed the following acts that have significant direct effect on the state courts (Acts are listed by their chapter numbers in the 1978 Public Laws and bill numbers are also indicated):

Chap. 77 - H 7521: Allows the investigation by state agencies of present and prospective foster parents in order to determine whether they have criminal records.

Chap. 109 - S 2109 A: Allows closed corporations and family owned corporations to designate a representative to prosecute small claims.

Chap. 128 - S 2668: Provides for an assessment of costs against criminal defendants to be paid into the violent crimes indemnity fund.

Chap. 138 - H 7868 B: Authorizes the family court to restrain either party to a marriage from causing or attempting to cause bodily harm to the other in cases where a divorce petition has not been filed.

Chap. 144 - S 1218: Includes felony narcotics offenses within the list of designated offenses for purposes of the wiretapping laws.

Chap. 173 - S 2566: Provides that the license to operate a motor vehicle of a person found to be an habitual offender pursuant to a court order shall not be reissued for a period of at

least 1 year, but not more than 5 years from the date of the court order.

Chap. 182 - S 2191 A: Provides that the district court shall have exclusive original jurisdiction of all violations of minimum housing standards; amends certain provisions regarding appeal procedure and penalties in housing matters.

Chap. 185 - H 7415: Establishes the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act; sets forth the criteria for the family court's jurisdiction in custody matters; establishes procedure to be followed by the family court in child custody cases.

Chap. 189 - H 8034: Establishes the Governor's Justice Commission to develop policies and plans to improve the state's criminal justice system.

Chap. 190 - H 7818: Authorizes the director of social and rehabilitative services to delegate his authority to verify Reciprocal Enforcement of Support to any class of persons under his control.

Chap. 191 - H 7966: Requires the court administrator to notify the secretary of state and local canvassing authorities of the names of those persons convicted and sentenced for a felony; requires that names of such persons be removed from voting lists.

Chap. 205 - H 7434 A: Provides that salaries of court clerks shall be set by the unclassified pay plan board.

Chap. 221 - S 2218 A: Provides that school committees and the board of regents hold harmless any teacher or administrator from financial loss arising out of claims for bodily injury or property damage under certain conditions.

Chap. 224 - S 2915: Authorizes civil actions by cities and towns to enforce environmental quality standards; creates an environmental advocate within the Attorney General's Department.

Chap. 234 - H 8126 A: Provides that judges may order restrictions in the form of monetary payments or some type of community service as part of a sentence or as a condition of probation.

Chap. 238 - H 7706: Grants immunity from liability to persons certified by the American Heart Association or the American National Red Cross in basic or advanced life support who voluntarily and gratuitously render emergency assistance to persons in need thereof.

Chap 260 - H 8133: Increases the travel

allowance for jurors from 8 to 15 cents per mile.

Chap 296 - H 7035: Provides that a superior court justice may file a misdemeanor in the same manner as a district court justice and may place conditions on said filing, such as the performance of services for the public good.

Chap. 299 - H 7634: Defines product liability damages and subsequent alteration or modification; absolves manufacturer or seller from liability where a substantial cause of the injury was subsequent alteration or modification of the product; provides for a general statute of limitations of ten years.

Chap. 304 - H 7842: Increases the district court entry fee to \$5; eliminates all other fees for civil actions.

Chap. 322 - H 7671: Provides that surety need not be given by the chief of police, deputy chief of police, commander, captain, police inspector, town sergeant, or police sergeant in the town of Warren upon the making of complaint in the issuance of a warrant.

Chap 326 - H 7585: Empowers justices of the district court and former justices of the supreme, superior, family, district and municipal courts to perform marriage ceremonies.

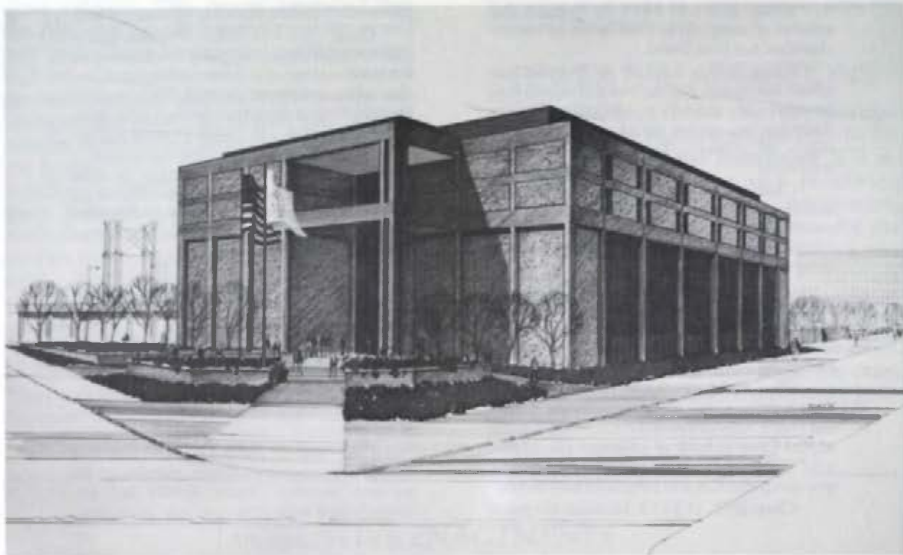
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

The significant caseload improvements made by all the state courts in 1978 involved some changes in court operations. The Administrative Office has been supporting these changes in several ways: by providing statistics to identify problems and monitor progress in solving these problems; by reporting on model plans for improvements and by providing the resources to implement necessary changes.

JUDICIAL COMPLEX CONSTRUCTION PLANNED

Construction is scheduled to start in 1979 on a new Judicial Complex in Providence. Built by the Public Building Authority (PBA) for the use of the courts and related agencies, it will be the only courthouse constructed in the last 51 years. The Ad-

ministrative Office has been studying the unmet facility requirements of the courts for years and consequently the courts have been well prepared to actively participate in the design of the new complex. The PBA and its architects have been sensitive to the special design requirements of a court building and they have shaped their plans to meet most of the courts requests.



The new Judicial Complex pictured in this rendering by architects Robinson Green Beretta Corporation will be built in Providence by the Public Building Authority.

The Complex has been planned to house both the Family and District Court in Providence. Offices for the Workers Compensation Commission have been included in the plans. There will also be space for agencies associated with the court — the Attorney General, the Public Defender, the Division of Probation and Parole, and local prosecutors. Preliminary designs have been reviewed by the courts and appear to effectively separate each court and agency. Concern for the convenience of the public is reflected in the placement of clerks offices and other public access areas. Security is improved by physically separated and controlled access to some areas.

The Authority is a body appointed by the Governor that will finance the construction of this complex with the sale of revenue bonds. The building will be rented for the use of the courts, and the rent will be used to pay off the bonds. The PBA is completely responsible for building the complex and has hired the architects and con-

struction manager. However, they have closely consulted the courts and other tenants while planning their building.

To help them work with the PBA and its architect, the courts hired a professional consultant with wide experience in courthouse design. He worked with representatives of the two courts that will occupy the complex and prepared detailed specifications for the architects. The consultant also provided the architects with information on successful courthouse designs nationwide that have addressed the unique special relationships, traffic flow patterns and security considerations of courts.

SJIS SETS UP NETWORK OF TERMINALS

The Statewide Judicial Information System (SJIS) has completed its second year of development and phased installation of a computer-supported system to track

criminal cases and provide management statistics on case flow. By the end of the year, SJIS had built a data base and written programs to support a terminal network serving all criminal adjudication agencies with a single information source. Through terminals statewide in the offices of the courts, the Attorney General, the Public Defender and the Corrections Department, this network provides information on the status of cases in the system and allows for review of the data being fed into the system.

Installation of these terminals has been held up by delays by New England Telephone who is providing the lines that inter-connect the network, but it is expected that all terminals in the network's Phase I plan will be hooked up by June. When fully operational, this system will reduce manual recordkeeping requirements and give all agencies easier and quicker access to current case information. Future plans call for extension of the network to all District Court divisions and for all terminals to serve a data input and update function.

Up-to-date data is entered on paper forms which are picked up by a messenger, delivered for keypunching, and then entered into the system. This means a delay of several days before recorded data appears in the system. When updates can be made through the terminals, new data will be immediately available and entries can be checked for accuracy.

Plans for improving information update procedures are being developed with the help of the Superior Court Administrator and Clerks. They have tested and are using a new clerks note form in Providence/Bristol County. Use of these new notes has greatly reduced the time taken to put information on Superior Court actions into the system. This court is now also making use of information in the system to assist criminal case scheduling.

In the last half of 1978, SJIS committed its programming staff to support the development of the Family Court's model

Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS). Following the specifications of that court's consultant, and using a data base already compiled in earlier information system development efforts, SJIS programmers are designing and testing software to build and maintain automated files that will allow more efficient handling of juvenile cases. This system will also produce statistical information on juvenile caseflow. When perfected, this software will be made available to other jurisdictions nationwide as a model JJIS. A large portion of SJIS programmers' time will be devoted to this project in 1979 so it may be completed by its September deadline.

SJIS has been called upon to develop several other specific information system applications to meet special court needs. Programming tasks will begin on a statewide warrant system that by June of 1979 will automatically prepare and record all warrants issued. This will allow instantaneous checks on warrants that are cancelled. An automated jail list system is being prepared that will be updated immediately when inmates are received by the ACI or released. Plans for this system will be presented to the Superior Court for their approval, and its implementation will be coordinated with the court. The system not only will assure that any errors in carrying out detention or release orders are quickly noticed, but it will also save time now wasted in telephone calls between the prison and the courts checking on defendants' release status. Work on an information system to monitor Supreme Court caseflow in detail has begun and is proceeding ahead of schedule.

Initial staff and equipment expenses for SJIS have been supported by discretionary grants directly from LEAA, Washington. Although the project has won continuation funding from the federal government, the LEAA provides subsequent grants in reduced amounts assuming both that system operating costs will be lower than develop-

An SJS terminal in the Superior Court Criminal Scheduling Office helps track cases awaiting court action. (Photo, M. Scandon)



ment costs and that the state will begin to take on an increasing share of these costs. In 1978, some of the system's professional staff were added to the court budget and requests have been made for inclusion of the rest of the SJS staff in the next state budget.

COLLEGE TO STORE AND CATALOGUE OLD RECORDS

The Administrative Office made an agreement with the Providence College Archives to store and allow access to older court records. These records, which date from colonial times to the early 20th century, have been in dead storage at the State Records Center in the basement of the Veterans Memorial Auditorium. This new arrangement will not only provide the courts with needed additional record storage space but also preserve documents of potential historic value and make these documents more readily accessible.

Although records as old as these are not likely to be needed in court proceedings, their identity as court records is preserved in this agreement. They are still the property of the courts, and the judiciary still has control

over their use. The College Archives will index and arrange all these materials, so they can be more easily referenced. Provision will also be made for secure storage of these records.

Approximately 1000 cubic feet of space has been made available in the State Records Center by the transfer of these records. The Court Records Center in the Providence County Courthouse plans to immediately use 700 cubic feet of this space for storage of inactive records now crowding the courthouse vault.

FEDERAL GRANTS TOTAL \$545,340

During 1978, the court received 11 grants of federal assistance for specific programs. These grants were from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and represented a total commitment of \$461,840 in federal support. Continuing a trend toward reduced LEAA contributions this total is down from previous annual levels. The courts also received direct federal support from the CETA program which paid about \$83,500 so the courts could hire additional staff members on a temporary basis. Allocations to both of these programs have been cut nationally, and the Administrative Office forecasts continued reductions in this type of support for 1979.

CETA provided funds for a twelve-month program that hired four bail interviewers to assist the District Court in validating information on defendants appearing for bail determination. Although extended for three months, it is expected that the funds for this project will run out early in 1979, and it will have to be discontinued.

The titles of 11 LEAA funded court programs are listed below with short descriptions of their objectives. Additional information on the progress made in each of these programs can be found in the sections

of this report on each of the four state courts.

MICROFILM PROJECT — Gives the court equipment needed to make more extensive use of microfilm, so court records can be stored more economically and more securely.

COURT SECURITY — Provides modern electronic equipment to improve physical security for officers of the court and all persons attending court proceedings, also to increase the security of court records and documents.

JUVENILE JUSTICE INFORMATION SYSTEMS — Supports with personnel and data processing equipment the implementation of an automated system which meets the Family Courts' information needs.

JUDICIAL EDUCATION — Offers advanced training to judges, court administrators and other court staff through attendance at courses offered by the National College of the State Judiciary, the Institute of Court Management and other specialized educational institutions.

JUDICIAL PLANNING COUNCIL — Designs and aids coordinated planning for the courts and other justice system agencies.

APPELLATE PROCESS IMPLEMENTATION, PHASE I — Assists the Supreme Court with measures being taken to reduce case processing delays and to more strictly control the number of cases allowed to remain on the court's docket.

STATEWIDE JUDICIAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS — Provides the Judicial System with automated capabilities designed to meet case tracking and statistical information needs for all courts, the Department of the Attorney General and the Public Defender's Office.

SUPERIOR COURT — Funds the remodeling and refurbishing of space in the Providence County Courthouse (3rd floor) to add a thirteenth Superior Court Room.

PROVIDENCE COUNTY COURTHOUSE STUDY — Contracts for a space utilization study of the Providence County Courthouse to determine how to reorganize the present space maximizing the number of courtrooms and relocating support staff based on their functional relationships.

CHILD MONITORING — Allows a more active role of the Family Court to monitor children in placement with an innovative use of trained volunteers.

FAMILY COURT RULES OF PROCEDURE — Finances the use of professional consultants to help the Family Court develop juvenile criminal rules of procedure. This will include a review of published standards and models of juvenile procedure, juvenile rules adopted in other jurisdictions, relevant case law and federal and state statutes affecting the court.

Seated: Justices
 Eugene G. Gallant, Eugene F. Cochran, Arthur A. Carrellas, Presiding Justice Florence K. Murray, Justices William M. Mackenzie, Ronald R. Lagueux, and Anthony A. Guarnieri. Standing: Justices Corinne P. Grande, John P. Bourcier, John E. Orton, III, Francis J. Fazzano, Donald F. Shea, Thomas H. Needham, Joseph F. Rodgers, and Albert E. De Robbio. (Justices John S. McKiernan and Clifford J. Cawley, Jr. are not pictured).
 (Photo., Gunning Studio)



SUPERIOR COURT

During 1978, the Superior Court disposed of cases at a higher rate than ever before. With plans for even further increases in court activity throughout the next year, the court expects to meet goals for reduced backlogs and delays ahead of schedule. These caseflow improvements have been supported by the commitments and efforts of judges and court employees at every level.

CRIMINAL CASE DISPOSITIONS INCREASE

In March of 1978 the court instituted plans for a long range, continuous effort to increase criminal dispositions and to reduce the inventory of pending felony cases. The decision was made to give priority to new cases so they could be disposed before the 180-day limit the court has set as a goal. A commitment was also made to gradually reduce the backlog of older felony cases over an extended period of time.

Statistics from the first four months of

the court term that began in September show the success of these efforts. Monthly disposition rates for felonies increased significantly and more felony cases were tried. An examination of the age of felony cases awaiting trial at the end of the year shows that almost all new cases were disposed before they reached the 180-day limit. A reduction in the number of cases older than 180 days is also indicated. Projections from these figures predict that continued dispositions at this rate could completely eliminate the felony backlog in three years.

The Presiding Justice took several steps to implement these plans in the spring and summer of 1978. She decided that the judges assigned responsibility for calling and supervising the criminal hearing and trial calendars would be changed periodically to fairly distribute this extra duty and to give more judges experience in dealing with caseload considerations. The Superior Court Administrator was assigned additional responsibility to work with the judges calling the two criminal calendars and to direct the support operations of the Criminal Scheduling Office. The Presiding Justice also established some special calendars to reach into the inventory of pending cases and reduce backlogs.

Under the direction of the Superior Court Administrator, the Scheduling Office staff was strengthened and a new scheduling procedure was set up. A professional consultant assisted in the development of this system which also provides periodic statistical reports for judges and the Court Administrator. Equipment and programs of the Statewide Judicial Information System were provided to support on-line operation of this scheduling system.

JUSTICE MURRAY APPOINTED PRESIDING JUSTICE

Honorable Florence K. Murray was appointed Presiding Justice of the Superior Court after Justice Joseph R. Weisberger was elected to the Supreme Court. Justice Murray previously served almost 22 years as an Associate Justice on the court.

In her judicial career, Justice Murray has won wide recognition and has held leadership positions in several national professional organizations. Currently, she is on the Boards of the National Judicial College, the American Judicature Society and the Institute of Court Management. She is Secretary of the Executive Committee of the National Conference of State Trial Judges

and serves on several important committees within that organization. She is also a member of the Boston University Law School Board of Visitors, and serves on the Boards of Trustees for Syracuse University, Bryant College and Salve Regina College.

During World War II, Justice Murray served five years in the WAC, was awarded the legion of merit and attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. After the war, she served nine years on the Newport School Committee five of those years as chairman. During that time she also was elected to the State Senate for four terms. She was graduated from Syracuse University and from Boston University Law School. She is admitted to the Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Federal, Tax and Supreme Court Bars.



Presiding Justice
Florence K.
Murray
(Photo., M.
Scanlon)

STAFF MEETINGS HELD ON ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

The Presiding Justice held a series of staff meetings to discuss and implement reforms in administrative procedures. Separate meetings were held with employees at different position levels. Training seminars have also been used to help em-

ployees implement some of these reforms.

Meetings with judges have covered a wide range of topics and have allowed the institution of some new procedures. One of the major changes presented by the Presiding Justice through these meetings put the court on a full year schedule. New personnel procedures also were developed to accommodate vacation and education leave schedules to plans for full summer sessions. Another change involved the re-institution of a policy in effect several years ago that required judges to report monthly on their pending decisions. These meetings have also helped the court implement a policy of rotating judicial assignments so judges get broader experience in all court operations. Special assignments, such as representing the court at meetings of national associations or on state boards and

commissions, are also being opened to more judges on the court and where possible an individual assignment is matched to a judge's duties on the court.

Meetings also have been held with court clerks. They have covered many subjects including: uniform entries on clerk's notes, use of caseflow reporting forms, handling of court bank accounts and relations with the public. Clerks also were given a two-day seminar to help them participate fully in programs to reduce the number of pending cases on all calendars. Court stenographers and secretaries have also met regarding new arrangements to be made so they could more efficiently cover growing needs for their services.

COURT RETURNS TO BRISTOL COUNTY

Considering space problems in the Providence County Courthouse on Benefit Street and seeking ways to attack the large inventory of civil cases, the Presiding Justice decided to use the historic courthouse in Bristol again for Superior Court trials and assigned one judge to hear cases there.

In recent years, the large second floor courtroom in the Bristol County Courthouse has been used only infrequently by the Family Court. The 182 year old building once held sessions of the general assembly and is now used by the Department of Employment Security and the Bristol County Sheriff. It recently was restored and repainted.

The judge assigned to Bristol County hears cases from a special non-jury trial calendar. He is accompanied by a Principal Deputy Clerk and a court stenographer from Providence. In the first months of its operation, this new calendar has been disposing cases at an even higher rate than expected.



*The historic
Bristol County
Courthouse, re-
cently restored, is
again being used
by the Superior
Court.
(Photo., W.
Me one)*

ACTION INITIATED ON RECEIVERSHIPS

While taking action on some specific receivership cases, the Presiding Justice noticed a pattern of inaction and delay for cases of this type. Following a review of the files for pending receivership cases, 128 open cases were identified, some over 10 years old. Consequently, the Presiding Justice has set up a statewide special calendar which she has personally been calling to deal with these often complicated cases.

In the past, the Presiding Justice had sent annual letters to all the attorneys involved in open cases of this type. However, few attorneys had acted in response to these letters. With the special statewide calendar, attorneys were notified of scheduled hearings on open receiverships, and they were asked to show cause why their cases should not be closed. If the cases were allowed to remain open, a plan to conclude the receivership was required. If a conflict was present between the involved parties which needed judicial resolution, the case was moved to the civil calendar with a special priority and a reporting date for transfer back to the special calendar.

As a result of activity on this special calendar, the court achieved an accurate inventory of receiverships in all counties as of July 1978 and then closed out approximately 80% of these cases.

NEW JUDICIAL APPOINTEE IS FROM DISTRICT COURT

The Honorable Albert E. DeRobbio was appointed to the Superior Court by the Governor in 1978. As a District Court judge, he has distinguished himself by his hard work. Consequently, the Presiding Justice requested that he be immediately assigned to the Superior Court although he remained a District Court judge while awaiting Senate confirmation of his new appointment.



Justice Albert E. DeRobbio
(Photo., M. Scanlon)

Justice DeRobbio was a member of the Attorney General's Department for 10 years before he took a place on the District Court bench. He is a graduate of Boston College and Boston University Law School.

JURY MANAGEMENT IMPROVED

As programs to increase court dispositions have been put into effect, activity on the trial calendars has increased dramatically. Consequently, the court's demand for jurors also has gone up. With juror facilities already overcrowded and juror fees taking a large part of the court's budget, the Jury Commissioner has responded to this increase in demand by seeking to improve jury management methods instead of simply calling larger jury pools. By carefully monitoring the daily use of jurors by the court, he has developed ways to more efficiently use those jurors called.

The commissioner has implemented several data collection procedures that give him a constant measure of jurors serving on trials and those available for courtroom

service. This information has helped the court keep its bi-weekly call for jurors tied closely to planned court trial activity. By dismissing some jurors during lulls in trial activity, and by having other potential jurors out on call for periods of unpredicted heavy demand, the commissioner has economically accounted for short-term fluctuations in court activity without asking judges to postpone trials for lack of jurors.

Statistics collected by the Jury Commissioner are also being used to guide broader policy on criteria for the selection and qualification of jurors. Studies have been prepared on demographic characteristics of all veniremen drawn and summoned. Other studies have focused on jurors excused or those not found at their listed addresses and on those not responding to summonses. Costs of jurors have been carefully analyzed and the attitudes of jurors toward their service have been probed. The Presiding Justice has found these studies very informative and an aide to improving jury management.

Some reorganization of staff assignments within the office of the Jury Commissioner has allowed the implementation of these new methods without additional personnel. The office has also been able to completely take over control of the jury pool and relieve some sheriffs from their duties in the jury lounge. Some additional reading materials and activities have been provided for jurors who are awaiting an assignment to a courtroom.

ALTERATIONS ADD COURTROOM IN PROVIDENCE

To support efforts to increase case-flow in the busy Providence and Bristol County Superior Court, several changes have been made in the Providence County Courthouse on Benefit Street. By combining some offices and remodeling one area, a new courtroom was added with chambers for one additional judge and a study or conference room for judges assigned to other counties who must occasionally work in Providence.

The new courtroom, the 13th in the building, is on the third floor in what was formerly the Lawyers Lounge. An LEAA grant financed the remodeling needed to turn this space into a courtroom. The naturalization and accounting offices that had used part of the area were relocated to the fifth floor into rooms vacated by the Civil Assignment Office when they moved to larger quarters on the sixth floor. The Presiding Justice and other justices have used this new courtroom for several special calendars created to dispose of specific types of pending matters.

In other work on the courthouse, several judges chambers have been refurbished as part of a continuing program of maintenance and restoration.



The recently added 13th courtroom in the Providence County Courthouse furnished with surplus furniture as arrangements are made to install new courtroom furniture designed especially for this room. (Photo., M. Scan on)



Seated: Judges Michael De Ciantis (retired), Edward V. Healey, Jr., Chief Judge Edward P. Gallogly, Judges William R. Goldberg, Jacob J. Alprin. Standing: Judges Thomas F. Fay, Carmine R. DiPetrillo, Angelo G. Rossi, John K. Najarian, and Robert G. Crouchley. (Photo., Gunning Studio)

FAMILY COURT

Through the use of management statistics the court attempted to address the juvenile, domestic relations and adult caseloads of the court. By adjusting judicial schedules during a two week crash program, almost two-thirds of the cases on contested divorce calendar were reached and heard. Additional scheduling adjustments were made to the juvenile calendar, thus allowing more judicial hearing time for an increasing number of dependency / neglect filings. Organizationally, internal adjustments allowed the court to divert approximately 40% of the juvenile caseload. Within the next year the court will continue to monitor management statistics and make the necessary adjustments to stay current with its caseload.

INTAKE IMPROVED

In April the Juvenile Intake Department was reorganized after careful study of their goals and operations. All administrative and record keeping tasks were assumed by the Juvenile Clerk's Office and other changes were made to better support Intake Supervisors in their professional duties. The reforms have succeeded in helping the court handle many juvenile matters

more appropriately and more efficiently.

The Intake Department performs a vital role that is unique to a juvenile court. Because the court has a special and continuing concern for juvenile offenders referred to it, several alternative means of handling cases are available. Intake Supervisors have the responsibility and the authority to investigate each referral to make a professional judgment, within certain standards, as to

the most effective means of handling each case.

Some successful intake programs for juvenile courts in other jurisdictions were examined as models for improvements here. The best features of several of these models were used to increase the level of professional support available to Intake Supervisors. Weekly staff meetings were instituted and procedures were installed to make all the information on each case readily available. Procedures used for intake interviews or hearings were also improved, and closer contacts were formed with court and community counseling, social service, and treatment agencies.

The reorganization has resulted in close integration of the Intake Supervisors and Youth Diversionary Workers. As a result of Intake Screening, Y.D.U. workers receive cases which can utilize their talents more efficaciously. The diversion rate averages about 40%.

Implementation of this reorganization was carefully planned and all affected employees were involved in testing new procedures before they were put into effect.

DIVORCE CASES DISPOSED

During two weeks in September, six judges were assigned to hear contested divorce cases on a special calendar that resulted in over 200 dispositions. Some 300 cases were placed on this calendar to reduce the large inventory of divorce cases that had built up in Providence County. When a fire temporarily closed the courthouse in Providence where this calendar was to be called, the court shifted all these matters to Kent County, and using some courtrooms borrowed from the Superior Court, all hearings proceeded as scheduled.

Some delay is purposely built into the way contested divorce cases are tried. A waiting period of at least sixty days is required by statute to allow the parties to reconsider. Similarly the court is committed

to encourage reconciliation where appropriate and so will allow parties more time if they appear to be working out their problems. However, by the summer of 1978, an examination of the pending contested cases in Providence showed that quite a few cases had remained open for longer than the court felt was reasonable, some as long as four years.

By successfully disposing of so many older cases, the court has made possible several improvements in the operation of the contested calendar, which is now more accessible to new cases. When the parties desire, some new cases can be tried within a few months after placement on the contested calendar. Lengthy hearings on temporary motions that consider the same issues heard later in a trial can now be avoided. Some matters on the motion calendar that arise from cases that are obviously contested can be shifted quickly to the contested calendar and then heard only once on their merits before a final order is issued.

Plans for the special disposition effort in September were coordinated by the Administrative Judge, who called the enlarged calendar and assigned cases for trial to the six participating judges. The Domestic Relations Clerk's Office supported this effort by compiling the cases to be listed on the calendar, by notifying all the parties involved, and then by informing them of the move to the Kent County Courthouse. By recent amendment to the court rules, the clerks have been given the power to issue citations and subpoenas and so are better able to move the calendar and avoid delays.

A similar master calendar is planned early in 1979 for contested divorce cases in Kent County and, if necessary, another will be arranged for Providence County in the middle of the year. The court has set a goal to reach all contested cases within 120 days of filing date and plans to use master calendars when needed to help achieve this goal.

SHARP RISE IN ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES

Cases for abused and neglected children have been brought before the court in rapidly increasing numbers. In the past year additional judicial hearing time has been assigned to try these high priority matters. The increases have been attributed, not to a higher incidence of child abuse or neglect, but to tightened reporting requirements for doctors and increased public awareness of these problems.

The Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services has also responded to this increased caseload by adding another attorney to the staff that presents these cases to the court. The expanded need for attorneys to defend indigent adults charged in these matters has been met by Rhode Island Legal Services and has been financed with a grant from the United Way. Additionally, the court may appoint legal counsel for such indigent parties from a list maintained within the Juvenile Clerk's Office. As a result of these efforts, the court has managed to assure that abuse and neglect cases continue to be heard without delay.

CASA PROGRAM SUPPORTS CHILD PLACEMENTS

A new program to systematically review the care given to children placed by the court in substitute homes was started in October. As an innovative program that uses specially trained volunteers, it has been granted federal funding for at least one year. These volunteers are called Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and their use follows the model of successful programs in Seattle, Washington.

The program is run by a four-person (director, 2 staff, 1 clerk) staff based in the Providence Family Court. They seek volunteers, review volunteer applications, train those accepted into the program, then advise and assist volunteers in their services

to the court. Depending on the number of children placed by the court, the staff plans to use 200 to 300 volunteers.

Training is an important part of the CASA program. All volunteers go through a formal orientation and training program before they receive their first assignment. The professional staff members work with volunteers individually to continue their training, and periodic seminars on specific topics are held for groups of volunteers. Written reports to the court are required on each placement reviewed by a volunteer. The program teaches volunteers what to include in their reports and how to write them. The staff edits all reports and does all typing and duplication required.

The staff is also responsible for matching each child with a particular volunteer. Usually volunteers are only assigned to one child at a time. When volunteers are asked to appear at a court hearing to orally report their findings, staff is available to advise them on the legal requirements for their testimony and, if necessary, to appear with them in court.

By the end of 1978, about 100 applications had been received by the CASA program and the staff had completed initial interviews with almost 50 of these prospective volunteers.



INFORMATION SYSTEM TO BE NATIONAL MODEL

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges has chosen Rhode Island as the site for the development of a Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) that will be a model that can be used in other jurisdictions nationwide. The system will allow more rapid access to information on juvenile cases and assure that this information is quickly updated. It will also help the court schedule and consider juvenile matters without delay. This project will be financed in part with LEAA funds.

The Family Court was selected to receive funds and consultant services that will help build this model for several reasons. The Council sought a jurisdiction with a comprehensive but moderately sized caseload. They also found here the active and strong judicial leadership they felt necessary. Finally, they were impressed with the effort the court and the state judicial system had already expended in this area, and they were assured that the system would be willing and able to meet the additional demands of the model.

From their Reno, Nevada headquarters, the Council has assigned their Director of Systems and Technology to direct the project. For six years, the Director has been helping courts all over the nation use modern information and operations support systems. In the last few years under a contract with the LEAA he has developed the requirements and general framework for a model juvenile justice information system that he has described in a series of books. This contract will help finance his installation of the model system in Rhode Island by paying for equipment and some technical staff. After the model has been fully developed and proven operational, the LEAA will offer the system to other jurisdictions for their use.

The court has fully supported the

development of this model and expects to benefit from its use. The Administrative Judge has taken an active role in planning the changes necessary for the installation and use of the system. The other judges have been learning about the model and have cooperated with changes in forms and procedures that it requires. Previous work the court had done on its own to develop a system similar to the model has been adapted to serve the new project and the court has assigned one technical and one clerical employee full time to work on the model.

The Statewide Judicial Information System (SJIS) has also been assigned to support the development and installation of the Family Court model system. Because of the priority given to the model, SJIS programmers will devote most of their time for one year to creating software for this project.

The model system is scheduled to begin operation by September of 1979. The special privacy requirements for juvenile records have been recognized in system plans, and the same access restrictions that now apply to paper files will apply to information on specific juvenile cases stored in computer files.

RETIRED VETERAN JUDGE IS SUCCEEDED BY JUDGE FAY

After serving on the Family Court for over 16 years, Judge Michael DeCiantis retired in January, 1978. He was appointed as one of the original five judges who established this court in 1961. Before taking his position on the bench, Judge DeCiantis had a long career of public service as an attorney for the Town of West Warwick, the State Unemployment Compensation Board, the Division of Public Utilities, and the Attorney General.

The Honorable Thomas F. Fay was appointed and confirmed as a Family Court judge to fill the position vacated by Judge DeCiantis. Judge Fay, as an attorney and

legislator, has long been concerned with the state courts and involved in efforts to improve them. He served for ten years in the State House of Representatives and chaired that body's Judiciary Committee as well as other committees concerned with specific legal or justice system issues. A practicing attorney since 1966, he came to specialize in domestic relations cases and served on the State Bar Association's Family Court Bench-Bar Committee.

A graduate of Providence College, Judge Fay received his law degree from Boston University Law School.

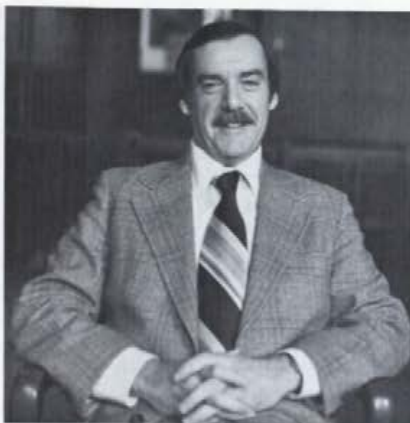
FIRE ALLOWS BETTER OFFICE ARRANGEMENT

Near the end of July a fire destroyed part of the upper floor of the old school building that houses the Family Court in Providence. Although Education Department offices on that floor were completely burned out, Providence firefighters kept the flames from spreading to the lower floors used by the court. However, there was considerable smoke and water damage to court offices. The fire also made it impossible to immediately secure the building.

Court records and equipment were quickly moved to temporary quarters in the old factory buildings of the Capital Industrial Complex (CIC). Some water-soaked files had to be specially freeze dried to avoid the complete loss of vital court records. After an interruption of only a few days, court operations resumed out of offices in the CIC and courtrooms borrowed from other state Courts.

In order to allow the Family Court back into their building as quickly as possible, the state decided to postpone any major repair of the fire damage. Instead, burned out areas were stripped and sealed off. The entire building was then cleaned and repainted. New, lighter colored flooring was added on the first floor.

The court planned its return carefully.



Judge Thomas F. Fay
(Photo., M. Scanlon)

In the past years, as the court expanded, it was forced to use whatever space was available and, consequently, some offices were split between different floors. These offices were rejoined and related offices were located together when they were moved back into the Hayes Street Building. Office layouts were also improved and some remodeling was done. Some of these improvements were made possible because the court gained some office space vacated by the Education Department.

NEW RULES DRAFTED

A final draft of new court rules of procedure was submitted in December. Written by consultants from Boston University Law School with the advice of a committee of judges and attorneys, these rules govern domestic relations matters. They are the product of over a year's work and have been reviewed in detail by the judges of the court.

The full draft has been submitted to both a legislative oversight committee chaired by Representative Maurice Caron and a committee of the Rhode Island Bar Association for comment. The proposed

rules will be sent to the Supreme Court whose approval is required before they can take effect. This is expected to happen by summer of 1979.

ALCOHOLISM/DRUG AWARENESS ENCOURAGED

The staff of the court's Alcohol Counseling Unit has developed an Alcoholism Awareness Program that uses lectures, films, and discussions to help educate the public on the nature of alcohol and other substance abuse. The program offers free, two-hour long evening sessions every Monday. Participants include juveniles and adults referred by the Family Court or other state agencies because they have been identified as having potential alcohol and/or drug abuse problems. Anyone interested in the subject is welcome, and the program uses a brochure and personal contact to encourage attendance.

Registrations for these sessions are taken by the Alcohol Counseling Unit, and the program is run on a voluntary basis by the counselors of this Unit. Attendance is usually limited to 8 or 10 participants and the full course extends over two Monday evenings. Separate sessions are offered for juveniles and adults.

NEW BUILDING PLANNED TO COURT'S NEEDS

The Family Court will be one of the major tenants in the new Judicial Complex to be built in Providence by the Public Building Authority (PBA). Although the Authority will finance this building and is in complete charge of its construction, the architects hired by the PBA have been working closely with the courts and agencies that will occupy the facility.

The court has long been aware of the inadequacies of the former school building on Hayes Street that it now occupies. Several studies have been done documenting these problems and specifying the court's space needs. Consequently, the Family Court was able to provide the architects with detailed facility requirements.

As the architects developed their plans for the complex, they were submitted to the court and reviewed by the Chief Judge, the Administrative Judge and office heads at each state in the design process. Recommendations that came out of these reviews were usually incorporated into succeeding plans. Through this process, the architects have tried to respond to the unique space and security requirements of the Family Court including the special arrangements needed for juveniles.



Seated: Judges Antonio S. Almeida, Edward J. Plunkett, Walter R. Orme, Chief Judge Henry E. Laliberte, Judges Charles F. Trumpetto, Orist D. Chaharm, Paul J. Del Nero. Standing: Judges Albert E. De Robbio (appointed to the Superior Court), Victor J. Beretta, Anthony J. Dennis, Francis M. Kiely, Robert J. McOsker, Vincent A. Ragosta. (Photo., Gunning Studio)

DISTRICT COURT

The District Court accomplished one of its major goals in 1978 by attaining its objective in disposing of misdemeanor cases within 90 days of filing. Also during 1978, the jurisdiction of the District Court was enlarged to include certain equity powers. In administrative matters, the Court has become the first to provide an operations manual for its clerks and office personnel, and a bail interview project for defendants was initiated using temporary CETA personnel.

MISDEMEANORS DISPOSED WITHIN 90 DAYS

By the end of 1978 the District Court substantially achieved the goal set in the previous year for the disposition of misdemeanor cases within 90 days of filing. To meet this goal, the court took the initiative in scheduling criminal cases and adopted an automatic scheduling procedure. Special efforts were devoted to the disposition of

older cases, and judges and court employees made individual contributions that were vital to this achievement.

From the end of 1977 to December 31, 1978, the number of misdemeanor cases pending over 90 days was reduced by over 1,000, to a figure that represented only 1% of the total misdemeanors filed during the year. Similar progress was made in reducing the number of felony cases pending District Court action over 90 days.

Progress in the disposing of criminal cases was not made at the expense of activity on civil cases. Total civil dispositions in 1978 were 7% higher than the previous year.

MORE ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY CASES FILED

The District Court has now exercised judicial review over administrative agency procedures for two full years. The court has been working to handle this additional caseload as efficiently as possible, since these matters are being brought to court at an increasing rate. In 1978 the court received 362 new administrative agency cases or about 30 cases for each sitting judge.

All these matters are filed at the Sixth Division. Memorandums are requested from the parties and the necessary transcripts or records are assembled. Cases are assigned on a rotating basis to all District Court judges for written decisions.

The court has instituted a change in procedure for these matters that has achieved considerable savings of time and money. Typed transcripts are no longer required for cases that originate at the Division of Motor Vehicles where proceedings are recorded on tape cassettes. Since the District Court uses similar tape transcripts, judges are accustomed to working directly from cassette records. As the majority of all administrative agency cases come from the Division of Motor Vehicles, this procedural change has had a large impact.

RULES AMENDED TO INCLUDE EQUITY POWERS

The District Court amended its rules of civil procedure to specify the use of limited equity power given to the court under recent legislation expanding its jurisdiction. Until 1976 the District Court did not possess ordinary equitable power to issue injunctions or orders on the performance of particular acts. Then, a 1976 statute trans-

ferred judicial authority over various proceedings in administrative agencies from the Superior Court to the District Court. This gave the court equity power to enforce subpoenas and other orders required in these proceedings. Legislation passed in 1977 gave the court jurisdiction over the enforcement of the Housing Maintenance and Occupancy Code and authorized it to exercise equity powers to restrain actions in violation of the code or to order actions correcting violations.

The additions made to the rules are patterned after the appropriate Superior Court Rules except where it was necessary to take specific notice of the differences in the courts' jurisdictions. Rule 65 was amended to specify procedures used in actions seeking equitable relief for violations of minimum housing standards. Rule 70 merely makes explicit the court's power to find a party in contempt for failing to comply with an order to perform or refrain from performing some act.

The amended rules will be submitted to the Supreme Court for their study and approval at the beginning of 1979.

MANUALS DISTRIBUTED AND UPDATED

An Operations Manual for District Court clerks and office personnel was distributed to all eight divisions early in 1978. The Manual was prepared by consultants from the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) and was introduced to court employees in two workshops conducted by these consultants. This publication is designed to assist in training new employees, to help all staff members handle new or unusual assignments, and to allow the court to establish more uniform administrative procedures among all divisions.

The NCSC consultants wrote the manual after interviewing judges, clerks, and other court employees. They submitted preliminary drafts to a committee of court

staff members for correction and approval. A looseleaf format was used to allow easy changes and updates. The court is committed to keeping the information in the manual as current as possible and a committee assigned to correct and update the manual has met throughout the year to review the whole book. One set of changes has already been issued to all manual users and more are planned.

The NCSC has prepared clerk's manuals and judge's benchbooks for other courts in New England and nationwide. Their consulting services were paid for with an LEAA grant.

NEW COMPLEX TO HOUSE SIXTH DIVISION

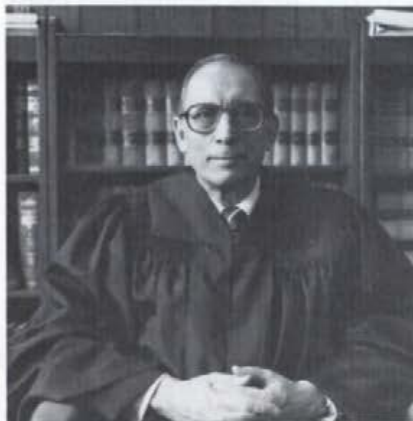
The Sixth Division of the District Court will occupy part of the new Judicial Complex to be built in Providence by the Public Building Authority (PBA). The District Court has joined with the Family Court, which will also be located in this complex, and the Administrative Office of the State Courts, to assist the PBA and its architects plan a building that will meet security and space needs that are unique to courts.

The PBA will finance and construct the complex which will then be rented to the state for the use of the courts. From the project's inception, the Authority has involved the courts in the design of the building they will occupy. The District Court's space needs were studied and specified by a consultant hired to provide the PBA's architect with general design considerations for the complex. At several stages in the design process, meetings were held with the Chief Judge and other representatives of the District Court so the architect's plans could be discussed and commented upon. Changes requested by the court were usually incorporated in subsequent designs.

Representatives of the court are satisfied that the final plans meet their needs

as completely as possible within the construction cost limits set by the PBA. Security arrangements in the complex will much improve on what is possible in the remodeled factory building now rented for the Sixth Division. The new design provides controlled access to some areas, and for internal movement separates prisoners, court personnel and judges from each other and from the general public.

WELL-KNOWN ATTORNEY APPOINTED TO COURT



Judge Vincent A. Ragosta
(Photo: M. Scanlon)

The Honorable Vincent A. Ragosta was appointed and confirmed as a judge of the District Court. He takes a position on that court made vacant when Justice Corinne P. Grande was appointed to the Superior Court in 1977. Judge Ragosta had practiced law as a trial attorney for almost 27 years. He served 13 years as Assistant City Solicitor for Providence, first as City Prosecutor and then as attorney for the city. In these roles, he handled diverse cases and appeared in state and federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court.

As an active member of the Rhode Island Bar Association, Judge Ragosta had

served on many committees and commissions and was a member of the Association's Executive Committee and House of Delegates. He has also been active in community affairs and has held positions in many community and service organizations.

BAIL PROJECT INTERVIEWED DEFENDANTS

During 1978 a pilot program provided District Court judges with extensive, verified information on defendants prior to their appearance for bail determination. CETA funds were used to hire four interviewers for this program. Their reports helped judges direct their questioning of defendants at bail

hearings. The court's experience with the program will help its consideration of recent proposals for changes in procedures used to determine bail.

Interviewers used standard forms to gather information on persons held by police for court arraignments. Statements made by defendants were investigated and verified by the interviewers. Despite the problems involved in interviewing defendants in police custody, the program staff successfully gathered the required information. Police departments were generally cooperative, and the interviewers agreed to constraints necessary to preserve security. Defendant responses were completely voluntary but most answered all questions.

COURT DIRECTORY

SUPREME COURT JUSTICES:

JOSEPH A. BEVILACQUA, Chief Justice
 ALFRED H. JOSLIN, Associate Justice
 THOMAS F. KELLEHER, Associate Justice
 JOHN F. DORIS, Associate Justice
 JOSEPH R. WEISBERGER, Associate Justice

SUPERIOR COURT JUSTICES:

FLORENCE K. MURRAY, Presiding Justice
 JOHN S. McKIERNAN, Associate Justice
 ARTHUR A. CARRELLAS, Associate Justice
 WILLIAM M. MACKENZIE, Associate Justice
 EUGENE F. COCHRAN, Associate Justice
 RONALD R. LAGUEUX, Associate Justice
 EUGENE G. GALLANT, Associate Justice
 ANTHONY A. GIANNINI, Associate Justice
 FRANCIS J. FAZZANO, Associate Justice
 DONALD F. SHEA, Associate Justice
 JOHN E. ORTON, III, Associate Justice
 THOMAS H. NEEDHAM, Associate Justice
 JOHN P. BOURCIER, Associate Justice
 JOSEPH F. RODGERS, JR., Associate Justice
 CLIFFORD J. CAWLEY, JR., Associate Justice
 CORINNE P. GRANDE, Associate Justice
 ALBERT E. DeROBBIO, Associate Justice

FAMILY COURT JUDGES:

EDWARD P. GALLOGLY, Chief Judge
 EDWARD V. HEALEY, JR., Associate Judge
 WILLIAM R. GOLDBERG, Associate Judge
 JACOB J. ALPRIN, Associate Judge
 CARMINE R. DIPETRILLO, Associate Judge
 ANGELO G. ROSSI, Associate Judge
 ROBERT G. CROUCHLEY, Associate Judge
 JOHN K. NAJARIAN, Associate Judge
 THOMAS F. FAY, Associate Judge

DISTRICT COURT JUDGES:

HENRY E. LALIBERTE, Chief Judge
 ANTONIO S. ALMEIDA, Associate Judge
 ORIST D. CHAHARYN, Associate Judge
 PAUL J. DEL NERO, Associate Judge
 ANTHONY J. DENNIS, Associate Judge
 FRANCIS M. KIELY, Associate Judge
 WALTER R. ORME, Associate Judge
 EDWARD J. PLUNKETT, Associate Judge
 CHARLES F. TRUMPETTO, Associate Judge
 VICTOR J. BERETTA, Associate Judge
 ROBERT J. McOSKER, Associate Judge
 VINCENT A. RAGOSTA, Associate Judge
 JOHN J. CAPPELLI, Associate Judge

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

SUPREME COURT:

250 Benefit St., Providence, R. I.

Walter J. Kane, Administrator,
 State Courts/Clerk 277-3272
 Ronald A. Tutalo, Administrative
 Asst. to Chief Justice 277-3073
 Robert C. Harrall, Deputy Administrator,
 State Courts 277-3266
 Brian B. Burns, Chief Deputy Clerk 277-3272
 John J. Manning, Business Manager 277-3266
 Edward P. Barlow, State Law Librarian 277-3275
 Sophie D. Pfeiffer, Chief Appellate
 Screening Unit 277-3297
 C. Leonard O'Brien, Coordinator, Judicial
 Planning Unit 277-3382
 Ronald R. LaChance, Director, S.J.I.S. 277-3358
 Thomas A. Dorazio, E.E.O. Officer 277-3266

SUPERIOR COURT:

250 Benefit St., Providence, R.I.

John J. Hogan, Administrator 277-3215
 Joseph Q. Calista, Clerk 277-3250
 Alfred Travers, Jr., Jury Commissioner 277-3245
 Charles Garganese, Civil Assignment
 Clerk 277-3225
 Thomas P. McGann, Public Contact
 Officer 277-3292
 Bonnie L. Williamson, Criminal
 Scheduling Office 277-3602

KENT COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

Thomas M. Mooty, Clerk 822-1311
 222 Quaker Lane
 West Warwick, R. I. 02893

WASHINGTON COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

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

NEWPORT COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

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

FAMILY COURT:

22 Hayes St., Providence, R. I.

Charles E. Joyce, Administrator/Clerk 277-3331
 Joseph D. Butler, Deputy Court Administrator 277-3334
 John J. O'Brien, Jr., Master 277-3360
 Dolores M. Murphy, Chief Juvenile Intake Supervisor 277-3345
 Howard F. Foley, Chief Family Counsellor 277-3362
 Raymond J. Gibbons, Supervisor of Collections 277-3356
 J. William McGovern, Fiscal Officer 277-3300
 William L. Doherty, Chief Deputy Clerk (Domestic Relations) 277-3340
 Joseph Squicciarino, Deputy Clerk (Juvenile) 277-3352
 Chester G. Lupton, Court Appointed Special Advocate 277-6863

DISTRICT COURT:**SIXTH DIVISION DISTRICT COURT**

345 Harris Avenue
 Providence, R. I. 02909
 Raymond D. George, Chief Clerk 331-1603
 Joseph Senerchia, Administrative Assistant to Chief Judge 331-1603

JUDICIAL COUNCIL:

40 Westminster Street
 Providence, R. I. 02903
 Patrick O'N. Hayes, Chairman
 Melvin L. Zurier, Secretary 751-2400

FIRST DIVISION DISTRICT COURT

Gerald L. Bonenfant, Deputy Clerk 245-7977
 516 Main Street
 Warren, R. I. 02885

SECOND DIVISION DISTRICT COURT

Francis W. Donnelly, Deputy Clerk 846-6500
 Eisenhower Square
 Newport, R. I. 02840

THIRD DIVISION DISTRICT COURT

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

FOURTH DIVISION DISTRICT COURT

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

FIFTH DIVISION DISTRICT COURT

Edward T. Dalton, Deputy Clerk 722-1024
 145 Roosevelt Avenue
 Pawtucket, R. I. 02865

SEVENTH DIVISION DISTRICT COURT

Paul A. Plante, Deputy Clerk 762-2700
 Front Street
 Woonsocket, R. I. 02895

EIGHTH DIVISION DISTRICT COURT

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

DISCIPLINARY BOARD:

250 Benefit Street
 Providence, R. I. 02903
 Lester H. Salter, Chairman
 Frank H. Carter, Disciplinary Counsel 277-3270

CASELOAD STATISTICS

RHODE ISLAND SUPREME COURT

ANNUAL CASELOAD*	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Cases on docket at start	311	326	355	447	516
New cases docketed	345	355	422	438	460
Cases disposed	330	326	330	364	418
Cases remaining of docket	326	355	447	521	558

TYPES OF CASES FILED	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Civil Actions	125	157	146	175	148
Criminal Actions	49	52	61	51	82
Certiorari	83	76	105	96	113
Family Court	23	18	35	32	31
Habeas Corpus	16	10	31	24	17
Workmen's Compensation	16	13	16	34	26
Other	33	29	28	26	43
TOTAL	345	355	422	438	460

*Collected for the court year which runs October 1 to September 30.

RHODE ISLAND SUPERIOR COURT

CASES FILED	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
PROVIDENCE/BRISTOL					
Civil	3,672	4,376	4,431	3,974	4,055
Probate Appeals	24	45	26	46	42
Misc. Petitions	492	680	689	654	511
Indictments/Information	1,649	1,638	1,455	1,689	1,590
Criminal Appeals	770	821	654	536	494
TOTALS	<u>6,607</u>	<u>7,560</u>	<u>7,255</u>	<u>6,899</u>	<u>6,692</u>
KENT					
Civil	514	616	721	875	917
Probate Appeals	15	29	11	5	10
Misc. Petitions	91	99	108	70	40
Indictments/Informations	292	327	388	318	479
Criminal Appeals	146	168	177	147	185
TOTALS	<u>1,058</u>	<u>1,239</u>	<u>1,405</u>	<u>1,415</u>	<u>1,631</u>
NEWPORT					
Civil	233	310	299	308	327
Probate Appeals	4	3	3	4	3
Misc. Petitions	45	31	54	17	33
Indictments/Informations	307	179	164	140	154
Criminal Appeals	113	121	204	115	87
TOTALS	<u>702</u>	<u>644</u>	<u>724</u>	<u>584</u>	<u>604</u>
WASHINGTON					
Civil	302	287	348	354	378
Probate Appeals	5	10	12	6	8
Misc. Petitions	38	56	31	28	29
Indictments/Informations	203	230	152	120	173
Criminal Appeals	177	181	83	88	88
TOTALS	<u>725</u>	<u>764</u>	<u>626</u>	<u>596</u>	<u>676</u>
ALL COUNTIES					
Civil	4,721	5,589	5,799	5,511	5,677
Probate Appeals	48	87	52	61	63
Misc. Petitions	666	866	882	769	613
Indictments/Informations	2,451	2,374	2,159	2,267	2,396
Criminal Appeals	1,206	1,291	1,118	886	854
STATE TOTALS	<u>9,092</u>	<u>10,207</u>	<u>10,101</u>	<u>9,494</u>	<u>9,603</u>

RHODE ISLAND FAMILY COURT

DIVORCE PETITIONS FILED	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
COUNTIES					
Providence/Bristol	3,070	2,524	3,119	3,167	2,849
Kent	818	687	828	924	796
Newport	428	456	283	524	428
Washington	421	482	497	481	496
STATE TOTAL	4,737	4,149	4,727	5,096	4,569

JUVENILE PETITIONS	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Wayward/Delinquent	7,290*	7,072*	6,587	6,232	6,400
Dependency, Neglect & Abuse	211	296	340	254	420
Child Marriages (couples)	94	100	69	59	28
Adoptions	456	403	348	418	431
Termination of Parental Rights	138	138	111	133	134
Other	25	11	26	44	40
TOTAL	8,214	8,020	7,481	7,150	7,452

JUVENILE REFERRALS	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
COUNTIES					
Providence/Bristol	3,310	2,648	2,262	2,175	2,575
Kent	1,140	1,111	896	813	798
Newport	366	320	357	362	536
Washington	413	289	255	276	358
STATE TOTAL	5,229	4,368	3,770	3,626	4,267

*Figures for these years include minor motor vehicle violations now handled by the Administrative Adjudication Division of the Department of Transportation.

N. B. Beginning in 1978, juvenile statistics were collected with a new automated system, and although generally comparable with statistics for previous years, there are some differences.

RHODE ISLAND DISTRICT COURT

CRIMINAL CASEFLOW	1974*	1975*	1976	1977	1978
MISDEMEANOR					
Arraignments	44,289	36,535	22,365	23,211	25,545
Dispositions	42,837	35,703	22,081	25,881	26,954
Backlog Increase/Decrease	1,452	832	284	-2,670	-1,409
Appeals	449	544	410	285	291
FELONY					
Arraignments	7,107	6,732	6,392	6,907	5,912
Dispositions	3,947	6,744	6,108	8,339	7,192
Backlog Increase/Decrease	3,160	-12	284	-1,432	-1,280
CIVIL ACTIONS					
	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
FILINGS					
Small Claims	10,607	12,107	9,062	6,058	6,802
Regular Civil	20,610	21,228	19,964	22,430	22,394
TOTAL	31,217	33,335	29,026	28,488	29,196
DISPOSITIONS					
Small Claims					
Hearing Judgments	717	706	631	547	622
Defaults & Settlements	3,471	5,906	5,688	3,728	4,760
TOTAL	4,188	6,612	6,319	4,275	5,382
Regular Civil					
Trial Judgments	1,303	1,539	2,947	2,999	2,741
Defaults & Stipulations	13,967	11,901	12,484	13,971	14,672
TOTAL	15,270	13,440	15,431	16,970	17,413
Appeals	350	445	489	543	442

*Figures for these years include minor motor vehicle violations now handled by the Administrative Adjudication Division of the Department of Transportation.