



2012 Annual Report

46th District Court

26000 Evergreen

Southfield, MI 48076

www.46thdistrictcourt.com



STATE OF MICHIGAN
46th DISTRICT COURT

Dear Citizens:

We are very pleased submit the 46th District Court's 2012 *Annual Report* to you. This report, published annually since 1987, documents the activities and accomplishments of the Court during the past year and provides you with useful information about court operations in general. We understand our responsibility to be accountable to those we serve and have found our annual report to be an excellent way to improve the public's understanding of and appreciation for the administration of justice.

In these difficult economic times, it is particularly important that we emphasize our commitment to using taxpayer dollars wisely. Over the years, the Judges and staff of the 46th District Court have focused on maintaining a high standard of public service by increasing productivity through internal operational and procedural improvements. These improvements allowed us to handle significant increases in caseload and workload over the years without increasing the number of judges and staff. Compared to 35 years ago, the 46th District Court is handling more than twice the number of cases per year with the same number of judges and the fewer total court staff. We feel this level of performance is extraordinary for any organization--public or private.

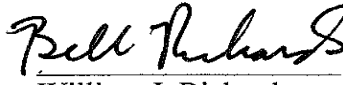
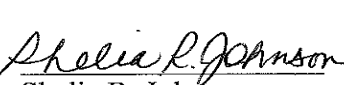

In terms of case flow management, the Court continues to operate in a highly efficient manner with a 100% clearance rate and effectively meeting or exceeding most of the Supreme Court's case processing time guidelines. Our collections program, now in its tenth year, generated \$824,798 from unpaid tickets, bringing the total collected since the program began to \$5,817,201. For this first time this year, the Court launched a state income tax garnishment project to collect outstanding funds owed to the Court on civil infraction and misdemeanor cases. As of the date of this report, over \$59,000 has been collected.

In response to concerns about the increasing number of domestic violence cases, and recognizing the unique risk of harm posed by such cases, the Court started an intensive domestic violation probation program in May of 2012. With intensive oversight, long term counseling and education, and regular judicial review, it is hoped that this program will help break the cycle of violence.

As always, we extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the entire staff of the 46th District Court. Their commitment to public service, professionalism and teamwork has created an organizational culture that supports continuous improvements and allows us to function as a high-performing court.

We fully understand and accept our responsibility to uphold the highest standard of public service, ensure the efficient and effective use of public funds and increase the public's understanding and appreciation of the administration of justice. We look forward to working together for the continued fair, efficient and effective administration of justice in our community.

Very truly yours,

		
William J. Richards Chief Judge	Shelia R. Johnson District Judge	Debra Nance District Judge

Judges of the 46th District Court



Judge Shelia R. Johnson was elected in November 2002 and is the first African American to serve as Judge in the 46th District Court. In November 2008, she was re-elected for an unopposed second term. Judge Johnson was also selected as a 2012 Democratic nominee for candidacy for Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court. Prior to assuming the bench, Judge Johnson was an attorney with over 18 years of legal experience in both State and Federal Courts. Judge Johnson was in private practice in Southfield where she specialized in both civil and criminal litigation.

Among her community and civic affiliations are: the Southern Oakland Chapter of the NAACP, where she serves as an Executive Committee member; founding member, Southfield Community Foundation Women's Fund; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Task Force, Inc.; Southfield Lathrup Optimist Club; Western International Optimist Club and Integrative Human Services, a non-profit organization which helps at-risk youth and families, where she also served on the board. Additionally she is a member of Hope United Methodist Church where she has served as vice-chair and chair of the "Church and Society Ministry." Judge Johnson has also established a "Court in Schools" Program, where court sessions are held at local schools with the goal of deterring youth from criminal behavior and inspiring them toward positive career choices. Judge Johnson is the recipient of numerous community service awards, including the 2013 Women of Excellence Award from the Michigan Chronicle newspaper, the 2013 Trailblazer Award from the D. Augustus Straker Bar Association, the 2005 Phenomenal Woman "Torch Award" for outstanding legal leadership and community service by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Southfield Alumnae Chapter, the 2006 "Member of the Year" award from the Southern Oakland County NAACP for her work as chair of the "Health Committee," the 2008 Powerful Woman of Purpose Award in the Legal Profession from the Rhonda Walker Foundation and most recently the 2009 Mattie Belle Davis Award from the National Association of Women Judges. She has also been recognized in Who's Who Publishing Company's volume of "Black Judges in America."

Judge Johnson is a member of the State Bar, Oakland County District Judges Association, Association of Black Judges of Michigan, D. Augustus Straker Bar Association, Wolverine Bar Association, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan, Black Women Lawyers Association of Michigan and the National Bar Association. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Michigan District Judges Association, and she is a former member of the Executive Committee of the Judicial Council of the National Bar Association and the Equal Access Initiative of the Committee on Justice Initiatives of the State Bar of Michigan. Judge Johnson is also a former President of the Association of Black Judges of Michigan and former Vice President of Publications and board Member of the National Association of Women Judges, where she was editor of the national newsletter "Counterbalance."

Judge Johnson is a former law clerk to the Honorable Benjamin F. Gibson, United States District Court, Western District of Michigan. She is a graduate of Dartmouth College and the University of Michigan Law School, where she was the first African American elected President of the Law School Senate and delivered the commencement address to her graduating class. She has been a resident of Southfield for 26 years.



Judge Debra Nance was elected to the bench on November 6, 2012. She began a six-year term as Judge of the 46th District Court on January 1, 2013. Judge Nance received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Detroit. She began her professional career as an Assistant Personnel Manager at the Hudson’s Northland Store before serving as Personnel Superintendent for several other Hudson’s Department Stores throughout Michigan. She has also worked in various Human Resource capacities in the automotive market prior to launching her legal career.

Judge Nance began her career as an attorney after obtaining a law degree from Wayne State University Law School. She worked on assignment to the Office of the General Counsel at Ford Motor Company, and gained invaluable experience while working in the Oakland County Prosecutor’s Domestic Violence Unit and the Wayne County Prosecutor’s Child & Family Abuse Bureau. In 2001, she went into private practice at the Kemp Klein Law Firm where she developed a successful litigation practice in the areas of Civil Litigation, Probate Litigation, Juvenile & Family Litigation and Adoption Law.

In service to the community, Judge Nance has volunteered in numerous projects. She worked to make legal information accessible to those in the community by volunteering at free legal aid clinics. She worked to educate our youth by participating in the 50th Anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* Project in Southfield Public Schools. She has supported organizations such as the Women’s Survival Center of Oakland County and Creating Independence and Outcomes (CIAO) for foster care children. She worked as an “Election Protection Attorney” and poll watcher in a number of elections to ensure the fairness and integrity of the election process. Judge Nance has also worked as a Volunteer Attorney Mediator for small claims, consumer and commercial disputes, and landlord/tenant matters in District Court.

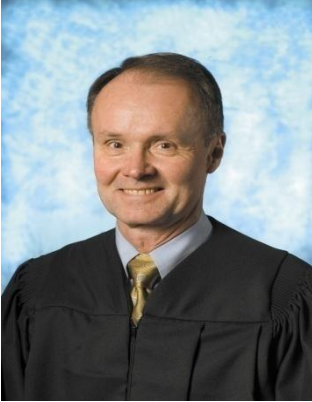
In service to the legal community, Judge Nance lectured to lawyers at the Institute of Continuing Legal Education, and has lectured to law students at Cooley Law and the University of Michigan Law School. Active in various bar associations, she served as a Board Member for the D. Augustus Straker Bar Association, was selected to serve on the Oakland County Bar Association Judicial Candidates Committee, and has been a long-serving member of the Adoption subcommittee of the Family Law Division of the Michigan State Bar Association. Prior to taking the bench Judge Nance was appointed to serve on the Michigan State Bar Character & Fitness Committee which reviews the suitability of law graduates seeking to obtain a license to practice in Michigan.

Judge Nance has lived in Southfield for over 30 years. She remains active in the community and looks forward to a term of continuing service.

Welcome, Judge Debra Nance

The Judges, Magistrates and Staff of the
46th District Court extend a warm welcome
to Judge Debra Nance.

Judges of the 46th District Court



Chief Judge of the 46th District Court, the Honorable Bill Richards was appointed to the 46th District Court in 2007 by Governor Jennifer Granholm. In 2008, voters elected him to a two-year term. In 2010, voters re-elected him to a full six-year term.

Judge Richards is a longtime local resident with a distinguished career in government, teaching and private practice. He is the former Deputy Attorney General, the principal deputy to the Michigan Attorney General (1999-2002), and former Assistant U.S. Attorney (1989-1998), where he prosecuted public corruption and drug crimes. In the U.S. Attorney's Office, he served as ethics officer for nine years. Earlier, he was a staff attorney in the Federal Defender Office and law clerk to U.S. District Judge Cornelia Kennedy.

Judge Richards has taught advanced criminal procedure at Cooley Law School. He is the former President of Oakland-Livingston Legal Aid, where he helped provide free legal aid to the poor and seniors. Judge Richards is a member of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Task Force, a Judge in the National Black Law Students Association Annual Moot Court competition, and a mentor in the Volunteers in Prevention – VIP – program for youth. He was a volunteer fundraiser for the Susan Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. He serves on the board for GreenPath, a non-profit credit counseling agency. He is a member of First Congregational Church.

Bill Richards earned both his bachelor's degree and his law degree from the University of Michigan. Judge Richards and his wife Joan have been married for 43 years and have two daughters, Jennifer and Kristin, and two grandchildren.

Jurisdiction

Geographical Jurisdiction – The 46th District Court serves the cities of Southfield and Lathrup Village, the Villages of Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms and Franklin and the Township of Southfield.

Legal Jurisdiction – District Courts were established by the Michigan Legislature in 1968 and are considered "Courts of Limited Jurisdiction." The legal jurisdiction of the 46th District Court is determined by statute and includes:

- **Civil** lawsuits in which the amount in controversy does not exceed \$25,000 (a civil lawsuit is a non-criminal case which involves the claim of one party against another).
- **Criminal misdemeanors** punishable by fine or imprisonment not exceeding one year, or both.
- **Arraignments:** the setting and acceptance of bail.
- **Preliminary examinations** in all felony cases. A preliminary examination is a hearing at which the District Court Judge determines if there is probable cause to believe a crime has been committed and that the defendant committed the crime. If the Judge determines that there is probable cause, the case is "bound over" to the Circuit Court for trial.
- **Traffic misdemeanors and civil infractions**, including parking violations.
- **Small claims** cases in which the amount claimed does not exceed \$5,000 (increased from \$3,000, effective 9-1-12).
- **Landlord-tenant disputes**, land contract and mortgage forfeitures and eviction proceedings.

Special Programs and Services

Court Website – The 46th District Court’s website gives citizens a closer look at the Court and the services it provides. The website provides information on hours and location; judges, magistrates and staff; jury duty; fines and costs; filing a small claims case; special programs offered by the Court and copies of our Annual Report. Please visit us on the web at www.46thdistrictcourt.com.

Small Claims Mediation Program – The Court provides a Small Claims Mediation Program to assist the Court and the public in resolving small claims disputes. Unlike litigation, where one party wins and one loses, mediation helps parties reach their own mutually-satisfactory resolution in a non-adversarial manner. The Court uses trained community volunteers from the Oakland Mediation Center to provide mediation services. The 46th District Court’s Mediation Program has been a model for other courts across the state. In 2012, the Oakland Mediation Center handled 272 small claims cases and resolved 133, or 49% of them.

General Civil In Pro Per Mediation Program – The Court also utilizes the Oakland Mediation Center’s mediation services in general civil cases where one or both parties are not represented by an attorney. In 2012, mediators from the Center handled 297 general civil cases and resolved 108, or 36% of them. The Oakland Mediation Center has also mediated landlord-tenant cases referred to them by the Court.

Community Work Program – The Work Program provides the Judges with a sentencing alternative. The Program allows low-risk misdemeanor offenders to perform manual labor instead of incarceration. The offenders pay the Court’s cost for supervision and are assigned to work projects in the City of Southfield’s Public Works, Code Compliance and Parks and Recreation Departments. Specific work projects include collecting trash on our community’s streets and highways and general maintenance projects. Forty-two (42) defendants participated in the Work Program in 2012, completing 1,456 hours of work—a 10% increase over 2011.

Community Service Program – This sentencing alternative provides Judges with the opportunity to order offenders to work in the community as part of their sentence or instead of fines and costs, if they are indigent. Placements are found in governmental or community non-profit agencies and are supervised by the Probation Department. There were 34,151 hours of community service completed in 2012. Lutrell Coleman is the Community Service Coordinator and is responsible for interviewing, placing and monitoring approximately 320 probationers performing community service.

Law Day Program – Each year, May 1st is proclaimed “Law Day” to encourage citizens to learn about their rights and our legal system. Throughout the year, 46th District Court Judges speak at schools and community organizations and participate in a variety of programs, including Bar Association events and educational programs for attorneys and the general public.

Security/Weapons Screening – A Security/Weapons Screening Program checks individuals entering the Court. Services are provided by G4S Secure Solutions, Inc. During 2012, 106,393 people (431 per day) went through the Court’s security screening system.

Community Education Program – The Court encourages the community to learn more about its operation and jurisdiction through special educational tours and visits. Visiting groups receive an orientation on local court operations, take a tour of the facility, observe courtroom proceedings and meet with the Judges, if time allows. Numerous community groups visited the Court in 2012, ranging from students in kindergarten through high school as well as various community and civic organizations. (For more information, call 248-796-5800.)

Caseload/Workload Overview

Pending and Disposed Cases – As of January 1, 2012, there were 8,335 cases pending. During the year, there were 55,980 new cases filed, 3,477 cases reopened and 59,423 cases disposed, resulting in an ending pending caseload of 8,369 as of December 31, 2012.

	Beginning Pending	New Filings	Reopened Cases	Disposed Cases	Pending
Total Caseload	8,335	55,980	3,477	59,423	8,369

Filings – There were 55,980 new cases filed in the 46th District Court in 2012. This represents a 7% increase over the past five years, and a 2% increase in the last year. Please note this chart was revised to correspond to the State Court Administrative Office’s Caseload Report and provides additional caseload detail.

Felonies	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012				
Criminal	743	658	593	490	488				
Traffic	14	31	25	29	17				
Drunk Driving	32	26	47	24	28	<i>1 Year Change</i>	<i>5 Year Change</i>		
Total	789	715	665	543	533	-10	-2%	-256	-32%
Misdemeanors									
Criminal	1,739	1,613	1,569	1,352	1,200				
Traffic	4,052	3,422	3,692	3,004	2,478				
Drunk Driving	253	292	433	324	273	<i>1 Year Change</i>	<i>5 Year Change</i>		
Total	6,044	5,327	5,694	4,680	3,951	-789	-16%	-2,093	-35%
Civil Infractions									
Traffic	21,697	21,042	22,487	17,780	17,639				
Non-Traffic	469	742	1,159	1,775	1,482	<i>1 Year Change</i>	<i>5 Year Change</i>		
Total	22,166	21,784	23,646	19,555	19,121	-434	-2%	-3,045	-14%
<i>1 Year Change</i> <i>5 Year Change</i>									
Parking	8,946	8,056	14,256	17,598	19,089	1,491	8%	10,143	113%
Civil									
General Civil & Miscellaneous	5,920	5,388	5,269	4,985	5,467				
Landlord Tenant/ Land Contract	7,184	6,028	5,735	6,638	7,010				
Small Claims	1,313	1,036	899	937	809	<i>1 Year Change</i>	<i>5 Year Change</i>		
Total	14,417	12,452	11,903	12,560	13,286	726	6%	-1,131	-8%
<i>1 Year Change</i> <i>5 Year Change</i>									
Grand Total	52,362	48,334	56,164	54,936	55,980	1,044	2%	3,618	7%

Probation – A summary of the Probation Department’s 2012 activity is provided below.

- 986 new clients were placed on probation, representing a 25% decrease in the past year.
- 915 cases were pending on Probation Officer caseloads, a decrease of 19% in the last year.
- 328 investigative reports were completed, representing an 18% decrease in the past year.
- 10,611 appointments were held.
- 815 Violation of Probation hearings were conducted, a decrease of 21% over the past year and a 5% decrease over the past five years.

Caseload/Workload Overview

Probation Caseload and Workload Overview	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% Change	
						1 year	5 year
Cases Pending	1,063	1,070	1,063	1,135	915	-19%	-14%
Number of Probation Officers	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3*	-14%	-14%
Average Caseload Per Probation Officer	303	306	304	324	305	-6%	0%
New Cases	1,357	1,297	1,373	1,319	986	-25%	-27%
Investigative Reports	307	342	430	399	328	-18%	7%
Appointments	13,330	12,893	12,633	12,521	10,611	-15%	-20%
Violation of Probation Hearings Conducted	859	858	900	1,036	815	-21%	-5%

*There are two probation officers who carry full-time caseloads and two probation officers who carry part-time caseloads, which is equivalent to three full-time probation officers.

Major Accomplishments

The 46th District Court had many accomplishments in 2012, which have significantly improved the Court's overall operation, increased the public's understanding of the Court system and resulted in improved service to the public. A summary is provided below.

Commitment to Efficient Use of Public Resources - The Court has long recognized its responsibility for the efficient use of public resources. Judges and staff have focused on maintaining a high standard of public service by increasing productivity through internal operational and procedural improvements. This has allowed us to handle significant increases in caseload and workload without increasing staff.

Compared to 35 years ago, the Court is handling more than twice the number of cases per year with the same number of judges and fewer court staff. This is remarkable, considering the increases in caseload and workload over the past 35 years due to new legislation, more complex procedures and new programs and services.

	<u>1977</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>% of Change</u>
New Cases Filed	24,324	55,980	130%
Judges	3	3	0%
Court Staff	36.50	35.25	-3%
Average # of Cases Per Judge	8,108	18,660	130%

Special Programs and Projects

- Tax Garnishment Program** – In an attempt to collect outstanding funds owed to the Court on civil infraction and misdemeanor cases, the Court launched a state income tax garnishment project this year. The Court prepared and filed approximately 1,200 garnishments, representing over \$400,000 in outstanding debt owed to the Cities of Southfield and Lathrup Village, the Villages of Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Franklin and the Township of Southfield. While we do not yet know the total amount collected as a result of this project, over \$59,000 has been received at the time of this report. This project was undertaken with minimal cost to the Court, no additional staff, and no overtime expenses.

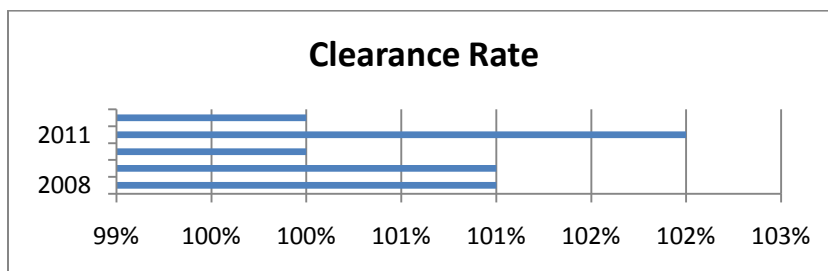
Major Accomplishments

- **Intensive Domestic Violence Probation Program** – In response to concerns about the increasing number of domestic violence cases in the 46th District Court, and recognizing the unique risk of harm posed by such cases, the Court started an intensive domestic violence probation program in May of 2012. This 52-week program, called the HEAL program (“Helping Explore Accountable Lifestyles”), is a partnership with our Probation Department, the City of Southfield’s Department of Human Services, and private practitioners. A specially-assigned probation officer handles all domestic violence probationers, and the cases are subject to regular review by the judge assigned to the case. There are presently 38 defendants participating in this domestic violence program in three different groups, which meet once per week on various days and times. It is hoped this intensive program of supervision and education will help break the cycle of violence.
- **On-Site Drug Testing Program** – The 46th District Court partners with the Oakland County Sheriff’s Office (OCSO) to provide on-site drug testing services at the Court for defendants on probation. The OCSO Results Drug and Alcohol Testing program uses the Court facility to provide convenient, professional, accurate and affordable testing services. Approximately 150 probationers participate in this program monthly.
- **Electronic Ticket Payment Program** – The 46th District Court was one of four courts in the state to pilot the Judicial Information Systems’ (JIS) electronic ticket payment program for traffic and parking tickets. The program provides citizens with a convenient and efficient method for paying tickets on-line so they do not have to come to court. It also provides the Court with a more efficient processing alternative because payments are automatically posted to the Court’s case management system, driver license suspensions are cleared and the case automatically disposed. This eliminated the need for staff to key the payment, clearance and disposition.
- **Collections Program** - For the past 10 years, the Court has sent reminder notices to violators with unpaid traffic tickets to increase compliance with court orders. In 2012, a total of \$824,798 was collected, which represents a 46% increase over the prior year. This brings the total amount collected since the program began in 2003 to \$5,817,201.

Case Flow Management Accomplishments

- **Efficient Case Processing** – Clearance rates measure a court’s case flow management performance and efficiency. It indicates the degree a court is able to keep up with incoming caseload. A clearance rate of less than 100% means that more cases were filed than disposed and a clearance rate of more than 100% means that more cases were disposed than filed. Generally, the higher the percentage, the more efficient the court is in handling its caseload.

In 2012, the 46th District Court’s clearance rate was 100% with 59,457 new or reopened cases and 59,423 disposed cases. Over the past five years, the Court has continually had a clearance rate of 100% or greater.



Major Accomplishments

- **Timely Case Scheduling** – Most traffic and criminal cases are scheduled for hearing and held within three weeks. Informal and formal hearings are scheduled two to three weeks from the date a hearing is requested and pre-trials are scheduled within three weeks of arraignment, unless the defendant is in-custody. If the defendant is in-custody, an expedited pretrial is scheduled within three to five days.

Civil cases are also scheduled in a timely manner. Landlord tenant cases are scheduled within three weeks of the case being filed; small claims trials are scheduled within two to three weeks of mediation and general civil pre-trials are scheduled within 30 days of the answer being filed.

- **Timely Case Disposition** – The 46th District Court is substantially meeting or exceeding all but one of the guidelines specified by the Michigan Supreme Court. In 2012, the Court performed within the following guidelines:

46th District Court

Michigan Supreme Court Time Guidelines

95%	90% of General Civil cases adjudicated within 273 days of filing
100%	100% of General Civil Cases adjudicated within 455 days of filing
99%	100% of Summary Civil cases without jury demand adjudicated within 126 days from case filing
94%	90% of Civil Infraction cases adjudicated within 35 days from case filing
100%	100% of Civil Infraction cases adjudicated within 84 days of filing
89%	90% of Misdemeanor cases adjudicated within 63 days of first appearance
97%	100% of Misdemeanor cases adjudicated within 126 days of first appearance
51%	80% of preliminary examinations held within 14 days of arraignment
67%	100% of preliminary examinations held within 28 days of arraignment [Note: the Guidelines do not take into consideration approximately 50% of defendants waive the 14 Day Rule because defense attorneys need more time for discovery.]

- **Outstanding Performance in Secretary of State Conviction Reporting** - The 46th District Court continues to have an exemplary record in this area. Over the past four years, the Court processed and reported 44,803 abstracts of conviction to the Secretary of State, of which 44,126 or 98.5% have been timely and received in 10 days or less. This clearly demonstrates the Court's ability to process extremely high volumes of cases with a high degree of accuracy and timeliness.

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	Total
# Abstracts Reported	11,604	12,253	10,701	10,245	44,803
# Abstracts Reporter Timely	11,340	12,098	10,544	10,144	44,126
Percent Timely	98%	99%	99%	99%	98.5%

Major Accomplishments

- **Effective Monitoring of In-Custody Prisoners** – The 46th District Court has long established procedures for the effective monitoring of in-custody prisoners. Expedited pre-trials are scheduled for in-custody misdemeanor defendants who do not bond out and bond reviews are conducted by the judge, if the defendant has not bonded out within three days of bond being set.

Monitoring the number of days a defendant is in jail prior to trial not only helps Oakland County and the Oakland County Sheriff's Office deal with jail overcrowding, it is also an important safeguard that helps ensure misdemeanor defendants do not spend more time in jail awaiting trial than they would if they were found guilty and sentenced to jail.

Retirement of the Honorable Susan Moiseev – Judge Moiseev retired on December 31, 2012, after over 26 years on the bench. Appointed to the bench by then-Governor James Blanchard on May 13, 1986, she was re-elected four times. In 2012, the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan awarded Judge Moiseev the Mary S. Coleman Award, bestowed annually to a current or former member of the Michigan federal, state, or tribal judiciary whose leadership, talent, and significant contributions to women provide a role model for women in the profession and women in general. She was also the recipient of the Oakland County Bar Association's Distinguished Public Servant award for 2012. Judge Moiseev retired as the senior-most sitting female judge in Oakland County and the longest-serving judge of the 46th District Court. We thank Judge Moiseev for her outstanding service to the Court and to the citizens of the communities served by the Court, and wish her well in retirement.

Retirement of Donna Beaudet and Brian Smith – Court Administrator Donna Beaudet and Deputy Court Administrator Brian Smith both retired in June of 2012. Donna Beaudet came to the Court in 1983 as Deputy Court Administrator, and was appointed Court Administrator in 1987. During her twenty-nine years with the Court, she was recognized statewide and nationally for her excellence in court administration. Brian Smith began his tenure as Deputy Court Administrator in 1987, and held this position for twenty-five years. Both made numerous and invaluable contributions to the Court during their years here; we thank them both for their leadership and guidance, and wish them well in retirement.

Revenues, Distributions and Expenditures

Most citizens are not familiar with the court system. As a result, there are many widely-held misconceptions about the operation of the courts, particularly in the area of court revenues and budgets. To maintain the public's trust and confidence in our system of justice, it is important to address the most common misunderstandings.

- **Courts are not businesses** – The purpose of our court system is to provide a forum for the resolution of disputes in a “fair, efficient, effective, timely, unbiased and convenient manner.” The judicial branch of government, like all branches of government, exists to maintain order, provide necessary services and to serve the public; not to make a profit.
- **Courts do not keep the revenue they generate** – Courts are prohibited by law from keeping and using the money they collect from fines, costs and fees. All monies collected are distributed to either the state, the county or local units of government, according to statutory requirements. In addition, judges are full-time salaried officials. Their compensation is not linked to fines that are assessed or monies that are collected.
- **The legislative branch of government approves court budgets** – All monies received by courts to maintain their operation are reviewed and approved through a budget process and are authorized by the courts' funding unit.

The following is a summary of the 46th District Court's revenues and expenditures for the past two years.

REVENUES	2011	2012
Fines, Costs, Fees ¹	6,316,775	6,509,012
Total Revenues	6,316,775	6,509,012

DISTRIBUTIONS²		
State of Michigan	1,554,165	1,530,328
County of Oakland	118,212	120,798
City of Southfield	4,416,460	4,629,695
City of Lathrup Village	140,991	133,463
Village of Beverly Hills	62,166	68,467
Village of Bingham Farms	14,118	11,984
Village of Franklin	10,636	10,250
Township of Southfield	27	27
Total Distributions	6,316,775	6,505,012

BUDGETED EXPENDITURES³		
For Direct Operational Costs	3,427,506	3,382,945

¹ Includes interest collected directly by the Court that was offset by bank fees. It does not include interest revenues earned by the City of Southfield on Court distributions.

² Formula is established by state law. These figures reflect how monies collected by the 46th District Court were distributed between the various governmental agencies and may not reflect exact disbursements for the periods indicated.

³ Based on actual expenditures for fiscal years ending in 2011 and 2012. Budgeted expenditures do not represent the total cost of the Court. Costs incurred by the City of Southfield for debt service, facility charges, insurance, telephone, printing and postage, etc., are not included.