

March 2015

# ARKANSAS COURT NEWS

a publication of the Arkansas Administrative Office of the Courts *“Supporting Courts, Ensuring Justice”*



## THE FACE OF THE ARKANSAS COURTS

and the Communities  
They Serve

**Online Court Security Training • Supreme Court Welcomes Two Justices  
Court of Appeals Swears In New Judges • ACAP Updates • and more**

# WHAT'S INSIDE

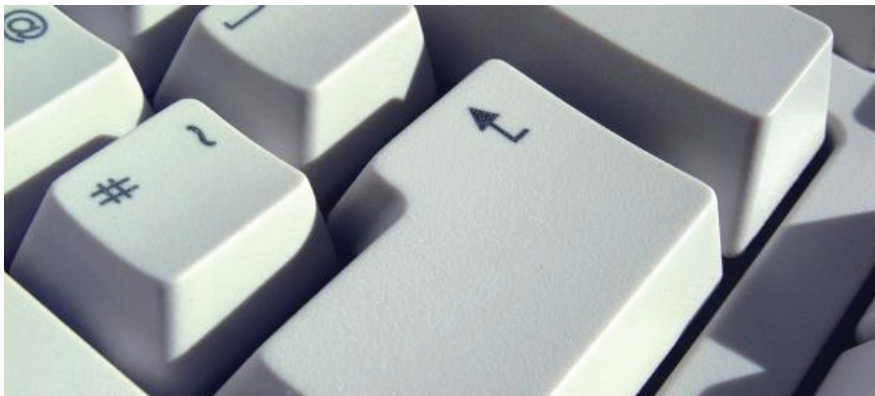
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Ozark National Forest  
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## Going Digital



The Administrative Office of the Courts has eliminated the paper version of *Friends of the Court* and gone to an online-only format. This allows room for regular content, more diverse court-related news, and more features on *you*, the people who do the work of the Judicial Branch.

The newsletter has been completely reformatted to utilize the new medium. It has undergone a name change as well, and will now be called *Arkansas Court News*, a title more fitting for its content.

The electronic version of the newsletter will be published on the Judiciary website:

[www.courts.arkansas.gov/forms-and-publications/newsletters/friends-court](http://www.courts.arkansas.gov/forms-and-publications/newsletters/friends-court)

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# The Face of the Arkansas Courts and the Communities They Serve

By JD Gingerich, Director  
*Arkansas Administrative Office of the Courts*

A recent issue of *The Arkansas Lawyer* was devoted to the topic of diversity in our state's legal profession and law schools. This article extends that examination to the Arkansas state court system – the judges, public attorneys, clerks and other court staff who comprise the “face” of our courts. This examination is based upon a convergence of three topics which have been of primary interest to those who study the courts in recent years: 1) the level of public trust and confidence in the court system and the system's reliance upon that trust to carry out its mission; 2) the concept of procedural fairness and the factors which most influence the perceptions of parties to litigation; and 3) the developing neuroscience research which supports earlier social science research on implicit bias and its potential impact upon the courts.

## **Public Trust and Confidence**

The ability of the court system to function is primarily dependent upon the trust and

confidence which the public has in the system. There is a positive relationship between the respect for and trust in the court and the willingness to accept its findings and abide by its rulings.

Luckily, the public's perception of our courts remains positive, despite a recent decrease in the trust in public institutions generally. In 1999 the American Bar Association co-sponsored the National Conference on Public Trust and Confidence in the Justice System. A centerpiece of the conference was a national survey commissioned by the National Center for State Courts on the public's perception of the court system. While a majority of Americans expressed trust in American institutions overall, courts ranked somewhere in the middle, with the strongest support for the medical profession and law enforcement and the least support for legislative bodies and the media. There were several positive findings, with 79% of the respondents agreeing that judges are fair and

honest in deciding cases and 74% agreeing that court personnel are helpful and courteous. In a separate survey commissioned the same year by the ABA, 80% of the respondents agreed that “... in spite of its problems, the American justice system is still the best in the world.”

The more troubling findings of the NCSC survey concern perceptions of unequal treatment. Many Americans express doubt that all parties receive equal treatment from the courts. Almost half of all respondents stated their belief that blacks and Hispanics receive “worse” or “far worse” treatment by the courts than others. Only 23% of the black respondents believed that the court system treats blacks the same as others. In a 2005 study published by the California Administrative Office of the Courts, a majority of all respondents stated that blacks and Hispanics usually receive less favorable results in courts than others and among black respondents, 87% thought that blacks receive unequal treatment. These general findings have been

replicated in other state and national surveys since that time.

These perceptions are also shared by many members of the bench and bar. In a survey of 809 federal district judges, 83% of the white judges agreed that “black litigants are treated as fairly as others in the justice system,” a belief shared by only 18% of the black judges. In a joint research project initiated by the ABA and the National Bar Association, perceptions of unequal treatment in the justice system among lawyers of different races were similar to the perceptions within the general public.

No state-wide surveys have specifically addressed the issue in Arkansas, but the excellent series of annual reports published by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock have examined racial attitudes in Little Rock and Pulaski County. The 2013 report included questions concerning the judicial system. As to the issue of “trust”, approximately two-thirds of the white respondents reported that they had a “great deal” or “quite a lot” of trust in the judicial system, a view shared by only one-third of the black respondents. In response to questions about confidence that courts will treat all people fairly, white respondents were significantly more likely to have confidence than were blacks or Hispanics. As to a more specific question about whether the courts would treat blacks as fairly as others, more than one-half of black respondents reported “very little” or “just some” confidence. This compares with approximately twenty-five percent of white respondents.

Arkansas judges and other court leaders are dedicated and

extremely sensitive to the issues of fair and equal treatment of all who come before them, without regard to such issues as race and ethnicity. Unfortunately, the public perception is different. To be viewed as fair and impartial is critical to public trust and confidence; and the public’s trust and confidence is critical to the legitimacy and effectiveness of the court as an institution.

In his 2010 State of the Judiciary address, Chief Justice Jim Hannah stated:

In every speech I have given since becoming Chief Justice I have made the statement that the success and viability of our court system is dependent upon the trust and confidence of the public. It is important that our decisions... are color blind. But it is equally important that our system be perceived as fair and impartial... we must take seriously the public’s perception and do all that we can to create and sustain a system which is fair and impartial, both in fact and in appearance.

### **Procedural Fairness**

John Thibaut and Laurens Walker published their seminal work on the theory of procedural justice in 1975. Their findings that parties involved in litigation care more about how they are treated by and during the litigation than whether they won or lost the case were initially received with great skepticism – especially by the legal community. Subsequent research over many years, however, has confirmed their initial theory.

... In the minds of litigants, the importance of a favorable outcome is consistently outweighed by the impact of an unfair process; in other words, a prevailing litigant might look back upon a recent court experience and say “yes, I won the case, but I don’t know if it was worth it. It cost me too much, the judge wouldn’t let me speak, I didn’t understand what the judge was talking about, I was treated like dirt. I

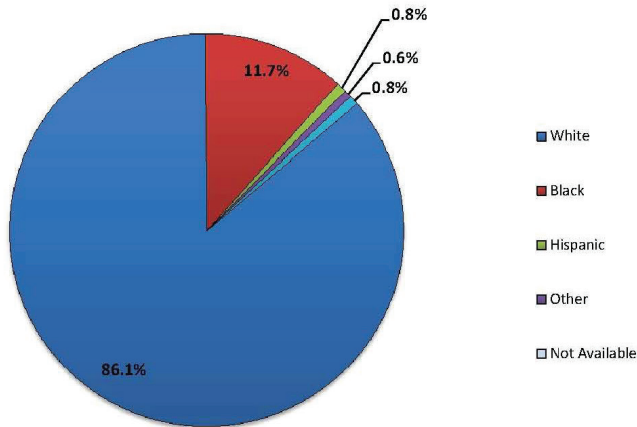
hope I never have to go through that again.” On the other hand, an unsuccessful litigant can leave the courtroom saying, “I lost my case but I had my day in court, I was treated fairly, I can move on.”

The American Judges Association has brought the importance of procedural justice into the mainstream of judicial practice with the publication and adoption of the policy statement “Procedural Fairness: A Key Ingredient in Public Satisfaction.” Arkansas judges first included the topic as a part of their education conference in 2009. It can be difficult for judges and lawyers – who are trained to believe that a thorough development of the relevant facts and correct application of the law will produce an outcome which is fair – to discover or accept that other factors may have a greater impact on the public’s perception of what is fair.

The research now suggests that there are four factors which most affect a litigant’s belief that the proceeding was “fair” and make it more likely that the litigant will comply with the court’s order. They include

- Voice. People want an opportunity to participate in the process and to tell their side of the story.
- Neutrality. People need to see that the decision is based upon law, not personal opinions, and is applied consistently.
- Trust. People are just as concerned with the character as with the competence of the judge and form opinions about whether the judge “cares” about the litigants or the outcome.
- Respect. People need to feel that authorities take their concerns seriously and treat them with

Race of Arkansas Circuit and District Court Personnel



Race of Arkansas General Population

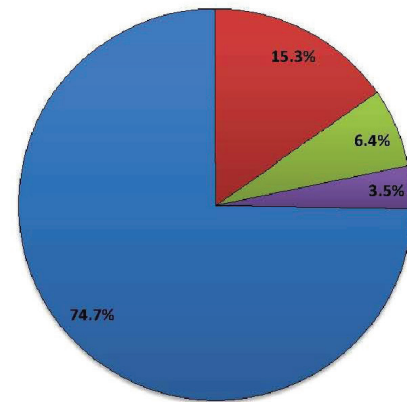


Table 1

courtesy and politeness.

These factors have a direct impact upon the core mission of the judicial branch. They are also important in light of the distrust expressed within our minority populations. If it is true that attention to procedural justice issues can impact trust and confidence in the system, a review may prove helpful in responding to these concerns.

### Implicit Bias

For many years social scientists have studied and documented the process by which humans form attitudes and stereotypes about a wide variety of people, objects and situations as a way by which to more efficiently navigate the world. Much of the research has centered on identifying areas of implicit bias and studying the ways in which such attitudes and stereotypes are formed. These issues have been noted and discussed within the context of judges, courts and the legal system for many years.

Much more recently, neuroscientists have entered the field. Advances in the study of

the brain have made it possible to locate the areas of the brain and the physical processes by which the brain receives, sorts, calculates, and manages enormous amounts of incoming information needed by humans to constantly make routine decisions. It appears that the development of stereotypes and biases is not just a personal or cultural phenomenon but rather a way in which all humans are “hard-wired” to both remain safe and operate efficiently. Because these biases are automatic they can impact our behavior and our decisions without our even being aware. Last October members of the Arkansas judiciary heard a fascinating presentation by Kimberly Papillon, a lawyer and national presenter on the neuroscience and psychology of legal, judicial and medial decision making. With the growing and compelling body of scientific research which documents the existence of implicit bias in all humans, she argued that we can now move past arguments about whether such bias exists and focus instead on how we recognize it and guard against it in our roles as judges and

lawyers. Other studies have shown that while implicit biases exist in all populations, including the judiciary, “judges seem to be aware of the potential for bias in themselves and possess the cognitive skills necessary to avoid its influence.”

The writing and research on implicit bias in the court system has centered on its potential impact upon judges; it may also be relevant to those on the other side of the bench. Imagine for a moment that you are a litigant in a courtroom and as you view the room you find that you are of a different race or ethnicity than everyone else present. The judge, the lawyers, the bailiff, the court reporter, the court clerk, perhaps even the members of the jury – all appear different than you. The scientists who study the brain would tell us that this scenario would likely produce an unconscious reaction in the brain of our imaginary litigant, provoking feelings of fear and distrust. This response would result without the litigant having any actual knowledge about or experience with any of the other people in the room and would be similar if the litigant was white

and the other participants black or vice versa. Thus, the mere “face” of the court system may be very important to how a member of the community reacts and responds to the court system.

### **Connecting the Dots**

How are these three areas of research – public trust, procedural justice and implicit bias – connected? The proposition is a fairly simple one. Arkansas’ minority populations express less trust and confidence in the Arkansas court system and its ability to provide fair treatment to all persons. Two of the factors which impact the public’s perception of the court system are trustworthiness and respect. Studies on implicit bias indicate that our brains are much more likely to initially trust and respect people who look like we do. Public trust and confidence in the institution of the courts can be enhanced when members of the public can observe someone who is a part of the institution who looks and sounds like themselves. The courthouse environment becomes more welcoming and less threatening.

The bottom line is that one way those of us in the court system can respond to the distrust found among many in our minority communities is to insure that the “face” of our court system is somewhat similar to that of the community it serves. So how are we doing?

### **The Arkansas Survey**

For the purposes of this study, an attempt was made to collect demographic information about all persons who are likely to be seen by litigants during the court

process and might be assumed to be a part of the court system. The racial and ethnic breakdown of employees of the Arkansas Supreme Court, Arkansas Court of Appeals, and Administrative Office of the Courts was received directly from those agencies... Information about elected Prosecuting Attorneys and Deputy Prosecuting Attorneys was provided by the Prosecutor Coordinator Commission. Information about Public Defenders was provided by the Arkansas Public Defender Commission. In December 2012 a written survey was distributed to all Circuit Judges, Circuit Clerks, County Clerks, and District Clerks to obtain additional information about employees who work in these offices. Telephone follow-up with each office was attempted to supplement any data missing from the written surveys. All data collection and compilation was performed by Andrew Walchuk, then a Policy Analyst at the Administrative Office of the Courts and now a law student at Yale University.

The data includes a mix of state, county and local employees. Some of the elected officials and employees maintain an office in one location but are elected or appointed to serve multiple counties within a judicial circuit. The data analysis compares the racial and ethnic breakdown of the officials and employees by judicial circuit and by county to that within the general population of those areas.

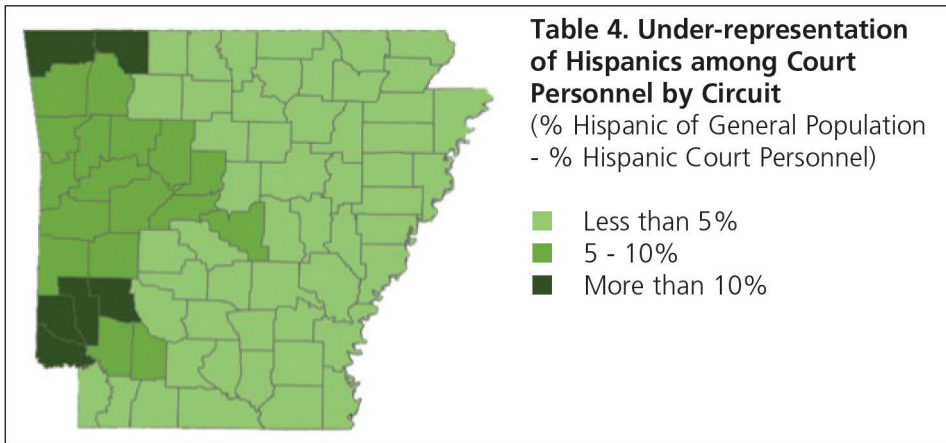
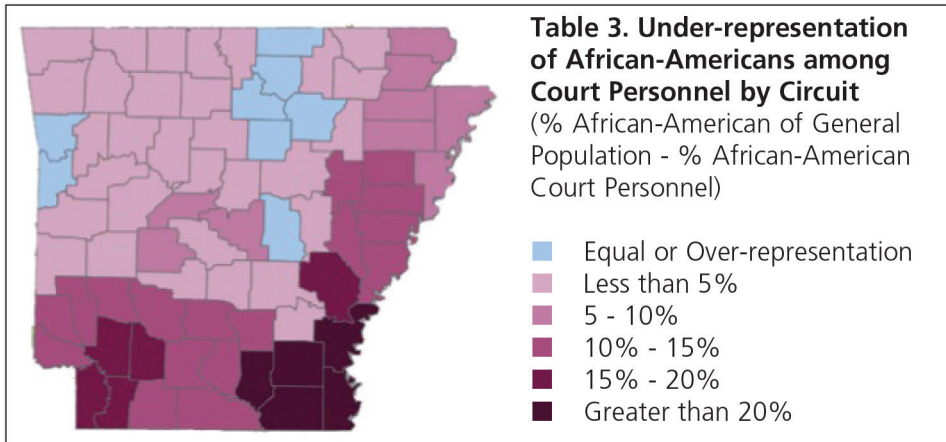
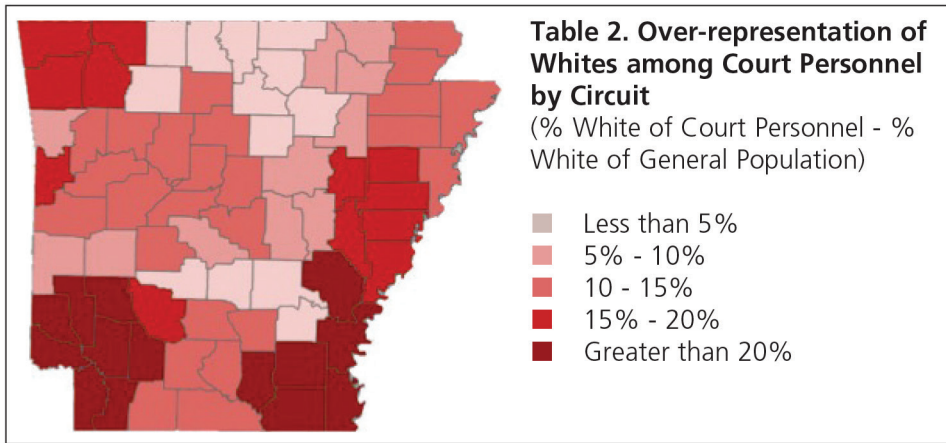
Table 1 shows the racial breakdown of the Arkansas population as found in the 2010 U.S. Census. Arkansas has experienced a rapid growth in the population of Hispanic residents, increasing by

114% between 2000 and 2010. The black population decreased by over 7% during the same period. Table 2 shows the statewide comparison between the general population and all circuit and district court judges and personnel. Blacks comprise 15.3% of the general population compared with 11.7% of the court population. Hispanics make up 6.4% of the general population compared to only 0.8% of the court population. A similar comparison of appellate court judges and employees is found in Table 3.

Tables 4, 5 and 6 provide a geographic illustration of the comparison between the court population and the general population by judicial circuit, with a separate comparison for whites, blacks and Hispanics. Table 4 shows the areas of the state with the greatest over representation of white employees as compared to the general population. Tables 5 and 6 show a similar comparison, based upon the under-representation of blacks and Hispanics among judges and court employees as compared to the general population. Finally, Table 7 provides the breakdown of elected officials and court employees by each of Arkansas’ counties as compared to the general population of the county.

### **What Now?**

While these general comparisons seem to show there are differences between the face of the courts and some of the communities they serve, the question remains as to what response is required. It should be noted initially that the data and statistical comparisons are far too simplified to be able to reach any more than a general impression.



responsibility rests with the voters. Once elected, however, all of the leadership within the judicial branch can and should work together toward a more diverse workforce which is reflective of the communities in which we work.

The importance of the issue has been noted by other state court leaders from across the country. A resolution of the U.S. Conference of Chief Justices notes that all courts should take a leadership role to insure that they “better mirror the racial and ethnic makeup of the communities they serve.” A paper published by the U. S. Conference of State Court Administrators provides that all state courts should “develop strategies to promote a representative workforce.” The National Action Plan developed as a response to the National Conference on Public Trust and Confidence in the Justice System ranked the most important strategies which courts should adopt and included “make the courts more inclusive” and “make the courts more demographically representative of the community they serve”.

Several state supreme courts have adopted specific plans for their court systems designed to support a more representative workforce.

The courts in Washington State have published a massive but very practical guide for hiring and retaining a diverse workforce. It distinguishes appropriate concerns about diversity in our courts from hiring quotas or affirmative action plans, noting that the goal is not about legal hiring requirements but rather about increasing the public’s confidence in the court system.

It is arguable, for example, that the inclusion or omission of particular groups of employees within the data is inappropriate or misleading. The combination of elected and non-elected officials may distort the picture. Further, it is arguable that a comparison to the general population is not appropriate when considering the election or employment of persons in positions which require professional credentials, such as a law degree.

These and similar concerns provide sufficient reason to justify caution in drawing any specific conclusions from the data.

If nothing else, the information may provoke those of us who have some authority in the selection and employment of court employees to become more sensitive to the issue. We are not in control of who will be elected to serve as judges, prosecuting attorneys, or circuit and county clerks – that

Arkansans have done an excellent job of electing talented and dedicated candidates to serve as judges and judicial branch leaders. These officials have demonstrated a commitment to a court system which provides fair and equal treatment for all. Courts are dependent upon the public's trust to successfully carry out their mission. For a segment of our population that trust has been diminished and a perception of unequal treatment exists. Members of the public are more accepting of a system when they see others like themselves who are a part of it. One way to improve trust and confidence in the court system is for court leaders to provide leadership toward the goal of insuring that the faces of our courts are reflective of the communities they serve.

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## Endnotes

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This year, the Administrative Office of the Courts is celebrating its 50th anniversary. The fall issue of *Arkansas Court News* will be featuring content focused on this achievement.

Do you have something you'd like to see published? Know of anything we should include? Please send your ideas, stories, photos, and other submissions to [meghan.sever@arkansas.gov](mailto:meghan.sever@arkansas.gov).





# A NEW COURT

## The Arkansas Supreme Court Welcomes Two New Justices to the Bench

History was made this year when the Arkansas Supreme Court welcomed Associate Justice Rhonda K. Wood, formerly of the Arkansas Court of Appeals, to the bench. With Wood's recent election, the Court saw their first female majority, changing the Court's makeup to four women and three men.

Justice Rhonda Wood, who lives in Conway, was sworn in as the fourth woman on the current court on January 6, 2015. The oath was administered by the first woman to be elected to the state's highest court, Justice Annabelle Imber Tuck, who retired in 2009.

Justice Karen Baker was also sworn in after running unopposed for an eight-year term. She had first been

elected to complete the term vacated by Justice Tuck, so served two years before having to run again for a full term. Justice Ron Sheffield had been appointed to fill the position



Associate Justice Rhonda Wood.

between Tuck's retirement and Baker's election.

Associate Justice Robin Wynne, of Fordyce, was also sworn in. He was elected to Position 2, which was held by Justice Donald Corbin until his retirement in December.

Baker acknowledged the historic day and told a story about her daughter, Emily, who was born during Baker's second year on the state Court of Appeals. A colleague on the court noted that when she grew up, Emily would not be intimidated by judges. Baker responded, "If I have my way she won't be intimidated by anything at all. That's my hope for all our daughters. I think we're making great leaps here today."



Associate Justice Rhonda Wood is sworn in by retired Justice Annabelle Imber Tuck.  
*Photo credit: Arkansas Secretary of State*

Wood also discussed the significance of the new majority, and noted that no women were on the Supreme Court of the United States or the Arkansas Supreme Court when she and the other justices were born. “As children,” Wood said, “dreaming of sitting on this court was not in the realm of what we could believe was attainable... Now young girls across the state can easily see this is a realistic goal.”

Justice Wynne was introduced by one of his four sons, Robin Wynne, Jr., and sworn in by Chief Justice Jim Hannah.

“No judge writes on a clean slate,” said Wynne, quoting former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter. “And that is certainly a true statement. My slate now includes four years on the Arkansas Court of Appeals ... Today I stand on the shoulders of my family, which includes seven attorneys.”

Wynne’s and his family’s experience in law and politics is written on his slate, and he said he is “very much honored to become part of the Arkansas Supreme Court.” He said, “I pledge to each of you that I will work hard and I will contribute



Associate Justice Robin Wynne takes the oath of office from Chief Justice Jim Hannah as his family looks on.  
*Photo credit: Arkansas Secretary of State*

based on the slate that I bring this court. Our relationships and the decisions that we make will impact generations to come just as those that have come before us have done.”

*“... The decisions that we make will impact generations to come just as those that have come before us have done.”*

The ceremony, in its entirety, may be viewed on the Judiciary’s website: [www.courts.arkansas.gov](http://www.courts.arkansas.gov).

# ARKANSAS DEVELOPS FIRST ONLINE COURT SECURITY TRAINING PROGRAM



**Pete Hollingsworth and Associate Justice Rhonda Wood demonstrates the new online security training program in Faulkner County.**

The FBI issued a report recently that found the number of active shooters in the United States has increased in the last fourteen years. The first seven years of the study saw an average of 6.4 incidents a year; the last seven years had an average of 16.4 incidents. Courthouses are always at risk for violence, in large part due to the nature of the business conducted in our nation's courts.

Pete Hollingsworth, Director of Security and Emergency Preparedness for the Arkansas Administrative Office of the Courts, has developed an interactive court security training course for law enforcement and court staff that will be used throughout the country.

Hollingsworth, a certified police officer, along with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), applied for and won a \$30,000 grant from the State Justice Institute (SJI). He has spent the last year developing the course, which will soon be eligible for law enforcement continuing education credit in Arkansas. The free, elective course consists of four modules that cover active shooters, best practices in court security, judicial threat management, and body language as a

communication tool. All court security officers in Arkansas are required by statute to complete an twelve-hour initial training that is separate from this elective course.

“Court security remains a top issue for state courts, and the Arkansas Judiciary has taken a leadership role in developing training that prepares court security officers for future threats,” said Jonathan Mattiello, Executive Director of SJI. “SJI commends the Judiciary on their work, and encourages all state courts to use this valuable training resource.”

While Hollingsworth created the training content, he worked with the NCSC, which developed the online programs to deliver the training. NCSC is offering the courses as part of its Institute for Court Management. Several court staff in Arkansas are trained faculty for these programs, which are administered all over the country.

NCSC's president, Mary McQueen, commended “the Arkansas Judiciary for its commitment to improving the security of its courts and for its innovative approach to making security training more effective and engaging for the state's court security officers. Arkansas courts are the first to use this new online-learning simulation format, which better prepares officers for threatening situations and, in turn, makes for safer courts.”

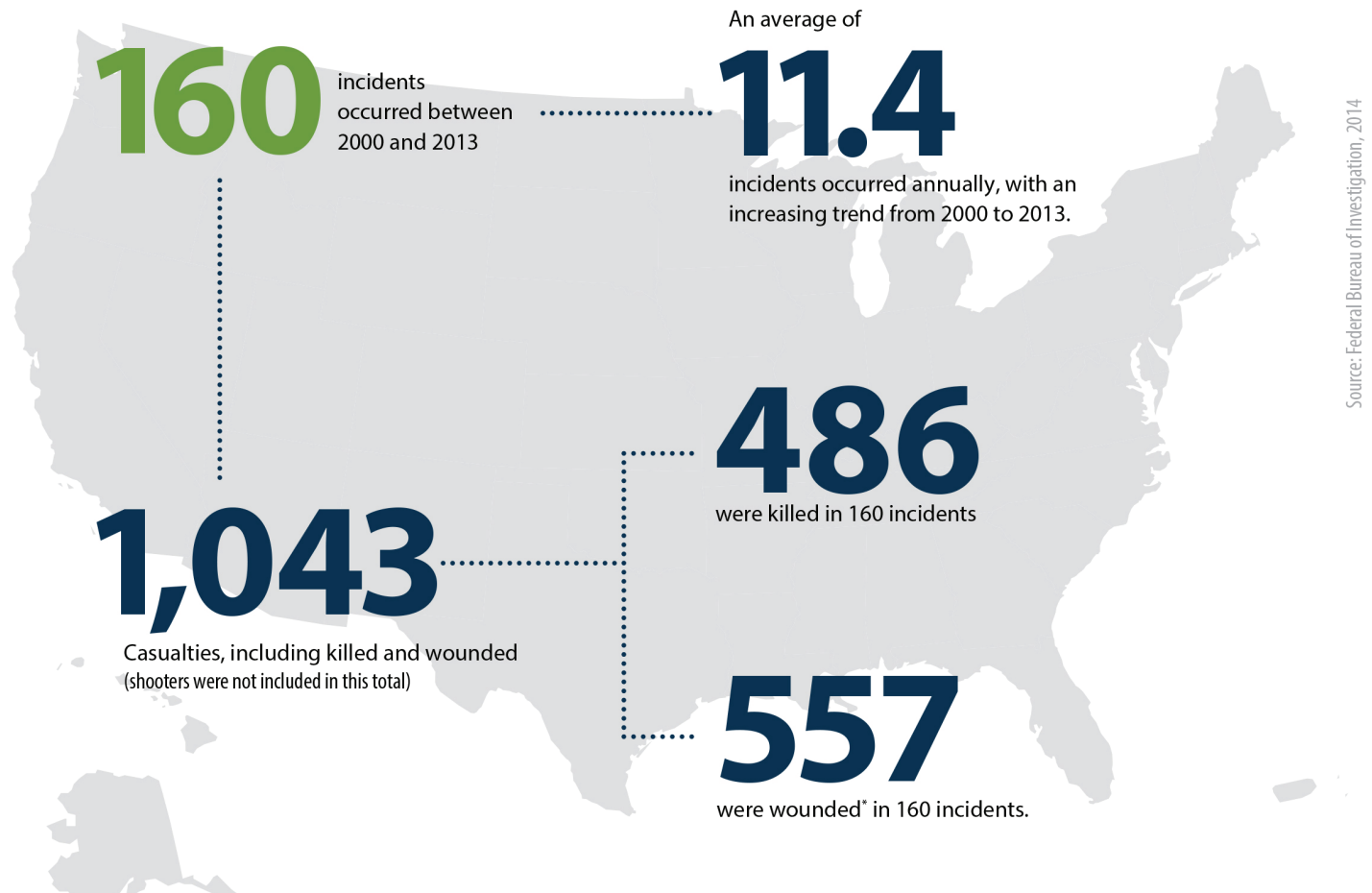
Arkansas is not immune from courtroom violence. In 2011, a man shot and injured a court employee in Crawford County. Video from that incident is used in the training and by law enforcement nationally.

Supreme Court Associate Justice Rhonda Wood is the liaison to the Security and Emergency Preparedness Committee. When she was a circuit judge in Faulkner County, she and her staff were confronted by a woman in the courtroom who threatened them with a gun. Fortunately, no one was hurt, but that is an example of the dangers people face in courtrooms around the nation.

Hollingsworth says that every day courthouses are “visited by a large number of citizens, many of whom may be disgruntled and angry. Acts of violence such as threats against judicial officials, escapes from custody, and disruption of court proceedings are increasing. Additionally, courthouses, which represent the ideals of democracy in American society, have become symbolic targets for anti-government extremists. One goal of my office is to provide training for Court Security Officers that has an immediate impact toward providing a safe and secure environment for courthouse staff and visitors.”

The National Center for State Courts is an independent, nonprofit court improvement organization whose efforts are directed by and in collaboration with the Conference of Chief Justices, the Conference of State Court Administrators, and other associations of judicial leaders.

The State Justice Institute was established by Federal law in 1984 to award grants to improve the quality of justice in state courts, facilitate better coordination between state and federal courts, and foster innovative, efficient solutions to common issues faced by all courts.



## INCIDENTS

- An average of 11.4 incidents occurred annually.
- An average of 6.4 incidents occurred in the first 7 years studied, and an average of 16.4 occurred in the last 7 years.
- 70.0% of the incidents occurred in either a commerce/business or educational environment.<sup>10</sup>
- Shootings occurred in 40 of 50 states and the District of Columbia.
- 60.0% of the incidents ended before police arrived.



# Court of Appeals Swears in New Judges

The Court of Appeals welcomed four new judges to the bench at the Justice Building in Little Rock on January 30.

The newest appellate judges to join the Court of Appeals are Raymond Abramson, District 1, Position 1; Bart Virden, District 2, Position 1; Cliff Hoofman, District 2, Position 2; and Mike Kinard, District 5. Three returning judges on the Court of Appeals were sworn in to their

new terms during the ceremony as well: Phillip Whiteaker, Division 1, Position 2; Kenneth Hixson, Division 3, Position 2; and Larry Vaught, Division 6, Position 2. After taking the oath of office, the judges donned their robes and took their place on the bench. Each judge said a few words upon taking their seat, including Judge Mike Kinard who praised the Judiciary. “The judges in the courts in Arkansas get it right”, he said. “And they do a wonderful

job for the people of Arkansas to keep the system of justice where it should be... I want to be a small part of that with the help of this lady and these gentlemen who are on this Court of Appeals. I hope that we can all accomplish that purpose.” The ceremony in the courtroom was followed by a reception in the lobby.

The ceremony, in its entirety, may be viewed on the Judiciary’s website: [www.courts.arkansas.gov](http://www.courts.arkansas.gov).



Chief Judge Robert Gladwin administers the oath of office to Judge Bart Virden.

*Photo credit: Arkansas Secretary of State*



Judge Hoofman is sworn in as Court of Appeals judge.

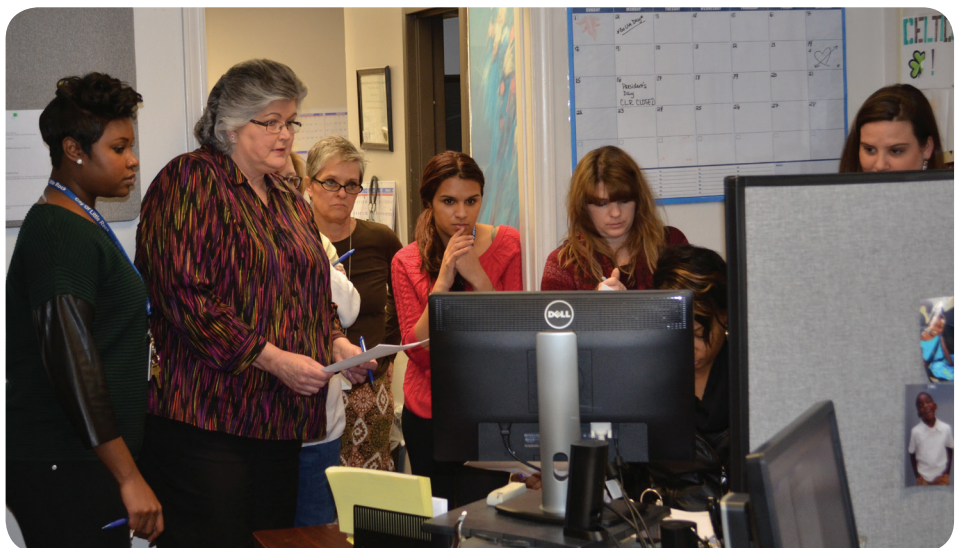
*Photo credit: Arkansas Secretary of State*

## ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION MEETING



The Access to Justice Commission met on February 5, at the Justice Building in Little Rock. Members of the Arkansas Judiciary met with other Commission members to honor members whose terms had expired and approve draft recommendations from the Commission's Task Force on Self Represented Litigants for proposed rule changes. The Access to Justice Commission meets quarterly to work toward its goal of expanding pro bono attorney participation, implementing court assistance projects, facilitating changes to statutes and court rules, and increasing financial resources available to provide legal aid to low-income Arkansans.

## CONTEXTE TRAINING IN LITTLE ROCK



District Court Clerks in Little Rock get hands-on Contexte training. Contexte, part of the AOC's Arkansas Court Automation Program, is a case management system that allows public access to court case information and online citation payment. Little Rock District Court is one of many to offer these services throughout the state.

# ACAP project update

(arkansas court automation project)

## CIS Division Projects Progress at a Glance Week of March 17, 2015

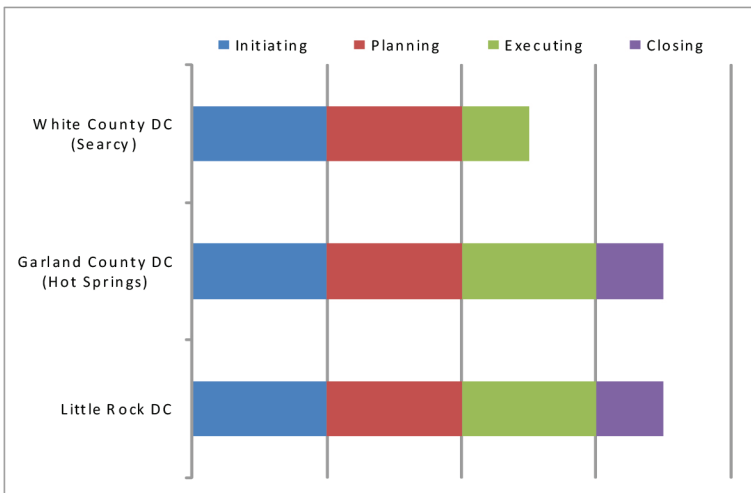
**Legend**

- = Initiating (up to Contract signed/scope defined)
- = Planning (up to Schedule Baseline)
- = Executing (up to Go-Live date)
- = Closing (up to Signed Project Closing Documents)

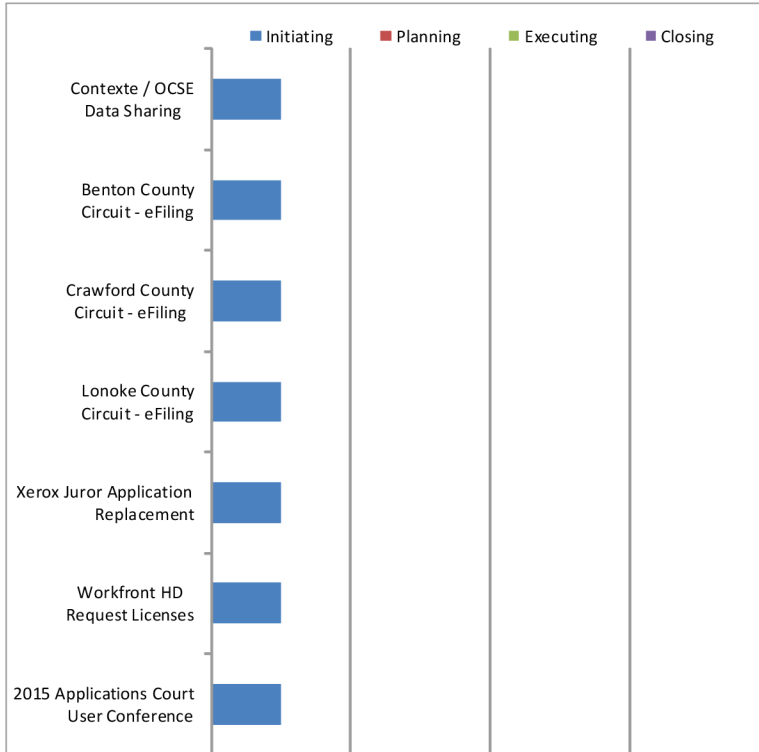
### Contexte Implementation - Circuit Courts



### Contexte Implementation - District Courts



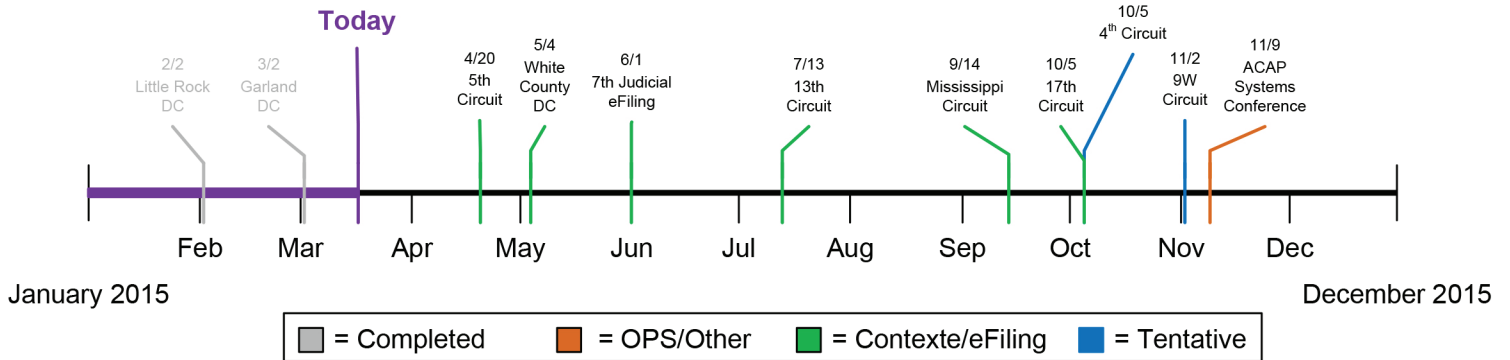
### Other ACAP Projects



# ACAP project update

(arkansas court automation project)

## Go Live Dates 2015



# A VISIT FROM ARGENTINA



Justice Wood poses with visitors from Argentina inside the Arkansas Supreme Court courtroom. The group was a delegation of attorneys, professors, and healthcare professionals here for a two-week English immersion program facilitated, in part, through the Universidad de Buenas Ares.



# New Faces

## Circuit Judges

1st Circuit - **Christopher Morledge**  
2nd Circuit - **Melissa Bristow Richardson**  
2nd Circuit - **Dan Ritchey**  
4th Circuit - **Doug Martin**  
4th Circuit - **John Threet**  
6th Circuit - **Cathleen V. Compton**  
6th Circuit - **W. Mike Reif**  
8th S. Circuit - **Carlton D. Jones**  
12th Circuit - **Leigh Zuerker**  
13th Circuit - **David W. Talley**  
14th Circuit - **Deanne "Suzie" Evans**  
18th E. Circuit - **Wade Naramore**  
16th Circuit - **Holly Meyer**  
18th W. Circuit - **Jerry Ryan**  
19th E. Circuit - **Scott Jackson**  
20th Circuit - **Mike Murphy**  
20th Circuit - **Troy Braswell**  
20th Circuit - **H.G. Foster**  
23rd Circuit - **Ashley Parker**

## District Judges

Conway County - **Jeannie Denniston**  
Drew County - **Sara Hartness**  
Lawrence County - **Adam Weeks**  
Mississippi County - **Donald Betterton**  
Polk County - **Jake Looney**  
Scott County - **Donald Goodner**  
Scott County - **Jessica Smith**  
Washington County - **William A. Storey**  
Yell County - **Carol Collins**

## County Officials

Ashley County - **Christie Martin**  
Cleveland County - **Jimmy Cummings**  
Columbia County - **Phyllis Disotell**  
Craighead County - **Candance Edwards**  
Drew County - **Beverly Burks**  
Faulkner County - **Margaret Darter**  
Greene County - **Phyllis Rhynes**  
Howard County - **Angie Lewis**  
Izard County - **Shelly Downing**  
Jackson County - **Stacie Sullivan**  
Lafayette County - **Valarie Clark**  
Lee County - **Lynsey Russell**  
Lincoln County - **Cindy Glover**  
Logan County - **Elaine Robertson**  
Lonoke County - **Dawn Porterfield**  
Miller County - **Stephanie Harvin**  
Mississippi County - **Leslie Mason**  
Pike County - **Sabrina Williams**  
Poinsett County - **Misty Richardson**  
Poinsett County - **Teresa Rouse**  
Pope County - **Diane Willcutt**  
Prairie County - **Vanessa Peters**  
Randolph County - **Rhonda Blevins**  
Saline County - **Myka Bono**  
Scott County - **Barbara Whitely**  
Sevier County - **Kathy Smith**  
Stone County - **Angie Hudspeth**  
Van Buren County - **Pam Bradford**

## Trial Court Assistants

2nd Circuit - **Kelsey Wilson**  
4th Circuit - **Aleta Cargill**

## Court Reporters

1st Circuit - **Ruby Watts**

## District Clerks

Faulkner County - **Melissa Hallman**  
Lonoke County - **Lisa Hunter**  
Mississippi County - **Darla Atchley**  
Pulaski County - **Helen Skipper**  
Sebastian County - **Florene Brown**

## AOC

**Kasi Erwin** - Attorney Ad Litem  
**Michael Moats** - Attorney Ad Litem

# in the Judiciary

**Hello**  
my name is

Are you a new court employee or know someone who should be featured in this section? We want to know!

Contact Meghan Sever at [meghan.sever@gmail.com](mailto:meghan.sever@gmail.com).

# calendar of events

## April

- Administrative Judges Meeting (Heber Springs) **8-10**
- State Drug Court Conference (Little Rock) **8-9**
- Candidate Assessment Exam (Springdale) **11**
- ADR Commission Meeting (Little Rock) **22**
- District Judges Spring College District Clerks Annual Meeting (Little Rock) **23-24**
- ADR Southwest AR CME (Texarkana) **24**

## May

- Central Regional CME (Little Rock) **8**
- Children in the Courts (Little Rock) **15**
- ADR Northeast AR CME (Jonesboro) **15**
- Candidate Assessment Exam (Little Rock) **16**
- Candidate Assessment Exam (Springdale) **30**

## June

- CMP Class '17 "CourTools" (Little Rock) **3-5**
- Spring Judicial College and Judicial Council Meeting (Hot Springs) **10-12**
- CMP Class '16 "Managing Technology Projects" (Little Rock) **17-19**
- Candidate Assessment Exam (Little Rock) **20**
- CMP Class '15 "Managing Human Resources" (Little Rock) **24-26**
- ADR Northwest AR CME (Bentonville) **26**

Have a conference or program you would like to have added to the calendar? Email it to [meghan.sever@arkansas.gov](mailto:meghan.sever@arkansas.gov).