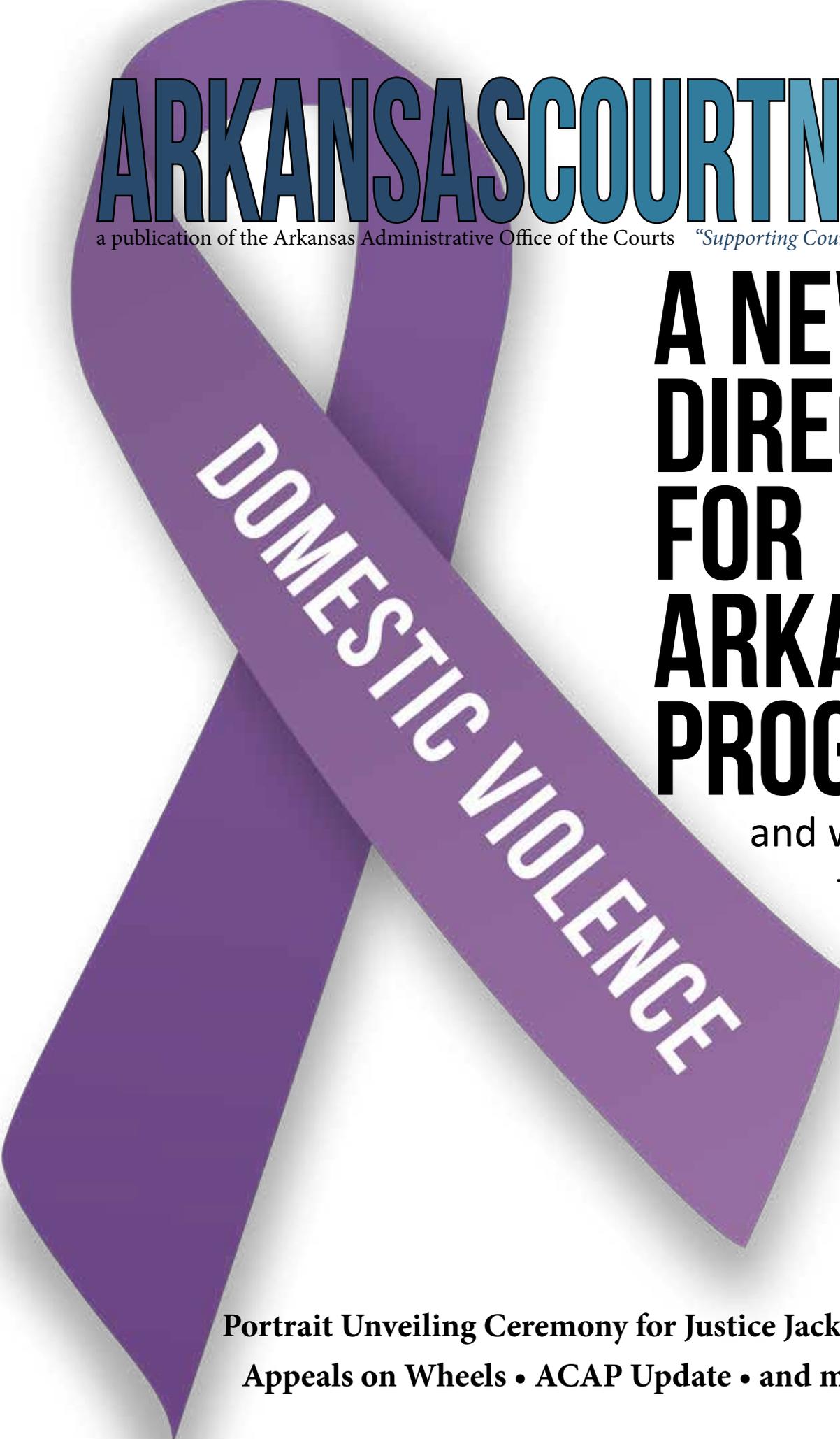


May 2015

ARKANSASCOURTNEWS

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



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A NEW DIRECTION FOR ARKANSAS' PROGRAM

and what it means
for our courts

Portrait Unveiling Ceremony for Justice Jack Holt

Appeals on Wheels • ACAP Update • and more

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Woodruff County Courthouse

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

Arkansas Court News is a bi-monthly publication of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Contributions, comments, and inquiries are always welcome.

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A NEW DIRECTION FOR ARKANSAS' DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM



and what it means for our courts

“In the last decade, Arkansas has consistently ranked in the top ten worst states for homicides involving domestic violence,” said Rebekah Tucci, Domestic Violence Program Director for the Administrative Office of the Courts. “As community leaders, members of the judiciary play a crucial role in helping to end domestic violence in our courtrooms and our communities.”

Tucci joined the AOC in December to take on the task of educating judges, court staff, law enforcement, probation, and community partners about domestic violence and how we can all work together to climb to the bottom of that list of worst states. Meet Rebekah and learn how she and others are doing just that.

Q: What is your background and how did you come to Arkansas?

A: I earned my undergraduate and law degrees in Florida. I am currently working towards a Master of Public Service degree from the University of Arkansas Clinton School Of Public Service. Prior to joining the AOC, I worked with the Center for Arkansas Legal Services (CALs) as their pro bono coordinator, and with pro se litigants at the reference desk of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law Library.

Q: Do you have a background in helping victims of domestic violence?

A: Before going to law school, I worked as a domestic violence victim’s advocate and research intern for the Special Prosecutor in the Office of the State Attorney, 10th Judicial District in Bartow, Florida. While working toward my law degree, I consulted for the Domestic Violence Unit of the prosecutor’s office in Buenos Aires, Argentina. I also interned with the Domestic Violence Family Law unit of Memphis Area Legal Services and the Family Safety Center of Shelby County in Memphis.



Rebekah Tucci is the new Domestic Violence Coordinator.

Q: What do you do in your role as the program director?

A: My job is to educate the judiciary and its stakeholders in the area of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual assault. I also serve as the point person for judges and their staff for questions regarding laws in the area of domestic violence. I coordinate efforts between the courts and law enforcement, court services,

probation and corrections, prosecutor coordinators, victim witness coordinators, and clerks' offices throughout the state to find innovative ways of providing more effective and efficient processes to help judges make decisions in the area of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking.

Q: You said that the judiciary is crucial to end domestic violence. What did you mean?

A: We must do a better job as a judiciary to hold batterers accountable and support victims. The effective adjudication of domestic violence cases requires an understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence; the context of the battery within the relationship; and the ability to assess lethality and dangerousness of the victim/perpetrator relationship.

Judges must have the ability to support victims' need for safety, support, and autonomy, while at the same time holding batterers accountable for their conduct and providing them opportunities to change their abusive behavior. This absolutely reduces the incidence of domestic violence deaths.

The courthouse is where citizens rely on the impartiality of judges; the zealous advocacy and competent representation of lawyers; and the solid investigation and evidence-gathering of law enforcement. However, all too often, without proper education and collaborative coordinated systems in place, batterers continue to batter and victims die.

Q: How do we achieve this? What resources do we lack?

A: In the past several months this has been the overarching conversation. Here are the needs we have been discussing:

- Batterer's intervention programs with statewide standards for the curriculum, instructors, best practices, and a certification process for these programs.
- Evidence-based tracking of batterer's intervention programs. Judges must be sure they are sending the batterers to the right program and know that that program has a proven track record.
- A way to provide domestic violence advocates to victims seeking orders of protection.
- Coordinated and collaborative efforts between law enforcement, probation, the prosecutors, public defenders, and the private bar associations.
- A better way to track orders of protection throughout the state.
- Cross-training and re-training of everyone who handles domestic violence cases--from first responders to judges and everyone in between.
- Better ways to track escalation of violent behavior and recidivism in cases.
- Collaboration, coordination, and communication of regional domestic violence homicide prevention task forces.
- More formal services for victims who have limited English-language skills.
- Generally, judges are in a better position to make decisions when the litigants who appear before them have representation, and when everyone on the other side of the bench provides the judge with evidence upon which to base good sound decisions.



Q: Who are you working with?

A: Right now I am working with the National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence and the resources provided by the National Center for State Courts. In Arkansas, I am working with the Arkansas Domestic Violence Advisory Committee of Judicial Council, the Arkansas Court Improvement Program, Arkansas Court Information Systems, Arkansas Court Interpreter Services, Legal Aid of Arkansas and the Center for Arkansas Legal Services, the Young Lawyers Division of the Arkansas Bar Association, the Clinton School of Public Service, the Arkansas Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and the Arkansas Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

The resources I have been developing range from evaluation of my own program to a domestic violence handbook; implementation of an incubator program to collect data related to domestic violence offences; educational materials for teen dating violence information and prevention; educational materials on the dynamics of domestic violence for the private bar; educational materials on communication techniques and the use of lethality assessments for law enforcement and probation officers; and best practices bench cards for the entire Arkansas judiciary.

Q: When you came to Arkansas, what was your plan?

A: My ultimate goal, after finishing my Master's Degree at the Clinton School, was to set up a program similar to the Family Safety Center of Shelby County in Tennessee that would provide victims of rape and domestic violence with wrap-around services. Those are services that would include access to legal advice and counsel, including services to help deal with all the ramifications of violence.

For most victims, getting orders of protection, talking to law enforcement and prosecutors, locating shelter, clothing and employment, and finding transportation is all too daunting a task to actually leave the abuser. The idea was to create a safety net for victims to leave and not go back. States that have implemented this



program successfully have witnessed dramatic reductions in perpetrator recidivism, domestic violence homicides and suicides, and reduction in victims returning to their abusers. The reality is, that for reductions to happen both professionals and nonprofessionals must work together to build a support system to halt the onslaught of violence and death experienced by the entire community when family violence occurs.

Q: What is the thing that is most misunderstood about victims of domestic violence?

A: There seems to be a plethora of misinformation about domestic violence victims. Mostly, it comes down to victim blaming and shifting the focus away from the abuser and onto the victim. It is so much easier for communities to look at the victim and focus on what the victim should do rather than look at the abuser and figure out how to hold them accountable for their behavior. The power and control relationship is a top-down relationship just like our justice system. If not

handled properly, the courts can revictimize the victim and empower the batterer to keep battering. We have to figure out better ways to communicate with victims to provide them with resources and a solid safety net so they do not have to return repeatedly to their abuser. Moreover, we need to figure out ways to be better leaders in our communities and not stand by and watch while abuse, harassment or violence happens. We need to figure out ways to confront violence and to respond individually and collectively. Ultimately, I think the question needs to be different because while victims come in all shapes and sizes, all classes, colors, races, creeds and philosophies, there is one constant: the abuser. The thing is that abusers have the same mode of operation – they use power and control tactics to get what they want. The most misunderstood thing about domestic violence abusers? They need to learn how to control their anger. The reality is that physical violence and angry outbursts are tools abusers use to gain control and submission over their victim. When we think about it this way, it is less about the angry outbursts and more about power and control and the abusers thought process.

Q: What is your vision for AOC’s Domestic Violence Program?

A: To have a program that supports a well-educated judiciary, with judicial experts in every region of the state who are focused on reducing the rates of domestic violence homicides.

Q: If you had all the money and resources you needed, what would you do?

A: I would make sure that every part of the state had domestic violence response and homicide prevention teams whose members are experts in the area of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. These teams would coordinate and collaborate on efforts throughout that region. There would be family justice centers all over the state where domestic violence victims and their families were provided with wrap-around services. Community partners and domestic violence programs and batterer’s intervention programs would be preventative and reactive.

Q: Have there been any changes in the laws involving domestic violence?

A: Yes, there have been a few. The Domestic Abuse Act of 1991 was amended to include “in-laws” in the definition section of “family or household members” §9-15-103(4). The State Legislature also passed and the Governor signed, “Laura’s Law” (Act 877) which requires law enforcement officers to use a lethality or danger assessment when responding to a report of domestic violence and “Laura’s Card” (Act 873) which requires first responders to provide a victim or a victim’s family with information on victim’s assistance, rights, compensation, protection and access. Also signed into law was Act 876 which requires law enforcement to investigate complaints or accusations of domestic violence in a way that does not require victim testimony or victim centered evidence. Finally, Act 952 which requires that dating violence awareness is added to the educational curriculum taught in health course in grades 7-12.



For more information, please contact Rebekah Tucci,
Domestic Violence Program Director, at:
rebekah.tucci@arkansas.gov.



APPEALS on WHEELS



Justice Courtney Goodson meets with local school children during Appeals on Wheels in Mountain Home.

Meet the Justices

The Arkansas Supreme Court traveled to Mountain Home for oral arguments in April as part of their Appeals on Wheels program. After oral arguments, justices met with 275 students from Norfolk, Cotter, Flippin, and Mountain Home schools to talk about oral arguments, the roles and responsibilities of a judge, and how courts work.

Appeals on Wheels is a Supreme Court outreach program designed to educate students about their state government. Twice a year, the court travels the state to hold oral arguments outside of Little Rock and meet with students to answer questions about the appeals process.

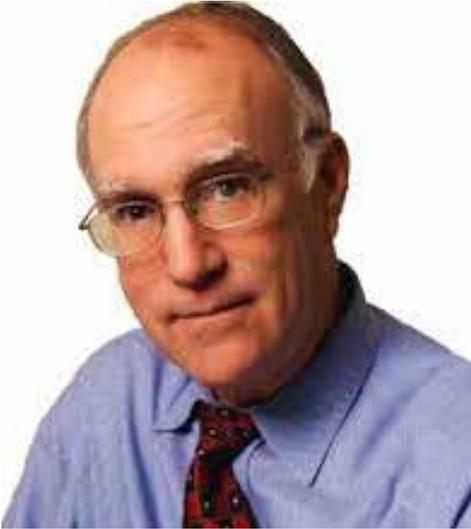


This year, the Administrative Office of the Courts is celebrating its 50th anniversary. A special issue of *Arkansas Court News* will be featuring content focused on this achievement.

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.

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Judge Vic Fleming



District Judge Vic Fleming.

Judge Vic Fleming, Little Rock District Court Judge, has been busy during his 19 years on the bench. During his long career, he's filled a variety of roles including adjunct professor, musician, writer, and crossword puzzle creator. He shares his story below.

Q: Did you always want to be a judge?

A: When I was in law school, Professor Ken Gould, in a 3rd year course called "Client Counseling" carved out a 15 minute period at the end of one class to jot down your ideal legal career. 14 minutes later I was still looking at a blank sheet of paper. So I jotted down "1/3 trial practice, 1/3 judge, 1/3 professor." I kept that sheet with me and looked at it every year for 15 years, asking myself the question, "Are you going to be true to this?" Along the way, I was a trial lawyer. The truth of the matter is, 90% of my work was real estate related and litigation so I was the least likely person in the world to become a traffic judge. In the 16th or 17th year of my practice, I perceived that this position was going to become open and I had concluded that if I was going to become a judge, I was going to have to run for election. I didn't really want to run for election but through some prayerful consideration and consultation with my family, I decided I would run for this position and I was lucky enough to get elected.

Q: How did you get to where you are today? Where did you go to school?

A: I went to Davidson College, outside of Charlotte, North Carolina, for my undergrad. I majored in English. When I was a kid, my mother always told me, "You need to be a lawyer because you love to argue." I wanted to be a teacher and a writer. In fact, after undergrad school, I applied to and was accepted into a Master's Program in English at the University of North Carolina. I had a friend who was finishing up his PhD in English, which was the route that I wanted to take, and he couldn't find a job. So I investigated the job market and thought, "This is horrible," and I withdrew from that English program before it started. I called my mother and said, "Okay, I'm going to apply to law school." She was nice enough not to gloat. During the next year I took the LSAT and applied to law school at the Bowen School of Law.

Q: What would you be doing if you weren't a judge?

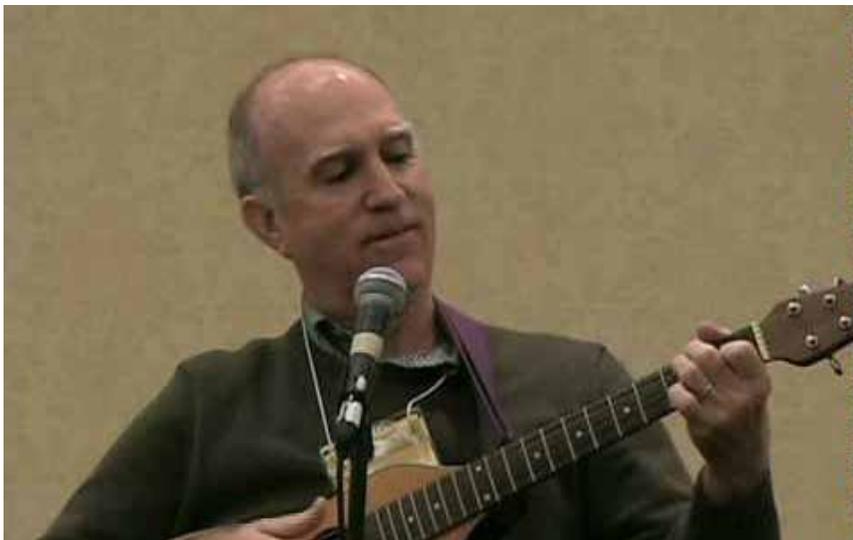
A: I would probably still be practicing law. I might have found a way to make the jump to academia. Roughly 5 years after becoming a judge, I signed up to audit a course at the law school called "Law and Literature." I got a call from the academic dean and he said, "The professor has had a medical problem and is not going to be able to teach this semester and I want you to teach it instead." So I said I'd do it under one condition - that we get the other guy back next year -- and he said, "Done." Well, the other guy took early retirement and I've been teaching it every year since 2003.

Q: When you're not at work, what do you like to do?

A: I like to play golf, play the guitar and write music, and I write crossword puzzles. I've become a grandfather in the past two years so when I get a chance, I like to go visit my grandkids, as well as visiting with other extended family.

Q: How did you start creating crossword puzzles?

A: My mother got me started working them when I was probably in junior high. She worked them from time to time and because she did them, I did them. Even before then, I liked to draw mazes as well as doing work quizzes and word play so maybe crossword puzzles were my destiny. Then, in law school, I started occasionally making a puzzle and it would take me three or four hours to make a puzzle that broke all the rules. I realized that was going to be way too time consuming so I said, "I'm going to put this on hold while I have a legal career." So, 25 years later, in the year 2003, I asked myself, "When are you going to get back to these things that you said you were going to do?" And one of them was crossword puzzles. So I hunkered down at the computer one night, reviewed all the rules of crossword puzzles, figured out how to print something off so I could draw my own grid, and I made a puzzle that week and submitted it to the *New York Times*. I did the same thing the next week and the next week and the next week. After a month, I got an email telling me that all my puzzles had been rejected. The same thing happened the next month. Finally I got a note from Will Shortz telling me that I was real close but I was never going to get there if I didn't get a mentor. Once I got into it, [my mentor] showed me how making a crossword puzzle is a lot more like writing a term paper than it is drawing a picture on a piece of paper. Basically the year 2004, I hunkered down at my computer every night -- about 3 hours a night for several months -- teaching myself and letting others teach me everything that I needed to know if I really wanted to publish crossword puzzles. By the time my first one was published, I had 10 or 15 more accepted. I had created a monster that now needed to be fed.



District Judge Vic Fleming performs with his guitar, one of his many talents.

Q: What's the most interesting thing that's ever happened to you while writing puzzles?

A: I decided I would go to the American Crossword Puzzle Tournament for the first time in March 2005. I knew that there would be a talent show and I applied to be one of the 12 acts in the talent show. After being accepted, I wrote a song about crossword puzzles called "If You Don't Come Across, I'm Gonna Be Down." It turns out, that was the year they were shooting the movie *Wordplay*, a documentary. The filmmakers kept my song in the movie, licensed the rights, and

used the song in the closing credits.

Q: Where are your puzzles published?

A: I have one a month in the *Rotarian Magazine* and one a week in the *Little Rock Daily Record*. The *Daily Record* has a sister newspaper, the *Hamilton County Herald* and the publisher of those two syndicated the

puzzles to two other papers, the Memphis Daily News and the Nashville Ledger. So every week my puzzle is in four court and commercial papers. That's 64 puzzles a year that I'm under contract to create.

Q: What advice do you have for those interested in crossword puzzle creation?

A: Get a mentor. I was never going to get there if I hadn't gotten a mentor. I believe in mentorship on a lot of different levels.

JUDGES' BUD?

By Victor Fleming

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38						39				

Across

- 1 Give a head signal to (2 wds.)
- 6 "Hardball" network
- 11 Bridge bid, briefly (2 wds.)
- 12 The bounding main
- 13 Pro ___ (to such an extent; Lat.)
- 14 Passover month
- 15 With 30-Across, non-party who might submit a brief (2 wds)
- 17 ___ cup (to-go container)
- 18 "As ___ sharpens ___, ..."
- 22 90-degree shape
- 23 "I'm at the ___ of my rope"
- 25 Space walk, to NASA
- 26 "If all ___ fails ..."
- 28 Irish dog
- 30 See 15-Across (2 wds.)
- 32 Nebraska's most populous city
- 35 Celebrity with a book club
- 36 Turn away
- 37 Al ___ (not too soft, as pasta)
- 38 "___, ___" ("It's going to be all right")
- 39 County northeast of London

Down

- 1 Having a price (2 wds.)
- 2 Winning every time, say (3 wds.)
- 3 Accused one's cries
- 4 Chipped in?
- 5 Canadian \$2 coin
- 6 Like early Elvis albums, for short
- 7 Robert A. Heinlein's genre
- 8 Former Sega competitor, for short
- 9 "___, ___, black sheep"
- 10 Wolf Blitzer's ainer
- 16 Thick as a brick
- 19 Kickoff runbacks, or IRS forms
- 20 Stuffed oneself
- 21 Church passageway
- 24 Work out a cryptogram

Down

- 27 Cousin of chloroform
- 29 Gets likkered up
- 31 ___ and hearty
- 32 Scrap of food
- 33 "It could be pretty boring"
- 34 Jungle swinger

Portrait Unveiling for *Chief Justice Jack Holt, Jr.*

April 21 was a monumental day for the judiciary as Retired Justice Jack Holt, Jr. unveiled his official judicial portrait, 20 years in the making, before more than 150 of his family and friends at the Justice Building in Little Rock.

Justice Holt, arguably one of the most influential Arkansas Supreme Court Justices, retired in 1995 after serving the Supreme Court as Chief Justice for 10 years. Justice Holt created the Judicial Disability and Discipline Commission, aided in expanding the Arkansas Court of Appeals from six members to twelve, and created the drug courts, which he considers “the highlight of my tenure as Chief Justice.” Prior to his time on the Supreme Court, Justice Holt served in the Air Force and practiced as a trial lawyer in Little Rock.

Justice Holt’s wife, Jane Holt, is the artist behind his official portrait. Holt is an award-winning Little Rock artist, founding member of the Portrait Society of America, and associate member of the Oil Painters of America. She has works in many national and international collections, including the Arkansas



Justice Jack Holt’s portrait, painted by his wife, Jane, hangs in the lobby of the Justice Building.

Court of Appeals, the Arkansas Governor’s Mansion, and the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute. Her work has been featured in *Southwest Art*, *Americian Art Collection Magazine*, and other publications. “Most portrait painters do not share the privilege of painting a Justice of any Supreme Court, but our situation is unique since I am a professional painter and I married Jack Holt,” Jane said. “The honor of painting him and appearing before this court is mine.”

The portrait is symbolic in many ways. In it, Justice Holt stands in the Supreme Court courtroom, where

he sat for 10 years. He is holding a gavel, a symbol of the authority and responsibility he carried during his tenure as Chief Justice. From the signature hangs a set of keys, a nod to the fact that Justice Holt is notorious for misplacing his keys.

Retired judge Jack Lessenberry introduced Justice Holt and gave a summary of his career and achievements, saying “Perhaps late Justice Tom Glaze said it best... ‘Jack was an outstanding chief in the way that he did not only have a full understanding of the law but he was, in essence, a reformer.’”

Chief Justice Jack Holt’s portrait was unveiled by his grandchildren in the courtroom and officially received by the Arkansas Supreme Court Historical Society. A brief reception followed.

The official portrait now resides in the lobby of the Arkansas Supreme Court Justice Building in Little Rock along with an exhibit featuring the life and works of Justice Jack Holt. The Justice Building is open to the public Monday through Friday, 8am to 5:00pm.

CLERK of the YEAR

elizabeth hulse



Elizabeth Hulse, 2015 District Court Clerk of the Year.

Elizabeth Hulse, Chief Court Clerk in Centerton, was named the 2015 District Court Clerk of the Year at the District Judges Spring College/ District Court Clerks Annual Meeting in Little Rock.

The Clerk of the Year award is given by the Arkansas District Court Clerks Association to an individual who has made significant contributions to the profession of court clerk. To be nominated for this achievement, a clerk must be an active member of the Association for at least five years, exhibit leadership, and provide service to other clerks. Hulse has served the Centerton District Court for over 13 years, trains and mentors other clerks, and has been assisting the Little Flock District Court while their chief clerk recovers from emergency surgery, all while maintaining a full work load and being a mom to three very busy boys. She is a leader and goes above and beyond to help others.

Hulse was recognized for her achievement at the Association's award luncheon, held during the conference on April 24.

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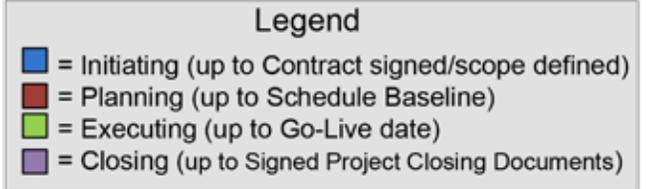
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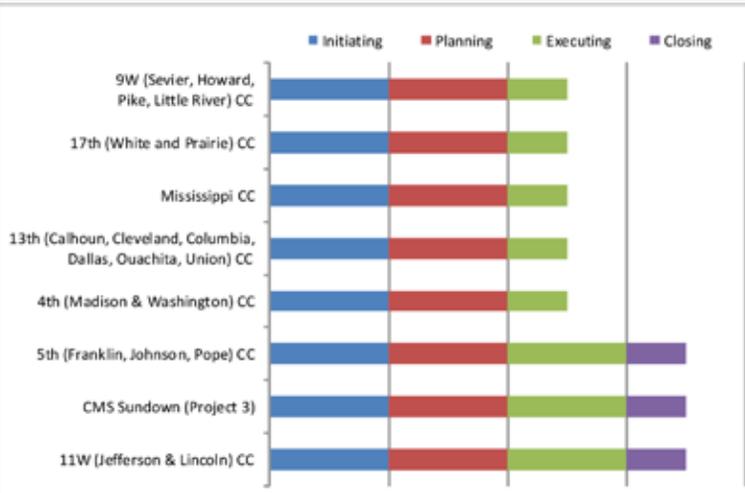
ACAP project update

(arkansas court automation project)

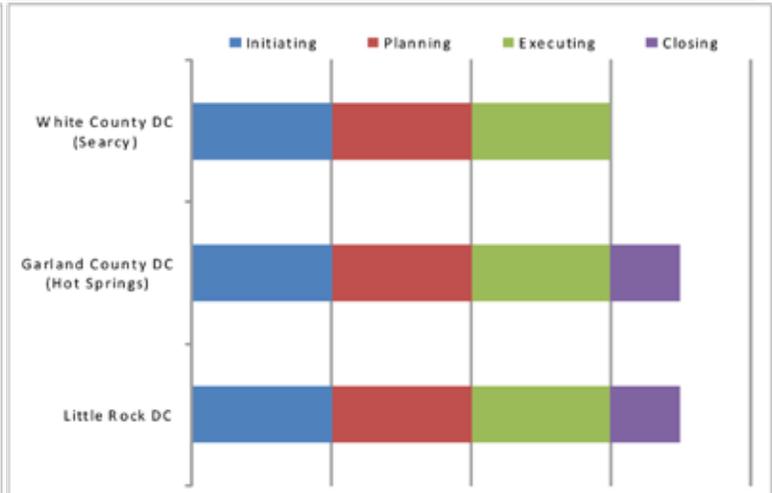
CIS Division Projects Progress at a Glance Week of May 19, 2015



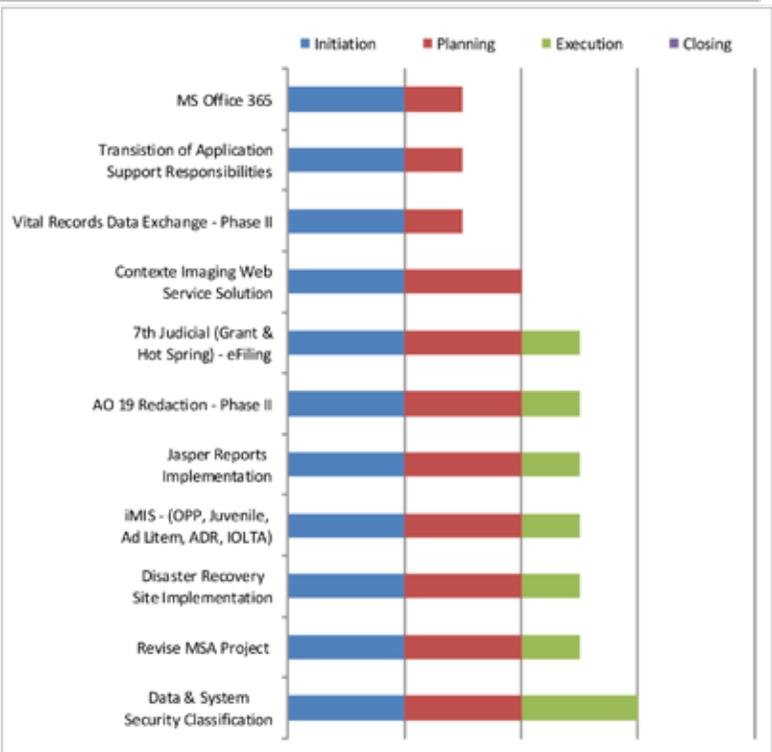
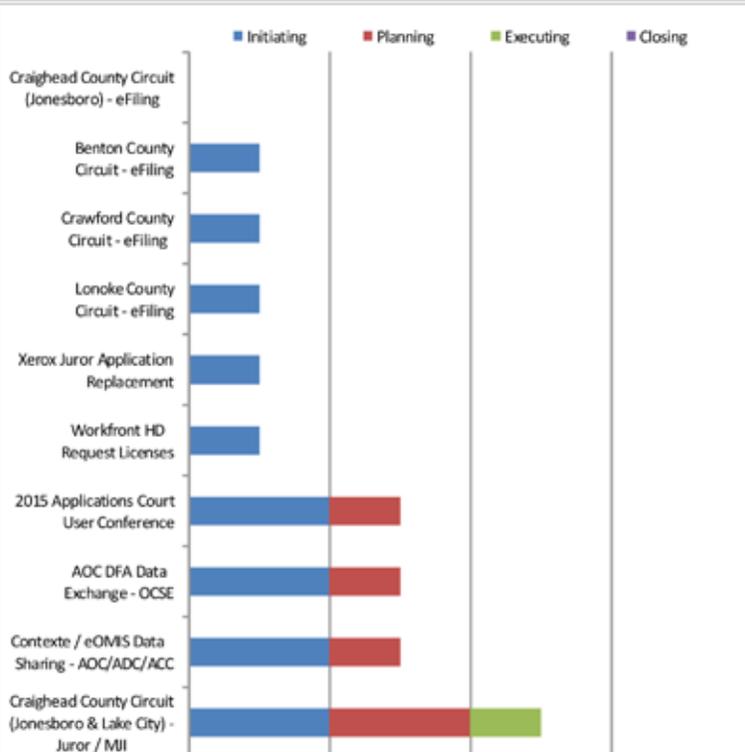
Contexte Implementation - Circuit Courts



Contexte Implementation - District Courts



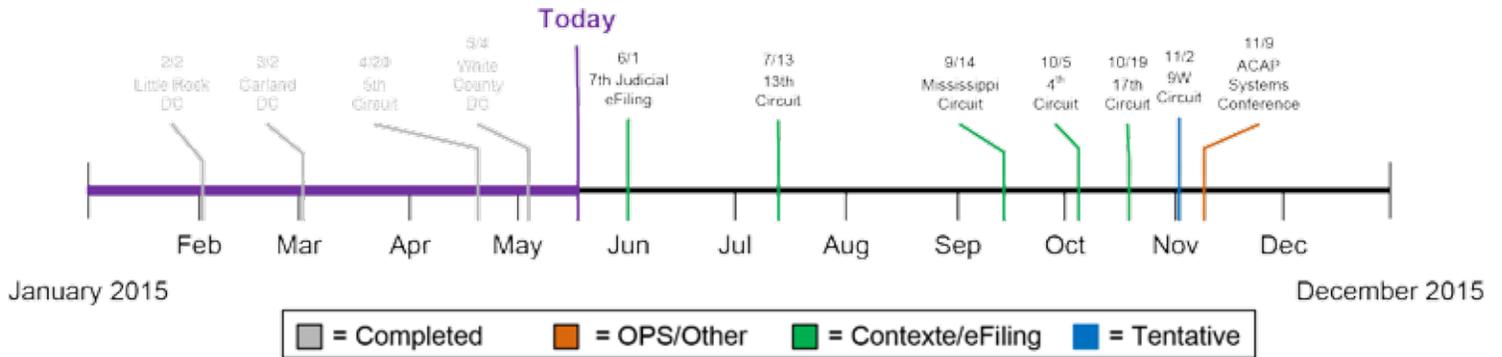
Other ACAP Projects



ACAP project update

(arkansas court automation project)

Go Live Dates 2015



STUDENTS VISIT JUSTICE BUILDING



Supreme Court Justice Paul Danielson meets with City Year volunteers and students from Mabelvale Elementary during a tour of the Justice Building on May 7. The tour, part of the celebration of Law Week, was set up through City Year and the Pulaski County Bar Association.

New Faces

AOC

Teanna Thompson - Project Manager

Jeanie Stobaugh - Human Resources Assistant Manager

Trial Court Assistants

6th Circuit - **Cycle Blackmon**

Court Reporters

6th Circuit - **Cycle Blackmon**

6th Circuit - **Patti Rice**

19th Circuit - **Lisa K. Wisdom**

District Clerks

Jackson County - **Tabitha Johnson**

Lincoln County - **Carmen Davis**

Lonoke County - **Danielle Meridith**

Washington County - **Sherri Curry**

Mississippi County - **Darla Atchley**

Woodruff County - **Della Fobbs**

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@arkansas.gov

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

July

Juvenile Probation Officer Certification (Little Rock)	13-16
Legal Interpreting Seminar (Little Rock)	16
ADR Commission Meeting (Little Rock)	17
40 Hour Basic Mediation Training (Little Rock)	20-24
Access and Visitation Orientation (Little Rock)	31

August

CMP Class '17 "CaseFlow Management" (Little Rock)	3-5
Chief District Court Clerk Conference (Hot Springs)	14
Southwest Arkansas CME (Pine Bluff)	14
CMP Class '16 "Purposes & Responsibilities of Courts" (Little Rock)	19-21
Last Chance CME (Little Rock)	25
CMP Class '15 "Managing Financial Resources" (Little Rock)	26-28
Court Interpreter Candidate Orientation (Little Rock)	28

September

Access and Visitation Advance (Little Rock)	11
Oral Proficiency Candidate Preparation Workshop (Little Rock)	12
District Judges Fall College (Texarkana)	17-19
Initial Qualification Training for Domestic Relations/Probate Attorneys Ad Litem (Little Rock)	21-22
20 Hour Mediation Training (Little Rock)	30