

To: The Honorable Chief Justice of Pennsylvania and Honorable Justices of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania and to the Citizens of the Commonwealth

I am pleased to present this Report of the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts for 2000. Our goal is to provide a general reference document that reflects the hard work and dedicated service of the Administrative Office and the boards and committees of the Supreme Court.

Within this report we have attempted to outline the array of programs and services that provide the framework of our effective judicial system. This report also serves to highlight noteworthy accomplishments in the administration of justice that took place during what was both a very busy and productive year.

The judiciary continued to move in the direction of improving service, access and the administration of justice for all Pennsylvanians in 2000.

Among the year's highlights was the successful and efficient transition of 175 senior county court administrative staff into state service -- a move that became effective on January 1, 2000, according to guidelines established in legislation passed during the previous year by the General Assembly. Various human resource and organizational issues were occasioned by the transfer of these staff over the course of the year.

Another noteworthy event was the Supreme Court's creation -- also with funding provided by the General Assembly -- of a committee to study the subjects of race, ethnicity and gender as they arise within Pennsylvania's courts.

The judiciary also continued to make strides in statewide court automation to help manage its diverse and substantial caseloads. Of particular significance was the successful implementation in December 2000 of the Pennsylvania Appellate Court Case Management System (PACMS) for the Supreme, Superior and Commonwealth Courts.

Preface
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The ultimate goal in automating Pennsylvania's judicial system remains a fully integrated case and financial management system at all court levels to effectively perform judicial record keeping, collect fines, fees and costs and provide a timely and accurate statewide court case data link.

Other automation accomplishments during the year included first phase implementation of the Administrative Support Application Project in August 2000. The system replaced an outdated accounting/payroll/human resources computer network with one that is able to serve the judiciary's existing and projected computerization needs.

The year also marked the starting point for efforts to upgrade the District Justice System to Criminal Justice Network or JNET standards and needs. The effort underscores the judiciary's interest in developing and implementing modern technology for use both independently and as an integral part of the executive branch's JNET initiative.

Allowing Philadelphia Municipal Court civil cases to be filed electronically over the Internet for the first time was another example of how the state court system improved service and accessibility through automation during the year. The move made the claims process easier for citizens and their attorneys while providing an alternative to a largely manual system that generated tons of cumbersome paperwork into the municipal court system each year.

In 2000 the Supreme Court adopted a new Code of Civility to underscore the importance of courtroom conduct in resolving cases and upholding the dignity of the legal profession.

I was honored to be named Court Administrator of Pennsylvania on a permanent basis toward the end of the year after having served as acting state court administrator since January 2000.

The judiciary takes great pride in demonstrating through this report to you the challenges and changes faced by the courts and how they are being met through our efforts to provide effective service, access and justice for all Pennsylvanians.

Sincerely,



ZYGMONT A. PINES

Acting Court Administrator of Pennsylvania