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1990 Annual Report of the Municipal
Court.

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Filed March 5, 1992
Norward Brooks, City Comptroller
By Margaret Carter
Deputy

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REPORT O

Honorable President:

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The Municipal Court of Seattle

1992 MAR -5 TH 3:48
CITY CLERK

Clerk

NORWARD J. BROOKS Seattle City Comptroller RECEIVED						
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March 2, 1992

Mr. Norward Brooks, Comptroller
City of Seattle
Municipal Building
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Mr. Brooks:

I am pleased to present the Seattle Municipal Court 1990
Annual Report. If you have any questions or comments, please
contact Court Administrator Chuck Foster, 684-8707.

Sincerely,

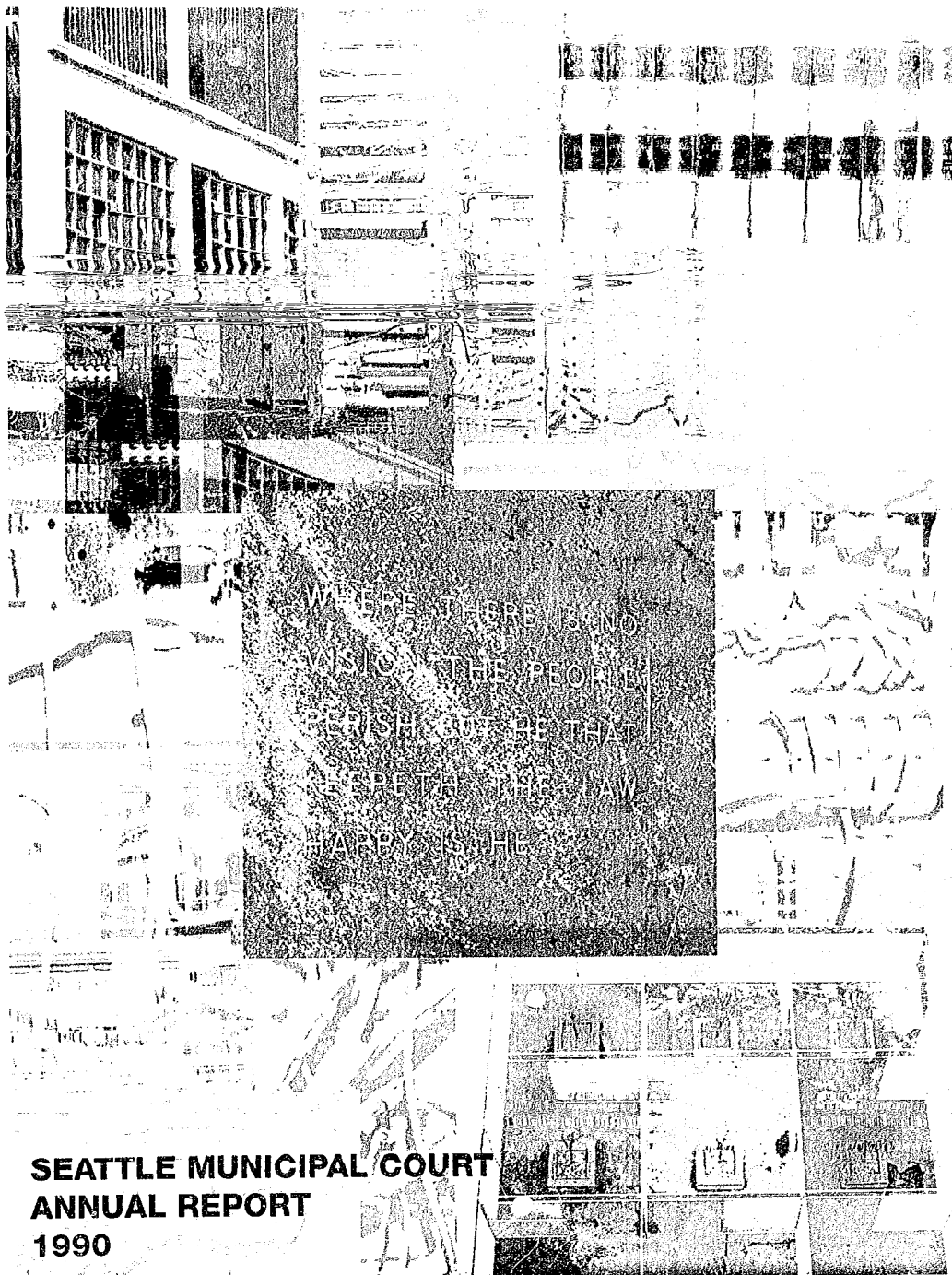
Barbara Madsen

Barbara Madsen
Presiding Judge

BM/FG/kp

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**SEATTLE MUNICIPAL COURT
ANNUAL REPORT
1990**

NEW JUDGES

In 1980, the Seattle City Council authorized a fifth judge for the Municipal Court bench. In 1990, the ninth and tenth Seattle Municipal Court judges were appointed, doubling the number of judges in just 10 years. The two new judicial positions were part of the City's Public Safety Action Plan (PSAP). The PSAP authorized an increase in the City's Business and Occupation tax to finance additional police, prosecutors, and courts. City voters approved the plan in 1989.

Mayor Norm Rice appointed C. Kimi Kondo and Stanley Taylor to fill the new judicial positions in April 1990. Judge Kondo was already serving at the Court as

a magistrate. Judge Taylor was the City's acting hearing examiner at the time of his appointment. (Both judges ran for election in 1990. Judge Kondo was elected to a four year term; Judge Taylor was defeated. Judge Fred Bonner was sworn in on November 30, 1990.)

The two new judges were necessary to increase the Court's capacity to hear jury trials and to preside in the Court's jail courtroom on evenings and week-ends. The new jury trial court had a significant impact. The Court heard 600 jury trials in 1990 compared to 515 jury trials in 1989.

COLLECTIONS

From 1980 through 1989, nearly four and one-half million parking citations were written in Seattle, an average of more than nine citations for each Seattle resident. Not surprisingly, some people neglected to pay for their citations. By 1989, unpaid parking citations represented millions of dollars of potential revenue. During the 1990 budget process, the City Council directed the Court to begin using a collection agency to collect on delinquent parking citations.

State law requires prior notice be given to a debtor before an account is referred to a collection agency. The Court began its collection effort in February 1990 by sending demand letters. The demand letters listed outstanding citations, requested payment, and informed violators their accounts would be sent to a collection agency if the citations were not paid. Demand letters were sent for parking citations written prior to February 1990. Citations issued after February included notice about collection practices.

During 1990, the Court sent more than 100,000 demand letters, representing 215,000 delinquent citations with a value, of \$6,662,000, including

delinquent penalties. Revenue from demand letters reached \$1.34 million by the end of 1990, a collection rate of over 20%. In December 1990, the Court contracted with a collection agency for the next phase of the collection process. Collection efforts through the collection agency were begun in January 1991.

While the Court was pursuing delinquent parkers through mainstream collection efforts, the Court's warrant office assigned one warrant officer to focus on parking scofflaws. More than 1,000 offenders were identified as having at least 20 outstanding parking citations. The warrant parking specialist contacted the scofflaws by telephone and mail. In flagrant cases, the warrant officer requested the City Attorney's office to issue arrest warrants for failure to appear. Although fewer than 10 offenders were actually arrested for parking warrants, the threat of a warrant was often enough to convince scofflaws to pay the citations or arrange for time payments. In one notable case, a scientist doing research in Antarctica mailed a check from Chile to satisfy unpaid parking citations.

CREDIT CARDS



Revenue cashier Leslie Brinkman uses a customer's Visa card to record a fine payment.

Since November 1990, Seattle Municipal Court cashiers and clerks have been asking, "Do you want to pay with cash, check, or charge?" The Court accepts Visa or Mastercard to pay for parking and traffic citations, court ordered fines, and even for bail if a defendant is booked into jail on a Municipal Court offense. Citizens using credit cards are subject to a minimum \$5.00 service charge, payable to the vendor providing the service, in addition to the fine or bail.

During the first full month of having credit cards available, December 1990, the Court had 45 credit transactions with a total value of \$17,909. By comparison, Court cashiers handle more than 10,000 transactions per month. Credit card bail posting transactions at the jail averaged \$715 each and fine payments averaged \$166 per transaction. The Court does not expect credit cards to provide a significant source of revenue or transaction volume, but credit cards do provide a service alternative to Court customers at no cost to the City.

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EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARDS



Beverly Tratnik

always supported the mission statement and goals of the Court. She has dedicated herself to the Court for more than 30 years. She has always accepted responsibility and serves the public as well as her staff."



Janet Jepson

recognition for a job well done."

Freddie Mae Gautier, records manager, was described as "so helpful to all people, regardless of their status in life, she is a 'goodwill ambassador' for the Court. She sets an example for all City employees in going the extra mile to listen, research, and get back to the public in a professional yet courteous manner."



Yvette Carter

In 1988, the Court established an Employee Recognition Awards Program. Employees nominate their peers in five award categories: High Performance, Special Project, Public Service, Special Achievement, and Valor. Nominations are evaluated by the Recognition Committee, which selects a recipient for each award. This year, the third year of the Recognition Program, the Committee received a record number of nominations. The nominees selected were Beverly Tratnik, High Performance; Janet Jepson, Special Achievement; Freddie Mae Gautier, Public Service; Glenn Jordan, Special Project; and Yvette Carter, Valor.

The High Performance Award recognizes an employee for sustained high performance, productivity, and for positive contributions to the Court environment. Beverly Tratnik, revenue supervisor, as described on one nomination, "has

Glenn Jordan, probation counselor, was selected for the Special Project Award, which recognizes an employee for performance on a special project/program outside the scope of their normal duties. Glenn was selected for his work as staff to the Court Safety Task Force. "(Glenn's) energy, effort, and initiative were superb," wrote one nominator. "I believe Glenn's presence on the task force was one of the main reasons for the group's success."

The Special Achievement Award recognizes an employee for a special achievement such as developing a new procedure that reduces paperflow, task performance time, and costs. The Court assigned Janet Jepson, revenue cashier, to help develop a new collection program for delinquent parking citations. Janet was recognized for both her skills and abilities: "Setting up the Collections Unit for parking citations has required someone with intricate knowledge of the parking system, citations, and data processing - all of which Janet has. She was extremely instrumental in this project, all without asking for praise or

The Valor Award recognizes an employee for heroic deeds in an emergency situation. Yvette Carter, scheduling clerk, found herself in the middle of an emergency situation when an altercation broke out among several people during an administrative hearing in a courtroom. No judge was present but Yvette helped to break up the disturbance and restore order to the courtroom. Yvette received the Valor Award for her courageous response to a very unusual occurrence.



Glenn Jordan



Freddie Mae Gautier

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Work can be as subtle as a good description of the fragrance of a single blossom, or as awe-inspiring as the thunderous roar of a steel mill. But, whatever the work, if it is honest work, performed with pride, then the world will be better because of it.

MUNICIPAL COURT INFORMATION SYSTEM



Creating and implementing the Municipal Court Information System was a group effort joined by scores of Unisys Corporation employees and contractors and Court employees. Representatives of both groups are pictured.

Several years of planning and development came to fruition on November 26, 1990 when the Court began operating its new Municipal Court Information System (MCIS).

MCIS planning started in 1985 but actual development began in June 1989 under a \$3.4 million turn-key contract with Unisys Corporation. MCIS is a comprehensive case management computer system that supports all activity related to criminal and traffic infraction cases filed in the Seattle Municipal Court. MCIS enabled the Court to replace three separate computer systems which supported case processing, parking, and revenue accounting. MCIS also replaced personal computer applications that supported time payments and restitution. Converting from existing systems to MCIS involved information on 406,000 defendants, 956,000 cases, 870,000 parking citations, 35,000 warrants, 1,020,000 financial transactions, 507,000 vehicles, and 13,000 hearings, plus many other types of records from several source computers.

The Court worked closely with Unisys during MCIS development, providing project management, systems analysis, and assigning several Court employees as "user analysts" to provide input about user needs for various operational functions.

MCIS features a menu driven on-line system with functionality to schedule hearings, track case events, support all revenue functions, and maintain warrants. The system also includes subsystems that manage parking tickets and track case files by using bar codes. Unlike many court case management computer systems, MCIS has the capability to schedule all types of hearings automatically and from any location in the court. When a scheduling transaction is initiated, MCIS allows users to choose from a list of available times and dates displayed on the screen or have the

system automatically set the hearing. In the date selection process, the system considers the business needs of the Court, availability of the defendant, availability of the primary arresting officer(s), and the availability of other case participants. MCIS also indicates whether a time period in a particular courtroom (a "slot") is over-or under scheduled and permits the clerk to override pre-set capacity limits. Hearings for traffic and parking tickets are scheduled automatically through a batch entry process. Defendants and some participants are automatically notified of the hearing date.

MCIS offers a variety of features which are well suited to supporting court operations. MCIS creates a docket with a complete record of events for each case including all revenue transactions; the MCIS data base includes a ten-year defendant history of Seattle Municipal Court cases; new events can be entered on-line in courtrooms; informal traffic and parking hearings are conducted on-line through terminals on each of the Court's six magistrates' desks. The system interfaces with the State of Washington Department of Licensing for information on drivers' and vehicle registrations and the Washington State Patrol's ACCESS network where Municipal Court warrants are maintained along with state criminal records. MCIS provides a complete revenue and accounting subsystem which supports cashiering, mail-in payments, time (installment) payments, trust accounts, restitution, balancing, and journal entries for the City's central financial management system.

Seattle Municipal Court will continue to refine and enhance MCIS to better suit our needs and involve more Court users as MCIS plays an increasingly important role in the Court's future.

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The Municipal Court of Seattle

December 14, 1991

To the Citizens of Seattle, Mayor Norman Rice, and the City Council:

As required by the City Charter, I am submitting the Municipal Court of Seattle Annual Report for 1990.

The Court began the new decade by laying a foundation for its future: the new Municipal Court Information System (MCIS) began operation after several years of planning and development; we developed a new case file folder to replace a system in use since 1973; two new judicial departments were added to the Court, doubling the number of judges the Court had in 1980; and the Court implemented a new collection program which helped increase revenues to record levels. During this year of new beginnings, a long chapter in the Court's history was ending: Judge Barbara Yanick, a Seattle Municipal Court Judge since 1974, decided to end her tenure at the Court.

This annual report highlights some of the achievements, challenges, and changes of 1990. The shortcoming of an annual report is that it can only hint at the magnitude of change experienced by Court employees. Neither space nor time allows an annual report to capture the day-to-day operation of the Court, with all its excitement and tedium, human drama and comedy, the continual change and the enduring constancy which defines the Court. Those of us who work daily at the Court have grappled with major transformations during the past decade, and 1990 is no exception. To the casual observer, however, the Court, like the old Volkswagen Beetle, looks remarkably the same from year to year.

The steady progress of the Seattle Municipal Court is a tribute to its employees. Each year since 1988, the Court's annual report has featured the recipients of the Court's Recognition Awards. The employees who received awards were chosen by their peers for making outstanding contributions to the Court. Their efforts are certainly worthy of recognition and I join in commending them.

I believe every Court employee has earned recognition. Scores of people were involved in making MCIS a reality. Many others worked for hours on the new case files, the collections program, and the Safety Task Force. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge all of the Court's employees, without whose efforts the Court could not function, much less meet the ever changing demands of our City.

Sincerely,

Barbara Madsen

Barbara Madsen
Acting Presiding Judge

SMC FACT SHEET 1990

STAFFING	
Judges	10
Magistrates	6
<u>Support Staff (FTEs)</u>	232.82
Full-time	214
Part-time	36
FILINGS	
DWI	2,537
Criminal	35,364
Traffic, Criminal	22,898
Traffic, Infraction	100,153
Parking	471,227
PROCEEDINGS	
<u>Arraignments Scheduled</u>	
In-custody	37,385
<u>Hearings Scheduled</u>	
Pre-trial Hearings	31,286
Motion Hearings	567
<u>Jury Trials</u>	
Scheduled	6,602
Heard	600
<u>Bench Trials</u>	
Scheduled	2,715
Heard	388
<u>Contested Hearings</u>	
Scheduled	1,911
Heard	992
FINANCIAL	
<u>Revenue to City</u>	\$12,118,375
Parking	\$8,020,799
Criminal & Traffic	\$4,097,576
Revenue to State	\$2,638,310
SMC Adopted Budget	\$11,783,507
PROBATION	
Avg Counselor Caseload	223
<u>New Cases</u>	
Total	3,334
Deferred Prosecution	508
Domestic Violence	878
PR Interviews Conducted	5,945
PR Release Granted	1,072
% PR Release Granted	18%
WARRANTS	
<u>Bench Warrants Issued</u>	
Total	36,244
DWI	2,496
Domestic Violence	1,882
<u>Bench Warrants Cleared</u>	
Total	30,854
DWI	2,506
Domestic Violence	2,004

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COURT SECURITY

Despite the high potential for violence at Seattle Municipal Court and the large numbers of criminal defendants, an uneasy "peace" had prevailed. That peace was broken on May 9, 1990 when a violent incident erupted in a courtroom during intake proceedings. Intakes are administrative hearings with no judge present, but the entire Court was shocked that the "sanctuary" of a courtroom had been violated. The Court had recently requested additional funding to provide police security for the intake calendar but that request had been denied. The intake incident was clear evidence the Court's concern had been well founded. Fortunately, no Court employees or court related personnel were injured but the incident underscored the need to re-examine court security.

The Court immediately arranged for a police officer to be assigned to the intake hearings. A Court Safety Task Force was quickly formed to study safety at the Court and make recommendations. The Task Force was chaired by Judge Nicole MacInnes with members drawn from the Court, Seattle Police, and the Department of Administrative Services. The Task Force conducted a security audit of Court facilities and surveyed court employees about safety concerns.

The Task Force findings and recommendations were compiled in a report issued in August 1990.

Several Task Force recommendations were implemented very quickly: restricting evening access to the Court building; improved lighting in some public areas; installing additional locks; contracting with an armored car service to transport receipts from the Court to the Treasurer's office. The City Council authorized an emergency appropriation for facility improvements recommended by the Safety Task Force.

In the 1991 budget process, the Court received funding to purchase additional locks and to hire Court Marshals. The marshals are armed security officers, who will replace off-duty police officers at several Court hearings. The Court has also formed a permanent employee safety committee which will serve to monitor safety issues at the Court. Judge MacInnes serves as the committee chair.

The Seattle Municipal Court has been fortunate for many years to have avoided the serious incidents that have plagued other courts across the country. That good fortune combined with increased preparation, will hopefully combine to ensure many more uneventful years at the Court.

CENTRAL FILES



Court employees find the new files and filing system easier to use.

The Municipal Court docket was created in 1973, when the court began using a computerized main-case processing system. The docket was a case record, pre-printed with a defendant's name, address, charges, case number, and other relevant information. As a case progressed through the system, case actions and the results of each successive hearing were duly recorded on the docket by hand. Any attachments were stapled to the docket, so this versatile document served as a case file as well as a case record. All was well as long as the number of case

actions, hearings, and attachments remained small, which they did until the mid 1980's.

During the 1980's, the Court gradually transformed from a court hearing mostly bench trials to a court hearing mostly jury trials. With the jury trials came additional hearings and more attachments. Each hearing was dutifully recorded on the docket and each

they could serve as paperweights. Some dockets had enough staples to set off an airport metal detector. Dockets were no longer read they were deciphered; one no longer leafed through attachments, one excavated, much like an archeological dig.

In 1988, the Court received assistance from a consultant to evaluate records management at the court. The consultant was provided through the EMT Adjudication Technical Assistance Project. The consultant recommended adoption of a case file folder or jacket and the use of a central file area. The consultant also recommended forming an "infoteam" to design the file folders and plan the central file area and procedures.

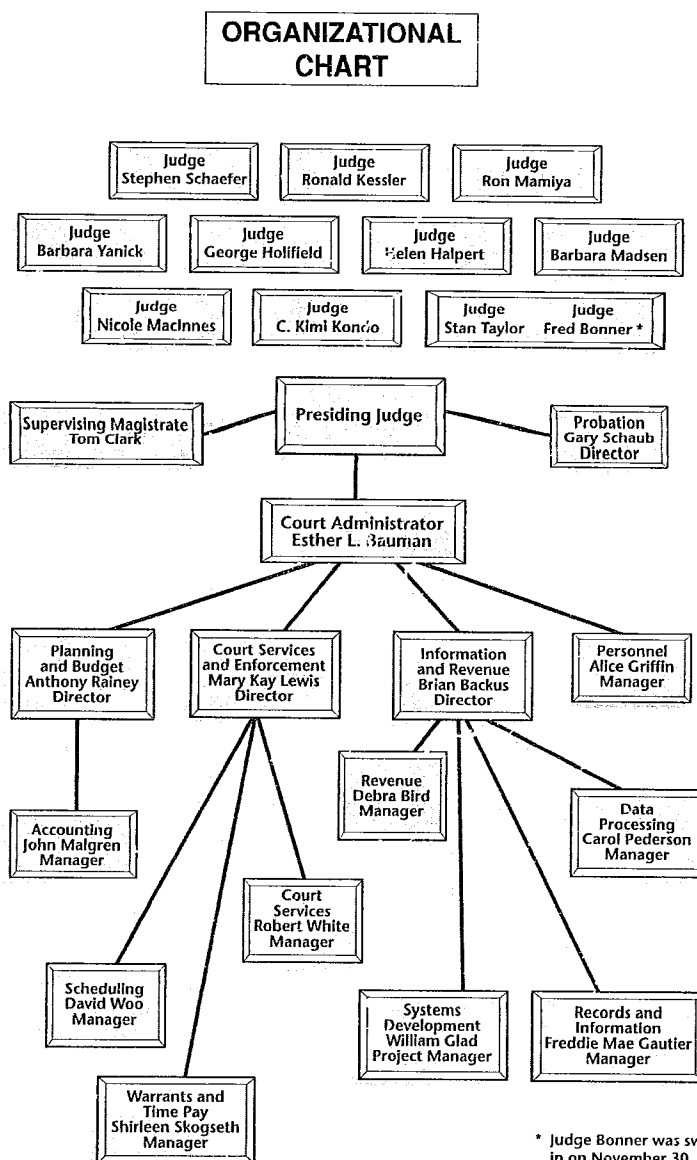
The Court formed an "infoteam" which began work late in 1988. The "infoteam" included staff from throughout the Court. Most members used case files in their work. The team decided to use pre-numbered file folders and a terminal digit file system. The last three digits of the case number are color coded to improve the accuracy of filing. Folders are bar-coded for use with a computer based file tracking system. The "infoteam" also decided to limit the use of case file folders to criminal cases. This decision was based on the prohibitive cost of using folders for all cases, the limited amount of space for filing, and the expectation that the Court's new computer system would eliminate many of the documents used for infraction cases. The Court began using the new file folders on January 16, 1990.

Some elements of centralized filing remain to be implemented. The Court still lacks sufficient space to keep all records in one place so files have not been

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attachment was dutifully stapled on the back, usually with multiple staples. When space on a docket became scarce, an overlay was taped or stapled on to provide more room to write. Many dockets had several overlays. Some dockets were so thick with attachments

they centralized. The bar-code file tracking system is not yet in use. These are issues which the Court hopes to resolve during 1991. Overall, the new file folders and the changes in the filing system have been positive steps toward improving the Court's records management.



* Judge Bonner was sworn in on November 30, 1990

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JUDGE YANICK RETIRES



Judge Barbara Yanick

Judge Barbara Yanick, the Seattle Municipal Court's senior judge, chose to leave the bench at the end of 1990 after 17 years of service. Judge Yanick, appointed to the bench in 1973, decided not to run for re-election due to poor health. She was the first woman to serve on the Municipal Court bench. Judge Yanick served several terms as presiding judge at the Court, most recently this year, 1990.

Judge Yanick left her mark both on and off the Municipal Court bench. She was elected president of the American Judges Association in 1986, the first woman to hold that position. She led a delegation of judges to Israel and to the Peoples' Republic of China, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Japan. She also was a member of the U.S. delegation to the U.S./China Joint Session on Trade Economics, and International Law in Beijing. She served on several national boards and panels on the subject of domestic violence. She was a member on the National Institute of Justice Advisory

Board on Civil Protection Orders in Domestic Violence cases.

Although she was seriously considered for appointment to the King County Superior Court bench, Judge Yanick preferred the complex human issues of Municipal Court to the complex legal issues of Superior Court. On the bench Judge Yanick displayed a combination of straight-talking no-nonsense confrontation tempered with compassion and curiosity about the human condition.

Judge Yanick often used the authority of the bench to confront the behavior of those who appeared before her. "A judge represents society," she said. "The judge can tell a domestic violence batterer, 'Society will not stand for your behavior.'" Judge Yanick did not demur from labeling defendants alcoholics. Her head-on approach was designed to capture the offender's attention so he/she could hear the judge's other message. "If you try to make people feel some pride in themselves," she said, "if you can set them up so that they can accomplish something, then they begin to feel, 'I am not a bad person, I can do it.'" I am willing to work over and over again with someone who will keep trying." Her persistence often paid off. Judge Yanick received numerous letters from former offenders who credited her for inspiring them to make significant changes in their lives.

Judge Yanick often used the same direct approach with attorneys. Her approach was not always well received. State Supreme Court Justice Charles Z. Smith (former Associate Dean of the University of Washington Law School who administered the clinical law program and the University Defenders Service) had many students practice at Municipal Court. "I would say Judge Yanick would not win any popularity contest among my students," Smith said. He went on to say, "If I were to administer a survey, I think the overall assessment of my students would be that she is fair, knowledgeable, and bright, and that's all we're really looking for."

While Judge Yanick's record includes many accomplishments, it is her humanity that makes her truly stand out.

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