



MONTGOMERY COUNTY
COMMON PLEAS COURT
ANNUAL REPORT
2025



GENERAL DIVISION | JUVENILE DIVISION
DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION
PROBATE DIVISION | CLERK OF COURTS

To the Citizens Of Montgomery County:

On behalf of the judges and staff of the Montgomery County Common Pleas Court, I am honored to present the 2025 Annual Report. This report reflects not only the scope of our work, but also the responsibility we carry each day to ensure that justice in our community is fair, accessible, and responsive to those we serve.

The work of our court is as varied as Montgomery County itself. Across its divisions, the court addresses complex legal matters that have a direct and lasting impact on individuals and families. From serious criminal cases and high-stakes civil disputes to sensitive family matters and issues involving children and other vulnerable members of the community, each division plays a distinct role in upholding the rule of law. Supporting this work is the Clerk of Courts, whose office provides the foundation for accurate recordkeeping and public access to court services.

Over the past year, the court has continued to evolve our operations in deliberate ways. We have focused on strengthening internal processes, expanding programs that address the underlying causes of legal involvement, and improving how we deliver services to the public. These efforts include enhancements in case management, continued development of specialized dockets, and strategic investments in technology designed to increase efficiency.

Equally important is our commitment to the experience of those who come before the court. The administration of justice is not defined solely by outcomes, but by the fairness, clarity, and respect demonstrated throughout the process. We strive to foster an environment where all individuals are treated with dignity, which I believe is evident in the information you will find in these pages.

This report represents the collective efforts of judges, magistrates, and staff across four divisions. I invite you to review the pages that follow to learn about our work and progress over the past year. It is a privilege to serve Montgomery County, and we remain committed to carrying out our duties with integrity and purpose.

Respectfully,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Wiseman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop on the letter 'y'.

Mary Wiseman
Presiding Judge
Montgomery County Common Pleas Court



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ABOUT THE COMMON PLEAS COURT

The Common Pleas Court possesses constitutional and statutory power. The Montgomery County Common Pleas Court consists of four divisions that provide timely and equitable service to the citizens of Montgomery County. Each of the divisions has a unique role in the judicial process. Collectively, the Court is dedicated to delivering superior service to promote public safety, corrections, rehabilitation, family law, probate, and civil justice. The courts work on joint programs and projects designed to provide cost effective solutions for our citizens. We provide the best Court system in the State of Ohio.

There are 16 Judges on the Montgomery County Common Pleas Court. The Judges are elected to, and conduct their work in, one of the four divisions. In some instances, the Presiding Judge will assign a Judge from one division to another for specific cases.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMON PLEAS COURT

GENERAL DIVISION ■ 11 JUDGES

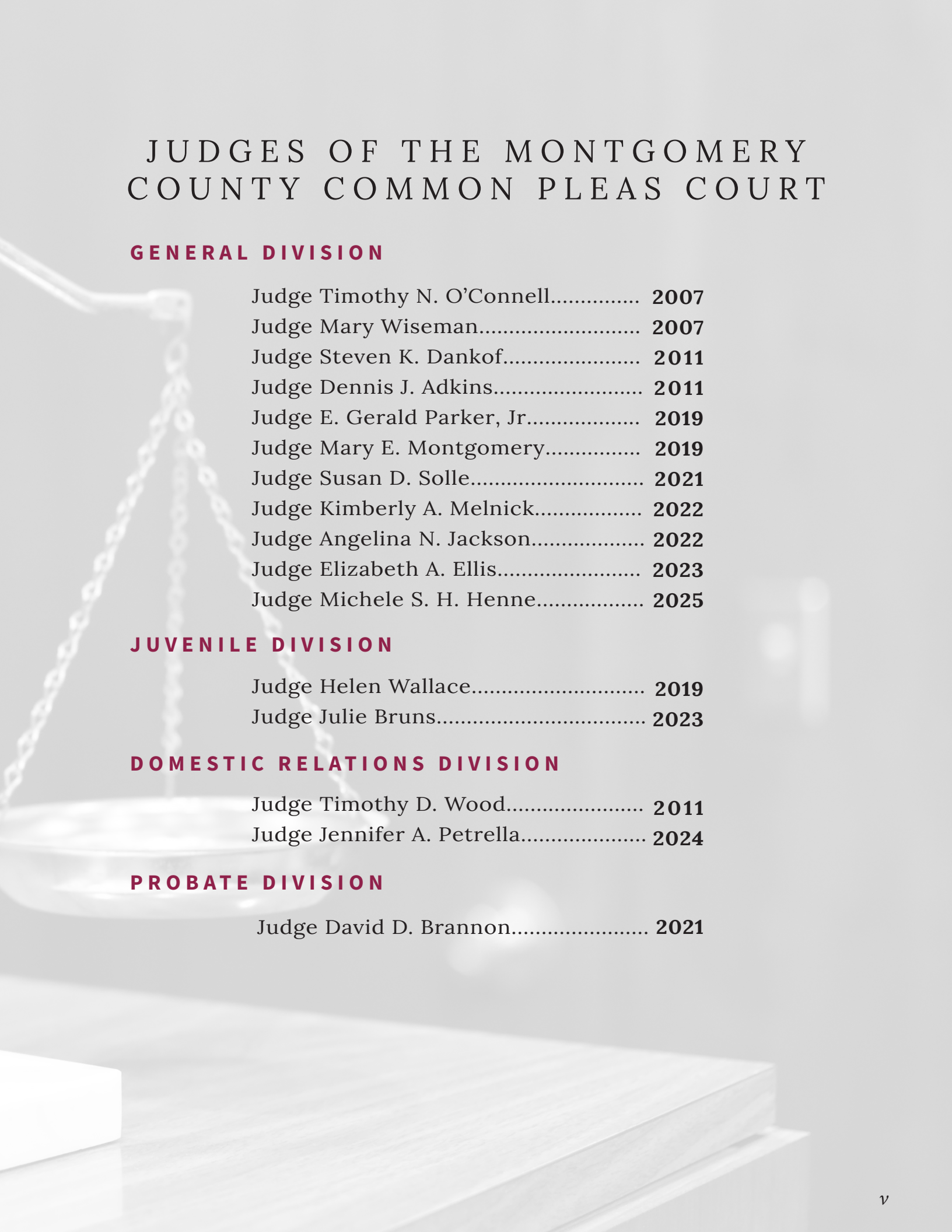
JUVENILE DIVISION ■ 2 JUDGES

DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION ■ 2 JUDGES

PROBATE DIVISION ■ 1 JUDGE

JUDGES OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMON PLEAS COURT

GENERAL DIVISION



Judge Timothy N. O’Connell.....	2007
Judge Mary Wiseman.....	2007
Judge Steven K. Dankof.....	2011
Judge Dennis J. Adkins.....	2011
Judge E. Gerald Parker, Jr.....	2019
Judge Mary E. Montgomery.....	2019
Judge Susan D. Solle.....	2021
Judge Kimberly A. Melnick.....	2022
Judge Angelina N. Jackson.....	2022
Judge Elizabeth A. Ellis.....	2023
Judge Michele S. H. Henne.....	2025

JUVENILE DIVISION

Judge Helen Wallace.....	2019
Judge Julie Bruns.....	2023

DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION

Judge Timothy D. Wood.....	2011
Judge Jennifer A. Petrella.....	2024

PROBATE DIVISION

Judge David D. Brannon.....	2021
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GENERAL DIVISION

ABOUT THE GENERAL DIVISION

The General Division of the Montgomery County Common Pleas Court is a trial court of general jurisdiction that provides prompt, fair, and just resolution of litigation in civil and criminal cases. The General Division Judges preside over bench and jury trials involving civil litigation as well as felony criminal cases.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission: Together we provide fair and efficient justice under the law for all.

Our Vision: We will provide innovative and high quality court services to the people of Montgomery County.

Our Goal: To assure the administration of justice, we will draw on the experience and knowledge of our court employees and community partners.



HONORABLE MARY WISEMAN

*ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE, Montgomery County
Common Pleas Court, General Division*

Judge Wiseman was appointed to the General Division bench in 2007, and was most recently elected to a new, six-year term in November 2022.

Judge Wiseman received her B.S. from Ball State University in 1984 and her J.D. with honors from the William H. Bowen School of Law at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 1988.

Prior to her judicial service, Judge Wiseman practiced complex civil litigation in state and federal courts nationwide. She has taught at the University of Dayton School of Law and Sinclair Community College. She served on the Dayton City Commission from 1998-2002.

Judge Wiseman is a past President of the Dayton Bar Association, the Greater Dayton Volunteer Lawyers Project, the Carl D. Kessler Inn of Court, and the Dayton Bar Foundation. She serves as the Administrative Judge of the General Division. She is the Presiding Judge of the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas.

Judge Wiseman is a member of the Ohio State and Dayton Bar Associations, and a trustee of the Ohio Common Pleas Judges Association. She is admitted to the United States Supreme Court and numerous other federal courts at the trial and appellate level.

She is a past trustee and member of a diverse array of community groups, and has received numerous awards and recognitions for civic and professional accomplishments.



**HONORABLE
TIMOTHY N.
O'CONNELL,**
*JUDGE
Montgomery
County Common
Pleas Court,
General Division*

Judge O'Connell was elected a General Division Judge in 2006. He serves on the Probation, Pretrial and Investigative Services and Case Management Committees. Judge O'Connell received his B.A. from the University of Dayton in 1977 and his J.D. from the University of Dayton School of Law in 1980.

From 1980-1990, Judge O'Connell was in the private practice of law. He maintained a general practice with Baver, Messham & Bookwalter Co., L.P.A., initially, and then with Ensley & Eilerman Co., L.P.A. In 1990, Judge O'Connell was appointed as a Referee in the General Division. He served in that position for 16 years with the last three years as Chief Magistrate.

Judge O'Connell serves on the Board of Trustees of Nova Behavioral Health. He also serves on the Executive Committee for the Ohio Judicial Conference. He is a member of the Ohio State and Dayton Bar Associations, and the Carl D. Kessler Inn of Court. He serves on the Judicial Advisory Board of the MonDay CBCI.

Judge O'Connell has taught continuing legal education seminars for the Dayton Bar Association, Ohio Association of Magistrates and the Ohio Common Pleas Judges Association. He is a former member of the Board of Trustees of the Ohio Association of Magistrates.

General Division 2025 IN REVIEW

JUDGE MICHELE S. H. HENNE APPOINTED TO THE BENCH

Judge Michele S. H. Henne took the judicial oath of office on July 21st following her appointment to the General Division bench. Judge Henne officially assumed her duties on July 30th.

Judge Mary Wiseman presided over the ceremony, which took place in the Montgomery County Courts Building, and Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney Mathias H. Heck administered the oath. Judge Kimberly A. Melnick and Greene County Prosecuting Attorney David Hayes gave remarks.

Judge Henne worked as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney in the Criminal Division of the Greene County Prosecutor's Office for six years, and as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney in several divisions of the Montgomery County Prosecutor's Office for twelve years. She attended Washington University in St. Louis and the University of Dayton School of Law.

JUDGE WISEMAN RECOGNIZED AT FINAL RISE COURT GRADUATION

A standing ovation and a gift box full of her favorite treats greeted Judge Mary Wiseman as she entered the courtroom to preside



Judge Michele S. H. Henne took her judicial oath of office after her appointment to the bench in July.



Left: Judge Wiseman at her final RISE Court graduation. Right: Mediators gathered for a luncheon with staff and judges at the end of Mediation Week in October.

over her last Recovery IS Empowering (RISE) Court graduation ceremony. For the past three years, Judge Wiseman has headed RISE Court, a specialized docket for female offenders with substance use disorders. The room was emotional as Judge Wiseman expressed her gratitude for her term in RISE Court, and more emotional still as seven women graduated from the program, each standing before the court to give advice to their fellow participants and speak about the lifesaving support they had received.

In January, Judge Mary Montgomery took over as the designated judge of RISE Court. RISE Court continues its mission of supporting female offenders with substance use disorders through accountability, treatment, and support, and Judge Montgomery brings thoughtful leadership to that work.

JUDGES AND STAFF GATHER TO HONOR MEDIATION WEEK

The court celebrated Mediation Week from October 27-31, recognizing this court service that is free to the public and helps to resolve civil disputes.

“Mediation Week is an opportunity to raise awareness in our community about this valuable resource within the Montgomery County Common Pleas Court,” said Judge



HONORABLE STEVEN K. DANKOF, JUDGE
Montgomery County Common Pleas Court, General Division

Judge Dankof was appointed as a General Division Judge by then Governor Ted Strickland on December 30, 2010. Judge Dankof was elected to the Bench in 2012, and thereafter re-elected in 2014 and again in 2020. Judge Dankof is the Men’s Achievement Recovery Court (MARC) Judge and a member of the court’s Probation, Pretrial & Investigative Services Committee. He received his BBA summa cum laude from Ohio University in 1973 and his JD with Honors from the University of Texas at Austin’s School of Law in 1976 where he also received The Order of the Coif. Judge Dankof has frequently lectured for the Ohio Common Pleas Judges Association, the Ohio State and Dayton Bar Associations, and the University of Cincinnati’s Honors College and School of Law. Judge Dankof is the author of Extreme Cruelty – the Complicity of Judges in the Shame of Wrongful Convictions, and a moving force behind An Evening for Justice – an annual event in Dayton, Ohio to benefit the work of the Ohio Innocence Project.

Susan Solle. “By providing parties with the option to work directly with a neutral, trained mediator, it empowers individuals to take charge of their disputes and find solutions that work for them, all while saving time and resources.”

Civil cases, including matters such as personal injury and contractual disputes, are often expensive and lengthy to resolve through the traditional trial process. Mediation offers an alternative to resolve disputes faster, with less expense than a trial, and greater input by the parties to the case. This valuable mediation service is provided to the General Division’s civil cases without any extra charge or cost.

The court held a Mediator Appreciation Luncheon to show appreciation for the court’s twelve mediators. Also in attendance were Judge Wiseman, Judge Solle, Judge Melnick, and Judge Henne, as well as the court’s Mediation Program staff.



Judge Adkins, pictured with his staff, celebrated his retirement at the end of 2025.

COURT HONORS JUDGE DENNIS J. ADKINS AT RETIREMENT RECEPTION

Surrounded by colleagues, friends, and members of the legal community, Judge Dennis J. Adkins celebrated his upcoming retirement at the end of 2025 at a reception hosted by the court.

Appointed to the General Division bench in 2011, Judge Adkins has been a respected and influential voice in the fair administration



HONORABLE DENNIS J. ADKINS, JUDGE

Montgomery County Common Pleas Court, General Division

Judge Adkins was appointed to the General Division bench on June 6, 2011. He received his B.S. from the University of Dayton in 1982, and his J.D. from the Salmon P. Chase College of Law at Northern Kentucky University in 1986.

From 1986 to 2011, Judge Adkins practiced law in the Dayton area, engaging in both criminal and civil litigation. Since 1993, he has served as an Acting Judge in Kettering Municipal Court, and has over 15 years of experience as a special prosecutor in several cities.

Judge Adkins is a member of the American, Ohio, and Dayton Bar Associations, the Ohio Common Pleas Judges Association, and has taught continuing legal education seminars for the Dayton Bar Association. He has also been a frequent lecturer at local colleges, including the University of Dayton School of Law, various legal organizations, and other community civic and service groups.

In 2013, Judge Adkins created the first Veteran’s Treatment Court in this area, which was designed to provide treatment and rehabilitation for veterans who have found themselves involved in the criminal justice system due to combat related problems.

Judge Adkins is also Honorary Chair of the Final Salute Society, which assures that no Veteran is buried in Montgomery County without a representative at the grave site to receive the American flag for the veteran’s service to this country.

of justice throughout his tenure. Over more than a decade on the bench—and decades of legal service before that—he earned the admiration of his community for his integrity, professionalism, and perhaps most of all, his work championing veterans’ causes.

Among his many contributions, Judge Adkins is particularly proud of his role in founding the area’s first Veterans Treatment Court in 2013. Through this work, he helped ensure that justice was paired with treatment and support for veterans impacted by service-related challenges.

PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

Dedicated. Passionate. Committed. These are a few of the words colleagues used in their nominations leading to this year’s Professional Excellence Award winners, Alvin Stokes and Terra Bechtol.

The winners, who combined have over 47 years of service at the General Division, were announced and recognized at the court’s Employee Appreciation Luncheon to overwhelming applause. Staff may nominate a colleague for a Professional Excellence Award for consistently high performance in one’s duties, for superior achievement of a special project, for



Professional Excellence Award winners Alvin Stokes and Terra Bechtol.

exemplary display of a positive attitude, or for a combination of all three.

As a Probation Programs Coordinator, Alvin was recognized for his unwavering support for his clients’ growth.



HONORABLE E. GERALD PARKER JR.,
JUDGE
Montgomery County Common Pleas Court, General Division

Judge Gerald Parker was elected to the Common Pleas Court Bench, General Division, in November of 2018, taking office in early January of 2019. He serves on the Probation, Pretrial & Investigative Services and Case Management Committees. Judge Parker received his B.A. from Georgetown College (KY.) in 2004 and his J.D. from Salmon P. Chase College of Law at Northern Kentucky University in 2007.

From 2007 to 2011, Judge Parker was an Assistant Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney spending a majority of his time on felony dockets. In 2012, Judge Parker joined the civil litigation team with the Dayton firm of Dyer, Garofalo, Mann & Schultz. He was appointed as juvenile magistrate for Montgomery County Juvenile Court in 2016.

Judge Parker is a member of the Ohio State and Dayton Bar Associations, the Ohio Common Pleas Judges Association, the Ohio Black Judges Association, and the Carl D. Kessler Inn of Court. He serves as Board President for Building Bridges, Inc., and on the board for the Salvation Army.

He is a member of numerous community organizations and received both Dayton’s Top 10 African-American Male Award and WHIO Channel 7’s Making a Difference Award. Judge Parker became Montgomery County’s first African-American male elected to serve on the Montgomery County Common Pleas Court Bench. Judge Parker often volunteers at various churches, schools and community organizations.



Court staff participated in several classroom speaking engagements, community initiatives, and information fairs in 2025.

A colleague stated, “His passion and commitment are deeply rooted in giving clients the opportunities to rebuild, contribute, and be more than their past.”

Terra, a Probation Services Manager, was lauded for her thoughtful leadership style and management of day-to-day operations, with one staff member saying, “Her meticulous work ensures accuracy and high standards, a quality her peers and supervisors praise for its consistency.”

OUTREACH EVENTS EDUCATE COMMUNITY ON COURT’S MISSION

In 2025, the General Division participated in many outreach events throughout the Dayton community. These events were opportunities to educate the public on the court process and highlight many different areas of court operations as the occasion required, as well as provide resources and answer questions. The court also



HONORABLE MARY E. MONTGOMERY, JUDGE

Montgomery County Common Pleas Court, General Division

Judge Montgomery was elected to the Common Pleas Court Bench, General Division, in November 2018 after serving nearly 21 years as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney with the Montgomery County Prosecutor’s Office. During her tenure with the Prosecutor’s Office, she served, among other positions, as a Supervising Attorney at Care House, prosecuting felony crimes involving physical and sexual abuse of children, as well as a Trial Supervisor, training and managing trial attorneys on multiple judges’ criminal dockets. Judge Montgomery then

served as Chief of the Civil Division, where she and her staff represented the County and all its departments and agencies, as well as the elected officials, in various administrative and civil matters, including civil defense litigation.

Judge Montgomery graduated summa cum laude from Ohio University in 1994, receiving her B.A. in Political Science. She received her Juris Doctor in 1998 from the University of Dayton School of Law.

Judge Montgomery is a member of the Dayton Bar Association, the Ohio State Bar Association, the Dayton Lawyer’s Club, the Carl D. Kessler Inn of Court, and the Ohio Common Pleas Judges Association. She is currently a member of the Common Pleas Court Case Management Committee, Information Technology Committee, and Courthouse Security Committee, as well as the Criminal Law and Procedure and Court Technology Committees for the Ohio Judicial Conference.

Judge Montgomery is admitted to practice law in the United States District Court, Southern District of Ohio, the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court. When not on the bench, you’ll find her on the soccer field cheering on her three children.

participated in several criminal justice and government career fairs to speak with students about internships and job opportunities with the court. Below is a selection of just a few of the outreach events the court attended in 2025.

- National Night Out in Harrison Township
- Overdose Awareness Day
- GROW Blitz (Getting Recovery Options Working) in partnership with the Riverside Police Department
- Montgomery County & Dayton Public Schools Career Expo
- University of Cincinnati Criminal Justice Career Expo
- Activities at several area colleges and high schools, including University of Dayton, Wright State University, Miami University, The Ohio State University, and Dayton Public Schools

**General Division
COURT OVERVIEW**

**COURT ADMINISTRATION
DEPARTMENT**

The Court Administration Department is the lead administrative department of the Court, and, in conjunction with various judges’ committees, provides oversight to the Information Technology Department,



**HONORABLE
SUSAN D. SOLLE,**
*JUDGE
Montgomery
County Common
Pleas Court,
General Division*

Judge Susan D. Solle joined the General Division on January 1, 2021. She was elected to the position in November 2020.

Before joining the court, Judge Solle was a trial lawyer for 18 years and practiced law with the firm of Dinsmore & Shohl from 2004 until she took the bench. She received her undergraduate degree, with honors, from Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, and her law degree, also with honors, from the University of Dayton School of Law.

Judge Solle’s professional experience also includes working as an acting judge in the Montgomery County Municipal Court, as a judicial staff attorney for Judge James A. Brogan in the Ohio Second District Court of Appeals, and as a law clerk for Judge David G. Sunderland in the General Division.

Judge Solle has served as a board member and president of the Dayton Bar Association, and as board member and president of Legal Aid of Western Ohio and Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, and as board member and president of the Dayton Bar Foundation. She is a member of Ohio State and Dayton Bar Associations, and the Carl D. Kessler Inn of Court. She currently serves as vice president of the board of Nova Behavioral Health. She was also an adjunct professor at the University of Dayton School of Law from 2004-2022. Married for 35 years, Judge Solle and her husband, Jeff, have two grown sons.



**Court
Administration**

Steven Hollon, Court
Administrator
Mary Kay Stirling, Deputy
Court Administrator



HONORABLE KIMBERLY A. MELNICK, JUDGE

Montgomery County Common Pleas Court, General Division

Judge Melnick was elected to the Common Pleas Court Bench, General Division, in November 2022 after serving the majority of her 28-year career prosecuting criminal cases.

Judge Melnick began her legal career with the Montgomery County Prosecutor’s Office in January 1994. In 1998, she went into private practice before returning to the Montgomery County Prosecutor’s Office from 2000 to 2002. From 2002 to 2006, Judge Melnick spent time as a Deputy District Attorney in Jefferson County, Colorado. She returned to Dayton and the Montgomery County Prosecutor’s Office in November 2006.

During her tenure with the Prosecutor’s Office, she served, among other positions, as a Supervising Attorney of the Grand Jury/Intake Division, the Supervising Attorney for the Adult Protection Unit, as a Trial Supervisor, training and managing trial attorneys and most recently as a member of the Violent Crimes Bureau, prosecuting only homicide cases.

Judge Melnick graduated from Wright State University in 1990, receiving her B.S. in Marketing. She received her Juris Doctor in 1993 from the University of Dayton School of Law. Judge Melnick is a member of the Ohio State and Dayton Bar Associations, and the Carl D. Kessler Inn of Court. She is currently a member of the court’s Information Technology and Probation, Pretrial, and Investigative Services Committees.

the Case Management Department, the Pretrial&InvestigativeServicesDepartment, and the Probation Services Department. The department, under the direction of the Court Administrator, and with the assistance of financial resources, human resources, organizational development, and public information staff, implements internal policies and procedures, provides research and advisory services, and works to develop the strategic direction of the Court.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

The Information Technology (IT) Department manages the court’s technology portfolio, programs and special projects, prepares and maintains the court’s IT budget, manages IT procurement and vendor relationships, manages the court’s five-year end-of-life cycle and initiates and participates in any audits, investigations, public record requests, sealed and expunged record court orders, as well as strategic direction from a technological perspective.



General Division Magistrates

Adelina E. Hamilton (2022)

Karen B. Groseth (2025)

2025 Accomplishments

- The IT Department continued work with other stakeholders on a multi-year project to migrate from our existing case management system to a new, state of the art web-based platform developed by Journal Technologies. Configuration and testing will continue in 2026 with an expected “go-live” later this year.
- As part of the end-of-life cycle, the IT Department replaced the court’s existing laptop fleet with 231 new laptops. The new laptops ensure the court provides our staff with up-to-date hardware and software, along with the flexibility to operate anywhere on or off the court’s campus.
- The IT Department deployed a new cloud-based service desk solution for receiving, tracking, and resolving help tickets from court staff. Migrating to this new solution saved the court approximately \$15,000.00 annually while still providing the functionality necessary to manage the IT Department service desk operations.

CASE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

The Case Management Department provides case management services to the court. The functions of the Case Management Department include the collection and reporting of caseload statistics in compliance with the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio, the storage and maintenance of evidence, and the coordination of jury services. Through its Docket Support Section, the Case Management Department monitors judicial criminal dockets and prepares related court entries. The Case Management Department also supports and manages the court’s Magistrate Section, as well as the court’s Mediation, Appointed Counsel, and Civil Stalking Protection Order programs.



**HONORABLE
ANGELINA N.
JACKSON, JUDGE**
*Montgomery
County Common
Pleas Court,
General Division*

Judge Angelina N. Jackson was elected to the General Division in 2022 after practicing law for 18 years.

A Dayton native, Judge Jackson graduated from Colonel White High School. She received her B.A. from Florida A&M University in Tallahassee and her J.D. from the University of Cincinnati College of Law.

From 2015 until her election to the bench, Judge Jackson worked as an Assistant Montgomery County Public Defender. Prior to her employment as a public defender, she was employed at the Ohio Justice & Policy Center, the University of Cincinnati College of Law, and the law firm of Dinsmore & Shohl.

Judge Jackson has volunteered with a number of community service initiatives, including mock trial, community-based legal clinics, the Greater Dayton Volunteer Lawyers Project, and the City of Dayton’s Use of Force Committee. She is a member of the Ohio State Bar Association, the Dayton Bar Association, the Ohio Black Judges Association, the Thurgood Marshall Law Society, and the Carl D. Kessler Inn of Court.

Magistrate Section

The court has two full-time Magistrates who preside over civil matters referred by the Judges of the court, including court hearings and bench trials. Matters of general referral to the Magistrate include presiding over i) petitions for civil stalking protection and sexually oriented offense protection orders, ii) forcible entry and



**HONORABLE
ELIZABETH A.
ELLIS, JUDGE**

*Montgomery
County Common
Pleas Court,
General Division*

Judge Elizabeth A. Ellis was appointed to the General Division bench in June 2023.

Judge Ellis graduated from Denison University in 1997, receiving her B.A. in Communications and English Literature with a concentration in Renaissance Studies. Judge Ellis also studied with the Advanced Studies in England through University College of Oxford, UK, and with the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law Summer Program at St. Anne’s College of Oxford, UK. She received her J.D. from the University of Dayton School of Law in 2001.

Judge Ellis first practiced with Legal Aid of Western Ohio before becoming an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for Greene County, Ohio. Judge Ellis worked for Greene County for 18 years in the Juvenile, Appellate, Criminal, and Civil Divisions, serving as Chief Assistant of the Civil Division for 10 years. In 2021, Judge Ellis was appointed to the Appellate Division in the Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office.

Judge Ellis is a member of the Dayton Bar Association, the Ohio State Bar Association, the Carl D. Kessler Inn of Court, and the Ohio Common Pleas Judges Association.

Judge Ellis is admitted to practice law in the State of Ohio; the United States District Court, Southern District of Ohio; the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals; and the United States Supreme Court. Judge Ellis has volunteered for various community organizations, including the Girl Scouts of Southwestern Ohio, Oakwood Ballet, and the Dayton Ballet School.

detainer cases, iii) replevin actions, iv) property forfeiture actions, v) petitions for court-ordered certificates of title, vi) motions for distribution of excess funds, and vii) proceedings in aid of execution. In

2025, the magistrates handled 2,026 matters for the court, 1,932 of which were general referrals.

2025 Civil Stalking Protection Order Program

The Civil Stalking Protection Order (CSPO) program began in 2001 after an influx of violent crimes in Montgomery County. Since that time, over 20,000 petitions for protection orders have been filed. Many parties seeking protection orders have been, and currently are, the victims of crime and abuse, and, consequently, they present to the court with challenging and demanding circumstances. Staff interview petitioners to determine if they are in the appropriate jurisdiction, assist in completing the necessary paperwork to file with the court, and, if needed, refer parties to outside agencies for additional help. The goal of the program is to ensure that each party, regardless of whether he or she is the petitioner or respondent, feels heard and respected.

- 1,241 petitioners assisted in seeking a protection order
- 1,110 petitions for protection orders filed
- 482 full hearings were held

2025 Jury Services Accomplishments

- 3,023 prospective petit jurors reported for jury selection to hear 65 trials
- 162 grand jurors served from two weeks to four months during 2025
- Petit and grand jury fees for jury service totaled approximately \$141,330

2025 Pretrial & Investigative Services Data

2,141

Presentence Investigation and Intervention in Lieu of Conviction Reports Completed

78%

of Pretrial Supervision Defendants Successfully Terminated

6,577

Felony and Misdemeanor Defendants Screened by Pretrial Screening

75%

of Electronic Monitoring Defendants Successfully Terminated

PRETRIAL & INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES

The Pretrial & Investigative Services Department provides the court with investigative screening and supervision of criminal defendants, as well as the preparation of various reports necessary to the judicial process. Pretrial & Investigative Services Department staff interview

those arrested on new felony and certain misdemeanor charges and recommend bond, conditions of supervision, and other services. Department staff supervises those defendants who are on electronic monitoring and other supervised release arrangements. The Pretrial & Investigative Services Department also prepares reports for the judges,



HONORABLE MICHELE S. H. HENNE, JUDGE

Montgomery County Common Pleas Court, General Division

Judge Michele S.H. Henne was appointed to the General Division bench in July 2025.

Judge Henne graduated from Washington University in St. Louis in 2003, receiving her B.A. in Political Science with a minor in Psychology. She received her J.D. from the University of Dayton School of Law in 2006. Judge Henne serves on the bench as Montgomery County’s first Asian American Judge.

Judge Henne brings years of legal experience to the bench, having served as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney in Montgomery County for approximately 13 years. In May 2019, Judge Henne was appointed to the Criminal Division in the Greene County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office. Judge Henne is admitted to practice in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio and the United States Supreme Court.

Judge Henne is an active member of the Dayton Bar Association, currently serving on the Certified Grievance Committee and the Bar Admissions Committee. Judge Henne is also a member of the Ohio State Bar Association, the Carl D. Kessler Inn of Court, and Dayton Lawyer’s Club. She participates in the Sinclair Community College Criminal Justice Sciences Program Advisory Committee and serves on the board for the Greater Dayton Volunteer Lawyers Project. Additionally, Judge Henne serves as an attorney-mentor through the Ohio Supreme Court Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program.

In addition to her contributions in the legal community, Judge Henne also actively participates in many community organizations. She has served many years as a Homeroom Parent and coached several of her children’s community sports teams. She currently serves as the Vice President of the Oakwood Junior High and High School Parent-Teacher Organization, Secretary of the Oakwood Fine Arts Boosters, and Secretary of the Wright Memorial Library Foundation Board. Judge Henne also volunteers as a tennis coach for the Oakwood Junior High Tennis Team.



Left: Probation staff had an information booth at Overdose Awareness Night. Right: Mariah Davis, Derrick Shepard, Holly Vadnais attended the Ohio Supreme Court Mental Health and Crisis Intervention for Probation Officers.

including those relating to pre-sentence investigations, intervention in lieu of conviction, judicial release, sealing of records, and jail time credit.

Pretrial Screening

- Screened 3,604 felony and 2,973 misdemeanor defendants
- Completed 853 sealing of records
- Completed 3,600 jail time credit reports

Pretrial Supervision and Electronic Monitoring

- Supervised 2,266 felony defendants
- Supervised 399 misdemeanor defendants

Pretrial Supervision defendants had a 78% successful termination rate, and Electronic Monitoring defendants had a successful termination rate of 75%.

Investigative Services

- 1,190 presentence investigation reports completed

- 951 intervention in lieu of conviction reports completed

Staff Accomplishments

- Two supervisors graduated from the University of Dayton Leadership Program.

PROBATION SERVICES

The Probation Services Department provides varying levels of supervision for persons who are convicted of felonies and misdemeanors and sentenced to probation or granted intervention in lieu of conviction. The Department is comprised of the following sections and teams: supervision teams, transport team, specialized docket team, and program coordinators. Services provided by Probation Services include intensive supervision, including specialized supervision for domestic violence cases and sex offender cases, chemical abuse/mental health supervision, evidence-based programming, on-site cognitive based programming, a community service work program, drug intervention services, adult treatment and mental health courts, literacy and education programs and employment opportunities.

2025 Probation Services Data

2,888	\$23,752
Total Probation Population in 2025	Restitution Collected in 2025



Specialized docket staff attended the Supreme Court of Ohio Specialized Docket Conference.

Staff Accomplishments

- Director Carlos Walker received the Vincent Polito Award from the Ohio Chief’s Probation Officers Association for executive leadership.
- Three Probation Supervisors graduated from University of Dayton Leadership Program.
- Two staff obtained their Chemical Dependency Counselors Assistant (CDCA) licenses.
- The Court established Kushinda Court in 2021, spearheaded by Judge E. Gerald Parker, Jr. Kushinda Court is a trauma-informed, culturally responsive, developmentally targeted program for young black males between the ages of 18 and 29. With the increase in program

participants, a second Kushinda Probation Officer position was created.

- An Intensive Probation Officer position was reappropriated to a Risk Reduction Officer to streamline Ohio Risk Assessments for consistency among staff.

2025 Drug and Alcohol Accomplishments

- 7,165 urinalysis tests were administered
- Probation officers receive immediate notification every time their client is tested with the instant urine cups.

2025 Community Service

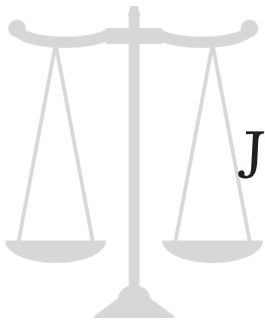
- 672 clients participated in community service work.

Specialized Dockets

General Division Intensive Probation Officers monitor clients who participate in one of five specialized dockets. Specialized Dockets are specifically designed to address particular clients, typically those with severe drug and/or alcohol addictions. In addition, the intensive probation officers who monitor the clients in our specialized dockets have established relationships with several local treatment facilities and organizations that provide therapy and programs to serve the particular needs of these clients.

Specialized Dockets/ Programs	Year Established	Presiding Judge in 2025
Men’s Achievement Recovery Court (MARC)	1996	Hon. Steven K. Dankof
Recovery is Empowering Court (RISE)	2014	Hon. Mary Wiseman
Veteran’s Treatment Court	2016	Hon. Kimberly A. Melnick
Mental Health Court	2019	Hon. Timothy N. O’Connell
Kushinda Court	2021	Hon. E. Gerald Parker, Jr.





JUVENILE DIVISION

ABOUT THE JUVENILE DIVISION

As a division of the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas, the jurisdiction of Juvenile Court extends countywide to children who are alleged to be traffic offenders, delinquent, unruly, neglected, dependent, abused, and/or born to unmarried parents. The Court also has jurisdiction to rule on Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act, and to hear and determine criminal cases that charge adults with violating Ohio Revised Code Chapter 2151. In addition to the two judges and twelve magistrates who preside over official court hearings, there are additional court facilities and departments that serve the community.

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a court of law dedicated to:

- preserving families by supporting parents and intervening only when it is in the best interest of the child and/or community;
- ensuring fairness, equity, and access to justice for all children and families regardless of their ethnicity, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin, gender, or sexual orientation;
- ensuring a balance between consequences and rehabilitation while holding offenders accountable for their actions;
- protecting the children of the community while at the same time ensuring the safety of the community.



HONORABLE HELEN WALLACE, *ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE*
Montgomery County Juvenile Court

Judge Wallace is the administrative judge of Montgomery County Juvenile Court, leading the organization of approximately 450 employees who strive to provide individualized justice for children and to protect the community, while carefully balancing the interests of both. Judge Wallace began serving as a Judge in the Court in 2019.



**HONORABLE
JULIE BRUNS,**
*JUDGE
Montgomery
County Juvenile
Court*

Judge Julie A. Bruns began serving as a Montgomery County Juvenile Court judge in January 2023. She had previously worked as a Juvenile Court magistrate since 2019, presiding over juvenile traffic cases and private custody cases, and serving as chief magistrate. Judge Bruns was the Chief of the Juvenile Division Prosecutor's Office from 2005-2019.

GOALS

Juvenile Court is a catalyst in the community, rallying community partners to be a part of cost effective programming that eliminates implicit bias and racial inequities, while also benefiting children and families by organizing and maintaining community resources. Juvenile Court exercises sensitivity toward, and protection of, victims and their families, while at the same time providing appropriate rehabilitation for juvenile offenders.

CASE TYPES

The Court's judges and magistrates hear cases in three different types of dockets. They handled 20,871 total referrals in 2025.

The Juvenile Delinquency Docket has jurisdiction over all offenses involving children under the age of 18, as well as cases involving juvenile protection orders, unruly filings, and juvenile traffic offenders.

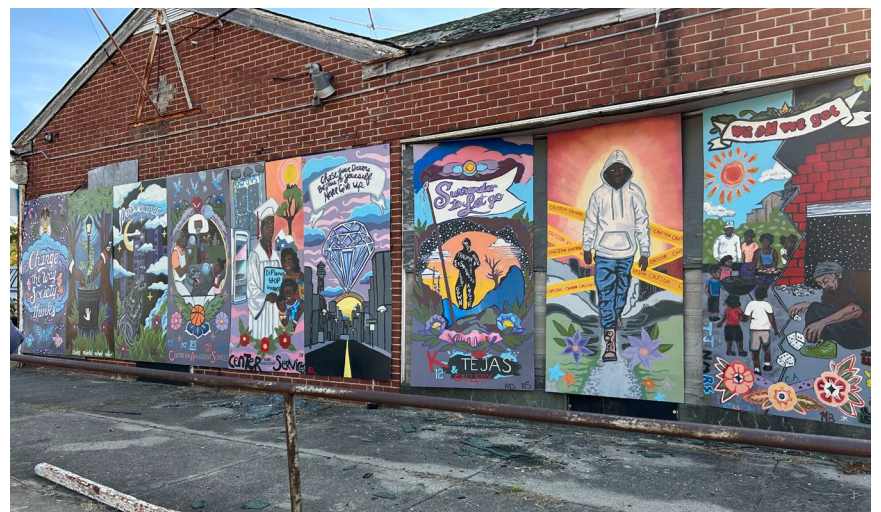
The Private Custody, Child Support, and

Visitation Docket has jurisdiction involving the issues of paternity, custody, parenting time, visitation, and child support when the child's parents were not married at the time of their birth, when the child's parents married after their birth but have not filed for divorce, or when a non-parent initiates a filing.

Juvenile Court presides over cases regarding children alleged to be Abused, Neglected, or Dependent. The goal is to strengthen families so that children can safely remain with their families whenever possible, and to find permanent homes for children when that is not possible.

Juvenile Division 2025 IN REVIEW

- 122 new Court employees were hired in 2025 (not including 23 internal moves)
- 16 federal, state and local grants totaling approximately \$14 million were awarded to the Court in 2025.
- The Clerk's Office processed a total of 26,201 new filings and expanded the use of e-filings.
- Three new directors were named in 2025. William Hudson became director of Detention in January. Andrina Ryhlick was named director of Probation in May. Nick Harvey became the director of Information Technology in July.
- David Smith was appointed as magistrate in July after the retirement of Magistrate Paula Durden.
- Construction began on the fourth floor of the Juvenile Justice Center. In 2026, the Probation Department, including the Court Appointed Special Advocate team, will move to the newly renovated space.



Left: Employees earned Supervisor of the Year, Employee of the Year and Rookie of the Year awards during the annual employee recognition lunch. Right: Murals provide community artwork at 2262 Gettysburg Ave.

EMPLOYEES RECEIVE PEER-NOMINATED RECOGNITION

On Nov. 4, Juvenile Court hosted its annual Employee Recognition Luncheon. County Commissioners Judy Dodge, Mary McDonald and Carolyn Rice, as well as County Administrator Michael Colbert joined Judge Helen Wallace and Court administrators at the fiesta-themed appreciation event.

Twenty-eight employees received pins for their 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 35-years-of-service. The 35-year recognition went to Dr. Laura Fujimura-Drenik, Court psychologist. Awards were also presented to the Rookie of the Year, Supervisor of the Year and Employee of the Year.

The Rookie of the Year award went to Addison Early, probation officer IV. Supervisor of the Year was presented to Jodi Benson, a program manager in the Intervention Center. Katherine Bundy, a paralegal in the Court Services department, earned the Employee of the Year award.

YOUTH CREATE MURALS FOR ABANDONED BUILDING

Last summer, nine colorful mural panels were installed over the front windows at a vacant building located at Gettysburg Ave.

About 40 youth from Juvenile Court’s Center for Adolescent Services and Nicholas Residential Treatment Center painted the murals in their classrooms under the guidance of a K12 TEJAS Gallery Art Instructor.

In addition to creating unique community artwork, the painting experience was also a vehicle for self-expression and empowerment. When brainstorming for the murals, youth were asked:

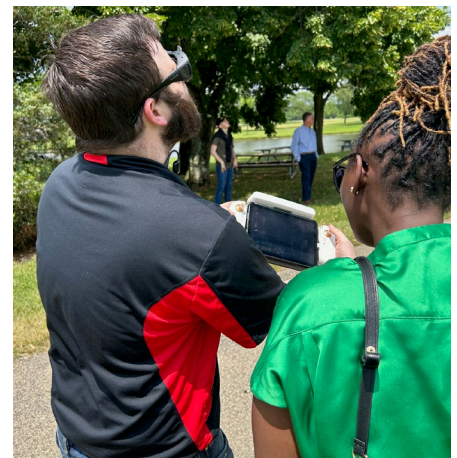
“What is something in your community you want to celebrate?”

“What is something you want to change?”

“What do you want to say?”

Each unit worked together as a team to come up with a concept for their mural, to paint it and to bring it to life. Some examples of panel themes are Perseverance, Before-and-After Graduation; and We’re All We Got.

Court Administrator Eric Shafer said he appreciates the ongoing gallery partnership that encourages an investment in the youth and the community. “This is something that the youth take pride in,” he said. “When the neighbors drive by with a honk and wave, they see that they can truly impact their community in a positive way.”



Left: CAS successfully completed the ACA audit in 2025. Right: Representatives from Sinclair's National UAS Training & Certification Center allowed NRTC students to test out the drones.

C.A.S. EARNS PERFECT AUDIT

The team at the Center for Adolescent Services (CAS) in New Lebanon received a perfect score on the American Correctional Association audit that was completed in early November.

The 100% score means CAS met the 25 mandatory and 261 non-mandatory applicable standards that are considered the benchmark for the effective operation of a correctional facility.

Two auditors spent two full days at the center interviewing youth and staff, and evaluating CAS's services, programs and operations. The assessment looks at administrative and fiscal controls, staff training and development, physical plant, safety and emergency procedures, sanitation, food service, rules and discipline.

In meeting all of the standards, CAS shows that it provides practical policies and procedures that safeguard the health and safety of employees and juvenile residents.

"I'm so proud of the staff," said Eric Shafer, Juvenile Court administrator. "They work hard every day. They follow procedures and they make sure that they're not becoming complacent."

YOUTH GET CHANCE TO OPERATE DRONES

About 15 youth from the Nicholas Residential Treatment Center got a hands-on, interactive lesson on drone technology, as well 3D printing and CNC machining thanks to a visit from Sinclair's National UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems) Training and Certification Center. The students got to learn about the bio-mimicry (such as the

Court Administration



Eric Shafer,
Court Administrator



Tiffany Dulin,
Deputy Court Administrator

fins on humpback whales) that inspired the design of the propellers on ‘Creed,’ a Parrot Anafi A1 drone owned by the center. They also got to play a Real Flight Evolution video game and push the buttons on 3D printing and computer numerical control machines that can make parts for a drone. The team from Sinclair Community College also described many of the real-world applications for drones in the work force.

**EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
NURTURES YOUTH WITH
OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN**

The Juvenile Court’s Education Department has a school chartered by the Ohio Department of Education located within the county. Nicholas Residential Treatment Center (NRTC), Center for Adolescent Services (CAS), and the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) all offer education to youth. Comprehensive middle and high school courses of study are offered through year-round programming and partnerships with the local school districts for Title 1, Part D funded services.

The school receives federal funding to improve the quality of education in facilities for neglected and delinquent youth who have yet to attain the credits that allow them to graduate from high school and are under the age of 21. The school teaches

core content areas of English, Math, Social Studies, and Science, as well as Art and Physical Education. This allows for students to engage and continue on their educational path. The Court supplements services for those youth that have significant learning deficits.

CAS has recently been approved as an official GED testing site so any youth that are detained or on probation has the opportunity to take the GED assessment in a secure environment.

Additionally, the school maintains community partnerships with K-12 Gallery & TEJAS, Fathers to Fearless, and Sinclair Wi-STEM to implement additional programming for students.

In an effort to support the social-emotional needs of all youth, Education staff collaborate with the facilities to maintain full implementation of PBIS programming to include holiday celebrations, building-wide events, and incentives for students. Last year, the Education Department implemented a sensory room at NRTC so students have an opportunity to reduce over-stimulation and enhance emotional regulation. The primary goal is to provide a safe, calm space to reset behaviors and emotions, fostering improved focus and reduced stress.



Left: Teachers in the Detention Center coordinated a World Harvest event in November. Right: Detention regularly brings in guest speakers, including a representative from the National Park Service during the 2025 Black History Month event.

DETENTION CENTER OFFERS COMPREHENSIVE CARE

Detention Services provides a comprehensive program for pre and post dispositional youth, in a safe and secure environment, while protecting the public safety. Youth range in age from 10 to 20 years old. Detention Services houses six distinct populations within its 96-bed facility. All youth housed or committed to placement are offered evidence based programming, educational, mental health, medical, physical, and life-skills programming.

In 2025, Detention Services continued to offer a variety of programming designed to inspire youth to make better decisions, encourage them to become leaders in their peer groups, and decrease their involvement in delinquent behaviors. This included a Black History Program, Professional Career Expo, World Harvest Fest, assemblies with local professionals and motivational speakers, and weekend incentivized activities and tokens. The facility continued to incorporate Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports standards and practices to incentivize youth for expected behaviors.

The six distinct populations and the number of youth served in 2025 include:

Detention Services - those awaiting the legal process or transfer to approved



The Community Based Services Girls Group completed a community service project at Heavenward Farm that also involved horseback riding.

placements. (841 youth served in 2025)

The Juvenile Cognitive Alternative Rehabilitative Effort-Specialized Treatment Program (JCARE-STP) is designated for male sex offenders ages 14 to 18 of all felony levels (5 youth served).

Juvenile Cognitive Alternative Rehabilitative Effort-Aggression Replacement Training (JCARE-ART) is a treatment program for felony adjudicated male youth ages 12-19, identified as moderate to high risk to reoffend per the Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS) who would otherwise be committed to the Ohio Department of Youth Services (38 youth served).

The **Corrections Program** is an alternative program for adjudicated youth who have demonstrated the need for an immediate short-term commitment of either for 5 or 10 days. The program is designated for youth between the ages of 10-17 (13 youth served).

The **Detention Certified Program** is for youth under the age of 21, whose cases have been transferred to the adult Court for prosecution; but who can be behaviorally maintained in a juvenile setting (6 youth served).

The **Detention Motion to Transfer (MTT)** Program services youth under the age of 21, who are awaiting a determination of amenability or transfer to the adult Court (12 youth served).

PROBATION PUTS FOCUS ON COORDINATED RE-ENTRY

The divisions of the Probation Department include the Traditional Unit, Resource Planning Program, Adult Probation, Evening Reporting Center I & II, Community Based Services, Juvenile Court Work Program and Transportation.

The Resource Planning Program (RPP) supports moderate and high-risk youth as they return to the community after placement. This transition is critical for long-term success and public safety.

In 2025, the Probation Department strengthened its reentry approach, by

2025 Juvenile Probation Data

637

Total Youth Served

439

Total Terminated

342

Total Youth Admitted

9 months

Average Length of Probation

improving coordination and continuity of care using the existing staff and budget. The teams collaborated closely with schools, the judiciary, court administration, detention, and the Evening Reporting Center. This partnership ensured clearer transition planning and consistent contact with youth. These improvements produced strong results. Recidivism for RPP, a high-risk population, declined from a high of 58% in prior years to 18% in 2025. This outcome highlights how focused leadership and teamwork advance youth success.

The Probation department's recidivism

rate (up to 1 year post termination) is 11%. Recidivism looks at if a youth has been adjudicated of a new offense one year post involvement with Juvenile Court.

CASA GROWS TO MEET DEMAND

The Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program grew significantly in 2025 to meet the rising demand for child-focused advocacy. Court filings increased from 774 in 2024, to 809 in 2025.

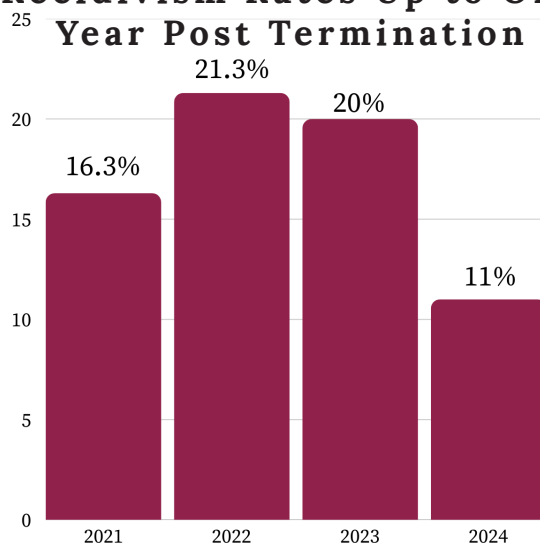
The CASA program responded by expanding its reach. Successful volunteer appointments rose from 58 to 91. This 57 percent increase ensures more children receive an independent advocate during critical court proceedings.

The improved efficiency allowed CASA to connect children with advocates faster, even as case volume rose. This progress ensures the court makes informed decisions that promote stability and positive outcomes for our youth and families.

FAMILY TREATMENT COURT: ADVANCING RECOVERY, REUNIFICATION

Family Treatment Court helps parents achieve recovery from substance use disorders while keeping children safe and families together. In 2025, the docket received 27 referrals and accepted 78 percent of them. This reflects steady engagement and effective screening processes.

Recidivism Rates Up to One Year Post Termination



Recidivism looks at if a youth has been adjudicated of a new offense one year post involvement with Juvenile Court. The national average of juvenile offenders is 55%.



Top: CASA volunteers from across the region gathered for a Dayton Dragons game in 2025. Left: Children and family members are invited to attend the graduation ceremonies for Family Treatment Court participants. Right: Students at CAS got the opportunity to create their own songs in January 2025.

Program outcomes remained strong. Of the 15 participants who exited the program, 75 percent completed it successfully. The average time families spent on the docket decreased from 18 months to 16 months.

These results show that Family Treatment Court staff members are moving cases efficiently while maintaining high success rates. The Court remains focused on timely reunification, lasting family stability, and community safety.

RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES PROVIDE SAFETY, EDUCATION

In 2025, the Center for Adolescent Services (CAS) provided services to 82 youth. CAS received a total of 55 referrals during the year with 38 being females and 17 being males. Of those, demographics include 53 African American youth in placement, 24 white youth, 1 Hispanic youth and 2 other/unknown youth. The average length of stay for males was 231 days and the average length of stay for females was 184 days.

CAS also successfully completed the American Correctional Association Audit and received accreditation in November 2025.

CAS continued to provide cognitive behavioral therapy to address criminogenic needs and gender specific therapy to address the needs of females.

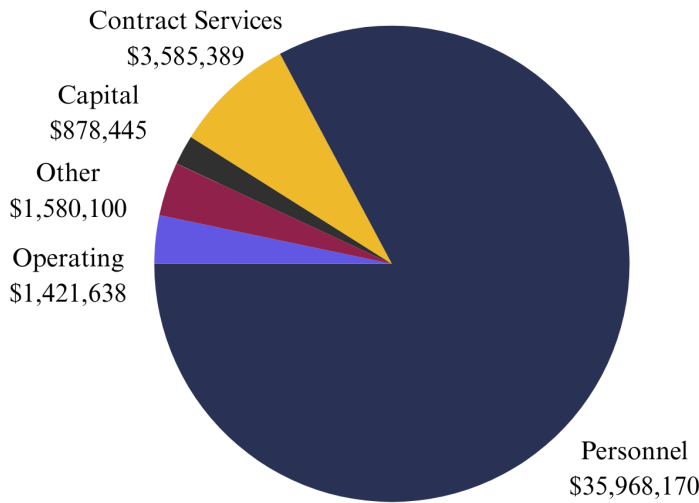
CAS received capital upgrades to the parking lot, HVAC and security systems.

In 2025 Nicholas Residential Treatment Center (NRTC) had 247 referrals to programming. Of those referrals, 126 were male referrals and 121 were female. Throughout the year, NRTC provided services to a total of 26 youth. Of those youth, 14 were males and 12 were females. Demographics include 16 African American youth, 8 white youth and 2 other/unknown youth.

NRTC successfully completed an audit through the Council on Accreditation in April 2025 and found to be in compliance. NRTC was also found to be in compliance with the Ohio Administrative Code when reviewed by the Ohio Department of Children and Youth in October of 2025. NRTC continued to provide services through a trauma informed care approach.

Both CAS and NRTC continue to collaborate of mental health services provided to

Juvenile Court 2025 Budget



the youth with the addition of a licensed clinician to oversee the referral process for youth and to ensure mental health needs are being met. CAS and NRTC each were recognized through the Montgomery County Educational Services Center in receiving an award as Schools of Distinction in Mental Wellness in 2025 for the services provided to both youth and staff.

FIRST POINT OF CONTACT FOR YOUTH: INTERVENTION

The Intervention Center (IC) located at the Juvenile Justice Center, is a 24-hour, 7-day a week single point of entry for court services

for unruly and delinquent youth. With the onsite support of outside agencies, the IC can provide a triage for youth and their families when more in-depth intervention is needed. Youth are connected to resources such as individual counseling services, certified peer recovery services, and opportunities for restorative justice through community service activities.

In 2025, the Intervention Center conducted 1,790 administrative hearings, monitored 494 youth in the Electronic Home Monitoring program, and facilitated 107 placements of 96 youth into Emergency Foster Care.

Programming opportunities for diversion of low-risk youth included:

- **Disproportionate Minority Contact Diversion Program (DMC/DP)** - 328 referrals in 2025;
- **10 & Under Program** - 76 referrals;
- **Sexually Oriented Diversion Approach (SODA)** - 16 accepted referrals in 2025;
- **Screening Brief Intervention Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)**-78 referrals;
- **Traditional Diversion**-88 referrals;
- **Creating Opportunities for Resilience and Empowerment (CORE)** - 88 referrals;
- **Education Unit** – 354 referrals.

Juvenile Division 2025 STATISTICS

JUVENILE COURT REFERRALS	
DELINQUENCY, UNRULY, AND TRAFFIC	8,083
CHILD SUPPORT, CUSTODY, OR VISITATION	10,394
ABUSE, NEGLECT, DEPENDENCY	1,046
OTHER	1,348
Total	20,871





DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION

ABOUT THE DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION

The Domestic Relations Court is the division of Common Pleas responsible for hearing all divorce, dissolution, legal separation, annulment and civil domestic violence cases for residents of Montgomery County. Parties may also return to the Court for post-decree resolution of matters including child or spousal support, allocation of parental rights and responsibilities (“custody”), parenting time or visitation among other matters. In 2025, two Judges along with 44 staff served Montgomery County in this capacity.

OUR MISSION

The Montgomery County Domestic Relations Court is dedicated to resolving family conflict by:

- Offering easy access to the Court for prompt problem resolution
- Providing quality services to the public
- Ensuring efficient case management by a professional and courteous staff
- Providing insightful education to divorcing parents

The Court will anticipate and meet the challenges presented by continuing to embrace social, legal, and technological advancements.



HONORABLE TIMOTHY D. WOOD, *ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE*
Montgomery County Domestic Relations Court

Judge Timothy D. Wood stepped into the role of Administrative Judge in May 2024 and was elected to the bench in November 2024. Prior to becoming the Administrative Judge, he served our community in the Domestic Relations Court as Judge for 13 years after being appointed to that position in 2011 and served as a magistrate for eighteen (18) years prior to becoming Judge. Judge Wood received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Dayton in 1980 and his Juris

Doctor from the University of Dayton in 1984. Judge Wood first served as a Staff Attorney in Darke County, Ohio, and then went into private practice for a number of years. Judge Wood became a Domestic Relations Magistrate in 1992. He is very involved in several legal and community organizations, as well as teaching at the University of Dayton.



HONORABLE JENNIFER A. PETRELLA, JUDGE
Montgomery County Domestic Relations Court

Judge Jennifer A. Petrella has been serving as a Judge in Montgomery County Domestic Relations Court since 2024. She received a Bachelor of Arts and Laut Honors degrees from Wheeling Jesuit College in 1995 and her Juris Doctor from the University of Dayton School of Law in 1998. Judge Petrella has served her entire legal career in public service. She advanced from law clerk to Director of Court Services in the Montgomery County Juvenile Court, serving over 18 years in the division. In 2015, she joined the Domestic Relations Division as Court Administrator and Magistrate and was elected as Judge of the Division in 2024. Judge Petrella leads the Montgomery County Domestic Relations Community Collaborative, participates in the DV Death Review, is a member of the Dayton Lawyers Club and continues to serve as Treasurer of Miami Valley Crime Stoppers, Trustee of Montgomery County Juvenile Court Foundation, as well as participates in Ohio Supreme Court boards and committees. She likewise continues to educate groups and volunteer in her church and community.

Domestic Relations Division 2025 IN REVIEW

2025 was a busy year for Domestic Relations Court. As we launched into 2025, the Domestic Relations Court announced Barbara Reno as our new Legal Administrator and Chief Magistrate. Magistrate Reno has served Montgomery County as a magistrate in Domestic Relations Court for 23 years. As she continues to hear cases in our Court, she has also worked through updating the Local Rules for Domestic Relations Court, taken over writing the Spotlight newsletter to keep attorneys who practice at our Court up to date on legal matters, as well as managing the Court's team of magistrates and legal staff.

Domestic Relations Court also said goodbye to two staff members who served our court with integrity and professionalism. Judge Petrella's bailiff, Suzanne Alder, retired in 2025 after serving our court for 24 years and serving Montgomery County for 31 years. Before becoming Judge Petrella's Bailiff, Suzanne served as the Manager of the Compliance Department for many years. Magistrate Ken Krochmal also hung up his

robe at the end of 2025 to enjoy retirement. Magistrate Krochmal served the Domestic Relations Court and Montgomery County for 3 years.

We also welcomed Magistrate Janna Parker to the team at the end of 2025. Magistrate Parker assumed the vacant Magistrate position, bringing 24 years of legal experience with her. Additionally, Rachel Doyle was hired as Judicial Assistant to Judge Petrella. Rachel served Montgomery County for 25 years prior to joining our team.



Chief Magistrate Barbara Reno



Marina Camacho, Bill Hargis, and Sofia Marquez were honored at a Law Day celebration for their service to the court as interpreters.

The Domestic Relations Court continues to work with the Clerk's Office to build a new Journal Tech Industries' Case Management System, commonly referred to as "JTI". The Domestic Relations Court's current case management system is several decades old. Several other Montgomery County Divisions are also working with JTI to create a universal system. The program is scheduled to go live in June 2026. Domestic Relations started filing electronically in February 2022 with a different system. The new Journal Tech System will allow the Domestic Relations Court to have one program that handles case management and electronic filing with newer technology.

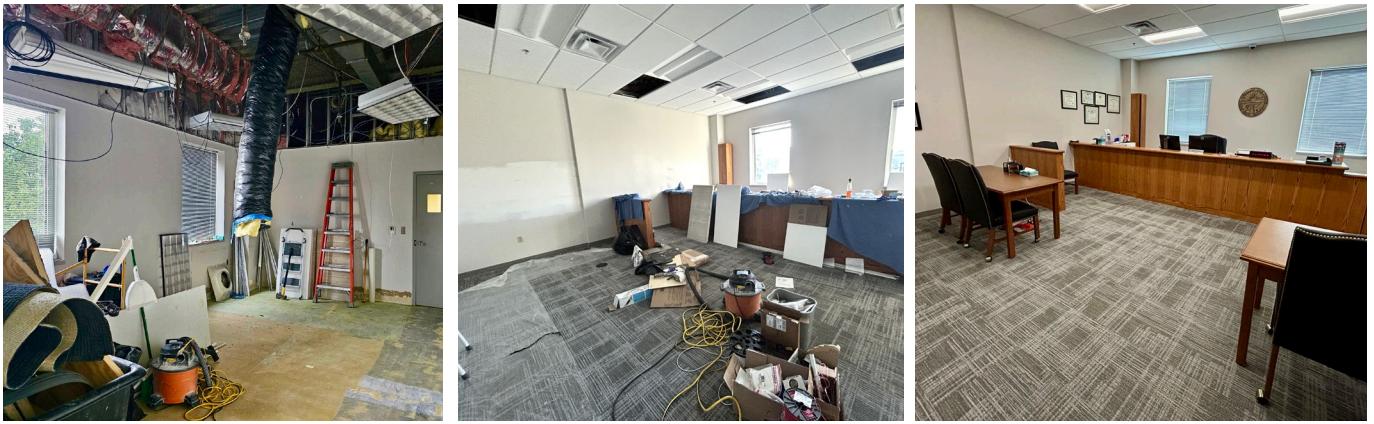
This past year, our Court focused on updates in the courtrooms that meet the needs of the public and attorneys that use our Courts. We have completed the demolition and complete renovation of one of our courtrooms to make it both more convenient and ADA accessible. We have also installed a new electronic docket board in the lobby showing all the upcoming hearings and their assigned room numbers. All nine courtrooms also have new tables and chairs for parties and their counsel.

In May, the Court took part in the annual Law Day celebration organized by the Dayton Bar Association. This is a nationally celebrated day that looks at the important role of law and Courts in our communities. Several Court divisions were present, as well as the Clerk of Courts and the honorees for a special luncheon at the Sinclair Conference Center. Domestic Relations Court honored three of our dedicated Supreme Court certified interpreters for this special award, Marina Camacho, Sofia Marquez and Bill Hargis. In 2024, the Domestic Relations Court had a total of 341 interpreters covering 19 different languages. Collectively, Marina, Sofia and Bill interpreted nearly 40% of those hearings. It was an honor to recognize their dedication and service to interpret these proceedings for non-English speaking individuals in our courts. Their specialized services are critical to those who cannot communicate effectively in the courtrooms.

The Domestic Relations Court supported Child Abuse Awareness month in April to raise awareness and focus on preventing child maltreatment, encouraging communities to work together to support families, and create safe, healthy environments for children. The court also recognized Domestic Violence Awareness throughout the month of October to raise awareness about domestic violence in our communities as well as uplifting the needs and voices of survivors.



2025 retirees: Suzanne Alder and Magistrate Ken Krochmal.



Court renovations focused on convenience and accessibility.

Our Court is always looking to make connections and gather resources that support people who come into our Court seeking assistance. One way we do that is by participating in the annual National Night Out event in old North Dayton alongside agency partners reaching out to educate the community. The event focuses on personal safety, marriage counseling and conciliation, as well as child support issues. Another is attending the Fatherhood Summit which is an event linking fathers who are engaged in their children's lives to resources in the community that help their children thrive.

Domestic Relations magistrates participate in the Ohio Association of Magistrates, the Domestic Relations Committee of the Dayton Bar Association and take part in the monthly meetings of the Stanley Z. Greenberg Family Law Forum. This forum is a collaborative and educational organization with the intent to increase communication among the membership, inform members of developments in Family Law, and enhance trial advocacy skills. Our own Magistrate Andy Root serves as the Recorder for this forum.

In addition to participating in the above mentioned events and organizations, our Court also supported UNCF, Culture Works, and the United Way through donations

raised by the staff. Casual Friday provides the option to wear jeans to work for a \$5 donation. At the end of each month, money raised is donated to these non-profits.

The Court also reached out to send support to the Dayton Boys & Girls Club who are currently meeting in a local middle school after being displaced from their home building. Staff members made cards filled with words of encouragement for the boys and girls in the club over the holidays. It was a good reminder that support doesn't always have a cost attached to it.

MOVING FORWARD INTO 2026

After the 2020 Covid pandemic interrupted the Domestic Relations Court Summit from meeting, the group remained in hiatus. Since that time, there has been new leadership at multiple partner agencies, and new partners to join the table of enhancing court services to our community.

With the support of Administrative Judge Timothy D. Wood, Judge Jennifer A. Petrella invited a group of community representatives to again meet around the table.

Newly identified as the "Domestic Relations Community Collaborative," Judge Petrella, Court Managers, as well as leaders from ADAMHS, Artemis, Child Support Enforcement Agency, Dayton Police

Department, Legal Aid of Western Ohio, Volunteer Lawyers Project, and Wright Patterson Air Force Base, began meeting in June 2025.

Being action driven, the Court initiated new communication efforts with the community. The Court implemented the dissemination of purple folders to all those who obtain an ex parte civil protection order from the Court. The folder contains community resource information for domestic violence and other social supports. The Court also participated in National Night Out sharing information about Conciliation Services and other Court programming. The Court is slated to offer similar community outreach in 2026.

Community partnerships engaged in collaboration and provided ideas for the upcoming year over the quarterly meetings in 2025. Participants identified others to be around the table, as well as signed up to work on subcommittees for Access to Justice for Self-Represented Parties (SRP) and Domestic Violence CPO programming enhancements. In 2026, the group is looking at introducing new technology advancements such as text message reminders for legal clinic appointments,

large-group sessions for completing SRP divorce complaints / dissolution petitions, as well as initiating a pilot project for ex parte remote access for petitioners. The group is also striving to develop an event with an expanded group of community representatives to review programming for batterers involved in the civil system, and to determine how to best collaborate and draw down mental health resources to address this pervasive problem cutting across the county in all identifiable groups.

The Domestic Relations Community Collaborative will continue to be led by Judge Jennifer A. Petrella with the project management assistance of Court Navigator, Isha Glass.

Domestic Relations Division COURT OVERVIEW

JUDGES

Timothy D. Wood began serving as the Administrative Judge of Domestic Relations Court in May 2024. In addition to hearing cases, Judge Wood is charged with assigning work throughout the division, hiring staff to carry out the specific functions and overseeing supervision of all personnel, as well as maintaining the Court's budget.



Left: The court recognized Domestic Violence Awareness month during October. Right: Representing the court at National Night Out.



He is also an advocate for safety of all participants while enhancing access to justice. Jennifer A. Petrella serves as Judge for the division. Judge Petrella actively participates in Court operations in addition to hearing the cases assigned to her docket. Judge Petrella presents information on the Court and its' services to various community members. Each Judge appoints a personal staff consisting of a bailiff and a judicial assistant. Amy Brandl serves as Bailiff and Kathy Everson as Judicial Assistant for Judge Wood. Dannese Jackson serves as Bailiff and Rachel Doyle as Judicial Assistant for Judge Petrella. Kathryn Shields serves as the Staff Attorney for Judge Wood and Maria Rabold serves as the Staff Attorney for Judge Petrella.

ADMINISTRATORS

Two Administrators have the primary responsibility of overseeing Court departments and day-to-day functions. Duties are divided between court operations and legal matters. These positions are appointed by Judge Wood.

Court Administrator

The Court Administrator's primary duties are to attend to public and staff relations, as well as the safety and welfare of all participants, and to hear court cases in the Domestic Relations Court. This administrator assists in program development, payroll, budget, inventory control, and contract oversight. The Court Administrator also manages

staff directly related to the support of the courtrooms and daily operations, as well as with case management and special projects in conjunction with the Legal Administrator. Court Administration includes the Court Operations Specialists focused on Purchasing and Interpreter Services, a Customer Service Specialist, Navigators, Facilities Service Worker, as well as Information Systems, Assignment, Compliance, Family Relations, and Parent Education Departments. In addition to the above, the Court Administrator is the point of contact for public record requests, as well as any concerns over interpreter or Guardian ad Litem performance.

Kristen Keebaugh-Chambers serves as Court Administrator with direct supervision of four (4) Managers and seven (7) staff.

Legal Administrator

The Legal Administrator's primary duties are to provide oversight of the magistrates and legal support staff, to hear court cases, and to maintain relations among the attorneys and legal community practicing in Domestic Relations Court. This administrator assists in maintaining the Court's Local Rules, providing legal training and assuring magistrates provide timely decisions. The Legal Administrator also assists on special projects and daily operations in conjunction with the Court Administrator. Legal Administration includes the Administrative Assistant, Magistrates, Legal Secretaries and Mediation Departments.



Judge Wood with Bailiff Amy Brandl and Judicial Assistant Kathy Everson.



Judge Petrella with Bailiff Dannese Jackson and Judicial Assistant Rachel Doyle.



Court Administration

Attorney Kristen Keebaugh-Chambers, Court Administrator

Barbara Reno, Chief Magistrate and Legal Administrator

Barbara Reno serves as Legal Administrator with direct supervision of two (2) Managers, the Magistrates, and an Administrative Assistant.

MAGISTRATES

Magistrates are attorneys appointed by the Judges who have the primary duty of hearing cases referred to them. Magistrates may answer procedural and other questions; however, they may not give legal advice nor discuss a case with either party (or their attorney) if the other party / attorney is not present. Magistrates write articles for legal publications, make presentations at legal seminars and participate in special projects

of the Court. While magistrates often encourage and facilitate party settlements via mediation or agreed orders, they also issue decisions on contested matters. Parties may object to decisions (per the civil rules), but even if there is no objection filed, the assigned Judge will review them before the decision becomes a permanent order of the Court. The Court has full-time and part-time Magistrates among its staff.

LEGAL SECRETARIES

The Legal Secretary Department performs tasks in support of a Judge or Magistrate. Staff require considerable knowledge of office, secretarial and administrative



Domestic Relations Division Magistrates

Standing: J. Andrew Root (2018), Nicholas Sylvain (2002), Kathryn Shields (2022), Thomas Schiff (2024)

Seated: Maria Rabold (2025), Erin Otis (2019), Janna Parker (2025)

Not pictured: Barbara Reno (2002), Kristen Keebaugh-Chambers (2024)

practices and procedures. The legal secretaries prepare court orders, Domestic Violence Wallet Cards, reports, forms, memos, and correspondence, in addition to decisions for the Judges and Magistrates. They receive, screen and refer telephone calls from the public and attorneys, as well as manage many documents that are e-Filed. Additional duties include tracking cases for appropriate sealing, searching and maintaining files for a variety of complex and confidential matters, as well as scanning documentation for the Court's internal system. There is one Manager and four (4) Legal Secretaries for the Court.

COURT OPERATIONS

The Court Operations focus is on the daily needs of the Court. There are seven (7) team members, several of whom serve as Mediators for the Court, in addition to their primary duties.

The main responsibilities provided by this department include assuring parties and attorneys check-in at the Court's electronic kiosks for Court hearings, filing for Civil Protection Orders, and answering phone inquiries. They oversee safety concerns before and after hearings, such as assisting public in evacuation drills and providing separation between opposing parties in domestic violence cases. They are the point of contact for self-represented parties prior to working with the Compliance Office, as well as before / after hearings. Their main responsibility is to assist parties, in navigating the Court system. This assistance is especially critical for self-represented parties who are unfamiliar with technology and/or need interpreter services.

Additionally, they assist with inventory oversight, initiate budget functions, and assist on other special projects. The critical Language Access responsibilities are centralized here. They obtain interpreters for Court hearings and other Court events,

maintain activity and track billing. They are responsible for securing new interpreters as vendors as well as processing all requests for audio recordings and transcripts that are filed with the Court.

COMPLIANCE OFFICE

The Compliance Office consists of a Manager and five (5) staff. Compliance Officers have the primary responsibilities of reviewing paperwork and preparing post-decree administrative orders. Paperwork being reviewed can be prepared by either attorneys or self-represented litigants. Compliance Officers review packets of information for self-represented litigants to assure they have the required paperwork and addenda to file a new case or post-decree matter before the Court. The Compliance Officers also review the Final Decree, post decree orders regarding child and / or spousal support and agreed orders. In addition to the above, the Compliance Officers prepare modifications, terminations and establishment of arrearage payments for the Judges. They are a point of contact with the Court and answer procedural questions, prepare correspondence and initiate the paperwork for the annual emancipation project.

ASSIGNMENT OFFICE

The Assignment Office consists of a Manager and three (3) staff. Assignment Officers have the primary duties of scheduling hearings and assigning Magistrates to cases. To perform these duties, Assignment Officers facilitate calendar coordination between the Court, attorneys and self-represented parties, collect and maintain files for matters pending before the Court, and complete case inventory. They also track cases monthly and complete mandated reporting to the Supreme Court of Ohio.

In addition to the above, they have the responsibility to review records of

individuals with Seek Work Orders, and payment history of overdue support obligations to determine if a party is in compliance with the order and prepare reports for the Judges and Magistrates prior to contempt or imposition of sentence hearings.

As a sworn Deputy Clerk, Assignment Officers are also responsible for overseeing parties who come to the Court to eFile a Petition for Civil Protection Order. They process the submission and file the case. These duties result in an expedited hearing before a Magistrate on the same day the party comes in to complete the Petition. If granted, they print copies for the party, as well as the copy to be served by the Sheriff. Additionally, they prepare LEADS information for law enforcement. They are a point of contact for other Courts, out-

of-county police, victim-witness advocates and the public.

MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The M.I.S. Department consists of a Manager and a Systems Technician. The department is primarily responsible for providing hardware options and software solutions to ensure staff have the proper tools to complete their tasks effectively. The department administers and maintains data collection in the Court’s case management system, assures regular back-up of stored information and provides protection for internal files and confidential communication. The department is responsible for all technological resources: computers, printers, check-in kiosks, telephones, audio recording equipment



Clockwise from top left: Compliance, Legal Secretaries, Management of Information Systems, Court Operations, and Assignment.



Left: Family Relations. Right: Parent Education.

PARENT EDUCATION

The Parent Education Department consists of two (2) Parent Education Specialists. They are responsible for conducting parent seminars. The seminar, entitled “Helping Children Succeed After Divorce,” is a mandatory three-hour presentation for parents who are in the

process of a divorce, dissolution or legal separation and have minor children under the age of eighteen (18). The presentation provides information regarding the effects of divorce and parental conflict on children, giving parents the insights and tools to move toward a co-parenting model in safe and separate homes. The presentation also includes topics such as the importance of regular and consistent child support payments, as well as regular and consistent parenting time. Additionally, Parent Education staff regularly support the Court as mediators, and provide coverage for customer service.

and software, laptops, storage and the Court website. M.I.S. is the point of contact for vendors, the Clerk’s Office, other county agencies and technology entities doing regular business with the Court. The department works with other information technology personnel under contract with the Court and with Montgomery County Data Processing. They also work to maintain the integrity of court communication and security systems.

FAMILY RELATIONS

The Family Relations Department provides investigative services and prepares reports on families. While parties may request involvement of the Family Relations Department, all referrals are made by the assigned Judge or Magistrate. The department provides family investigations and home studies, including home studies at the request of out-of-state courts or agencies. Family Investigators also meet with parents needing assistance in creating a workable parenting time schedule and provide recommendations. Licensed Family Investigators also offer counseling services to parties interested in preserving their marriage through conciliation. Several staff also serve as mediators on cases they are not investigating. The Family Relations Department includes a Manager and three (3) staff.

MEDIATION DEPARTMENT

The Court provides intense Mediation where parties can resolve disputes outside the formal legal process. Mediation services are available for most cases, and all pre-decree cases are screened for mediation. If



Mediation staff

the parties agree to mediate, they will meet in a private setting with two Ohio Supreme Court certified staff mediators. Mediators assist the couple in identifying issues and developing options and solutions, but they will not decide on issues for the couple. Mediation is a confidential process, and the mediators may not be subpoenaed into court. If the parties can reach an

agreement, a “written agreement” is prepared, and signed by the parties. This agreement is then given to the parties, the Court, and attorneys of record. There is one Manager and one Mediation Specialist in the Mediation Department, along with thirteen (13) certified staff throughout the Court.

Domestic Relations Division 2025 Statistics

DOMESTIC RELATIONS STATISTICS	2022	2023	2024	2025
New Filings for Divorce	915	862	805	765
New Filings for Dissolutions	521	561	536	553
New Filings for Legal Separations	18	13	10	9
New Filings for Annulments	9	14	5	4
Custody Motions	167	166	147	170
Parenting Time Motions	142	129	153	134
Property/Other Motions	362	357	310	322
Support Motions	780	885	905	1,270
CS (New - Custody and Support Cases)	43	35	45	44
Motions Dismissed by Parties	709	712	552	488
Motions Dismissed by the Court	822	856	973	1,534
Final Orders - Divorce Decrees	848	799	774	728
Final Orders - Dissolution Decrees	553	516	529	543
Final Orders - Annulment Decrees	6	7	5	2
Final Orders - Legal Separation Decrees	4	8	7	4
Family Relations Investigations	62	81	70	65
Mediations	98	114	110	106
New Case/Motion reviews (Attorney/Self-Represented)	4,189	5,832	7,810	4,404
Domestic Violence Petitions Filed	2,038	1,938	2,055	2,130
Notice of Withholding Orders Prepared	710	994	361	376
Child Support Emancipation Entries	2,528	2,538	1,205	1,097
Parent Education Seminar Attendance	821	934	807	702
Conciliation Counseling	29	47	37	31
Transcripts / CD's Prepared	148	443	353	375
Interpreters Scheduled* (NEW CATEGORY IN 2023)		321	341	343



The Old Court House





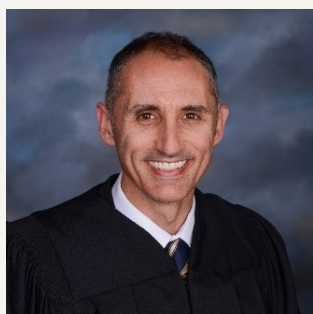
PROBATE DIVISION

ABOUT THE PROBATE DIVISION

Probate Court, a division of the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas, is a trial court with limited jurisdiction as granted by the Ohio Revised Code. Probate Court has exclusive jurisdiction over the administration of estates and trusts, appointment of guardians for those deemed incompetent and estates of minors, adoptions, issuance of marriage licenses, name changes, commitment of mentally ill and various other actions. The court also approves settlements in wrongful death actions and minor injury actions. Probate Court is charged with more than 600 responsibilities pursuant to Ohio Revised Code.

An Ohio Probate Judge is elected for a six-year term. In our Court, five Magistrates, appointed by the Judge, assist in handling the voluminous caseload. A Probate Judge is also the Clerk of the Probate Court. Therefore, to assist the Judge in managing the court records, the deputy clerks maintain and make available to the public certain Probate Court records. Our clerks accept filings, issue service of summonses, and are responsible for docketing and maintaining the records of the cases.

The Probate Judge appoints board members to the County Board of Developmental Disabilities Services, Montgomery County Environmental Services Appeals Board, Greater Dayton Premier Management, and all members of the Five Rivers Metro Parks Board. The Probate Judge also has authority to make other appointments pursuant to statute including agents of the Humane Society of Greater Dayton, guardians, attorneys, and many other fiduciaries.



HONORABLE DAVID BRANNON, *ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE*
Montgomery County Probate Court

Judge David Brannon and his family are lifelong residents of Montgomery County, Ohio. He feels privileged to serve the citizens of Montgomery County and strives to improve government service every day. He feels blessed to hold a job he loves and to work with his fantastic team and the County's most vulnerable people.

Since being elected Judge in 2020, he has presided over thousands of probate matters, giving him extensive probate experience in adoption, guardianship, estate, and mental illness matters. Prior to being elected, Judge Brannon practiced law for fifteen years with his father and brother in the Dayton region. He focused his area of practice on probate law and eventually was certified as an Estate Planning, Trust & Probate Law Specialist in 2015 by the Ohio State Bar Association, until he took the bench.

Since taking the bench, Judge Brannon, as Administrative Judge, coordinates and collaborates with other County agencies and leaders to address today's most serious issues facing our Community, including mental health, access to courts, and stewardship. He believes government works best when there is authentic accountability and transparency.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Court strengthens our community by protecting and supporting individuals and families through the achievement of impartial justice under the law.

Probate Division 2025 IN REVIEW

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PROBATE COURT LEADS THE WAY IN ASSISTED OUTPATIENT TREATMENT

The Montgomery County Probate Court is a recognized leader in mental health justice after establishing Montgomery County’s first—and only—Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) program. As the first court in the county to implement AOT, the Probate Court demonstrated forward-thinking leadership by creating a structured, community-based response for individuals with serious mental illness who are under civil commitment.

The AOT program is a court-ordered, community-based mental health treatment program designed to support individuals suffering from a serious mental illness while ensuring appropriate judicial oversight. Through intensive monitoring,

coordination with treatment providers, and regular court review, the program promotes treatment adherence, stability, and long-term recovery. The Probate Court expects to serve more than 100 individuals annually through this intensive treatment model, significantly expanding access to coordinated mental health services in the community.

Under the leadership of Judge David D. Brannon, the Probate Court has embraced a problem-solving approach to administering AOT. Probate Court magistrates provide ongoing judicial oversight through regular hearings, ensuring treatment plans remain individualized, responsive, and compliant with statutory requirements. This consistent judicial involvement reinforces accountability while preserving dignity and respect for program participants.

The Court’s leadership is further reflected in the strong operational structure supporting the AOT program. Dedicated monitoring and coordination ensure participants remain engaged with treatment providers and community resources. Close collaboration with local mental health agencies and stakeholders helps reduce barriers to care, improve continuity of services, and lessen reliance on crisis-driven interventions.



Judge Brannon and staff celebrated graduations from the AOT program in 2025.



The Willis family, left, and the Jenkins family, right, finalized their adoptions in 2025.

The Montgomery County Probate Court has set a statewide standard for how probate courts can address complex mental health needs through collaboration, accountability, and compassion. The program underscores the Court’s role not only as an adjudicative body, but as a leader in advancing effective, humane solutions that strengthen both individual outcomes and community well-being.

MENTAL HEALTH COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION TEAM

Montgomery County Probate Court established and leads the Montgomery County Mental Health Collaboration and Innovation Team, a multidisciplinary partnership that brings together state, federal, and local agencies to coordinate monitoring, treatment, and system-level responses for individuals living with serious mental illness. This collaborative framework strengthens communication across systems, improves continuity of care, and ensures court-ordered treatment is supported by comprehensive community resources.

The success of both the Assisted Outpatient Treatment program and the Collaboration and Innovation Team reflect the leadership of Judge David Brannon, along with the

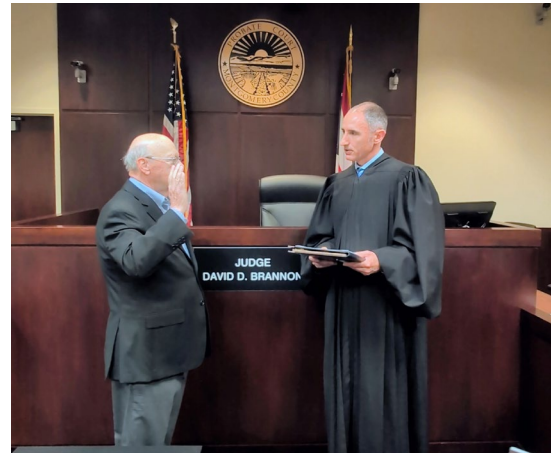
dedication of Magistrate Brittany Doggett and Magistrate Heather Shannon. Their work demonstrates a strong commitment to problem-solving justice, accountability, and compassionate judicial oversight for individuals living with serious mental illness.

Stronger Crisis Response and System Coordination

The Court partnered with county leadership and local health systems to support the Crisis Notification System through the County’s Safety Net Portal, enabling real-time alerts when individuals on the civil commitment docket are admitted to hospitals for mental health crises. This advancement improved cross-system communication, follow-up, and continuity of care.

Expanded Adoption Assessment Capacity

Probate Court investigators completed specialized adoption assessor accreditation through the Ohio Department of Children and Youth, with one investigator currently finalizing the process. This training enhances the Court’s ability to conduct thorough, timely, and child-centered adoption assessments in compliance with state standards.



Left: Neighborhood Night. Right: Judge Brannon swore in Michael Brigner after his appointment to the Five Rivers Metroparks board.

Statewide Judicial Leadership

Judge David Brannon was appointed Chair of the Supreme Court of Ohio Assisted Outpatient Treatment Workgroup (2024–present), providing statewide leadership on AOT policy, best practices, and implementation. He was also re-appointed Co-Chair of the Competency Restoration and Probate Court Issues Committee of the Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost’s Task Force on Criminal Justice and Mental Illness, advancing coordinated solutions at the intersection of mental health, courts, and the criminal justice system. He also serves as secretary on the executive board of the Ohio Probate Judges Association.

Commitment to Access and Public Service

Throughout 2025, the Probate Court continued its mission of delivering fair, efficient, and accessible justice across its statutory responsibilities—including guardianships, estates, adoptions, marriage licenses, name changes, and mental health matters—while enhancing service quality for the public. The Court’s Probate Resource Center (“PRC”), onsite and staffed by the Public Defender’s Office provides an attorney to offer legal advice to the public regarding probate matters, increasing access to justice.

Probate Division COURT OVERVIEW

JUDGE BRANNON

The Judge of the Probate Court is assigned all cases coming before the Court. The judge is also charged with the supervision of all personnel of the Probate Court, which is approximately 35 staff total.

MAGISTRATES

Five (5) Magistrates assist the Judge in handling the case load. A magistrate is an attorney appointed by the Court who hears cases referred by the Judge. Magistrates hear and consider cases in the same manner as a judge. Magistrates have discretion to issue recommendations and orders in all case types handled by the Probate Court. All magistrate decisions are reviewed and approved by the Judge. Magistrates are available to answer procedural and other substantive questions, but may not discuss a case with either a litigant or attorney in the absence of the other party, or that party’s attorney to the case.

CHIEF DEPUTY CLERK / CLERK’S OFFICE

The Chief Deputy Clerk provides leadership and oversight for all operations of the Clerk’s Office, which is responsible for filing, maintaining, and providing public



Court Administration

Laura Peterangelo, Court Administrator
Ryan Colvin, Deputy Court Administrator

access to all non-confidential Probate Court case records. The Clerk’s Office also assists customers in person and by telephone with filings, scheduling, and other administrative needs, and manages the collection, receipting, and posting of court costs and fees. The Chief Deputy Clerk ensures timely and accurate docketing, maintains high standards of data integrity, and oversees the issuance of required notices and service. In addition, the role

directs staff performance, manages case and records administration—including retention and archival processes—and develops policies and strategic initiatives that strengthen efficiency, compliance, and alignment with the Court’s mission. Through effective leadership, strong quality control, and a commitment to exceptional customer service, the Chief Deputy Clerk ensures the Clerk’s Office operates professionally and in accordance with all legal and operational standards.

COURT ADMINISTRATOR

The Court Administrator is responsible for the overall management and operation of the Court, ensuring efficient, consistent, and compliant daily operations. The role involves strategic planning, budget development and oversight, payroll management, supervising staff, policy implementation, and maintaining compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The Court Administrator also oversees hiring, training, performance management, and employee relations, while supporting the Judge and magistrates with complex or sensitive issues. Additionally, the position manages technology and process improvements, monitors organizational effectiveness, represents the Court in the community, and works to enhance customer service, public communication, and professional standards across the organization.



Probate Division Magistrates

Heather Shannon
Brittney Doggett
Brandon Allen
Lisa Wiseman
Andrea Ostrowski



Left: Probate Court staff. Right: Staff wore pink in October in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

DEPUTY COURT ADMINISTRATOR

The Deputy Court Administrator supports the Judge and Court Administrator in overseeing daily court operations, ensuring efficient case flow, and maintaining compliance with all applicable laws and procedures. The Deputy Court Administrator manages the Judge’s calendar, coordinates hearings and deadlines, reviews and prepares case documents, and plays a key role in courtroom operations, including administering oaths, managing proceedings, and maintaining order and security. The position supports public outreach and media relations and serves as a liaison with internal and external stakeholders.

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

The Public Information Officer serves as the primary communications lead for the Montgomery County Probate Court, overseeing all public messaging, media relations, digital content, and community outreach to promote transparency, public trust, and understanding of the Court’s mission. Responsibilities include managing press releases and public notices, coordinating interviews and events such as Adoption Day, maintaining the Court’s website and social media presence, developing educational materials, supporting branding across all publications, and representing the Court at events.

COURT INVESTIGATORS

The Probate Court has four court Investigators. They serve notice of proceedings and hearings in guardianship, adoption, and mental health cases. They also provide guardianship, adoption, and mental health case management support for the Magistrates and Judge, including investigating complaints of financial and physical abuse. Investigators conduct wellness visits with wards and complete home studies in adoption cases.

MARRIAGE DEPARTMENT

The Marriage Department’s principal function is to issue marriage licenses and record marriage certificates. Further duties include providing statistical reporting concerning case management and providing marriage abstracts.

ADOPTION DEPARTMENT

One of the most rewarding responsibilities of the Probate Court is to ensure a child is placed in a safe, loving, and permanent home. The department’s primary function is to provide case management of the adoption cases. Adoption filings are accepted by the department, reviewed and set for hearings as appropriate. All adoptions proceedings and records are confidential unless excused by law or by the Judge.

MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

It is the responsibility of the Probate Court to oversee the involuntary commitment



Left: National Adoption Day at Probate Court. Right: Montgomery County Commissioners presented a proclamation in honor of National Adoption Day.

process of individuals who are alleged to be mentally ill subject to court order, while protecting their rights and ensuring they receive treatment in the least restrictive environment.

The Probate Court has made the mental health crisis a primary focus as this emergency has devastated many communities, including many in Montgomery County. This Court has been directly involved in the following initiatives, including:

- Facilitating bi-monthly meetings with the Mental Health Collaboration and Innovation Team;
- Actively participating in the Behavioral Health Taskforce;
- Drafting Ohio Supreme Court standard

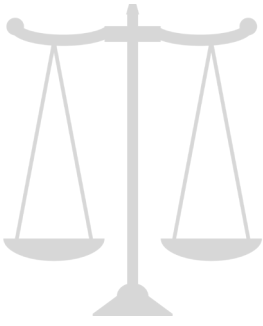
forms for recommendation to the Ohio Supreme Court for adoption State-wide;

- Co-chairing the Competency Restoration and Probate Issues Committee on the Attorney General’s Task Force on Criminal Justice and Mental Illness;
- Drafting proposed legislation, Rules of Superintendence, and other statutes involving mental illness and criminal matters;
- Data sharing on the County’s JusticeWeb and other databases with justice partners; and
- Starting an Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) program administered by the Court.

Probate Division 2025 STATISTICS

CASES FILED STATISTICS	2022	2023	2024	2025
Adoptions	157	153	160	178
Estates/Trusts	2,777	3,000	2,632	2,493
Guardianships	458	519	578	425
Mental Health	559	672	869	833
Miscellaneous	519	566	578	716
Total	4,470	4,910	4,910	4,645
MARRIAGE STATISTICS	2022	2023	2024	2025
Licenses Issued	2,928	2,975	2,840	2,998
Marriage Certificates	5,504	4,835	4,974	2,875





CLERK OF COURTS

ABOUT THE CLERK OF COURTS

The Montgomery County Clerk of Courts is a complex organization that serves the Common Pleas Court; General Division; Domestic Relations Court; County Municipal Courts; and the Second District Court of Appeals. The Auto Title Division offers a wide variety of services including titling of motor vehicles, titling and registration of watercraft, processing passport applications, TSA Enrollment Services, and BMV Driver Exams.

The Clerk's Office has a variety of functions, including:

- Receive, docket, index, certify, and preserve the pleadings, court orders, and other legal documents that are filed with the courts
- Serve court papers as required by law and as directed by the parties
- Furnish preliminary case schedules and notices of hearings
- Issue such writs as summonses, subpoenas, warrants, and executions
- Receive, account for, and disburse deposits of money to cover court costs, fines, fees, and restitution according to statute and court order
- Issue Certificates of Title for automobiles, motorcycles, mobile homes, travel trailers, campers, motor homes, and watercraft.



MIKE FOLEY, *CLERK OF COURTS*
Montgomery County Clerk of Courts

Mike Foley serves as the Montgomery County Clerk of Courts, having been elected to the position in 2018. In his role as Clerk, Mike oversees an office of 100 employees, with an annual budget of more than \$15 million dollars.

Prior to his election as Clerk of Courts, Mike Foley served as an Ohio Deputy Registrar for 12 years. In that role, he was charged with operating the regional Bureau of Motor Vehicles in Huber Heights, Ohio.

A native of Cincinnati, Mike Foley moved to the Dayton Area in 1996 to embark upon an entrepreneurial path where he became proficient in restaurant franchise management, including the launch and operation of the initial First Watch restaurants in Montgomery County.

Prior to serving as Clerk of Courts, Deputy Registrar, and the owner of multiple local businesses, Mike Foley served his Country as a Medic in the United States Army and the Ohio National Guard. Mike Foley is a graduate of The Ohio State University and resides in Oakwood with his wife Lisa.

- Offer driver examination services at our Moraine Auto Title Branch.
- Process U.S. Passport applications as an authorized Passport Acceptance Agency at all Auto Title locations.
- Offer TSA Enrollment Services, including TSA Pre-check TWIC, HAZMAT, AND FTSP Services at the Auto Title location in Downtown Dayton.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Montgomery County Clerk of Courts is to provide progressive and efficient records management and financial services for the justice system, the legal community, and the public through our core values of respect, fairness, and honesty.

Clerk of Courts 2025 IN REVIEW

AUTO TITLE DIVISION

In 2025, the Auto Title Division saw three team members promoted from Deputy Clerk I to Deputy Clerk II; a testament to their hard work and continued growth.

The Auto Title Division now offers off-site VIN inspections for inoperable out of state vehicles, furthering the goal of convenience to all our customers. 2025 also saw the growth of our driver examination program through a partnership with Wright Patterson Airforce Base to ensure military members stationed locally are able to efficiently obtain the documentation needed during their time here. Eligible personnel, such as Foreign Liaison Officers, are able to utilize walk-in services at our Moraine Drive Test Location.

LEGAL DIVISION

In 2025, the Legal Division continued streamlining their processes and welcomed its new three-member Management Team, consisting of a Chief Deputy and two Assistant Chief Deputies. We welcome this change as we continue to improve efficiencies. This year also marked the pilot of our Employee of the Month program that saw many team members receive recognition for their dedication to the office and citizens of Montgomery County.

The Legal Division will be busy this year as we are preparing for the final implementation of the new case management system, expected to launch in June. With our new



Left: Auto Title driver exams. Right: Pictured left to right, Auto Title Chief Deputy Marquis Sansom and Assistant Chief Deputy Abi Sullivan



Pictured left to right, Chief Deputy Angela Whitfield, Assistant Chief Deputy Elizabeth Barrett, and Assistant Chief Deputy Jamie Allen

management team in place, we will continue to improve upon current processes and identify areas of improvement with a focus on customer service.

MUNICIPAL DIVISION

The Municipal Court Operations Manager completed the Court Management Program and received recognition as a Certified Court Manager in August 2025. The program is offered through the Supreme Court of Ohio and National Center for State Courts. The program creates a pathway for professional

growth, ensuring individuals are prepared to lead effectively and contribute to efficient court operations.

Five team members were promoted to higher level positions, which contributes to providing exceptional customer service due to cross-training. We have increased the number of notaries and will continue to provide notary services for customers.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

In 2025, two representatives from the Clerk of Court’s IT team participated in the Journal Technologies User’s Conference. They were asked to present on the parallels of Project Management and Organizational Change Management regarding the implementation of the Court’s Case Management System alongside with Journal Technologies’ Director of Project Management. This presentation was observed by Journal Tech customers from all over the country as well as the Journal Technologies Leadership Team.



Left: Belinda Davis, Chief Deputy of the Municipal Courts Division Right: Clerk of Courts, Mike Foley speaking with members of the public at a Connecting with the Community event at the Employment Opportunity Center in Westtown.

Location and Phone Directory

GENERAL DIVISION

Montgomery County Courts Building

41 N. Perry Street
First, Third or Fourth Floors
Dayton, Ohio 45422-2150
937.225.6000
www.montcourt.oh.gov

JUVENILE DIVISION

Montgomery County Juvenile Justice Center

380 W. Second Street
Dayton, Ohio 45422-4131
937.496.7913
www.mcjcoho.org

DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION

Dayton-Montgomery County Courts Building

301 W. Third Street
Dayton, Ohio 45422-2156
937.225.4063
937.496.7443 Fax (Administration)
937.496.7835 Fax (Case Specific)
www.mcoho.org/dr

PROBATE DIVISION

Montgomery County Courts Building

41 N. Perry Street
Second Floor
Dayton, Ohio 45422-2155
937.225.4640
937.496.3181 Fax (Administration)
www.mcoho.org/probate

CLERK OF COURTS

Montgomery County Courts Building

41 N. Perry Street
First Floor
Dayton, Ohio 45422-2150
937.496.7623
www.mcclerkofcourts.org

Structure of the Ohio Judicial System

THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO

There are six Justices and a Chief Justice. Court of last resort on state constitutional questions and questions of public or general interest; appeals from Board of Tax Appeals, Public Utilities Commission, and death penalty cases.



SECOND DISTRICT COURT OF APPEALS

There are five Appellate Judges. Original jurisdiction in select cases. Appellate review of judgments of Common Pleas, Municipal, and County Courts, and appeals from Board of Tax Appeals.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

GENERAL

There are 11 General Division Judges. Civil and criminal cases, appeals from most administrative agencies. Unlimited civil and felony criminal jurisdiction. Civil stalking orders and temporary protection orders on non-Domestic Relations matters.

JUVENILE

There are two Juvenile Division Judges. Offenses involving minors, most paternity actions, abuse, neglect, dependency and child support. Juvenile civil protection orders where the respondent is under 18.

DOMESTIC RELATIONS

There are two Domestic Relations Division Judges. Divorces, dissolutions, legal separations and annulments, allocations of parental rights and responsibilities, parenting time, child support, and spousal support, civil protection orders for domestic and dating violence.

PROBATE

There is one Probate Division Judge. Decedents' estates, mental illness commitments, guardianships, adoptions and marriage licenses.



MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY COURTS

Civil cases up to \$15,000, traffic cases, and misdemeanor offenses. Preliminary jurisdiction in felony matters.



MAYORS COURTS

Not courts of record. Violations of local ordinances and state traffic laws.

