2015 Annual Report
54-A District Court
Lansing, Michigan

Dear Mayor Bernero, Members of City Council and Citizens of Lansing:

It is my pleasure and privilege to serve as Chief Judge of the 54-A District Court and along with my colleagues, Judge Patrick F. Cherry, Judge Frank J. DeLuca and Judge Hugh B. Clarke, Jr., present to you the court's Annual Report for 2015.

In 2015, the court had 36,438 new filings, up from 34,659 in 2014. The largest increase in filing was in the category of civil infractions, up from 8,374 to 13,523. A significant decrease was seen in our parking cases, down from 7,787 to 4,656. All other case types remained fairly consistent from the previous year. Overall, the court processed 43,676 cases which include new filings, pending cases, and reopened cases.

2015 began with a reduction in judicial workforce with the retirement of our longest serving District Court Judge Charles F. Filice, a position eliminated by legislative action in 2012. While the loss of a judicial position was significant to the court, it also presented an opportunity to restructure our courtroom space. Our civil division was moved to the fifth floor and designed with a customer service focus, including an area for case mediation. The sixth floor now houses all four judges and space was opened up for attorney/client meeting rooms, as well as additional seating space. The security system and security processes were updated and is ongoing court wide.

The court also embarked on technology improvements, adding enhanced video (polycom) to each courtroom. This partnership with the Department of Corrections now allows direct access to all prison and online jails in the state for certain court hearings, saving transportation dollars and enhancing safety. In September, 54-A District Court also started an online ticketing process which allows individuals to contest certain traffic tickets and process payments. Computer monitors were placed in the hallways to display judicial schedules. Each of these initiatives is more fully described in the report.

We appreciate the financial support of the City of Lansing as we continue to meet the needs of the community and the challenges before the court.

Sincerely,

Louise Alderson

Louise Alderson
Chief Judge

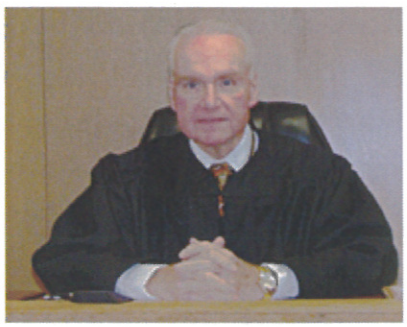
54-A DISTRICT COURT JUDGES

Judge Louise Alderson is a Lansing native who graduated from Eastern High School and holds a B.A. in Criminal Justice from Michigan State University and a J.D. from the Western Michigan Thomas M. Cooley Law School. She served as an assistant prosecuting attorney in Clinton County, working in the District, Circuit and Probate Courts. She has also served in the House and Senate as Legal Counsel to the Judiciary Committee and as Legislative Director for the Executive Office. Judge Alderson was appointed to the 54-A District Court bench in 2001 and was successful in her retention election in 2002, and re-elected to the bench in 2004 and 2010. The Michigan Supreme Court appointed Judge Alderson as the Chief Judge on January 1, 2014 and re-appointed her on January 1, 2016.

As part of her judicial duties, Judge Alderson also presides over the specialized felony Sobriety Court whose mission is to enhance public safety and community welfare by reducing recidivism among drug and alcohol offenders. That mission is accomplished through a team approach including intensive supervision, individualized treatment, and personal accountability which are monitored by frequent judicial review.

Judge Alderson has served on many community boards, including EVE, Inc., Michigan District Judges Association, Michigan Judicial Council, Girl Scouts of Michigan Capitol Council and the Zonta Club of Lansing. She currently serves as the vice-chair of the Western Michigan Thomas M. Cooley Law School and is trained as a literacy tutor with the Capital Area Literacy Coalition.

Judge Alderson's staff consists of Tami Marsh, Court Recorder/Judicial Secretary, and Christina Corcoran, Court Officer/Law Clerk.

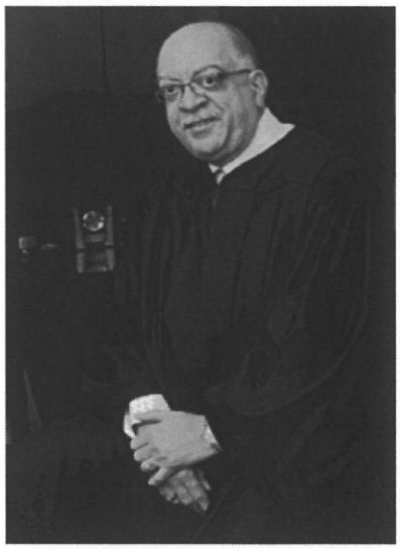


Judge Patrick F. Cherry is a Lansing native who earned his B.A. from the University of Michigan in 1966, and his Juris Doctorate from Wayne State University in 1969. He served in the Ingham County Prosecutor's Office as Chief Trial Attorney and Chief of the Criminal Division before he was appointed to the bench in 1975. Judge Cherry served as Chief Judge of the 54-A District Court from 1999 to 2006.

Judge Cherry's staff consists of Linda Shoemaker, Court Recorder/ Judicial Secretary, and Sherri Smith, Court Officer/Law Clerk.

Judge Frank J. DeLuca graduated from Western Michigan University and the Detroit College of Law where he was elected president of his graduating class. Judge DeLuca served as an assistant prosecuting attorney for Ingham County from 1971 through 1975. He engaged in the private practice of law for more than 20 years prior to his election to the bench in November of 2000. Judge DeLuca was appointed a member of the Ingham County/City of Lansing Community Corrections Advisory Board in 1995 and has served in several different capacities including two terms as chairperson. He is a member of the Ingham County Bar Association and was selected as a Fellow of the Michigan State Bar Foundation. Judge DeLuca served as Chief Judge of the 54-A District Court from 2006 through 2013.

Judge DeLuca's staff consists of Susie Cherry, Court Recorder/Judicial Secretary, and Gwen Walker, Court Officer/Law Clerk.



Judge Hugh B. Clarke, Jr., is a graduate from Wayne State University with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice. He went on to attend and graduate from the Thomas M. Cooley Law School receiving his Juris Doctorate. During his legal career, Judge Clarke served two years as a Special Consultant (1977-1979) to the State Senate Committee on Judiciary and two years as the Associate General Counsel for the State Senate (1979-1981).

After leaving state government, Judge Clarke spent over thirty years in the private practice of law, handling criminal, civil, probate and family law matters. He brings to the bench a varied and wide range of experience in various areas of the law. He has served on State Bar of Michigan Committees including the Committee on Standard Criminal Jury Instructions, Character and Fitness Committee, and the Criminal Law Section Council. In addition to memberships with the State Bar of Michigan including the Master Lawyers Section, a Fellow with the Michigan State Bar Foundation and the Ingham County Bar Association, he has held memberships in the Davis-Dunnings Bar Association, Association of Black Judges of Michigan, American Judges Association as well as the Michigan District Judges Association where he previously served as Treasurer.

He has a broad base of community service including serving seven years on the Lansing Board of Education. During his tenure on the school board he served as Vice President, President of the board as well as chairperson of the Superintendent Search Committee. Judge Clarke has served on the Board of Directors of numerous community and civil organizations, and is a Member of the National Advisory Board for *The History Makers.* Judge Clarke is a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church where he serves as a licensed Lay Eucharistic Minister. Judge Clarke has received numerous awards from various organizations recognizing his commitment to the Lansing community including proclamations from the Mayor of Lansing, the Lansing City Council, the Michigan Legislature and the Office of the Governor of the State of Michigan. Judge Clarke has received a United States Letter of Tribute from U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow and a Special Tribute from the United States Congress (sponsored by U.S. Representative Mike Rogers). His biography and interview has been preserved with the Library of Congress.

Judge Clarke has been the recipient of the Distinguished Citizen of the Year Award from the Central Michigan Heritage Enterprise, Community Hero Award from the Eastside Community Action Center, the Community Champion Award from the Tabernacle of David Worship Center, E. Patterson Community Award from the United Auto Workers Local 652 and various other organizations.

Judge Clarke was appointed to the 54-A District Court in December of 2010 by former governor Jennifer Granholm. He was elected in November 2012 to serve the balance of that term.

Judge Clarke and his wife reside in Lansing and have a son currently attending Michigan State University.

Judge Clarke's staff consists of Sandy Gregory, Court Recorder/Judicial Secretary, and Robin Narlock, Court Officer/Law Clerk.

Appointed Attorney Magistrates

Laura A. Millmore

Mary K. Kelly

COURT MISSION AND JURISDICTION

Court Mission

Our mission is to provide equal trial court services to all persons, employing available resources and working in partnership with the community to afford efficient and courteous assistance.

Jurisdiction

As part of Michigan's "One Court of Justice," the 54-A District Court has jurisdiction over the following case types arising in Lansing:

Criminal Felonies (arraignment -preliminary examination)
Criminal Misdemeanors (arraignment – sentencing)
Traffic and Zoning Infractions
General Civil Lawsuits (up to $25,000)
Landlord-Tenant Disputes
Small Claims Lawsuits (money disputes up to $5,500)

SOBRIETY COURT

The 54-A District Court specialty program utilizes a team approach to assist felony drinking and driving offenders achieve and maintain long-term sobriety. Our dedicated team consisting of treatment providers, a Lansing Police Department representative, an assigned prosecutor, a judge, and probation officer meet bi-weekly to review each case individually. Each client participates in a stringent 24-month-long program, which focuses on sobriety and creating a healthy and manageable lifestyle.

The program participants are required to complete numerous court-ordered terms and conditions, which provide structure and assist in achieving sobriety. All participants must complete a treatment program, attend 12-step meetings, obtain employment and perform community service. Since 2007, we have admitted 140 clients to the program, with a 78% success rate. There are currently 42 active participants in the program.

54-A DISTRICT COURT STAFF

Court Administrator Anethia O. Brewer

Deputy Court Administrator Mary K. Kelly

- Administrative Asst Cindy
- Bookkeeper Tina

CRIMINAL/TRAFFIC/COLLECT

MANAGER Marketa

DEPUTY CLERKS

Dawn	Rebecca
Michelle	Austin
Troy	Sandra
Jonathan	Shannon
Wendy	Delores
Susie	

PROBATION DEPARTMENT

CHIEF PROB OFCR Danielle

PROBATION OFFICERS

Heather	Cynthia
Michael	Mario

DEPUTY CLERKS

Michelle	Michele

CIVIL DIVISION

DEP MANAGER Stephanie

DEPUTY CLERKS

Christine	Karen
Gayle	Laurie
Debra	Yavonne

MAGISTRATE'S CLERK

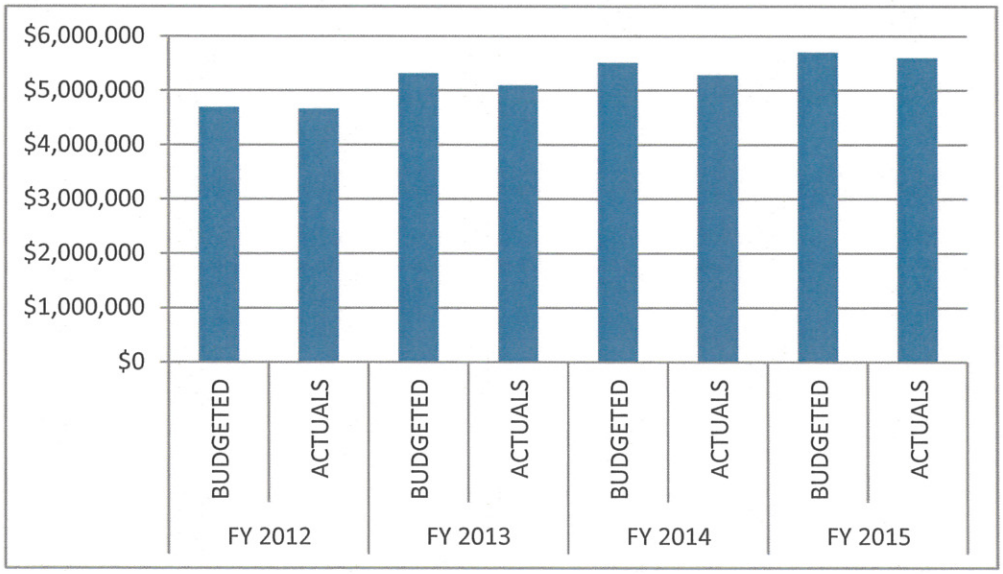
Carol

CONTRACT EMPLOYEES

Sobriety Court Probation Officer Sam
Assessment Agent Ron
Operations Manager Shawn
Arraignment Officer Sherry

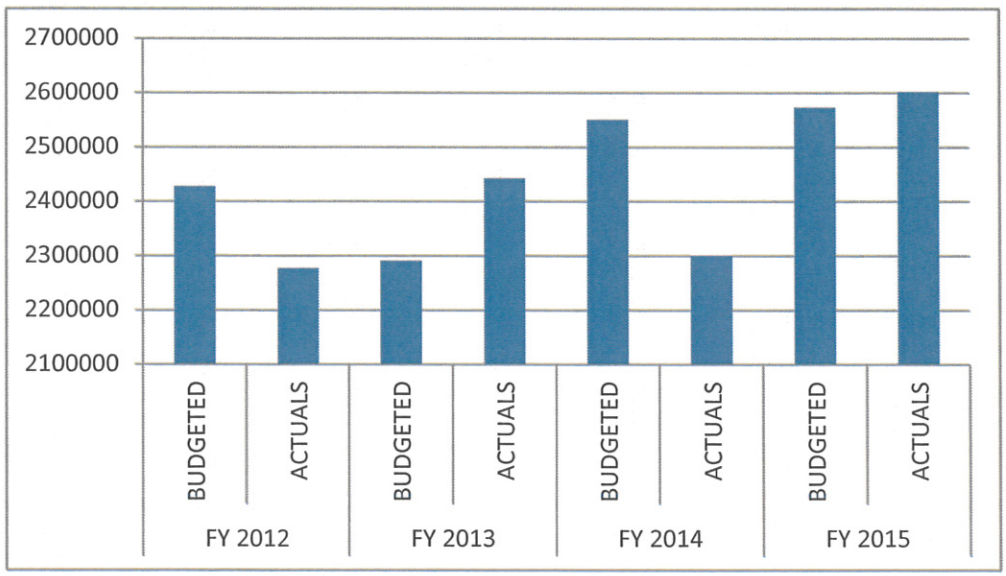
4-YEAR EXPENDITURES COMPARISONS

FY 2012		FY 2013		FY 2014		FY 2015	
BUDGETED	ACTUALS	BUDGETED	ACTUALS	BUDGETED	ACTUALS	BUDGETED	ACTUALS
$4,689,987	$4,664,526	$5,315,599	$5,097,992	$5,513,057	$5,285,230	$5,701,150	$5,601,583

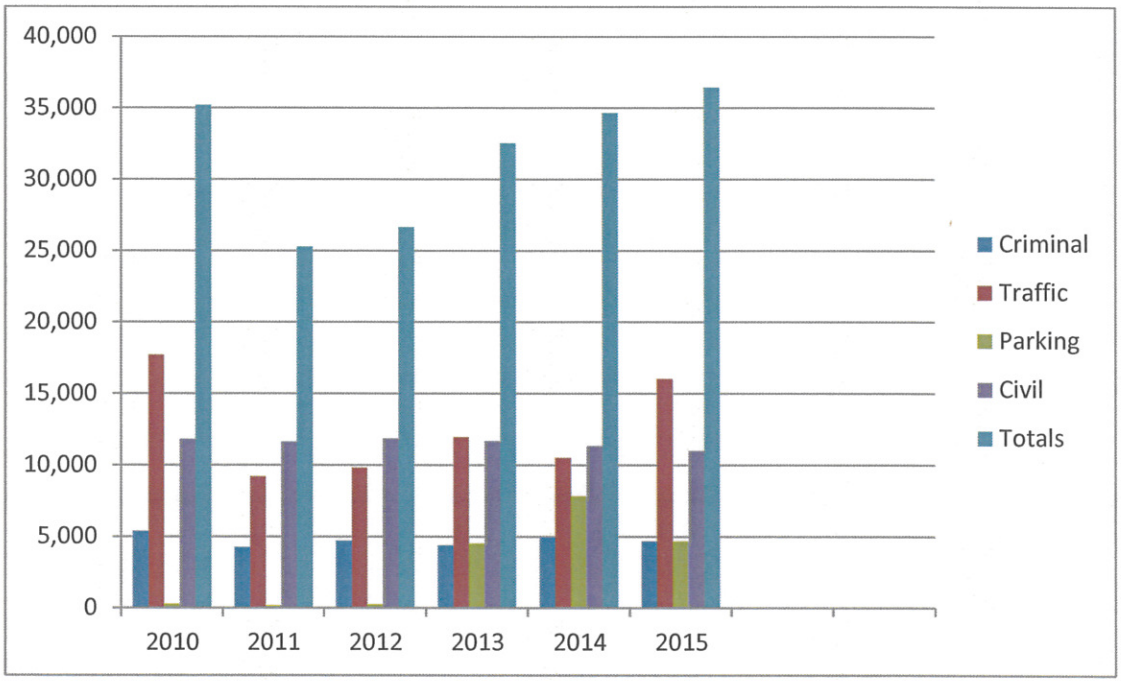


4-YEAR REVENUE COMPARISONS

FY 2012		FY 2013		FY 2014		FY 2015	
BUDGETED	ACTUALS	BUDGETED	ACTUALS	BUDGETED	ACTUALS	BUDGETED	ACTUALS
$2,428,620	$2,278,307	$2,291,720	$2,443,574	$2,551,700	$2,301,920	$2,574,000	$2,603,118



NEW FILINGS COMPARISONS BY CASE CLASS



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Criminal	5,394	4,259	4,723	4,403	4,970	4,705
Traffic	17,708	9,217	9,819	11,959	10,520	16,035
Parking	281	164	250	4,507	7,822	4,681
Civil	11,818	11,643	11,876	11,683	11,347	11,017
Totals	35,201	25,283	26,668	32,552	34,659	36,438

SURVEY SAYS.....

At the direction of the Michigan Supreme Court, the 54-A District Court conducted its third annual Public Satisfaction Survey in November of 2015. Court users were asked to complete a brief questionnaire rating their level of satisfaction with their overall experience, including the quality of service they received. Court staff worked hard to obtain responses from the wide range of individuals who come to court, including parties, attorneys, family members, law enforcement personnel, jurors, interpreters, and interested members of the public.

Consistent with responses from earlier surveys, results from this year's survey were overwhelmingly positive. In particular, the vast majority of all persons appearing in court felt they were treated with courtesy and respect. Highlights of the results include:

- 95% of court users felt they were treated with courtesy and respect by court staff.
- 89% of court users felt they were treated with courtesy and respect by the judge or magistrate.
- 89% of court users were able to get their business done in a reasonable amount of time.

ONLINE RESOLUTION OF TRAFFIC TICKET REQUESTS

In September of 2015, the court partnered with Court Innovations to provide drivers the option of resolving traffic tickets online. Requests for review submitted online are routed through police review to the magistrate for final approval. If eligible, a driver may have the charged offense changed from one that carries points against a driver's license (e.g., speeding) to one that carries no points. In addition, everything from the initial request to final payment is handled without the need for the individual to physically come to court. This program furthers our mission of enhancing customer service and the public's access to justice.

The court is working with Court Innovations on a similar program to allow individuals to resolve bench warrants for failure to pay online.

54-A Online Traffic Activity Update
9/1/2015 – 3/25/2016

4,263 Traffic ticket searches have been made by citizens

581 Cases have come through the system for review
491 Cases Approved 90 Cases Not Approved

$79,515 Collected by the court from online tickets reviewed

LANSING PARKING BUREAU COURT COLLECTION

In January 2013, the 54-A District Court partnered with the City of Lansing's Parking Bureau to increase revenue from unpaid parking tickets. In response to 2012 Public Act 13, which authorized the court to place holds on licenses where the driver has three or more unpaid parking tickets, tickets are now referred to the court after 43 days of delinquency. Our case management system will generate a hold on the license plate when three or more unpaid parking violations are filed with the court, and the hold is not lifted until the driver pays all outstanding assessments to the court.

Revenue generated for FY2015 and part of FY2016 through the court's enforcement of ticket payment is provided in the graph below.

	2014	2015	2016
January		$17,158.45	$16,039.10
February		$20,745.15	$24,918.51
March		$17,751.20	$25,213.49
April		$15,442.00	
May		$19,308.30	
June		$21,312.65	
July	$13,098.80	$17,292.28	
August	$14,040.43	$17,820.32	
September	$13,151.17	$16,193.50	
October	$20,316.60	$19,285.20	
November	$13,584.20	$16,771.20	
December	$16,675.30	$17,366.90	
TOTAL	**$90,866.50**	**$216,447.15**	**$66,171.10**
FISCAL YEAR PARKING REVENUE TOTALS			
	FY15	**FY16**	
TOTAL	$202,584.25	$170,900.50	
AVERAGE	$16,882.02	$14,241.71	

NEW IN 2015

Here are some court administration highlights from 2015:

- All courtrooms were updated with new cameras and wall-mounted televisions. Court Administration secured funds for the project from the State Court Administrative Office, as part of a federal grant. The upgraded equipment allows us to expand the use of videoconferencing with the Michigan Department of Corrections facilities, county jails and forensic centers. Videoconferencing eliminates the otherwise significant costs of transporting prisoners to and from correctional facilities for court hearings. Additional benefits include enhanced public safety and courtroom security.

- Both the 5th and 6th floors were renovated in 2015, following the retirement of Judge Filice and the reduction of our judgeships from five to four. The Civil Department moved to a new home on the 5th floor in an area that was formerly a courtroom, and all judicial courtrooms are now located on the 6th floor. The public service area on the 6th floor was expanded into the space formerly used by the Civil Department. Two private offices and three attorney-client conference rooms were added to the space. The Collections Office is now located in this area, making it easily accessible for people coming out of the courtrooms who have been referred to collections. The Court is deeply indebted to Building Maintenance for its great work on all of our renovation projects.

- Docket monitors were installed in the lobbies and outside of courtrooms to display each judge's daily schedule. Court users can use the docket monitors to determine their courtroom location and time of hearing, without having to ask at the service counter.

- The Probation Department began using a custom module, created by DMC, to interface with the Court's case management system. The interface allows a probation officer to check and record amounts owed, payments made, upcoming court dates, and contact information obtained during monthly check-ins or other contacts in real time. Previously, the Probation Department created a Microsoft Word document for each case to record case notes, and information from probation orders and probation violations had to be typed twice: once in JIS and once in the Word format. Utilizing the DMC Probation Module, the information is coded to automatically replicate into case notes, thus allowing the Probation Department to be more efficient in case and time management.

- New check writing software was installed to expedite issuing bond refund checks. Formerly, bond refunds needed to be requested from the Finance Department, with a 7 to 10 day waiting period before the check could be issued. The new software allows us to issue the check on the spot and in person.

54-A DISTRICT COURT COMMUNITY INTERESTS

CRIMINAL JUSTICE STUDENT TOURS:
In 2015 we continued our partnership with the Eaton County Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) and the LCC School of Criminal Justice and Public Service Careers, the goal of which is to promote interest in public service and legal careers. The Court hosted a student group for a day of courtroom observation and presentations by key court personnel on a number of related topics, including:

- An overview of the court system;
- Jury service and civic responsibility;
- The impact of social media on the criminal justice system; and
- Social media as tools used by law enforcement.

The students were also given the opportunity to meet the judges, who explained their roles in the system and the responsibilities of their position.

JEANS FOR CHARITY:
The 54-A District Court continues its tradition of investment in our community through the Jeans for Charity program. On payday Fridays, our employees are allowed to wear casual dress in exchange for a donation to a local charity selected by staff. Previous agencies selected by staff include Advent House Ministries, the Capital Area Humane Society, Volunteers of America, the Tri-County Office on Aging, and the Lansing Boys and Girls Club. The Greater Lansing Food Bank was the recipient of the 2015 Jeans for Charity donations in the amount of $835.