

JUDICIAL COLUMN

Connecticut Judicial Branch Volunteer and Intern Program • Issue 1 • April 2006

Celebrating 35 Years ... Inaugural Issue

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that I write to you in this inaugural edition of *The Column*. I am proud of the accomplishments of the volunteers and interns. They provide an invaluable contribution to our state courts and I am confident that they, in turn, gain valuable experience and the satisfaction of a job well done.

35 Anniversary Celebration

By Volunteer/Intern Program Administration

On a pristine spring day, when the Honorable Joseph Pellegrino stepped to the podium in the Supreme Court courtroom, it was not to address other judges or justices, but to welcome the attendees to the 35th Anniversary of the Judicial Branch Volunteer/Intern Program.

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One of the highlights of my job is to see people who were once interns with the Judicial Branch go on to succeed in future endeavors. I am delighted to run across former interns who now hold positions in state government and who bring the same level of commitment and enthusiasm to their current jobs as they did to their intern positions. I am

Internship Training Program: Then and Now

By Intern Michael Sevarino

The internship training program traditionally has been a single session that all interns attended before beginning their respective field work. However, in recent years several smaller training programs, each including 40-50 interns,

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certain that the experience that they gained from their internships has benefited them.

I look forward to many more editions of *The Column* and to reading about the accomplishments of our talented and energetic interns and volunteers.

Regards, *Melissa A. Farley*
Executive Director, External Affairs



UPCOMING INTERN EVENTS

Important Dates

Applications for Summer Session
due by May 19th

Orientation: June 8 and 9

Applications for Fall Session
due by September 8th

Orientation: September 21 and 22

For Timely Information Visit:

[www.jud.ct.gov/external/news/
jobs/intern.htm](http://www.jud.ct.gov/external/news/jobs/intern.htm)

Internship Training Program: Then and Now

By Michael Sevarino & Photos By Jessica Dorosh

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provide for a much more intimate, participatory atmosphere. Interns come from many schools, backgrounds, and experiences and considering the incredible diversity of the program, this smaller setting was especially conducive to allowing everyone to express their ideas.

For the first portion of the training, V/I Program Staff led a comprehensive presentation on proper intern conduct. It was unambiguous and left no room for interpretation. This was very effective in reminding interns about proper professional appearance and conduct in the workplace and left no questions unanswered, from basic reimbursement forms to guidelines for attire.

Traditionally the annual program has been a single session, however, in recent years there have been several training sessions per year, attended by 40-50 interns per session . . .

Mr. Michael Kokoszka, Chief Clerk for the Middletown Judicial District, led the next portion of the training. This session was the most interactive and allowed the interns to debate openly with each other concerning controversial issues. In the exercise, a controversial statement was presented, such as “Despite the advances in women’s rights, it is still a man’s world,” or “There should be a statute that requires that people have their driver’s license revoked at age 70.” Following the statement, interns were to split into agree, disagree, and undecided. For each statement, there were always a myriad of opinions that surfaced. All of the questions, appropriately, inspired



Intense intern debates convey important lesson.



debate which often times pushed the comfort level of interns. The debates that ensued were often intense and the questions, as intended, remained open ended, however, all interns left with an important lesson in diversity of opinion and background.

Mr. Tim Peiffer, Superintendent Juvenile Detention Centers, presented

an informative slideshow on the dynamics of sexual harassment. The presentation concluded with a follow up exercise, which had interns split into five groups to evaluate a given scenario on the basis of whether or not it constituted sexual harassment. Mr. Peiffer led a thoughtful discussion where he encouraged interns to disagree with his opinion on the given scenarios. The exercise, and the debate that arose, was indicative of the necessity of sexual harassment training and also of the vastly different opinions about what is sexual harassment and what is not. Despite these differences among interns, at the conclusion of Mr. Peiffer’s portion of the training, all interns had a clear understanding of sexual harassment and its implications in the workplace.

The training ended with a few closing remarks from Ms. Oliver, and with over 150 enthusiastic interns eager to begin their education in the Judicial Branch. 🗑️

INTERN CORNER

Meet Jessica Dorosh

As a senior due to graduate in May from Eastern Connecticut State University the focus of this year



has been on the pressing question on any college graduate’s mind: “What happens next?” During the fall semester, I completed an internship at the Danielson Courthouse, in the Intake, Assessment & Referral Unit. While my major is communications my minor is in criminology, an area that has always interested me. When I entered the office on my first day, I had no idea what to expect or how I was going to handle working in an area in which my knowledge was limited.

My fears were put to rest as the staff in the office was very welcoming and helpful. I have been able to see things I never imagined I would experience in my college career. This was partly because I never imagined myself interning with the Court Support Services Division. I was able to see the amount of work that is put into each case that is brought to court and then supervised by probation officers. I learned about the different aspects to being a probation officer and was able to observe court and get a first-hand view of what I had only read or heard about in the news.

Until my experience in the IAR Unit, I was content in my pursuit of a career in public relations. As I continue interning this semester, I am becoming more aware of how interested I am in the criminal justice field and possibly choosing it as my “next step” after graduation. Spending time in this office has been one of the high points of my college career and I am very glad that I chose to participate in such a beneficial internship opportunity.

35th Anniversary Celebration Volunteer/Intern Program

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On May 6, 2005, past and present interns, volunteers, Judicial Branch employees and program supporters from across the state journeyed to the majestic Supreme Court courtroom to celebrate with the V/I Program staff a milestone bench mark. Judge Pellegrino opened the celebration by welcoming the more than 100 guests. He indicated how amazed he was with the total number of hours that volunteers and interns contribute to the Branch each year.



“When I was reviewing the program’s statistics, I had to read the report twice to make sure I was reading the correct number of hours. During the past year, volunteers and interns contributed a total of 69,087 hours to the Judicial Branch, which equates to \$ 1,212,476.85.” In closing, Judge Pellegrino thanked all of the volunteers and interns for the tremendous work and hoped that they would continue to assist the Branch.

Merv Amols, Judicial Branch Volunteer for 14 years, provided the history of the Volunteer/Intern Program. Mr. Amols’ unique style of oration and delivery not only provided the historical perspective of the program, but also showed the spirit and mindset of what volunteerism is really about. His keen sense of humor entertained the packed courtroom. Mr. Amols remarked that “Much credit should be given to the former Director of Adult Probation, Terry Capshaw, for having the foresight to see what could be accomplished by a volunteer workforce operating alongside paid staff. His support and the volunteers themselves are responsible for the Program becoming an integral part of the Judicial Branch budget.” In conclusion, Mr. Amols remarked “... It has come a long way from that original little closet in the Maple Avenue Probation office and the Judicial Branch is grateful for its having done so.”

V/I Program staff, Rosanne Purtill and Ivette Servera introduced the current 53 volunteers and numerous interns who were currently serving the Branch. Stephen Ment, Deputy Director of the External Affairs Division, recognized the special guests that were in attendance. Among those special guests in attendance were Terry Capshaw, former Director of the Office of Adult Probation and Claire Collins, former Program Coordinator for the V/I Program.

Judge Pellegrino, along with the V/I Program Coordinators presented Certificates of Recognition to 57 Judicial Branch employees for their outstanding work with the V/I Program.

The program was followed by a reception in the Museum of Connecticut History. 

HONORED VOLUNTEER

Merv Amols



Last May a reception to honor Judicial Branch volunteers was held at the state Supreme Court in Hartford and I was one of those honored, having been a court volunteer for the past 15 years. My visit there generated a lot of thoughts and emotions.

The word “supreme” — I had an idea of what it meant but I looked it up in the Oxford dictionary. The actual definition of supreme: highest in authority or rank, the supreme commander, highest in importance or quality; the most outstanding; the supreme sacrifice, such as in war, the giving of one’s life; supreme being, as in God; the supreme commander as in the military; and the Supreme Court, highest of the United States and also of most states.

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HONORED VOLUNTEER *Merv Amols*

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When I walked into the Supreme Court for the first time I stood there in awe and got goose bumps. I must have passed the building at least 500 times on my way to volunteering at the criminal court building around the corner. I've been in court for years but this court is a Supreme Court. I just stood there and saw the beauty of it — the lights, the pictures of all the former judges, governors, and thought that for years I had taken this court for granted.

It's not just the beauty of it — it is what goes on inside; it hears the highest cases in the state and decisions are made there that affect us all, not just the defendants. It made me stop and think — how lucky I was to be born in the United States. Oh sure, we complain about things but



there is no better place to live than the U.S. And, without the court system to protect us where would we be?

If you have never been to the Supreme Court, before you pass on to that great court in the sky, I urge you to visit and spend some time there. And to think about what it represents. I guarantee you will never forget it. 

The Connecticut Judicial Branch Volunteer/Intern Program

99 East River Drive, East Hartford, CT 06108



NEWSLETTER STAFF

Michael Sevarino & Jessica Dorosh,
Interns

Rosanne Purtill & Rhonda Stearley-
Hebert, Editors

Karen LeBoulluec,
Creative Direction & Production

Commission on Official Legal
Publications, Enfield - Printer

VOLUNTEER/INTERN PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Questions and Comments:
(860) 282-6581

Robyn N. Oliver, Program Manager
Robyn.Oliver@jud.ct.gov

Juana Brown, Coordinator
Middlesex, New London,
and Windham Counties

Rosanne Purtill, Coordinator
Hartford and Tolland Counties

Ivette Servera, Coordinator
New Haven and Litchfield Counties