

MSBA



Judicial Administration Section

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

February 11, 2009

IN ATTENDANCE: *Hon. Ruth Jakubowski, Chair; Richard L. Flax, Esquire, Vice Chair; David C. Chiu, Esquire, Secretary; Master Mary M. Kramer, Assistant to the Secretary; Hon. Robert W. Heffron; Master Andrea F. Kelly; Hon. Michael D. Mason; Hon. Robert C. Nally; HON. John E. Nunn, III; Franklin B. Olmsted, Esquire; David L. Palmer, Esquire; T. Christine Pham, Esquire; Rosalyn E. Pugh, Esquire; Hon. Eileen C. Sweeney; Carolyn H. Thaler, Esquire; and Hon. Julia B. Weatherly*

Amazingly, after battling Baltimore *County* rush hour traffic, Baltimore *City* rush hour traffic, *Baltimore-Annapolis* rush hour traffic, *Annapolis* rush hour traffic, and suspect computer generated directions, this was the very first time the Chair was late! Even then, food was ordered and the meeting was started in a timely manner! And with that, the meeting was called to order.

Congratulations were given to Assistant Public Defender John Nunn for his appointment to the District Court bench!

The minutes from our last meeting of **November 12, 2008**, were approved.

Master Kramer presented an update on the Masters' Project. The first seminars will be held in early March. 37% of the masters have signed up, a huge turnout for a first time program especially since it is voluntary!

Judge Weatherly presented her update on the joint Family Law Section Council and Judicial Administration Councils' Self Representation Project to develop guidelines for attorneys where the opposing party is unrepresented. The FLSC will distribute a survey with their newsletter and at local bar associations' family law committees.

Judge Weatherly then segued into our MSBA Summer Conference program, for which our joint Self Representation Project committee is creating a program tentatively titled *The Wise, The Wicked and the Simple* using vignettes to illustrate various self represented litigant (SRL) issues. The Chair, Judge Weatherly and Master Kramer were "volunteered" to play the parts of the self-represented litigants in this year's production.

Following the MSBA Annual meeting presentation, the Project will participate in family law committee meetings with local bar associations throughout Maryland—"town meetings" to survey issues as well as to provide guidance in dealing with SRL issues.

Legislation Chair Olmstead presented his usual outstanding summary of upcoming legislation. As before, only the non-judicial attorneys on the JAC voted, with the following results:

- Senate Bill 124 OPPOSE
- Senate Bill 307 NO POSITION
- Senate Bill 497 NO POSITION
- Senate Joint Resolution 4 NO POSITION
- House Bill 118 SUPPORT
- House Bill 196 NO POSITION
- House Bill 202 OPPOSE
- House Bill 376 OPPOSE
- House Bill 399 SUPPORT
- House Bill 407 OPPOSE

Vice Chair Flax summarized his latest findings on the Rules Committee following which there was a discussion on what import the Rules Committee recommendations have and whether and how the Judicial Administration Council should add its input on upcoming rules changes since rules, by definition, involve Judicial Administration.

Other possible projects or areas of inquiry for JAC consideration were discussed. Master Kelly suggested an examination of the effect our economic recession is having on the legal system. The Council shared observations that divorce proceedings are down, child support actions are up, criminally there is a spike in the kidnapping of minor relatives in the belief that if you take the child you will not have to pay child support, child custody issues are being resolved more frequently by way of one year final protective orders, and there are more requests for guardianships being filed, which are being contested, as people fight for control of shrinking assets.

Christina Pham graciously offered her offices in downtown Baltimore for the March meeting. The April meeting will be scheduled only if necessary. The final meeting of the year in May will be held at the Baltimore residence of new member Carolyn Thaler. Thanks to all for their generosity and assistance!

With that the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

DAVID C. CHIU, Esquire
Secretary, JAS Council