

# MICHIGAN COURT OF APPEALS



*Michigan Constitution of 1963, Article VI, § 1:  
The judicial power of the state is vested exclusively in one court of justice which shall be divided into one supreme court, one court of appeals, one trial court of general jurisdiction known as the circuit court, one probate court, and courts of limited jurisdiction that the legislature may establish by a two-thirds vote of the members elected to and serving in each house.*

2002

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This edition of the Annual Report has been printed in black and white in deference to 2003 State of Michigan guidelines on the conservation of color printing resources.

# INTRODUCTION

The Michigan Court of Appeals was created by the Constitution of 1963, Article VI, Section 1, under which the State of Michigan has "one court of justice."

*The judicial power of the state is vested exclusively in one court of justice which shall be divided into one supreme court, one court of appeals, one trial court of general jurisdiction known as the circuit court, one probate court, and courts of limited jurisdiction that the legislature may establish by a two-thirds vote of the members elected to and serving in each house.*

When it first began operation in 1965, the bench of the Court of Appeals was comprised of nine judges. As filings with the Court grew from a low of 1,235 in 1965 to a high of 13,352 in 1992, the Legislature increased the size of the bench to 12 judges in 1969, to 18 judges in 1974, to 24 judges in 1986, and to 28 judges in 1993. Originally, the Court's offices were located only in Lansing, Detroit and Grand Rapids. The Southfield Clerk's Office was opened in 1995 after the last increase in judges, when the Legislature apportioned the state into four districts for election purposes.

The Court now has facilities in six locations across the state. About 250 employees (judges and staff) work in these locations, linked by a statewide computer network that is supported by the Court's in-house Information Systems Department. On any given day, Court employees make close to 1,000 docket entries on the statewide computer system. At the same time, mail staff in four principal locations process approximately 300 newly filed documents daily for movement between offices or for docketing in the local office.

The people who are the Court of Appeals work hard to effectuate its mandate: "To secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of every action and to avoid the consequences of error that does not affect the substantial rights of the parties." Michigan Court Rule 1.105. As will be seen in this 2002 Annual Report, that mandate drives the Court's continued evolution as a critical part of the Michigan justice system.

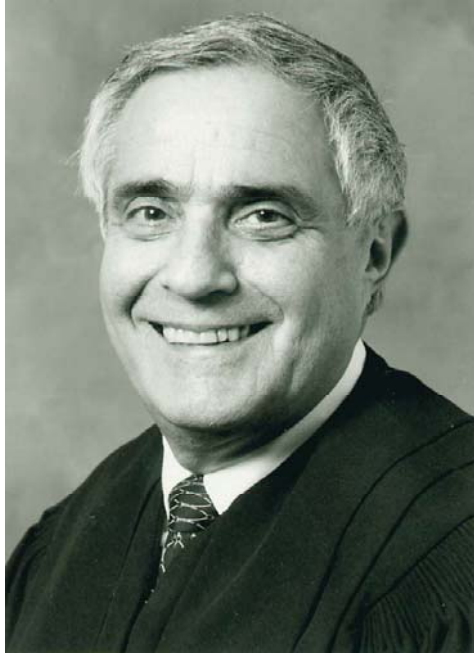


This publication is intended to provide the Court and its customers with a wide range of information and data about its performance in the preceding year. We hope that all readers will contact us with questions or comments about its content.

Sandra Schultz Mengel, Chief Clerk

Larry Royster, Research Director

# IN MEMORIAM



**Martin M. Doctoroff**, age 69, passed away on July 9, 2002. Judge Doctoroff had a bachelor's degree from Harvard College and earned his law degree from the University of Michigan. After serving as a U.S. Government Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Judge Doctoroff practiced law until he was appointed to the Court of Appeals in 1987 by then-Governor James Blanchard. He was elected to the Court in 1988, 1992 and 1998. From 1992 to 1996, he served as Chief Judge of the Court. After being diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, Judge Doctoroff faced the debilitating disease with courage, grace and dignity, and remained an active member of the bench until his death.



**George N. Bashara, Jr.**, age 67, passed away on April 8, 2002. Judge Bashara graduated from the University of Michigan in 1956 and the Detroit College of Law in 1960. He practiced law with his father, George Bashara, Sr., until 1963 when he was appointed to the Michigan Employment Security Appeal Board. He served as a Wayne County Probate Court judge from 1969 to 1972. Governor William Milliken appointed him to the Court of Appeals effective January 2, 1973. In 1982, he left the Court for private practice and held legal positions at Dykema Gossett, Federal-Mogul, and Clark Hill.

# JUDGES OF THE COURT OF APPEALS

The Michigan Court of Appeals is a high-volume intermediate appellate court. Although divided into four districts for election purposes, the Court's twenty-eight judges sit in panels of three and rotate with equal frequency with each of the other judges and among the three courtroom locations (Detroit, Lansing and Grand Rapids). A decision of any panel of judges is controlling statewide and is reviewable by the Michigan Supreme Court on leave granted.

Judges Who Served in 2002	Joined the Bench	Current Term Expires on January 1 of
Whitbeck, William C., Chief Judge	1997	2005
Hood, Harold, Chief Judge Pro Tem	1982	*
Holbrook, Jr., Donald E.	1975	*
Sawyer, David H.	1987	2005
Doctoroff, Martin M.	1987	**
McDonald, Gary R.	1987	***
Murphy, William B.	1988	2007
Cavanagh, Mark J.	1989	2009
Griffin, Richard Allen	1989	2009
Neff, Janet T.	1989	2007
Jansen, Kathleen	1989	2007
Fitzgerald, E. Thomas	1991	2009
White, Helene N.	1993	2005
Saad, Henry William	1994	2009
Bandstra, Richard A.	1995	2009
Hoekstra, Joel P.	1995	2005
Markey, Jane E.	1995	2009
O'Connell, Peter D.	1995	2007
Smolenski, Michael R.	1995	2007
Gage, Hilda R.	1997	2007
Talbot, Michael J.	1998	2009
Wilder, Kurtis T.	1998	2005
Zahra, Brian K.	1999	2007
Meter, Patrick M.	1999	2009
Owens, Donald S.	1999	2005
Cooper, Jessica R.	2001	2007
Kelly, Kirsten Frank	2001	2007
Murray, Christopher M.	2002	2009
Donofrio, Pat M.	2002****	2005

\* Retired December 31, 2002.

\*\*\* Resigned effective January 3, 2003.

\*\* Died July 9, 2002.

\*\*\*\* Appointed effective November 8, 2002.



# COURT PERFORMANCE

## Delay Reduction Plan

In 2002, the judges of the Court of Appeals unanimously adopted an ambitious Delay Reduction Plan that was focused on reducing the time between filing and disposition of all cases resolved by an opinion of the Court. The Preliminary Report on Delay Reduction, as well as subsequent Progress Reports, can be accessed on the Court's website at <http://courtofappeals.mijud.net/>, under Resources, Special Projects.

Cases filed with the Court of Appeals are resolved either by opinion or order. *Order cases* move relatively quickly from filing to disposition because the dispositive orders are usually issued before the case is eligible for review by a staff attorney and submission for oral argument before a panel of judges. Indeed, some cases are disposed by order within the first month after filing if they were not properly filed with the Court. For the approximately 4,500 cases disposed by order in 2001, the *average* time from filing to disposition was 130 days.

**The *average* time to disposition by opinion was reduced to 603 days in 2002.**

*Opinion cases* move more slowly than order cases because their facts and issues are not amenable to disposition by order, and they are thus reviewed and reported on by a staff attorney and then submitted to a panel of judges for resolution by opinion. For the approximately 3,100 cases disposed by opinion in 2001, the *average* time from filing to disposition was 654 days. Following implementation of a variety of delay reduction initiatives throughout 2002, the average time to disposition by opinion in 2002 was reduced from 654 days to 603 days.

Delay reduction measures deployed in 2002 that contributed to this achievement were primarily focused on the length of time each opinion case spent in the judicial chambers after submission on case call. Included among these, the judges adopted shortened deadlines for issuing opinions in appropriate cases, implemented a policy that prevented the adjournment of cases from summary case call panels, volunteered for extra panel assignments, and accepted additional cases without supporting staff attorney memoranda. As a measure of the increased load shouldered by the judges in 2002, the number of opinions increased 16%, from 3,138 opinions in 2001 to 3,645 opinions in 2002.

As noted above, the Preliminary Report on Delay Reduction and subsequent periodic Progress Reports can be accessed on the Court's website at <http://courtofappeals.mijud.net/>, under Resources, Special Projects.

## Performance Trends

Beyond delay reduction, the Court of Appeals routinely tracks two other measures of performance. *Clearance rate* reflects the number of cases disposed compared to the number of cases filed. In 2002, the Court posted a

**2002 Clearance Rate:  
106.99%  
7,647 dispositions  
7,156 filings**

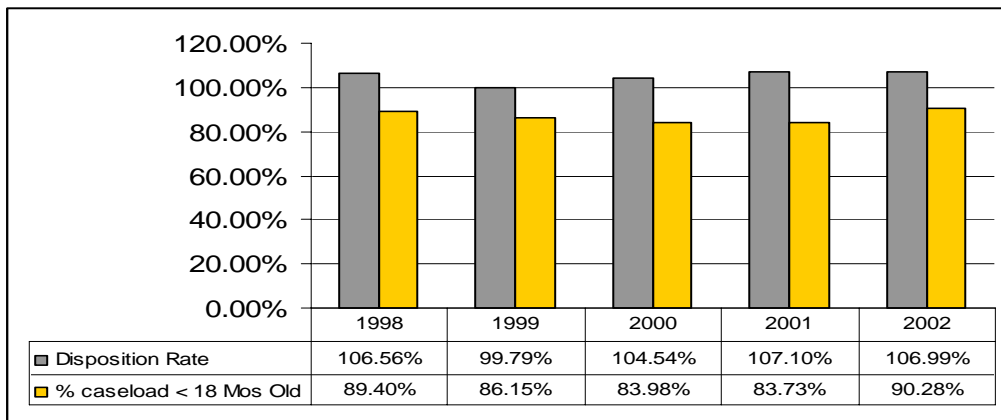
clearance rate of 106.99%, disposing of 7,647 cases during the same period when a modest filing increase occurred and 7,156 cases were filed.

**Age of Pending Caseload  
Close of 2002:  
90.28% of pending cases  
were 18 months old  
or younger.**

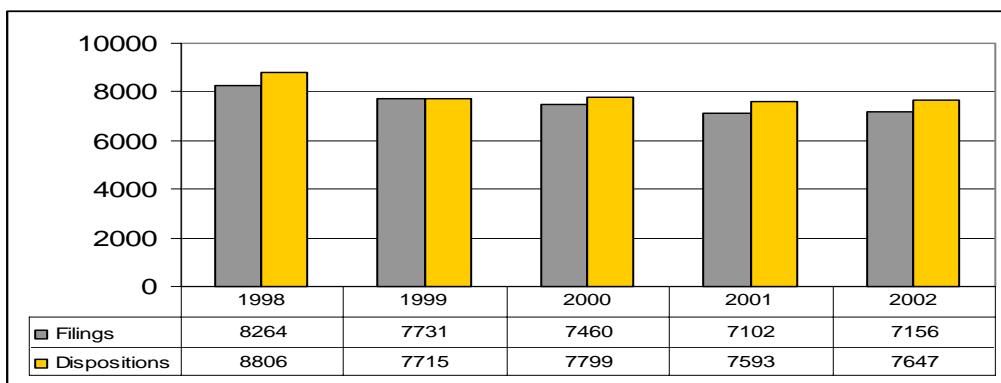
The second primary performance measure is the *relative age* of the pending caseload. An 18-month standard is applied to all pending cases, with the measure reporting the percentage of pending cases that is 18 months old or younger. At the close of 2002, for the first time since 1997, 90.28% of the Court’s pending caseload was 18 months old or younger.

### Five-Year Statistics

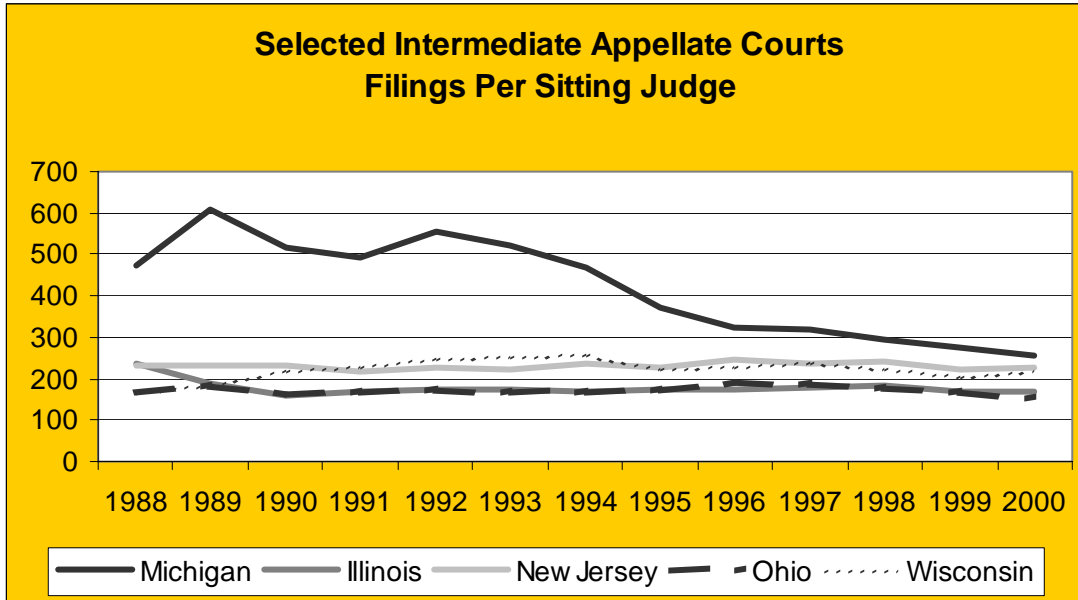
The following chart illustrates the Court of Appeals’ performance trends for the past five years.



In 2002, filings in the Court of Appeals increased 0.76% over 2001. In the same period, dispositions in the Court of Appeals increased 0.54% compared to 2001. In 2001, the Court recognized a settling of the rate of change from one year to the next in filings and in dispositions. The modest filing increase in 2002 is further evidence that the continued diminution in annual filings may have come to an end.



Comparing the filings per judge at the Court of Appeals to filings per judge at intermediate appellate courts in similar states, it appears that the substantial decline in Michigan filings from the high in 1992 is anomalous. However, the graph illustrates a settling in the number of filings since 1996, and it is clear that the Michigan Court of Appeals still experiences higher filings per judge than any of these other states.



2001 statistics are expected to be available from the National Center for State Courts in May 2003.

## CLERK'S OFFICE



### Lansing Office Moves to Hall of Justice

On October 19, 2002, all of the Court's Lansing offices moved to the newly constructed Michigan Hall of Justice at the opposite end of the Mall from the Capitol Building. The building was designed specifically for the Judicial Branch and also houses the Supreme

Court, the State Court Administrative Office, the Michigan Judicial Institute, the Board of Law Examiners and the Judiciary's new Learning Center for K-12 students. The location of the Clerk's Offices of both the Court of Appeals (second floor) and the Supreme Court (fourth floor) in the same building greatly facilitates movement of files and case records between the two courts. Parties and attorneys appearing before the Court of Appeals are also benefited by the location of its Lansing courtroom on the same floor as its Clerk's Office. The courtroom was designed to fit both the standard three-judge panels and the seven-judge panels that are assigned to sit from time to time on conflict cases.

## **Southfield Office Joins District II Judges in Consolidated Space**

In December 2002, the Southfield Clerk's Office was relocated from the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the American Center Building to space on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor that was formerly occupied by the Court's Information Systems Department. All District II Court offices now share adjacent space, facilitating improved communication, file and mail distribution, and security. The Southfield Clerk's Office is by far the most frequently visited office of the four districts; nearly one-third of the people who make filings at the four Clerk's Office locations do so in Southfield.

## **Delay Reduction Projects**

The March 2002 adoption of the Court's general Delay Reduction project impacted the Clerk's Office in 2002 principally through the process of opinion release. The plan's ambitious schedule of truncated deadlines for the issuance of opinions led to a flood of opinions through the Clerk's Office, particularly at year end. The judges issued 507 more opinions in 2002 than in 2001, with each opinion case being processed on a priority basis by the Clerk's Office records staff and opinion clerk.

**Delay Reduction  
Projects Are Focus of  
Clerk's Office in 2002.  
Termination of  
Parental Rights Cases  
Receive Special  
Attention.**

As 2002 closed, the Clerk's Office was also involved in a special review of all cases involving termination of parental rights. In September 2002, Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Maura D. Corrigan invited the Court of Appeals to place special emphasis on reducing delay in dependency (custody and termination of parental rights) appeals. A preliminary report was issued in November 2002 and may be accessed on the Court's website at <http://courtofappeals.mjud.net/Resources/specialproj.htm>. As a

direct offshoot of this report, the Detroit Clerk's Office began an experiment focused on Wayne County appeals from orders terminating parental rights. In those cases, the Detroit Clerk's Office reviews each appeal in which transcripts are overdue and recommends to the Court a *sua sponte* order to show cause any court reporter who fails to timely file a transcript ordered for the appeal. Prior Court practice included a 21-day warning letter to appellant's attorney, time to review and submit resulting attorney motions to show cause the court reporter(s), and further time to docket and mail resulting orders to show cause. The new process is expected to cut approximately four to six weeks of delay in these very important cases.

## **Fax Filing Project**

Under Administrative Order 2002-2, the Court of Appeals began accepting certain filings by facsimile in September 2002. This project presently encompasses only answers to seven-day motions and answers to emergency pleadings, as these are the type of filings that are often difficult to accomplish in a timely manner from the more remote areas of Michigan, particularly when inclement weather prevents commercial services such as FedEx or UPS from operating. The Court expects its experience with this project to serve as a foundation for its e-filing initiative. The fax filings are received directly into the Court's database, from which they are electronically linked to the corresponding entry on the Court's electronic case dockets. They can then be accessed by Court judges or staff in other cities via the Court's intranet.

## **Electronic Opinion Distribution**

Coincident with the move to the Hall of Justice and the early retirement of the Court's long-time print technician, electronic distribution of the Court's opinions was implemented for everyone but the attorneys, parties, and lower courts on each case. Now, the media and members of the

public retrieve the Court's opinions (both published and unpublished) from its website at <http://courtofappeals.mijud.net/resources/opinions.htm>. The opinions are released twice a week and are available on the website by 9:00 am on the next business day. A variety of search options are available to users, including one command that elicits all opinions released on a specified date. The Court's Information Systems Department is now developing an option that will accumulate an entire release in one document for downloading and printing.

### **Costs & Fees**

As part of a periodic review of the Court's fiscal situation, costs assessed under MCR 7.217 for failure to pursue an appeal in conformity with the court rules were increased in July 2002 from \$200 to \$250. This sum more accurately reflects the drain on Court resources that results when Clerk's Office staff become involved in labor-intensive efforts to secure transcripts or briefs that were not filed as required by the court rules. Other policy changes were implemented to ensure that all filing fees are collected as directed by MCL 600.321.

**Fiscal Review  
Focuses on Costs  
& Fees to Ensure  
Appropriate Levels  
and Consistent  
Collection  
Standards.**

### **Staff Reductions Through Early-Out Retirements**

State of Michigan budget reduction efforts for 2002 included the enactment of two separate early out opportunities for eligible state employees. The Clerk's Office was impacted by this effort when five senior employees retired between June and December 2002. Although this reflects a 9% reduction in Clerk's staff statewide, all positions have been held open while Court administrators evaluate the impact of past and projected future cuts in the Court's annual appropriation. Further, an additional position has been held open following a senior employee's transfer to another division to fill a more critical position vacated in the wake of an early retirement there.

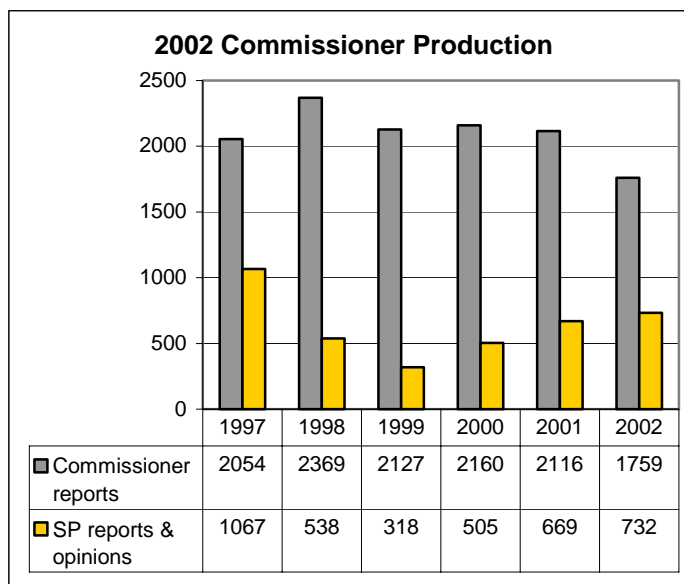
## **RESEARCH DIVISION**

### **Commissioners**

The Commissioners are experienced central staff attorneys whose primary function is to prepare written reports in (1) discretionary matters such as applications for leave to appeal, (2) motions to withdraw as counsel or to remand, and (3) complaints for writs of habeas corpus, superintending control, and mandamus. The Commissioners also review incoming emergency applications and work closely with the judges to resolve priority matters on an expedited basis. Several Commissioners also prepare reports and proposed opinions in cases assigned to summary panels. The Commissioners are located in each of the four district offices—Detroit, Southfield, Grand Rapids and Lansing.

In 2002, the Commissioners prepared reports in 1,759 leave applications and miscellaneous matters. Although this is fewer than in years past, two Commissioners left the Court in 2002 and were not replaced for budgetary reasons. By shifting some of the Commissioners' responsibilities to the Senior Research attorneys, the remaining staff is able to timely process the new leave applications without creating a backlog in any of the district offices.

In 2002, the Commissioners also prepared 732 reports and proposed opinions in cases assigned to summary panels. This is an increase in the number of reports and opinions prepared in the past few years. The chart to the right compares the 2002 production of both commissioner reports and summary panel reports with the production numbers from the prior five years.

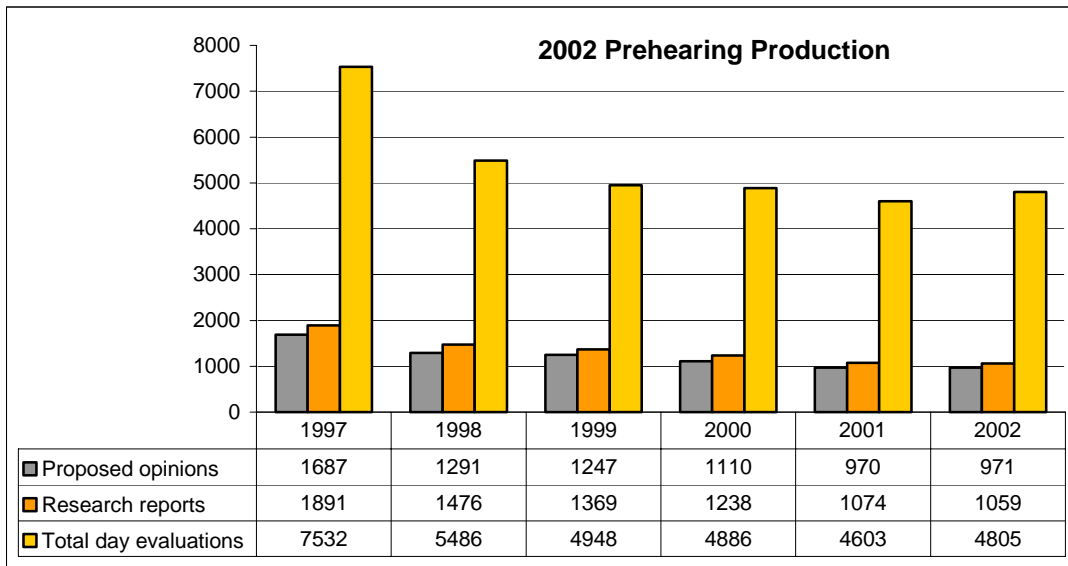


## Prehearing

Prehearing attorneys are typically recent law school graduates who are hired for a period of one to three years. They prepare research reports in cases that are determined to be in the mid-range of difficulty. The reports are confidential intra-Court documents that contain a comprehensive and neutral presentation of the material facts, a recitation of the issues raised by the parties, a summary of the parties' arguments, a thorough analysis of the law and facts on each issue, and a recommendation as to the appropriate disposition. Prehearing has offices in Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Lansing.

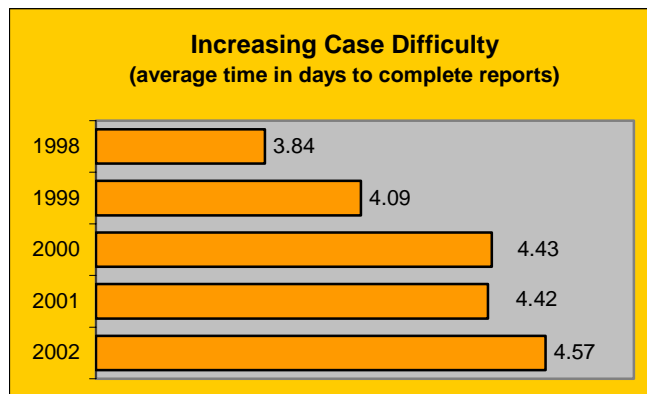
In 2002, Prehearing maintained a staffing level of 28.5 attorneys, compared to 29.5 in 2001, 31.4 in 2000, and 32.6 in 1999. The reduced staffing levels have been the result of budget restrictions over the past several years. In 2002, twenty-four Prehearing attorneys left the Court and eighteen new attorneys were hired. In addition, two Prehearing secretaries retired from the Court and were not replaced.

In 2002, Prehearing attorneys prepared 1,059 reports and 971 proposed opinions for regular case calls. The reduced number of reports in comparison with prior years is primarily due to the increased difficulty of the cases. In 2002, Prehearing prepared reports in cases with an aggregate day evaluation of 4,805 days—an increase from the 2001 level of 4,603 days and only slightly less than the 2000 and 1999 levels of 4,886 days and 4,948 days, respectively, when the staffing levels were higher. The chart on the next page compares the 2002 Prehearing production with the prior five years.

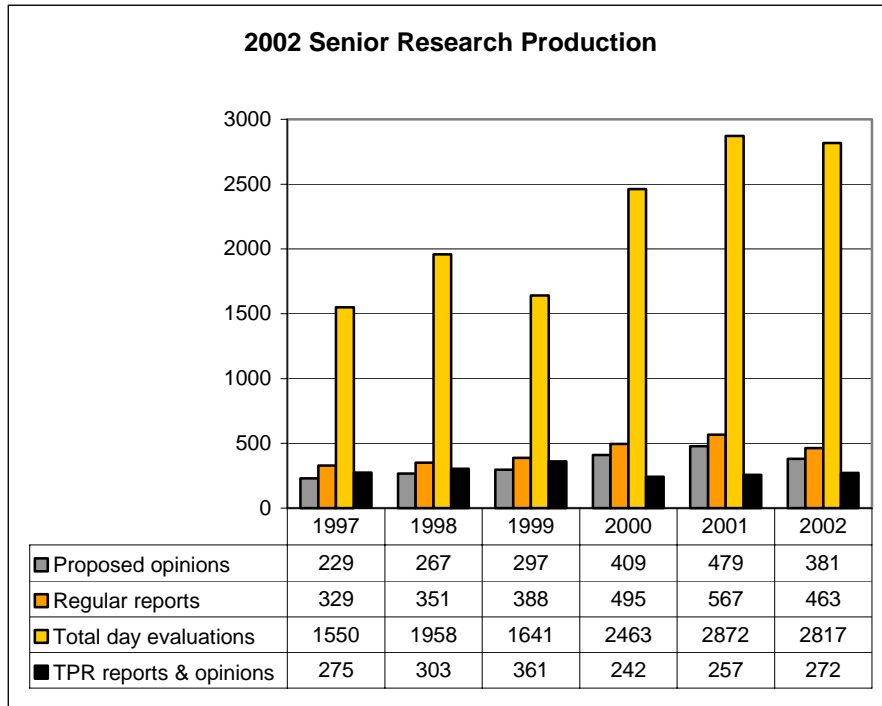


## Senior Research

Senior Research is comprised of experienced attorneys whose backgrounds typically include Prehearing, judicial clerkships and private practice. Unlike Prehearing, the tenure of the Senior Research attorneys is not for a limited duration. The primary function of these attorneys is to prepare research reports in longer or more complex cases for case call, although they also prepare reports in a significant number of termination of parental rights appeals. The content of these research reports is the same as those prepared by Prehearing. The main office of Senior Research is located in Detroit, but several attorneys are housed in the Grand Rapids and Lansing offices.



At the end of 2002, the Senior Research unit was comprised of sixteen full-time attorneys and two part-time attorneys (a slight decrease from 2001). In addition, Senior Research also utilized the services of fifteen to seventeen contract attorneys to prepare reports and proposed opinions in termination of parental rights appeals only. The contract attorneys are all former staff attorneys who work out of their homes and are not otherwise engaged in the practice of law.



Senior Research prepared 463 research reports and 381 proposed opinions for regular case calls. Although the number of reports is significantly less than in 2001, the aggregate day evaluation of the cases decreased only slightly due to the fact that they had higher day evaluations on average. The Senior Research attorneys and contract attorneys also prepared reports and proposed opinions in 272 termination of parental rights appeals.

### Settlement Office

The Settlement Office, which is located in the Detroit offices at Cadillac Place, ended its first full year of a new structure with only one full-time attorney and one secretary. By every measure, the restructuring has been a success. In 2002, the Settlement Office settled 94.4 appeals (the .4 reflects a partial appeal), or 35.4% of its caseload. Another 44 appeals were still pending at year's end. The settled cases equate to the workload of more than two Prehearing attorneys, who would have had to prepare research reports if the cases had not settled. In addition, the settled cases saved an incalculable amount of time by Clerk's Office personnel, judges and law clerks in not having to process the cases to disposition by opinion.

Two new initiatives have contributed to the success of the Settlement Office. First, several active circuit court judges have volunteered their services to facilitate settlements in some of the larger and more complex appeals from outside their circuits. In 2002, 8.5 of these larger cases settled and 5.5 did not, for a settlement rate of 60.7%. Second, the Settlement Office began utilizing outside facilitators in domestic relations cases (DM and DO suffixes). These facilitators are recognized as experts in the field of family law and volunteer their time in cases in which they have no interest or connection. In 2002, 6.4 domestic relations appeals settled (26.7%), 17.6 did not, and seven are still pending.

<b>SETTLEMENT CASES 2002</b>				
Case Type	Not		Success	
	Settled	Settled	Pending	Rate
<b>ALL CASES</b>	94.4	172.6	44	35.4%
<b>Major Case Types (by lower court suffix):</b>				
CH	5	19	2	20.8%
CK	29.5	40.5	10	42.1%
CZ	9	17	4	34.6%
DM	2.4	9.6	3	20.0%
DO	4	8	4	33.3%
NH	3	2	2	60.0%
NI	6	20	5	23.1%
NO	18.5	25.5	4	42.0%
NZ	4	8	3	33.3%
Misc	13	23	7	36.1%

# INFORMATION SYSTEMS

## Video Conferencing

What began as an experiment has now turned into a very successful element of Court of Appeals technology. Initially, video conferencing equipment was installed in two Court locations – Cadillac Place in Detroit and the Hall of Justice in Lansing. Many video conference meetings have been conducted between these locations, allowing participating judges and staff to avoid the time and expense of traveling hundreds of miles round-trip between cities. Video conferencing equipment has now been purchased for the Grand Rapids location and Court judges and staff in Southfield will soon have access to video conference equipment located in another Judiciary office there.

**Video Conferencing is Cost-Effective for Court.**  
**Possible Expansion to Oral Argument.**

In March 2003, as the result of a joint project between the Attorney General's Office, the State Appellate Defender's Office, and the Court, a video conference oral argument will be conducted between Lansing and Grand Rapids. If it proves to be a viable means of conducting oral argument, the Court anticipates that such an option will benefit both the Court and the attorneys appearing before it by reducing travel time and related travel costs. And although it arose out of an effort to conserve dwindling resources for State agency attorneys, the option is also expected to be a means of reducing costs for all practitioners who volunteer to utilize it.

## Network Conversion

More than 200 internal users access the Court's multi-faceted intranet browser via a state-wide network. The network must absorb the load presented by these users while supporting constantly replicating redundant servers in each of the four primary Court locations.

In the fall of 2002, overall network data transfer speed was quadrupled and the network became substantially more cost-effective when the IS Department upgraded the data network from a frame relay configuration to a point-to-point configuration. As an additional benefit of the increase in bandwidth, the Court's internal video conferences can be conducted on the network at no cost.

## Fax Serve

In September 2002, the Court began accepting a limited number of filings submitted by facsimile. The IS staff developed the process by which an electronic copy of each fax transmission is directly linked to the case management system without the necessity of printing a hard copy. The IS staff worked closely with the Michigan Department of Treasury to implement a software program that accepts credit card payments for the fax filings. The knowledge and experience gained through this project will move the Court one step closer to its ultimate goal of accepting and managing electronic filings.

## Electronic Court Rules

During 2002, IS staff continued the project of "marking up" the Michigan Court Rules in XML (eXtensible Markup Language) for inclusion on the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court

websites. This project was undertaken with assistance from Supreme Court staff. The rules were placed on the two websites in March 2003, and work will now begin on a supplemental public comment section on which outside users can review proposed rules and post and read comments about those proposals.

### **Electronic Opinion Release List**

In mid-year, an automated program was designed under which all judicial offices and staff attorneys receive an emailed list of each opinion release. The email lists each case from the prior day's release and provides hypertext links to the corresponding opinions and available digest entries. The Court is now experimenting with a small group of outside attorneys to verify that the email list is useful in that context. Plans are also underway to create a "zip" file for quickly downloading an opinion release either in full or separated into published and unpublished opinions.

### **Imaging**

The 2001 imaging project under which all docketing statements received in the Lansing Clerk's Office were scanned into PDF (Portable Document Format) was expanded to the other three Clerk's Office locations in 2002. Now, all Court orders are also scanned and linked electronically to the corresponding docket entry in the internal MAPPIS case management system. When public access to the electronic case dockets is implemented in the future, copies of these orders will be accessible to the public through the Court website.

### **E-filing**

In February 2002, Chief Judge Whitbeck and Information Systems Director Denise Devine delivered a presentation to the Appellate Practice Section of the State Bar on the e-filing vision of the Court of Appeals. The full-day symposium was attended by approximately 100 attorneys. Breakout sessions allowed small groups of participants to raise and discuss a variety of e-filing issues that could impact their own work. The feedback from these discussions was welcomed by the Court and will be used to structure the e-filing project as it evolves. At present, the State's budget problems prevent the Court from moving ahead in this area, although alternative methods of funding an e-filing system were being explored at the end of the year.

### **Redesigned Website**

In November 2002, the Court of Appeals website (<http://courtofappeals.mjud.net/>) got a facelift. Principal modifications were focused on two goals: first, to speed up user load time by eliminating some of the weightier graphics, and second, to have a "look and feel" more like the *One Court of Justice* website at <http://courts.michigan.gov/index.htm>. All of the original information was retained, and a "Special Projects" section was added that presently showcases the Court's work in the area of delay reduction.

**Website  
Redesigned for  
Faster Loading  
by Users.  
Special Projects  
Section Added.**

### **Southfield Clerk's Office Move**

In December, IS staff assisted with the move of the Southfield Clerk's Office from the 6<sup>th</sup> floor to the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of the American Center Building. New network and phone cabling was run by in-house staff. The move was accomplished during business hours with virtually no disturbance to the office's ability to accept public filings at its counter.

**Hall of Justice  
Data Infrastructure  
Design Will  
Support Court  
Long Into Future.**

### **Hall of Justice Move**

As part of the years-long planning for the Judicial Branch's new Hall of Justice, Court of Appeals IS staff worked closely with Judicial Information Systems (JIS) staff from the Supreme Court, as well as a number of outside vendors, to create a data infrastructure design and backbone that will support Court information systems needs well into the future. Over a four-day period in October, almost 90 Lansing users were moved to the new Hall of Justice from the former Court of Appeals location at the Washington Square Building. All PC's, printers and fax machines were relocated and installed with minimal disruption to the users.

### **Windows 2000 Upgrade**

In the summer of 2002, more than 250 Court of Appeals PC's at six locations were upgraded from Windows 95 to Windows 2000. A half-day training session was offered by the in-house trainer for all court employees.

### **IS Assistant & Trainer Resignations**

In 2002, the IS Assistant and the Automation Specialist/Trainer resigned from the IS department to pursue other opportunities. A new IS Assistant was hired during 2002; the Trainer position was filled in early 2003.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **Department Merger**

In 2002, the Human Resources Department faced a number of challenges. The first among them was the merger of the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court Human Resources staff in order to better serve the needs of approximately 500 people, including the employees of the Court of Appeals, the Supreme Court, the State Court Administrative Office, the Michigan Judicial Institute, and the State Appellate Defender's Office. Following the merger, all Human Resources staff are funded through a branchwide appropriation line item.

### **Benefits Changes**

2002 was also a year of significant change in the health care industry. In response to dramatically rising health care costs, Judiciary employees were transferred to substantively equivalent but more economical insurance options and it was necessary for Human Resources staff to introduce new health, dental, and vision benefits to all employees. Informational meetings were held in all four districts to assist employees in understanding the provisions of the new benefit options. Open enrollment for the 2002-2003 benefit year required all employees to enroll online for the first time, using the State of Michigan Human Resources Management Network (HRMN) Self-Service function.

**Judiciary Benefits  
Changes  
Reduce Costs  
While Maintaining  
Coverage.**

## **Bookkeeping Upgrade**

As 2002 closed, the Human Resources staff modified the time and attendance process to reduce paperwork, and the department continues to explore options for fully automating this function to further streamline operations.

2002 was undoubtedly a year of transition and adaptation as offices were moved and staffs were merged. Although it faced major budgetary constraints and exponentially rising health care costs, the Human Resources Department handled these challenges in the most cost-effective and efficient way possible, while maintaining its standard of providing courteous and prompt service to all employees.

# **SECURITY DIVISION**

**Security is Collaborative Effort at Hall of Justice.**

## **2002 Focus**

The security focus in 2002 was the move to the Hall of Justice and collaboration of Court of Appeals security personnel in the provision of security to its 250 occupants and many visitors. Security measures in the Hall of Justice included the provision of proximity card access for all judges and employees and full-time screening of the public.

## **Facilities Projects**

The opening of the Hall of Justice was just one of several facilities projects on which the Security Division collaborated. In Southfield and in Grand Rapids, the security of the Clerk's Offices was enhanced through cost-effective reorganization of existing space.

## **Security Reports**

The Division has the daily obligation to monitor security incidents in the Court. In 2002, court employees generated 55 Security Information Reports. Of these, 7 were criminal incidents and 48 were non-criminal in nature.



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