



## Keeping Kids Off the Mean Streets



*Court Administrator Mike Pisciotta wraps the hands of two-time Air Force Champion Larry Hampp at the 2011 South Dakota Golden Gloves in Rapid City, just prior to Hampp's Light Heavyweight championship match which he won by knockout.*

“Keeping kids off the Mean Streets” has been the motto and the goal of boxing coach Mike Pisciotta since founding Mean Street Boxing in Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1990. Working as a Correctional Officer at the

Nebraska State Penitentiary, Pisciotta saw first-hand the end results of crime, drugs, and alcohol abuse, and sought to develop his amateur boxing

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**Welcome to the fourteenth issue of the UJS Newsletter!**

**Articles, information and feedback are welcome. Articles and information will be printed as space allows. Please email your information to Gloria Guericke.**

## ...Mean Streets, cont'd. from page 1

program into a healthy, constructive activity for at-risk and disadvantaged youth in the Lincoln community.

Today, more than twenty years later, the 4th Circuit Court Administrator continues to volunteer his time working with youth through the Mean Street Boxing Club located at the corner of 7th and West Main in the J&P Cycles building in Sturgis. Pisciotta's program has helped hundreds of youth, and has produced 33 state and Midwest Golden Gloves Champions, 24 state and regional USA Boxing Champions, four Air Force Champions, and one National Native American Champion. Pisciotta has also guided several of his boxers successfully into the professional ranks, with numerous ESPN Friday Night Fights appearances and three professional state champions.

Many of the youth that

pass through the program are at risk or have had some contact with the juvenile or adult justice system.

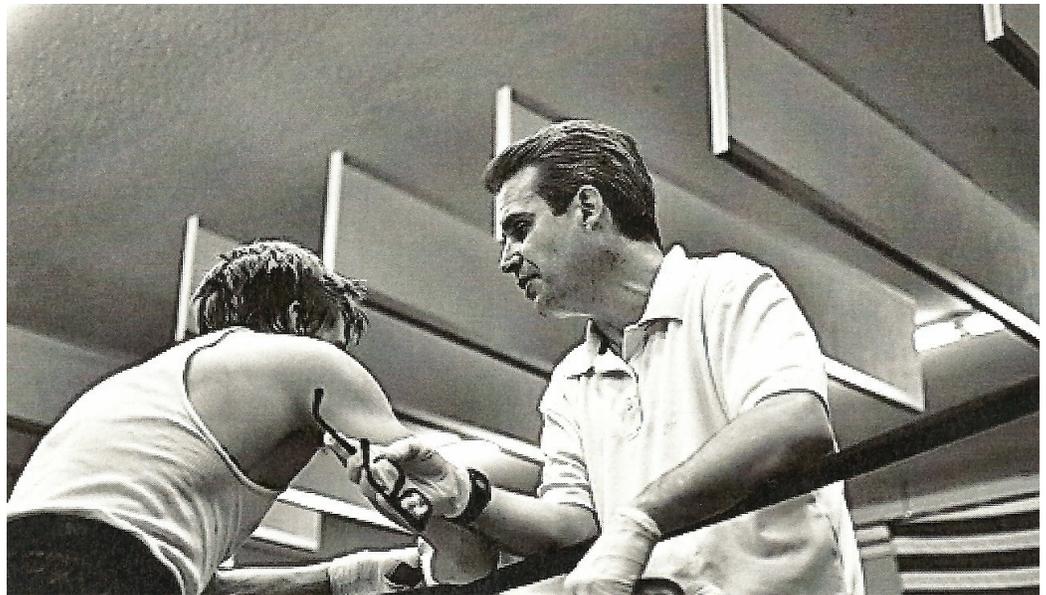
Through the program Pisciotta works to instill the ability to overcome life's obstacles and

his philosophy is simple, "Boxing is a microcosm of life. When life knocks you down, you get back up. When life hits you hard, you fight back

**"Boxing is a microcosm of life. When life knocks you down, you get back up..."**

harder. In boxing there is no one to block for you, no one to pass the ball to, you face your opponent alone in the ring. Boxing teaches self-sufficiency, self-discipline, and a strong work ethic. Life is tough. A winner must be tougher. We owe it to our kids to tell them that."

*Information from flyer assembled by Casey Walton, Gordon, Nebraska, with Mike Pisciotta, for submission to the Sturgis Chamber of Commerce. Photographer: El Gallo.*



*Pisciotta confers in the corner with Lightweight boxer Jacob White Buffalo after novice title bout won by White Buffalo by a 3rd round knockout at the 2011 South Dakota Golden Gloves in Rapid City.*

For if all things were equally in all men,  
nothing would be prized.

HOBBS, Thomas, *Leviathan*, Part I, chap. VIII.

## Chief Justice's Memo

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Several months ago a friend of mine presented me with a judicial gavel which he had specifically made for me. Instead of a rounded head like most judicial gavels, this one had a claw hammer for a head.

My friend told me he had made it that way so as a judge, I could "build things." Although I have been a judge for 27 years, such a simple, yet brilliant thought never before had crossed my mind.

All of us who work within the UJS are building something. We may be taking a broken life and building it into a successful one. We are currently engaged in an upgrade of



*Chief Justice David Gilbertson displays the judicial gavel made for him by a friend, which he referenced in this year's Judicial Message.*

our software program which will build a better system to serve the public when it is completed. We are

building a better, more responsive system by improving interpreter services, allowing public access to court proceedings by TV cameras in appropriate cases, improving our response to minorities who come into our system, assisting those who enter our system who will represent themselves, and others too numerous to mention.

I doubt we will replace the black judicial robes with bib overalls. However, as Thomas Edison observed, "Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."



## State Court Administrator's Message

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By the time you read this, the legislative session will almost be over. The usual "high points" of the session are Budget Hearing Day, floor votes on bills that have been controversial, and Amendment Day (when the General Budget Bill is finalized). This year we added another high point when we stepped outside our "responsive" stance and



*Patricia Duggan, State Court Administrator*

engaged in a proactive, outreach, educational opportunity. All I did was say "okay," but the gem of the idea came from Gloria Guericke. She and many other supporters (see listing on page 5)

pulled together, on very short notice, the first UJS Showcase.

It was so well received that we have already reserved the Rotunda for next year. It was a fine example of people who

believed in their work and were rightfully proud to show it off. Regardless of how the budget turns out (even with a possible

**It was a fine example of people who believed in their work and were rightfully proud to show it off.**

bonus), the Showcase Day was my personal favorite day of the 2012 session. Next year, you should think about checking it out for yourself—either the Showcase or the Session, or both!



# The UJS Rotunda Showcase



*Noreen Plumage, Heather Covey, Laura May, Patty Vonsik and Nicole Drew at the Drug Courts table.*

The Unified Judicial System provides many services, many of these services not realized by the general public.

To dispel some of these unknowns, the UJS developed a "Showcase."

which was held on Friday, February 10, in the Capitol Rotunda to provide information to legislators, lobbyists and the general public about what's going on in the UJS.

The Showcase came together quickly as there was only one-and-a-half weeks from the time the

Showcase idea was conceived until it was held on the only date the Rotunda was available.

Staff in the Circuits and Pierre did an amazing job pulling together their information for the display tables. The response to the display was very positive from the UJS staff as well as the public. Visitors encouraged us to continue the Showcase as they felt it was a very educational tool.

Staff from the 2nd, 4th, and 6th Circuits provided information about their respective drug courts as well as the 2nd Circuit's MSA (Meth Sentencing Alternatives) program.

This impromptu opportunity also gave everyone involved in the Drug Court programs a chance to visit and share ideas.

IT showcased the Odyssey case management system,

## **A special thank you to the following for their assistance in the UJS Showcase:**

*Nancy Allard, Kim Allison, Sheri Anderson, Karn Barth, LeAnn Birkeland, Dakota Bixler, Judge John Brown, Kristin Bruggeman, Dale Carda, Heather Covey, Rex Craven, Nicole Drew, Jessica Fjerstad, Sarah Gallagher, Chief Justice David Gilbertson, Laura Graves, Kent Grode, Jill Gusso, Amy Hudson, Tara Huebner, Shirley Jameson-Fergel, Sara Kelly, Tara Kristin, Richard Lenius, Lisa Mammenga, Jeanne Mann, Laura May, Bubbles Mensch, Matt Naasz, Derrick Nedved, Chris Pankratz, Helen Paxton, Mike Pisciotta, Noreen Plumage, Kinsley Powers, Kathryn Rich, Judge Patricia Riepel, Tracy Smith, Suzy Starr, Pat Stewart, Jeanette Svoboda, Judd Thompson, Patty Vonsik, Justice Lori Wilbur, Denise Wilson, Danette Zickrick, Justice Steven Zinter*

# The UJS Rotunda Showcase

comparing it to the current Legacy program that is being phased out.

The Supreme Court's display contrasted long-standing traditions with modern innovation. A handwritten, leather bound docket book from 1912 was juxtaposed with online case management and computerized legal research on Westlaw and at <http://ujs.sd.gov>.

Also on display was the

“stagecoach hat,” which was donated by Justice Frank E. Henderson. It has long been the tradition of the Supreme Court that prior to each term of court, the names of every case for that term are placed in the hat and the Law Clerks of each Justice draw the names of the cases out of the hat. The Justice is then assigned the cases drawn by his Law Clerk .

Visitors could make a souvenir

Court Seal by pulling on the heavy handle of the Supreme Court's official seal, which has been used since statehood in 1889.

The Supreme Court's courtroom and the anteroom's display of the Supreme Court's history were open for public tours, which was a very special treat for school tours that happened to be in the Capitol that day.



*LEFT: The Supreme Court's Seal, which has been in use since 1889.*



*ABOVE: Denise Wilson and Danette Zickrick at the Odyssey display table.*



*ABOVE: Sara Kelly and Kim Allison Kim was available to discuss Pro Se information with those interested in learning more about this option.*

*Photos continued on pages 18 and 19.*

# Presiding Judge John Brown, 6th Judicial Circuit

## A Question & Answer Interview with Presiding Judge John Brown.

**You've recently taken on the duties of the DUI Court Judge. Describe what that has been like.**

I previously served as backup for Judge (now Justice) Wilbur, so I had some knowledge of the program and the participants. Just sitting in on occasion did not really give me an opportunity to get to know the participants well; and, unfortunately, my most significant contact with them occurred when I had to deal with those few who were unsuccessfully terminated from the program. I am now enjoying the opportunity to work more closely with those in the program to facilitate their recovery.

**What's the most rewarding part of working with the DUI Court?**

Getting to know the program participants as individuals, not just as criminal defendants

who must be processed through court, is the highlight of the job. You really can connect with them in a personal way and come to find common ground with them as you learn about their families, jobs, strengths and weaknesses.

**What's been the biggest**



Presiding Judge John Brown, 6th Judicial Circuit

**surprise in working with the DUI Court?**

I wasn't, and still am not, as aware as I could be with the amount of programming, treatment and supervision that is involved for participants in the DUI Court. The professionals that staff and monitor the participants' progress truly take on a great challenge and do it in a very strict but caring manner. The

team does great work.

**What's the most important aspect of the Judge's role in DUI Court?**

The Judge's role is important primarily from the standpoint of providing legitimacy, in a legal sense, to the process. Regular appearances in a court setting,

with a Judge meting out incentives and sanctions, reinforces for the participants that society imposes consequences, positive and negative, for their behaviors.

**Tell us one thing people should know about DUI Court, but don't.**

Participants in the program aren't getting let off the hook easy. They are required to deal with a level of supervision and involvement in their daily lives that most of us would find oppressive. They deal with it because they want to make their lives better and commit to that effort.

**Getting to know the program participants as individuals, not just as criminal defendants who must be processed through court, is the highlight of the job.**



# Meet Robert Mandel, Circuit Judge in the Seventh Judicial Circuit

Judge Mandel was Supervisory Assistant United States Attorney, heading up the U.S. Attorney's office in Rapid City before joining the Unified Judicial System. He previously served as first assistant U.S. Attorney for South Dakota. Robert Mandel began work in the U.S. Attorney's Office in 1982, working in Pierre from 1982-86, in Rapid City from 1986-95, in Sioux Falls from 1995-2002, and back to Rapid City in 2002.

As assistant U.S. Attorney, Mandel litigated several complex and high-profile cases, including the "Sue" tyrannosaurus rex cases and the case involving the 29-year-old murder of Annie Mae Aquash.

Mandel, a native of Chicago, is a graduate of Shimer College in Mt. Carroll, Illinois and Antioch School of Law in Washington, DC. Prior to moving to South Dakota in 1982, he served as a county judge in Mercer County, North Dakota from 1979 to 1982, and as a tribal judge in Ft. Berthold Tribal Court from 1980 to 1982.

## Question & Answer Interview

**In what field is your undergraduate degree?**

I majored in natural sciences (biology, chemistry and physics) and my minor was in German.

**What motivated you to study law?**

Probably more than anything else, it was the challenge involved in the learning of and the practice of law. My father was a lawyer, so I had a good sense of what was involved. Although my main interest was first in the sciences, the careers that were available in that field after graduation did not hold much appeal for me.

**If you weren't a lawyer or a judge, what would you like to do?**

If I were to start over again, I would probably be back in the sciences, but looking in the direction of electrical engineering in the long run.

**What do you enjoy most about being a judge or the greatest reward of your job?**

I think that when the job is done well, you can often have a positive effect on the lives of people whose cases are before you, and also have a positive effect on the interests of the people of our state. I also enjoy the challenge of



*Circuit Judge Robert A. Mandel*

simply trying to unravel the truth from the various evidence that is put before you.

**What are your outside interests?**

I would put motorcycles, scuba diving, hunting, camping, travel and reading at the top of the list.

**Who are your role models? What is the best advice you have ever received and from whom?**

My parents drilled into my head the importance of getting a good education. I would say that has been the best advice in the long run, and it would be true for most everyone.

**What is one thing most people don't know about you?**

I had about two dozen jobs before I ever went to law school,

*(Continued on page 9)*

# Circuit Judge Craig Pfeifle Joins the Seventh Circuit

Craig Pfeifle joined the firm of Lynn, Jackson, Shultz & Lebrun. His practice was focused on civil litigation and appeals, including insurance, education and employment law. Pfeifle has held leadership roles in the American Bar Association, the S.D. Bar Association, the Pennington County Bar Association, and the S.D. Defense Lawyers Association.

Pfeifle is a Sioux Falls native and a graduate of Augustana College and the University of South Dakota School of Law. Prior to joining Lynn Jackson, he was a law clerk for Justice Robert Morgan of the South Dakota Supreme Court, and practiced law for a short time in Kansas City, Missouri.

Pfeifle is active in numerous civic organizations, including Youth and Family Services, the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program, Westhills Village Retirement Community, and the Northern Plains Eye Foundation.

## Question & Answer Interview

### In what field is your undergraduate degree?

I was a government and international affairs major at Augustana College in Sioux Falls.

### What motivated you to study law?

The fact that I was a government and international affairs major in college; it was either law school or a job in which I asked “do you want fries



Circuit Judge Craig A. Pfeifle

with that?” I was actually influenced at an early age by a friend of my parents who was a lawyer. He was always willing to tell me about the interesting and meaningful work he did, and I focused on law as a career from that point forward.

### If you weren't a lawyer or a judge, what would you like to do?

Since I am now beyond the age in which I could be meaningfully considered as the next first base prospect for the

Minnesota Twins, my career path is more limited (I am discounting of course any lack of talent, as the question asks what I would *like* to do). I would have gravitated towards something involving writing had I not been a lawyer.

### What do you enjoy most about being a judge or the greatest reward of your job?

I am too new to the job to describe what I enjoy most, but can see the great reward in both the personal challenges the position offers, and the good work one gets to do each day.

### What are your outside interests?

I spend as much time with my family as I can. We enjoy hiking, travel, books and outdoor sports of all kinds.

### Who are your role models?

I've practiced before some great judicial role models whom have all been influential and after whom I will attempt to model my behavior as a judge.

**...the personal challenges the position offers, and the good work one gets to do each day.**

### What is the best advice

you have ever received and from whom?

My personal motto for years has been “Run through the tape.” My dad ran

*(Continued on page 9)*

## Judge Pfeifle Interview, cont'd. from page 8

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collegiate track, and he used that phrase as motivation in our home when I was younger. We were reminded to continue our fullest effort once the task was started, and I try to use that daily.

**What is one thing most**

**people don't know about you?**

I think I still hold the Sioux Falls Lincoln Patriot boys basketball record for lowest field goal percentage in a single season.

**Words to live by or favorite quote?**

See above.

**What is your favorite food?**

Just about anything my wife makes.

## Judge Mandel Interview, cont'd. from page 7

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which I consider the best part of my education.

**Words to live by or favorite quote?**

"Don't be so humble. You're not that great." Golda Meir, Prime Minister of Israel.

**What is your favorite food?**

I wish it was something exotic, but I'd have to say a good rare but charred steak is tough to beat!



## Best Wishes, Tracey!

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After 38 years of outstanding service to the Unified Judicial System and the people of South Dakota, our friend, co-worker, and colleague Tracey Butler retired from the Clerk's office in Sioux Falls in January 2012.

Tracey was most recently Civil Division Supervisor for many years, but her decades of work on a long list of committees, groups and task forces truly made her a statewide asset



*Tracey Butler, who retired from the Clerk's office in Sioux Falls*

and she certainly has friends and fans from border to border.

Tracey's retirement send-off on January 27 was packed to the rafters. The old pre-UJS county courts must have violated child labor laws and hired Tracey when she was about eight years old because after 38 years with

the court Tracey's public service career isn't done – she accepted a position with the Veterans Administration without even one day off between jobs. (Karl filled out the federal background check forms and told them she was every employer's worst nightmare, but they stole her anyway.)

We'll all miss Tracey very much, her sense of humor, her unshakeable good temperament no matter what the stress or controversy, and her great wit. It's a remarkable thing to leave a supervisory position decades-long with unanimous affection and support. We wish her the very best in the years to come.

*Submitted by Karl Thoennes*

# Welcome to the Hyde County Courthouse

*Chief Justice Gilbertson takes photos of the courthouses he visits as he travels the state. These photos have been used in the UJS Judiciary Message booklets and will now be used to feature a different courthouse in upcoming issues of the UJS newsletter.*

*A "thank you" to Marilyn Hanson and Deb Houdek for providing the information\* and photos used in this article.*

"Hyde County was created in 1872 and organized April 12, 1883, by the authority of the Dakota Territorial Legislature and named in honor of James Hyde. The contract for the new county courthouse was awarded...for \$9,000.00 on March 27, 1886...The newly constructed courthouse was dedicated on June 12, 1886. Six years later, on June 20, 1892, the courthouse burned to the ground and was a complete loss. Nearly all the records were saved, however.

...On Monday, April 17, 1911 the Board opened seven bids for the construction of the courthouse with the contract being awarded to Gray Construction Company of Watertown, South Dakota for \$51,941. The building was to be completed nine months after work commenced and work to commence 10 days after notification from the County Auditor...

The laying of the cornerstone was celebrated on August 5, 1911 and dedicated on September 30, 1912. The building was constructed using cement blocks and stone. The courthouse housed the library on the top floor for many years before it moved to



*Hyde County Courthouse in Highmore, SD.  
Photo taken by Chief Justice Gilbertson.*

its current location. The courtroom and judges' chambers occupied a majority of the remaining top floor along with restrooms and storage areas. The main level provided office space for the Auditor, Treasurer, Register of Deeds, Clerk of Courts, Sheriff and County Commissioners. The County Superintendent of Schools occupied office space in the basement level along with restrooms, furnace room, and storage areas...

Upkeep of the courthouse was aided by Federal Revenue Sharing checks the county received beginning in 1972 and

had to be spent within two years of issuance. A total of \$926,216 was spent on various projects that included sandblasting, tuckpointing, waterproofing, lowering ceilings in offices, rewiring, roof repair, combination windows and paneling, oil furnace, underground oil tank, desks, air conditioners, typewriters, sidewalk, combination snow blower and mower, lawn tractor and blacktopping rear parking area for courthouse and grounds...

As with any aging building, upkeep is

necessary to insure the long-term viability of the structure.... Several of the interior steps have been replaced due to cracking and major renovation was completed in the Auditor, Register of Deeds and Treasurer offices. Those offices saw their floors supported and leveled and new flooring installed... A new boiler system and energy efficient lighting were installed. South Dakota weather offers challenges to flat roofs and the courthouse is no different. A new roof surface was laid to prevent

## Hyde County Courthouse, cont'd.



*A board made with the history and pictures memorabilia.*

water leakage. The upkeep of the historic dome also poses ongoing challenges for the county.

Builders of 1911 could never have envisioned the technology required today to conduct business. With the advancement of phone systems and computer and internet usage the courthouse had to be modified to allow for

these. The courthouse also cannot be entered without climbing stairs. To assist those unable to navigate the many stairs, a buzzer system was installed in the rear of the courthouse.

Patrons simply need to park beside the call button and push

the call button for service.

One of the offices will answer your call and visit with you about what services are required. The proper office staff will then come to you and assist you in completing your business. The patron does not need to leave their vehicle...

Visitors to the courthouse can still find original furniture,

oil light fixtures that have been converted to electricity, original blue prints, original vaults, marble countertops and original woodwork and other interior finishes. The courtroom remains much as it did 100 years ago with the wood fold-up chairs, wood floors and having had additional wood chairs installed...



*Current courthouse employees and commissioners took an old time picture for the 100th Anniversary.*

The courthouse has been home to an annual Christmas tree display since 1994 where local businesses, individuals, and organizations decorate trees... The main level rotunda features ever changing displays to depict holidays and happenings..."

The community celebrated the courthouse's 100th anniversary in August 2011.

- *The Staying Power Book, published July 1989 by the Hyde Co. S.D. Centennial Committee.*
- *The Hyde Heritage Cook, published 1977, by the Hyde Co. Historical Society Book Committee.*



*The Courthouse employees with the 100th Anniversary cake.*

# Changing Lives and Making a Difference in 2nd Circuit

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Over the past few years the 2nd Circuit has joined a number of other courts across the country and the state in offering innovative programs to finally break long, destructive, and expensive cycles of addiction.

## • Second Circuit's Drug Court

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The Second Circuit Drug Court just celebrated its first year anniversary. To date the program has 17 participants with over 3,000 days of sobriety – and saved the state an estimated \$150,000 in costs that would have otherwise been incurred.

The Second Judicial Circuit Drug Court's mission is to create and offer alternatives aimed at keeping more individuals out of prison, lowering costs to the state, reducing crime and recidivism. The Court also strives to improve the quality of life for their participants through intensive treatment, supervision, incentives and sanctions.

The Second Judicial Circuit Drug Court in Sioux Falls officially began in January of



professionals and concerned citizens worked behind the scenes to make Drug Court a reality in Sioux Falls. The program combines intensive supervision, addiction treatment and counseling along with support and positive role models to assist offenders with rehabilitation. Participants are also closely monitored not only

2011. Led by Judge Patricia Riepel and Court Service Officer Laura May, a cadre of law enforcement officers, chemical dependency treatment providers, mental health

to protect the public, but also to help them return to society as sober and productive members of their community.



## • Second Circuit's MSA Program

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The Meth Sentencing Alternative Program (MSA) is a program started in the Second Judicial Circuit for first-time drug offenders. The program began as a collaborative effort between treatment providers, law enforcement, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and the court. The program is currently funded through a

federal COPS grant. The program targets defendants who are new to the criminal justice system and acquired a drug addiction. The goal is to provide treatment, intensive support and supervision, and provide the defendant with the skills and desire to remain drug free. The State's Attorney's office makes recommendations for the program and agrees to dismiss the

felony charge that the defendant pleads guilty to as part of the program. Once the defendant enters a guilty plea, they serve 14 days in jail to make sure that when they start treatment they are free of drugs and alcohol. The program lasts approximately 18 months and

*(Continued on page 13)*

## Second Circuit's MSA Program, cont'd. from page 12

involves decreasing levels of supervision along with regular drug testing. Once the program is complete, the parties enter the courtroom where the State officially dismisses the felony charge and the participant graduates from the program.

**The goal is to provide treatment, intensive support and supervision, and provide the defendant with the skills and desire to remain drug free.**

Since the UJS took the program over in July of 2009, 72 defendants have participated in the program and 25 have graduated. Eight participants have been

unsuccessful. Twenty-one participants are expected to graduate in 2012. Sheila Kieso is the current MSA Case Manager. Sheila works at the

Minnehaha County Courthouse through the grant and provides support, direction,

and encouragement to the participants in the program. Sheila has a degree in social work and spent ten years at the Penitentiary involved in the sex offender treatment program.

No state funds are allocated to this program.

The MSA program also results in huge cost savings. The UJS would have spent \$171,875 on supervising the 25 graduates on probation. The UJS would spend an additional \$144,375 for the 21 participants who are expected to graduate in 2012. The MSA program allows defendants to develop long term life and recovery skills. Without this program, the participants would likely continue to be involved in the criminal justice system and would likely continue to be addicts and pose a risk to the community and themselves.

## 2012 Partner's in Policymaking Class

*Darci Propst, Clerk Accounting Analyst in the UJS Finance Office, is a participant in the Partners in Policymaking Program.*

The Partners in Policymaking Program is an innovative leadership and advocacy training opportunity designed to involve and empower people with developmental disabilities, parents of children with disabilities and other family members.

The expectation is that each



*Darci Propst, (second from right on bottom step), poses with the Partner's in Policymaking Class and Governor Dennis Daugaard in the State Capitol Building.*

Partner will commit to actively use the skills learned to encourage positive changes in the areas of community awareness, sensitivity, accessibility, and inclusion for people with disabilities.

This is the 20th year for Partners in Policymaking, with over 499 graduates!

*(Continued on page 14)*

## Your Human Resources Office



*Beth Urban, Human Resources Director*

The HR office is responsible for providing leadership and consultation to employees and supervisors. We accomplish this by providing direction on staffing, employee relations,

training, and workforce planning. In addition, we administer position and salary classification, recruitment activities, payroll, benefits, and ensure adherence to federal and UJS rules, policies, and procedures.

Over the last several years, we have been trying to better serve our employees and supervisors by utilizing available technology and resources. A few of the accomplishments toward this goal include: developing and expanding the Human Resource and Wellness section on the UJS Intranet; scanning all of the personnel files; developing and implementing an electronic new employee orientation

process. We look forward to continuing to serve the employees and supervisors in the years to come.

*Submitted by Beth Urban*



*Lisa Mammenga, Human Resources Specialist*



## Partners in Policymaking Class, cont'd. from page 13

A typical Partners class consists of 23-26 participants who are selected through an application/selection process.

Partners attend six two-day training sessions from November through April, typically on Friday and Saturday. At each session, experts in disability and advocacy fields present information and interact with participants. Partners have the opportunity to work on communication skills, assertiveness, decision-making skills, legislative testimonial presentation skills

and group activities. Partners must complete homework assignments every month.

Attendance at all sessions is mandatory and all participants must sign a letter of agreement to those requirements. For more information and how to apply, please contact: Sandy Stocklin Hook, Partners Coordinator, SD Advocacy Services, 221 S. Central Ave., Pierre, SD 57501-2453; 800-658-4782 or 605-224-8294 or the website [www.sdadvocacy.com](http://www.sdadvocacy.com)

*Submitted by Darci Propst*

Great doubts,  
deep wisdom;  
small doubts,  
little wisdom.

*Chinese Proverb, in Walker, Richard L., "About Those Meetings in Peking.", The New York Times, October 26, 1971, p. 39, col. 6*

## Legal Form Helpline Appreciation Dinner

*Congratulations to everyone involved with the Legal Form Helpline for recently taking their 300th call!*

First Circuit Court Administrator and Legal Form Help Line Administrator Kim Allison hosted an appreciation dinner for the Help Line law school student volunteers on February 13th. The Help Line was set up just shy of a year ago in collaboration with USD Law School to provide assistance on UJS Pro Se forms to individuals who are representing themselves in court.

The Help Line receives calls for various matters and forms, but over half of the inquiries involve the Pro Se Divorce Forms. Calls are logged and screened by the Administrator and then distributed to the Law School student volunteers who return the calls, usually within a couple of days. The students



*Attendees pose for a quick photo after the Legal Form Helpline Appreciation Dinner.*

help individuals complete UJS Pro Se Forms. These forms are available on the UJS website.

Present at the dinner were law school student volunteers Sam Mollet, Marilyn Trefz, Steph Trask, Carmen Evenson, Staci Stupka, Mike Haddock; Faculty advisor for the Help Line volunteers Judge Arthur Rusch; USD Law School faculty Dean Thomas Geu, Associate Dean Tom Sorenson, Assistant Dean Angela Erickson; and First Circuit Law Clerk, Amanda Fay.

President of the Legal Form Helpline Volunteers, Cassie Bennett, was unfortunately unable to attend.

Kim offered her personal thanks to everyone for bringing this project to life and donating their time and support to help Pro Se individuals and the Courts, and passed on Chief Justice Gilbertson's thanks and appreciation to everyone involved.

*Submitted by Kim Allison*

### Are You Representing Yourself in Court?

You can find court publications and legal forms on the South Dakota Unified Judicial System's website under the Forms tab at <http://ujs.sd.gov>



For assistance in completing these forms call:

**Legal Form Help Line**

at 1-855-784-0004 (toll-free)

*(This service is meant to provide helpful information and is not legal advice)*

# Welcome Aboard!

## 1st CIRCUIT:

- Carol Strickerz, Bailiff
- Kristin Woodall, Court Reporter, Davison/Mitchell

## 2nd CIRCUIT:

- Taryn Albrecht, Circuit Court Administrative Secretary, Minnehaha/Sioux Falls
- Amanda Rahe, Deputy Court Clerk 1, Minnehaha/Sioux Falls
- Jenna Sechser, Computer Assisted Court Recorder, Minnehaha/Sioux Falls

## 4th CIRCUIT:

- Carey Arnold, Court Clerk Magistrate 1, Corson/McIntosh
- Jayna Frederickson, Court

Services Officer,  
Meade/Sturgis

- Sandra Semerad, Court Reporter, Lawrence/Deadwood

## 6th CIRCUIT:

- Kathleen Moore, Deputy Court Clerk Magistrate 1, Hughes,/Pierre
- Sherise Wittler, On-Call Deputy Court Clerk Magistrate 1, Sully/Onida

## 7th CIRCUIT:

- Valerie Dziwulski, Court Services Secretary, Pennington/Rapid City
- Teresa Fink, Court Reporter, Pennington/Rapid City
- Robert A. Mandel, Circuit

Judge, Pennington/Rapid City

- Craig Pfeifle, Circuit Judge, Pennington/Rapid City
- **SCAO/SUPREME COURT:**
- Eve Smith, Legal Research Secretary, Supreme Court

## RETIREMENT:

### 2nd CIRCUIT

- Tracey Butler, Deputy Court Clerk II, Minnehaha/Sioux Falls

### 5th CIRCUIT

- Kathleen Fuehrer, Court Clerk Magistrate 1, Campbell/Mound City

## TRANSFER

Tracy Binder, Court Reporter, Pennington/Rapid City  
(transferred from 4th Circuit)

## Kathleen (Peggy) Fuehrer's Retirement



ABOVE: Judge Von Wald presents Peggy with a plaque for her 28 years of diligent service to the UJS.

RIGHT: Judge Scott Myren, retired Judge Leland Berndt, Peggy and Judge Von Wald

Best wishes to Peggy Fuehrer on her retirement. Peggy's retirement luncheon and plaque presentation took place Tuesday, January 3, 2012 in Mound City.

Thank you, Peggy, for your 28 years of service to the Unified Judicial System!

Article submitted by Susan Compaan



## Odyssey—The Next Steps

The pilot project of the UJS Case Management System has entered the fourth month of live production use by the six pilot counties of the Third Circuit. This establishes a need to review the status, list issues, determine what we could improve and decide if setting a date for the next conversion event was appropriate.

In mid-January, IT and Tyler staff met and then traveled to Sioux Falls to join staff from the Third, Fifth and Second Circuits to discuss these items and more (the least of which was Linda K's cats).

A significant number of known issues were resolved in the initial weeks of the Go-Live, covering areas such as data conversion, security



*Kent Grode, Director of the Information & Technology Office*

rights and defining "how do we do this" steps.

Issues remain and progress will continue - that's why a pilot is defined as being used to test the design of the full-scale experiment which then can be adjusted (and yes, I got that from Wikipedia). Training

will be modified to focus on areas that pilot staff felt would provide greatest benefit. An additional change will be utilizing a Second Circuit offer to include staff in training and participate in the Go-Live event. This will add extra staff in the Go-Live offices as well as provide insight and preparation for the future Odyssey migration event in Minnehaha and Lincoln counties.

The decision was made to move forward with planning the necessary steps for the next conversion event. The Go-Live date for the remaining Third Circuit and all Fifth Circuit counties has been set as Monday, May 7th. Taking place between now and then will be conversion data reviews, additional development projects and Odyssey user training classes in Pierre and Aberdeen.

## Latitude Health Plan

The Bureau of Personnel is proposing changes to the health plan for FY2013. These proposed changes will affect the lowest deductible health plan, it will become the Latitude Health Plan.

The Latitude Health Plan will become a \$500 deductible plan and require completion of the health assessment in FY2013; completion of the health assessment and health screening in FY2014; and completion of the health

assessment, health screening, and a wellness program in FY2015 to be eligible for the plan.

The \$1000 deductible plan will not see any changes in the deductible.

**These proposed changes will affect the lowest deductible health plan,...**

The \$2000 deductible plan is changing to a \$1800 deductible plan. All plans will experience some plan design changes and they will be shared during the annual enrollment process in May 2012.

The Bureau of Personnel is holding informational meetings through the DDN and selected ITV sites explaining the Latitude Health Plan proposal. If you wish to find additional information or see the DDN/ITV schedule, please view the website at: <http://benefits.sd.gov/latitudehealthplan.aspx>.

Many of these changes will also be explained in the Bureau of Personnel newsletters, reading these newsletters during this enrollment period will be beneficial.

*Submitted by Beth Urban*



*Karn Barth,*

*Judicial Branch Educator*

In the Spring 2011 issue of *On the Gavel*, Judge Kathleen Trandahl and I were featured along with Justice Sandra Day O'Connor announcing Justice O'Connor's legacy program iCivics. It has recently come to my attention that it was a nice article and the opportunity to share the iCivics information throughout the state has been wonderful, but the article did very little to explain to the people who work for the UJS what exactly the program is all about.

The idea for iCivics was formed at a 2006 Conference on the State of the Judiciary. Participants at the conference were concerned that many of the problems the judiciary faces comes from a lack of understanding of its role in our government.

Justice O'Connor then hosted a conference of teachers from around the country and asked them what they needed to better prepare our young people. Those

teachers said they needed off-the-shelf good curriculum resources that weren't boring, dry, and loaded with facts and figures (as most social studies curriculums are). 97% of American teenagers already play video games, so why not make it game based.

Here is an overview of what you will experience when you play iCivics:

- **Do I Have a Right?** You'll run your own firm of lawyers who specialize in constitutional law.

- **Branches of Power** allow you to do something that no one else can: control all 3 branches of government.

- **Supreme Decision:** You get to help cast the deciding vote.

- **Argument Wars:** You will try out your persuasive abilities by arguing a real Supreme Court case.

- **Law Craft:** Learn what it takes to make a law as you play a member of Congress from the state of your choice.

- **Executive Command:** Have you ever wanted to be President for a day? In Executive Command you can be President for four years!

Check out iCivics at [www.icivics.org](http://www.icivics.org).



## **The UJS Showcase, cont'd. from page 5**



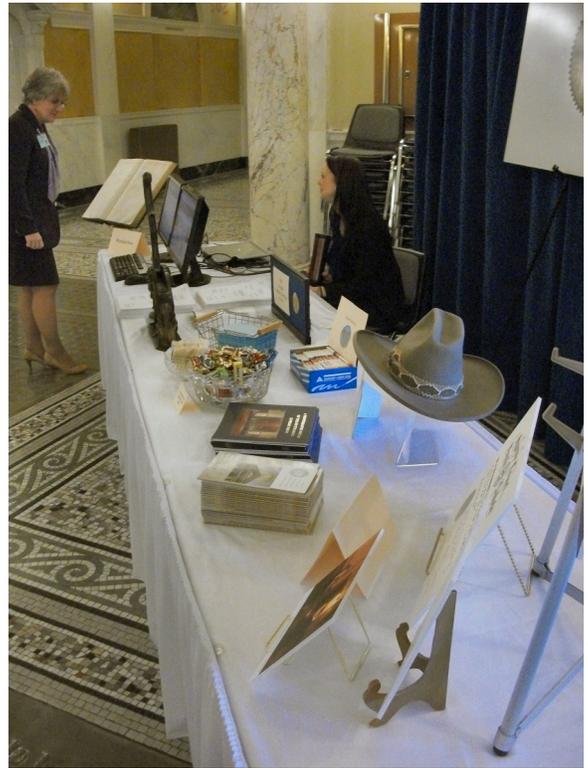
*General UJS information. Photos of South Dakota courthouses on the display board.*

## The UJS Showcase, cont'd. from page 18



*ABOVE: Law Clerk Kathryn Rich visits with a guest at the Supreme Court's information table.*

*RIGHT: State Court Administrator Patricia Duggan viewing information in the 1912 docket booklet on display at the Supreme Court's display table, while Law Clerk Jessica Fjerstad looks on. Justice Henderson's hat is in the foreground.*



*Noreen Plumage, Laura May, Patty Vonsik, Jeanne Mann and Nicole Drew enjoying a quiet moment in the Rotunda.*



*Jeanne Mann and Nicole Drew provide information to a visitor at the Drug Courts table.*