

Court Information Release



United States District Court
Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
219 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60604

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CHIEF JUDGE JAMES F. HOLDERMAN PROVIDES HIS ANNUAL “STATE OF THE COURT” ADDRESS

CHICAGO – Following a long-standing annual tradition, Chief Judge James F. Holderman, on Tuesday, June 22, 2010, spoke at a luncheon sponsored by the Chicago Chapter of the Federal Bar Association and provided insight into the state of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, its workload, and its operations of the past year.

Civil case filings increased 6.2% in 2009 over 2008, to a total 8,305, which is the highest annual civil case filing total in the last five years. The number of criminal felony defendants charged in 2009 dropped 1.2% to a total of 1,046 as compared to a total of 1,059 felony criminal defendants charged in 2008. The number of defendants charged with felony immigration violations rose 41% to a total of 126 defendants charged in 2009 compared to 89 defendants charged in 2008. Bankruptcy case filings rose 27.9% in 2009 to 52,663 cases compared to 41,168 bankruptcy case filings in 2008. As for efficiency, the court in 2009 continued to remain in the top 10% of U.S. District Courts across the country with a median time from filing to disposition of civil cases of 6.2 months.

The court began 2009 with only a single vacant district judgeship created by former Judge Mark Filip’s resignation in March 2008. During the 2009 calendar year, Judges Robert Gettleman, David Coar, and Elaine Bucklo took senior status. In February 2010, Judge Blanche Manning also took senior status. Consequently, there are five district judge vacancies currently open, with a sixth to occur at the end of July when Judge Wayne Andersen retires. This is the most district judge vacancies that the court has experienced in its 191 year history.

There were significant changes for the magistrate judge bench in 2009 as well. Magistrate Judge Martin Ashman and Magistrate Judge Arlander Keys shifted to recalled status, and have maintained active judicial calendars. These changes in status opened two magistrate judge positions on the court. An additional magistrate judgeship was created for the court’s Eastern Division in 2009. In the past few weeks, the three magistrate judge vacancies were filled, and the court was very pleased to welcome new Magistrate Judges Sheila Finnegan, Jeffrey Gilbert, and Young Kim to our magistrate judge bench.

The court was also pleased to welcome new Chief Probation Officer Kristine Phillips in May 2010. Chief Phillips has served in the district's probation office for over 20 years and takes over for former Chief Probation Officer Richard Tracy, who retired May 1, 2010. The district also has a new United States Marshal, Darryl McPherson, whose nomination by President Obama was confirmed by the United States Senate on May 28, 2010. Marshal McPherson previously served as a Deputy U.S. Marshal in Chicago for over a decade.

As of June 1, 2010, the court had over 25,000 registered e-filers, which is 18% more than a year ago. The daily rate of document filing is up 15% to a total of 867 electronic documents filed with the court per day compared to the daily filing average of 733 electronic documents a year ago.

Chief Judge Holderman spoke of various other initiatives of the Clerk's Office and the court's judges. He thanked his fellow judges and members of the court's bar for their work in providing justice and access to justice in the court over the past year. He stated that he is looking forward to addressing the challenges of continuing to provide justice in the best way possible in the year to come.