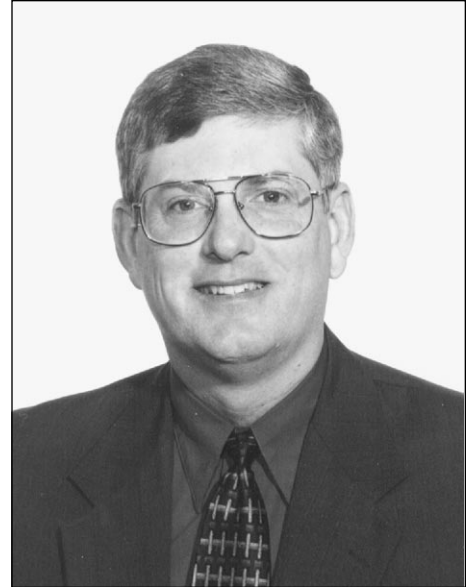


# News Bits

by **Kevin M. Oeffner**  
**Circuit Court Administrator**



**H**ard to believe it's December. Because it is the end of the year, I suppose it would be helpful to mention a few reminders as we are about to embark upon a New Year, and to inform you of some recent developments that should pick up steam next year.

You may already have seen notices posted on courthouse bulletin boards or in the Oakland County Legal News, but a reminder is in order that the December 27 motion call has been cancelled.

Speaking of motion calls, you may also have seen notices that "spin off" motions will no longer be assigned to another judge if the judge to whom the underlying case was assigned is away on motion day. As a reminder and a rule of thumb, motions will be heard by the judge to whom the underlying cases have been assigned. If a judge is away on motion day and it is urgent that a particular motion be heard, the chief judge (or, in the absence of the chief judge, the presiding judge of the applicable division – family or civil/criminal) will hear the motion. In situations where a judge is away on an extended absence, the court will assign a visiting judge to handle the docket and hear all assigned motions.

The Criminal Assignment Committee recently adopted a policy whereby an attorney will be removed from the indigent criminal defense roster if 90 days lapse from his or her acceptance of the last appointment. The establishment of this policy is in response to a growing number of attorneys who consistently decline appointments, and have done so going back a couple of years. It is understood that attorneys may have to decline appointments from time to time, but to consistently decline appointments creates additional work for court administration staff. Exceptions will be considered for extraordinary or unusual circumstances. Please be sure to inform my office in writing if you will be unable to accept appointments for an extended period, and please explain the reason or reasons.

In last month's *Laches* I wrote about efforts on the part of the Oakland County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to encourage legislative changes to the County Jail Overcrowding State of Emergency Act. I won't rehash the issues here, but I did want to publicly thank the Oakland County

Bar Association board of directors and the Bar

Association's Circuit Court, Criminal Law, and Legislative committees for their support of the legislative amendments. There's a long road yet to be traveled before the proposed amendments become law, but the traveling is made easier thanks to the OCBA's support.

A Brown Bag Lunch Lecture series entitled *Fundamentals of Juvenile Law* will be presented by the OCBA in 2007. The series will chronicle the progression of a juvenile case and include several topics pertaining to the practice of juvenile law. The first lecture in the series will take place on January 11 and the last on October 11. A presentation will be held each month (except July) at the courthouse complex. The Family Division Attorney Appointment Committee has decided that attorneys who apply for placement on the juvenile appointment roster must agree to attend each presentation in the series to be eligible for appointments. More information about the series may be obtained by contacting the OCBA at 248-334-3400 or by e-mail at [cle@ocba.org](mailto:cle@ocba.org).

On a related matter, attorneys who accept juvenile appointments should be informed that beginning in 2007, a continuing legal education requirement will be imposed. Attorneys must complete 10 hours of continuing legal education to remain eligible to receive appointments. Attorneys may obtain their continuing legal education hours by attending the Brown Bag Lunch Lecture series mentioned in the preceding paragraph, or any other sanctioned juvenile law training program. The Circuit Court's Family Division administrative office has information on juvenile law programs for which continuing legal education credit will be given.

Before closing, I want to devote a few moments in tribute to the Honorable Deborah Tyner. Most may know by now that Judge Tyner has decided to retire effective January 1, 2007. Judge Tyner was first elected in 1990, began her service as a jurist on January 1, 1991, and will complete 16 years as a circuit judge upon her retirement.

I first became acquainted with Judge Tyner while providing support to the inaugural Criminal Assignment Committee, which she chaired. I quickly became impressed with the efficient manner in which she presided over the meetings. She played a significant role in crafting our court-appointed attorney program. The Criminal Assignment Committee, under her leadership, deftly managed the implementation of a program that delicately balances the requirement that trial courts move toward an equitable distribution of attorney appointments while at the same time ensuring that defendants are appointed qualified, knowledgeable and experienced defense attorneys.

Judge Tyner has not let duty and obligation to the administration of justice rest solely with her responsibilities as a judge. During her tenure she served on committees of the State Bar and Oakland County Bar Association, and the

Oakland County Bar and Michigan Bar foundations. She served as criminal section co-chair of the 2005 Bench/Bar Committee. Her ideas and input contributed to a successful and widely appreciated Bench/Bar Conference. Judge Tyner also served on the Michigan Judges Association Executive and Legislative Committee, and is a former member of the State Bar Representative Assembly. On a more localized level, we have appreciated the many court committees and projects on which Judge Tyner has given of her time and talents.

I want to thank Judge Tyner for her many contributions to this court. I personally appreciate her support and feel privileged to have worked with her these many years. I know that the judges and employees of this court wish the very best for Judge Tyner as she embarks upon her next endeavor.

Until next time...



## *Racing against time*

*to make the courthouse  
filing deadline?*

### *Use the OCBA File-by-Fax Service!*

Circuit Court Mediation Summaries • Praecipes • Acceptances/Rejections • Witness Lists  
Appearances • Briefs • Motions • Civil Actions • Driver's Restoration • *AND MUCH MORE!*

**Phone: (248) 858-1585 – Fax: (248) 338-9540**

Copies only 10 cents/page • Fax services discounted for OCBA members • We bill you for copies & faxes