

THE COURT REPORTER

January • June 2007

Volume 4 Issue 1

A Message from Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio



Lois McMaster Bujold once said, "An honor is not diminished for being shared."

While I wholeheartedly agree with that sentiment, I would take it a step further and say an honor is *enhanced* for being shared. In this edition of the *Court Reporter*, you'll note that there are several articles covering various honors and awards received recently by staff members at the Court.

I believe such honors are a reflection of the work we do daily at the Court by all of our staff members. That some have been recognized individually does not alter that. If there is work being done at the Juvenile Court that warrants recognition, it is a product of a cooperative effort between staff members and the networking with the wealth of social service providers in this county.

We also acknowledge the effort of our staff members internally and I would like to congratulate Martha Jeffries and Jody Tolley, our 2006 Employees of the Year who received Highpoint Awards on May 30, 2007.

And while Kevin Bing isn't technically a member of the Juvenile Court staff, he and the members of the maintenance crew he supervises might as well be. Kevin has gone beyond the scope of his regularly assigned responsibilities to play a significant role in our Project: Greenhouse Affect program. Kevin holds a degree in Horticulture and two years ago, he spearheaded the planting of a garden on the grounds of the Juvenile Court Center by youth in detention. From that effort came *Project: Greenhouse Affect*, where the youth can now grow flowers and vegetables year-round in the greenhouse that was constructed last year through a grant from the Court's Women's Board. Kevin was recently recognized for his work at the Court when he was named a Distinguished Alumni of the Wayne County Schools Career Center. We thank Kevin for sharing his knowledge and his talent.

And speaking of sharing, my personal thanks once again to John Bok, the high school artist who created a portrait that now hangs in the halls of the Juvenile Court. It is covered in more detail in the pages of this newsletter, but I thank him for sharing his talent and for sharing his portrait so that we can proudly display it.

Linda Tucci Teodosio

Jeffries, Tolley Named Employees of the Year

Pardon the pun, but Martha Jeffries' 30-year career at the Summit County Juvenile Court ended on a "high point."

Martha, who will be retiring soon, joined Judicial Secretary Jody Tolley as the recipients of the Juvenile Court's 2006 Highpoint Awards, acknowledging them as the Court's Employees of the Year. They received their awards at a ceremony May 30th in Summit County Council Chambers as part of county government's 19th annual observance of Employee Recognition Week.

In her introduction, Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio noted that Martha was a model Probation Officer, bringing to the job all the qualities necessary to be effective in the field and in the courtroom.

As she accepted her award, Martha stated, "I hope I didn't get this award because I am retiring." She went on to say that the award was really meant for all of the Probation department staff, whom she called "my second family."

Jody Tolley worked in the Domestic Relations Court before joining Judge Teodosio's staff as her secretary in January 2003. Judge Teodosio cited Jody's ability to work well with the public and her willingness to work with her, regardless if it means staying until well past the normal end of the work day.

"When you work with someone as closely as I work with Jody, you get to see the best and the worst of a person," said the Judge. "I have yet to see the worst of Jody Tolley. It takes a special person to do her job and she is a special person. She is a gift."

Jody's comments were brief, but telling.

"I just want to say one thing: I love my job." End of speech.

Martha and Jody join Patty Blasio, Todd Schauffler (2005), Bryan Bryce, Ursula Gould and Esther Thomas (2006) as past Juvenile Court Highpoint Award winners.



Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio (center) with the 2006 Summit County Juvenile Court Employees of the Year, Jody Tolley (l) and Martha Jeffries.

Judge Teodosio Earns "Distinguished Alumni" Recognition



Judge Teodosio with fellow *Distinguished Alumni Award* recipients Nickolas Andreeff (middle) and Anthony Alexander. A fourth honoree, Shirley Buccieri, was unable to attend.

Saying that it was "humbling to receive an award for doing a job that I truly love," Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio was one of four recipients of The University of Akron School of Law's Distinguished Alumni Award at a banquet on April 26th.

Judge Teodosio is a 1982 graduate of the UA School of Law. She has worked as a staff attorney, Magistrate and Referee as well as entering private practice before her election to the Cuyahoga Falls Municipal Court bench in 1997. She served there for six years before she began her administration of the Summit County Juvenile Court in January 2003.

Judge Teodosio was recognized for her innovations and progressive programming at the Court and her many awards as a result of those programs and initiatives were cited. "It's a challenging job, but it is one that I look forward to doing every day," she said.

Judge Teodosio was honored along with Anthony Alexander (Class of '75), President and CEO of FirstEnergy Corp., private and corporate attorney Nickolas P. Andreeff ('60) and corporate attorney Shirley H. Buccieri ('83). "My most sincere wish is that I will continue to endeavor to bring honor to our law school and our university," said Judge Teodosio.

She ended her remarks by offering one more note of thanks to the School of Law. "It brought me together with the most special person in the entire world," she explained. "Little did I know when I walked into the classroom that first day that two seats away would sit the man who would become my husband."

Linda Tucci and Tom Teodosio were married in 1983. On May 15th of this year, Judge Teodosio gave the oath of office to the newest Judge of the General Division of Common Pleas Court, Judge Thomas Teodosio.

Linda Bennett Receives Award

Her entire professional career has been dedicated to children and on April 4th, CASA/GAL Program Attorney Linda Bennett's dedication was acknowledged.

Linda was one of 10 individuals honored at the Alliance of Summit County Childcaring Providers Recognition Breakfast at the Downtown Radisson Ballroom.

A former teacher in the Akron Public School system, Linda retired from teaching and earned her law degree. She immediately sought to apply her legal expertise to benefit children, first as a Prosecutor in Juvenile Court, defending the needs of children in abuse, dependency and neglect cases.

She also became a CASA/GAL attorney and recently became a Program Attorney for the CASA/GAL Program, providing a voice for children in legal proceedings in Court.

What made Linda such a representative choice for this award is her gentle nature and willingness to work on behalf of her clients beyond her normal responsibilities. As her nominator, fellow CASA Victoria Kesling wrote: "*Linda has helped children get new clothing. She spends extra time with them and makes them feel special. She collaborates with service providers to learn about the needs of the family and is consistently learning and sharing information about services and programs.*"

That would seem more than enough to warrant her selection. But that's only part of the story. Once again, Ms. Kesling: "*Linda helped locate a stove for a family and worked with a school to find a creative solution for non-traditional transportation, arranging for a teacher to drive a child to school daily. Her approach to all her families is similar. She goes far beyond making recommendations in Court and looks at the family with a sense of their strengths and an understanding of their needs and takes the time to try to maximize those strengths.*"

"Linda Bennett is an outstanding choice for this honor," said Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio. "Behind that quiet demeanor is a woman with the perfect blend of tenderness and tenacity. She utilizes both qualities to great effect in her job with the Court and to the families with whom she works."

Linda reacted to the award with typical modesty: "I'm just thrilled to be able to work with so many people who work so hard to make a difference in the lives of others who need some assistance. That's the greatest reward"



Program Attorney Linda Bennett following the ceremony at which she recognized for her outstanding advocacy work on behalf of families involved in the Courtis CASA/GAL Program.

Local Teen Artist Donates Portrait to Court

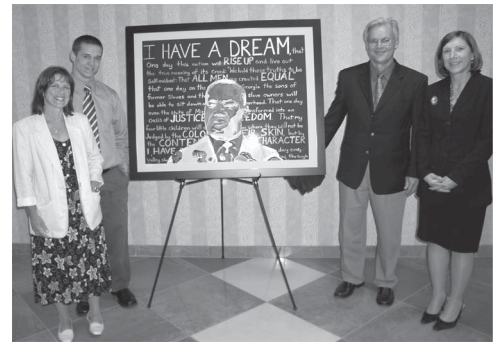
What started out as a project for the Court's Student Board has become a fixture in the corridors of the William P. Kannel Juvenile Court Center.

Members of the Board were asked to go back to their schools and ask classmates to create artwork depicting Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that would be displayed at the Court as part of its observance of Black History Month.

One rendering caught Judge Teodosio's eye and she was immediately struck by the work's concept and creativity. The portrait was created by Walsh Jesuit High School senior John Bok. Painted on black dryback board, John printed in white lettering the core message of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. With the lettering serving as a backdrop, John then re-created, again in white paint, the famous photo of Dr. King delivering the speech at the Lincoln Memorial.

So taken was Judge Teodosio with the artwork that she asked John if the Court could frame it and display it at the Court. John agreed and on May 3rd, as part of the Court's Law Week Open House, John's portrait was unveiled. For his parents, Deb, a Walsh Jesuit teacher, and Chip, the Beacon Journal's award-winning editorial cartoonist, it was the first time they had seen what their son had created.

The painting now hangs just off the main lobby of the Juvenile Court Center, visible to all who enter. The Court thanks John Bok for his artistry and his generosity.



Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio (far right) stands with the Bok Family following the unveiling of John's portrait of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The family members are, from left, Deb, John and Chip.

Court Magistrate Records a First



Magistrate Tammy Richardson recently became the first Magistrate ever to be appointed to the Ohio Judicial Conference (OJC).

The OJC is an independent state agency that serves as the voice of Ohio judges on issues affecting the administration of justice. All Ohio judges are members of the Judicial Conference. Approximately 200 judges serve on committees that consider all facets of the judiciary. What makes the appointment even more noteworthy, Magistrates cannot be members of the OJC.

Magistrate Richardson has been invited to serve on the Juvenile Law and Procedure Committee. According to the OJC website, "The Juvenile Law & Procedure Committee analyzes pending legislation with a judicial impact on juvenile laws and procedures and reviews issues and proposals of relevance to judges with juvenile jurisdiction. It makes recommendations to improve the Ohio Revised Code, Rules of Juvenile Procedure, and relevant Supreme Court Rules of Superintendence."

Magistrate Richardson is the first Magistrate to serve on that committee. She was nominated for the committee by the Ohio Association of Magistrates (OAM) Board of Trustees, on which she currently serves as the Juvenile Practice Chairperson.

"I am very excited and honored to serve on the OJC Juvenile Law and Procedure Committee," said Magistrate Richardson. "I hope to bring a new perspective based on my experience as a Juvenile Court Magistrate."

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