

# COURT COLUMN

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A NEWSLETTER OF THE JUDICIARY OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

## 10th Annual LADCP Training Conference Held in N.O.; Marchman receives Jake Hadley Award

Retired U.S. Army General and former Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), General Barry Richard McCaffrey, addressed over 450 drug court professionals in New Orleans at the 10th Annual Louisiana Association of Drug Court Professionals (LADCP) Training Conference in New Orleans.

General McCaffrey was joined by the Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP), West Huddleston; NADCP Board Chairman, the Honorable Chuck Simmons; and Ken Robertson from the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in Washington, D.C. Louisiana officials including Roseland Starks, Director, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services and Whalen Gibbs, Assistant Secretary, Department of Public Safety and Corrections also addressed the group.

The Conference was co-sponsored by the Louisiana Supreme Court Drug Court Office which currently supports 45 local drug court programs statewide. These 45 programs provide judicial oversight and treatment to approximately 2,900 adult and juvenile drug court clients each month.

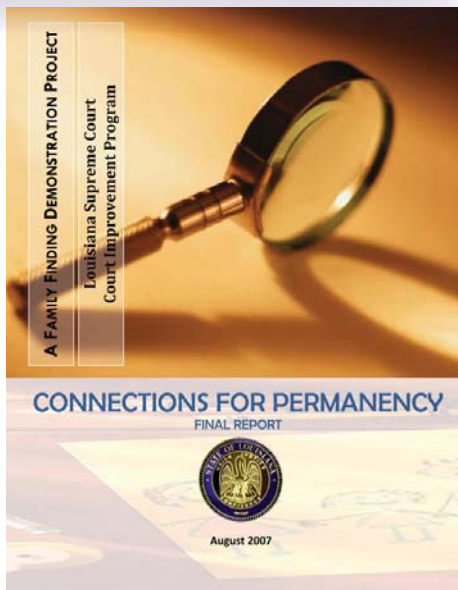
"Judges, district attorneys, public defenders, treatment providers, and others around the State are helping to change the lives of individuals and families who suffer from drug and alcohol addiction," said Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Catherine D. "Kitty" Kimball, "and in doing so, they are changing communities. We are very grateful for the support we receive from our



Louisiana Supreme Court Deputy Judicial Administrator Scott Griffith, Director of the Louisiana Supreme Court Drug Court Office and 4th Judicial District Court Judge Sharon Ingram Marchman, recipient of the prestigious Jake Hadley Award.

federal and state partners who make it possible for our courts to do this critical work."

During the Conference, Judge Sharon Ingram Marchman, who serves as both the adult and juvenile drug court judge in the 4th Judicial District in Monroe, Louisiana, was awarded the prestigious Jake Hadley Award for her dedication and outstanding service to the drug court field. Deputy Judicial Administrator Scott Griffith, Director of the Louisiana Supreme Court Drug Court Office, presented the award.



found themselves. Neighborhoods were destroyed, and connections to familiar places and faces were lost. This situation was particularly acute in Orleans and Jefferson Parishes.

In an attempt to help re-connect foster children with their families in Orleans and Jefferson Parishes, the **Court Improvement Program of the Louisiana Supreme Court** joined collaboratively with the Louisiana Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services (OCS), to demonstrate an innovative concept known as “Family Finders” to help connect foster children with displaced family members and/or other persons, whether fictive kin or family friends, who would be willing to be a permanent connection for the child. Louisiana chose to call its program, “Connections for Permanency” (CFP).

The process involved an intensive “mining” of legal and social work records to look for clues about persons significant to the child and their possible whereabouts. Staff members then utilized internet searches and telephone calls to try to locate persons identified who might be suitable “connections” for the child. Some connections were with family members or friends who had recently been a part of the child’s life. Other connections were more distant in space and time. The results were often emotional and very heart-warming as family members reconnected with foster children whom they may have not seen in years.

Priority was given to children aged 17 and older who were most at risk of exiting the foster care system with no

## COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) ISSUES REPORT ON PERMANENCY

Following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, more than 300 foster children were displaced outside of Louisiana. On top of that statistic, biological family members and foster parents who were also displaced added to the exponentially critical situation in which many of this state’s most fragile children

permanent placement. The importance of caring, supportive relationships during the transition to successful adulthood is well-established by national research. Statistics show that children that do not have permanent connections in their lives are significantly more likely to have negative outcomes: homelessness, mental illness, reliance on public assistance, and criminal activity.



**Kären A. Hallstrom, Deputy Judicial Administrator for Children & Families**, says that this was directly responsive to a recognized system need. “For years, Louisiana judges have expressed particular concern for foster children “aging out” of the system, leaving state custody without connections to anyone having a continuing interest in their welfare.”

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**Orleans Parish Juvenile Court Judge Ernestine S. Gray**, who is Chair of the **Louisiana Court Improvement Program CARE Advisory Committee** said, “The CFP demonstration was an important tool in helping to achieve permanence for children and youth in the child welfare system and should be available through the life of a case as we work to assure not only that children are safe, but that they also have a lifelong relationship with and permanent connection to a nurturing family.”



The target population had little or no family relationships and was experiencing the highest level of urgency for connectedness. This group of children was generally unstable in placement and had a history of mental illness, destructive behavior, multiple foster care placements and few, if any, significant relationships. The original project goal of serving 25 children in the demonstration was far exceeded, with more than 55 children served.

“The very significant involvement of the Louisiana Supreme Court as a collaborative partner in the Connections for Permanency project is an outstanding example of systems and communities coming together to help achieve permanency for Louisiana’s most vulnerable children,” said Marketa Garner Gautreau, Assistant Secretary, Office of Community Services.

With lessons and best practices learned from the demonstration, Court Improvement Program and OCS staff are working to expand the program to other parts of the state. A copy of the report is available at: [www.lasc.org/court\\_managed\\_prog/CIP.asp](http://www.lasc.org/court_managed_prog/CIP.asp)

## TOP SUCCESSES OF THE CONNECTIONS FOR PERMANENCY (CFP) DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

*By Ann Joseph, former Regional Administrator for the Orleans Regional Office of the Office of Community Services and staff member of the CFP project.*

The top three successes that resulted from the CFP Demonstration Project were: the ability of CFP staff to locate and arrange meetings for youth who had been in foster care for years with no contact from family members; the ability to witness first-hand the interaction between youth and their families, realizing the voids that had been filled for each of them, and finally, the ability to assist OCS staff who are overburdened with case responsibilities by conducting searches of their files and archives and/or internet searches to locate family members for youth who are preparing for independence. In several cases, the information was found in the case files, but family members had not been contacted. It is hoped that these examples of CFP intervention will give an idea of the impact of this demonstration project.

**Jeanikia R.** a sixteen year old in a therapeutic treatment facility who was reunited with her mother for the first time since she was removed from her care shortly after her birth. This reunion was extremely emotional for the youth as well as her mother, who is a deaf-mute. During the meeting many tears were shed by those in attendance and ongoing plans were made for future visits with her mother as well as other family members. The caseworker indicated that facility staff informed her that Jeanikia was participating better in her case plan following the meeting with her mother, and seemed to be more hopeful about her future.

**Irealle H.** a severely multi-handicapped twenty-one year old who is placed in a medical treatment facility where she receives 24 hour care. Contact with her caseworker revealed that she is nearing the point in her treatment due to her age and medical needs, that long term plans must be made for her future care. Other than her caseworker and her CASA worker, no one else visited her or participated in planning for her care. Her father was contacted in Alaska, came to New Orleans to visit her and is in the process of assisting in the planning for her long term care.

**Devin R.** an eighteen year old who was very hesitant about meeting his mother and grandmother when he was told that they had been located. When he finally agreed to meet them, he appeared to be a bit overwhelmed at the beginning of the meeting. His mother, grandmother, siblings, and a cousin were present. He met a younger sister for the first time. His grandmother apologized for mistakes that had been made in his care in the past and begged for his forgiveness, which he gave. One of his siblings tried to put a lot of pressure on him to return to live with his family when he left foster care, but he was strong enough to explain to them that he had already made plans for his future, would maintain contact with them, but would not live with them. His caseworker later advised that he was assisting his family in resolving issues with FEMA that resulted from Hurricane Katrina and continued to maintain contact with them.



## Your Honors



**29th JDC Chief Judge Kirk R. Granier** recently graduated from the Dispute Resolution Skills Certificate in Judicial Development program of the National Judicial College.

## JUDGE HARRINGTON RECEIVES LETTIE PATE WHITEHEAD EVANS AWARD

The Virginia Theological Seminary has awarded 10th JDC Judge **Eric R. "Rick" Harrington** with the 2008 **Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans (LPWE)**



**Award.** The award is given each year by the Seminary to honor an Episcopal layperson who, over a significant period of time, has given leadership within his or her congregation, community, Diocese and in the world.

Judge Harrington was enthusiastically selected by the LPWE Committee because of his dedication to programs that complement his position as a judge. He was instrumental in bringing the nationally recognized programs, Drug Court and Teen Court, to his community. Additionally, in cooperation with the Sheriff's Office, Judge Harrington implemented the Long Distance Dads Program, which teaches incarcerated men to be better fathers, both while in jail and after their release. He joined with the Boys and Girls club of Natchitoches to establish a CASA program, which trains volunteers to advocate on behalf of children who have been abused

## JUDICIAL EXCHANGE VISITORS IN LA.

Russian judges visited the **Second Circuit Court of Appeal** as part of their week-long tour of various local, state and federal judicial systems in early April, 2008. The jurist are participating in the Open World program which is the largest U.S.- Russia judicial exchange.

The visiting judges were Judge Rais Abdullin, Supreme Court of Tatarstan Republic; Chairperson Rinat Gayfutdinov, Tukaevsky District Court; Deputy Chairperson Andrey Nikolaev, Soviet District Court, Kazan City; Chairperson Mukhamed Safargaliev, Atninsk District Court, Republic of Tarstan; Deputy Chairperson Luiza Sigbatullina, Vakhitov district Court, Kazan City. The group, accompanied by U.S. District Judge Maurice Hicks and U.S. Magistrate Mark Hornsby, had an opportunity to participate in a question-and-answer session with judges of the Second Circuit facilitated by Sergey Kulygin of the Republic of Tatarstan.



or neglected, and has sponsored a probation support group for people released on felony probations. Finally, through his leadership, Trinity Episcopal Church hosted the "Red Mass" for the local legal community, which was believed to be the only time this Mass was hosted in a Protestant Church in Louisiana.

Established in 1999, the award honors the legacy of Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans, an Episcopal laywoman, philanthropist and friend of Virginia Theological Seminary.

Candidates for the award are active laypersons in an Episcopal congregation and must live in Alabama, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia or West Virginia.