

Incoming Law School Students Get Lesson in Professionalism

On the first day of class, first year law students at Louisiana's four law schools - Louisiana State University (LSU), Loyola University, Southern University and Tulane University - got a lesson in professionalism and ethics from justices of the Supreme Court, members of the judiciary and members of the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) as part of a new orientation program sponsored by the LSBA Professionalism and Quality of Life Committee.

Justice Chet D. Traylor kicked off the professionalism program on August 11 speaking to students at the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. Justice Harry T. Lemmon participated in the program at both Tulane and Loyola University Law Schools and Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero, Jr. addressed the incoming class of 2003 at Southern University Law School.

"It is appropriate that your first class in law school emphasizes the aspirational aspects of the practice of law because your professional reputation begins today. As an officer of the court, one should serve with integrity, honesty and civility, being polite and courteous at all times," Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero, Jr. said.

Calogero also warned students that the state's highest court has taken a very aggressive approach toward disciplining unethical lawyers in recent years.

According to LSBA President E. Phelps Gay, the



Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero, Jr. addresses incoming Law School students at Southern University.

professionalism program was patterned after similar programs in Georgia and Mississippi. "Getting a Supreme Court Justice to address you on your first day of law school was central to the idea of the success of the professionalism program," Gay said. "We - the academy, the bar and the judiciary - should never be too busy to get together to share ideas about improving the administration of justice," he added.

Also participating in the program were 37 judges and 48 attorneys who led classroom discussions of hypothetical professional and ethical dilemmas which the students might encounter either in law school or in the practice of law.



Justice Chet D. Traylor kicks off the professionalism program at Louisiana State University.



Justice Harry T. Lemmon speaks to students at Loyola Law School.



C O R N E R

C O L L I N S



*Hugh M. Collins, Ph.D.
Judicial Administrator*

I am pleased to announce that the first annual report on *The State of the Judicial Performance in Louisiana* has been prepared and published pursuant to the provisions of the Judicial Budget and Performance Accountability Act of 1999 (R.S. 13:84). Under the Act, the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court is responsible for developing a performance accountability program and for reporting on court performance to the Supreme Court and the people of Louisiana on an annual basis.

In this Report, I outline the types of activities undertaken by the various courts to improve their performance, which were compiled from information provided by the courts themselves. As the Report shows, in 1999 all levels of courts made significant improvements in technology, juvenile justice and automated or electronic case tracking and management systems. Additionally, trial courts extended considerable effort in the establishment of drug courts, better jury management and employee training. My office has also derived information on performance from our Community Relations Department, which has sponsored programs involving the courts of appeal and district courts and which has reported on these activities in *Court Column*. The picture that emerges is one of an active court system at every level dedicated to performance improvement.

If you would like to see for yourself, I invite you to contact my office at (504) 568-5747 for a copy of *The State of the Judicial Performance in Louisiana*.

Supreme Court Hosts International Visitors

In June the Louisiana Supreme Court hosted a group of judicial officials from the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the office which oversees the judicial system in Kosovo including everything from staffing, salaries, courthouse facilities to law reform, war crimes and the promulgation of new laws. The officials traveled 5,600 miles to the United States to observe the American judicial system and to learn about Louisiana law in particular.

Speaking with Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero, Jr., the Kosovo officials were primarily interested in exploring how Louisiana's civil law heritage fits into a common law country, as Kosovo is presently in transition from a civil law system to one that may include aspects of a common law system. They also sought ideas on how to better reward their judges who currently earn only \$118 a month.

Louisiana Supreme Court Clerk of Court John T. Olivier, Deputy Judicial Administrator Tim Averill and Special Prosecutor Nancy Rix also met with the officials to learn about case management, case docketing and judicial disciplinary procedures of a modern court.



Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero, Jr. and UNMIK officials Nakibe Kelmendi, the first female judge in Kosovo; Sylvie Pantz, a French judge, who with Kelmendi is co-director of Judicial Affairs for the U.N. Mission and a former chief investigator for the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague; Albanian lawyer and translator Imer Berusha; and Stéphane Jean, Legal Officer.

Photo by Times-Picayune

Seminar Visits Court in 2020

Justice Harry T. Lemmon, Chair, the Appellate Judges Seminar Series, took part in a seminar designed to project the advances in technology and methodology in the court system in the year 2020. The seminar, which took place at the National Symposium on the Future of Judicial Branch Education and was sponsored by the State Justice Institute, involved forty-eight states and several national organizations such as the Appellate Judges Conference (AJC), sending four-member teams to the symposium.

Attendees were able to view a display of technological advancements designed to project how a future court or hearing might appear. An example was a video presentation of a typical 2020 trial judge, working out of her home office conducting an evidentiary hearing via video hookups with the other court players in a studio. The demonstrated technology was sensitive to the judge's specific learning style, could present research information, could perceive when the

judge needed clarification and subsequently could repeat the information in a different style.

Following the presentations, a 2020 educational seminar model was devised, focusing on the ability to bring judges together for a highly interactive learning experience and to provide a forum to bring judges together with trial judges, appellate court professional staff and members of the bar.



Members of the Appellate Judges Conference (AJC) team included: back row (l-r): Penny Miller, Mary Ellen Donaghy, Sandy Roos, Doug Bader; front row (l-r): John Irwin & Justice Harry T. Lemmon.



IJJIS System Garner's National Interest

Orleans Parish Juvenile Court is currently the site of a pilot program of a state-of-the-art Integrated Juvenile Justice Information System (IJJIS). Six states including Montana, Tennessee, Utah, North Carolina, West Virginia, Alaska and Washington, D.C. have expressed interest in obtaining the model program from Louisiana and two have requested copies of the management system design, software programs and supporting documentation associated with the IJJIS system.



Orleans Parish School Board, Juvenile Detention Facilities, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA-New Orleans), the Louisiana Supreme Court and local law enforcement agencies with the purpose of providing a timeline of vital information on child welfare/juvenile justice cases, allowing for a historical view of case and a more complete understanding of the circumstances affecting children and families in crisis.

Under Orleans Parish Juvenile Court **Chief Judge Ernestine S. Gray**, the Child In Need of Care, Termination of Parental Rights and Families In Need of Services software has been installed and is now online. Research and design of the remaining components of the IJJIS are substantially complete, with programming and staff training already in progress. Partial implementation of the system will proceed as new components are completed and tested with full implementation expected in December 2000.

The system is designed to enhance case processing efficiency by integrating information from Orleans Parish Juvenile Court as well as other government and social agencies. The IJJIS system will allow access by the Louisiana Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services, Or-

Ankle Bracelets Contain Offenders

Plaquemine City Court Judge William Dupont has initiated a new program in his court to alleviate juvenile detention costs and prison overcrowding and to allow non-violent offenders the opportunity to post bond by allowing them to continue to work. Dupont accomplished this with the assistance of electronic monitoring transmitters, or "ankle bracelets."

The system allows Dupont to confine the defendant to a primary residence, a room within the residence and a place of work. Under the house-arrest program the devices, which consist of an ankle bracelet and a monitor hooked to the defendant's home telephone, act in tandem to provide the court with information on the offender's whereabouts, noting exceptions for work-related absences approved by Judge Dupont. The court receives a daily fax report which shows when and if each person under house arrest leaves the residence.

"This is not the answer and it is not for everyone, but it is a tool," Dupont said. "The parish jail is small and constantly full. We're freeing up jail space for someone who's not a candidate for the program," he said noting that violent offenders will not be offered the opportunity to participate in the program.

Case Management System Streamlines Workload

Jon A. Gegenheimer, Jefferson Parish Clerk of Court, has spearheaded the implementation of a new case management system for the 24th Judicial District Court. The civil management system will complement the criminal case management system that has been in place since 1998. The civil system includes the following:

- Filing and allotment which allows for an unlimited number of litigants, multiple class and sub-classifications of cases for better tracking and reports of case activity. This portion of the system also has the facility for analyzing and reporting on cases that have been inactive for some time.
- More detailed suit inquiry provided for the public, judges and clerk personnel. Latest activities can be displayed for each litigant to allow for faster response to attorney's requests. All of the inquiry menu is accessible through JEFFNET, the clerk's subscription computer service, or through terminals electronically connected to the central processing server throughout the courthouse.
- Improved accounting features that allow for more accurate identification of charges for each litigant. Reservation of sheriff's charges for service on each document issued helps prevent overdraw of the litigant's account.
- A table-driven, easy to use, consolidated court division calendar function that allows the judges to view an entire month of the scheduled events that affect their divisions. These events include each judge's civil and criminal master dockets, *en banc* meetings, magistrate duty, jury pool availability, seminars and other activities.

CYBER COURTS

Legalese: Understanding the Language of the Courts

www.courts.wa.gov/legalese

Louisiana Legislature Revised Statutes

www.legis.state.la.us/tsrs/search.htm

Justice Served Resources & Technology For Courts, Administrators and Justice Agencies

www.justiceserved.com

Hieros-Gamos Law and Government Portal

www.hg.org

Louisiana Association of Drug Court Professionals

www.ladcp.com



Families In Need of Services Assistance Program

(FINSAP) - by Lynette Adams, FINSAP Project Coordinator

Striving for Consistency - Linking Children and Families to Needed Services

FAMILIES IN NEED OF SERVICES (FINS), a legislatively created type of juvenile court proceeding, was enacted into law upon the passage of the Louisiana Children's Code in 1991. The FINS title consolidated former Child in Need of Supervision and Parent in Need of Supervision jurisdiction. In addition to formal court procedures, an informal process was added in which the court,



through a court-appointed intake officer, facilitates the establishment of a voluntary family services plan between the family and the providers of needed services. FINS provides a unique and valuable opportunity

for early judicial intervention to prevent delinquency and child abuse. The FINS process is designed to identify and integrate existing service providers, connect families to needed services, and to promote the establishment of new services or programs where gaps in services have been identified.

Legislative funding for FINS began in 1995 by an appropriation made through the Children's Cabinet of the Governor. In 1998, the legislature requested a study by the Louisiana State University - Office of Social Service Research and Development (LSU-OSSRD) for equitable distribution of funds for the administration of

“FINS has been invaluable in stemming juvenile delinquency, school dropouts, teenage substance abuse, ungovernable family situations and a myriad of other social concerns.”

*- Judge Robert H. Morrison, III
21st Judicial District Court*

FINSAP Changes

To provide the fiscal and programmatic accountability required by the Legislature, FINSAP has required local FINS offices to implement many new changes in the past year. These include:

A **DATA DICTIONARY** designed to create a common language for the disparate terms used in FINS across the State.

Adherence to new **PROGRAM STANDARDS** that define in greater specificity than the Children's Code the process that must be followed by local courts for FINS. These Standards set forth the responsibilities and duties of the courts and the FINS officers, the minimum qualifications of a FINS officer, and, for the first time, require continuing education for all FINS officers statewide. For some offices, these Standards have added new steps to the FINS process that were not included in the past (such as private interviews with the families and monthly monitoring of the Informal Family Services Plan Agreement).

Use of the **POSIT (PROBLEM ORIENTED SCREENING INSTRUMENT FOR TEENAGERS)** and the **POSIP (PROBLEM ORIENTED SCREENING INSTRUMENT FOR PARENTS)**. Developed by the National Institute of Health (NIH), they identify both nationally recognized instruments as excellent screening tools for helping FINS officers to identify and validate the potential service needs of their clients. The **POSIT** and **POSIP** can be self-administered, provide critical tools for providing consistency statewide, and help document the unmet service needs of many FINS families.

Development of a new **COMPUTER SOFTWARE** package for FINS. The Court now mandates that all offices use the new **GUIDANCE SOFTWARE** program written specifically for FINSAP. FINS officers have worked very hard to adapt to program use considering that many have no previous computer experience and others have had to modify preexisting computer networks and systems to work with **GUIDANCE**. Ultimately, with continued system modifications and computer training and enhancements, the new software should make processing FINS cases easier and data collection more accurate.

All FINS offices are now required to submit **QUARTERLY FISCAL REPORTS** to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court also requires that FINS offices submit **MONTHLY PROGRAMMATIC REPORTS** to the Supreme Court. FINS officers currently generate quarterly individual reports from the **GUIDANCE** database. To reduce the time necessary to compile these reports, the Court is working to obtain programmatic reports electronically from the new software.



FINS throughout the 41 judicial districts, in accordance with Louisiana Performance Audit laws. The LSU-OSSRD study reported that development of uniform standards is integral to the concept of equitable distribution. In addition, the study emphasized the need for centralized program and financial management, uniform data collection, centralized data analysis, and statewide accountability for FINS.

In June 1999, in response to the LSU-OSSRD study and at the request of the Legislature, the Louisiana District Judges Association, and the Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (LCJFC), the Louisiana Supreme Court accepted responsibility for administrative program oversight of FINS. To implement the recommendations of the study, the Court created the Families in Need of Services Assistance Program (FINSAP) within the Judicial Administrator's Office. Since creation of FINSAP, the Supreme Court has taken many steps needed to bring FINS into compliance with the Louisiana Performance Audit laws and particularly the Performance-Based Budgeting Act. More important, the Court has made continuous efforts to improve the administration of FINS and work with individual districts to effectively identify and help link Louisiana families to needed services.

In keeping with the mission of FINSAP to manage the funds provided by the legislature for assisting local FINS processes, developments have included a needs-based allocation formula; a uniform data system for tracking, managing and reporting FINS informal cases; programmatic standards; development; performance indicators and measures; periodic fiscal reports and fi-

“There is always a great deal of discussion in the legislature about program accountability. FINSAP has developed an extraordinary capacity for direct accountability in a short period of time, with a uniform assessment process and database capability provided by the Supreme Court. Change is always hard; it is particularly difficult for FINS offices, working with relatively few resources for a large number of children. What’s been accomplished is really quite amazing.”

*- Luceia LeDoux
Assistant Director
LSU - OSSRD*

Kimball is directly overseeing the FINS program on behalf of the Court. Working closely with Justice Kimball and the Court is Deputy Judicial Administrator for Families and Children Kären Hallstrom and Lynette Adams, a newly hired Project Coordinator.

To reach either Hallstrom or Adams, call 504-568-5747.

ncial responsibility; and general supervision of and assistance to local FINS offices in other ways.

Currently the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court and more than 40 other judicial district offices participate in the Families in Need of Assistance Services Program. In addition to monthly allocations, more than 50% of FINSAP participants have requested and received funding for enhancements including computer upgrades and technical assistance. During the next phase, the Supreme Court will continue its efforts to develop and implement reforms that will provide children and families with opportunities to access services targeted to properly address the underlying causes of pre-delinquent behavior.

The Supreme Court accepted the statewide administration of FINS because it recognized the importance and great benefits to be realized by the program. At the request of Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero Jr., Justice Catherine D.



A Case for FINS

As an example, in New Orleans a considerable number of students are referred to juvenile court as directed by school district procedures and public law. The school social worker collects all facts surrounding the youth's absenteeism - family history, patterns, school performance, cultural tendencies and neighborhood - to make recommendations on which the judge would make his or her disposition.

On determination as to the cause of a student's absenteeism - that is, if the nonattendance is due to factors based on parental, pupil, educational or environmental conditions, the youth's case may become a FINS referral.

When a referral is received, a FINS intake officer screens the data, conducts a conference with the family and develops an interagency service plan that offers assistance to the child and family. The parent and the student sign a six-month contract that can be extended for an additional six months. In addition, the FINS monitoring officer follows the family's progress. If the family fails to comply with the plan, then court adjudication is mandated.

School social workers have reported that the contract and contract monitoring process have kept a large number of cases out of the court, indicating an increase in compliance with compulsory school attendance laws.

- Carolyn N. Trask, BCSW-BAS, SSWS. To reach Trask, Juvenile Court Liaison, New Orleans Public Schools, call 504-365-8756.



Pillar of the Community: Judge Mary “KK” Norman

Judge Mary “KK” Norman, 2nd City Court of New Orleans believes in community involvement. In fact, her community involvement often takes her out of the courtroom and into the classroom.

Most recently, Judge Norman visited O. Perry Walker High School, where she addressed 9-12th grade Special Education students and William J. Fisher Elementary School where she spoke and took part in the crowning of the King and Queen of the school's Royal Court.

Judge Norman also often invites students to the 2nd City Court courthouse where she presides. A recent visit included 75 summer camp students from local public schools, grades K-1. Typically, she provides students with an overview of the court system, has them meet court personnel, shares anecdotes of memorable courtroom moments, and explains how she handles difficult cases and difficult decisions. Her goal always is to stress the importance of the judicial system and of being a good citizen. Understanding these things she feels will prevent the youngsters from ever appearing before the court in their adult life.

While her work with school children focuses on the teaching the young, Judge Norman also works on preserving the



Judge Norman joins a couple in marriage at the Algiers Courthouse.

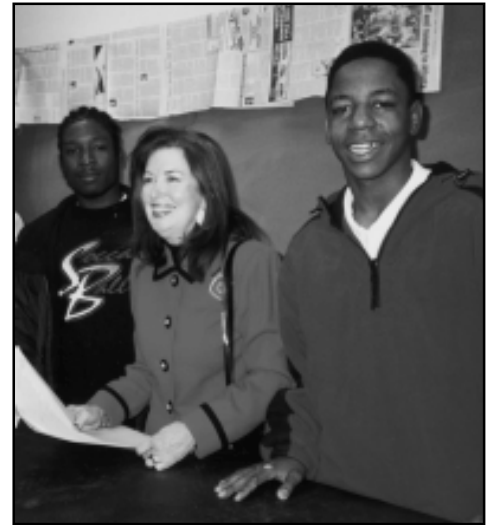
Photo by Times-Picayune

24th Judicial District Court, Jefferson Juvenile Court Host Drug Rally

In May, the 24th Judicial District Court and the Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court held a Drug Court Rally in recognition of National Drug Court Month and to highlight the success of their Drug Court program. More than 75 men and women have graduated from Jefferson Parish's drug courts having completed the intensive 12-month program of comprehensive drug treatment, close supervision and full accountability.

The rally, which gathered 150 participants, featured Assistant Secretary Alton “Jake” Hadley, Louisiana Office of Addictive Disorders, as the guest speaker. Joining him were **Judge**

old. Specifically, the historic Algiers Courthouse which houses the 2nd City Court of New Orleans is one of her pet projects. She serves on the board of the “Friends of the Algiers Courthouse,” a non-profit organization founded by



Judge Norman visits with students at O. Perry Walker High School.

the Algiers Point Civic Association to help ensure the maintenance and upkeep of the court which was built in 1896. It is the third oldest continuously used courthouse in Louisiana. In 1999, the courthouse balcony was designated as a “Best Place to Kiss” by cable television's Travel Channel.

There is one day every year when romance is definitely in the air at the Algiers Courthouse—Valentine's Day! On Valentine's Day, Judge Norman does not schedule a regular docket, instead she schedules a day of weddings. She provides the brides with roses, decorates the courtroom with flowers, prepares packets including personalized vows and the marriage license, performs each ceremony, has the chimes in the court's clock tower play the wedding march each time a ceremony is completed and she, along with her staff, dresses in red for the day.

“I have always been motivated to community involvement,” said Norman, “even before I became a judge; however, as a sitting judge, I especially aspire to make myself accessible. I look for any opportunity to help, as I feel we all should give back to our communities in whatever capacity we can. As an elected official, I am elected to serve and am very grateful to have been given the opportunity.”

Ann Murry Keller, Judge Melvin Zeno, Judge Fredericka Wicker and Judge Marion Edwards. Judge Edwards underscored the significance of the occasion noting, “This has been a true community effort. The Jefferson Parish drug courts boast a 91% clean screen rate for all participants and graduates. Both courts have less than an 8% recidivism rate, below the national average, while traditional probation has an 80-85% recidivism rate. The Jefferson Parish drug courts are working!”

National Drug Court Month 2000 marked the eleventh year of drug courts in the United States.



Baton Rouge City Court Keeps Full Slate

In a court where nearly 130,000 cases were filed in 1999, **Baton Rouge City Court** continues its mission to provide citizens with efficient and convenient access to justice. Last year, 5,557 offenders were referred for participation in the Court's educational programs while 3,941 offenders were referred to the community service program by the Court's judges resulting in 171,944 hours of work, valued at \$885,460, being given back to the community.

It is this mission to take an active role in the Baton Rouge area community which has become a staple of the Court Services Division through its Educational and Rehabilitation Programs. In-house programs currently in effect at the Court include: Driver Improvement and Alcohol Rehabilitation Program (DWI Program), Program for Anger Management (PAM), Court's Effective Decision Making School (CEDMS); Substance Abuse Self-Awareness Program (SASAP), Defensive Driving Courses (SCOPE I and II), Alcoholics Anonymous Orientation and Institutional Meetings, Cocaine Anonymous, Community Service Work Program, Volunteers in the Court Program (VIC), Drug Screening Program, House Arrest Program and Anger Control Training (ACT) Pretrial Program. Outside program involvement includes: Domestic Violence Offenders Program (DVOP), Healing & Eliminating Abusive Relationships Through Scripture (HEARTS), 55 Alive/Mature Driving Program, Greater Opportunities for Adult Learn-

ing (GOAL), Literacy Works, Job Corp, Motor-cycle Safety Courses and DAWN - Psychological Skill Training Program.

As a result of their commitment and dedication to the principles of fairness and justice, and for the numerous educational and rehabilitative programs it provides to the community, Baton Rouge City Court was selected for a Public Service Recognition Award, given by the Federal Government as part of National Public Service Week. Baton Rouge City Court was selected from among 47 City-Parish agencies in the United States.



Judge Suzan S. Ponder accepts the Public Service Recognition Award on behalf of Baton Rouge City Court.

Lafourche Parish Student Government Day

Students at Thibodaux and Lafourche area high schools had the opportunity to get involved in their local government through the **Lafourche Parish Student Government Day Program**. The program, open to juniors and seniors from E.D. White Catholic High, Thibodaux High, Central Lafourche and South Lafourche High Schools, paired students with a city or parish official to learn firsthand about their role in government and the operations of their work. In order to take part in the Student Government Day Program, the high school students had to fill out an application, be approved by their school administrators and be elected by the student body of their school.

The Student Government Day Program, initiated by **Judge John L. Weimer III, 1st Circuit Court of Appeal**, included participation by **17th Judicial District Judges Jerome J. Barbera III, John J. Erny Jr., A. Bruce Simpson and John E. LeBlanc** in addition to **Thibodaux City Judge David M. Richard**. Students then joined with a government official to "shadow" for the remainder of the day.

Clerk of Court Vernon Rodrigue was shadowed by a number of students who were interested in learning about the accuracy of the voting process and the computer-based balloting system in Lafourche

Parish. Side by side the Clerk of Court, the students were able to view the workings of the voting machines that were used in that previous Saturday's ballot and to witness the opening of the voting machines to verify balloting results.

"Our program has many benefits," said Judge Weimer, "including providing public officials with an opportunity to meet with the young people of our parish and exposing students to our system of government. It is, in effect, a living civics lesson."

Goldilocks Takes the Stand



Kindergarten Students at Arden Cahill Academy held a mock trial at the 24th Judicial District Court as Papa A. Bear, Mama A. Bear and Baby A. Bear took Goldilocks to court. Judge Alan Green heard the case while students served as jurors. The students found Goldilocks guilty of having bad manners and being impolite.

People's Law School Course

The People's Law School, a five-week public service course designed to help the public understand how to navigate the legal system, featured speakers from the Louisiana Court system. The speakers were **Judge Brady M. Fitzsimmons, 1st Circuit Court of Appeal; Judge Reggie Badeaux, 22nd JDC; Judge Raymond Childress, 22nd JDC; and Judge Larry J. Green, 22nd JDC**. The judges, representing the Mandeville-Covington area addressed a wide range of legal topics.



IPSO FACTO... Courthouse Holds Links to the Past

Ouachita Parish Clerk of Court **Bill Hodge** is serving as a present link to the past history in Ouachita Parish by continuing the maintenance and safekeeping of transactions from many years ago.

Records dating back to the 1700's in the courthouse basement hold clues to the past history of the area, including early marriage licenses and the actual documents from sales of land, cattle, property and "other earthly possessions."

Originally, the records were stored in folders, folded in half width-wise, then folded four times lengthwise. A preservation effort was initiated and some documents were laminated for protection. That process was halted when concerns arose that the originality of the documents was being altered.



Photo by Monroe News Star

IT'S A FACT:

The Ouachita Parish Courthouse also holds original Spanish land grants made in the late 18th century, predating the Louisiana Purchase, which was signed in 1803.

YOUR HONORS

■ **Justice Harry T. Lemmon**, who in May was recognized for 20 years as a Justice on the Louisiana Supreme Court, is marking his 30th year on the bench in October. Lemmon was first elected to the Court of Appeal, Fourth Circuit in 1970, and served there until he took office with the Supreme Court on May 16, 1980.



■ **Retired Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Revius O. Ortique, Jr.** received the Thurgood Marshall Award, the ABA's highest civil rights honor. Ortique served more than 50 years as a labor leader, lawyer, state representative, judge and public servant appointed to posts by five U.S. presidents.



■ **Chief Judge Melvin A. Shortess**, 1st Circuit Court of Appeal, announced his retirement effective August 1, 2000. In January 1982, he was elected to the 1st Circuit Court of Appeal, where he served since that date. In 1990, he served on the Louisiana Supreme Court as a judge *pro tempore* for District 2.



■ **Judge Ronald Bodenheimer**, 24th JDC; **Judge Paul Bonin**, New Orleans Traffic Court; **Judge William Burris**, 22nd JDC; **Judge Robert Chaisson**, 29th JDC;

and **Judge Mark Doherty**, Orleans Juvenile Court were recognized by Victims and Citizens against Crime for their efforts in helping victims of crime.

■ **Judge Ulysses Gene Thibodeaux**, 3rd Circuit Court of Appeal, served as a panelist on the Alternatives to Incarceration forum sponsored by the ACLU and McNeese State University Department of Human Relations and Social Equity. Thibodeaux spoke on the need to assist in the rehabilitation of non-violent offenders.



■ Baton Rouge area judges were among honorees at the Southern University Law Center class of 2000 commencement ceremony. Distinguished alumni recognized included 1st Cir-

cuit Court of Appeal Judges **John Michael Guidry** and **Freddie Pitcher, Jr.** (retired); 19th JDC Judges **Curtis Calloway**, **Janice G. Clark** and **Michael R. Erwin**; Baton Rouge City Court Judge **Suzan Ponder**; Baton Rouge Family Court Judge **Toni Higginbotham**; Baton Rouge Juvenile Court Judge **Pamela T. Johnson**; 18th JDC Judges **James Best**, **Robin Free** and **Sharah Harris**; 21st JDC Judges **Brenda Bedsole Ricks** and **Zoey Waguespack**; and 23rd JDC Judge **Alvin Turner, Jr.**

■ **Baker City Judge John Engelsman** (center) recently starred in the role of Felix Unger in the Baton Rouge Little Theatre production of Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple*.



Photo by The Advocate

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(504) 599-0311

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