



## **Message from the Clerk** **Sheryl Loesch**

It's hard to believe another year has come and gone. What's even harder to believe is that COVID is still in the news. In reflecting on the 2022 calendar year, I'd like to think of it in positive terms; however, that is far from the case where our Court is concerned. Sadly, we lost our wonderful and much-beloved

Judge Michael G. Williamson. Our Court family will be missing him for a very long time, but his memory and the impact he had on the Court will live on forever. We also had a number of our long-serving, dedicated Court staff decide to retire. Although we will certainly miss them as well, we are happy for them as they enter this new phase of life. On the bright side, we had investitures for two of our new Judges during 2022: Judge Robson and Judge Brown. So there was some happy news during the year!

On the staffing front, our caseload continued to decline throughout the year. Ordinarily, that would be an issue because, as you may or may not be aware, our caseload is a large factor in determining our staffing formula. However, since we had so many staff opt to retire by the end of the fiscal year (September 30, 2022), we are in good shape for the current fiscal year.

In other news, as Judge Delano mentioned in her message in the last edition of our newsletter, I attended the global conference of the International Association for Court Administration that was held in October in Helsinki, Finland. "IACA," as it is commonly known, is near and dear to my heart because I was one of the founding members of the association when it was formed back in 2004. For the past three years, I have served as IACA's President, which in and of itself is a daunting task—one made more daunting because of the challenges COVID presented.

IACA is known for its impressive international conferences, but for nearly three years, it was not able to hold one. The Helsinki conference was scheduled three times before it finally took place this past year. Although COVID did not impact the October conference, we had to contend with Russia's war on Ukraine and the fact that Finland shares a border with Russia. To say planning and conducting this conference was stressful is an understatement!

I would like to take this opportunity to brag about this wonderful association. IACA was formed to promote effective court management by cultivating the profession of

court administration around the world. It provides resource materials and educational programs, and it fosters collegiality, as well as compliments and reinforces efforts by governmental and non-governmental organizations to foster judicial reform and build justice-sector capacity. IACA also publishes two impressive publications: the *International Journal of Court Administration* (more of a scholarly, academic publication) and *The Court Administrator* (more of a “nuts and bolts” publication geared toward sharing best practices in the area of court administration.)

The theme of the Helsinki conference was “People Centered-Justice in the New Normal.” Some highlights from the conference included the President’s Welcome Reception, which was graciously hosted by the Mayor of Helsinki at City Hall. The opening plenary session on the topic of People-Centered Justice (PCJ) was moderated by Andrew Solomon, Senior Rule of Law Advisor, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and it included a distinguished panel of subject-matter experts from around the World, including Hon. Zamirbek Bazarbekov, Chair of the Supreme Court of Kyrgyzstan; Hon. Ivan Michchenko, Justice of the Supreme Court of Ukraine and Member of the High Judicial Council; Hon. Albert Zogaj, Judge of the Supreme Court of Kosovo and Chair of the Kosovo Judicial Council; and Dr. Maurits Barendrecht, Program Director, The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law. The panel discussed working PCJ into their judicial systems.

Another distinguished plenary panel, which included Chief Justices from several countries discussing Judicial Modernization Around the World, featured Marc Giroux, Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs, Canada, and Interim Director and Senior General Counsel, Canadian Judicial Council. The panelists were Hon. Richard Wagner, P.C., Chief Justice of Canada, and Chairperson of the Canadian Judicial Council; Hon. Tatu Leppänen, President of the Supreme Court of Justice of Finland; Hon. Ivor Archie, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Trinidad and Tobago; and Hon. Loretta Rush, President of the Conference of Chief Justices of the United States.

Among the many impressive breakout sessions during the 2-1/2 day conference were several that included panelists from the judiciary in Ukraine that were especially moving. If I have piqued your interest in this association, and you are interested in learning more and possibly becoming involved, please visit IACA’s website at [www.iaca.ws](http://www.iaca.ws). You are also always welcome to contact me with any questions.

As we turn our attention to the year ahead, we look forward to the investitures of two more Judges: Judge Burgess and Judge Geyer. Our Court is fortunate to have such an impressive bench of jurists and Court staff who are ready to tackle whatever challenges the new year brings.

I hope everyone had a Happy Holiday season and a Happy New Year!