

SEATAC MUNICIPAL COURT

Your City.  Your Court.

“Your Washington Courts”

Did you know.....?

- There are four levels of court in Washington: the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, the superior courts and courts of limited jurisdiction (district and municipal courts).
- The Supreme Court is located in Olympia in the Temple of Justice on the state capitol grounds.
- Courtrooms of the three divisions of the state Court of Appeals are located in Seattle, Tacoma, and Spokane.
- Courthouses in each of the state’s 39 counties house superior court courtrooms.
- Each county has at least one district court and many of the state’s cities and towns have a municipal court.
- Though some proceedings are not open to the public, visitors are welcome to attend all others without an appointment.

- From “A Guide to Washington State Courts,” published by the Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), 1979, 2008, available for download at www.courts.wa.gov

Every year the Chief Justice of the

Washington State Supreme Court delivers a State of the Judiciary address. This year Justice Barbara Madsen steps down as Chief Justice and passes the gavel to our new Chief Justice, Mary Fairhurst.

Besides processing over two million new cases filed each year, judges within Washington are serving in many other ways in an effort to increase access to justice for all, and to better the court system for the citizens of this state. By a review of this year’s State of the Judiciary report, one can see that the amount of work that is being done is impressive.

The courts are constantly

(Continued on page 2...)



Washington State Supreme Court, 2017; courtesy www.courts.wa.gov

For a brochure describing the organization and operation of the Washington State Court system, take a look at “A Citizen’s Guide to Washington Courts” at

http://www.courts.wa.gov/newsinfo/resources/?fa=newsinfo_jury.brochure_guide&altMenu=Citi

Retired Justice Charles Z. Smith passed away at age 89, August 28, 2016.



Retired Washington Supreme Court Justice Smith was the first ethnic minority judge to serve on Seattle Municipal Court in 1965, and then the first to serve on King County Superior Court in 1966. In 1988, he became the first person of ethnic minority to serve as a Supreme Court Justice when he was appointed by Governor Booth Gardner.

“Justice Smith was a force in the legal community and a voice for diversity and inclusion. He reminded us that the justice system was created to serve all people,” said then Chief Justice Barbara Madsen. “Justice Smith advocated for a purposeful, deliberate strategy to end racial bias in our courts.”

Our current supreme court is exemplary, and each justice has received numerous awards and recognitions throughout their careers from both state and national organizations. To read the biographies of our current Washington Supreme Court, go to: http://www.courts.wa.gov/appellate_trial_courts/SupremeCourt/?fa=supremecourt.justices

*“Your Washington Courts”
(.....Continued from page 1)*

..working to increase diversity and fair outcomes in Washington’s judicial branch. The Minority and Justice Commission (established by the Washington Supreme Court in the 1980’s) is undertaking a study of jury pool diversity with the help of more than 30 Washington courts. Washington’s legal community held the fourth annual Initiative for Diversity Summit in Seattle in May to increase diversity in hiring, retaining, promoting and elevating diverse attorneys to leadership positions. The Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission began work on a comprehensive update of research examining the impacts of gender on accessibility and outcomes in the justice system. The Washington Supreme Court Minority and Justice Commission held Youth and Justice Forums across the state to expose middle and high school students to careers in law and justice and to increase diversity within those professions to improve the justice system. The Minority and Justice Commission also received a 3 year Department of Justice Grant to seek strategies to structure legal financial obligations “in ways that support, rather than undermine, rehabilitation.”

Continued on page 4....

The Administrative Office of the Courts provides support for Washington’s non-unified courts through a wide range of services to promote the efficient administration of justice (non-unified means courts receive some requirements, direction, and support from their branch, but handle day-to-day operations and projects within their county or city courts).

Washington Court System

THE SUPREME COURT

Six-year terms, staggered

- Appeals from the Court of Appeals
- Administers state court system

COURT OF APPEALS

Six-year terms, staggered

Division I, Seattle; Division II, Tacoma

Division III, Spokane

- Appeals from lower courts except those in jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

SUPERIOR COURT

Four-year terms

- Civil matters
- Domestic relations
- Felony criminal cases
- Juvenile matters
- Appeals from courts of limited jurisdiction

COURTS OF LIMITED JURISDICTION

Four-year terms

District and Municipal courts

- Misdemeanor criminal cases
- Traffic, non-traffic, and parking infractions
- Domestic violence protection orders
- Civil actions of \$100,000 or less
- Small claims up to \$5,000

- From "A Guide to Washington State Courts," published by the Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), 1979, 2008, available for download at www.courts.wa.gov

All information contained within this newsletter and more can be found at

www.courts.wa.gov. Also, see  [facebook.com/washingtoncourts](https://www.facebook.com/washingtoncourts), and  [@wacourts](https://twitter.com/wacourts)

*“Your Washington Courts”
 (.....Continued from page 2)*

Washington now allows Limited License Legal Technicians (LLLT) to practice in family law to help those who cannot afford to hire attorneys fill out and file court forms and guide clients in how to navigate the court process (because they do not take the Bar exam and are not attorneys, they cannot represent clients in court).

Many local courts have established new juvenile justice programs, pre-trial services programs, and therapeutic court programs aimed at reducing the recidivism and incarceration rates of arrested individuals.

Court technology improvements continue throughout the state on a local level as well as on a state level to improve the level of service courts are able to provide to citizens. Also, many Washington judges work with local schools to engage students in active civics educational programs. Finally, there are many judges who received recognition on a state and national level for their continued efforts towards improving justice. There is so much more work that courts and judges are doing on a daily basis that cannot be encapsulated within this newsletter and that exemplifies your excellent judicial branch at work. I encourage you to read the State of the Judiciary for more detailed information at:

<http://www.courts.wa.gov/newsinfo/content/StateoftheJudiciary2017.cfm>

Advance the efficient
and effective operation
of the Washington
Judicial System.



AOC
Mission
Statement,
Courtesy
AOC,
[www.courts
.wa.gov](http://www.courts.wa.gov)

Any websites, web pages, links, or other internet content referred to or contained within this newsletter are for reference purposes only and neither the SeaTac Municipal Court nor the City of SeaTac endorse, support, or recommend any advertisement contained within a referenced website, web page, or link that is external to the SeaTac Municipal Court webpage.

The SeaTac Municipal Court Newsletter is written by Judge Elizabeth Cordi-Bejarano. Any copying, reproduction or distribution of this document, in whole or in part, without her explicit written permission is strictly prohibited.

To receive this newsletter via email, visit www.cityofseatac.com, and under the tab, “I want to...” select “Sign up for...”, “eNotifications”, and select “Municipal Court Newsletter”

If you do not wish to receive future editions of this newsletter via email, simply notify the Court Administrator, Ms. Gail Cannon, at: gcannon@ci.seatac.wa.us

SEATAC MUNICIPAL COURT

4800 S. 188th Street
SeaTac, Washington 98188
206-973-4610

<http://www.cityofseatac.com/court>

