

Report of Operations
1999-2003



United States District Court
District of Puerto Rico

Héctor M. Laffitte, Chief Judge
Frances Ríos de Morán, Clerk of Court

On the Cover:

Federico Degetau Federal Building and
Clemente Ruíz Nazario United States Courthouse
San Juan, Puerto Rico

United States District Court District of Puerto Rico

UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGES

Hon. Héctor M. Laffitte, Chief Judge
Hon. Juan M. Pérez-Giménez
Hon. Carmen C. Cerezo
Hon. José A. Fusté
Hon. Salvador E. Casellas
Hon. Daniel R. Domínguez
Hon. Jay A. García-Gregory

SENIOR UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGES

Hon. Gilberto Gierbolini
Hon. Raymond L. Acosta
Hon. Jaime Pieras, Jr.

UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGES

Hon. Jesús A. Castellanos
Hon. Justo Arenas
Hon. Aida M. Delgado-Colón
Hon. Gustavo A. Gelpí

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Frances Ríos de Morán, Esq., Clerk of Court
Angel A. Valencia-Aponte, Esq., Chief Deputy Clerk
Laura E. Rivera, Operations Manager
Damaris Delgado-Vega, Esq., Administrative Manager
Norman Aybar, Systems Manager
Carmen I. Arroyo, Human Resources Manager

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Greetings from the Chief Judge	4
Message from the Clerk of Court	5
Mission Statement	6
Judicial Committees	7
Highlights	8
Judicial Milestones	12
Court Profile	13
Operations	14
Statistical Charts	17
Human Resources	20
Technologically Enhanced Courtroom	31
Space and Facilities	32
Case Management/Electronic Case Filing	34
Systems	36
Internet Home Page	42
History of the Court	43
Court-Annexed Mediation Program	44
Pro Se and Indigent Cases	45
Services to the Bar	46
Administrative Services	52
Finance	55
Jury Administration	57
Community Outreach	58
Acknowledgment	61

GREETINGS FROM THE CHIEF JUDGE



I am very pleased to present this report outlining the recent achievements of the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico. This has been both a challenging and exciting period for the Court as a result of a number of initiatives and changes that have been instituted in order to better serve the litigants that come before this Court seeking prompt and fair resolution of their disputes.

Upon taking office as the Chief Judge of this District, I felt very honored to be leading the Court into the twenty-first century. Today, having served as the Chief Judge for this District over the past five years, I am pleased with all that the Court has accomplished and believe that it is well prepared for the challenges of the future.

During this period our Court family has been enriched by the arrival of numerous individuals, including Judges Daniel R. Domínguez, Salvador E. Casellas, and Jay A. García-Gregory. They have served with great courage and dedication. Similarly, the approval of a fourth magistrate judge and the appointment of Magistrate Judge Gustavo A. Gelpí has been a tremendous asset to this Court. We are also looking forward to the arrival of Magistrate Judge Camille Vélez Rivé, who will soon be sworn in to replace retiring Magistrate Judge Jesús A. Castellanos.

One of the hallmarks of our District has been its immense efficiency in light of the large number of complex multi-defendant cases that prevail in its dockets. Over the past five years our Court has completed more trials than virtually any other district in the First Circuit. Nevertheless, we have not rested on this achievement. Rather, in order to continue our goal of serving with expediency and fairness, the Court recently overhauled and adopted a new set of Local Rules, including a new rule on Court-ordered mediation that gives parties alternative and more cost-efficient ways of resolving their disputes. Similarly, the establishment of a visiting judges program has been a tremendous success thanks to those judges who have graciously accepted our invitation to sit in San Juan and resolve numerous cases. I am particularly grateful for the assistance of the late Judge Robert Ward from the Southern District of New York who regularly sat in San Juan during the last four years.

The efficiency and success of the Court has also been due to significant technological advancements in our Court, including courtroom upgrades and the recent installation of an Electronic Case Management/Filing (CM/ECF) System which has made the Court essentially "paperless."

The physical aspects of our Court have also been given great attention, including the creation of a chamber and courtroom for the new Magistrate Judge, the addition of a Judges' dining room in the cafeteria, improved access to the Judges' parking lot, and extensive renovations to the Clerk's Office. In addition, our courthouse in Old San Juan was renamed in honor of José V. Toledo and a bill was recently proposed before the United States Senate to rename the U.S. Courthouse in Ponce after former governor, statesman, and patron of the arts, Luis A. Ferré.

While many of these initiatives signify the Court's desire to look and prepare for the future, there has also been a significant effort to look to the past with the recent publication of the History of the Federal Court in Puerto Rico. This comprehensive book illustrates and documents the development of our District Court in the context of the socio-political and historical changes in Puerto Rico. It is a testament to our great history and our willingness to face the challenges of the future in order to serve the people of Puerto Rico with fairness, diligence, and strength.

Much of this strength comes from the various judges, administrators and court staff who have worked tirelessly to achieve the numerous accomplishments in this report. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their unwavering commitment. In addition, I would especially like to thank the Clerk of the Court, Frances Ríos de Morán, for her dedication and loyalty to the Court. It is a tremendous honor and privilege to preside as the Chief Judge over a District with such a talented and committed group of individuals who strive so hard to improve our Court and serve the public on a daily basis.

Hector M. Laffitte

A MESSAGE FROM THE CLERK OF COURT



The period of 1999 through 2003 was one of transition, transformation and change. During this time, the Office of the Clerk entered a new millennium. The period included the year of Y2K preparations and the data management crisis that fortunately never materialized. It also encompassed the conclusion of the administration of then Chief Judge Carmen Consuelo Cerezo and the beginning of a new administration with current Chief Judge Héctor M. Laffitte. This period also included the retirement of our Chief Deputy, José M. Morales (Pepo), after many years of excellent service, and the hiring of our new Chief Deputy, Angel A. Valencia. We suffered the loss of beloved co-workers and friends and opened our doors to new employees. These years also featured the reopening of the historic U.S. Post Office and Courthouse Building in Old San Juan as a tangible symbol of how the roots of the Federal Court as an institution are deeply intertwined with the history of Puerto Rico and its people.

In preparing ourselves for the new millennium, we envisioned the crucial role technology would play in the different Court components. We were tenacious and rewarded with the successful completion of the "Technologically Enhanced Courtroom" (TEC) project, which placed the District among the most advanced in the Nation. This project began under the leadership of Chief Judge Cerezo and was embraced by Chief Judge Laffitte as one of the District's most relevant projects. Thus, we have made additional tools available to litigants and practitioners with a state-of-the-art computerized, audio-visual evidence presentation system. The new millennium also demanded a more aggressive integration of technology into administrative services in general, and more specifically into the services that we provide to the public and the bar. Accordingly, the Court launched an *Imaging and Noticing System*, an *Electronic On-Line Calendar*, and a *Real Time Court Reporting System*, among many other technological advancements. Lastly, we took a big leap into the future when the District successfully implemented the *Case Management/Electronic Case Filing* technology, being among the first courts in the Nation to implement both components simultaneously for civil as well as criminal cases, eventually resulting in a complete paperless system. With this cultural change, the formidable tools of Justice are now available on-line and the promise of *justice for all* is ever more attainable in Puerto Rico.

Between 1999 and 2003 the Office of the Clerk hired 25 additional employees that reflect the generational change in the office's staff composition. During this period the District was singled out twice as one of just a handful of district courts in the Nation that received a rating of "no findings" in financial audits. We take pride in this special distinction since it attests to our staff's capability for excellence, achieved through a spirit of cooperation, dedication and honesty, values that must be safeguarded during these challenging times.

These years have been especially rewarding, having had the privilege of serving the Court under the leadership of two outstanding chief judges: the Honorable Carmen Consuelo Cerezo, our first female Chief Judge, who had the vision to fully support our Technologically Enhanced Courtroom Project, and the Honorable Héctor M. Laffitte, whose legacy, as embodied in The History of the Federal Court in Puerto Rico, is further evidence of his foresight and commitment to this institution. I have had the good fortune of counting with the trust and respect of all our district and magistrate judges in order to accomplish every major goal and raise the benchmarks that have made this Court unique within the federal judiciary.

Our optimism and our clear vision are the engines that make us move toward the future with a firm pace. We affirm our commitment to work harder and to pursue excellence in everything we do. Our optimism gives us the necessary courage to move on. We have beautiful dreams about the future and about being a catalyst entity to fulfill the promises of liberty and the pursuit of happiness in Puerto Rico. And why not? After all, we are the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico!


Frances Ríos de Morán





MISSION STATEMENT
of the Clerk's Office
U. S. District Court, District of Puerto Rico


The mission of the Clerk's Office of the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico is to provide clerical and administrative support to all areas of the federal judicial administration process, through the highest quality of service to the Court, members of the bar, other agencies, and the public. In providing efficient management support to the Court and its affiliates, we take pride in assisting the Court to promote public trust and confidence in the Federal Judicial System.

We pledge to:

 *maintain the highest standards of professionalism and ethics, in compliance with the governing rules and regulations;*

 *always strive to improve the quality of our services; and*

 *perform our duties with courtesy, respect, equality and fairness, in an accurate and knowledgeable fashion;*

 *encourage teamwork, education and pursue training programs to adapt to the growing needs of the Court and the public, in response to technological advances and innovations in the law.*

JUDICIAL COMMITTEES

In addition to their case management responsibilities, several of the judges have been designated to work on a number of national committees. Each judge also has an important role, locally, as a liaison to one of the agencies or functional areas that are necessary for the efficient operation of the Court. In this capacity, they confer and meet regularly with the persons responsible for the functional area to resolve problems, address concerns, and plan for the future. There are also several standing committees on which one or more district judges participate, with one district judge having the responsibility of chairing the committee.

Judicial Conference of the United States

Conference Representative	Chief Judge Héctor M. Laffitte
Committee on the Administration of the Bankruptcy System	Judge Salvador E. Casellas
Committee on International Judicial Relations	Judge Juan M. Pérez-Giménez

Local Committee and Liaison Assignments

Federal Judges' Association	Chief Judge Héctor M. Laffitte
Magistrate Judges Advisory Group	Magistrate Judge Justo Arenas
Automation & Information Systems	Chief Judge Héctor M. Laffitte, Judge José A. Fusté
Bankruptcy Court	Judge José A. Fusté
Bar Examination	Judge Daniel R. Domínguez
Budget	Chief Judge Héctor M. Laffitte, Judge Carmen C. Cerezo, Judge Salvador E. Casellas
Circuit Satellite Library	Judge Carmen C. Cerezo
Court Reporters and Interpreters	Judge Salvador E. Casellas, Magistrate Judge Aída M. Delgado-Colón
Criminal Justice Act Committee	Judge Juan M. Pérez-Giménez
Employee Dispute Resolution (EDR)	Judge Daniel R. Domínguez, Magistrate Judge Aida M. Delgado-Colón
GSA - Construction & Maintenance	Judge José A. Fusté
Jury Pool	Judge Juan M. Pérez Giménez
Local Rules of the Court	Chief Judge Héctor M. Laffitte, Judge Jay A. García-Gregory, Magistrate Judge Aída M. Delgado-Colón
Office of the Clerk of Court	Chief Judge Héctor M. Laffitte
Office of the U.S. Marshal (Court Security)	Chief Judge Héctor M. Laffitte
Pretrial Services Office	Judge Juan M. Pérez-Giménez , Judge Salvador E. Casellas
U.S. Magistrate Judges	Judge Juan M. Pérez-Giménez
U.S. Probation Office	Judge Juan M. Pérez-Giménez, Judge Salvador E. Casellas
Technology – CM/ECF	Judge José A. Fusté

HIGHLIGHTS

Judge Héctor Laffitte Takes Over as Chief Judge

In March 1999, Judge Héctor M. Laffitte took over as Chief Judge for the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico.

In July 1983, after establishing a successful legal practice, Chief Judge Laffitte was appointed United States District Judge by President Ronald Reagan. Born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, he is a graduate of the Politechnic Institute, the University of Puerto Rico School of Law, and Georgetown University Law Center, where he completed a Masters in Law degree. He is admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court, the First Circuit Court of Appeals, the Puerto Rico Supreme Court, and the U.S. Court of Military Appeals.

Re-Opening of U.S. Post Office and Courthouse Building in Old San Juan

May 5, 2000 marked the re-opening of the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in Old San Juan. The building, completed in 1914, was the first significant federal building constructed in Puerto Rico and has been described by the General Services Administration as "a building whose essential character was at the same time Caribbean and recognizably federal ... a building of considerable charm, appropriate to its location, and having a hospitable appearance." Barbara Rabinovitz, "Old Courthouse Makes Big Comeback!" From the Bar (FBA PR Chapter Newsletter) at p. 6 (Issue No. 26 Spring 2000).

Expanded in 1940 under the presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the building nearly doubled in size and became an imposing presence at the picturesque harbor site of the Old San Juan historic district, the center of government activity. The building, which occupies the entire block bounded by Comercio, Tanca, Recinto Sur and San Justo Streets, is now restored to its full glory as an architectural and institutional landmark, and a beacon of justice.

The "José V. Toledo Federal Building and United States Courthouse"

On November 17, 2000, a dedication ceremony was held naming the Old San Juan U.S. Post Office and Courthouse Building in memory of former U.S. District Chief Judge José V. Toledo, who died in office in 1980 at the age of 49. The judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals and the U.S. District Court, other public officials and members of the Toledo family, gathered to pay tribute to Judge Toledo. The José V. Toledo Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse is home to the chambers of the Honorable Juan R. Torruella, U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit; the chambers of the Honorable Raymond L. Acosta, the Honorable Gilberto Gierbolini, and the Honorable Jaime Pieras, Jr., Senior U.S. District Judges; the U.S. Bankruptcy Court; and an annex Office of the Clerk of Court for the U.S. District Court.



José V. Toledo served the District of Puerto Rico for ten years. Born in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, in 1931, Judge Toledo was a graduate of the University of Florida in Gainesville and the University of Puerto Rico School of Law. In 1955, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served as a first lieutenant at Fort Brooke, Puerto Rico, and a member of the Judge Advocate General Corps until 1960. In addition, Judge Toledo served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney and in the Government of Puerto Rico. In 1970, while engaged in the private practice of law, he was appointed to the federal bench in Puerto Rico by President Richard M. Nixon. At only 38 years of age, Judge Toledo was the youngest judge in the federal judicial system at the time. Chief Judge Toledo died in office 10 years later, in 1980. At the time of his death, he had risen to the position of Chief

Judge, serving in said capacity with great distinction until his untimely death at the age of 49.

Judge Toledo's judicial career was marked by his humble character, always patient yet strict disposition, and exemplary courage in the scholarly and impartial enforcement of the law. In 1999, as a testimony to his historic mark as a judge, Congress designated the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in Old San Juan, built in 1914, as the "José V. Toledo Federal Building and United States Courthouse." It is appropriate that this building, renovated to its imposing and beautiful glory, bear the name of Judge Toledo, a beacon and a mentor for all the judges of the District of Puerto Rico - - a true friend, a model of professionalism and even handed judicial temperament - - in recognition of his outstanding service.

Court-Sponsored Seminars and Workshops



Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán and Administrative Manager Damaris Delgado Vega (standing from right to left) welcome a group of high school students visiting the Court.

During 1999-2003, the District and Magistrate Judges took part in a number of programs to educate the bar and the public in various functions of the judiciary, in seminars and workshops, including:

- Moot Court Competition - University of Puerto Rico School of Law
- Bail Seminar - Catholic University School of Law (1999 and 2000)
- Moot Court - Republic of Colombia, National Advocacy Center, Department of Justice (1999 and 2000)
- Lecture - Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, Department of Justice Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development
- Seminar: "Special Considerations in Representing Non-Citizen Defendants" - University of Puerto Rico School of Law
- Lecture: "The Anatomy of the Federal Judicial Process" - Overseas Press Club
- Miguel Velázquez Debate Competition - University of Puerto Rico School of Law
- Seminar: "The Do's and Don't's of Federal Practice Before a Federal Magistrate Judge" - Federal Bar Association Puerto Rico Chapter
- Courtroom as Classroom - Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts and U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit
- Mediation Seminar - Inter-American University School of Law
- Mediation Seminar for State Judges
- Moot Court Demonstration for High School Students - Inter-American University
- Federal Civil Practice Panel - Federal Bar Association Puerto Rico Chapter
- Covering the Courts - U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, Puerto Rico General Court of Justice Public Information Office, Puerto Rico Association of Professional Journalists
- Law Day 2000 - United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit
- Judicial Day - Bureau of Prisons, Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) Guaynabo
- Law Day 2001
- Courtroom as a Classroom Program - University of Puerto Rico School of Law (February 28, 2001) and Law School of the Catholic Pontifical University of Puerto Rico (April 4, 2001)
- Meet the Press
- Money Laundering Seminar for Judges - Republic of Panama
- "Fourth Amendment and Electronic Surveillance Use" Seminar - Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
- Annual Intercollegiate Litigation Competition - Inter-American University School of Law
- Law Day 2002

- September 11, 2002 Patriot Day Ceremony
- CM/ECF Training Series



District Judge Juan M. Pérez Giménez and Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán listen as Major Michael Arizmendi from the 369th Combat Support Hospital U.S. Army Active Guard Reserve sings Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the USA" in the September 11, 2002 commemoration of Patriot Day.

First Circuit Forum

"Judging in Puerto Rico and Elsewhere", was the topic of the First Circuit Forum held at the Clemente Ruíz Nazario U.S. Courthouse on May 23, 2001, with Puerto Rico native José A. Cabranes, Circuit Judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, as guest speaker. Courts have always "stood in delicate equipoise between the forces of local influence and federal uniformity", between local and national interests, Judge Cabranes explained. This delicate balance of interests takes a special meaning in our District, due to Puerto Rico's unique political status within the United States. Following Judge Cabranes' excellent lecture, judicial officers, members of the Bar, and Court staff had the opportunity to ask questions and share views.

Appointment of New District Judge Jay A. García-Gregory

Appointed by President William J. Clinton, Judge Jay A. García-Gregory was sworn-in to the federal bench in Puerto Rico on August 1, 2000, after twenty-six years of private practice in a major San Juan law firm where he was a senior partner at the time of his nomination.

Having graduated with high honors in 1972 from the University of Puerto Rico School of Law, he pursued an additional year of legal studies while teaching legal research as an associate in law at Columbia University School of Law. From 1973 to 1974 he served as federal judicial law clerk to Chief Judge Hiram R. Cancio.

Appointment of New Magistrate Judge Gustavo A. Gelpí, Jr.

Appointed as United States Magistrate Judge on June 29, 2001, Magistrate Judge Gelpí is the first appointee to the newly created fourth magistrate judge position. He has devoted his professional life to a distinguished public service career in the federal and state jurisdictions, serving as judicial law clerk for the Hon. Juan M. Pérez-Giménez, Assistant Federal Public Defender; Special Counsel to the U.S. Sentencing Commission, Special Assistant to the Attorney General of Puerto Rico, and Deputy Attorney General and Solicitor General at the Department of Justice of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Re-appointment of Magistrate Judge Aida M. Delgado-Colón

Magistrate Judge Delgado-Colón was re-appointed to a second eight-year term, effective December 23, 2001. A graduate of the Pontifical Catholic University School of Law, Magistrate Delgado-Colón served as an Assistant and Acting Federal Public Defender for the District before becoming the Court's first woman Magistrate Judge. Her re-appointment is a recognition to her high standards and ethics, as well as her efficiency in the administration of justice.

Selection of New Magistrate Judge Camille Vélez-Rivé

Camille Vélez-Rivé was selected as Magistrate Judge to replace Magistrate Judge Jesús A. Castellanos, who will retire in March 2004. Ms. Vélez-Rivé is a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, and the University of Puerto Rico School of Law. She worked as a law clerk for Puerto Rico Supreme Court Associate Justice Francisco Rebollo-López, after which she went into private practice with a prestigious San Juan law firm. She has served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Civil Division since 1998.

Appointment of New Chief Deputy Clerk



Newly designated Chief Deputy Clerk Angel A. Valencia-Aponte (second from the left) is sworn-in by Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán (fourth from the left).

Angel A. Valencia-Aponte is a graduate of the Inter-American University School of Law and holds a Masters in Labor Law from the Georgetown University Law Center. He is also a graduate of the United States Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Prior to his appointment as Chief Deputy, Valencia served as Deputy Regional Attorney for the National Labor Relations Board, Legal Counsel to NLRB Board Member Robert P. Hunter in Washington, D.C., and Legal Counsel for the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration in Washington, D.C. He also served as Counsel for the Connecticut State Department of Human Resources, and Public Defender with the Criminal Unit of the San Juan Legal Services Corporation.

CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS (COOP) PLAN

The Court's COOP Plan Manual was completed, including all home kits in 2003. A matrix was established and an evacuation plan was designed accordingly.

In 2003 the Administrative Office of the U.S. Court (AO) requested all District Courts and Courts of Appeal to work on a continuity of operations plan (COOP Plan). This Plan will enable the courts to continue operations with a minimal level of disruption in case of an emergency, disaster, or attack. The District Court in Puerto Rico worked on a plan that integrates all the court units presently located in the Federico Degetau Federal Building (Clerk's Office, Probation and Pretrial). All essential functions, staff and resources have been identified. The Plan's final draft will be reviewed and revised by the Chief Judge, whose signature is mandatory.

JUDICIAL MILESTONES

(Judicial Officers who have served 25 years or more)

Hon. Raymond L. Acosta: Nominated for appointment to the federal bench on Sept.30, 1982 by President Ronald Reagan, Judge Acosta took senior status in June 1994. A graduate of Princeton University and Rutgers University School of Law, Judge Acosta actively served in the U.S. Navy during World War II, where he participated in the invasion of Normandy. Besides his private practice as a practicing attorney, prior to his appointment to the federal bench Judge Acosta worked with the U.S. Department of Justice as an FBI special agent, and as U.S. Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico.

Hon. Gilberto Gierbolini: Nominated for appointment to the federal bench in 1980 by President Jimmy Carter, he took over as Chief Judge on October 31, 1991 and took senior status in 1993. A graduate of the University of Puerto Rico School of Law, Judge Gierbolini was in active duty with the U.S. Army during and after World War II. His distinguished legal career, encompassing both the private and public sectors, led him to serve as Superior Court Judge with the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico General Court of Justice, Solicitor General and Assistant Attorney General at the Department of Justice of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Chair of the Puerto Rico Elections Board, and Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico, among others.

Hon. Juan M. Pérez-Giménez: Nominated for appointment to the federal bench October 22, 1979 by President Jimmy Carter, he took over as Chief Judge on October 30, 1984. A graduate of the University of Puerto Rico School of Law, Judge Pérez-Giménez has a Masters in Business Administration from George Washington University. Judge Pérez Giménez was in private practice at a prestigious Puerto Rico law firm for several years. Prior to his appointment to the federal bench, he served the federal government as Assistant U.S. Attorney in the District of Puerto Rico, and U.S. Magistrate Judge.

Hon. Jesús A. Castellanos: A graduate of the Inter-American University School of Law, he was first appointed U.S. Magistrate Judge in March 21, 1980, after a distinguished legal career in both the public and private sectors which led him to serve as in-house legal counsel for various corporations and as legislative assistant in the U.S. House of Representatives. Magistrate Judge Castellanos will retire in March 2004.

Hon. Justo Arenas: A 1974 graduate of the University of Puerto Rico School of Law, he was appointed U.S. Magistrate Judge on April 20, 1981. He served actively in the U.S. Army and has remained in the U.S. Naval Reserve. Magistrate Judge Arenas engaged briefly in the private practice of law, devoting his legal career almost entirely to public service. He served as judicial law clerk to the Hon. Juan R. Torruella, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico, and as temporary U.S. Magistrate Judge for the District of New Hampshire. Magistrate Judge Arenas has also served as Adjunct Professor of Forensic Psychology at the Caribbean Center for Advanced Studies.

COURT PROFILE

The District of Puerto Rico has seven active district judges, three senior district judges, and four magistrate judges. Although our Court is considered medium-sized, it is one of the most active in the federal judiciary. For example, in 2000 the District of Puerto Rico had more than double the number of criminal defendants per case than the national average. In 2001, more civil and criminal cases were filed in Puerto Rico than in any other district within the First Circuit, in part because of an 84% increase in criminal prosecutions stemming from protests against the Navy's presence in the Municipality of Vieques. The trend continued in 2002 when the Court ranked first in the Circuit for the number of civil case filings.

Many of these cases are very complex, with one-third of all criminal prosecutions involving narcotics. Similarly, white collar criminal prosecutions and civil rights violations are prevalent in the district. In 1999 the United States Attorney's Office filed 178 cases with 728 defendants involving narcotics and dangerous drugs, and a total of 36 cases with 67 defendants involving public corruption and white collar crime/fraud. During this period, 20% of the civil cases involved violations of civil rights. It is evident that the pace, intensity, complexity, and demands of our district's operations compare in nature with high-profile districts having many more federal judges, such as the Southern District of Florida and the Southern District of New York.

What is remarkable is the efficiency of the Court. Year 2002, for example, was a banner year not only because the Court received more civil cases than any other district within the First Circuit, but also because it terminated more cases and completed more trials than any other court in the Circuit. In 2003, Puerto Rico ranked first in terminations, second in completed trials, and fourth in total filings within the Circuit. Moreover, throughout the past four years, the number of civil cases over 3 years old has been significantly reduced by 7.5%.

The cultural environment under which the Court operates also challenges its daily work. The District of Puerto Rico is the only United States District Court that operates in a jurisdiction where

Spanish is the dominant language throughout the entire district. This poses a challenge in two critical areas of the Court's operations: jury management and interpreting services.

Accordingly, jury selection in this district requires candidates to first pre-qualify as proficient in the English language before they are included in the jury wheel for selection. This is time-consuming and can be particularly difficult in situations where a large number of potential jurors is needed. Indeed, this was evident in 2003 when Chief Judge Laffitte presided over the first death penalty trial in Puerto Rico in over forty years. The long and arduous jury selection process was successful in part because of the efficient and timely service of the Court's Jury Administration office.

Similarly, the prevalence of the Spanish language creates a great need for interpreting services. Indeed, not only are these services provided in 100% of all criminal cases but the District of Puerto Rico is the only one in the First Circuit where each judge has an assigned interpreter.

OPERATIONS

The Operations section includes intake, records, docketing, and case managers. Most of the interaction between the Clerk's Office, attorneys, and the Judges involves the Operations Section. Our Operations Manager is Laura E. Rivera. Laura brings a wealth of experience to her position, since she has worked in all the areas encompassed by Operations, moving up through the ranks to her current position. Laura's assistant Operations Manager is Lida I. Egelé, who is also Judge Pérez-Giménez's Case Manager.

During the years 2000-2003, Operations started the transition from traditional paper filing to electronic case filing. To ease the transition, the Clerk's Office initiated the smaller scaled fax noticing project in order to familiarize Court staff and attorneys with the idea of a more mechanized and faster approach to communications between them. The Clerk's Office also sent some of the operations staff to a training program on how to manage and accept change. During the years 1999-2003, our staff prepared for changes to our traditional way of doing business while effectively handling an overall increase in its work-load as to civil and criminal cases filed, criminal defendants filed, and a remarkable growth in the membership of the CJA Panel of Attorneys.

INTAKE/RECORDS



INTAKE CLERKS

Andrés Lebrón-Albino, Work Leader
Carmín Santana
Freddie González
Neil Almeida

RECORDS AND REPRODUCTION CLERKS

Michael McDougall
Janice González

Work team leader Andrés Lebrón-Albino and the deputy clerks in the section always give special attention to the quality of the files in the Clerk's

custody. Their goal is to keep the files as neat and orderly as possible, and to readily identify their location. They are also responsible for the delivery of case files to and from chambers and the Clerk's Office, a service that they perform twice daily. The Records and Reproduction clerks duplicate all files assigned to senior judges. These, and any pleadings filed, are delivered daily to the Clerk's Office Annex at the José V. Toledo Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Old San Juan via messenger service.

The Clerk's Office file tracking system, which was implemented at the beginning of 2003, is the latest technological aid in maintaining a tight control over the location of all case files. Bar code labels, affixed to the jacket of all case files, are scanned into a terminal which maintains the necessary information as to the precise location of the file once it has been processed by the Docketing Section.

The intake/file deputy clerks also safe-keep the recordings of all Court proceedings prepared by the court reporters, as well as those produced by the FTR ("For The Record") Recording System utilized in the Magistrate Judges' courtrooms. The court reporters' notes are part of the records kept by this section in the Clerk's Office storage area, as prescribed by judicial directives.

In addition to assisting the public and the bar, the Intake clerks make inventory listings of files sent to the Federal Records Center, prepare all documentation concerning civil and criminal bail bonds, and distribute all correspondence received at the Clerk's Office.

SERVICES TO THE BAR AND THE PUBLIC

Copy Request Service by Fax

Members of the bar and the public may now request copies of documents and files by fax. Once the request is received, one of the Records and Reproduction clerks contacts the requesting party as to the costs involved and the final processing of the request.

Messenger Service to Clerk's Office Annex

Documents are exchanged to and from the Clerk's Office at the Federico Degetau Federal Building and its Old San Juan Annex at the José V. Toledo Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse twice daily. This service is extended to all judicial chambers, including the U.S. Bankruptcy Court.

Attorney Identification Cards

In 1999, the Clerk's Office started issuing attorney identification cards for access to the U.S. District Court.

Agency Distribution Panel

A mailbox system was implemented at the Clerk's Office Intake Counter. Specific agencies are provided with keys to a "box" for daily pick-up of their mail and documents.

Windock / Imaging-Noticing System

Windock is a new computer program which enables deputy clerks to view and print imaged orders and dockets of proceedings. Windock has improved accessibility to documents and case information by significantly reducing the need to physically obtain information from the files and paper documents. All orders are scanned on a daily basis; these are then automatically notified through the imaging-noticing system to all parties who are subscribed to the fax service.

Filing Drop Box

Working in conjunction with the U.S. Marshals Service, the Clerk's Office is able to provide access to the filing drop box after normal working hours for emergency filings through prior arrangements. Documents may be filed using the Filing Drop Box at the entrance to the Federico Degetau Federal Building from 6:00 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. Documents deposited in the Filing Drop Box are retrieved by Clerk's Office staff three times a day: 8:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., and 4:30 p.m. The box has clear instructions and a clock to stamp the pleadings prior to being deposited.

Electronic Calendars

Daily up-to-date information on court proceedings is available through monitors located at the Clemente

Ruiz Nazario Courthouse, the Clerk's Office Intake Section, and the Federico Degetau Federal Building.

DOCKETING SECTION



DOCKET CLERKS

Nívea Ocasio, Team Leader

(Judge Pérez Giménez)

Janet Sánchez (Chief Judge Laffitte)

Rebecca Narváez (Judge Cerezo)

Carmen Tacoronte (Judge Fusté)

Olga Vega (Judge Casellas)

Nancy Pérez (Judge Domínguez)

Franchesca Torres (Judge García Gregory)

Sulma López-Defilló (Senior Judges)

Yelitza Rivera (Electronic Reporter, Senior Judges)

Carmen Cruz (Assistant Docket Clerk, Statistics)

Xiomara Muñíz (Appeals)

As part of the transition from paper case filing to electronic case filing, the docket section underwent several changes. A Clerk's Office Annex was established at the José V. Toledo Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse and docket clerk Sulma López-Defilló was designated as case manager and intake clerk. As part of our efforts to serve the newly opened court facility in Old San Juan, we also hired Yelitza Rivera as an electronic reporter and generalist clerk also assigned to the Clerk's Office Annex. Ilma Rivera, a long-time docket clerk, was transferred to the Systems Department as data quality analyst. Two docket clerks were hired, Carmen Tacoronte and Franchesca Torres, to serve Judge Fusté and Judge García-Gregory, respectively. Ms. Nívea Ocasio was promoted to the newly created position of Relief Courtroom Deputy/Docket Clerk Work Leader. Janet Sánchez, Judge Domínguez's former Case Manager transferred to the position of docket clerk for Chief Judge Laffitte; in addition to her duties as docket clerk, she is also a Relief Courtroom Deputy Clerk.

A number of docketing workshops were offered to the newly designated docket clerks, among them: Introduction to Integrated Case Management System (ICMS) Docketing; Introduction to ICMS Docketing - Criminal; and, Introduction to the Speedy Trial Act.

CASE MANAGERS' SECTION



During 1999-2003, Lida I. Egelé, a vastly experienced and long-time work leader for the case managers' group, was promoted to the newly created supervisory position of Assistant Operations Manager. Case managers continue to monitor the required reports for the status of motions and bench trials pending for more than six months, and cases pending for more than three years for the periods ending March 31st and September 30th of each year, pursuant to the Civil Justice Reform Act (CJRA). Courtroom deputies have also been attending training sessions in the U.S. mainland to prepare for the District implementation of the Case Management/Electronic Case Filing (CM/ECF) System that will go live in January (CM) and February (ECF) 2004.

CASE MANAGERS

Rebecca Agostini, Work Leader (Judge Fusté)

Lida I. Egelé (Judge Pérez Giménez)

Minerva Figueroa (Chief Judge Laffitte)

Gretchen Rodriguez (Judge Cerezo)

Kim Flores, R.I.P. (Judge Casellas)

Omar Flaquer (Judge Domínguez)

Lilly Alicea (Judge García Gregory)

Sulma López-Defilló (Senior Judges)

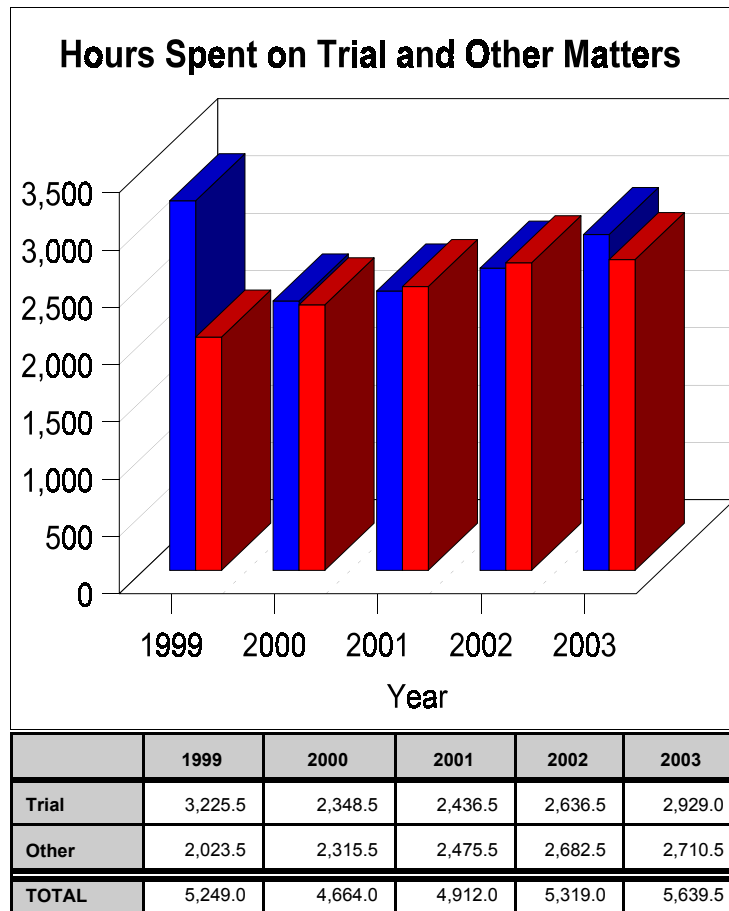
Rosie Oliver (Magistrate Castellanos)

Tere Molfullea (Magistrate Arenas)

Brenda González (Magistrate Delgado)

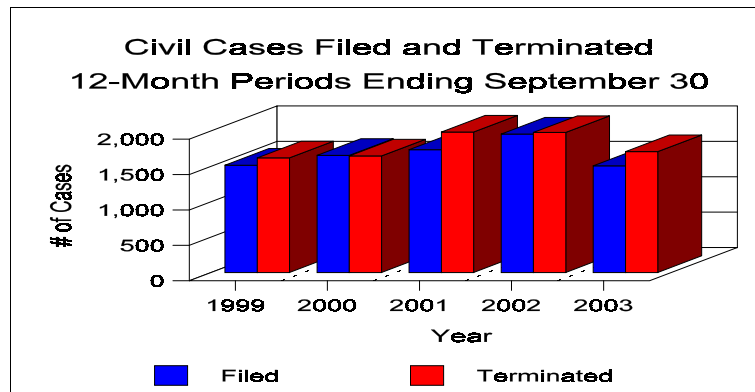
Carlos Rodríguez (Magistrate Gelpí)

STATISTICAL CHARTS



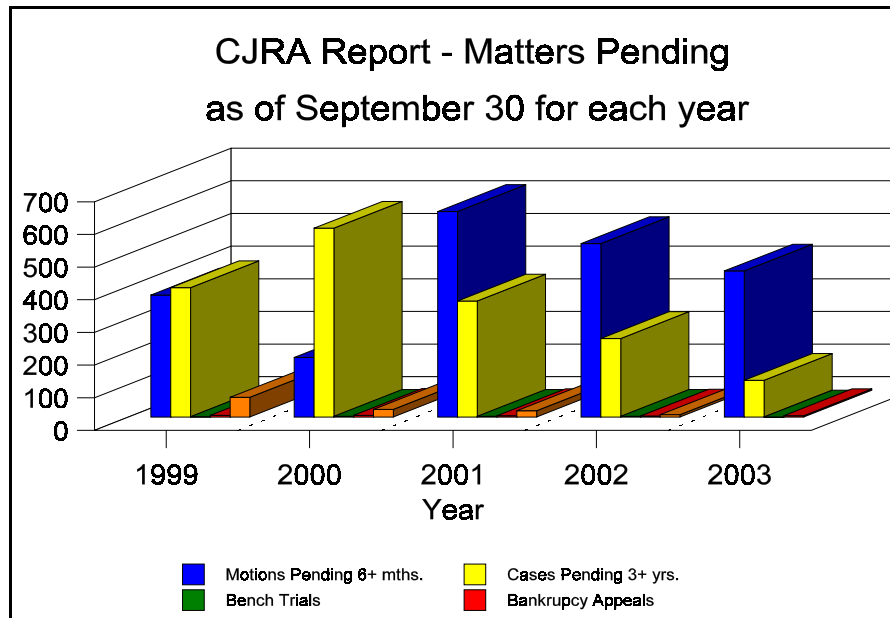
Source: Trials and Trial Hours Reports for the 12-month periods ending December 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 (Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Statistics Division).

DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO
Report of Operations 1999-2003

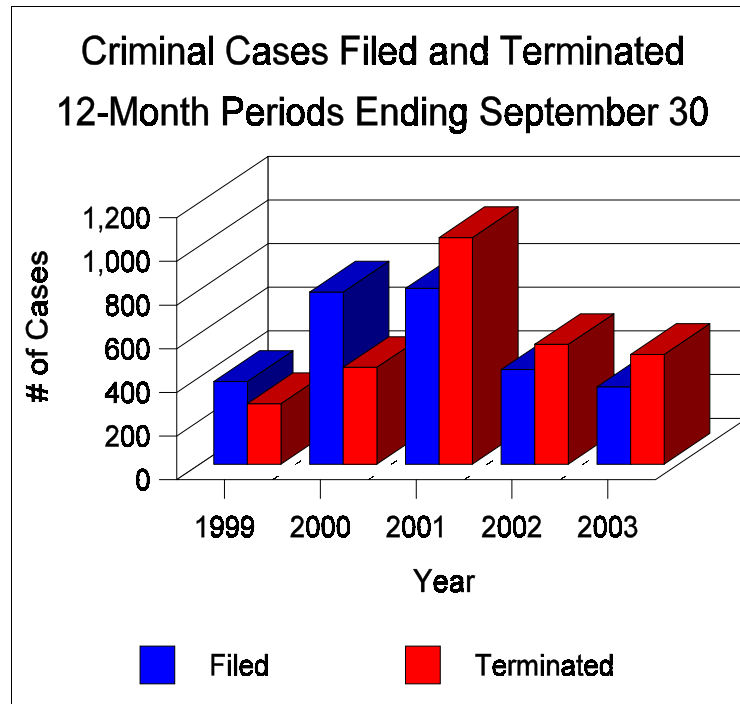


Civil Case Activity	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Filed (*)	1,515	1,654	1,734	1,955	1,506
Terminated (**)	1,607	1,646	1,900	1,822	2,011(***)

Source: (*) Federal Court Management Statistics for 12-month periods ending September 30, 1999 thru 2003 (Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Statistics Division); (**) Judicial Business of the U.S. Courts 1999 thru 2002 Annual Reports of the Director (Table C); (***) Statistics Compiled by USDC-PR Docketing Section (Federal Court Management Statistics 2003 pending release).



Source: CJRA Report (USDC-PR Systems Department).



Criminal Case Activity	1999 (*)	2000 (*)	2001 (*)	2002 (*)	2003 (**)
Filed	379	789	806	434	291
Terminated	278	444	1,039	549	363

Source: (*) Judicial Business of the U.S. Courts 1999 thru 2002 Annual Reports of the Director (Table D); (**) Statistics compiled by USDC-PR Docketing Section (2003 Federal Court Management Statistics pending release).

HUMAN RESOURCES

PERSONNEL SECTION

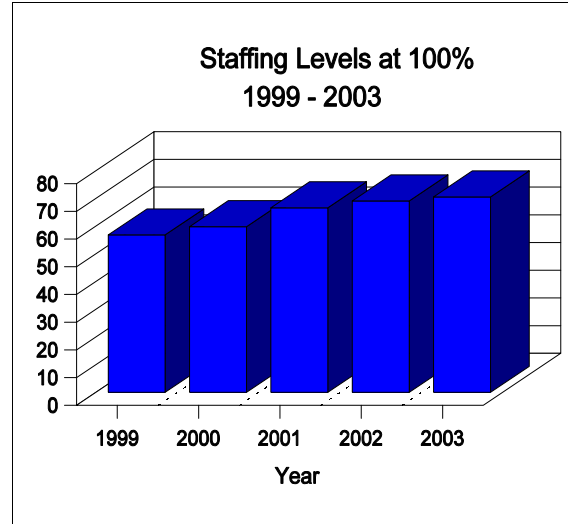


Carmen I. Arroyo
Human Resources Specialist

Cindy Alequín
Human Resources Clerical Assistant

Carmen I. Arroyo started with the Court in 1989 and has been in charge of the Personnel Section ever since. She was officially appointed as Personnel Specialist by the Clerk in 1991. Based on 100% funding, the staffing level remained at 56.8 authorized work units during 1999, and rose to 59.8 authorized work units during 2000, after the confirmation of U.S. District Judge García-Gregory.

In 2001, after the confirmation of Magistrate Judge Gelpí, it rose to 66.6 authorized work units.



Staffing Levels at 100%	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
	56.8	59.8	66.6	69.1	70.5

PERSONNEL EVENTS

1999

New Hires

- Loyda E. Díaz, Secretary to U.S. District Judge Salvador E. Casellas
- Kathleen Fegers, Court Reporter
- Mayra López, Staff Interpreter
- Marta Ortíz-Aguilú, Secretary to U.S. District Judge Juan M. Pérez-Giménez

DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO
Report of Operations 1999-2003

Promotions

- Donna Dratwa, Official Court Reporter, to Level 2
- Ralph Rodríguez, Assistant Financial/Telephone Administrator and Procurement Clerk
- Zulma Ruíz, Official Court Reporter, to Level 2
- Manuel Sellés, Property / Procurement and Court Technology Clerk

Transfers

- Ana I. Lara, Secretary to U.S. District Judge Salvador E. Casellas, to the Clerk's Office of the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida, Ocala Division, as Generalist Clerk
- Mari Carmen Ríos, Appeals Docket Clerk to the Pretrial Services Office as Pretrial Services Officer

Retirements

- Aida C. Salicrup, Secretary to U.S. District Judge Juan M. Pérez-Giménez, after 24 years of service

2000

New Hires

- Diane Breaz, Official Court Reporter
- Michael McDougall, Records and Reproduction Clerk
- Carlos J. Rodríguez, Intake & Records/Reproduction Clerk
- Yelitza Rivera-Buonomo, Electronic Court Recorder Operator and Generalist Clerk
- Cándida Torres-Pomales, Secretary to U.S. District Judge Jay A. García-Gregory

- Carlos D. Rodríguez, Temporary Records and Reproduction Clerk
- Debra Valentín, Official Court Reporter

Promotions

- Norman Aybar, Systems Manager
- Yolanda Carrillo, Administrative Secretary
- José Concepción, Supply and Assistant Procurement Clerk
- Julio Dávila, Assistant Systems Manager
- Kim D. Kalife, ICMS Systems Administrator.
- Sulma López-Defilló, Courtroom Deputy and Generalist Clerk
- Xiomara Muñíz, Appeals Processing and Civil Violations Bureau
- Carmen Tacoronte, Docket Clerk

2001

New Hires

- Angel A. Valencia-Aponte, Pro Se Law Clerk
- Cindy Alequín-Santiago, Human Resources Clerical Assistant
- José Noel Caraballo-Cruz, Automation Support Specialist
- Omar Flaquer-Mendoza, Courtroom Deputy
- Freddie González, Records and Reproduction Clerk
- Noel Rodríguez, Audio Visual Specialist

DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO
Report of Operations 1999-2003

- Sandra Marqués, Secretary to Magistrate Judge Gelpí

Promotions

- Marlene Mortera, Finance Clerk and CJA Voucher Specialist
- Manuel Sellés, Project Manager and Procurement Administrator
- Yolanda Carrillo, Administrative Secretary and CJA Voucher Review Analyst
- José A. Lebrón-Albino, Intake Supervisor
- Lida I. Egelé, Assistant Operations Manager
- Edgar Natal, Automation Specialist
- Rebecca Agostini-Viana, Courtroom Deputies' Work Leader
- Neil Almeida, Finance Specialist and Records Clerk
- Kim D. Kalife, ICMS Administrator
- Edith Ríos, Finance Administrator and Supervisor
- Gizelle M. Rivera, Management Analyst
- Ilma Rivera, Data Quality Analyst and Systems Help Desk
- Franchesca Torres, Assistant Docket Clerk
- Angel A. Valencia-Aponte, Chief Deputy Clerk
- Carmen L. Santana-Ferrer, Intake and Bond Deputy Clerk

Transfers

- Janet González, Relief Courtroom Deputy and Docket Clerk
- Brenda González, Courtroom Deputy

Retirements

- José M. Morales, Chief Deputy Clerk

2002

New Hires

- Carmen I. Serrano, Courtroom Deputy
- Javier Morales-Varela, Automation Support Specialist
- Sarah V. Ramón, Intake Clerk
- Joyce Del Valle, Official Court Reporter
- Yvette Richardson, Official Court Reporter
- Janis Palma, Staff Interpreter
- Edgardo Rodríguez-Quilinchini, Pro Se Law Clerk
- Inez Cosme-Oquendo, Finance Administrative Assistant
- Coraly Romero, Jury Clerk
- Iliá N. Bermúdez, Data Entry Clerk
- Mirrael Vázquez-García, Imaging Clerk
- Belkis González, Administrative Assistant to the Chief Deputy Clerk
- Patricia Garshak, Official Court Reporter

DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO
Report of Operations 1999-2003

- Oscar Alvarez-Ramos, Systems Analyst and Programmer
- Carmen M. Cruz, Assistant Docket and Statistics Clerk

Promotions

- Carlos J. Rodríguez, Magistrate Judge Courtroom Deputy
- Franchesca Torres, Docket Entry Clerk
- Anthony Figueroa, Jury Clerk and Administrative Assistant
- Yelitza Rivera-Buonomo, Electronic Court Recorder Operator
- Carmen I. Arroyo, Human Resources Manager and Administrative Assistant to the Clerk of Court
- Marlene Mortera, CJA Clerk and Assistant Budget Analyst

Transfers

- Gizelle M. Rivera, Pro Se Law Clerk (Part-Time)
- Yolanda Carrillo, Court (Swing Pool) Secretary

Retirements

- Noris J. Vázquez, Certified Court Interpreter (Chief Judge Laffitte)

2003

New Hires

- Ada I. García, Attorney Admissions Manager

- Janice González, Records and Reproduction Clerk
- José A. Aponte-Lucena, Systems Programmer
- Gretchen Rodríguez, Courtroom Deputy

Promotions

- Sarah V. Ramón, Magistrate Judge Courtroom Deputy
- Carmen I. Serrano, Secretary to the Chief Deputy Clerk
- Franchesca Torres, Docket Clerk
- Carmen Tacoronte, Docket Clerk
- Inez Cosme-Oquendo, Administrative Clerk
- Freddie González, Intake Clerk
- Patricia Garshak, Official (Real Time) Court Reporter

Transfers

- Yolanda Carrillo, Secretary to Chief Judge Laffitte
- Belkis González, Court (Swing Pool) Secretary

Retirements

- Angie Warner, Secretary to Chief Judge Laffitte
- Myriam C. Rodríguez, Secretary to Senior District Judge Gierbolini
- Frieda Ramírez, Case Manager to Judge Cerezo

PERSONNEL MILESTONES

(Clerk's Office staff who have served 25 years or more)

Frieda Ramírez, Federal Service Career Started: January 30, 1967 - Frieda commenced her government career at the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York. In 1970 she relocated to Puerto Rico and accepted a position with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Puerto Rico. In June 1988 she transferred to the U.S. District Court, as a docket clerk, until October 1988 when she was appointed as courtroom deputy for Judge Carmen Consuelo Cerezo. Frieda retired on October 31, 2003.



Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán and District Judge Carmen C. Cerezo (first and third from left) share a special moment with Frieda Ramírez, Judge Cerezo's long-time courtroom deputy/case manager, at Frieda's retirement celebration.

Lilly Alicea, Federal Service Career Started: September 3, 1969 - Lilly started working at the Clerk's Office doing clerical work. She was later assigned to the Intake Counter. Eventually she worked as an Interpreter for the late Judge José V. Toledo. She was later assigned to work as a docket clerk for Judge Juan R. Torruella. In 1981 she became courtroom deputy for Judge Gierbolini

until he took senior status, at which time she continued as a courtroom deputy for all the senior judges of the Court. In August 2000 she was appointed courtroom deputy to Judge García-Gregory.

Boabdil "Bo" Vazquetelles, Federal Service Career Started: December 21, 1970 - Bo started his career as a Court Reporter with the late Judge José V. Toledo with whom he worked from the day the latter was sworn-in until his untimely demise while in office. He was then assigned to Judge Gierbolini's courtroom until the judge took senior status. From 1994 until today he has worked with Judge Pérez Giménez. Bo was the first machine writer and the first Court Reporter in Puerto Rico to receive a Certificate of Merit from the National Court Reporters' Association.

Laura E. Rivera, Federal Service Career Started: December 6, 1971 - Laura started her career in the U.S. District Court for the District of Puerto Rico as Secretary to the Clerk of Court with collateral duties in the Library. She also assisted with filings at the Clerk's Office. Thereafter, with the arrival of visiting judges, she was trained as a courtroom deputy and as a docket clerk. This enabled her to serve as docket clerk to the late Judge José V. Toledo and to the visiting judges as needed. When Judge Cerezo was appointed to the bench in 1980, Laura was officially assigned as



Operations Manager Laura E. Rivera (second from left) addresses the Clerk's Office staff after moving remarks by Chief Judge Laffitte and Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán (third and fourth from left) as Laura's mother, "doña Mérida" (first from left), proudly looks on.

DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO
Report of Operations 1999-2003

her courtroom deputy. She was appointed as the Court's Operations Manager in 1988.

Carmen L. "Carmín" Santana-Ferrer, Federal Service Career Started: December 11, 1972 - Carmín started working in the Clerk's Office as a dispatch clerk. Pursuant to a Clerk's Office reorganization, she was reassigned to the File Section. She also collaborated in the Jury Administration Section, calling jurors to report for duty. She served as a docket clerk to Judge Pieras, and was later assigned to the Intake Counter where she performs a variety of duties to this date, from answering pro se letters to handling criminal bail bonds.

Arthur Pineda, Federal Service Career Started: March 2, 1973 - In 1973 Arthur commenced his career as a Court Reporter with the U.S. District Court. He worked with the late Judge Pesquera for nine years until the latter's demise, after which he was assigned to work with Judge Acosta until 1994. Arthur currently works with Judge Domínguez. As a Court Reporter, Arthur worked in one of the biggest and logistically complex cases in Federal history, the Dupont Plaza Fire Mass Tort Litigation. He single-handedly transcribed daily copies for two years, and also took the first live satellite testimony. During his career, Arthur has worked with other major cases, such as the 18-month long trial of Clay Jackson vs. Greyhound Int'l.

Rosie Oliver, Federal Service Career Started: August 21, 1975 - Rosie has been working in the Clerk's Office Magistrate Judges' Section for eighteen years. Prior to working at the Clerk's Office, she worked at the U.S. Attorney's Office, Criminal Division and the U.S. Corps of Engineers.



A group of Clerk's Office employees gathered to wish Courtroom Deputy Rosie Oliver (second from left) a happy retirement. Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán (first from left) organized the activity. Magistrate Judge Justo Arenas and Magistrate Judge Aída M. Delgado-Colón (third and fourth from left) also bid Rosie farewell, as Janice González, Sarah Ramón, Noel Rodríguez, Brenda González, and Ivette Caliz (beginning fifth from left to right) listen attentively.

Lida Isis Egelé, Federal Service Career Started: December 15, 1975 - Lida started working at the Clerk's Office as an Interpreter specializing in the French language. She also rendered interpreting services for other federal agencies such as the U.S. Probation Office, the U.S. Pretrial Services Office, and the U.S. Marshals Service. She became the first criminal docket clerk in charge of criminal cases for all judges. In 1979, she was appointed courtroom deputy clerk for Judge Pérez-Giménez. She was Work Leader for the courtroom deputies until her recent promotion to Assistant Operations Manager.

Ilma C. Rivera, Federal Service Career Started: July 20, 1976 - Ilma started her Federal career with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Puerto Rico Field Office, as switch-board operator, and time and attendance clerk. She transferred to the F.B.I. Miami Field Office where she worked as a time & attendance clerk for approximately 3½ years, after which she returned to the San Juan Field Office as Assistant Office Manager. In 1981 she transferred to the F.B.I. Los Angeles Field Office as docket clerk for the Bank Robbery Division. Once again, she transferred back to San Juan as an Assistant Office Manager. In 1991 she started working at the Clerk's Office as docket clerk to Judge Laffitte. She was promoted to Data

Quality Analyst at the Systems Department in 2001.

Hilda Gutiérrez, Federal Service Career Started: September 27, 1976 - Hilda started working at the Court as temporary interpreter and later accepted a docket clerk position. She became a Certified Court Interpreter In 1981 and was assigned to work in that capacity with Judge Pieras. Since Judge Pieras took senior status, she has been assigned to work with Judge Casellas. Hilda is also the Work Leader for the Interpreters' Section.

Ana Gloria "Annie" Flores, Federal Service Career Started: November 15, 1976 - Annie started her career with the U.S. District Court as an interpreter for the late Judge Toledo. After Judge Toledo passed away, she became a "floating" court interpreter assigned to visiting judges and other judicial officers as needed. For the past 24 years she has been assigned to work with Judge Pérez-Giménez. Annie was the creator and editor of the Clerk's Office newsletter "Just Cause" published for about two years. She was appointed as Training Coordinator and organized a variety of office-wide activities, from lunch-bag sessions to full-day seminars. Annie is also responsible for the production of the two Annual District Court Talent Shows that have been staged.

Janet González, Federal Service Career Started: September 12, 1977 - Janet started her career as an Interpreter and was reassigned as a Civil Docket Clerk for all Judges in 1982, working with the late Judge Pesquera until his demise. She worked as Courtroom Deputy to Judge Acosta from 1984 until he took senior status in 1994, at which time she was assigned as Courtroom Deputy to Judge Domínguez. Since August 2001 she serves as Relief Courtroom Deputy and Docket Clerk for Chief Judge Laffitte.

Carmen Minerva Figueroa, Federal Service Career Started: February 7, 1977 - Minerva's government career started as a temporary clerical assistant to Judge Antonio Hernández at the U.S. Bankruptcy Court. She transferred to the U.S. District Court in 1977 as a deputy clerk assigned to

the File Section. Six months later she transferred to the Intake Section and, after three years, she was appointed as Civil Docket Clerk for all judges. She later served as docket clerk for Judge Pérez-Giménez. She has been the Courtroom Deputy for Judge Laffitte since 1983.

Mayra Borrero, Federal Service Career Started: December 19, 1977 - Mayra started her government career as a temporary employee working with the re-filling of the jury wheel until April 9, 1978. In May 1978 she was hired as a permanent employee to perform the duties of a file clerk. She was appointed to the position of Jury and Naturalization Clerk in 1979. Mayra has been the Court's Jury Administrator since 1988. Mayra (or "Mayrita," as we affectionately call her), has been the Court's talent shows' "Master of Ceremony" because of her vivacious personality and spontaneity.

Edith Ríos, Federal Service Career Started: August 1, 1977 - Edith started her career at the Court as Liaison Officer and CVB Clerk. She was assigned as Property & Procurement Assistant in 1982, under the mentorship of the late Ana Muñoz. In September 1984 she was bestowed with new duties and responsibilities as Property and Procurement Administrator, and Financial Assistant. Edith rose to the position of Budget Analyst in 1993, and was promoted to Financial Administrator in 1994. In August 2001, she became the Court's Finance Administrator and Supervisor.

TRAININGS

As in the past, there was a continued emphasis on training from 1999 through 2003. The Training Committee, which was created in 2000, continued assessing the training needs of the office. The Training Committee consists of volunteer members of the Clerk's Office staff, which include: Carmen I. Arroyo, Damaris Delgado-Vega, Ana Flores, Kim D. Kalife, Marlene Mortera, Gizelle M. Rivera, and Coral Rodriguez.



Court employees attended Anthrax training as part of the heightened security and alertness in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

Training was offered in a number of modalities including broadcasts on the Federal Judicial Television Network (FJTN). Access to the FJTN has been available at the Clerk's Office Training Room since 1998.

Listed below are some of the training opportunities offered:

- Managing Generation Xers
 - Working Smart: Managing Change Through Collaboration
 - Court Personnel System
 - Leadership
 - WordPerfect (Basic and Advanced)
 - Internet/Intranet
 - Case Management/Electronic Case Filing (CM/ECF) (Overview and Application)
 - Employee Assistance Program Orientation
 - FAS₄T Certifying Officers
 - Train the Trainer
-
- Social Security Benefits under FERS
 - Federal Employees Health Benefits
 - Federal Retirement Benefits for Court Personnel
 - Travel Regulations
 - Electronic Records Management
 - Special Report: Y2K

THE CLERK'S OFFICE AS A WORKPLACE COMMUNITY



Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán (seated) is surrounded by the Clerk's Office Managerial Staff (from left to right): Carmen I. Arroyo (Human Resources), Norman Aybar (Systems), Laura E. Rivera (Operations), Angel A. Valencia Aponte (Chief Deputy Clerk), and Damaris Delgado-Vega (Finance).

Beginning in 1998, and continuing through the year 2002, the Clerk of Court established a training program titled "Building a Community in the Workplace." This program, especially designed for the Clerk's Office staff, started at the **U.S. District Court's Second Annual District Conference**, a weekend-long series of workshops which the Clerk hosted at the Wyndham El Conquistador Resort and Country Club. The main theme of the Conference, "Creating a Community in the Workplace," focused mainly on the concept of a community within the workplace as a common goal, the primary goals being teamwork, building on solidarity, cooperation, tolerance and pride. The success of this Conference was the personal impact it had on all of the employees, and it served as the basis for the **U.S. District Court's Third Annual Conference**, titled "Let's Continue Building a Community in the Workplace." This Conference focused mainly on the concept of empowerment as a tool to face the challenges of change, and to contribute to the Clerk's Office mission. Held at the San Juan Marriott Resort and Stellaris Casino in October 1999, this Conference, conducted by renowned professionals in the fields of industrial psychology and educational counseling and therapy, included workshop sessions on themes such as "The Power of Vision," "New Habits and Attitudes for a Rapidly

Changing Workplace," "Dealing with Stress," and "Music Therapy for Reducing the Effects of Stress."

In the year 2000, the Clerk of Court appointed a Training Committee, chaired by Administrative Manager Damaris Delgado-Vega, to survey the staff's training needs. The Clerk also enlisted the help of industrial psychology consultants to develop a series of workshops based on the staff's needs. The ensuing Training Plan for the year 2000 began with the **Clerk's Office Management Conference 2000**, held on February 2000 at the Wyndham el Conquistador Resort and Country Club. Under the title of "Empowerment in the Workplace," the Clerk and her staff of managers, with the guidance of two industrial psychologists, examined the survey and profile of the Clerk's Office staff, refined the Clerk's Office Mission Statement, and studied and approved the proposed Training Plan presented by the Training Committee.



The clerk of the Court, France Ríos de Morán (second from the left) flanked (from left to right) by Judge Daniel R. Domínguez, Magistrate Judge Aida M. Delgado-Colón, Judge Juan Pérez-Giménez, and Judge Carmen C. Cerezo at a U.S. District Annual Conference.

The approved **Training Plan 2000** consisted of five training sessions, scheduled throughout the year, and the **U.S. District Fourth Annual Conference** titled “We are Building a Community in the Workplace with Positive Attitudes and Teamwork.” Specifically tailored for the Clerk’s Office staff, the training sessions started on March 2000 with sessions to discuss supervisors’ roles and supervision concepts; it was designed to touch upon empowerment, delegation, and leader authority. This session was coordinated by Damaris Delgado. A training session for supervisors, which focused on leadership styles, was coordinated thereafter by Coral Rodríguez. The whole staff started with a session on Communication, feedback and listening skills, then Interpersonal Relations Skills, both coordinated by Kim Kalife; and finally a group session with introduction to teamwork was coordinated by Coral Rodríguez. All these training sessions were conducted by qualified professionals in the field of psychology. The year effort culminated in our **U.S.**



Operations Manager Laura E. Rivera (at lower left) during a Conference training session

District Fourth Annual Conference, held in **March 2001** at the San Juan Marriott Resort and Stellaris Casino with the logistical help of Marlene Mortera, Neil Almeida, and José Concepción. The Conference focused on the dynamics and hands-on experience of teamwork, as well as positive attitudes and humor in the workplace.

Teamwork as a tool for meeting challenges and building a community in the work place was the central theme for the **U.S. District Court Fifth**

Annual Conference (“Reach Out, We’re a Team”), held in **July 2002** at the Westin Río Mar Beach Resort. Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán created a “Team Work” acronym for the occasion (Tactfully, Eagerly, Appropriately, Moderately, Wisely, Objectively, Respectfully, Kindly). With these goals in mind, a veteran professional motivational speaker was teamed with a renowned psychologist to address the essentials of communicating with diplomacy and professionalism, and emotional intelligence in the workplace. The Conference was held in a collegiate and warm atmosphere starting with an Awards Ceremony and Welcome Reception, presided by Judge Fusté and our Clerk of Court. “We are successful because we think as a team and act as a team,” remarked Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán to an audience of Clerk’s Office staff and their families.

CAREER JUDICIAL STAFF

The District Court family is proud of all its members. However, we particularly highlight and recognize judges’ chambers secretaries and career law clerks who have practically devoted their entire professional careers to the Judiciary.

Judicial Secretaries

(listed alphabetically)



- Ivette Cáliz, Secretary to Magistrate Judge Delgado-Colón
- Yolanda Carrillo, Secretary to Chief District Judge Laffitte
- Ana M. Cifredo, Secretary to Magistrate Judge Castellanos

- María M. Delgado, Secretary to District Judge Cerezo
- Loyda E. Díaz, Secretary to District Judge Casellas
- Nydia Luz Gutiérrez, Secretary to Magistrate Judge Arenas
- Marirosa Jorge, Secretary to District Judge Fusté
- Sandra Marqués, Secretary to Magistrate Judge Gelpí
- Luz M. Méndez, Secretary to Senior District Judge Pieras
- Marta Ortíz-Aguilú, Secretary to District Judge Pérez Giménez
- Angie Serrano, Secretary to Senior District Judge Acosta
- Cándida Torres, Secretary to District Judge García Gregory
- Nilda Torres, Secretary to District Judge Domínguez
- Angie Warner, former Secretary to Chief District Judge Laffitte

Judicial Law Clerks

(listed alphabetically)

- Camelia Garrido (Chief District Judge Laffitte)
- James A. Libovicz (Chief District Judge Laffitte)
- Inés Méndez (Magistrate Judge Castellanos)
- Héctor Ramos (Magistrate Judge Arenas)
- Nancy D. Rebeschini (Magistrate Judge Delgado Colón)
- Ramón Santiago-Vélez (District Judge Cerezo)
- Judith H. Selsby (District Judge Cerezo)
- Marie Stubbe-Hertell (District Judge Pérez Giménez)
- Edilia Vázquez (Senior District Judge Acosta)
- Vilma Vilá-Sellés (Senior District Judge Acosta)
- Martha Vélez (Senior District Judge Gierbolini)



Judith H. Selsby and Ramón Santiago-Vélez have been District Judge Cerezo's law clerks since 1987 and 1989, respectively.

EEO/EDR PLAN

On October 1999 the Court adopted and approved a Consolidated Equal Employment Opportunity and Employment Dispute Resolution Plan (EEO/EDR Plan), adapted from the First Circuit Model Employment Resolution Plan and the District Affirmative Action Plan which had been adopted and approved on November 1997. Pursuant to the EEO/EDR Plan, Chief Judge Laffitte designated District Judge Domínguez and Magistrate Judge Delgado-Colón as our District's EDR Coordinators. The purpose of the Plan is to safeguard eligible employees' equal employment opportunities and anti-discrimination rights, among others, and to establish dispute resolution procedures for consideration of alleged violations. As part of the Plan, the Court also approved complaint, counseling and mediation forms.



From left to right: Court Secretary Belkis González, Attorney Admissions Manager Ada García, Chief Deputy Clerk Angel A. Valencia-Aponte, Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán, Human Resources Specialist Carmen I. Arroyo, Human Resources Clerical Assistant Cindy Alequín, and Carmen Serrano, Administrative to the Chief Deputy.

TECHNOLOGICALLY ENHANCED COURTROOM (TEC) PROJECT

Manuel Sellés, the Clerk's Office Court Technology and Procurement Administrator, has had the responsibility of planning and implementing the District's Technologically Enhanced Courtroom (TEC) Project. The project's objective is to install state-of-the-art equipment in all courtrooms to facilitate the presentation and management of evidence during trials.

The TEC Project was conceived pursuant to a visit by then-Chief Judge Cerezo and Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán to the William and Mary School of Law's Marshal-Wythe Moot Courtroom. This courtroom, also known as "Courtroom 21," is an experimental site that demonstrates the integration of audio, visual, and computer technology in the courtroom.

Equipping the district's courtrooms with state-of-the-art evidence presentation systems became a challenge, not only because of the need to accommodate the installation of the equipment within the judges' busy schedule, and in a fashion that would fit with each judge's courtroom set up and atmosphere, but also because financial assistance by the Administrative Office of the US Courts was very limited for this type of project at that time. Nonetheless, under the experienced administration of the Clerk of Court, the District was able to complete one courtroom during Judge Cerezo's tenure as Chief Judge, and the remaining six during Chief Judge Laffitte's term.



Attorneys are able to present documents and other evidence using the equipment located at each courtroom podium.



Each courtroom in the Clemente Ruiz Nazario U.S. Courthouse is equipped with flat panel monitors in the jury box.

The system installed in all courtrooms at the Clemente Ruiz Nazario U.S. Courthouse include:

- ◆ Full support for laptop multimedia presentations
- ◆ Flat panel monitors
- ◆ Flat panel touch screens for witness or attorney hand annotations
- ◆ Real-time recording system
- ◆ Telephone conferencing system
- ◆ Infrared emitters to wireless headsets for simultaneous interpreting
- ◆ Electronic whiteboard that allows annotations to be displayed in all courtroom monitors at the same time
- ◆ Touch screen icon menu for the Judge to control all sound equipment in the courtroom
- ◆ Video conferencing capability using a roll-about system that can be transported to each courtroom as needed.
- ◆ Digital recording systems for the Magistrate Judges' courtrooms.

SPACE AND FACILITIES

RELOCATION OF MAGISTRATE JUDGES

Through a collaborative effort with the Office of the Circuit Executive's Space and Facilities Liaison, Barbara Manford, the General Services Administration's Architect, Ramón Ramos, and the Clerk's Office Procurement and Court Technology Administrator, Manuel Sellés, the office space formerly occupied by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court at the Federico Degetau Federal Building was renovated and three of our four U.S. Magistrate Judges were successfully relocated to this floor. The chambers and courtrooms formerly occupied by the U.S. Magistrate Judges were very small and well below design guidelines for Magistrate Judges' courtrooms and chambers.

The project consisted of upgrading the facilities on the fourth floor after the U.S. Bankruptcy Court relocated to the renovated José V. Toledo Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Old San Juan. The work entailed the refurbishing of three courtrooms and three chambers, and the creation of conference rooms, jury deliberation suites, and witness rooms.

Specifically, the work included the construction of jury boxes, general and minor woodwork refurbishment of judges' benches, witness boxes, spectator benches, wood shelves, baseboards, and walls, as needed. Furniture for the new space, such as chairs for the jury boxes, conference tables and other items were also acquired. New carpets were installed throughout the chambers and courtrooms, and all areas painted; some alteration work was required, including the removal of walls and doors, and the construction of soundproof partitions to divide witness/attorney conference rooms. Special mention should be made of the restoration of the old benches that were used in the original courtrooms at the Old San Juan Courthouse. These benches were placed in Magistrate Judge Arenas' new courtroom.

The Magistrate Judges relocated during the month of July 2001, a move carefully planned so as not to disrupt their schedules – their chambers were effectively moved on a Friday afternoon and they were back in operations the following Monday.

Special funding for this project was provided by the Administrative Office. Funding has been provided as well for the much needed expansion of the Clerk's Office into the space vacated by the Magistrate Judges. A special acknowledgment goes to Barbara Manford, Office of the Circuit Executive's Space and Facilities Liaison, for her unyielding support to the successful completion of this very important project.

NEW MAGISTRATE COURTROOM

On June 2001, Magistrate Judge Gustavo A. Gelpí, Jr., was sworn-in and he and his staff were situated in one of the chambers and courtrooms vacated by the three Magistrate Judges who had moved to the new fourth floor facilities. Due to the inadequate size of the facilities to be occupied by Magistrate Judge Gelpí, and the impracticality and security issues of having one magistrate judge on a different floor, construction of an additional courtroom in the fourth floor was planned to begin upon relocation of the U.S. Attorneys Office. On July 2003, construction work began for the new chambers and courtrooms to consolidate the magistrate judges' section. The new courtroom will have two cell blocks and its infrastructure will permit future technological expansions. The space will also add much needed jury rooms and attorney/witness conference rooms.

CLERK'S OFFICE EXPANSION PROJECT

Once Magistrate Judge Gelpí has relocated and the U.S. Probation Office moves from the first floor to the fourth (in the remaining space that the U.S. Attorneys Office vacated), the Clerk's Office plans a major expansion into these areas of the first floor. Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán has already initiated this project with the creation of private offices for several managers in space that was made available when the three magistrates were relocated. The Clerk's Office also temporarily moved the Finance Section into this area to alleviate the space constraints this group was working under as a result of new hires and increased workload. In addition, some of the Systems staff and equipment were temporarily accommodated in this area, adjacent to the **CM/ECF Training Room** inaugurated by the Clerk of Court in 2003, and equipped with state-of-the-art computers and a projection screen where up to 30 persons can receive individual hands-on training.

The Clerk of Court has completed the design portion of the Clerk's Office Expansion Project. As a result, the Clerk's Office will have a Jury Assembly Room, an enhanced Grand Jury Room, a Training Room, an Examination Room, a Bail Room, as well as adequate space for its staff and operational needs.

This project will provide the Clerk's Office with an effective and adequate space environment and one that will truly epitomize the US District Court for the District of Puerto Rico.

JUDGES' DINING ROOM

The Clerk of Court also completed a long-desired project of Chief Judge Laffitte to create private a dining room for district judges in the cafeteria located on the seventh floor of the Federico Degetau Federal Building. The dining room has been used extensively by the judges who are now able to share and discuss important work matters during lunch, outside the public area of the cafeteria.

CASE MANAGEMENT / ELECTRONIC CASE FILING

Case Management/Electronic Case Filing (CM/ECF) has been said to be the most significant project to be implemented within the federal judicial system in the last 10 years, extending to all district, appellate and bankruptcy courts nationwide.

CM/ECF is a system that encompasses case management (CM) and docketing portions that will replace the aging software used by most courts, with a nationally-supported yet flexible system with customizable docketing and reporting capabilities. The electronic case files (ECF) portion of the system allows courts to manage documents electronically to whatever extent they choose, from allowing attorneys to file documents and create docket entries over the internet, to having court staff convert paper documents into an electronic format by scanning them. It also provides 24-hour access to case files by judges, court staff, and the public in a reliable and secure electronic form.

Immediately upon selection of our District for CM/ECF implementation, our Clerk of Court, Frances Ríos de Morán, designated a District Implementation Team, composed by: Chief Deputy Clerk Angel A. Valencia-Aponte, Operations Manager Laura E. Rivera, Assistant Operations Manager Lida I. Egelé, Docket Work Leader Nívea Ocasio, ICMS Systems Administrator Kim D. Kalife, Data Quality Analyst Ilma C. Rivera, and PACTS Systems Administrator Coral Rodríguez, who was also designated as the Project Manager. Chief Judge Laffitte appointed Judge José A. Fusté to oversee the entire CM/ECF Implementation Project.

In September 2002, the District Implementation Team visited the Washington D.C. and Maryland U.S. District Courts to observe and study their CM/ECF implementation process. In Puerto Rico, the CM/ECF implementation process formally began in March 2003. In preparation therefor, the District Implementation Team was redesignated as the Executive Implementation Group and other

staff members joined the team. The Project Implementation Group was organized by committees in charge of: training; process development; creation of a dictionary of civil/criminal terms; awareness and communications; technical support; MJSTAR; and, amendments to Local Rules.

During the month of April 2003, Chief Judge Dean Whipple, from the Western District Court of Missouri, met with the all District, Senior and Magistrate Judges, including their chambers' staff, to share CM/ECF anecdotes and experiences.

Training and teamwork have been the most important force in our Clerk's management. Very much aware of the need to empower her staff at the outset of the CM/ECF implementation process, on August 2003 our Clerk arranged to have a "Train the Trainer" Workshop in-house. Training Specialist Lou Gil, from the San Antonio's Training Center for the Administrative Office of the U.S. Court's Information Technology, Systems Deployment and Support Division Training Branch, conducted the workshop. The workshop was a success. During the month of September 2003, San Antonio-based Training Specialist Theresa Williams offered an Application Training to docket clerks and courtroom deputies.

The District Court is ensuring that all members of the bar receive adequate training for their use of CM/ECF. During the month of September 2003, our staff offered CM/ECF Introductory Orientations to more than 1,200 attorneys and support staff. In addition, the Clerk of Court directed the designation of Court facilities for preparation of a CM/ECF Training Room. As a result, a room was equipped with state-of-the-art computers and a projection screen where up to 30 persons can receive individual hands-on training. Attorneys, support staff, Court-unit employees, and others have been trained using this facility. Training has also been provided to attorneys and their support staff off-site at major law firms. Off-site training

DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO
Report of Operations 1999-2003

has also been offered at the Pontifical Catholic University, located in the Municipality of Ponce, in order to cater to the training needs of attorneys from the southern and western portions of our Island District. In sum, the Court has provided hands-on training to more than 720 participants.

An Attorney's Advisory Committee was designated by the Court as an Inter-Agency Group to assist in the strategic planning for CM/ECF deployment, together with an Advisory Committee on Rules and Manuals. Moreover, a new section was added to the Court's website in order to provide up-to-date CM/ECF information to attorneys and the general public.

Support from the Judges, vision, commitment, leadership and team work have been the key factors for continued success in the implementation of this project, which will mark our Court's passage into a new age of technology.

The District Court's date to go live is February 2004. The end of 2003 saw the completion of the dictionaries and the full-force ongoing implementation of the mapping process. While the Court is immersed in its test-data conversion process, all judicial and Clerk's Office staff will be fully trained as of December 2003, following the Court's CM/ECF General Order entered on November 2003.



The CM/ECF Training Room was inaugurated by the Clerk of Court in 2003. Equipped with state-of-the-art computers and a projection screen for 30 persons, the Training Room is part of the Clerk's Office Expansion Project. Above, a group of judges and their staff attend a CM/ECF training presentation by PACTS Systems Administrator and CM/ECF Project Manager Coral Rodríguez. Similar hands-on training has been offered to members of the bar in these facilities.

SYSTEMS

SYSTEMS STAFF DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO



Norman Aybar, Systems Manager
Julio M. Dávila, Assistant Systems Manager
Coral Rodríguez, PACTS Systems Administrator
Kim D. Kalife, ICMS Systems Administrator
Edgar Natal, Automation Specialist
José Noel Caraballo, Systems Technician
Ilma C. Rivera, Data Quality Analyst
Oscar Alvarez, Systems Analyst Programmer
Javier Morales, Automation Support Specialist
José A. Aponte Lucena, Systems Programmer
Mirrael Vázquez García, Imaging Clerk

The Systems Department works with eight full-time technical positions, providing full technical support to the U.S. District Court's Clerk's Office and Chambers, and the U.S. Pretrial Services and U.S. Probation Offices, serving a combined total of approximately 200 users daily, including annual cyclical equipment replacement.

1999 - 2003 were very busy and challenging years for the Systems Department. Much emphasis was placed on Y2K testing to ensure a smooth transition into the twenty-first century.

Y2K UPGRADES

Much of 1999 was spent preparing and testing all equipment and systems for Y2K compatibility to ensure a successful transition to the new millennium. Norman Aybar and Coral Rodríguez worked with the Unix servers (ICMS, PACER and PACTS), and Julio Dávila worked with the Clerk's Office, Senior Judges, Probation and Pretrial Novell servers.

COMPUTER UPGRADES

As of mid-1999, all computers in the Clerk's Office had the Windows 95 Y2K patch installed. All courtroom computers were reconfigured with upgraded versions of Norton Anti-virus, Netscape, Win95 2K fix, and the LANWorkPlace Pro Y2K fix. By the end of 2000, approximately one-hundred and ninety-three (193) Pentium upgrades had been completed by Automation Support Specialist Edgar Natal and, by 2001, most of the PC's were replaced with new ones that included Windows 98. In 2002 and 2003 all computer monitors were replaced with LCD flat screen monitors.

SOLARIS MIGRATION

The Court Financial System (CFS) was successfully converted by Systems Manager Norman Aybar to the new Y2K version on a new Solaris-based computer during May 1999.

PUBLIC INTERNET HOME PAGE

Online since 1998, our District Internet Home Page is located at www.prd.uscourts.gov, and contains general court information, directions, juror information, and vacancy announcements. During 2002-2003 our web page was redesigned by Systems Analyst Programmer Oscar Alvarez,

adding new sections as well, to include:

- ◆ Standing Orders
- ◆ Local Rules of the Court
- ◆ Pro Se Litigant Guidebook and Forms
- ◆ Pacer Information
- ◆ Bar Information and Examination
- ◆ Fee Schedule
- ◆ Directions and Contact Information for Clerk's Office and Judicial Staff
- ◆ Vacancy Announcements
- ◆ Court-Annexed Mediation
- ◆ Registry of Consent
- ◆ CJA Voucher Payment database
- ◆ CM/ECF Information and Training
- ◆ Courtroom Technology

The Clerk's Office takes great pride in its Internet Home Page, which has been selected as one of the top three court web sites nationwide for its organization and content.

IMAGING AND NOTICING SYSTEM

Implemented in 1999 by Systems Manager Norman Aybar, the Imaging and Noticing System revolutionized the manner in which noticing was done, by eliminating postal notifications almost completely. All documents to be noticed (orders, judgments and others) are scanned and notified via fax modems. Since its implementation, the Clerk's Office staff does not have to expend time and other resources making copies of documents for the bar, thus making the noticing process more expedient.

ELECTRONIC CALENDAR PROJECT

Designed and developed by PACTS Systems Administrator Coral Rodríguez, this program was implemented at the end of Fiscal Year 1999. It provides daily information as to the calendar events for each judge. In addition, it generates reports for the U.S. Marshals identifying those defendants who need to be brought from prison for court proceedings, and identifies those proceedings where court reporters and interpreters are needed. The

public can view the daily calendar on monitors which are strategically located at the Clerk's Office, the Courthouse and the Federal Building. During 2002 and 2003 a new version of the Electronic Calendar with on-line capability was developed and implemented by Systems Analyst Programmer Oscar Alvarez.

REAL TIME COURT REPORTING SYSTEM

This program enables judges to perform records searches of on-going proceedings at any time using a lap-top computer. As of 2000, it was successfully installed by Assistant Systems Manager Julio Dávila in three of the seven existing courtrooms.

DOCUMENT IMAGING PROJECT

This project will help in the management of administrative documents, especially in the Clerk's Office administrative and finance sections. Files in these and other areas will be scanned and electronically stored or filed in a server. The system will allow for documents and files to be more expeditiously retrieved by way of a user's personal computer, with the added benefit of saving paper file storage space. Its implementation began in December 2000. In 2001, the following five applications were developed by PACTS Systems Administrator Coral Rodríguez: Clerk's filing, Employees, Opinions for Judge Pérez-Giménez, Old Calendars and Old Cases. It is projected to expand to other administrative areas, such as Finance, in the coming years. Three major imaging projects were completed in 2002: Judge Pérez-Giménez's opinions, personnel records, and old docket records. In 2003, calendars were imaged and scanning of the López Feliciano v. Romero Barceló, Civil 79-004(PG), prisoner class litigation files was begun.

BUREAU OF PRISONS (BOP) JUSTICE PROGRAM

This application is a database system developed by the Systems staff for use by the Finance Section. It is a multi-debtor, multi-debt collection system which creates a separate record for each debt (special monetary assessments, fines and/or restitutions). This enables the Finance Section to track debt-related case activity, including post-judgment collection.

PAYMENT COUPON MANAGER APPLICATION

This application, also developed by the Systems staff, and used by the U.S. Probation Office, is designed to create payment coupon books for those defendants under supervision who have pending Court-ordered financial obligations such as fines, restitutions, home confinement and supervision costs, and/or special monetary assessments. This application thus facilitates the U.S. Probation Office's tracking of an offender's compliance with his or her obligations.

ELECTRONIC MONITORING APPLICATION

This application, developed by the Systems staff for the use of the U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services Offices, is designed to collect, organize and manage data related to defendants under electronic monitoring. By centralizing and providing easy access to comprehensive case information (enrollment, payments, equipment inventory, and closing) it allows quick identification of any issues concerning payments owed by defendants, inventory of transmitters and field monitoring devices, and the agencies' payments to vendors.

I N T E R P R E T E R S ' COURTROOM SERVICES SYSTEM

This application, developed by the Systems staff, creates a historical record of the in-court services provided by each staff interpreter. It tracks an interpreter's in-court hours expended in both civil and criminal proceedings, as well as the total number of docketable events.

FEDERAL TAX LIEN SYSTEM

This application, developed by the Systems staff, keeps a historical record of all tax liens (both outstanding and paid) and certificates of release filed in the U.S. District Court.

C J A A T T O R N E Y S MENTORING SYSTEM

This application, developed by the Systems Department, keeps track of all Court events attended by attorneys participating in the Court's CJA Mentoring Program. The program allows the Courtroom Deputy Clerk to electronically certify the attorney's attendance to a scheduled event and to generate reports.

R E C O R D S C E N T E R REQUISITION AND EXHIBIT SYSTEM

This system, developed by the Systems staff, enables clerks in the Clerk's Office Filing and Reproduction Section to track all file requisitions made to the Federal Records Center. It also enables them to create a database of all exhibits under Clerk's Office custody.

SEALED CASES / U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGES' DISMISSAL SYSTEM

This program is an inventory application that was developed by the Systems Department, which tracks all sealed cases and motions stored in the Clerk's Office vault and generates status reports on these. It also allows U.S. Magistrate Judge Courtroom Deputy Clerks to enter database information as to all cases dismissed by magistrate judges.

FOR THE RECORD (FTR) PROGRAM

The Summer 2000 move of the Senior U.S. District Judges' chambers to the José V. Toledo Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Old San Juan prompted the acquisition and installation of this program, which enables the digital recording, archiving, playback, and duplication of all proceedings, allowing for instant record access and distribution. Research and implementation was made by PACTS Systems Administrator Coral Rodríguez.

DISTRICT COURT NETWORK (DCN) UPGRADE

During the Spring of 2000 the District Court Network was significantly upgraded in order to allow the Clerk's Office to install and implement new applications, such as FAS₄T, and the Case Management and Electronic Case Filing System (CM/ECF). This upgrade, which involved the investment of significant manpower and technical skills, was successfully completed as planned by Assistant Systems Manager Julio Dávila and Systems Manager Norman Aybar. In 2002, the 3Comm 3500 and 9300 Cisco Routers were upgraded.

CYCLICAL REPLACEMENT PROJECT

During 2001, a total of 163 computers were replaced in all three agencies (District Court, Probation, and Pretrial). Two Novell servers (mail and main) were replaced: one in the District Court and one in the U.S. Pretrial Services Office. In addition, 15 new PC's (District/Probation), 10 notebooks, and 10 PDA's (Probation), were also installed. Great efforts were made by contracted personnel, together with Assistant Systems Manager Julio Dávila and Automation Support Specialist Edgar Natal, to accomplish these tasks. After all these changes were made, a new computer inventory was prepared. In 2003, the computers assigned to the Senior U.S. District Judges and their staff at the José V. Toledo Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse were replaced.

PRETRIAL, PROBATION, AND MAGISTRATE JUDGES' MOVE

The Systems staff was involved in the following three major moves within the Federico Degetau Federal Building: in April, the Pretrial Services Office moved from one side of the sixth floor to the other; around summer, the Magistrate Judges moved from the first floor to the fourth, both with the assistance of contracted personnel and Automation Support Specialist Edgar Natal; and most recently, towards the end of 2001, the Probation Office expanded its office space to the sixth floor, with the assistance of Systems Technician José Noel Caraballo.

Another change that took place in 2001 was the Probation Office move in Ponce from the Post Office building to a new location, with the assistance of Julio Dávila.

All the logistics and infrastructure planning were performed by Norman Aybar and Julio Dávila.

FAS₄T

Coral Rodríguez, and Kim Kalife were directly involved in the implementation of the FAS₄T project.

The Systems Department provided support for the installation and configuration of the hardware and software for District Court, Probation, and Pretrial.

Coral Rodríguez coordinated the training plan for the whole district. She also prepared the communications plan and the presentation to all the agencies. Kim Kalife developed and prepared the FAS₄T newsletter.

DIGITAL DOCUMENT CENTERS

PACTS Systems Administrator Coral Rodríguez joined efforts with Project Manager Manuel Sellés for the product research and purchase of Digital Document Centers. With the help of Assistant Systems Manager Julio Dávila, Coral configured and installed the document centers in all the chambers, the Finance Department, as well as the Systems Department.

TRAININGS

Several training sessions were offered by a contracted company in WordPerfect, Excel, Windows and Internet/Intranet. In addition, the Systems Department organized a technical presentation to participants in the 1999 “Technology in the Courtroom” seminar sponsored by the Federal Bar Association, Puerto Rico Chapter. This seminar proved so successful that it served as the basis for subsequent presentations geared to law students, sponsored by the Clerk of Court.

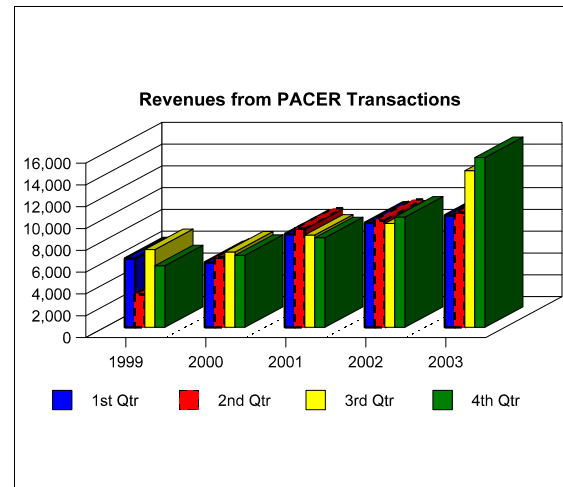
JURY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (JMS)

The JMS, which automates the selection and payment of jurors, was implemented in 2002 by ICMS Systems Administrator Kim D. Kalife and Assistant Systems Manager Julio Dávila.

LOTUS NOTES

The Court migrated from “cc: Mail” to the new “Lotus Notes” e-mail system in 2002. The migration was implemented by Assistant Systems Manager Julio Dávila and Automation Support Specialist Edgar Natal.

PACER



	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
1 st Qtr	6,316	5,959	8,554	9,588	10,276
2 nd Qtr	3,056	6,394	9,048	9,847	10,536
3 rd Qtr	7,141	6,913	8,464	9,531	14,375
4 th Qtr	5,648	6,605	8,221	10,113	15,580

Source: PACER Billing Center Quarterly Reports.

POLICY FOR INTERNET ACCESS, USE OF DCN/J-NET and E-MAIL

At its September 1997 session, the Judicial Conference approved a recommendation urging all court units to adopt their own policies establishing local responsibility for managing employee access to the Internet. Pursuant thereto, following the launch of the District's internet home page in 1998, Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán immediately communicated with the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts and its Office of Information Technology. She also directed her staff to research Judicial Conference policy and other model policies regarding connection to and responsible use of the Internet in order to develop a policy for the District of Puerto Rico. On December 1999, the Court approved a **"Policy for Internet Access, Use of DCN/J-Net and E-Mail,"** to provide all District employees with guidance as to what constitutes an

acceptable use of these tools. On December 2002, the Clerk also disseminated the policy for **"Personal Use of Government Office Equipment"** approved by the Judicial Conference on September 2002. Prior to enactment of these policies the Clerk's Office Systems staff conducted district-wide **Computer Security Training** sessions on a regular basis which included topics such as: copyrighted software guidance, use of judiciary-owned portable and personal computers in private residences, security awareness, and sensitive information management.

COURT LAUNCHES NEW INTERNET HOME PAGE

In 2002, Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán organized a team to redesign the Court's internet home page, www.prd.uscourts.gov. As a result, the Court's web page was revamped, overall improving its design, content and user friendliness. The website now has several interactive features and includes a general information section, as well as other sections for special interest users, such as general practitioners, CJA Panel attorneys, pro se litigants, and the District Court-Annexed Mediation Program, among others.

The pro-se litigants section in particular includes information in both English and Spanish. It also includes a basic guide to state and federal court systems, as well as step-by-step instructions on how to file a complaint. In addition, this section contains several printable forms with instructions designed to assist non-lawyer citizens with limited economic resources, so they may assert their rights in Court. The Clerk of Court specifically directed that Spanish translations of instructions and guides be included to facilitate access to the Court for those persons who may have difficulty with the English language.

The redesigned internet home page also contains a community liaison section called "Court and Community," through which citizens may communicate with the Clerk of Court to organize events for children, students and youth groups, and others interested in learning about the Court. This has proven to be an effective outreach tool to educate the public about the Court's mission.

The section for attorney contains many interactive features, and includes useful reference materials and information, including local rules, bar admission, district bar examination and scores, taxation of costs, judges' standing orders, the District Court-Annexed Mediation Program, the Registry of Consent for notification of documents by electronic means, post-judgment interest rates, PACER, and CM/ECF.

The District internet home page also lists numerous useful links to both federal and state judicial, executive and legislative agencies, as well as other organizations of interest to the legal community.

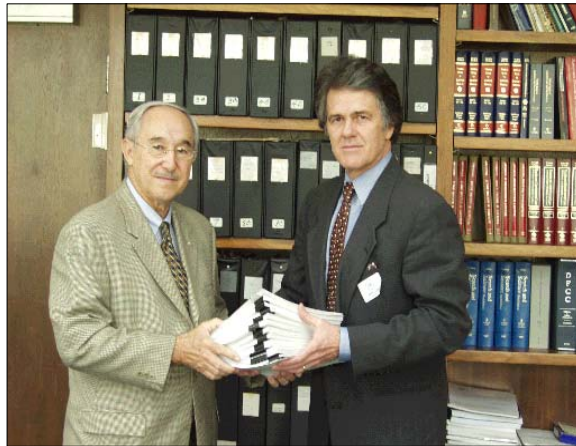
According to a 2002 preliminary study published by the Vera Institute of Justice, *Good Practices for Federal Panel Attorney Programs*, "[m]ore than 40 percent of persons charged with federal crimes who are financially eligible for government-funded lawyers are represented by panel attorneys – private attorneys appointed by the court." Always interested in improving the resources available to our CJA Panel attorneys, Chief Judge Laffitte, CJA Committee Chair Judge Pérez-Giménez, and Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán, gave special attention to the CJA Section of our District's internet home page.

Accordingly, the website now includes information and forms for CJA Panel attorneys –including the district Plan for Implementing the CJA and court-sponsored continuing legal education seminars– with links to the Administrative Office Defenders Services Division Training Branch.

The feature CJA Panel attorneys find most useful is the CJA Voucher Payment Status application. This feature allows CJA Panel attorneys, using a log-in password, to ascertain the status of the vouchers they have submitted for payment. The Court provides panel members with on-line access to the most current information about their vouchers' payment status.

The Court's internet home page, on-line since 1998, was developed by Systems Manager Norman Aybar, Assistant Systems Manager Julio Dávila, and Automation Support Specialist Edgar Natal. It was redesigned and is maintained by Systems Analyst Programmer Oscar Alvarez.

HISTORY OF THE COURT PROJECT



Chief Judge Laffitte (left) formally receives the first manuscript for the book from the author, Dr. Baralt (right).

In June 1999, Chief Judge Laffitte commissioned renowned Puerto Rican historian Dr. Guillermo A. Baralt, a professor of history at the University of Puerto Rico, to write the book “**Historia del Tribunal Federal en Puerto Rico (1899-2000)**” (**History of the Federal Court in Puerto Rico**). Dr. Baralt, who gained notoriety with his books, *Esclavos Rebeldes*; *Buena Vista: Life and Work on a Puerto Rican Hacienda, 1833-1904*; *Tradición de Futuro: La Historia del Banco Popular de Puerto Rico*; *Desde el Mirador de Próspero: La Vida de Luis A. Ferré, Vol. I*; *La Razón del Equilibrio: La Vida de Luis A. Ferré, Vol. II*; and *Al Servicio de mi Tierra: La Historia de El Nuevo Día*, enthusiastically accepted the mission and commenced a detailed research program aided by First Circuit Satellite Librarian Ana Milagros Rodríguez, and attorney Edgardo Rodríguez-Quilichini.

The book, which will be presented during the first quarter of 2004 in English and Spanish, documents how the judicial decisions of the U.S. District Court influenced the history of Puerto Rico. Rich in details of lost passages in the history of Puerto Rico, the book includes never-before published photographs that depict the co-existence of two legal cultures.

Dr. Baralt interviewed the judges of the Court as well as many other citizens, and relentlessly researched many different and diverse sources used to portray the character and diverse cultural roots of the People of Puerto Rico and their reliance upon the Court as an instrument of justice and as an institution with an unsurpassed degree of credibility and trust.

COURT-ANNEXED MEDIATION



In January 2003, a research and drafting project personally overseen by Chief Judge Laffitte culminated in the District Court's approval of a new local rule directing mandatory, non-binding mediation in appropriate civil cases. With the enactment of new **Local Rule 83.12** (Court-Annexed Mediation) the District of Puerto Rico takes a step forward towards the exercise of its inherent powers to address complex civil litigation cases with a flexible and creative approach.

Under the District's **Court-Annexed Mediation Program** established by the new rule, civil cases may be ordered for mandatory mediation at the discretion of the Court. The rule also permits expert advice, provides for separate caucuses during the mediation process, compensation for the mediator borne equally by both parties, and establishes a time frame for the conclusion of mediation.

Finally, the rule provides a process for the selection of a mediator from the Court's **Panel of Mediators** which includes judicial officers, retired judges, and certified mediator-attorneys. Pursuant to the local rule, mediators shall maintain impartiality while raising questions for the parties to consider as to the reality, fairness, equity, and feasibility of proposed settlement options. Therefore, the new local rule also sets forth strict ethical standards for mediators so as to ensure the panelists' impartiality and commitment to aid all parties, as opposed to any individual party, in moving towards an agreement.

PRO SE AND INDIGENT CASES

The District Court, in its interest to best serve the public, must ensure equal access to justice for all citizens, provide for efficient case management, and maintain the integrity of the judicial process. Thus, responding efficiently to the increasing number of *pro se* litigants is fundamental to the public's expectations.

A new approach to prisoner litigation management was implemented through the establishment of a Pro Se Office which provides centralized review of new prisoner filings and prepares memoranda and orders for immediate judicial review, allowing immediate dismissal of matters found to be constitutionally frivolous according to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(d). In appropriate cases, the *Pro Se* Office prepares final and interlocutory memoranda and recommendations to the judicial officer presiding over the case. The Office reviews habeas corpus, civil rights and *Bivens* actions, and motions under 28 U.S.C. §§ 2254 and 2255 filed by prisoners.

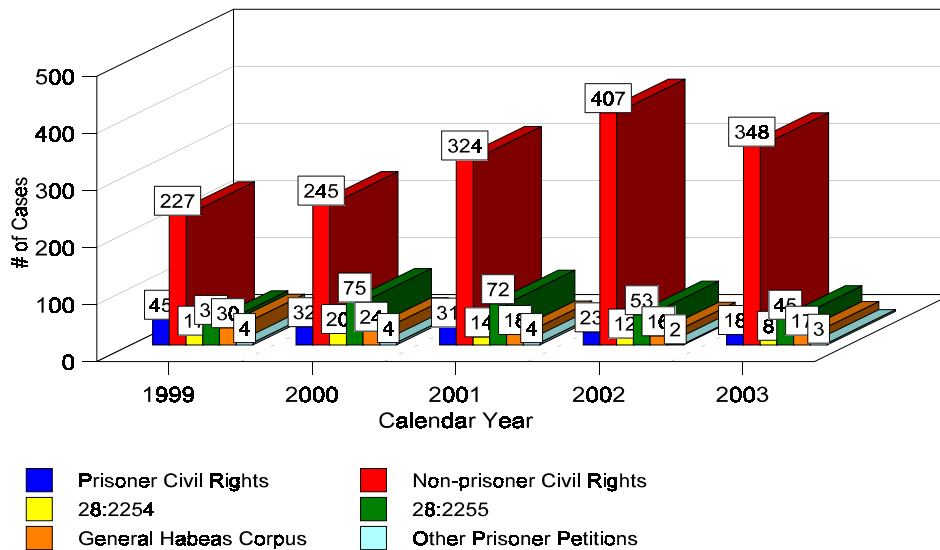
In addition to answering all *pro se*-related correspondence, the *Pro Se* Office also responds to telephone inquiries from self-represented litigants as well as from persons seeking court assistance in many matters not necessarily related to *pro se* litigation. Further, during the past year, Pro Se



Pro Se Law Clerks Gizelle M. Rivera and Edgardo Rodríguez-Quilichini.

Law Clerks Edgardo Rodríguez-Quilichini, Esq., and Gizelle M. Rivera, prepared and updated *pro se* litigant forms and instructional packets designed to assist unrepresented parties in drafting complaints and to avoid time-consuming procedural errors. This information was also posted in the Court's web-site with detailed instructions for *pro se* litigants.

Civil Rights and Prisoner Case Filings



Source: USDC-PR Systems Department Statistics of filing activity for 12-month periods ending December 31.

SERVICES TO THE BAR

FEDERAL BAR EXAMINATION

Chief Deputy Clerk, Angel A. Valencia-Aponte, is responsible for the administration of the federal bar examination established pursuant to the District Court's Local Rules. Until his retirement in the fall of 2001, former Chief Deputy Clerk José Morales led this effort along with his secretary, Yolanda Carrillo. Since 2002, Mr. Valencia-Aponte has had the support of Carmen Serrano, Administrative Assistant to the Chief Deputy, and Ada García-Rivera, Esq., Attorney Admissions Manager for the Court.



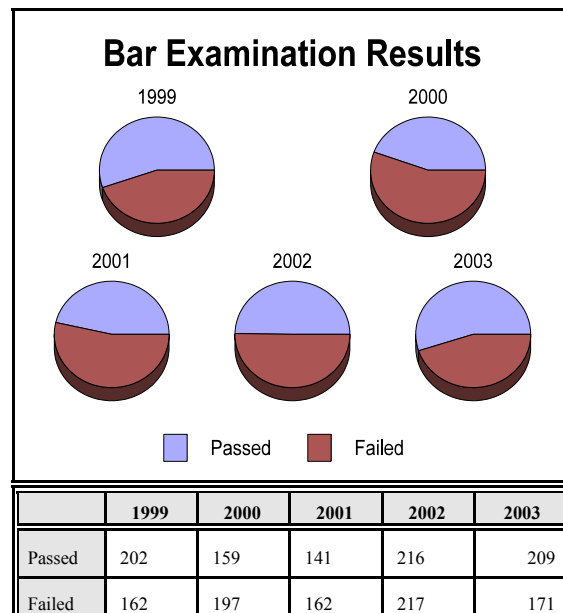
New members of the bar are sworn-in at a solemn ceremony presided by a district judge or magistrate judge.

In order to practice before the Court, applicants must meet the requirements of Local Rule 83.3. The district examination consists of fifty multiple choice questions in the areas of civil procedure, evidence, federal jurisdiction and venue, criminal procedure, appellate procedure, bankruptcy, local rules, and ethics. The examination is given twice a year, during the fall and spring, and has a passing grade of 65. As established by the Local Rules, a District Examination Committee presided by a District Judge, prepares the examination and generally oversees the process. The current District Examination Committee Chairperson is U.S. District Judge Daniel R. Domínguez. The

examination also contains a mandatory essay question to ascertain applicants' proficiency in the English language in order to effectively represent clients under the Sixth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States.

In 2002, the process to apply for the bar examination was totally automated. Applicants now complete their application on-line by going to the Court's web-site at www.prd.uscourts.gov. Moreover, in 2003, the return period for applicants' receipt of examination results was reduced to less than 30 days.

During 2002 and 2003, the number of applicants taking the bar examination increased, thus demonstrating the interest of the local bar in the federal jurisdiction arena. The charts below show bar examination results for the last five years and the increase in applicants for the last 16 years.

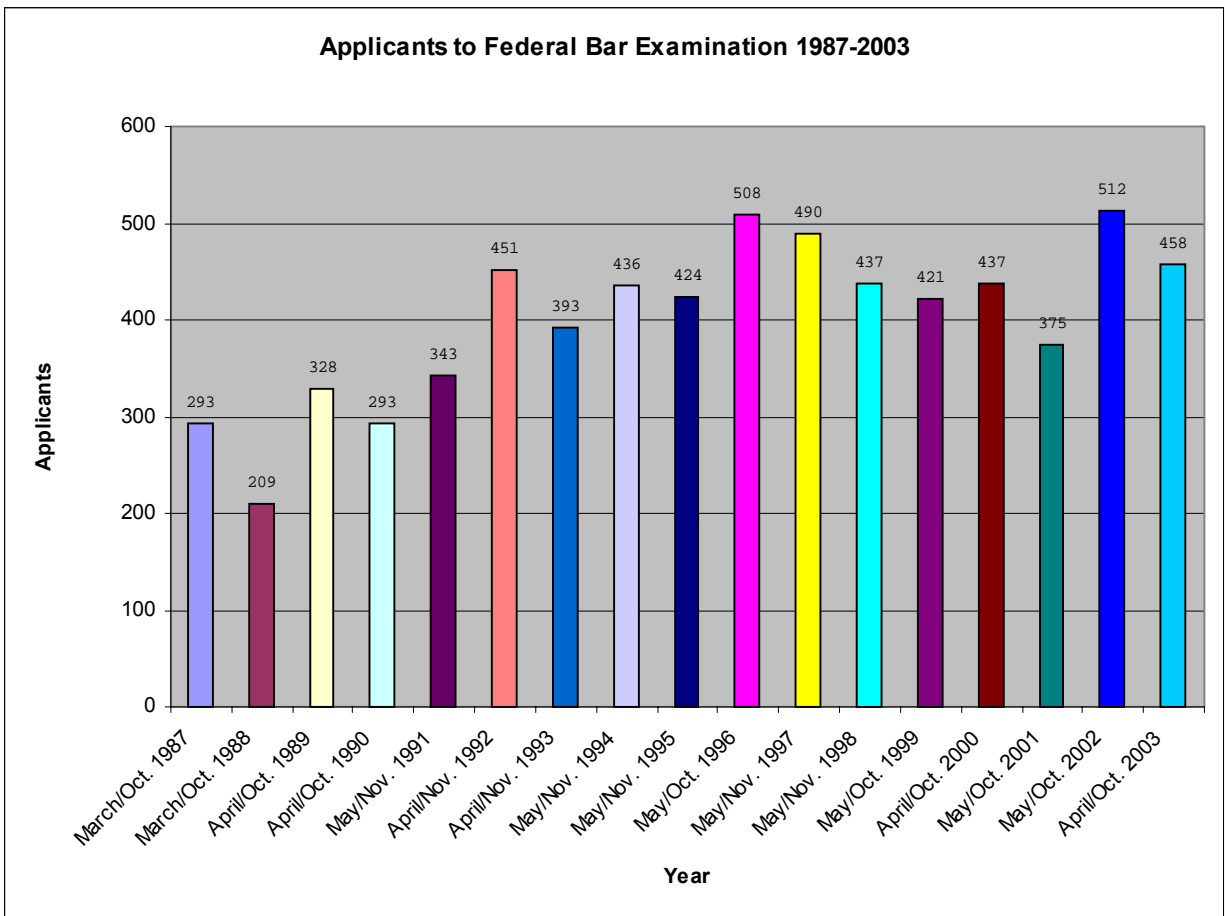


Source: Statistical data compiled by the Office of the Chief Deputy Clerk.

DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO
Report of Operations 1999-2003

After passing the bar examination, attorneys file a Petition for Admission to the Court at the Clerk's Office. All petitions are forwarded to the Committee on Admissions, which then considers each petition and ascertains that petitioning counsel meets all requirements for admission.

The Committee then makes formal recommendations to the Court as appropriate. The Committee on Admissions consists of three members of the bar appointed by the Court. The Committee on Admissions is currently chaired by attorney Fred Martinez.



Source: Statistical data compiled by the Office of the Chief Deputy Clerk.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT (CJA) PANEL

The local Criminal Justice Act (CJA) Plan for the District of Puerto Rico was approved on October 1, 1995, and was subsequently amended on November 13, 2002. The CJA Committee, with Judge Perez-Giménez as Chairperson, continued its oversight of and the participation in all CJA related activities in the District.

The annual application process for the CJA Panel of Attorneys resulted in the selection of eight new panel members in 1999, eighteen in 2000, one in 2002, and seven in 2003, with an average of twenty attorneys applying for membership each year. The CJA Plan was changed in 2002 to allow submission and acceptance of applications to panel membership throughout the entire year as opposed to previous years' limited period to apply. In the year 2003, the panel membership was 103.

In addition, the CJA Committee has established new mechanisms to monitor performance and continuing legal education compliance of panel attorneys, and has taken an active role in promoting and sponsoring continued legal education programs. In order to facilitate panel



CJA Committee Chair, Judge Pérez Giménez.

attorneys' arduous task in representing indigent criminal defendants in our District, the CJA Committee has sought the cooperation of the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to ensure that panel members have adequate and expedited access to clients housed at the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC).

The CJA Committee has been vigilant of the enforcement of the District Plan, particularly the requirement that CJA Panel attorneys must complete two approved continued legal education (CLE) seminars during the year in order to maintain panel membership.

The CJA Committee

Hon. Juan M. Pérez-Giménez, Chairperson

Hon. Gustavo Gelpí, U.S. Magistrate Judge
Frances Ríos de Morán, Esq. Clerk of Court
Joseph C. Laws, Jr., Federal Public Defender
Héctor Deliz, CJA Panel Attorney
Juan Alvarez-Cobián, CJA Panel Attorney
Francisco Rebollo-Casalduc, CJA Panel Attorney
Miriam Ramos-Grateroles, CJA Panel Attorney
Jorge L. Arroyo-Alejandro, CJA Panel Attorney

CJA PANEL ATTORNEY PAYMENT SYSTEM

In 1999 the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts replaced the antiquated system for payment of CJA Panel attorneys and related service providers with a renovated **CJA Panel Attorney Payment System**. Under the new system, defendant information is added to the computer program at the time of appointment of a CJA panel attorney. Once this data is entered, it is relatively easy to generate the CJA 20 or CJA 30 appointment forms, as well as vouchers for experts.

In February 2000, the Clerk of Court also established a **CJA Voucher Information Hotline**, which attorneys may call to verify the status of vouchers.

Another innovation in 2003 was the establishment of a **CJA On-line Information Section** within the Court's website that allows members of the Criminal Justice Act Panel to retrieve on-line information concerning the status of submitted vouchers for payment.

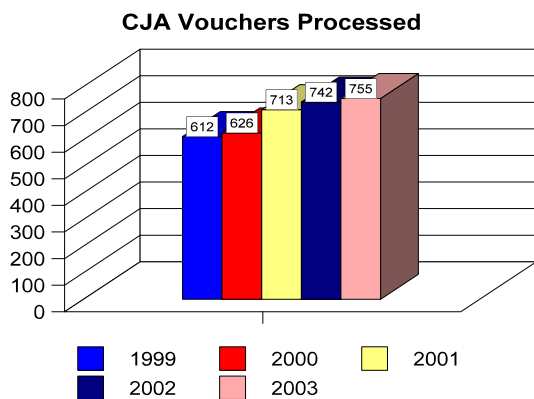
To further enhance local management and processing of CJA vouchers, the Clerk of Court formally designated Financial Clerk Marlene Mortera as **CJA Clerk**. Since Marlene's appointment, the processing time for payment vouchers has improved dramatically.

In fact, the number of CJA vouchers processed

DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO
Report of Operations 1999-2003

has increased steadily since year 1999. Year 2002, the most recent year for which we have a 12-month period accounted for, registered 742 vouchers processed, an increase of 21 % from the 612 vouchers processed in base year 1999. Year 2003 is projecting an increase from Year 2002, with a total of 755 vouchers processed up to December 31, 2003.

Although there was an increase in the number of **vouchers processed** for 1999-2003, the same period reflects a reduction in the amounts paid. The new CJA Panel Attorney Payment System's

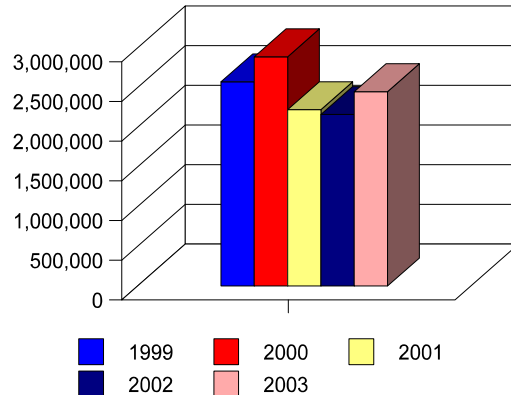


Source: Monthly reports generated by CJA Payment Program for 12-month periods ending December 31.

incorporation of better internal controls and audit trails has enabled our District to enhance the management of the panel attorney program as well as the voucher review process. Year 1999 registered payments totaling \$2,571,000 while year 2002 registered payments in the amount of \$2,159,721, reflecting a reduction of 16% from base year 1999.

Year 2003 is reflecting an increase of 1% in amounts paid compared to year 2002, which is still 14% under the amount of **registered payments** for 1999. The total amount of registered payments as of November 30, 2003, is \$2,448,209.00.

CJA Payment Summary



Year	Amount Paid
1999	\$2,571,000
2000	\$2,887,000
2001	\$2,221,000
2002	\$2,160,000
2003	\$2,448,000

Source: Monthly reports generated by CJA Payment Program for 12-month periods ending December 31.

CJA MENTORING PROGRAM

The CJA Mentoring Program continues to be a useful tool to introduce attorneys to federal criminal practice and procedure, and to equip them with the resources they need to adequately represent indigent criminal defendants in our District.

The Program, established by the local Plan for Implementing the Criminal Justice Act of 1964, as amended, is designed for attorneys who lack the necessary experience to serve on the CJA Panel.

Attorneys enrolled in the CJA Mentoring Program attend training courses and workshops throughout the year designed to deepen their understanding of federal criminal proceedings and the role of the different agencies involved. In addition, successful completion of the CJA Mentoring Program requires participants to certify attendance

to criminal and ancillary proceedings, such as: initial appearances; detention and bail hearings; arraignments; preliminary hearings; foster hearings; suppression hearings; changes of plea; jury selections; opening statements; direct and cross examination of government witnesses; direct and cross examination of defense witnesses; arguments for acquittal pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. P. 29; closing arguments; jury instructions; sentencing hearings; and, parole/supervised release revocation hearings.

CONTINUED LEGAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Clerk's Office is committed to provide services to the bar which include an agile and comprehensive program to sharpen skills, and to assist all members of the bar in the fulfillment of their duties as officers of the Court. Accordingly, the Clerk has taken a proactive approach to procure lecture, seminar and workshop opportunities as part of its commitment to the continued legal education of the bar.



Clockwise: Judge Pieras, Judge Pérez Giménez, Chief Judge Laffitte, Magistrate Arenas, Judge Domínguez, Judge García Gregory, and Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán.

Services Office. These conferences provide participants with the unique opportunity to share first-hand experiences from different perspectives.

Some of the sponsored lectures are geared specifically to CJA Panel attorneys, such as: *"Orientation for Newly Selected Attorneys to the Criminal Justice Act Panel"* (February 2003); *"Pre-trial and Probation Orientation for Newly Selected*

Panel Members" (March 2003); *"Sentencing Guidelines"* (2002 and 2003); *"Defending a Federal Criminal Case"* (March 2003).

On August 14-15, 2003, the Clerk of Court sponsored a *Federal Litigation Seminar* coordinated in cooperation with the Federal Bar Association, Puerto Rico Chapter. This two-day seminar, held at the Embassy Suites Hotel,



featured stateside instructors from the National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA), and included workshops on the subjects of Evidence, Opening Statements, Closing Arguments, Expert Witness Examination, and Direct and Cross Examination. The keynote speaker was U.S. Deputy Attorney General Larry D. Thomson.

From left to right: U.S. Attorney Bert García, Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán, Deputy Attorney General Larry D. Thomson, Chief Judge Héctor M. Laffitte, and Judge Jay A. García Gregory, at the 2003 NITA Seminar.

One of the most salient CLE programs was an elaborate week-long training course developed in conjunction with Mercer Law School's National Criminal Defense College (NCDC) and held on February 1999 at the Marriott Resort and Stellaris Casino in San Juan.



Some of the faculty from Mercer Law School's Criminal Defense College: (from left to right) Terry MacCarthy, Albert Krieger, Herschella Conyers, Steven Rench, Hugo Martínez, and Keith Belzer.

DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO
Report of Operations 1999-2003

The NCDC training, an initiative of Judge Cerezo in her capacity as both CJA Committee Chairperson and Chief Judge, included a distinguished faculty of attorneys, such as: Keith A. Belzer, Dale T. Cobb, Herschella Conyers, M. Cristina Gutiérrez, Steve Lindsay, Terence F. MacCarthy, Roberta Nieslanik, Martin Pinales, Stephen C. Rench, and Hugo Rodríguez. Renowned attorney, Albert Krieger, made a special appearance and addressed the participants. Several judicial officers and the Clerk of Court, Frances Ríos de Morán, also shared in many of the lectures and activities held throughout the week.



Judge Pérez Giménez addresses the audience flanked by Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán and Judge Fusté (in the far right corner).

The Clerk's Office coordinated travel and accommodations for the faculty, CJA Panel attorney enrollment and attendance, reproduction and distribution of training assignments and materials, as well as conference facilities and meals for all participants.

Judge Cerezo addressed all attendants at the closing session concerning the importance of continuing legal education as a tool for refining critical thinking and analysis. Judge Cerezo and Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán joined all participants for a farewell luncheon, thanking the attending faculty and CJA Panel attorneys for their outstanding performance.



Participants at a 2002 Training Seminar.

More recently, the CJA Committee's seminar entitled "*Defending a Federal Case*" deserves special mention. In his welcome remarks, Chief Judge Laffitte addressed all participants and congratulated CJA Committee Chair Judge Pérez-Giménez and Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán for their unrelenting commitment to continued legal education.

As guest speakers, the seminar featured a select group of attorneys engaged in federal criminal practice comprised by Dale T. Cobb, Terence F. McCarthy, Lisa Wayne, David Beneman, and Carmen D. Hernández.



CJA Seminar guest speaker Dale T. Cobb.

The Clerk's Office, together with the CJA Committee and the Office of the Federal Public Defender, has already completed coordination efforts for a "Law and Technology Workshop," to be held in February 2004. The workshop will feature a faculty of 13 instructors from the Administrative Office of the U.S. Court's Defenders Services Section Training Branch in Washington, D.C.



Chief Deputy Clerk Angel A. Valencia-Aponte and the Hon. Rubén Castillo, Commissioner (second and third from left to right), accompanied by other members of the Commission faculty at the 2002 Sentencing Guidelines Training.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

NATURALIZATION

The United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico conducts approximately 24 naturalization ceremonies annually in coordination with the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Chief Judge Laffitte, with other judicial officers also sitting, presides over the ceremonies and welcomes new citizens and their guests. At least two large ceremonies are held each year, one in commemoration of the Fourth of July and another in commemoration of Citizenship Week.

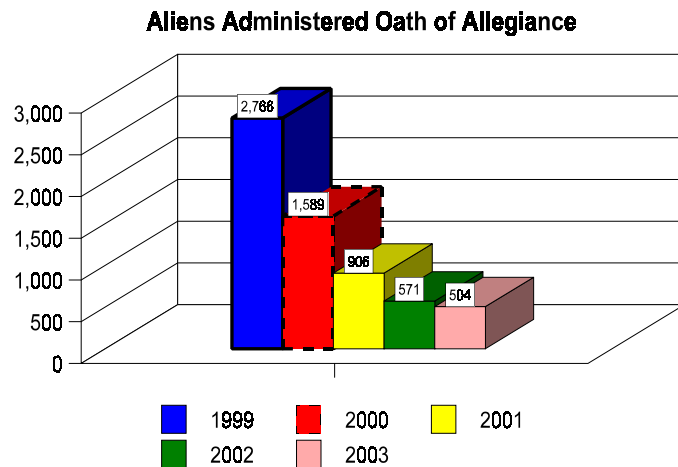
On July 15, 1999, the Court, presided by Chief Judge Héctor M. Laffitte, commemorated Flag Day by holding a special Naturalization Ceremony at the "Sala de Festivales Antonio Paoli" at the Luis A. Ferré Fine Arts Center. Seven-hundred and eighty-two persons became United States citizens on this occasion, during which the Hon. Pedro Rosselló, former Governor of Puerto Rico, addressed the audience as guest speaker.

During 2003, the Court conducted a ceremony at the Braulio Castillo Municipal Theater in Bayamón, Puerto Rico, with the support of the Municipal Government of the City of Bayamón.

The ceremony, attended by Chief Judge Héctor M. Laffitte and Judges Jose A. Fusté, Daniel R. Domínguez, Jay A. García-Gregory, and Magistrate Judge Justo Arenas, featured Mr. Jeffrey Farrow, Former Co-Chair for the President's Inter-Agency Group on Puerto Rico, as special guest and main speaker. Two-hundred enthusiastic new citizens pledged their allegiance to the United States of America in a highly emotional ceremony.

Also in 2003, an equally moving ceremony was conducted before Judge Jaime Pieras, Jr., in coordination with the Rotary Club of San Juan.

Andrés Lebrón-Albino and Carmen Serrano, from the Clerk's Office, lead the ceremonies' coordination with the assistance of personnel from the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services.



Source: USDC-PR Office of the Chief Deputy Clerk Statistics for 12-month periods ending December 31.

INTERPRETER SERVICES

There was an increase in the overall use of staff interpreters in the District of Puerto Rico between 1999-2003.

The use of contract interpreters in Spanish decreased in 2000 when compared to 1999, but increased again during 2001. On the other hand, the use of interpreters in other languages continued to increase throughout the 1999-2003 period. Staff Interpreter Hilda Gutiérrez is the Work Leader for the Interpreter Section.

The three languages certified by the Administrative Office are Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Navajo. The AO also maintains a list of interpreters who have passed a written examination in the following languages: Arabic, Cantonese, Hebrew, Italian, Korean, Mandarin, Polish and Russian. This list is available on the AO Web page, along with the new National Court Interpreter Database that provides information on interpreters used by various federal courts throughout the Nation.

OFFICIAL STAFF INTERPRETERS



Hilda Gutiérrez, Work Leader (Judge Casellas)

Janis Palma (Chief Judge Laffitte)

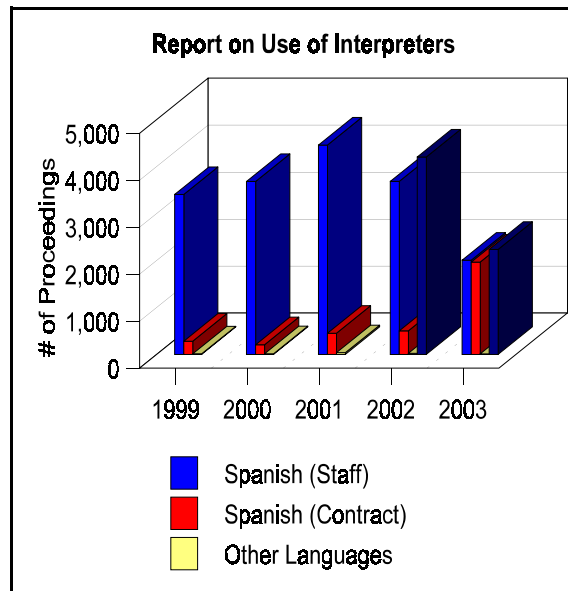
Ana G. Flores (Judge Pérez Giménez)

Thomas Kavelin (Judge Cerezo)

Marie Hernández (Judge Domínguez)

Mayra López (Judge García Gregory)

Jaime Sotomayor (Judge Fusté)



Interpreted Proceedings (Docketable Events)	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Spanish (Staff)	3,403	3,680	4,455	3,681	1,962
Spanish (Contract)	280	205	450	499	264
Other Languages	11	13	35	21	8
Total Proceedings	3,334	3,898	4,940	4,201	2,234

Source: Locally generated Report on Interpreters' Section Statistics for 12-month periods ending December 31.

Although practically all proceedings in the District of Puerto Rico involve Spanish interpreting, Cantonese, French, Haitian Creole and Italian interpreters were contracted during 1999, while Cape Verdean Creole, Haitian Creole, Hungarian, Portuguese, and Russian interpreters were contracted during 2000.

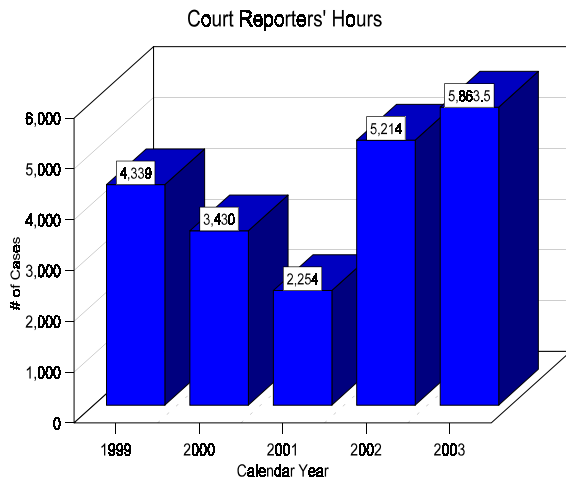
COURT REPORTERS

Chief Deputy Clerk Angel A. Valencia-Aponte and Operations Manager Laura E. Rivera are responsible for coordinating the court reporters' assignments so that all judicial proceedings and special ceremonies are covered. The Chief Deputy Clerk also contracts additional court reporters when required, and is responsible for the submission of court reporter forms with relevant data to the Administrative Office of the US Courts, in Washington, DC.

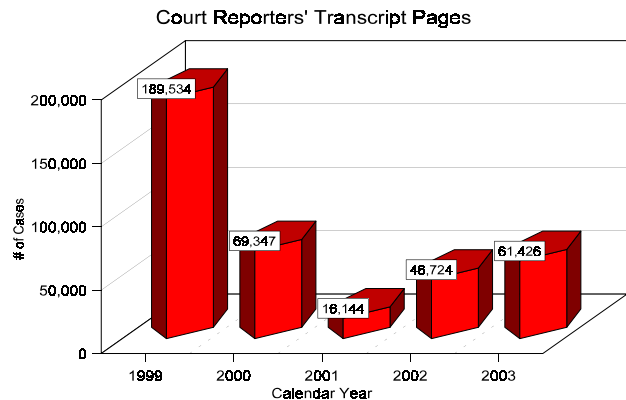
Official Court Reporters

Diane Breaz, Work Leader (Judge Casellas)
Patricia Garshak (Chief Judge Laffitte)
Boabdil Vazquetelles
(Judge Pérez-Giménez)
Zulma Ruiz (Judge Cerezo)
Yvette Richardson (Judge Fusté)
Arthur Pineda (Judge Domínguez)
Barbara Dachman (Judge Garcia-Gregory)
Joyce Del Valle (Floating Court Reporter)

During the year 2003, court reporters logged a total of 5,863 hours, up from previous year's 5,214 hours. Also in 2003 they reported 61,426 transcript pages, up from 46,724 in 2002, and 16,144 in 2001.



Source: Attendance and Transcripts of U.S. Court Reporters (AO 40A) submitted by Court Reporters to the Office of the Chief Deputy for 12-Month Periods Ending December 31.



Source: Attendance and Transcripts of U.S. Court Reporters (AO 40A) submitted by Court Reporters to the Office of the Chief Deputy for 12-Month Periods Ending December 31.

FINANCE

FINANCE STAFF

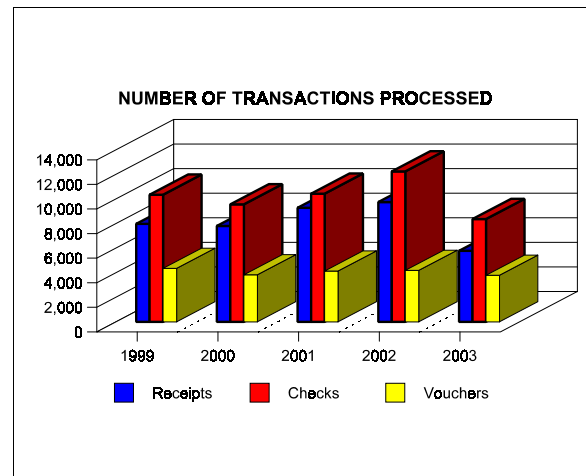


Damaris Delgado-Vega, Esq.
Administrative Manager

- Edith Ríos**, Finance Administrator
- Manuel Sellés**, Property and Procurement and
Projects Manager
- René Rivera**, Budget Analyst
- Ralph Rodríguez**, Assistant Finance Administrator
- Marlene Mortera**, Finance Analyst/CJA Clerk
- José Concepción**, Supply/Procurement Clerk
- Neil Almeida**, Cashier/Finance Clerk
- Noel Rodríguez**, Audio Visual Clerk

The Clerk's Office Finance Section strives to provide prompt and effective service to all its customers, and to assist the Clerk of Court in providing accountability for all funds appropriated to the District, and be the steward for all government property within the District. Since 1996, Administrative Manager Damaris Delgado-Vega has supervised the Interpreters' and Jury Administration Sections, as well as the Finance Section, whose main functions are to receive and process all funds that come into the Court, to disburse funds for all court units, and to help the Clerk in administering the budget and overseeing all administrative functions within the Clerk's Office. In performing its functions, this Section interacts with the judges, the public, the

Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, federal and local law enforcement agencies, judicial government agencies, and national and local banking institutions.



	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Receipts	7,965	7,794	9,278	9,746	7,622
Checks	10,342	9,555	10,420	12,239	10,566
Vouchers	4,344	3,825	4,123	4,181	3,994

Source: Locally generated CFS and FAS₄T Reports for 12-month periods ending in December 31.

FAS₄T

In 2000, the Finance Section was selected by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts to test and implement the Financial Accounting System for Tomorrow (FAS₄T). The project, part of the Administrative Office's Financial Management Improvement Program, involved the adoption of a new accounting and payment system and phasing out the old system that used CFS-1 software.

A team consisting of the following staff from the Clerk's Office and other Court units was formed to

participate in the testing and implementation of FAS₄T:

Damaris Delgado-Vega (Project Manager)
Edith Ríos (Functional Lead)
Marlene Mortera (Document Control)
Kim Kalife (Communications)
Ruth Rivera (Probation Office Liaison)
Annie Rodríguez (Pretrial Services Liaison)
Zaida Pericás (Bankruptcy Liaison)
Claribel Burgos (Bankruptcy Liaison Backup)
Elizabeth Molina (Federal Public Defender Liaison)

The FAS₄T project allowed our finance staff to learn about a new accounting system, to actively participate in project management activities, and learn about techniques to improve communication and manage the stress that accompanies change, but most importantly, we had the opportunity to develop friendships with people from other district courts. This enhanced our appreciation of the diversity and the quality of the work done by peers. We really enjoyed the whole process of implementing this new accounting system in our district. The process and the end result were both successful and worth all efforts expended.

CERTIFYING OFFICER PROGRAM

During February 2003 our financial staff completed another important step towards the completion of the AO's Financial Improvement Program. All the executives of the District Court's units completed the Certifying Officer Seminar, enabling Phillip McKinney, AO Chief Accounting Officer, to appoint all of them as certifying officers of their respective units. This was also an important step in the decentralization process because it removed from the Clerk of the District Court all liability derived from improper payments and shifted that liability to the court unit that certified the voucher for payment.

In an effort to continue promoting accountability and good administration, the Clerk of Court, in cooperation with all other court unit executives, brought to the District the Certifying Officer Seminar offered by the Department of the Treasury. The goal was to introduce all the financial middle management and staff from all

court units to the theory behind the federal government appropriations and payment disbursement process.

PURCHASE OF DIGITAL COPIERS

After many discussions and analyses of functions and benefits, the Clerk of Court approved the purchase of digital copiers for the Judges and Magistrate Judges. These digital copiers are commonly known as multi-function machines with the ability to copy, print, fax and scan, and they have proven to be a great addition to the office equipment.

The purchase included training for each office, and training sessions were successfully held. The machines are also expected to be very useful in various ongoing efforts at digital document management, paperless projects, and the Court Management/Electronic Case Filing (CM/ECF) Project.

JURY ADMINISTRATION

Jury Administration Staff



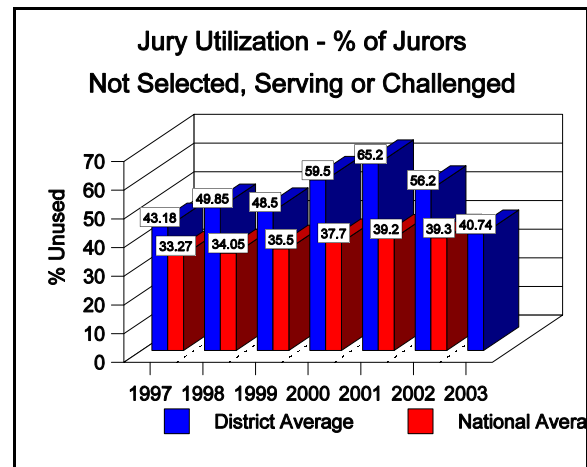
Mayra Borrero, Jury Administrator
Anthony Fiferroa, Jury Clerk

Mayra Borrero has served as Jury Administrator for our District for over 15 years. She is assisted by Jury Clerk Anthony Fiferroa, who was our chief cashier, but who joined Mayra after Frances Rodríguez, our former jury clerk, transferred to the Bankruptcy Court in Corpus Christi, Texas. Our Jury administration adopted the Jury Management System (JMS) during July 2002. The new system provides our jury clerks with reports and correspondence production capability that the old system did not provide. JMS provides attendance letters, excuse letters, and deferred service letters. It also produces reports on excused/disqualified jurors per pool, attendance by date and costs per event, among others.

We will start the process of refilling the Jury Wheel during the spring of 2004. Every four years, jurors are selected from the population of registered voters that exercised the right to vote in the most recent general election held in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

The District of Puerto Rico has had a very busy Grand Jury schedule during the last six years. The

district has had 3 grand juries working from 1999-2002, and four grand juries during year 2003. Grand juries serve for at least 18 months.



Source: U.S. District Court Judicial Case Load Profiles (2003 National Average statistics were not available).



District Judge Pérez-Giménez (right) and Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán (center) award a Certificate of Completion of Jury Service.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

During the course of 1999 - 2003, members of the Clerk's Office staff participated in volunteer and fund-raising activities that required efforts beyond their normal work activities.

Chief Judge Laffitte and Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán have also planned and promoted various community outreach educational activities, in partnership with the Office of the Circuit Executive, as part of the public affairs initiative of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts.

Easter Egg Hunt for the Hogar Cuna San Cristóbal (HCSC) - foster home for infants and toddlers located in the Municipality of Caguas. Employees brought their own children and joined HCSC's staff and children for an afternoon full of candy and surprises.

Three Kings' Day for the Hogar Colegio La Milagrosa - foster home for abandoned or abused girls located in the Municipality of Arecibo. Care packages full of presents were especially prepared for each girl and were delivered by a group of employees.

Hogar Nuestra Señora de la Providencia (HNSP) Baby Shower. Employees collected baby clothes and other gifts which were distributed among the young unwed mothers at the HNSP.

Annual Blood Drives. The Clerk of Court designated Coral Rodríguez to coordinate the first drive and Kim Kalife for the second one. Coral and Kim did an excellent job in motivating Clerk's Office staff and others to donate blood, making the events a total success.



Systems Technician José Noel Caraballo donates blood as ICMS Systems Administrator and Blood Drive Coordinator Kim D. Kalife awaits her turn.

Hogar de Ancianos Simonet (HAS) traditional visit during the Christmas Season - home for the elderly located in the Municipality of Humacao. His-and-hers gifts were collected by all employees and delivered to HAS residents, who were delighted to partake with Clerk's Office staff while enjoying traditional food and music.

Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) - The Clerk of Court designated Brenda González, Tommy Kavelin, and Ilma Rivera as CFC coordinators for the District Court. Brenda, Tommy and Ilma have held respective campaign kick-off activities, and coordinated a CFC video or personal presentation by a charitable entity representative. Becky Agostini was the coordinator for the 2001-2002 campaign.

The Clerk of Court opened each activity offering employees her words of encouragement for all to lend a helping hand to those less fortunate. Thanks to the Clerk of Court and her coordinators' efforts, as well as the generosity of all employees, donations made to the Combined Federal Campaign warranted a CFC Silver Award for the 1999-2000 campaign, and a CFC Gold Award for the 2000-2001 campaign. The Clerk of Court's active support of the CFC throughout the years has earned the U.S. District Court three CFC Silver Awards and two CFC Gold Awards since 1994-1995.



From left to right. Case Manager and CFC Coordinator Brenda González and Clerk of Court Frances Rios de Morán receive the CFC Silver Award on behalf of the U.S. District Court.

DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO
Report of Operations 1999-2003

Leave Share Program donations - The court staff donated 862 hours for federal court employees throughout the United States. Leave is donated to federal employees who are in need of additional leave for medical purposes.

We Three Kings, Inc.- non-profit organization whose mission is to help brighten Christmas holidays for children and the elderly, receives generous contributions of toys and novelties from the Clerk's Office and District Court family each Christmas.



Clerk of Court Frances Rios de Morán organized a "Children's Day" for the enjoyment of the children and grandchildren of court employees.

"Rainforest Kids Child Development Center" - Our Clerk of Court, both personally and as President of the Puerto Rico Federal Executives' Association, has supported the creation of a child development center to serve federal employees' families. Construction of the new child development center, the first in the Caribbean, was completed in 2000 and commenced operations in January 2001. The Clerk of Court designated Administrative Manager Damaris Delgado-Vega, Esq. and Pro Se Law Clerk Gizelle M. Rivera, as President and Secretary, respectively,



From left to right: Clerk of Court Frances Rios de Morán and Eileen Stern, National Director of Public Buildings Service Child Care Operations of the U.S. General Services Administration, address attendees to the Rainforest Kids Child Development Center's formal opening. The Center, the first to be built by GSA outside the U.S. mainland, is located in the grounds adjacent to the Federico Degetau Federal Building and Clemente Ruiz Nazario U.S. Courthouse in San Juan's Hato Rey district.

of the Center's Board of Directors. The Clerk of Court also sponsored the attendance of Damaris and Gizelle to the 1999 GSA National Childcare Conference in New York City.

Truman Scholarship Committee - The Clerk has been chairing this Committee since 1997. The Scholarship provides a total award of \$27,000 towards payment of the selected candidate's graduate degree in the fields of public policy or public administration. The Committee evaluates candidates nominated by chancellors of public and private colleges and universities in Puerto Rico.

The candidates must be at the junior class level and be in the upper quarter of their class. The evaluation consists of a written application and a personal interview before the Committee members. The Truman Scholarship Foundation was established by Congress in 1975 as a memorial to President Harry S. Truman. The Clerk of Court participates in this program every year as part of her commitment to bring the best of the younger generation into the public service sector.

Courtroom as Classroom Program

Since 1999 the Court has participated in various Classroom in the Courtroom presentations,



Magistrate Judge Gelpi and DEA Special Agents pose with a group of Boy Scouts at the conclusion of a "Courtroom as Classroom Program" presentation.

including law students, high school students, and scouts groups. Activities were coordinated

to illustrate the Court's role in the administration of justice, including an overview of federal appellate, civil and criminal practice and procedure. Program speakers have included: Circuit Judge Juan R. Torruella, Chief Judge Laffitte, Bankruptcy Court Chief Judge Gerardo A. Carlo, Clerk of Court Frances Ríos de Morán, and several Court unit executives, among others.

Computer Donation Program - The Clerk of Court created this program to donate computer and office equipment to various charitable entities, government entities and educational institutions, the following are institutions that have benefitted from this program throughout the past five years:

- ◆ 2003 - Escuela Superior Enrique Huyke, Escuela Superior de la Comunidad University Gardens, Tribunal de Primera Instancia, Sala de Bayamón.
- ◆ 2002 - Escuela Superior Rexville de Bayamón, Escuela Superior Raúl Tirado Vélez de Carolina.
- ◆ 2001 - Escuela José Nieves de Cataño, San Juan Community Library Buccapla.
- ◆ 2000 - Escuela Superior Bilingüe Juan Ponce de León de Humacao.
- ◆ 1999 - Escuela de la Comunidad University Gardens, Escuela Inés Mendoza de Bayamón.
- ◆ Escuela Superior Tecnológica Manuel Mediavilla de Humacao, University of Puerto Rico High School in Río Piedras.

The Clerk of Court was honored to receive, on the Court's behalf, appreciation awards from both the Escuela Superior Manuel Mediavilla de Humacao and the University of Puerto Rico High School.

Law Day 2000 - On April 2000 the Court sponsored a variety of educational events including the viewing of the national video conference "Law Day 2000: Judicial Independence is for You," a satellite broadcast transmitted live from the Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building. The purpose of this national program was to provide high school seniors with an interactive learning experience regarding the importance of judicial independence. The group of 100 high school students that attended also attended a Naturalization Ceremony, the first official court proceeding held at the renovated José V. Toledo Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, as well as several presentations on the history of the Old San Juan Courthouse, the Court's Technologically Enhanced Courtrooms' project, and the U.S. Marshals Service. The activities included a tour of the Clerk's Office and courthouse hosted by the Clerk of Court, Frances Ríos de Morán, and her staff.

The Anatomy of the Federal Judicial Process.

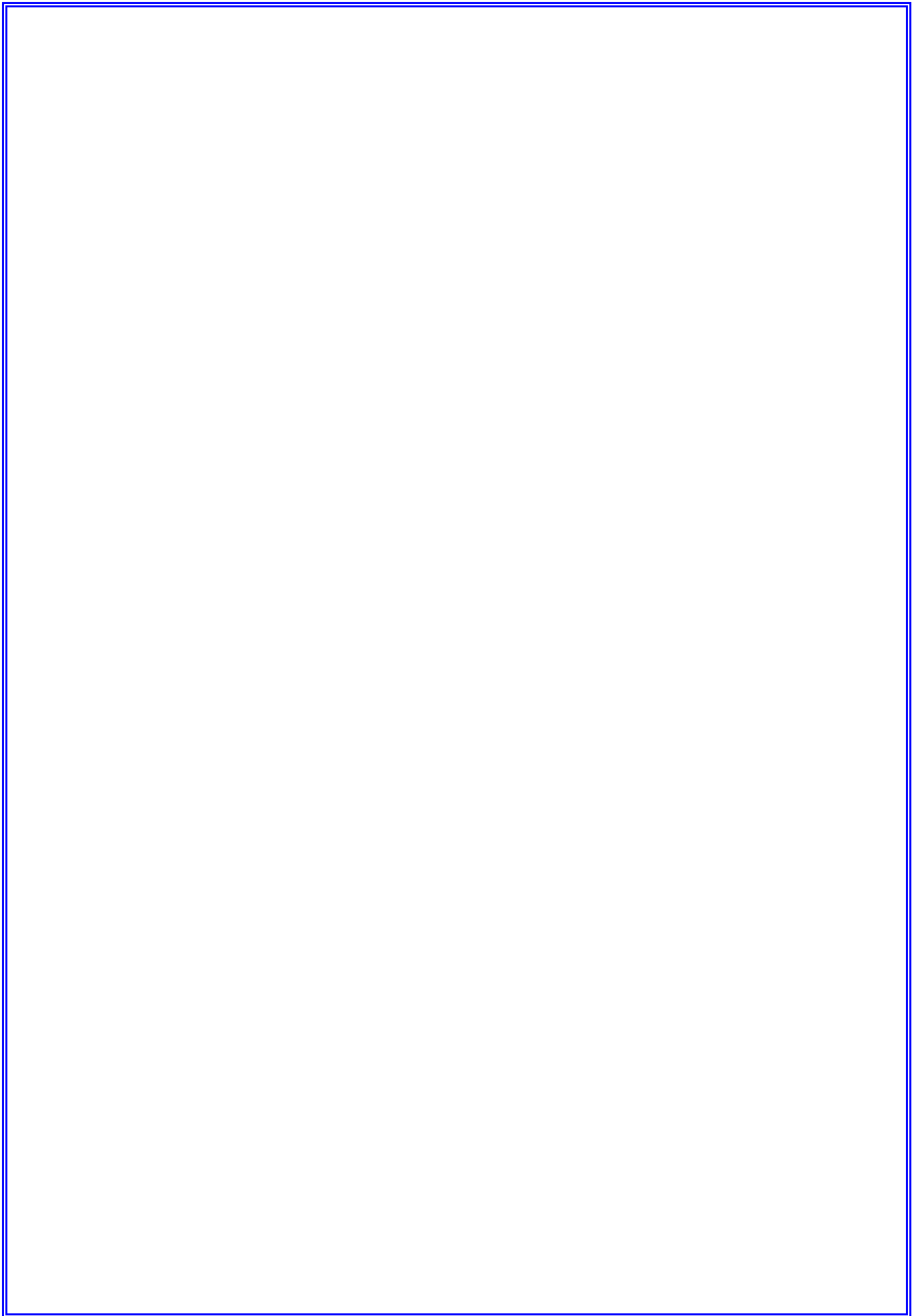
This workshop, held in Chief Judge Laffitte's courtroom in 1999, was co-sponsored by the Overseas Press Club, in order to educate and familiarize members of the press with the nature of federal civil and criminal proceedings.

Covering the Courts. This seminar, held in April 2000, was the result of a successful joint effort of the District Court, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico's General Court of Justice Public Information Office, and the Puerto Rico Association of Professional Journalists. It focused on the press coverage of federal court proceedings and featured discussions by a panel of federal judges and lawyers, and a panel of journalists.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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