

THE OACA INQUIRER

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OHIO ASSOCIATION FOR COURT ADMINISTRATION, INC.



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2012 Spring Conference

The 2012 Spring conference is set for May 16-18 at the McKinley Grand Hotel, 320 Market Avenue South in Canton, Ohio.

The conference will once again feature outstanding education topics on Leadership and HR, roundtable discussions and general and individual committee meetings.

Hotel Information

Room reservations can be made by calling the McKinley Grand Hotel (<http://mckinleygrandhotel.com>). The hotel telephone number is (330)454-5000 and the reservations number is (877) 499-8077.

ABOUT OACA

The Ohio Association for Court Administration is a professional organization of court managers who are committed to excellence. The association was established in 1973, and the current membership consists of 231 members from all Ohio court jurisdictions, as well as members of court-related agencies. OACA is a member organization of the National Association for Court Management.

OACA Goals:

- Enhance professional development
- Encourage solidarity
- Improve administration of justice
- Provide legislative and policy updates
- Encourage diversity
- Anticipate and meet the challenges
- Provide conferences with quality education

OACA Member Benefits:

- Member newsletters
- Association website
- Legislative and policy updates
- Conferences
- Networking
- Mentor programs
- CEU and CLE opportunities
- Scholarship programs

*Upcoming
OACA Conferences:*

*May 16-18, 2012
Canton*

*October 17-19, 2012
Columbus*

WINTER 2011 NEWSLETTER

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Newsletter designed by:
Lindsey Schmitz
The Supreme Court of Ohio
Judicial College/OACA Member

Message From OACA's President



Dear OACA members,

It's hard to believe that 2011 has come to a close! It was a busy and productive year for OACA! The association has always provided quality conferences with exceptional speakers and topics that are relevant to the work that we all do, and this year was no exception. At the spring conference in Cleveland, Gar Trusley spoke on how we as leaders can motivate our employees in tough economic times and Kim Riley spoke on human resource issues and employment law.

At the fall conference in Columbus we received information on ethics and campaign law from Supreme Court staff as well as the state of OPERS as it stands currently and court security issues that were presented by Supreme Court security officer Tom Brown as well as various members of OACA. In addition Monica Hunyadi, Supreme Court Director of Human Resources, spoke on social media and the role it plays in human resources. And as always we received valuable information on legislative updates and Supreme Court updates from Steven Hollon, Jo Ellen Cline and Allan Asbury. The new OACA officers were sworn in by Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor, which was truly an honor! Thanks to OACA member Atiba Jones and his staff, we were able to take a tour of the new Franklin County Common Pleas Court. And probably the most exciting news is that we had a record number of members registered for the conference!

And just to give a brief preview, our spring conference, which will be held in Canton on May 16-18, 2012, will highlight some of our own very qualified members as presenters.

In July, several of us were able to attend the NACM (National Association of Court Management) yearly conference, which was held in Las Vegas. President Ken Teleis and I attended (and yes, it was very warm)! But we had the opportunity to attend some very valuable sessions, as well as network with other court personnel from other parts of the United States. I actually met a woman from Guam, who was one of the few international participants. We became instant friends and spent the week comparing notes about the similarities and differences between our court systems, which were really interesting! Another one of the highlights was that Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor gave a keynote address. I really want to thank OACA for sending me to the conference and affording me this amazing experience!

And speaking of NACM, we are pleased offer a new opportunity—discounts to those who would like to be members of both associations. See the membership invoice for more details.

And finally, I want to give a sincere thank you to 2011 president, Ken Teleis (See page 4 for his remarks as outgoing president). He has continued to move our organization forward, with creative leadership and ideas for positive changes. He's been a "hands-on leader" and an exceptional mentor for me so that hopefully the transition of OACA leadership will be a seamless process. I am excited to work with such a fantastic and energetic board and look forward to serving you as your new president in 2012!

May you all have a blessed new year!

Sylvia Argento, LSW
OACA President

Members of the 2012 Executive Committee



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Behind the Scenes

KUDOS to all the hard work from OACA'S committee chairs and members!

Education Committee

Elizabeth Stephenson and Linda Lovelace, Co-Chairs
 Juanita Bryant
 Don Colby
 Melinda Cooper
 James Fox
 Jason Hill
 Angie House
 Bennett Manning
 Theresa McNea
 Marc Warner

Membership Committee

Lori A. Henry, Chair
 Dawn Bailey
 Katherine Curfman
 Tammy Flannery
 Penny McGuire
 Pat Schwartz
 Cheri Shaw
 Marc Warner

By-Laws

Bennett Manning, Chair
 Linda Lovelace
 Elizabeth Stephenson

Legislative Committee

Tim Lubbe, Chair
 Jo Ellen Cline, *ex officio*
 Stephanie Hess
 Michael Kochera

Conference Site Committee

Chair Needed

Mentor Orientation

Cheri Shaw, Chair
 Sylvia Argento
 Jean Atkin
 Andrew Bauer
 Becky Carpenter

Archival/Historian

Tammy Dwyer, Chair
 Sylvia Argento
 Melinda Cooper
 Mike Durbin
 Cheri Shaw

Administrative Support

Linda Lovelace, Chair
 Lori Clune
 Greg Popovich
 Kimberly Switzer
 Ken Teleis

Nominating Committee

Lori Clune, Chair
 Elizabeth Stephenson

Finance Committee

Michael Kochera, Chair
 Andrew Bauer
 Don Colby
 Ken Teleis

Brochure Committee

Chair Needed

Elizabeth Stephenson
 Kimberly Switzer

Vendor Show Committee

Chair Needed

Kathleen Hanners
 Paula Houston

Communications Committee

Ken Teleis, Chair
 George Denney
 Paula Houston
 Ed McNachtan

Message from OACA's Outgoing President



Dear Colleagues,

I am taking one final opportunity to address you as your outgoing president. It has been a tremendous honor for me to serve OACA as your president during 2011. While leading this organization does take a little bit of time, that time is paid back exponentially by the experience gained and friendships made through this fine organization.

I will continue to be an active member in OACA and look forward to assisting the incoming board in whatever way I can. I am proud to say that your incoming officers, especially President Sylvia Argento, are well prepared to carry on the fine traditions of OACA that were put in place long before my tenure.

I would like to thank my executive board for their exemplary service, and thank all of you members for placing your confidence in me during this past year.

I look forward to seeing you all at various conferences throughout the years. If I can be of any help to any one of you at any time, please do not hesitate to contact me!

Sincerely,
Kenneth R. Teleis, CCE
OACA Past President

Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) Update

By Melinda S. Cooper, Fifth District Court of Appeals

Gordon Gatién, a representative of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) gave an update on the retirement system and proposed changes that will effect most all of us, one way or another. Although the system is facing some difficult challenges, Mr. Gatién assured the audience that Ohio PERS has weathered decades of economic ups and downs. Each time, it has emerged stronger due to actions taken by the Board of Trustees, thoughtful planning and decision-making, and long-term investment policies designed to benefit from upturns in the economy. The presentation explained why the Board recommended the pending changes, what the proposed changes were and the status of the changes pending in the General Assembly.

The biggest concern facing the system is health care. In November 2009, the OPERS Board of Trustees recommended to the legislature a series of changes to benefits designed to strengthen the pension system and maintain funding for health care. Depending

on legislative implementation, the recommended changes to benefits will build on past actions by the Board to prepare for longer life expectancies of retirees, to encourage member engagement in their retirement planning and to correct inequities resulting from benefit subsidization. The changes are pending in the General Assembly now.

The proposed changes are different for different members, depending on how close one is to retirement. The information presented was far too detailed to present in this article. However, we can keep ourselves up to date by going to the Ohio PERS website, www.opers.org, where you will find weekly updates on the legislative process. You can even sign up for regular email announcements by registering for MBS (My Benefits System) on their website. OPERS is even part of the Social Network. You can visit it on Facebook, follow it on Twitter or check in on their PERSpective blog, all of which can be accessed on their home page, www.ohiopers.org.



Get to Know Your New President, Sylvia Argento Court Administrator, Tuscarawas County Probate/Juvenile Court

How did you first get involved in with OACA and/or the judicial branch?

I was a Social Worker for Children's Services in my former life and was often in court in front of the judge I now work for. I testified a lot and loved it (I know that isn't normal!) but I guess based on my performance over time, my judge thought I might make a good Court Administrator for her, even though neither of us really had a clue about what a Court Administrator did!! We learned together!

What is your position, how long have you been in it and how many people do you supervise? What departments are you responsible for?

I've been the juvenile/probate court administrator for 13 years. We have 22 employees, including me. Our departments include juvenile probation, paternity, marriage license, probate and a drug/alcohol program. Somewhat surprisingly my social work background has helped me tremendously in this job.

What might someone be surprised to know about you?

I once completely restored an old wooden boat by myself. It took two years but it turned out beautifully! And no, I'll never do it again!

If you could have dinner with five famous people from history, who would they be?

Martin Luther King, Jr., Sophia Loren, Lucille Ball, Billie Jean King and Former President Jimmy Carter.

What is your most treasured possession?

My heritage. I'm extremely proud of my Sicilian family and the struggles that my grandmother Concetta went through just so her children and grandchildren could have a better life. She sacrificed everything to come to America in a time that this country was not really accepting of foreigners. She is hands down the strongest person I've ever had the privilege of knowing. She died when I was just two years old so if I could invite a sixth "famous" person from history to have dinner with me, it would definitely be her!

What do you value most in your friends?

Honesty. Plain and simple.

Which living person do you most admire?

It probably sounds corny, but both of my parents. They embrace people they know and people who are total strangers with the same genuine kindness and I honestly don't know anyone who doesn't love and admire them. They are inspiring and simply a joy to be around. I'm just glad I realize what a blessing it's been for me to have them in my life.

What is your motto (words that you live by)?

It's actually a quote from Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Cowardice asks the question – is it safe?
Expediency asks the question – is it politic?
Vanity asks the question – is it popular?
But conscience asks the question- is it right?
And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular; but one must take it because it is right."

What do you think will change about the judicial system over the next five years?

I think that the courts will become much more technologically advanced. Things like e-filings, video conferencing, more accessibility to on-line dockets, advanced digital recording capabilities, etc. This type of technology would most likely result in less "face time" between clients, attorneys and court staff. What I find ironic about this is that the judicial system as a whole is also moving toward increased implementation of specialty courts such as drug courts, mental health courts and family-oriented courts, which will have just the opposite effect and require much more "hands-on face time." It will be interesting to see how the judicial system merges these two seemingly dichotomous philosophies.



Get to Know Your New Secretary, Elizabeth Stephenson Court Administrator, Tuscarawas County Common Pleas Court

How did you first get involved in with OACA and/or the judicial branch?

I practiced law for about eight years and attended the OACA conference as soon as I was hired—even before starting the job!

What is your position, how long have you been in it and how many people do you supervise? What departments are you responsible for?

I have been a court administrator for 14 years. I supervise the following court staff: magistrate, mediation, and probation department, so about 15 staff.

What is your favorite way of spending time?

Aside from being with my family, reading.

What is your favorite journey/vacation?

Any vacation with activity; I am not the type to sit still on a beach.

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

More self control when it comes to food.

If you could be or do anything else, what would that be?

A teacher.

What one word would you use to describe yourself?

“Problem-solver.”

What one word would your friends use to describe you?

“Positive.”

What might (someone) be surprised to know about you?

As a child, I was shy.

Who is your favorite fictional hero?

Wonder Woman

What is your most treasured possession?

Character.

What do you value most in your friends?

Humor.

Tell us about your family (parents, kids, siblings, pets, etc.)

Both parents are living (dad: attorney; mom: homemaker); husband: Paul McEwan (CPA: pension specialist); four children (college, high school, middle school and one in elementary); two sisters, one brother; three cats, two dogs, an ever-flexing number of fish and at least one unseen, uninvited mouse.

How did you meet your spouse?

I picked him out from across the room in Econ 512, and asked him to marry me in about a week (25 years ago).

What is your motto (words you live by or that mean a lot to you)?

Life mission: contribution (to family, work, and community).

What do you think will change about OACA and/or the judicial branch over the next five years?

We are all going to continue to better justify what we do, why it takes so much money to run the judicial branch and what a good job we do at helping create an orderly society.

What do you like most about your job? What do you like least?

I love that I get to tackle varied problems, but hate that I don't have time to do all that I want to get accomplished.