

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

CENTRAL DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

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CLERK

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May 23, 1991

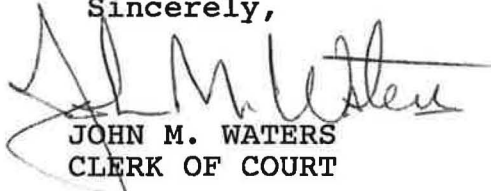
Mr. Abel Mattos
Chief, Court Programs Branch
Administrative Office of the
United States Courts
Rm. 1008
1120 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20544

Dear Mr. Mattos:

Enclosed are the minutes from the May 8, 1991, meeting of the Civil Justice Reform Act Advisory Group for the Central District of Illinois. I will forward the minutes following each subsequent meeting for your information.

If any further information is needed, please contact me.

Sincerely,



JOHN M. WATERS
CLERK OF COURT

JMW/jmk
Enclosure

MINUTES

CIVIL JUSTICE REFORM ACT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MAY 8, 1991

The organizational meeting of the Civil Justice Reform Act Advisory Committee for the Central District of Illinois was held May 8, 1991 in the District Courtroom in Springfield, Illinois. Committee members David Mueller, Walter Braud, Shawn Denney, Anne Draznen, Jim Lewis, Michael Meyer, Susan Stone, John Waters and Charlene Quigley attended. Member Harlan Heller was unable to attend. The committee was introduced to the District Judges, Harold A. Baker, Michael M. Mihm and Richard Mills; Magistrate Judge Robert J. Kauffman; and Chief Deputy Clerk Kay A. Clark. Magistrate Judge Charles Evans was in trial and could not attend.

Committee member John Waters, District Court Clerk, gave the committee an overview of the Central District. The district is composed of 46 counties, has three district judges, two full-time magistrate judges and one part-time magistrate judge. A fourth district judge is authorized and should be nominated soon. The district has four places of holding court, Peoria, Danville, Springfield and Rock Island. In July of this year ground will be broken for a new federal facility and place of holding court in Urbana. In addition the facilities in Danville and Rock Island are undergoing renovation to increase court space. The clerk's office has 24 employees, distributed throughout the district. Rock Island currently has only one deputy on staff and Springfield has a greater concentration of administrative staff. The remaining staff is evenly distributed among Peoria, Danville and Springfield.

As of April 30, 1990, the district had 1250 active civil cases and 280 active criminal defendants. For the preceding four to five years the district has averaged 1100-1300 filings per year. In the Seventh Circuit (Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin) this district had the most trials per judgeship and the most criminal filings per judgeship, with at least 60% of the criminal filings drug related in 1990.

There are approximately 100 asbestos cases with 300 plaintiffs currently on file in the district. The Multi-District Panel will meet in May to try to develop a national solution to the asbestos litigation dilemma. All of the asbestos cases in the district are stayed pending the outcome of the MDL considerations.

There are approximately 300 pro se prisoner cases now on file, with a new federal prison being built in Pekin. Committee member Michael Meyer handles all pre-trial matters in the pro se cases.

John Waters and Kay Clark gave the committee a brief introduction to the automated civil docketing system used in the district. The system is called CIVIL, was developed by the Administrative Office of United States Courts and is capable of electronic docketing and case management. Case management reports are self-generated from the docket data base. Kay Clark is the day-to-day civil manager and in charge of quality control. She distributed a representative sample of reports the system can

generate. Judge Mills commented that this district was one of the first fully automated courts, thanks in part to Judge Baker's participation on the Automation Committee of the United States Judicial Conference. The judges expressed great satisfaction with the system and stated that it allowed them to better control their dockets. Kay Clark stated that a new service called PACER came into service this month. With PACER anyone with a PC and a modem can access the court's public docket to browse and print. The security of the court's system is guaranteed with a separate PACER data base that is updated each night.

Judge Baker gave a brief statement about chambers automation. With the use of networked PC's, all of the judges' staffs have immediate access to the docket, to computer accessed legal research (LEXIS and WESTLAW), and to remote computers.

John Waters gave an overview of the process in which the advisory group is involved.

1. Analyze the court's docket.
2. Identify factors which contribute to cost and delay, to evaluate current methods of case management and comment.
3. Evaluate the six statutory techniques for more effective case management: tracking; early and ongoing judicial intervention; early and firm trial dates; control of the discovery process; control of motion practice; and use of final pre-trial conferences.
4. Make recommendations to the court.
5. The court reviews the recommendations and develops a plan for implementation.
6. Review the plan and its implementation yearly.

The committee and the judges then discussed several matters.

Judge Mihm asked that the committee keep in mind the impact of the criminal docket and of long trials when evaluating the docket. Judge Baker stated that he felt this district was one of the most advanced in the nation in terms of effective case management on a district-wide basis. He stated a policy of total access to the courts, the reports and the personnel. All of the judges expressed interest in the project and invited discussion at any time.

David Mueller stated that while we did not volunteer to be an early implementation district, nothing prevents early implementation if the committee so desires.

John Waters reminded the committee that mileage is reimbursable, so to keep mileage records and submit them in a timely fashion.

The next meeting will be Friday, July 19 at 10:00 at the Federal Building in Peoria. David Mueller and John Waters will circulate an agenda and some informational material before the meeting. The reporter will also circulate the new proposed draft of Local Court Rules as soon as they are available.


Charlene A. Quigley
Reporter