

NEW YORK STATE UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM



MERIT PERFORMANCE AWARDS
P R E S E N T A T I O N

Jonathan Lippman
Chief Judge

Ann Pfau
Chief Administrative Judge

NEW YORK STATE COURT OF APPEALS
ALBANY, NEW YORK

MAY 2, 2011

2011 Merit Performance Awards

RECIPIENTS

Superior Work Performance

Michael J. Williams

Superior Work Performance

Pamela R. Greene

Superior Work Performance

Marisa Alleyn

Community Service and Humanitarian Pursuits

Sarah T. Sennett

Community Service and Humanitarian Pursuits

Peter P. Robinson

2011 Merit Performance Awards

Presentation of Awards

Honorable Ann Pfau

Chief Administrative Judge of the Courts

Law Day ceremonies like today's Court of Appeals celebration are taking place nationwide this time of year, as members of the bar and bench and Americans from all walks of life gather to reflect on our legal heritage and demonstrate our commitment to the rule of law. In commemorating Law Day 2011, we pay tribute to our second president—the nation's premier lawyer-president and a staunch defender of the principle of due process—John Adams.

With the myriad challenges confronting the courts and legal profession today, it is particularly fitting that we honor the late John Adams, one of our earliest—and greatest—champions of access to justice. Also as part of our Law Day tradition, today we present the court system's prestigious Merit Performance Awards to five outstanding court employees; their efforts to ensure access to justice for all New Yorkers and strong commitment to public service exemplify the life and work of our esteemed second president. Among our honorees are a Family Court Clerk who regularly goes beyond the scope of his duties; an innovative Associate LAN Administrator whose ingenuity has helped streamline court operations; a Senior Court Analyst who works fervently to ease parting couples and their children through the stressful transition of divorce; a community-minded Surrogate's Court Clerk; and a Court Officer with a passion for serving the needy.

I also wish to acknowledge the ongoing contributions of our dedicated judges and non-judicial employees for their hard work and perseverance. In addition, I want to extend my gratitude to Chief Judge Lippman, the Associate Judges of the Court of Appeals and New York State Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman for their support of this year's Law Day awards program.

Superior Work Performance

Michael J. Williams

*Deputy Chief Clerk IV
Bronx County Family Court*

Over the course of a court career that has spanned nearly two decades, Michael Williams has worked tirelessly to help unrepresented litigants navigate their way through Family Court. Most recently, Michael has devoted his efforts to the development and implementation of online “do-it-yourself” (DIY) programs that since 2009 have assisted tens of thousands of unrepresented Family Court litigants in preparing court-ready child support and other forms and information sheets.

When the Unified Court System first began work on these software programs, Michael volunteered to be part of the development team, going far beyond his regular courthouse duties to master the computer programming skills required to create these programs: the result, a user-friendly program that enables litigants to produce a court-ready petition to modify child support. Before its official launch in May 2009, the support modification form program was tested in Kings County Family Court, where Michael, then an Assistant Deputy Chief Clerk at the court, provided program training to the staff and worked to encourage litigants’ use of the new software. Feedback garnered from the pilot program proved indispensable in readying the support modification form program for its official launch, with Michael’s expertise also vital in the development of online programs guiding litigants to create court-ready paternity and support enforcement/violation petitions, the latter of which was tested in April in Bronx County Family Court under Michael’s direction in his new capacity as Bronx Family Court Clerk.

Thanks in large measure to Michael’s pioneering spirit and tremendous work ethic, some 26,000 support modification and paternity petitions were generated last year by unrepresented litigants using the DIY programs. It is our pleasure to present Michael Williams with a Merit Performance Award for Superior Work Performance for his extraordinary support in making our courts more accessible to the public.

2011 Merit Performance Awards

Superior Work Performance

Pamela R. Greene

*Associate LAN Administrator
Sixth Judicial District Office*

Pamela Greene's attention to detail and ability to complete highly complex assignments while adhering to seemingly impossible deadlines continue to astonish both her IT peers and other court colleagues. Her work ethic and ingenuity have become legendary among her co-workers in the Sixth Judicial District and beyond, with Pamela playing a key role in the launch of many computer applications that have helped streamline court operations.

For instance, Pamela was instrumental in the roll-out of a software application that allows traffic case-related data to be imported from local police and other agencies, minimizing the courts' data entry role. She also created an application used by several upstate judicial districts as well as numerous downstate courts to keep track of their computer and furniture inventories. Additionally, Pamela took the lead in modifying a computer application to satisfy recent legislative requirements for tracking foreclosure cases, and developing a revenue-monitoring program that enables the pooling of statewide data into a central repository for ease of consolidation and reporting—working long hours on these projects to ensure their completion within just four months. Pamela's expertise has been vital in the development of multiple online projects that generate critical data for the court system, its partners and the public while helping to make our courts more efficient.

Pamela Greene represents the finest in public service. It is our privilege to present her with a Merit Performance Award for Superior Work Performance for her exceptional contributions to the Sixth Judicial District, the Unified Court System and our great state.

2011 Merit Performance Awards

Superior Work Performance

Marisa Alleyn

Senior Court Analyst

Nassau County Supreme Court-Matrimonial Center

In the highly emotional and complicated world of divorce, Marisa Alleyn serves as a voice of reason for sparring couples as they work out child custody and other sensitive matters in Nassau County Supreme Court's Model Custody Part, which offers a non-adversarial forum for parents to resolve their custody issues and otherwise expedite these contentious divorce cases.

Joining this non-traditional court part some four years ago, Marisa quickly earned a reputation for her finesse in opening the lines of communication between couples who are parting ways, even those embroiled in the most acrimonious of divorces. Trained as both social worker and mediator, Marisa brings a wealth of skills to the court, where she makes case assessments, facilitates couples in devising parenting plans that put their children first and links families to critical services. Working with couples at various stages of the divorce process, Marisa's empathetic approach—and her intense commitment and vast expertise—have proven successful in achieving positive outcomes for many families. In addition to her integral role in the Model Custody Part, Marisa also provides mediation services to the Nassau County Matrimonial Center as needed.

Always the consummate professional, Marisa Alleyn is an asset to the Matrimonial Center, the Nassau County families that it serves and the entire Unified Court System. We are delighted to acknowledge Marisa's admirable efforts with this Merit Performance Award for Superior Work Performance.

Community Service and Humanitarian Pursuits

Sarah T. Sennett

Deputy Chief Clerk

Monroe County Surrogate's Court

Deputy Chief Clerk **Sarah Sennett** is known around the courthouse for her diligence and high level of commitment, qualities that shine through in her multiple extracurricular roles, including that of blood drive organizer and coordinator of the county's Supreme and Surrogate's Courts' New York State Employees Federated Appeal (SEFA) campaigns, which provide support to a wide range of charities. In recent years, Sarah also served as an American Red Cross disaster relief volunteer, linking families left homeless by fire to housing and other essential services.

People close to Sarah are struck by her global outlook and genuine desire to make a difference in her community and the world at large. As a monthly volunteer at community blood drives, Sarah can be seen working the canteen or registration desk. She has also successfully coordinated 57 courthouse blood drives over the past decade—doing everything from sending out notices to the donors to arranging space at the courthouse and overseeing the many other logistics. The donations from these courthouse drives alone have helped nearly 7,000 critically ill patients. Sarah's superb organizational and leadership skills have served her equally well these past eight years as a SEFA campaign manager, in which capacity she has helped generate thousands of dollars in donations to a host of worthy causes, from local to international in scope.

In recognition of her many hours of selfless service to her community and countless others living far beyond the borders of Monroe County, we are pleased to present Sarah Sennett with a 2011 Merit Performance Award for Community Service and Humanitarian Pursuits.

Community Service and Humanitarian Pursuits

Peter P. Robinson

Court Officer

Niagara County Supreme Court

The only thing grander than Officer Peter Robinson's angelic voice is his warm heart, which sustains an indefatigable passion to serve humanity, whether through his singing, as a role model for at-risk youth or as overseer of food drives and other charitable endeavors.

In just the last year, Officer Robinson has donated his vocal talents to numerous courthouse and community events, including Veteran's Day and Memorial Day celebrations and a courthouse dedication paying tribute to crime victims and their families. Additionally, his voice provides inspiration to pre-adolescents in his role as youth hockey division coach, and to teens, in his capacity as a motivational speaker for a local group that fosters integrity and personal growth among this population. Peter has also lent his voice to the Niagara County District Attorney's DWI panels, which admonish offenders on the dangers of driving and drinking. Aside from his gifts as a vocalist and public speaker, Officer Robinson is noted for his management skills and leadership, which he puts to fine use as a volunteer commissioner for the Niagara County Youth Bureau, monitoring a variety of achievement-oriented programs, and as board president of the City of Lockport's fire department. Even with his plate overflowing, Peter somehow managed last December to organize Niagara County's first Peanut Butter and Jelly Drive, with drive volunteers collecting 1500 jars of peanut butter, jelly and marshmallow spread for distribution to food pantries and the Tuscarora Reservation.

It is our privilege to present Officer Robinson with a Merit Performance Award for Community Service and Humanitarian Pursuits for his spirited generosity on behalf of his local community, particularly his tireless efforts to benefit Niagara County's underprivileged youngsters and families.



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