

Metropolitan General Sessions Court

Nashville-Davidson County

"The Court of
First Resort"

ANNUAL REPORT
2012

This Issue

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Environmental /Night Court

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THE DOCKETS

The Metropolitan General Sessions Court system is committed to excellence in administering justice and is a contributing partner working toward a safe and vital community in Nashville-Davidson County. The Court handles a vast array of cases such as traffic offenses, preliminary hearings on felony and misdemeanor cases, mental health, various alcohol and drug related cases and civil related cases up to \$25,000. It is estimated that the General Sessions Court system processed cases representing over 300,000 litigants in 2012. The following is a general overview of the docket system handled by the Court:

Criminal Bond

Felony/Misdemeanor

Daily Traffic

Daily Civil

Daily Driver License/Misdemeanor

Daily Orders of Protection

Domestic Violence

Environmental

Emergency Committals

Special Committals

State Traffic

Felony Drug

Mental Health

Treatment Court

Court Jurisdiction

The Metropolitan General Sessions Court of Nashville-Davidson County serves as a very important "spoke in the wheel" as the basic foundation in the local justice system. It is a high volume limited jurisdiction Court that hears civil, misdemeanor, felony, traffic, environmental, and metropolitan ordinance violations. This court is served by 11 judges that are elected to an eight year term. There are also 5 law-trained judicial commissioners that handle the probable cause hearing's in the issuance of a criminal warrant and 1 referee that handles the environmental cases and other non-traffic metro ordinance violations. For a majority of the citizens, this level of Court will be their only encounter with the state's justice system. Consequently, it has been frequently described as "the court of first resort." The list below shows the area of law under the court's jurisdiction.

- **Criminal**—Cases in which the applicable penalty is no more than 11 months, 29 days; Preliminary Hearing; Amount and conditions of all appearance bonds; Forfeiture of property used in commission of crime; Issuance of search warrants.
- **Civil**—civil warrants with a jurisdictional limit of \$25,000 and monetary jurisdiction is unlimited in detainer actions; Orders of Protection; Mental Health (involuntary Committal); Tuberculosis Treatment (Non-Compliance).
- **Environmental**—Animal control. Housing code violations; Building code violations.
- **Metro Ordinance**—Traffic law violations; All other county ordinance violations.

2012 Case Load Overview

Criminal-Warrants/Citations	98,249
Traffic-Metro/State	87,173
Judicial Committals	7,856
Civil	37,942
Orders of Protection	3,428
Metro & Environmental	5,305
Combined Caseload	239,953

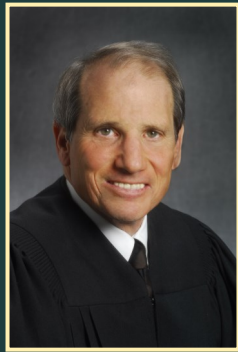
Source: Criminal Justice Planning Office, Criminal & Civil Clerk's Offices

WEB ADDRESS:
WWW.GSCOURT.NASHVILLE.GOV

General Sessions Court Judges



Judge Gale Robinson
Division I



Judge Dan Eisenstein
Division II



Judge Angelita Blackshear Dalton
Division III

Presiding Judge



Judge Gloria Dumas
Division IV



Judge Dianne Turner
Division V



Judge Michael F. Mondelli
Division VI



Judge William E. Higgins
Division VII



Judge Mike Jameson
Division VIII



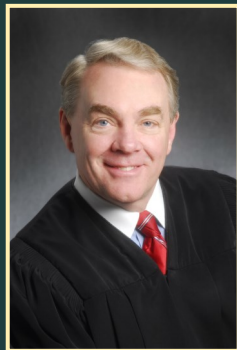
Judge Rachel L. Bell
Division VIII



Judge Sue McKnight Evans
Division IX



Judge Casey E. Moreland
Division X



Judge John Aaron Holt
Division XI



Administrative Staff

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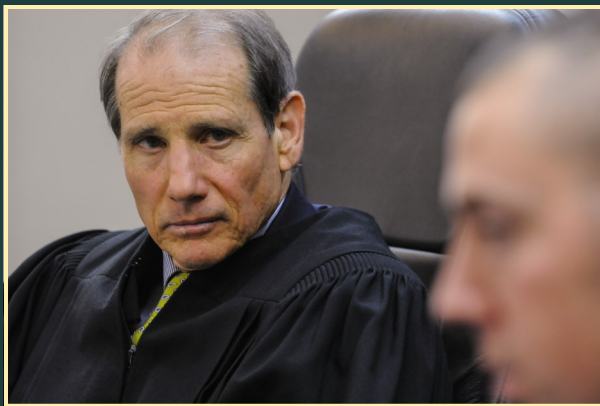
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Central Address for All Judges: Justice A.A. Birch Building,
408 2nd Ave. N., P.O. Box 196300, Nashville, TN 37219



Mental Health Court

The Davidson County Mental Health Court celebrated its 10th Anniversary in 2012. The Court was one of the first of five Mental Health Courts established in the United States.

The Mental Health Court is a part of Division II of the General Sessions Court. Judge Daniel B. Eisenstein presides over its operation. Over the past several years state funding of Mental Health services has decreased dramatically and as a result the Mental Health Court has seen a large increase in the number of people it serves. In the year 2012 Court personnel had direct contact with over 500 people who were in the criminal justice system who suffered from mental illness. The Court accepted 355 people to participate to its program during 2012.

The mission and purpose of this Court is to serve individuals in the criminal justice system who suffer from serious and persistent mental illness. The Court supervises those individuals who are accepted and choose to be in the Court. These individuals are on probation for criminal charges or on a diversion program for criminal charges. The most common period of supervision is 11 months and 29 days although some people are supervised for longer periods of time. The supervision includes developing and implementing a mental health treatment plan, finding appropriate housing when necessary, assisting in other areas of a person's life including transportation, medical services, alcohol and drug addiction treatment, and any other area that may need attention. The goal of the intensive supervision plan is to assist the individual in developing a life that does not involve the criminal justice system and to help the individual reach his or her greatest potential in society.

The Court added a new dimension to its program in 2012. A special docket for veterans has been requested, formed and now in operation. This Treatment Court has been established to assist Veterans who are on probation for criminal charges or are soon to be released from jail. A counselor with the Veterans Administration meets with these individuals at this special court docket to assist these Veterans in securing services to which they are entitled.

Program Manager
Tonia Dixon

Client Service Specialists
Patricia Breeding
Tamika Dobbins
Tonya Simmons

Administrative Assistant
Cynthia Nelson

General Sessions Court
Mental Health Court & Treatment Court

Ben West Building,
100 James Robertson Parkway
Suite 100, P.O. Box 196300
Nashville, TN 37219



Treatment Court

The General Sessions Treatment Court was recognized as 1 of 12 State Certified Drug Courts in the State of Tennessee in 2009. Under the direction of Judge Casey Moreland, certain drug offenders who have been arrested for nonviolent offenses are given opportunities to participate in a three-phase supervised rehabilitation program. They come on their own accord, because the program is available only to those who want help for their addiction. Treatment Court meets each Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. in Courtroom 4D of the Justice A.A. Birch Building.

Since its inception, the number of those opting for the treatment program has grown significantly to 70 active participants. The court offers an intensive and lengthy program, requiring from 12-18 months to successfully complete. Some find the rules too rigid and opt to serve jail time for their original offenses. Others subject themselves to electronic monitoring, four-times-a-week drug testing, alcohol monitoring and half-way house residency while taking classes in anger management, life skills and job readiness. Classes are also offered to those wishing to earn their GED diplomas. In 2012, the county realized a \$2.9 million savings in incarceration fees with participants logging 45,864 days in alternative jail time.

There are numerous members of the Treatment Court team who play key roles in the recovery of each participant. In addition to Judge Moreland, members of the team include Probation Officers, Public Defender, District Attorney, Case Managers, Electronic Monitoring, the Davidson County Sheriff's Department, the Metro Police Department and several treatment providers around the Nashville area.

2012 Activity Total

Participants from 01/01/12 to 12/31/12	132
Active Participants	70
• Phase One (44)	
• Phase Two (10)	
• Phase Three (16)	
Graduates	27
Participants in Half-way House	36
Participants on Electronic Monitoring	3
Participants in Inpatient Treatment	3
Participants Terminated from Program	8
Outstanding Warrants	22
Drug Free Babies in Treatment Court	1

Program Manager
Nancy Derrick

Probation Officers
Jimmy Waggoner
Scott Yates

Administrative Assistant
Sutton Nelson



Environmental Court

When disputes arise over enforcement of the county's environmental codes, the issues are brought before Special General Sessions Referee Jim Todd, who presides over a weekly Environmental Court Docket. The docket was created in October 2001 to address Metro Code violations pertaining to buildings, trash and debris in neighborhoods and business sites, as well as leash law cases involving nuisance complaints about barking dogs, at-large or vicious dogs.

A double docket call is held each Wednesday at 1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. in Courtroom 5D of the Justice A.A. Birch building. Environmental, police and animal control violation cases are heard at the 1:00 p.m. time slot with civil and environmental warrants being addressed at 2:30 p.m. The combined Metro and Environmental caseload for 2012 was 5,305. Of that number 3,356 were citations for both Environmental and Metro violations and 1,949 issued through the civil clerk's office. Todd was appointed referee of the court in 2007 by Division IV Judge Gloria Dumas. He is a graduate of Memphis School of Law and previously worked for Sen. Albert Gore (1984-1989) for whom he served as assistant campaign manager during the 1998 presidential election. Additionally, he served as executive director of the Tennessee Sports Festival under former Gov. Ned McWherter (1989-1991.) Prior to entering private law practice in 2005, he was an assistant district attorney general for 12 years.



Referee Jim Todd



Judicial Commissioners

Five judicial commissioners—each possessing the qualifications of a judge—comprise what is known collectively as “Night Court,” a viable and productive extension of the General Sessions Court. The identifying label is derived from the fact that the commissioners preside over proceedings that take place after normal business hours. But it is misleading in that the panel is actually on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, serving a broad range of functions relevant to the criminal justice process.

In addition to their other job responsibilities, the commissioners:

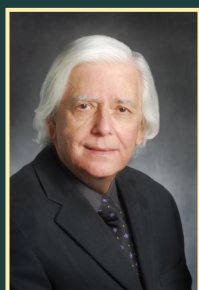
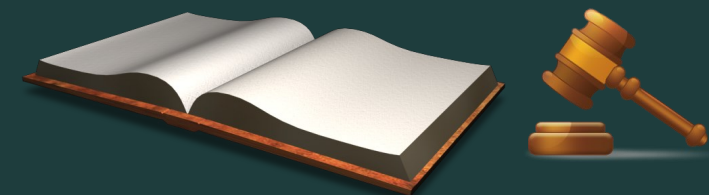
- Conduct probable cause hearings, issue warrants and set bail bonds in criminal cases
- Determine probable cause for judicial committals from county psychiatric facilities
- Issue Ex Parte Orders of Protection, as well as warrants for violations of such orders
- Issue property seizure warrants upon probable cause

Each commissioner is appointed by the court for a one-year term that dictates seven-day work weeks and alternating eight-hour work shifts with no annual leave, sick time or holiday leave time.

Activity for the 2012 Reporting Period

Warrants & Summons Issued	47,928
Conditions of Release/Orders	66,702
Emergency Committals	7,856
Mittimus for Appearance	71,850
Ex Parte Orders of Protection	3,428
Parole Violations	326
Order of Protection Violations	720
Property Seizure Hearings	1,049

Source: Criminal Justice Planning Office, Criminal & Civil Clerk's Offices



Commissioner
Howard Taradash



Commissioner
Carolyn Phipps



Commissioner
Thomas Nelson



Commissioner
Steve Holzapfel



Commissioner
Evan Harris

**Night Court
Commissioner's Office**

Phone: (615) 862-8304



Court Administrator
Warner C. Hassell



Assistant to the
Administrator
Gina Fox

Administrative
Assistant
Angie Von Mann



Assistant Security Officer
Coordinator
Lt. Chris Edmondson



Security Officer
Coordinator
Capt. Donnie
Dixon

Address for

General Sessions Court Administration Office

Justice A.A. Birch
408 2nd Ave. N.
Suite 1140
P.O. Box 196300
Nashville, TN 37219



Court Interpreter
Coordinator
Delma Aguilar

Language Interpretations

Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 41 was promulgated to assist the courts in providing equal access to participants who have limited ability to speak or understand the English language. It is the responsibility of the court to determine whether a participant in a legal proceeding has limited ability to understand and communicate in English. In 2012 the General Sessions Court's language interpreter coordinator scheduled 8,124 total court interpretations with 7,848 of those requiring Spanish interpretations. That computes to an average of 677 court interpretations monthly. The predominant foreign languages involved include Spanish, Arabic, Vietnamese, Laotian, Korean, Chinese, Kurdish and Somalian.



Information Systems
Application Analyst II
Brad Freeman

Technology Report

Information Services handled the following requests for the year 2012: **(T) 10,767**

- Helpdesk Phone Calls: 3,055
- Helpdesk Emails: 6,537
- Helpdesk Request Walk-ins: 529
- Helpdesk Calls to ITS: 271
- Helpdesk Calls to JIS: 375

ITS—Information Technology Services
JIS—Justice Integration Services

Information Technology
Service Representative

Amber Johnson



Administration Office

According to the Metro Charter, the office of the court administrator assists the presiding judge with the improvement in the efficiency and operation of the Metropolitan General Sessions Court. These duties, include but are not limited to, the following: budget and fiscal management, personnel management, office automation management, manage multiple courtrooms' digital recording system, assist in resolving court facility issues, court interpretative services coordination, manage supplemental court security personnel, and preparation of the annual report.

Overview of Principal Services

- Daily manage the Court's budget for FY 2013 of \$10,557,500 with a total of 110 court personnel
- Review, oversee, and/or process various Metro Electronic Business system transactions:
 - Over 1,000 payment transactions totaling \$470,900
 - Over 3,000 revenue transactions totaling over \$3.7 million
 - Over 150 separate payroll, human resources, and employee benefit related transactions for over a \$6.9 million payroll
- The estimated number of Metro government and court related emails received and acted upon by all services: Over 35,000
- The estimated number of total phone calls handled in 2012 by all services: Over 14,000
- Number of in-court language interpretations coordinated from over 273 email requests: 8,124
- Provide supplemental security in the public hallways and in courtrooms:
 - Over 300,000 litigants were monitored
 - Serious security related incidents: 10
 - Medical incidents reported: 8
 - Prisoners transported: 550
- Manage Master Calendar for all Courtrooms for special hearings/events: 59
- The number of web e-mails received from the public and acted upon: 258
- The number of General Services work orders submitted by the Court Administration office: 190
- The number of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations made: 25
 - 13 Criminal docket related
 - 7 Civil and/or Traffic related
 - 5 MTMHI

WEB ADDRESS: WWW.GSCOURT.NASHVILLE.GOV



Traffic Safety Education

General Sessions Traffic Education - John Slate, Director

Best Performance and Drivers License Reinstatement

The General Sessions Court Traffic School continued to win National Safety Council awards in 2012 for Best On-line and Best DDC Performance. For the 4th consecutive year, the main focus has been the "Driver's License Reinstatement" (DLR) class. Individuals arrested for "driving on revoked or suspended license" were referred to the DLR class as a condition of an "under advisement" plea.

The purpose of the class is to assess each driving history and devise an individual plan for the defendant to get their Tennessee driver's license reinstated. An added benefit is that they can receive coaching throughout this often complicated process.

In 2012, 3,770 Spanish-speaking persons and 4,748 English speaking persons enrolled in the Driver's License Reinstatement class. The combined DLR enrollments grossed \$766,620 annually. The Defensive Driving Classes grossed \$1,839,950, for a combined annual revenue of \$2,606,570.

Moving Citations

The number of Metro moving citations dropped from 89,222 in 2011 to 82,045 in 2012, a decrease of 7,177 citations. In spite of the decrease in moving citations, the 2012 Defensive Driving Class enrollment increased by 15%.

On-line Enrollments

2012 was the sixth full year of the on-line Traffic School operation in which 14,910 persons enrolled in traffic schools on-line, totaling \$1,291,100. This is an increase of \$222,990 over the 2011 annual online revenue.

Customer Service

The "Interactive Voice Recognition" (IVR) system is currently being tested and should be in service by the time this report publishes. The new phone menus allow customers to enroll with a debit or credit card without speaking directly to a school representative. This will allow the customer reps more time to resolve customer compliance issues and answering on-line user questions, which are usually, time sensitive. An added bonus is that customer calls will be answered on the second ring, resulting in fewer dropped calls and a drastic reduction in wait time.

Traffic Safety Courses

- **FIRST OFFENDER (FOT)** —a four-hour curriculum covering traffic safety rules and consequences, including laws on seat belts, child restraint, speeding, DUI and most commonly committed traffic offenses.
- **ALIVE AT 25 (A25, 4-Hour)**—designed to reduce risk-taking behavior such as driving distracted of young people 15-24 years of age and utilizes video tapes and group discussions.
- **DEFENSIVE DRIVING (DDC, 4-Hour)**—certified by the National Safety Council, this course teaches the importance of safety belts and other restraints, dangers of speeding, proper following distance and effects of alcohol and drugs.
- **DEFENSIVE DRIVING (DDC, 8-Hour)** —a more intensive version of the 4-hour course with emphasis on preventing traffic deaths and injuries.
- **ATTITUDINAL DYNAMICS OF DRIVING (ADD, 8-Hour)** —an intense 8-hour curriculum in group format that addresses mental health and attitude as they affect the ability to safely operate a vehicle.
- **DRIVERS LICENSE REINSTATEMENT CLASS (DLR, 2-HOUR)** — a tutorial class, utilizing the students own driving history and state reinstatement letter. The purpose of the class is to devise a viable plan of action for each student to follow. Since each legal situation is unique, the plans are custom written for each individual. Ongoing counseling is offered for individuals who have a combination of both state and county fees to satisfy before reinstatement.

Address for Traffic School

Justice A.A. Birch Building, 408 2nd Avenue North,
Suite 1130, P.O. Box 196300, Nashville, TN 37219

MEMBER

The National Safety Council & NSC International Advisory Committee; and The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)



Jan-Dec 2011-2012 Enrollment Comparison

	2011	2012
Defensive Driving (4-Hour)	4,729	5,444
Defensive Driving (8-Hour)	1,435	1,368
First Offender (2-Hour)	10,022	11,493
Alive @ 25 (4-Hour)	2,989	3,261
Attitudinal Dynamics	588	492
Drivers License Reinstatement	10,494	8,518
TOTALS	29,669	30,257



Probation & Electronic Monitoring

Written by: Robert Green, Director

Address for Probation Department

Ben West Building
100 James Robertson Parkway
Suite 10, P.O. Box 196300
Nashville, TN 37219

The General Sessions Probation Department has the responsibility of supervising approximately 6,500 offenders annually. Supervision responsibilities entail working with offenders to ensure compliance with the conditions of probation as ordered by the court. The Department's 22 Probation Officers, two DUI Bond-EM Officers, and seven Management/Support staff utilize current technology such as electronic monitoring, SCRAM, and ignition interlock to assist in managing our growing offender population.

The abuse of alcohol and drugs continues to play a significant role in the lives of the offenders we supervise. Thousands are referred annually to private and public treatment providers for substance abuse, mental health, and domestic violence services. Success for many offenders depends on their ability to apply treatment concepts to everyday living.

The Department experienced a change in leadership in 2012 with the retirement of Les Mondelli and the hiring of Bob Green as Probation Director on October 1, 2012. Immediate changes included a flexible working schedule for staff and expanded office hours to improve availability to the offenders we supervise. Other changes in 2012 included an evaluation of data with improved reporting, reducing time Probation Officers spend in court, and improved database information. Presently, we are working on a "paperless" pilot project by one Probation Officer. To date, the project is successful and additional officers will be added in early 2013. Our goal is to achieve a near paperless operation by early 2014.

ANNUAL REPORT 2012

Total Case Load	6,488
Probation	5,940
Multiple DUI Bond	505
Electronic Monitoring	43
Successful Completion	270
Revocations	926
Drug Tests Administered	13,220
Percentage Positive	21%
Public Service Work Hours Performed	50,948
Drug Test Fees Collected	\$22,610
Electronic Monitoring Fees Collected	\$13,292
Restitution Collected	\$204,420
Probation Supervision Fees Collected	\$1,159,352
Total Collections	\$1,399,674

GENERAL SESSIONS COURT JUDGES



From Left to Right in Order: Judge Gale B. Robinson, Judge Rachel L. Bell, Judge Casey E. Moreland, Judge Gloria A. Dumas, Judge John Aaron Holt, (seated) Presiding Judge Michael F. Mondelli, Judge Sue McKnight Evans, Judge Dan Eisenstein, Judge Dianne Turner, Judge William E. (Bill) Higgins, and Judge Angelita Blackshear Dalton



Judge John Aaron Holt



Judge (Bill) William E. Higgins



Judge Angelita Blackshear Dalton



Judge Rachel L. Bell



Judge Sue McKnight Evans



Judge Gale B. Robinson



Judge Dianne Turner

Dispensing Justice One Case At a Time...

CREDITS

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OTHER RELATED DEPARTMENTS

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Civil Court Clerk's Office	(615) 862-5195
Metro Environmental Court	(615) 862-5219
Sheriff's Department	(615) 862-8170
District Attorney General's Office	(615) 862-5500
Public Defender's Office	(615) 862-5730

INTERNET SERVICES

WEB ADDRESS: WWW.GSCOURT.NASHVILLE.GOV

Information regarding all services of the General Sessions Court can be found on-line at www.gscourt.nashville.gov. For information regarding civil cases, the address is circuit-clerk.nashville.gov. For information regarding criminal matters, the address is www.ccc.nashville.gov. From there, you can link to such topics as court dockets, judges' schedules, local rules, fees and downloadable forms.