

[933] File 77 Subject

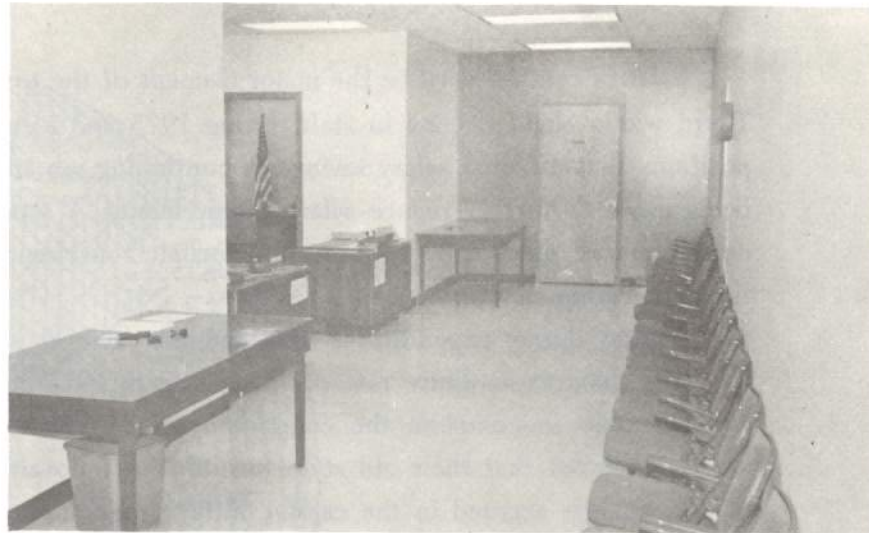
SUPERIOR COURT OF THE  
STATE OF WASHINGTON  
FOR KING COUNTY

ANNUAL REPORT 1975





**Ex Parte Department**  
Waiting room, clerk's reception  
area and judicial hearing room.



budget for 1976. Two motion calendar courtrooms were requested as well as two conventional jury courtrooms. The reviewing authority placed the motion calendar courtrooms in the capital program but did not fund them. The two conventional courtrooms were not placed in the program as being unjustified. It will be resubmitted in the next budget cycle (spring 1976).

During 1975, the jury administrative area was relocated to the front of the jury waiting room. It had been in a remote office adjacent to a judge's chambers. Private access to the chambers was through the jury office, making it inconvenient for the public as well as visitors to the chambers. The new arrangement makes it possible to have constant contact with the jurors.

The next facilities project will be a study to determine the space requirement of the administrative staff, courts and related agencies. The current assignment of office space indicates that there could be more efficient utilization. A technical assistance grant will be requested from American University for such a study. In that there are no matching fund requirements for such a grant, expedited processing is anticipated in getting approval.

#### JUVENILE COURT

Beginning in October, 1975 the judges of the Juvenile Court Committee began meeting twice weekly to discuss the increasing workload and calendar pressure at Juvenile Court. The fulltime assignment of three judicial officers was barely enough to maintain the workload. Assignment of eight prosecuting attorneys and eight public defenders exclusively to juvenile matters increased the court hearings considerably. The judges' committee is reviewing the entire process with the view of establishing new procedures toward expediting juvenile handling at the youth center consistent with meeting the necessary legal requirements.

*Court Reporting.* The heavy trial load and complexity factor of cases has markedly increased the transcript load on our court reporters. The appellate load is increasing and the added transcript requirements of our reporters has no end in sight. During this year, the National Center for State Courts completed a study of the state's appellate courts and showed the burgeoning case filings the state's appellate courts are now facing. The report shows



from 1970 through 1974 the filings in the Court of Appeals have increased from 854 to 1489 and the Supreme Court reflects a growth from 344 filings to 489 filings during the same period of time.

In order to cope with the corresponding increase in required transcripts requested of the court reporters, we have implemented the use of two court recording machines at Juvenile Court in two of the three courtrooms, with the utilization of clerical/recording skill to provide the electronic record and to type the transcripts when required. In addition, we have implemented a court recording device at the mental illness hearings at Harborview. Plans are to acquire additional recording equipment at Juvenile Court the forthcoming year and implement a recording device in the third courtroom, assuming we encounter no more problems than we have to date in our current usage. The court reporters formerly required at Juvenile Court and mental illness hearings will be transferred to Superior Court to relieve the workload created by the heavier number of appeals.

#### FAMILY COURT AND ADOPTION SERVICE (SPECIAL CALENDARS DEPARTMENT)

Family Court services in the custody/visitation area continued to grow in quantity. Total intake for these services was 658 cases, up 13 per cent from the 1975 total of 580. Conciliation intake declined slightly from the 1974 total of 289 to 272. Because the case weighting study begun during the year is still underway and being refined, it is difficult to assess the overall impact that these declines and increases will have on the Family Court staff.

Adoption procedures, particularly in the area of postadoption supervision and counseling, were modified in October 1975. This revision by the judges essentially reduced the requirement for an adoption counselor. With the foregoing action, coupled with a slight drop in stepparent adoptions, the Family Court's budget was reduced by one man year for the year 1976. There were no other agencies within Superior Court to absorb this man year due to budget limitation.

As an indication of the variety of activities this department can become involved in, the adoption service played a role in helping to place Vietnam orphans who came to this region as part of the international airlift, by doing

a number of home studies for the agencies sponsoring this program. Also interviews and recommendations were made to the court on 157 marriage waiver referrals for those 17 years old or under requesting marriage licenses.

The Special Calendars Department personnel greatly aided in making the National Conference of Conciliation Courts' 13th Annual Conference a success. Judge Solie M. Ringold was president of the association for the year 1974-75. The National Convention was held in a local hotel May 21-24.

The Family Court staff remained stable throughout the year with one resignation and an immediate replacement.

The Management Review begun by the court during this year will continue to reassess and evaluate the operations of this area in the forthcoming year. The Family Court administrator has undertaken and will continue a comprehensive study of the overall workload of this department. A specific, statistical report of the department's activity of the past year is published under separate cover.