

ERIE COUNTY COMMON PLEAS COURT

PROBATE DIVISION

2014 Annual Report Beverly K. McGookey, Judge

Cases heard in Probate Court deal with the administration of decedent's estates, guardianships, conservatorships, testamentary trusts, civil actions, adoptions, mental illness and mental retardation, minor's settlements, wrongful deaths, and name changes. In addition, the Probate Court provides registration services for births and corrections to birth records, issuance of marriage licenses, and numerous other statutory duties.

The Probate Judge is authorized to perform his/her duties under Chapter 2101 of the Ohio Revised Code. The Probate Court is unique in that it supervises cases that can be ongoing for many years, i.e. guardianships, conservatorships & administration of testamentary trusts (some lasting well over 40 years).

Ohio Supreme Court records reflect a total of 1173 pending cases on January 1, 2014. During 2014, 672 cases were filed, and 685 were disposed of, leaving a balance of 1160 cases pending as of December 31, 2014. The Court issued 439 marriage licenses during the year.

Over the past few years our Probate Court has worked to help expand the Erie County Volunteer Guardianship Program through Adult Advocacy Services, offering (in most cases) free guardianship services to needy wards. We have set up a program for a paid emergency guardian to handle situations when a family member is not available to serve.

We have also implemented a program, in conjunction with the ADAMHS Board, to provide the services of a professional emergency guardian in cases involving mental health issues when no one else is available to serve.

In addition to trial proceedings, Erie County's Probate Judges appoint members to various boards, including the Board of Developmental Disabilities, the Board of Park Commissioners of the Erie Metroparks, the S.O.S. (Serving Our Seniors) Board, Metropolitan Housing Authority, and the Sewage Treatment Appeals Board.

In addition to her statutory duties, Judge Beverly K. McGookey served as the President of the Ohio Association of Probate Judges (June of 2007 - June of 2009); and currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Ohio Association of Probate Judges, the Probate Law and Procedure committee of the Ohio Judicial Conference, and was appointed in 2014 to the Ohio Judicial College Board of Trustees.