

CONNECTICUT PROBATE ASSEMBLY ANNUAL MEETING

April 25, 2018

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Judge Mahon at 11:08 a.m.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance led** by Judge Lomme.
2. **Remarks of Senior Associate Justice the Honorable Richard N. Palmer**
Justice Palmer thanked all those who serve in the probate system and noted the efforts of Judge Knierim. He noted the positive changes in the probate courts and those that are coming, such as eFiling.
Justice Palmer spoke of Judge Caruso and his kindness and outstanding service to all. He applauded the efforts of Judge Mahon as President-Judge and looks forward to working with Judge Wright. Finally, he spoke of the public service of Judge Keeney.
3. **Approval of the January 25, 2018 Probate Assembly Meeting Minutes**
Approved
4. **Treasurer's Report:**
Judge Magistrali presented the reports for January and February, 2018.
Treasurer's reports approved.
5. **Committee Reports:**
 - Conservator Guidelines – Judge DeGennaro
The committee used the national standards as a starting point and worked to create standards for Connecticut. The standards have been submitted to the Assembly for review and are set to take effect on July 1, 2018.
 - Ethics – Judge Magistrali
A reminder to all that it is an election year. Judge Magistrali reminds judges to review the applicable canons of the Code of Ethics.
 - Legislative – Judges Fox and Rowe
Judge Rowe offered his condolences to the Caruso family.
The Probate Court Operations bill will be taken up this session. It includes allowing transfer of cases between Children's Courts in certain cases and a provision on kinship and respite.
Judge Fox reported that there is a proposal to raise the age from 18 to 21 for individuals eligible under the Special Immigration Statutes. He also reported that the budget should pass supporting the Probate Courts at level funding and suspending the automatic sweep of the probate fund.
 - Procedures Review – Judge Berkenstock
Judge Berkenstock reported that the committee continues to update the forms of the probate system. She encourages all to provide suggestions of needed changes.
 - Statistics – Judge Dorval
Judge Dorval offered his sympathies to the Caruso family. He thanks the members of the committee for all their hard work.

The committee has proposed revisions to the weighted workload system to better reflect the work done by the clerks and judges. The proposed system is based on a 10 point scale, with some 10+ possible rankings. The proposal will be circulated to all staff.

6. **Elections**

Judge Marino presented the slate of candidates:

Officers:

President-Judge	Honorable Philip Wright, Jr.
First Vice President-Judge	Honorable Michael Brandt
Second Vice President-Judge	Honorable Evelyn Daly
Executive Secretary	Honorable Michael Darby
Recording Secretary	Honorable Leah Schad
Treasurer	Honorable Michael Magistrali

Executive Committee:

Honorable Domenick Calabrese
Honorable Timothy Keeney
Honorable Mark DeGennaro

Budget Committee:

Honorable Joseph Marino

The slate was approved as presented.

7. **Remarks of the Probate Court Administrator**

Judge Knierim thanked Justice Palmer for addressing the Assembly. He thanked Judge Mahon for his service as President-Judge and congratulated Judge Wright. He welcomed Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman and the family of Judge Dan Caruso. Judge Knierim thanked all the judges and staff of the probate system for their outreach efforts to legislators in this last budget cycle. He recognized that staff has continued to perform with innovation and professionalism despite having less resources.

He acknowledged that the committees of the Assembly continue to work hard and produce admirable results.

8. **Remarks of the Out-going President Judge**

Judge Mahon stated he was honored to have the opportunity to serve as a probate judge for the last thirteen and a half years and as President-Judge for the last two. He believes that the Probate Courts are truly the "Peoples' Courts" and he is proud that the system handles matters with sensitivity and professionalism. Judge Mahon thanks all of the judges and staff and especially thanks Judge Knierim, Sue Dornfried and his wife, C.J.

Judge Wright presented Judge Mahon with a clock to commemorate his service to the probate system.

9. **Remarks of the Incoming President-Judge**

Judge Wright stated he was honored to have the opportunity to serve as President-Judge. He thanked Judge Knierim for his leadership and he thanked Judge Mahon

for all of his time and effort that he has dedicated to the probate system. Judge Wright is grateful for the support of his staff and the PCA staff.

10. Recognition of Retired Judges

Two retired judges were honored for their service to the probate system.

Judge Jack Keyes, from the New Haven Court, served as a probate judge for 32 years. Judge Keyes established the first Children's Court, the kinship and respite program and the New Haven truancy clinic.

Judge Steven Zelman, from the Tobacco Valley Court, served as a probate judge for 27 years. Judge Zelman is recognized for his service on numerous Assembly committees.

11. Presentation of Service Awards to Clerks

Three court clerks were honored for 25 years of service to the probate system.

Dina Falis from the Meriden Court

Linda Neal, from the Region #14 Court

Peggy Schroeder, from the Saybrook Court

12. Presentation of the Glenn E. Knierim Pro Bono Award

The award was presented by Judge Paul Ganim to Attorney Richard Bortolot. The award is presented in honor of Judge Glenn E. Knierim for outstanding pro bono service to the probate system.

13. Presentation of the Public Service Award

The award was presented posthumously to Judge Daniel Caruso. Judge Knierim recognized Judge Caruso's strong commitment to the probate system and his lifelong dedication to public service. Judge Caruso was a loyal and generous friend who took care of the people around him and was an exceptional judge. He served the probate system as President-Judge and was a skilled statesman.

Judge Knierim announced that Public Service Award would be renamed as the Daniel F. Caruso Public Service Award in his honor. The award was presented to the Caruso family with the condolences of the Assembly.

14. Other Business to come before the Executive Committee

Judge Anthony offered his condolences to the family of Judge Caruso. On behalf of the judges of Fairfield County, Judge Anthony presented the family with a \$1,000 donation to the Salvation Army in Judge Caruso's name.

15. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Leah Schad
Recording Secretary