



## CONNECTICUT PROBATE ASSEMBLY

### REGULAR MEETING JUNE 26, 2024

#### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Judge Darby at 12:22 p.m.

#### 2. Pledge of Allegiance

Judge Carchia lead the Assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### Roll call of the Judges

48 judges were present at CCSU for the meeting. In addition, Probate Court Administrator Judge Streit-Kefalas, Attorneys Heather Dostaler, Evan Brunetti and Eric Rothauser and other staff also attended.

#### 3. Approval of the April 10, 2024 Probate Assembly Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Judge Gardner Riordan and seconded by Judge Lewis to approve the minutes for the April 10, 2024 Assembly meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

#### 4. Committee Reports

##### Continuing Education

Judge Lewis thanked all the presenter judges. The next seminar is on September 18, 2024 and will be held at CCSU. The committee is working on a collaborative program with the Connecticut Bar Association on children's matters. LifeBridge will be presenting a program on trauma and secondary trauma. There will be an ethics component and a panel with a Juvenile Court Judge and Probate Court Judge to address children's matters. The committee's next meeting is August 21, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. in the PCA Library. All suggestions for educational topics are welcome.

##### Ethics

Judge Brandt reported that the committee recently sent out sample Rule 15.6 disclosure forms and will continue to forward ethical decisions of relevance. The next committee meeting is on September 19, 2024 at 9:30 p.m. in the PCA Library.

##### Legislative

Judge Fox reported that the Committee last met in April before the legislative session closed. The Probate Ops bill was passed. The next meeting is

November 7, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. in the Trumbull Probate Court. Please send any suggestions for proposed legislation to Judges Fox and Rowe.

### **Planning Committee**

Judge Anthony reported that the next committee meeting is on August 19, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. in the PCA Library. The committee is currently working on bench guidelines for judges on remote and in-person hearings.

### **Procedures Review Committee**

Judge Darby reported on behalf of Judge Berkenstock that the next meeting is September 9, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. in the PCA library.

### **Public Information**

The next meeting is September 6, 2024 at 1:30 p.m. in the PCA Library.

### **Court Security**

Judge Darby reported that Judge Calabrese is retiring and considering the ongoing dialogue about court security, he recruited Judges Rebimbas and Vaccarelli to join the committee.

## **5. Presentation of the Daniel F. Caruso Public Service Award**

Judge Streit-Kefalas described the history of the service award re-named in honor of the late Hon. Daniel F. Caruso in 2018. She presented the award to Mairead Painter, the Connecticut State Long Term Care Ombudsman who is dedicated to improving the lives of those who receive support services from the state. She is an excellent partner with PCA. Mairead Painter thanked the Assembly for the honor and recognized the hard work of the courts.

## **6. Remarks of the Probate Court Administrator**

Judge Streit-Kefalas reported on the following matters:

- a. The Governor has issued writs of special election for 6 probate districts. The elections will take place on November 5, 2024.
- b. The Court Security Committee had a great response from its recent survey and is compiling the results to share with all courts.
- c. The updated Rules of Procedure have been approved and will take effect on July 1, 2024. They are posted on our website. We will let you know as soon as hard copies are printed by the state's new printer.
- d. New Probate Court Regulations were also approved and became effective May 16, 2024.
- e. PCA is currently conducting court visits.
- f. The State Auditors of Public Accounts that audit all courts and PCA is currently undergoing a required audit of public accounts. Please cooperate with auditors and any requests for information.
- g. Civil contempt procedures will be addressed by the Legislative Committee to improve its use as a tool for judges.

- h. CMS will be updated soon to address legislative changes affecting courts on July 1, 2024.
- i. Under P.A. 24-118, the legislature is creating a task force to study the responsiveness of state agencies and the Judicial Branch to issues concerning child sexual abuse. In addition, the Office of the Child Advocate will be reviewing state agency practices and procedures for the care and protection of minors in Probate Court guardianships with a report due by January 1, 2025. Please contact PCA if an advocate reaches out to your court.

**7. Remarks of the President-Judge**

Judge Darby remarked that he hopes to address weighted workload, court security and contempt issues during his tenure as President-Judge. He intends to form committees to study each issue. He encouraged judges to step up and serve on a committee. He also spoke of the difficult dynamic our clerks face when trying to help the public without dispensing legal advice. He will work with PCA to assist in trying to solve the difficult situations encountered by clerks. He also is committed to trying to increase the number of guardians and conservators available to serve our courts.

**8. Any other business to come before the Assembly**

None

**9. Adjourn**

Judge Brandt made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Judge Lewis and unanimously carried. The Assembly adjourned at 12:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Hon. Kathleen N. Maxham  
Recording Secretary