

## **Hunterdon County Surrogate Selected As Section Chief, Pandemic Issues Continue To Present Challenges For Surrogate Courts**

Surrogate Susan J. Hoffman has once again been selected by her peers to serve as Section Chief for the Surrogates as part of the Constitutional Officers Association of New Jersey, effective September 25, 2020.

“I was sworn in as Section Chief September 2001 right after 9/11 and was faced with New York originally stating it would not issue death certificates without a body being identified. I worked hard with the Administrative Office of the Courts to substitute documents for the death certificate. Fortunately, New York changed its decision and issued death certificates. And now there is a pandemic that the Surrogates are dealing with.”

The Surrogate’s Court reviews and files adoptions, declares death actions, appoints guardians for persons in need and oversees trustees, conservatorships and accountings, in addition to several other administrative duties related to wills and probates, as well as records preservation.

Surrogate Hoffman stated that the most pressing items this year is establishing statewide Early Settlement Panels for contested probate matters, continue to have input in the statewide Guardianship Monitoring Program and keeping the Surrogate Courts open during the pandemic.

The Constitutional Officers Association of New Jersey is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of service. The Surrogates meet throughout the year for seminars and to exchange ideas.

The Surrogate’s office may be reached Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm by calling 908-788-1156 or visit, <http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/depts/surrog/message.htm> for more information.