



It's Always Happening in Magistrate Court

We're proud to share some recent accomplishments from our Magistrate Court Crew. Judge Ruth McMullin just returned from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania with Lawyers Without Borders for a week long training seminar. Judge McMullin was part of a global team lead by the Hon. Ann Claire Williams, retired, Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. The team was brought in to train prosecutors, wildlife officers, and Magistrates who handle wildlife trafficking cases on a variety of legal issues. Judge McMullin presented a lecture on cross-examination techniques and she also lead small group presentations on effective charging, sentencing and judicial case management. Earlier this year, Judge McMullin traveled to Kingston, Jamaica with a team from the National Center for State Courts. There, she conducted a program for the Jamaican Criminal Defense Bar on strategies for more effective use of plea negotiations.

In addition, our Court's Staff Attorney, Y. Soo Jo, has been appointed to serve on the State Bar of Georgia's standing committee on Access to Justice for the 2018-2019 term. The Access to Justice Committee makes recommendations to the State Bar's Board of Governors on ways to facilitate and recognize pro bono services in Georgia, studies and reports on methods of making legal services more available to low and moderate income groups, and partners with local Bar associations to achieve these goals. Ms. Jo has been serving on the Pro Bono Subcommittee of the Access to Justice Committee for the past year, and considers her recent appointment to the full committee to be a great privilege and opportunity to promote equal access to justice here in the Gwinnett Courts and throughout the State of Georgia.

For two days this summer, the Magistrate Court once again hosted the Legal Explorers from the Salvation and Deliverance Church, led by Bishop D.A. Williams. Highlights included spending the day at the Magistrate Court Jail Court Annex, hearing from judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys and law enforcement personnel, spending a morning watching civil hearings at GJAC (and hearing from civil attorneys) before being turned loose to have a mock trial of their own. The Explorers were also treated to an amazing demonstration by the Sheriff's Rapid Response Team. We always look forward to seeing the Legal Explorers; each and every one of these teens has a bright future ahead of them!

Hope everyone had a safe, happy summer!

Kristina Hammer Blum

Chief Magistrate