

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 041074)

RESOLUTION

Commending the Civil Trial Division of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas for being ranked the Best Trial Court of any Major Urban Court in the Country.

WHEREAS, In 1992, the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Civil Trial Division was faced with a backlog of more than 28,000 cases and was experiencing delays as long as seven years before moving a case to jury trial; and

WHEREAS, These conditions resulted in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas being ranked second-to-last among the country's largest 45 urban trial courts; and

WHEREAS, During the past twelve years, the Civil Trial Division has undertaken an impressive effort to eliminate its case backlog and to improve the management of cases; and

WHEREAS, By the end of 2003, the Court had reduced its total inventory of pending civil jury cases to fewer than 6,200 and only a small percentage of these cases had been pending longer than twenty-four months; and

WHEREAS, These achievements were accomplished while continuing to be one of the busiest general jurisdiction trial courts, with over 35,000 cases initiated in 2003 alone; and

WHEREAS, The case backlog was reduced through improved management of cases, along with the initiation of several other programs, including the Major Civil Jury Program, the Complex Litigation Center, the Motions Court Program, the Discovery Court Program, the Commerce Court Program and the Compulsory Arbitration Program; and

WHEREAS, Late last year, the court leaders asked the National Center for State Courts to undertake a review, provide a progress report, and make further recommendations for improvement; and

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WHEREAS, After an evaluation, the National Center for State Courts concluded that “the Philadelphia Court’s performance with civil jury cases is now better than that of any large urban trial court in the United States” and that the Civil Trial Division is “one of the finest and most successful urban trial courts in the country”; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby commend the judges, court administration employees, and the Prothonotary staff for their effective implementation of management reforms and for attaining this impressive achievement.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Honorable Frederica A. Massiah-Jackson, President Judge, the Honorable James J. Fitzgerald, III, Administrative Judge of the Trial Division, and the Honorable William J. Manfredi, Supervising Judge of the Civil Section, as an expression of this legislative body’s congratulations for this national recognition.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the ninth of December, 2004.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Patricia Rafferty
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Nutter and DiCicco

Sponsored by: Council President Verna, Councilmembers Nutter, DiCicco, Rizzo, Tasco, Clarke, Krajewski, Ramos, Blackwell, Goode, Reynolds Brown, Cohen, O'Neill, Kenney, Kelly and Miller