

# Hot Topics Newsletter

## GENERAL NOTICES

- The 2025 Judicial Conference is April 23 to April 25 at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge. Don't wait, register today! Registration is open until March 17.
- All overnight lodging requests should be arranged through the AOC Travel Coordinator, Allison Leebrick, at [allison.leebrick@mdcourts.gov](mailto:allison.leebrick@mdcourts.gov), unless otherwise approved by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Maryland, the State Court Administrator (SCA), or their designee.
- For State Retirement updates, visit: <https://sra.maryland.gov/members> and for the newsletter: [https://sra.maryland.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/retireenewsfeb2023\\_-\\_final\\_for\\_web.pdf?1677782761](https://sra.maryland.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/retireenewsfeb2023_-_final_for_web.pdf?1677782761).
- For the latest news, updates, payroll info, Hot Topics and more, check out the Senior Judge webpage, <https://mdcourts.gov/hr/seniorjudges>. Don't forget to save the link so you can refer to it at any time.

## MARYLAND SUPREME COURT FETES JUDGE WILNER

In its packed courtroom on January 23, our Supreme Court honored Judge Alan M. Wilner for, among his accomplishments, over 47 years of service as a judge and his tenure on the Court's Standing

Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure. Judge Wilner, who retired from the Committee this past November, served 28 years on the Committee, with 27 of those as its chair. He was involved with the Committee's work continuously since 1985.



Several speakers, including the chairs of the Maryland Senate and House Committees involving the Judiciary (Sen. William C. Smith, Jr. and Delegate Luke H. Clippinger) and Renée Hutchins Laurent, Dean of the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, noted his extraordinary service to the Maryland Judiciary and to Maryland law, leading the way on numerous initiatives, including the development of rules to facilitate management of litigation; codification of the Maryland Rules of Evidence; development of state-wide rules for greater uniformity in the probate process; revision of rules pertaining to pre-trial release; revision of rules relating to adoption; reorganization and revision of rules governing procedures in the juvenile court; development of rules governing access to judicial records; revision of procedures pertaining to attorney disciplinary proceedings and judicial disabilities and discipline; development of rules to implement Maryland Electronic Courts

## IN THIS ISSUE :

- BE AWARE OF BITCOIN AND BENCH WARRANT/ARREST SCAMS  
Page 2
- AGING PHILOSOPHY  
Page 3

- A MESSAGE FROM THE JUDICIARY HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION  
Page 4
- A PURSUIT OF JUSTICE BLOG
- FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES
- JIS CORNER  
Page 5

- IN MEMORIAM
- UPCOMING ADVANCED PAYROLLS
- SENIOR JUDGES COMMITTEE
- RETIREMENT SERVICES CONTACT LIST  
Page 6

(MDEC); and development of rules pertaining to remote participation in judicial proceedings.

In addition to serving as Rules Committee chair, Judge Wilner served as a member and chair of numerous judicial committees and work groups over the years, including most recently as a member of the Maryland Judicial Council's Major Projects Committee, chair of the Legislative Review Work Group of the Judicial Council's Court Operations Committee, and as a member of the former Work Group on the Professionalism Course and the Professionalism Center.

Judge Wilner's judicial career was even more prodigious. He served on the Maryland Court of Appeals as its member from the Second Appellate Judicial Circuit (Baltimore County and Harford County) from 1996 to 2007; as chief judge of the Court of Special Appeals from 1990 to 1996; and, as judge-at-large on the Court of Special Appeals from 1977 to 1990. Judge Wilner has also served as senior judge since 2007.

Prior to being appointed to the bench, Judge Wilner served as an assistant attorney general of Maryland from 1965 to 1968; chief legislative officer for Governor Marvin Mandel; and, an associate at Sherbow, Shea & Doyle and Venable, Baetjer & Howard. He graduated from Baltimore City College, The Johns Hopkins University (BA, MLA), and the University of Maryland School of Law. Among his awards and honors, Judge Wilner received the Professional Legal Excellence Award for Advancement of Professional Competence from the Maryland Bar Foundation, was named one of the Daily Record's Influential Marylanders, and was elected to Honorary Membership in the Order of the Coif.

The Senior Judges Committee expresses its pride in Judge Wilner's accomplishments and wishes him only the best in his overall retirement from active service as a Senior Judge. We are losing one of the best of us.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)

## **BE AWARE OF BITCOIN AND BENCH WARRANT/ARREST SCAMS**

**BY: SECURITY ADMINISTRATION AND DISTRICT COURT  
SECURITY OFFICE**

The U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) have issued alerts of several nationwide imposter scams involving individuals claiming to be U.S. Marshals, court officers, or other local law enforcement officials.

During these calls, scammers attempt to collect a fine in lieu of arrest due to a claim of identity theft, failing to report for jury duty, or other offenses, including outstanding arrest warrants. They then tell victims they can avoid arrest by withdrawing cash and transferring it to the government, purchasing a prepaid debit card such as a Green Dot card or gift card and read the card number over the phone to satisfy the fine, or by depositing cash into bitcoin ATMs and Coin Star kiosks, which are generally located in grocery stores.

Another scam you should be aware of is an email scam, alleging they have hacked into your computer and have gotten video of you and details of your browsing history. They imply that they have proof of you visiting "less than desirable" websites and video proof of what you have been doing while visiting said sites. They may reference your address and your city in this email, making you believe that it is a legitimate threat. It is best to ignore and delete these emails as soon as you get them.

### **Things to remember:**

- The U.S. Marshals Service, or local law enforcement, WILL NEVER ask for credit/debit card/gift card numbers, wire transfers, or bank routing numbers, or to make bitcoin deposits for any purpose.
- NEVER divulge personal or financial information to unknown callers.
- Report scam phone calls to your local FBI offices and to the FTC.
- You can remain anonymous when you report.

- Authenticate the call by calling the clerk of the court's office of the U.S. District Court in your area and verify the court order given by the caller. As Maryland Judiciary official, you also have the ability to verify any outstanding warrants for your arrest as a result of missing jury duty.

One way to minimize your exposure to these scams is to enroll in the Judiciary's personal privacy shielding program, currently provided by LEO Web Protect.

They are urging people to report the calls their local FBI office and file a consumer complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which has the ability to detect patterns of fraud from the information collected and share that data with law enforcement. You are also encouraged to reach out to our Judicial Threat Management team to report any scam attempts if you feel a threat has been made.

If you have any questions regarding these scams, feel free to reach out to members of the Judiciary Security:

Judicial Threat Management Center (JTMC):  
[jtmc@mdcourts.gov](mailto:jtmc@mdcourts.gov)  
 Sean Wolcuff, AOC Security Director:  
[sean.wolcuff@mdcourts.gov](mailto:sean.wolcuff@mdcourts.gov)

Stephen Barlow, District Court Security Manager:  
[stephen.barlow@mdcourts.gov](mailto:stephen.barlow@mdcourts.gov)

### AGING PHILOSOPHY

"Old age comes at a bad time." (Ed Sullivan)

"Old age is like a plane flying through a storm. Once you are aboard, there is nothing you can do about it." (Golda Meir)

"The older I get, the more clearly I remember things that never happened." (Mark Twain)

"I'm at that age where my back goes out more than I do." (Phyllis Diller)

"Nice to be here? At my age, it's nice to be anywhere." (George Burns)

"First you forget names, then you forget faces, then you forget to pull your zipper up; then, you forget to pull your zipper down." (Rob Reiner)

"You spend 90 percent of your adult life hoping for a long rest and the last 10 percent trying to convince the Lord that you're actually not THAT tired." (Princess Grace)

"Old people shouldn't eat health foods. They need all the preservatives they can get." (Bob Hope)

"At my age, flowers scare me." (George Burns)

"At age 20, we worry about what others think of us... at age 40, we don't care what they think of us... at age 60, we discover they haven't been thinking of us at all." (Ann Landers)

"When I was young, I was called a rugged individualist. When I was in my fifties, I was considered eccentric. Here I am doing and saying the same things I did then, and I'm labeled senile." (Milton Berle)

"The important thing to remember is that I'm probably going to forget." (Martin Scorsese)

"It's paradoxical that the idea of living a long life appeals to everyone, but the idea of getting old doesn't appeal to anyone." (Andy Rooney)

"The older I get, the better I used to be." (Lee Trevino)



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

"I was thinking about how people seem to read the Bible a lot more as they get older, and then it dawned on me - they're cramming for their final exam." (George Carlin)

"Everything seems to slow down with age, except the time it takes cake and ice cream to reach your hips." (Elizabeth Taylor)

"Grandchildren don't make a man feel old, it's the knowledge that he's married to a grandmother that does." (Norman Vincent Peale)

When your friends begin to flatter you on how young you look, it's a sure sign you're getting old." (Mark Twain)

"You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks." (Dennis Quaid)

"There are three stages in man's Life: he believes in Santa Claus, he does not believe in Santa Claus, he is Santa Claus." (Leon Phillips)

"Looking fifty is great - if you're sixty." (Joan Rivers)

#### **A MESSAGE FROM THE JUDICIARY HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION**

##### Your State Pension Account via mySRPS

The Judiciary Human Resources Division (JHRD) encourages you to stay connected with your pension account via the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System's online portal, mySRPS. The mySRPS portal allows you to access up-to-date information on your retirement account, view and update your designated beneficiaries, calculate retirement benefit estimates whenever you want, and more.

A few important reminders:

1. Make sure that you keep your beneficiary information current with the State Retirement Agency.

You can login to mySRPS to update your beneficiaries after life events such as marriage, divorce, birth, or death of a loved one to see whether changes are necessary. Please note that

designated beneficiaries cannot be changed after an account holder's death.

2. Talk to your loved ones now about survivor benefits.

Let your family or other loved ones know of the updated guide for Recently Deceased Judge's Beneficiary Support Assistance in the event of your death. Update your loved ones of your pension information and other important paperwork, such as life insurance information and your will.

##### Maryland State Retiree Health Benefits

We are happy to help if you have any outstanding questions or need assistance regarding your prescription drug coverage or Medicare Part D.

If applicable, you may also reach out to Via Benefits at 1-855-556-4419 for questions about Medicare Part D options or your Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA). More information can be found on the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Employee Benefits Division (EBD) retiree website.

##### Special Enrollment Period

The State-sponsored prescription drug plan ended on December 31, 2024, and if you did not enroll in a prescription drug plan you are still eligible to enroll into a new Medicare Prescription Drug Plan with your Special Enrollment Period (SEP).

In the fall of 2024, the Senior Judges Committee established an email account addressed as [Retiredjudgesrx@mdcourts.gov](mailto:Retiredjudgesrx@mdcourts.gov) for the retired judges and beneficiaries to use should they run into any problems accessing the VIA Program or its representatives or with the Department of Budget and Management ("DBM"). Lynne Battaglia, [Lynne.Battaglia@Mdcourts.gov](mailto:Lynne.Battaglia@Mdcourts.gov), and Pete Saquella, [Peter.Saquella@Mdcourts.gov](mailto:Peter.Saquella@Mdcourts.gov), will continue to monitor the site daily to report any problems encountered to DBM and/or VIA during the Special Enrollment Period.

We look forward to continuing to provide assistance in 2025!



**A PURSUIT OF JUSTICE BLOG****BY: HON. STEVEN I. PLATT**

Check out the latest article on [A Pursuit of Justice](#) titled, *The Intersection of Advocacy and Financial Forensics: The Role of the Expert in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dispute Resolution*.

**2025 FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES****BY: DEBRA KAMINSKI**

As a reminder, 2024 Judiciary Financial Disclosure Statements are due on or before April 30, 2025. You may complete your Statement in paper form or via our online filing system. We strongly encourage you to file using the online filing system because the information auto-populates from year-to-year. You should have received an email that includes details for filing your 2024 Statement, as well as a Guide to Online Filing with step-by-step instructions on how to complete your Statement online.

As a reminder, for security reasons, please do not include names of any family members. Instead of listing their full name, please identify them by their relationship to you (i.e., spouse, daughter, son). This applies to all Schedules although Schedules A and G most often request this type of information. As in past years, please identify the address of the employer of a family member by just listing the county and state if you believe there might be a security issue created by listing the full address.

Please feel free to contact Debra Kaminski directly if you need any assistance. Her direct line is (410) 260-1271 and her email address is [debra.kaminski@mdcourts.gov](mailto:debra.kaminski@mdcourts.gov). Below is the transition timeline provided by DBM. We look forward to providing assistance.

**JIS CORNER: STAY IN THE KNOW****CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS****PASSWORDS**

Creating a strong password can significantly enhance your security. The most secure passwords are lengthy and use a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols.

Here are some tips for crafting a strong password:

- Use a passphrase that combines words or phrases that are easy for you to remember but difficult for others to guess.
- Do not recycle passwords by changing a number or special character in the sequence. Instead, create something new.

Try out the Bitwarden Password Strength Testing Tool to see how long it may take a cybercriminal to crack your password: [Password Tester | Test Your Password Strength | Bitwarden](#)

For additional tips on staying safe while online, please visit the Judicial Information Systems, Information Security page on CourtNet: [Information Security \(state.md.us\)](https://www.courtnet.state.md.us/InformationSecurity)

Please contact Customer Services at 410-260-1114 if you have any questions.

**IN MEMORIAM**

- ❖ Hon. John. P. Davey  
Circuit Court for Prince George's County
- ❖ Hon. R. Patrick Hayman  
District Court in Somerset County
- ❖ Hon. John F. McAuliffe  
Supreme Court of Maryland
- ❖ Hon. Andrew L. Sonner  
Appellate Court of Maryland
- ❖ Hon. Michael J. Stamm  
Circuit Court for St. Mary's County
- ❖ Hon. J. Owen Wise  
Circuit Court for Caroline County
- ❖ Hon. Gerard W. Wittstadt  
District Court in Baltimore County

**THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL'S  
SENIOR JUDGES COMMITTEE**

Hon. James A. Kenney III, Chair, Senior Judge  
 Hon. Deborah Sweet Eyler, Vice Chair, Senior Judge  
 Hon. Jean Baron, Senior Judge  
 Hon. Lynne A. Battaglia, Senior Judge  
 Hon. Lawrence R. Daniels, Senior Judge  
 Hon. Glenn T. Harrell, Senior Judge  
 Hon. Steven I. Platt, Senior Judge  
 Hon. Irma S. Raker, Senior Judge  
 Sharon Reed, District Court Headquarters  
 Hon. Marcus Z. Shar, Senior Judge  
 Hon. Nancy B. Shuger, Senior Judge  
 Hon. Norman R. Stone III, Senior Judge  
 Hon. Dennis M. Sweeney, Senior Judge  
 Hon. Barbara B. Waxman, Senior Judge  
 Eliana Pangelinan, Staff

**UPCOMING ADVANCED PAYROLLS FOR SENIOR  
JUDGES**

**05/07/25 – 05/20/25** Timesheets will be due for approval by noon on Monday, May 19<sup>th</sup>.  
**06/04/25 – 06/17/25** Timesheets will be due for approval by noon on Monday, June 16<sup>th</sup>.

**RETIREMENT SERVICES CONTACT LIST****Maryland State Retirement and Pension System** – 1-800-492-5909

Shane Brown  
[sbrown@sra.state.md.us](mailto:sbrown@sra.state.md.us)  
 410-625-5664

**Social Security Administration (SSA)**  
[www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)  
 1-800-772-1213

**Centers for Medicare and Medicaid**  
[www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)  
 1-800-633-4227

**Maryland Supplement Retirement Plan (MSRP)** – 1-800-545-4730

Angela Anderson  
[angela.anderson@maryland.gov](mailto:angela.anderson@maryland.gov)  
 443-305-9055

**Department of Budget & Management, Employee Benefits Division**  
 410-767-4775

Missy Plunkert  
[mary.plunkert@maryland.gov](mailto:mary.plunkert@maryland.gov)  
 410-319-2176

**Maryland Judiciary:  
Human Resources Division**

Ebonye Caldwell, Assistant State Court Administrator  
[ebonye.caldwell@mdcourts.gov](mailto:ebonye.caldwell@mdcourts.gov)  
 410-260-1289

Lauren Weirauch, Dep. Director, HR  
[lauren.weirauch@mdcourts.gov](mailto:lauren.weirauch@mdcourts.gov)  
 410-260-3765

Debra Kaminski  
[debra.kaminski@mdcourts.gov](mailto:debra.kaminski@mdcourts.gov)  
 410-260-1271

**Employment Services** – 410-260-1731

Janean Thompson, Supervisor  
[janean.thompson@mdcourts.gov](mailto:janean.thompson@mdcourts.gov)  
 410-260-1269

Natasha Curtis  
[natasha.curtis@mdcourts.gov](mailto:natasha.curtis@mdcourts.gov)  
 410-260-3678

Leah Musiker  
[leah.musiker@mdcourts.gov](mailto:leah.musiker@mdcourts.gov)  
 410-260-1276

Barbara Prevo  
[barbara.prevo@mdcourts.gov](mailto:barbara.prevo@mdcourts.gov)  
 410-260-1288

**Office of Payroll Services** – 410-260-1735

Alex Hoyle, Manager  
[alex.hoyle@mdcourts.gov](mailto:alex.hoyle@mdcourts.gov)  
 410-260-1286

Gail Graham  
[gail.graham@mdcourts.gov](mailto:gail.graham@mdcourts.gov)  
 410-260-1721

Any questions regarding this issue, please contact Eliana Pangelinan at  
[eliana.pangelinan@mdcourts.gov](mailto:eliana.pangelinan@mdcourts.gov)