



*The Honorable  
C. Jean Stewart, Presiding*



## Annual Court Visitor Training/Meeting Held and Increase in Fee for Court Visit

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On July 25, 2008, the Annual Court Visitor Training/Meeting was held at the Denver Probate Court hosted by Susie Jordan, facilitator of protective proceedings. A court visitor is appointed in each new adult guardianship or conservatorship case that is filed in the Probate Court. Their job in a nutshell is to interview the respondent in person, explain the proceedings to him/her, and to make certain recommendations to the court via a written report.

Judge Stewart presented valuable refresher information on the sections of the Colorado Revised Statutes that cover the appointment of court visitors including their scope and duties. She also addressed many concerns and answered many questions posed by our current court visitors.

Ms. Jordan discussed the new report form (JDF 810) and also the new handout for respondents (JDF 797), which the current visitors had already flawlessly switched to using. The visitors were commended on submitting electronically filled out reports, which was the main goal of the last visitor meeting. Also discussed was the new CAC system, which requires visitors to request their payment for State pay cases electronically.

There has been much discussion of court visitors at the state level recently, including plans for new training materials to ensure consistent training statewide.

The big news, however, is that the fee for a court visit is increasing! Denver Probate Court visitors receive a flat rate for their visits. The fee includes mileage, copies, postage, long distance and any other costs incurred. This fee is currently \$75 and has been for many years.

**Effective September 1, 2008, the fee shall be increased to \$100.**

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**This newsletter is intended to provide general reference material in summary form and does not constitute binding authority on this or any other Court in a particular case. Moreover, this information is in no way an adequate substitute for qualified legal representation.**

# Employee Spotlight

Sarah Solano



If you have ever had to go to room 224, then you have probably met Sarah. She is the division clerk for Judge Stewart. Her official job title is Specialist. And that is exactly what she does, she specializes in overseeing the day-to-day activities that occur in the division office, chambers and in the Courtroom. She also processes estates, some protective proceedings cases, arranges administrative activities for Judge Stewart, and is the Deputy Registrar and assistant bailiff. Sarah has been with Denver Probate Court for almost 4 years.

That's the work side of Sarah, let's see what's on the other side:

**Family:** Husband – Dominique, Sons - Alex (9) and Drew (6) and a new puppy- Champ.

**What is your idea of happiness:** Spending time with family and friends. Listening to good music.

**When I'm not working, I'm...** Shuffling boys to and from sports, school and shopping. Trying to train Champ – have any tips?

**What is the quality you most like in a person:** Honesty

**Best gift you ever received:** My family and my very own pink iPod.

**What's the most useless thing you ever bought:** All my Disney movies that are on VHS. I thought I would get rich off them someday.

**What three individuals of historic or present would you like to have over for dinner:** Johnny Carson, Oprah and Rosa Parks.

**Not many people know that I:** Play classical piano, studied for several years and taught for 2 years.

**Toughest thing about your job:** Trying to keep up with the hundreds of e-mails I receive daily.

**Best memory at Denver Probate:** Listening to Judge Stewart's witticisms while she is on the bench.

**What would you do if you won the lottery:** If you can find me, I will tell you.

**Describe your perfect day:** As long as it starts with a cup of strong coffee, then I'm okay!

**What do you like most about Denver Probate:** Staff members and my office.

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It continues to be a flat rate to which no other costs will be added. Each district has the ability to set its own visitor rate of pay, and this new \$100 rate is effective in Denver Probate Court cases only.

**Note to attorneys:** the visitor fee is due to the visitor PRIOR to your scheduled hearing. The Court will vacate a hearing if the visitor fee has not been paid prior to the hearing.

If you have questions or comments about the Denver Probate Court visitor program, please contact Susie Jordan at [Susanne.Jordan@denverprobatecourt.org](mailto:Susanne.Jordan@denverprobatecourt.org)

## Conservatorship Training

The Denver Probate Court offers free training classes for conservators. All conservators are welcome. Conservators who attend the training will receive a certificate of attendance, a copy of which will be kept in their case file.

### ***The next training class will be held:***

**Date:** Monday, September 29, 2008

**Time:** 8:30am to 9:30am, followed by an optional question and answer session from 9:30am to 10:00am

**Location:** 1437 Bannock St., Room 224, Denver, CO 80202

Lucy Murray, a Certified Public Accountant and Court Volunteer, will conduct the training. Lucy and other Denver Probate Court staff will be available after the training to answer questions.

The goal of the training is to help conservators set up a system to manage the finances of a protected person and perform the required annual reporting in an efficient and effective manner. Not only will the training be informative and helpful to conservators, it will also offer conservators a unique opportunity to meet other conservators and exchange ideas.

The training class covers the following topics:

- The advisability to pay for all expenses for the conservatorship through a central checking account
- The need to maintain all records for the duration of the conservatorship because the Court and Interested Persons can request documentation at any time
- How to prepare the Conservator's Inventory and Financial Plan (JDF 882), and when an amended Financial Plan should be filed with the Court
- How to determine if the remaining assets in the estate are sufficient to provide for the present and future care of the Protected Person
- Common questions and issues when completing the annual Conservator's Report (JDF 885)
- When a conservator must file the IRS Form 1099-MISC to report payments made for services provided to the estate
- How to determine if the amounts paid for professional services are reasonable

We strongly encourage new conservators to attend, as well as conservators who have an upcoming report due.

If you plan to attend, please notify Lucy Murray at [lucy.murray@judicial.state.co.us](mailto:lucy.murray@judicial.state.co.us) or 720-865-8338.



Pictured from left: Adam Massaro, Pat Watkins, Judge Stewart, Samantha Credle, Sarah Solano, Susanna Baker. Photo by: Jennifer Shaler.

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, Judge Stewart and her staff toured the Mental Health Corporation of Denver's Ivy Street Clinic and visited MHCD's Monroe House.

In addition to touring MHCD's facilities, the court's mental health team have recently visited the Colorado Mental Health Institute at Ft. Logan, Denver Health Medical Center's 4 West and the newly renovated Psychiatric ER.

## Denver Probate Lucky to Have Interns

The Denver Probate Court has enjoyed the opportunity to work with three outstanding individuals this summer. We'd like to introduce you to Ms. Sam Credle, MSLA, and to law students Pat Watkins and Adam Massaro. We are extremely grateful for their hard work, and for their cheerful willingness to "work for experience."

**P**at Watkins is preparing for his 3rd year of law school at the University of Kansas, where he has focused on estate planning and local government law. He attended college at Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, where he enjoyed playing on the soccer team and participating in student government. Pat spends much of his spare time chasing his quickly evading athletic past, and also coaches youth soccer in Lawrence, Kansas. He is especially excited about taking advantages of the Colorado summer and being yet another Jayhawk in the Denver Probate office. *[Ed. Note: Rock Chalk.]* Pat also enjoys a fierce game of ping pong, non-fiction books, and cooking.

**Note:** Pat has already returned to Kansas to start the school year. "...I have truly valued all of the things I have learned here at the Probate Court. Without a doubt, this is the friendliest and nicest office I have had the chance to be a part of, so Thank You!" -- Pat Watkins

**S**amantha Credle (Sam) has always been obsessed with law and politics. In undergrad she earned a double major in History and Political Science in just three years. She was the president of History/Geography Club, Phi Alpha Theta, and secretary of Spectrum and Program Council. She worked on two different campaigns as campaign manager: one for the current mayor and one for a city council member who died just hours after winning the position. She has also worked on several national campaigns.

Her love of the law and the judicial system in particular lead her to pursue her Master's Degree in

Legal and Judicial Administration at the Denver University Sturm College of Law. It is through this program that Sam found the Denver Probate Court. After several classes studying mental illness and the courts, and faced with the requirement of completing an externship for graduation, Sam contacted the Denver Probate Court to pursue an opportunity in the Court's mental health. Judge Stewart presented her with the challenge of a lifetime – to work on the first Mental Health School hosted by the Denver Probate Court. This opportunity has been both exciting and educational. Sam says, "The contacts I have made and the experience of working on such an important project is something that will stick with me for the rest of my life. I hope to be a part of many more classes and educational adventures as I continue working at the probate court not as an extern but as an employee."

Sam also has two cute puppies and two cuddly kitties to go home to at night as well as a loving and supportive partner. She likes to read, write, watch CNN and yell at Lou Dobbs, take the puppies for walks around the lake in her front yard, as well as spend time with her family.

**A**dam Massaro is a rising 2L at the University of Denver Sturm College Law, who has a Public Relations degree from Penn State University. Adam chose to do a judicial internship this summer so that he could expose himself to many different areas of the law. Adam set this goal, and exceeded it: he has served as an intern for both Judge Stewart and Judge Robbins, learning about probate matters and civil litigation.

When Adam is not busy researching legal issues for Judge Stewart, he enjoys spending his time fly-fishing, mountain biking and grilling. Upon graduation, Adam plans to stay in Colorado and practice law in Denver.



## Business as Usual During DNC

Our May 2008 quarterly newsletter stated that Denver Probate Court would temporarily relocate to an alternate site during the week of DNC. Due to unforeseen issues, this will no longer happen. You will still find us at same place as always - the City and County Bldg, room 230, during the week of DNC.

The following are the legal holidays for **calendar year 2009**:

Monday, September 1, 2008	Labor Day
Monday, October 13, 2008	Columbus Day
Tuesday, November 11, 2008	Veterans Day
Thursday, November 27, 2008	Thanksgiving Day
Thursday, December 25, 2008	Christmas Day
Thursday, January 1, 2009	New Year's Day
Monday, January 19, 2009	Martin Luther King Day
Monday, February 16, 2009	President's Day
Monday, May 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2009	Memorial Day
Friday, July 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2009	Independence Day
Monday, September 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2009	Labor Day
Monday, October 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2009	Columbus Day
Wednesday, November 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2009	Veteran's Day
Thursday, November 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2009	Thanksgiving
Friday, December 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2009	Christmas Day

### Denver Probate Court Contact Information

Judge's Division	x8311
Magistrate's Division	x8313
General Information	x8310
Clerk of Court	x8389
Registrar	x8312



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### Denver Probate Court Staff

C. Jean Stewart	Presiding Judge	Melissa Barnes	Specialist
Michael Gallegos	Magistrate	Sam Credle	CJA
Lee Cole		Myra Warren	CJA
	District Administrator/Clerk of Court	Caroline Cammack	CJA
Natalie Williams	Admin Assist.	Micki Harris	Info System Specialist
Jennifer Shaler	Law Clerk	Susanna Baker	CJA
Linda Riggle	Registrar	Lucy Murray	Court Friend
Sarah Solano	Specialist		
Susie Jordan			
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