2020 Arizona Judicial Branch Strategic Agenda Award
Submitted by Kip Anderson, Superior Court

On March 31, 2021, Kyle Rimel, Court IT Director for the Mohave County Courts, will receive the 2020 Judicial Branch Strategic Agenda Award for Remote Jury Selection. The nomination for Remote Jury Selection was selected as the winner in the category for Promoting Public Trust and Confidence. The award will be presented by Chief Justice Robert Brutinel and recognizes Kyle’s outstanding service and contribution to the Arizona Judicial Branch.

When the COVID-19 emergency began, Kyle immediately began looking for ways to provide enhanced remote appearances for staff, attorneys, witnesses, and parties for court hearings. Kyle worked closely with the Chief Deputy County Attorney to identify a process, develop procedures, and purchase the necessary equipment to make this happen. Using the Zoom application, Kyle was able to develop the necessary procedures and acquire the equipment to allow grand jurors to appear remotely to complete their service.
Employee Spotlight - Julie Becker, Superior Court

Julie Becker joined the Mohave County Superior Court in January 2021 as an Official Court Reporter. Julie is a voice writer, which means she uses her voice to keep an accurate recording of proceedings equivalent to stenographers who use their hands to do the same. Voice writers are then able to prepare verbatim transcripts of proceedings by use of their voice notes. Voice notes are not simply just a mimic of the spoken word. Voice notes contain pertinent information that allows the voice writer to accurately transcribe proceedings and produce a transcript.

By use of state-of-the-art technology, voice writer court reporters can provide real-time access to proceedings simultaneously. Realtime transcription access enables attorneys and judges to have a simultaneous feed through their electronic devices and receive immediate access to the proceeding’s transcript.

Voice writers receive skill-focused training on how to use their voices to capture the record. Upon completion of training, voice writers are then tested for audibility and accuracy. The National Verbatim Reporters Association (NVRA) upholds and maintains the gold standard for voice writer court reporters. This standard is equivalent to those set by the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) for stenographers.

Julie first became interested in Court Reporting after serving as a juror on an attempted capital murder case. She was drawn to what the Court Reporter was doing during the trial. At the end of the trial, Julie asked to meet with the Court Reporter. Julie said she enjoys watching and being a part of the justice system as a Court Reporter. Julie has been a Court Reporter for 10 years, with seven of those years as a Court Reporter in the court system.

Julie said the role of a Court Reporter is very important in the justice system as they are the keepers of the record. A record is kept to ensure a person’s rights are protected under the law. Working for the courts makes her feel like she is a part of something. It’s not just a job. She enjoys using her Court Reporting skills to help protect the rights of an individual in the justice system.

What has surprised you most about working with the Mohave County Superior Court?

Love the new courthouse! Impressed with all the new technology in the new courthouse which will only enhance the justice services we provide.

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5 Years of Service

Top Left to Right: Hon. Jeffrey Singer, Kingman Municipal Court, Mary King, Superior Court, and Hon. Jon Moss, Bullhead Justice Court.

Bottom Left to Right: Hon. Billy K. Sipe Jr., and Hon. Doug Camacho, Superior Court.

Center Left to Right: Theresa White, Gretchen Howell and Wendy Jolls, Clerk of Superior Court.
5 Years of Service

Top to Bottom from Left to Right: Nicole Aragon, Karla Muro, Jana Chastain, Matthew Wokas and Dillon Richhart, Probation.

Not pictured: Brooke Jones, Bullhead Municipal Court.
Judicial Service Awards

10 Years of Service


15 Years of Service

Judicial Service Awards

20 Years of Service

Left to Right: Amber Freed and Rodger Stewart, Probation and Hon. Julia VanArsdale, Kingman Municipal Court.

Not pictured: Morena Ovalle, Bullhead Municipal Court and Vicky Roundy, North Canyon Consolidated Court.

25 Years of Service

Not pictured: Alan Palomino, Probation.

Congratulations to all for your years of Judicial Service.
Making A Difference Awards

Pictured from left to right: Virlynn Tinnell and Denise Pitt.

Pictured from left to right: Colene Lowery, Stacy Cherco and Hon. Mitch Kalauli.

Denise Pitt
Clerk of Superior Court
Individual Award Recipient

Stacy Cherco
Limited Jurisdiction Courts
Individual Award Recipient

Pictured on the left: Fred Shade.

Pictured on the right from left to right: Ambur Banas and Phil Shannon.

Fred Shade
Superior Court
Individual Award Recipient

Ambur Banas
Probation
Individual Award Recipient
Making A Difference Awards

Continued

Pictured on the Left:
Emily Snay.

Pictured on the Right:
Virlynn Tinnell.

Emily Snay
Probation
Supervisor of the Year Award

Virlynn Tinnell
Clerk of Superior Court
Presiding Judge Award

Restitution Debit Card Payment
Clerk of Superior Court and Superior Court
TEAM Award

Pictured from left to right: Christina Spurlock, Clerk of Superior Court, Kyle Rimel, Superior Court, Kim Cunningham and Margaret Harwood, Clerk of Superior Court.
Making A Difference Nominations

**Individual Nominations**

*Clerk of Superior Court*
- Denise Pitt
- Elizabeth Kuchen

*Limited Jurisdiction Courts*
- Stacy Cherco, Lake Havasu Municipal Court

*Probation*
- Ambur Banas
- Stephen Behl
- Don Doughty
- Dale Herren

*Superior Court*
- Fred Shade
- Valerie Winters

**Supervisor Nominations**

- Tina Sweeney Braniger, Lake Havasu Justice Court
- Hon. Jill Davis, Lake Havasu Justice Court
- Cassandra Oberlin, Clerk of Superior Court
- Emily Snay, Probation
- Julie Somma, Probation

**TEAM Nominations**

*Improving Court Operations*
- Lake Havasu Justice Court Staff

*Improving Court Operations*
- Lake Havasu Municipal Court Staff

*Improving Juvenile Probation Operations*
- Juvenile Probation and Juvenile Detention Staff

*Restitution Debit Card Payment Process*
- Kyle Rimel, Kim Cunningham, Christina Spurlock and Margaret Harwood

*Zoom Grand Jury Process*
- Kyle Rimel, Emily Dyson, Cassie Oberlin and Crystal Pringle

*Court Appointed Special Advocate Program*
- Lacie Robbins and Melissa Thomas
With little to no disruption in the weekly meetings, the Grand Jury was able to continue to function effectively during the pandemic. Mohave County Superior Court was able to continue to conduct weekly grand jury proceedings remotely, utilizing Zoom to facilitate the appearance of jurors. This process has been shared with other courts throughout the country that have implemented a similar process.

Building on the success with the grand jury, Kyle developed procedures to allow for the selection of jurors in criminal jury trials. The process has been successful and jury selection has been completed for several cases using this process. This process saves the county a significant amount of money that would be paid to the jurors for travel expenses, saves the jurors' travel time, and allows jury selection to be completed safely and efficiently.

Congratulations Kyle for helping to make a difference to the citizens we serve!

Melissa Register Receives Trauma Certification
Submitted by Sara Colbert, Probation

In November our Probation Clinician Melissa Register virtually attended a three-day course presented by the president of the Arizona Trauma Institute, Dr. Rhoton. She completed the Certified Clinical Trauma Specialist Individual training, making her eligible to become a trauma specialist. The training centered on obtaining a working knowledge of how to engage in the process of trauma treatment, focusing not only on interventions, but how to sequence those interventions to maximize outcomes. This training is designed to improve the quality of treatment for those that have experienced trauma. After this highly informative three days, Melissa studied for the certification exam. In December she took and passed the exam to become a certified Clinical Trauma Specialist. We are lucky to have this unique skill set we can offer to our probation youth. Congratulations Melissa on this tremendous achievement.

2020 Strategic Agenda Award
Continued from page 1.
What have you found to be the most challenging in working in the court system?
When a party to a case, such as families, or friends, does not feel justice was served, it can become very emotional in the courtroom. It can be difficult to watch under these circumstances.

What do you wish other people knew about the court system?
People often have a misconception about jury duty. Once someone goes through the jury process, they find jury duty very interesting. Many people are pleasantly surprised and enjoy serving as a juror.

What are you most proud of?
Getting through Court Reporting School. It was a huge goal. Worked a full-time job and went to Court Reporting School part-time to become a Court Reporter.

What’s the best advice you have received?
My mentor taught me the art of answering a question without answering because it is imperative that Court Reporters remain impartial. For instance, a party may ask how’s a case going so you give a general answer without being rude.

How do you enjoy your spare time?
In her spare time, Julie enjoys glassblowing, spending time with her family and exploring the outdoors. She relocated from the Midwest and was tired of shoveling snow. She loves the weather here and looks forward to exploring all Mohave County has to offer.
While 2020 was a challenging year for everybody, Court Appointed Special Advocates in our county still worked tirelessly to serve children in the dependency system. In 2020, Mohave County CASAs traveled 18,138 miles and volunteered 2,171 hours on their cases. Our CASAs dealt with numerous changes in procedures on visiting the children on their cases, quickly adapted to completing their training hours in a virtual setting and adjusted to telephonic court hearings. Due to COVID-19, we were unable to have our Annual Appreciation Event for our CASAs, so we instead delivered yard signs to each of their houses, thanking them for their service to our community’s most vulnerable children. We couldn’t be more grateful for our CASA’s willingness to tackle all of the obstacles that 2020 brought, in order to continue advocating for children in foster care.
Ways to Improve Positivity

How often do you feel thankful for the good things in your life? Studies suggest that making a habit of noticing what's going well in your life could have health benefits.

Taking the time to feel gratitude may improve your emotional wellbeing by helping you cope with stress. Early research suggests that a daily practice of gratitude could affect the body, too. For example, one study found that gratitude was linked to fewer signs of heart disease.¹

The first step in any gratitude practice is to reflect on the good things that have happened in your life. These can be big or little things. It can be as simple as scoring a good parking space that day or enjoying a hot mug of coffee. Perhaps you feel grateful for a close friend's compassionate support.

Next, allow yourself a moment to enjoy that you had the positive experience, no matter what negatives may exist in your life. Let positive feelings of gratitude bubble up.

"We encourage people to try practicing gratitude daily," advises Dr. Judith T. Moskowitz, a psychologist at Northwestern University. "You can try first thing in the morning or right before you fall asleep, whatever is best for you."

Moskowitz has been studying the impact of keeping a daily gratitude journal on stress relief and health. Practicing gratitude is part of a set of skills that her research team encourages people to practice. These skills have been shown to help some people increase their positive emotions. Her team is trying to better understand how a daily boost in positive emotions can help people cope with stress and improve their mental and physical health.

"By practicing these skills, it will help you cope better with whatever you have to cope with," Moskowitz explains. "You don't have to be experiencing major life stress. It also works with the daily stress that we all deal with. Ultimately, it can help you be not just happier but also healthier."

While practicing gratitude seems to work for some people, it doesn't for everyone. That's why Moskowitz's research team teaches other skills, too. These include meditating and doing small acts of kindness.

Her team has been developing and testing these skills with people who have illnesses like advanced cancer, diabetes, HIV infection, and depression.² ³ She's also worked with people who care for others with serious illness.
Lawrence “Larry” Wood was awarded the 2020 State University of New York ESC Alumni Veteran Service Award for exceptional service to the veteran community. Lawrence has more than 29 years of service in the military, serving in the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Air Force. While serving he volunteered in his community serving as the Cadet Explorer Law Enforcement Advisor for the Natrona County Wyoming Sheriff, the Cadet Fire Advisor for the Mills Fire Department, multiple volunteer fire departments, and reserve deputy/ rescue diver. He’s also been active with the United Service Organization (USO), serving as a volunteer mentor and airport volunteer in San Antonio, Texas, and with several veteran’s organizations, including the American Legion Post 1619, Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter 25 & 27, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 76 (Honor Guard), VFW Post 10386 (House Committee Member), Wreaths Across America, and Team RWB.

Larry is deeply committed to the unique obstacles that Veterans in the criminal justice system face and is currently serving as the Probation Officer for the Kingman Municipal Court’s Veterans Treatment Court. He has been with the Probation Department since May 2018.

Annual Report FY-2020

The 2020 Annual report is now complete and has been posted on the Court’s webpage. You are encouraged to review the report when you have a few minutes, as it highlights many good things the judges and court staff continue to do to improve services for the public and enhance court operations.

Kip Anderson, Superior Court Administrator, thanks all those who submitted articles and helped to complete the report, especially Fred Shade for his work on putting the report together.

To view the full report please click on the following link: [http://mohavecourts.az.gov/whatsnew/annualreport.pdf](http://mohavecourts.az.gov/whatsnew/annualreport.pdf)
The presentence investigation (PSI) unit prepares and submits presentence reports to the Superior Court for all felony cases, irrespective of the anticipated sentence and the defendant’s eligibility to be placed on probation. The purpose of these reports is to give the Court and the parties on both sides “the whole story”: the details of the crime, any input from the victims, and most importantly, the defendant’s social history, criminal history, and risk assessment—followed by an evaluation of their candidacy for probation and terms that should be recommended if so placed. The PSI unit is arguably an overlooked aspect of community supervision because the team works away from the public eye. Its function, however, is essential, as it provides an objective view of the case before the Court and allows the Judge to make an accurate decision that affects the lives of the defendant, the victims, and the community in general. Many times, there are details included that were unknown to the Court and the parties beforehand.

The PSI unit consists of three probation officers who are assigned to full-time presentence investigation work, three more officers who split their time between pretrial services and presentence investigations, as well as a probation services assistant and a supervisor. The work of these dedicated individuals is no easy task, as each investigation can require reviewing hundreds of pages of police report narrative and equally lengthy criminal history records, along with a comprehensive interview with the defendant, who may or may not be in custody. The volume of PSI reports prepared each year by the unit had been increasing from just over 900 in 2015 to nearly 1,200 in 2019, before decreasing last year due to the pandemic limiting or delaying criminal court proceedings.
In December of 2020, the Mohave County Juvenile Detention Facility completed its second federally required Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) audit. PREA is an Act passed by congress in 2003 designed to prevent, protect, and fund the issue of Prison Rape and similar acts within facilities. The Probation Department is very proud to report the audit was returned with “no findings” of non-compliance. The auditor stated, “out of the thirty plus audits I have completed nationwide this is only the second of which did not have any finding to report.” She further stated the juveniles detained in the Mohave County Juvenile Facility felt safe and protected. The outstanding results of this audit are a credit to the hard work of the juvenile detention staff and concentration of importance on this topic that filters through the facility. The staff are truly dedicated to the juveniles and families they serve. Congratulations to the Mohave County Juvenile Detention staff on a job well done!

Save the Date!

2021 Summer COJET Conference

MOHAVE COUNTY COURT AND PROBATION CONFERENCE
JUNE 23 THROUGH JUNE 25, 2021
KINGMAN, BULLHEAD CITY, LAKE HAVASU CITY

This conference will offer Ethics, Computer Network Security, as well as a variety of interesting and educational classes that will help you earn your COJET credit hours for 2021. The June Conference will be conducted while the judges are at their Annual Judicial Conference.

More information will follow later this year.

This is one of many things we can look forward to this year…and remember, better days are coming!!
When you make gratitude a regular habit, it can help you learn to recognize good things in your life despite the bad things that might be happening. Moskowitz says that when you’re under stress, you might not notice all the moments of positive emotion that you experience. With her research program, she’s trying to help people become more aware of those moments of positive feelings.

"Put some effort into experiencing gratitude on a daily basis and see how it goes," Moskowitz advises. "It might just surprise you that—despite how bad things are—there are things you feel grateful for alongside it." Feeling grateful may help improve both your mind and your body.

**Gratitude Tips**
Create positive emotions by being thankful every day:
- **Take a moment.** Think about the positive things that happened during the day.
- **Journal.** Make a habit of writing down things you’re grateful for. Try listing several things.
- **Savor your experiences.** Try to notice positive moments as they are happening.
- **Relive the good times.** Relive positive moments later by thinking about them or sharing them with others.
- **Write to someone.** Write a letter to someone you feel thankful toward. You don’t have to send it.
- **Make a visit.** Tell someone you’re grateful for them in person.

**Gratitude Assessment**
The Gratitude Questionnaire-Six-Item Form (GQ-6) is a six-item, self-report questionnaire designed to assess individual differences in the proneness to experience gratitude in daily life.

**Scoring and Algorithm**
Each item is scored 1-7, as indicated below. The total is the sum of all six items and has a possible range of 6-42 total:
- Total = 6-35: Low Gratitude
- Total = 36-40: Moderate Gratitude
- Total = 41-42: High Gratitude

**Instructions**
Using the scale below as a guide, indicate how much you agree with each statement below.
1 = strongly disagree
2 = disagree
3 = slightly disagree
4 = neutral
5 = slightly agree
6 = agree
7 = strongly agree

1. I have so much in life to be thankful for. _____
2. If I had to list everything that I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list. _____
3. When I look at the world, I see much to be grateful for. _____
4. I am grateful for a wide variety of people. _____
5. As I get older, I find myself more able to appreciate the people, events, and situations that have been part of my life history. _____
6. Not a long amount of time can go by before I feel grateful to something or someone. _____
Thank you for your service and dedication to the Mohave County Courts!

**Superior Court**
- Karen Wrolson 1 year
- Lacey Stewart 2 years
- Hon. Eric Gordon Sr. 2 years
- Sylvia Ogata 3 years
- Melissa Thomas 3 years
- Kimberly Warren 4 years
- Lacie Robbins 5 years
- Hon. Billy K. Sipe Jr. 6 years
- Jewell Martin 8 years
- Deborah Pitts 8 years
- Theresa Salsberry 8 years
- Amber Hurley 11 years
- Hon. Rick Williams 12 years
- Debra Cobb 14 years
- Hon. Rick Lambert 14 years
- Hon. Charles W. Gurtler Jr. 18 years
- Kathy Sperando 18 years
- Elizabeth Meins 2 years
- Denise Pitt 4 years
- Jessica Hipes 8 years
- Karen Seckler 19 years

**Probation**
- Sonya Jurado 1 year
- Jason Roorda 1 year
- Mariam Hart 1 year
- Renee Wienckowski 2 years
- James Owens Jr. 3 years
- Heidi Schmidt 3 years
- Nicole Aragon 6 years
- Amanda Simmons 8 years
- DeShae Fangmeyer 9 years
- Emily Snay 9 years
- Nancy Tharpe 10 years
- Susan Davidson 10 years
- Cindy Wolford 10 years

**Clerk of Superior Court**
- Dafne Hernandez-Lopez 1 year
- Eileen Norton 1 year

**Bullhead Justice Court**
- Kay Phillips 25 years
Mohave County Probation was honored to be part of the Hualapai Mountain Park Winter Wonderland Event that was held on December 11, 2020. DPO Victoria Flores, DPO Hector Ramirez and Karla Muro volunteered to decorate cabin #4. DPO Senior Julie Somma, DPO Jason Rooda, DPO Hector Ramirez, DPO Victoria Flores, and Karla Muro donated the lights and decorations required to put on a magnificent display. The decorations took over 2 days to finish but the end result was well worth the work that was put in. A special thank you to The Mohave County Probation Officers Association and probation employees for donating the candy that was handed out during the event on December 11th. Mohave County Probation appreciates the invitation to be part of this wonderful and cheerful event especially during these hard times. We look forward to participating in the 2021 event, where we will be adding even more lights and decorations to the cabin. If you visited the Hualapai’s during this event you might have seen Probation’s elves working hard and spreading holiday cheer. A special thank you to a furry four legged elf named Lucas for entertaining the crowd and barking the night away. Hope to see you all this year!

Here’s a few pictures from the cabin.

Winter Wonderland Cabin
Submitted by Julie Somma, Probation
Winter Wonderland

Continued from page 20
Heidi Schmidt, Probation,

The Kids at Hope team came together to develop a project for Juvenile Unit. She took time (8+ hours) to help make the trees, paint them, laminate them, cut out the trees/branches, and put them together. She went above and beyond all expectations for this project to make the trees look amazing and real. She continues to help all those in our department and share kindness through her work. She is the prime example of a team player and always ready to lend a helping hand.

Ashlee Lutgen, Superior Court,

As busy as she is with her judge’s case load and constant trials, she also has to take time to organize and pack for the move. She still finds time to help others despite her busy schedule. She is helping Danielle move and clean out items in the storage vault attached to the jury room, sort through old items left behind by retired judges, plus box and pack items that need to be moved to the new courthouse. She has gathered 12 boxes to shred and the work continues. She is appreciated for her willingness to help out.

Travis Cristler, Probation,

He has recently moved into the Youth Care Worker position for Project AIM housed in the juvenile detention facility. Due to unforeseen circumstances (COVID) Detention was very short staffed during the PREA audit. He took the time out of his busy schedule to jump in and help where needed. He worked control, took out trash and was overall a tremendous help to Detention and staff. We appreciate your teamwork and ability to recognize when help is needed.

Sylvia Ogata, Superior Court,

For her willingness to help law library staff when we need an interpreter to help with Spanish speaking patrons. She goes above and beyond bringing sunshine to all she does. We appreciate all you do.

Mohave County Juvenile Detention Staff, Probation,

For a job well done on the most recent PREA audit. All Officers and supervisors worked diligently in preparation and during the audit allowing for a successful positive outcome. Great Job!

Makayla Jenkins and Joshua Scurti, Probation,

For their outstanding initiative, not only for participating with the kids in the courtyard but also for taking time to clear and salt the staff parking sidewalks, they also cleared the parking lot. Mr. Scurti also cleared the perimeter of the courtyard to make it safer for officers during their rounds.

Every day employees of the Court are making a difference. Recognize your co-workers through the High 5 Program! Forms are available on Courtweb under Employee Recognition.
Stop the spread of germs that can make you and others sick!

- Wash your hands often
- Wear a mask
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Keep 6 feet of space between you and your friends

cdc.gov/coronavirus
Critical workers: Care for yourself one small way each day

Find new ways to safely connect with family and friends, get support, and share feelings

Take breaks to relax and unwind through music, sports, gardening, or new hobbies

Treat yourself to healthy foods and get enough sleep

Take care of your body and get moving to lessen fatigue, anxiety, or sadness

CDC
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Disaster Distress Hotline: call or text 1-800-985-5990

cdc.gov/coronavirus
The Superior Court is committed to establishing and maintaining a drug and alcohol-free workplace. Consistent with the spirit and intent of this commitment, the Superior Court will work to eliminate any substance abuse (alcohol, illegal drugs, misuse and/or abuse of prescription drugs or any other substance which could impair an employee's ability to safely and effectively perform the functions of the particular position in which employed) in the workplace.

Please take this opportunity to review the Superior Court’s Policy, 1.03 Drug Free Workplace, which states substance abuse in the workplace increases the potential for accidents, absenteeism, substandard performance, poor employee morale, and/or tends to undermine public confidence in the administration of justice. Employees who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, and violations of this policy may also result in legal consequences.

Mohave County Employees needing guidance or referrals for drug and alcohol counseling may contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 800-327-3517 (press 1).

Please feel free to contact members of the Superior Court HR Team at MohaveCountySuperiorCourtHR@courts.az.gov or by phone at (928) 718-4928 if you have any questions.

"Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful." - Joshua J. Marine

Mohave County Courts
401 East Spring St., Kingman, Arizona 86401
Phone: (928) 718-4928; Fax (928) 753-8908
Email: schr@mohavecourts.com; Webpage: http://mohavecourts.az.gov