



# U.S. District Court Eastern District of Missouri

## PRETRIAL SERVICES OFFICE Changing the Culture to Meet the Times

When Susan Hendrickson was appointed Chief of the Pretrial Services Office in October, 2022, she knew it was not going to be easy. The country was just coming out of the pandemic when investigations slowed down considerably for the third busiest separate pretrial office in the federal judiciary. It was just a matter of time before things got back to “normal.” However, Hendrickson entered the position with high expectations of delivering exceptional services to the Court as had been done prior to the pandemic. Yet Hendrickson wanted to raise the bar even higher to maximize the full potential of the agency.

Among the first initiatives Hendrickson wanted to accomplish was tackling a policy and procedures manual that had been developed over 10 years ago. Her goal was to facilitate consistency in approach and uniformity of policy implementation, making sure all the employees of the Pretrial Services Office were given the same information, policies were adhered to, and staff were supervised according to the updated policies and procedures.

Hendrickson also knew that she wanted to change the culture of the office, to augment a sense of shared purpose and revitalized initiative. That proved challenging when combining a diverse workforce that had a wide variety of experience, ranging from one to twenty years, and different mindsets. Hendrickson brought in consultant, James Corpening, a former Chief from the Eastern District of North Carolina’s probation office, to assist with this culture change. Corpening interviewed every employee to determine the needs of the office. He then designed a training program to help facilitate positive, long-term change. With the assistance of Hendrickson, they developed a plan of action to start implementing ideas to change the current culture into a new beginning for the office.

The first change was to seek and incorporate the ideas of employees by forming focus groups to determine how things would be accomplished. Hendrickson established monthly officer meetings to discuss the latest trends or issues in supervision and set quarterly staff meetings for the upcoming year. The U.S. Magistrate Judges of the Eastern District of Missouri met with the Pretrial Services Office for a roundtable discussion of how they could help make the pretrial officers’ jobs more consistent and less hectic. The lively discussion ended with a better understanding of each other’s needs and an informal gathering to get to know each other better.

Change continues to occur as Hendrickson moves forward with collaborative efforts to make the Eastern District of Missouri’s U.S. Pretrial Services Office the best in the country.



Hendrickson (r) and senior staff

**Our Mission: To serve the public, bench, and bar in an effective, fair, and impartial manner.**

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Serving the Citizenry of the United States by

- > Providing justice
- > Educating attorneys
- > Informing the public
- > Supervising & rehabilitating offenders

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- > Using resources wisely

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**U.S. District Judge Henry E. Autrey** spoke to the Civics Club at Parkway North High School in October. After describing his path to the bench and the role of the judiciary, he took questions from the club members. This event was part of the **Judicial Speakers Bureau**, free presentations by Eastern District of Missouri judges for community members who want to learn more about the federal courts.

**U.S. District Judge Sarah E. Pitlyk** was named to a 3-year term on the Committee on Judicial Resources for the Judicial Conference of the United States. This committee oversees all issues of human resource administration, including additional Article III judges, and the development of methodologies for human resource needs assessment and allocation.



**Senior U.S. District Judge Catherine D. Perry**, Inn member, spoke about the history and formation of St. Louis's **Theodore McMillian American Inns of Court** at the September meeting of the Inn. The mission of the American Inns of Court is to “inspire the legal community to advance the rule of law by achieving the highest level of professionalism through example, education, and mentoring.”



**Senior U.S. District Judge Rodney W. Sippel**, Chair of the Committee on the Judicial Branch for the Judicial Conference of the United States, was named to the conference's Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Group. This group will draft a revised *Strategic Plan for the Federal Judiciary*, to be submitted for review and approval by September 2025.



**U.S. Magistrate Judge Abbie Crites-Leoni** hosted the fifth annual summer Federal Justice Fellowship in the Eastern District of Missouri's Southeastern Division. Each year, undergraduate students are selected to spend the summer learning what it means to work in the judicial system. The 4-week program includes courtroom observations, interaction with staff from all departments and agencies in the courthouse, legal writing instruction and practice, and a final project. The program concludes with presentations by the fellows and an alumni luncheon for past and present fellows.



## Gathering of the Eighth Circuit U.S. Magistrate Judges

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit hosted a one-day gathering in October for the Circuit’s U.S. Magistrate Judges at which they learned from each other by discussing current issues and comparing notes with peers. Twenty-two magistrate judges from nine districts attended in person or remotely.

The Eastern District of Missouri’s Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge, Shirley A. Padmore Mensah, welcomed the attendees at the beginning of the day’s full agenda.

- U.S. Magistrate Judge Alice R. Senechal (North Dakota), who serves on the Judicial Conference of the United States’ Committee on Financial Disclosure, spoke on mandatory financial disclosure by judicial officers and employees—including what a magistrate judge should disclose and how to protect privacy.
- U.S. Magistrate Judge John M. Bodenhausen (Eastern Missouri) led a discussion on 4th Amendment concerns raised by potential nuances in geo-fencing tracking when issuing warrants. The discussion highlighted the need for magistrate judges to reconcile new technological capabilities with older, existing laws—especially how this affects pre-indictment investigations.
- U.S. Attorneys from Eastern Arkansas and Eastern & Western Missouri led a wide-ranging discussion on issues and updates in criminal matters. Important take-aways included U.S. Attorney’s Offices’ differing prosecutorial priorities, how discovery is handled in other districts, and trends across districts—for example increased time-to-disposition due to the large increase in digital evidence.

Other presentations included Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Willie J. Epps, Jr. (Western Missouri) demonstrating Microsoft OneNote’s paperless office capabilities for Chambers, and recalled U.S. Magistrate Judge David D. Noce (Eastern Missouri) leading a conversation on authoring contributions to Westlaw. The event also included a tour of the Eagleton Courthouse and Judicial Learning Center and a presentation on the Eighth Circuit’s civic education programs by court education staff.

The gathering ended with dinner at Ballpark Village, where the magistrate judges were able to talk informally about matters important to them and build camaraderie.



*U.S. Magistrate Judge attendees*

In September, the Eastern and Western Districts of Missouri held two swearing-in ceremonies at the Missouri State Capitol for attorneys who passed the bar in July and were licensed to practice in the state. U.S. Magistrate Judges John M. Bodenhausen (Eastern District) and Willie J. Epps, Jr. (Chief—Western Missouri) presided over the ceremonies at which 120 attorneys were sworn in to the federal bar.



Left: Judge Bodenhausen, Judge Epps, Jr., Deputy Clerk Czopek



Entry to the Federal Bar

JUDGE NEWS & NOTES

Motions for Sentence Modification

For each of the past several years in the Eastern District of Missouri, approximately 1,110 criminal cases were brought against defendants and almost the same number were concluded. At any one time, more than 400 and 2,000 defendants were on pretrial and post-conviction supervision, respectively. The latter includes almost 400 final revocation hearings. In addition to this large criminal defendant caseload, because of the U.S. Sentencing Commission’s (USSC) amendments to 18 U.S.C § 3582—Imposition of a sentence of imprisonment, the Court has had to rule on numerous motions for sentence modification.

Federal sentencing guideline amendments that allow incarcerated individuals to petition the Court for sentence modification are the:

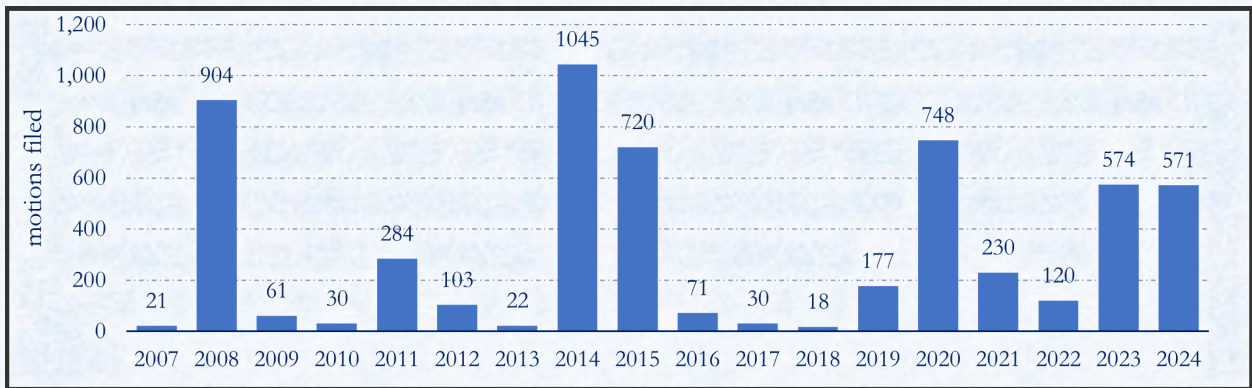
- 2007 Crack Cocaine Amendment,
- 2010 Fair Sentencing Act Amendment,
- 2014 Drug Guidelines Amendment, and
- 2023 Criminal History Amendment.

Each of these amendments has been made retroactive (i.e., applicable to those sentenced prior to the date the amendment became effective). Addi-

tionally, incarcerated individuals may apply for compassionate release and early release through the First Step Act of 2018—which rewards participation in recidivism reduction programming and other productive activities.

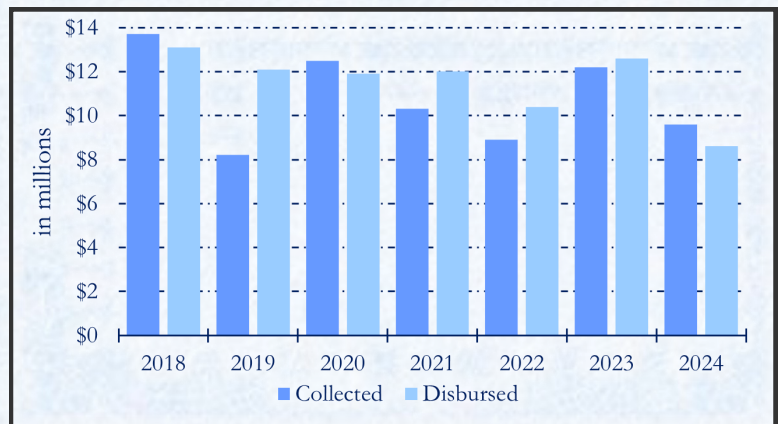
In response to these amendments, in the Eastern District of Missouri, approximately 3,000 criminal defendants filed more than 5,700 motions (and amended motions) in almost 3,200 cases. In the last six years, almost 1,500 have been filed under the First Step Act, while in the last two years almost 950 motions were filed under the Criminal History Amendment.

To date, the Court has issued more than 2,100 orders on these motions. The majority of orders granted the motions filed under the Crack Cocaine, Fair Sentencing Act, and Drug Guidelines amendments. However, approximately 80% and 75% of orders denied the motions filed under the First Step Act of 2018 and the 2023 Criminal History Amendment, respectively.



Collections & Disbursements

In 2024, the Eastern District of Missouri collected \$9.6 million in restitution, civil garnishments & refunds and disbursed \$8.6 million to victims and creditors. Over the last seven years, the Eastern District collected approximately \$75 million and disbursed \$81 million.



## Staying Abreast of Issues in Mediation

The 2024 ADR Court-Certified Neutrals Seminar was held at the Eagleton Courthouse in October. U.S. District Judge Matthew T. Schelp, Chair of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Committee, and Nathan M. Graves, Clerk of Court, welcomed the attending mediators.

Each year more than 500 civil cases go to mediation in the Eastern District of Missouri, of which approximately 50% achieve at least a partial settlement. The content of these seminars enable neutrals, who want to be certified with the Court, to gain and keep the skill-set necessary to successfully service the many litigants seeking Alternative Dispute Resolution.

This year, experienced local mediators, private & corporate attorneys, and former judges—many of them members of the Eastern District’s ADR Advisory Committee—collaborated on sessions exploring:

- how to handle ethical challenges during mediation,
- what litigants’ attorneys look for in mediation,
- communication skills in high conflict cases,
- mediator tools—such as bracketing, proposals, multi-party percents, and
- gender and age issues among mediating parties.

Other sessions were the always well-received judges’ roundtable and a much asked for session on marketing strategies to building a successful mediation practice.

More than 70 mediators attended the seminar, for which attendees could earn

7 MCLEs—sufficient to meet the **Local Court Rule** requirement to maintain certification as a neutral.

The overall program was more highly rated by attendees than in previous years. Attendees’ comments indicated anticipation for this seminar, where they could meet colleagues and discuss practical issues in



Nathan Graves introduced the judges’ roundtable with (l-r) U.S. District Judges Limbaugh, Sr.—*moderator* (retired), Schelp, and Fleissig (Senior) and U.S. Magistrate Judge Holmes

mediation. Ethics continued to be one of the most highly rated and popular sessions. Similarly, a diversity-bias session has become popular in recent years.



Kim & B Hoy present on bias

## Northern Division Bench & Bar

The divisional seminar was held in June at the Federal Building and Courthouse in Hannibal. Sessions included a review of the U.S. Supreme Court’s and Eighth Circuit’s last terms, ethics, wellness tips for attorneys, a judges’ roundtable, and court statistics—many of which were requested topics from attendees of prior seminars. U.S. Bankruptcy Court Judges Surratt-States and Walsh; Clerks of Court Graves (District) and McWay (Bankruptcy); district court law clerks Azrak, DeLapp, and Overcash; bankruptcy court Attorney Advisor Rodman and Operations Manager Ritter; and John Gunn, Esq.—The Gunn Law Firm, presented.

Approximately 30 attorneys attended. Once again, attendees overwhelmingly rated the seminar’s sessions as useful, the ethics session most favorably, and expressed thanks to the Court for holding this CLE in Hannibal.

## POWER Act Webinar

This free training fulfills the Court’s obligation under the Pro Bono Work to Empower and Represent Act to encourage attorneys to provide pro bono services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Panelists presented on the dynamics of domestic violence, spotting common tactics of abuse, and effective and responsible representation of survivors. Panelists also emphasized the importance of pro bono representation for these clients. Attorneys from the Eastern and Western District of Missouri were eligible to attend.

Evaluation showed attendees were satisfied with the training—indicating that the panelists were knowledgeable, training activities helped develop relevant skills, and after completing the training they would be better able to respond to these clients.

# The U.S. Supreme Court and My Hometown Revisiting a Landmark Eighth Circuit Case



In the fall of 2024, the courts hosted another term of **The Supreme Court and My Hometown**, the national civics program of the Supreme Court Historical Society. This initiative engages high school students in a thorough study of the process and substantive issues of a case decided by the Supreme Court of the United States in a unique and personalized way. Participants learn how the judicial branch interacts with the other two branches of government and their roles and responsibilities as active citizens. A distinguishing feature of this program is the focus on Supreme Court cases that originated in the students' hometowns and local courts.



Twenty high school students were selected for the after-school program which featured *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*, a landmark First Amendment student speech case. The program began with a 2-day orientation in July and continued after school on most Tuesdays throughout the fall semester.

Working with local attorney mentors, the students studied First Amendment law and every aspect of the case – from its trial in the Eastern District of Missouri, to oral arguments in the Eighth Circuit, to analyzing

the opinion of the Supreme Court of the United States. Participants learned from first-person case participants and legal experts throughout the term and were able to demonstrate new skills through realistic courtroom simulation activities.

Chief U.S. District Judge Stephen R. Clark, Eastern District of Missouri, presided over a courtroom simulation during which the student teams presented evidence and mock closing arguments in a trial courtroom.

U.S. Circuit Judge Raymond W. Gruender, Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, coached the student-justices and presided as Chief Justice during the moot court of *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*.

For the capstone project, the students conducted oral history interviews with participants in the case, including the three plaintiffs, as well as local and national experts, to develop an archive of voices discussing the significance of the case. Short sections of the interviews will become permanent additions to the *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier* exhibit created by the 2023 cohort of Hometowns students, currently on display in the **Judicial Learning Center**. The student groups presented their capstone projects to the judges and court staff at the closing celebration in December.



- contribution by Rachel E. Marshall

## Arguing Motions to Suppress



In celebration of the anniversary of the United States Constitution, the courts in St. Louis hosted 42 eighth graders from Principia Middle School in September. Prior the event, the students studied a cross-curricular unit of science and social studies. They analyzed a crime scene using forensic science techniques, while learning about the structure of the courts and the protections of the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments. During their visit to the Eagleton Courthouse, they took a tour, observed a court proceeding, heard from an Assistant U.S. Attorney and Assistant Federal Pub-

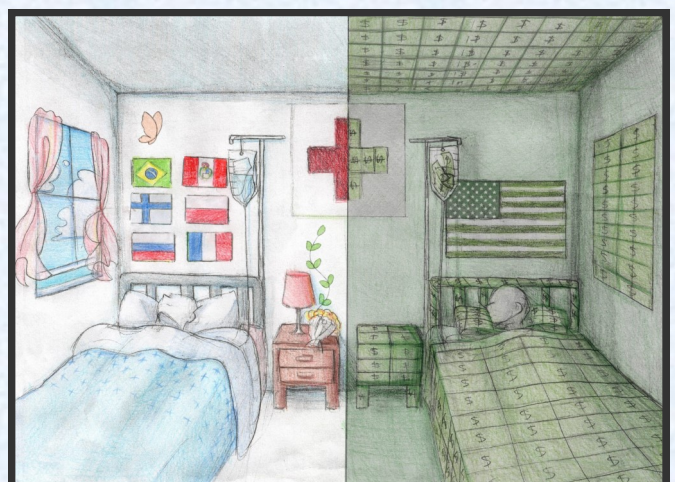
lic Defender about evidentiary hearings, and worked with volunteer attorneys to make final preparations for their own mock evidentiary hearings. In the afternoon, the students split into three groups to argue Motions to Suppress before Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Shirley A. Padmore Mensah, and U.S. Magistrate Judges Patricia L. Cohen and Stephen R. Welby. Whether they won or lost the motion, the students had a unique opportunity to bring the protections of the Constitution to life.

## Searching the World for Constitutional Amendments

In celebration of the anniversary of the Bill of Rights, district courts of the Seventh and Eighth Circuits collaborated to offer the fifth annual student essay and art contest and virtual event. This year, students in grades 5 -12 submitted essays and artwork that identified a right that exists for people in other nations that they want to see added as an amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

More than 300 students submitted 288 entries—including essays, visual art, multi-media, videos, songs, and poems. Winning entries were announced during a live webinar in December. As part of the webinar, three federal judges spoke about their work and its relationship to the Bill of Rights. They then took questions from the audience. More than 200 people participated in the webinar. **See the winning entries here.**

Yuhan Deng of Missouri won the art competition for grades 9-10, arguing for a right to medical care.



## Programming for Educators of Elementary through High School Students

Summer Teacher Institute. School was in session for regional civics and social studies teachers. The Eastern District of Missouri and the Eighth Circuit hosted two Summer Teacher Institute sessions of *Equal Protection Under the Law: The Evolution and Impact of Brown v. Board of Education*, which celebrated the 70th anniversary of this landmark case. More than 25 middle, high, and home school teachers participated in either the St. Louis or Cape Girardeau sessions.

Guided by judges and legal experts, the teachers explored the cases and litigation strategy that led up to *Brown* and its companion cases. They also analyzed the United States Supreme Court opinion in this case and applied their understanding of it to modern day equal protection scenarios. Most importantly, the teachers collaborated to create lessons and activities to take back to their students.

School District Professional Development. The Court offered numerous professional development opportunities for area teachers during back-to-school week. Social studies middle and high school teachers from the University City School District toured the Eagleton Courthouse—including attending a courtroom hearing, hearing from expert legal speakers, and visiting the Judicial Learning Center.

Off-site professional development programs were held for the Wentzville and Hazelwood school districts. At the Wentzville School District’s Resource Round-Up, U.S. Magistrate Judge John M. Bodenhausen and court education staff gave a student-centered lesson on Fourth Amendment search and seizure law and provided information on field trips and courthouse visits.



Judge Bodenhausen speaks to educators

At Hazelwood Central High School, court education staff taught teachers of government curriculum how to use moot courts to teach the First Amendment referencing *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*.

Missouri Council for History Educators. The Court engaged with teachers locally by exhibiting at the council’s conference at the Federal Reserve in St. Louis. Social studies teachers who visited the Court’s booth learned about courthouse field trip opportunities, court-related teaching resources, and historical cases for use in classroom teaching.

### Candid Conversations

In November, students from Hazelwood West High School participated in *Candid Conversations*, a national program held in several courts around the country, but a new offering for our Court. In addition to a tour of the Eagleton Courthouse, the students met with Senior U.S. District Judge Audrey G. Fleissig and four law clerks. Before coming to the Court, while in-class, the students brainstormed questions to ask. During a lengthy question & answer session, Judge Fleissig and others provided answers and reflections to the students’ questions.



Judge Fleissig answers students’ questions

### Media Outreach

The Court, in collaboration with the Missouri Courts, hosted a workshop at the national Conference for Court Public Information Officers in July. The workshop included a panel discussion of strategies for educating the public about the judicial branch. Attendees also toured the Eagleton Courthouse and the Judicial Learning Center.

- contributions on page by Rachel E. Marshall



## Tours & Programs

The Eagleton Courthouse welcomed guests of all ages and from around the world in 2024. During the second half of the year, 88 tours and events were held for 2,070 people. For the full year, there were 158 tours and events for 4,144 people. Transportation grants were awarded to 17 groups.

Notable visitors in the second half of 2024 were:

- four groups of international lawyers enrolled in Washington University’s Master of Laws program,
- two groups of undergraduate students participating in Washington University’s Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement, and
- aspiring and new attorneys through BAMSL and Lashly & Baer, P.C.

Numerous career-focused field trips, where students interact with guest speakers from a variety of legal and law enforcement fields, were held in the summer and fall. Career exploration programs included:

- Future Leaders Academy sponsored by the Florissant Police Department
- Summer at SLU legal advocacy camp
- STL Youth Jobs, Discover You summer program
- Hazelwood Central High School
- Rockwood School District Partners in Education
- South and North Technical High Schools
- Organization of Paralegal Students, Southern Illinois University Carbondale
- KAPi Pre-Law Fraternity, Washington University

While field trips typically serve middle and high school students, the Court offers programming for younger students as well:

- Webster Groves and MICDS 4th-5th graders: Reader’s Theater version of *Tinker v. Des Moines*, afterward visiting the Judicial Learning Center
- New City School 4th graders: mock trial
- Villa di Maria Montessori School 1st-3rd graders: behind-the-scenes tour, Reader’s Theater of *Minor v. Happersett* afterward discussing the different roles of the three branches of government
- Scouts BSA and Girl Scouts: heard from expert speakers, met with judges, and participated in a debate

## Scout Groups & Badges

Scouts BSA. More than 40 Scouts earned a Citizenship in the Nation Merit Badge this summer after participating in a full day workshop at either the Eagleton Courthouse in St. Louis or Limbaugh Courthouse in Cape Girardeau. The Scouts observed live court proceedings; met judges, attorneys, and U.S. Marshals; and participated in mini-sessions to learn more about the Constitution and our system of government. In St. Louis, the Scouts toured the Gateway Arch National Park. In Cape Girardeau, they toured the Common Pleas Courthouse.



Girl Scouts of the USA. In collaboration with the National Park Service, fifteen Girl Scouts earned a Finding Common Ground Badge. At the Gateway Arch National Park, they explored conflict resolution strategies and participated in an historic mock trial of Virginia Minor— a leader in the suffrage movement. The group walked to the Eagleton Courthouse for the afternoon, where they met with Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Shirley A. Padmore Mensah, after which she referred the Girl Scouts to a mock Alternative Dispute Resolution mediation about cookie sales. With the assistance of attorneys and an Assistant U.S. Attorney acting as mediator, the two groups were able to resolve the conflict

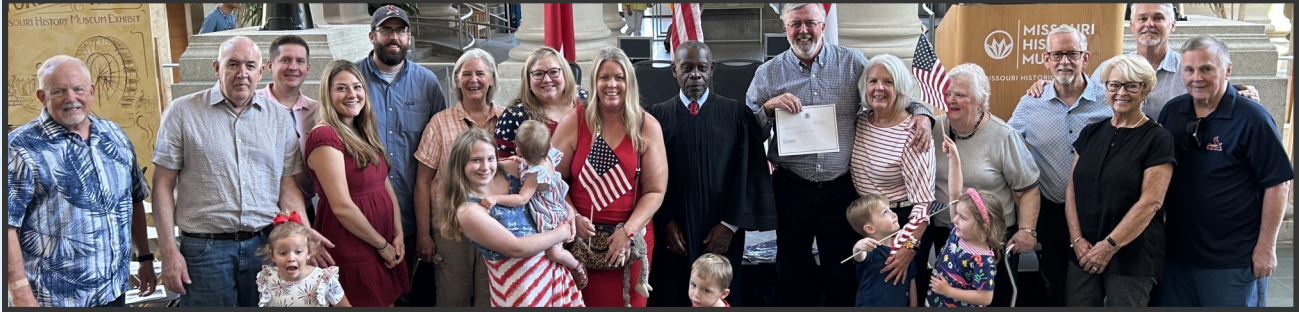
In October, the Court connected with Girl Scout troops from throughout eastern Missouri at the Girl Scout Activity Roundup, held at Camp Tuckaho in Troy. This full-day program allows organizations to demonstrate the badge opportunities they offer. The Court is an ideal place for scouts to work on civics badges by learning about the judicial branch of government. At the roundup, scouts played “You be the Judge” trivia, tested out a gavel, and got a photo-op in judicial attire.

- contributions on page by Rachel E. Marshall

NATURALIZATIONS

From July to December, the Court held 26 weekly ceremonies naturalizing 1,042 new citizens. For the full year, 55 ceremonies naturalized 2,379 new citizens. During the second half of the year, the special ceremonies below were held.

Missouri History Museum: Constitution Week—U.S. District Judge Henry E. Autrey presiding



Gateway Arch National Park: Independence Day—U.S. District Judge Sarah E. Pitlyk presiding



Busch Stadium: Constitution Day & Citizenship Day—U.S. Circuit Judge Lavenski R. Smith presiding

St. Louis City Hall: Welcoming Week—U.S. Magistrate Judge Stephen R. Welby presiding



Thomas F. Eagleton U.S. Courthouse: Veterans Day—U.S. District Judge Matthew T. Schelp, U.S. Navy veteran, presiding

NATURALIZATIONS

# PRETRIAL SERVICES OFFICE

## Diverting Offenders

The Eastern District's **Sentencing Alternatives Improving Lives** (SAIL) program is a post-plea, pre-sentence diversion program for defendants who would otherwise be incarcerated by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. SAIL consists of intensive supervision combined with various, individualized services that address the root cause(s) of a defendant's criminal conduct. In November, two participants graduated *{pictured below}*, bringing the total number of graduates who have improved their lives by making positive changes to 43. There are currently 9 participants in SAIL, with 3 additional participants expected to start in January 2025. Since its inception in 2015, SAIL has saved the Bureau of Prisons over **\$6 million** by diverting defendants from incarceration.



SAIL Team, Graduates and Guests

*Your support during this time has been invaluable to me. I cannot express enough gratitude for your willingness to lend an ear, offer assistance, and stand by me through thick and thin. Thank you for being an extraordinary team. During this tough chapter of my life, your unwavering belief in me has been a lifeline. I am deeply grateful for your encouragement and faith, which have given me the strength to keep moving forward.—November Graduate Testimonial*

## Community Service: BAMSL's Motion for Kids



This year, the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis (BAMSL) hosted the Motion for Kids holiday event for 2,214 St. Louis area children in the foster care system, or those whose lives have been severely impacted by the criminal justice system. Each child was matched with a sponsor from the St. Louis legal community—including judges, lawyers, paralegals, office administrators, law students, and legal secretaries. Sponsors were asked to purchase and wrap a gift(s) totaling between \$30-60 from the child's wish list. Gifts were then distributed to the children and their families during the annual holiday party. The Eastern District of Missouri, one of 49 participating organizations, sponsored more than 50 children from the St. Louis area.

*[photos courtesy of BAMSL]*



# PROBATION OFFICE

## College Bound Program

The Probation Office created College Bound in 2016 to assist clients with meeting their children’s needs for the first year at college. Many low-income parents struggle with assisting their first-year college students. If these children do not receive adequate support along the way, they are susceptible to failing. To remedy this, College Bound provides laptops, school supplies, and dorm room furnishings. Four children of ex-offenders under supervision received necessities for college. *{pictured below}*

- Tamia, the daughter of Mr. Terrell Jackson, will attend Southern Illinois University Edwardsville this fall after graduating high school with a 3.5 GPA. Tamia intends to major in psychology.
- Diwa, the daughter of Mr. Qais and Mrs. Aziza Meraj, will attend Washington University in St. Louis. At only 16 years of age, Diwa graduated high school with a 4.25 GPA.
- Kelsey, the daughter of Ms. Tara Birdwell, will attend the University of Mississippi after graduating high school with a 3.43 GPA. Kelsey will study the pre-pharmaceutical program.
- Jalen, the son of Ms. Antoinette Stevenson, will attend Universal Technical Institute—Miramar in Texas, where he will pursue a skilled trade program. Jalen has always been great with his hands and enjoys working on cars.



## Tis the Season - to Give



The Family Program’s annual Holiday Party strengthens pro-social family relationships between those on supervision and their children. The Family Program arranged for 149 families to participate in this season’s Holiday Party, which was hosted by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Families were given the items necessary for a holiday meal, while more than 279 children received toys, coats, and quilts. The holiday meal food items and gifts were made possible by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and faith-based community partners that have assisted the Probation Office for many years, such as Caritas Connections Inc. and the Orthodox Greek community. Because of the generosity of our Court family *{see next page}*, almost 200 bicycles were given to children aged 4-10 years.



Holiday Party attendees

- contributions on page by Lisa Coldon

# PROBATION OFFICE



Our mission statement reads, “The United States Probation Office for the Eastern District of Missouri will assist the Court in the administration of justice; facilitate long term positive change for those under supervision; and contribute to a safer community.” We believe we must develop a collaborative relationship with our clients to fulfill this mission. The seven most important words that a U.S. Probation Officer says to a client are, “What do you need to be successful?” With this simple question a collaborative and supportive relationship is forged. This is how our Family Program began.



We have found that our clients’ major stressor is family responsibilities. Most families expect our clients to immediately contribute to the household once out of prison, which puts an immense amount of stress and strain on our clients. The Family Program helps our clients with their families’ needs. This means assisting with items infants need, back to school supplies, and food for the entire family.

Families are stretched thin with their daily holidays can add even more stress. For 15 provided toys to clients’ children during referred for holiday gifts by the client’s with the needs and wishes of the client wish for a bicycle. Sadly, children have gift because of our community partners’ Probation Office took their disappointment-change this.



financial burdens, to which the years, the Probation Office has the holiday season. Children are probation officer, who is familiar and client’s family. Children often had to settle for a less expensive limited funding. Many within the ment personally, so we sought to

This year, the Probation Office called on bicycle drive, with the goal of collecting years. This age range was chosen because and the affordability of bikes for them. The bicycle drive was treated as a contest, where teams competed for a prize awarded to the team donating the most bikes. We wildly underestimated the Court’s response, being supported by everyone from the Judges to the Court Security Officers. The drive far exceeded the 50 bike goal, collecting 191 bikes. As a result of the Court’s generosity, every eligible child received a bike and helmet. Furthermore, since we exceeded the number of bikes we needed, several teams bought coats for the children, donating almost 200 coats.

our Court family to contribute to a 50 bicycles for children age 5-9 of the number of children this age



The Probation Office and Family Program are humbled by our co-workers’ generosity and kindness. Too often the words “Court Family” seem loosely used and cliché. However, our “Court Family” has shown how committed we are to each other’s missions and the Court we proudly serve.



- contribution by Lisa Coldon

# PROBATION OFFICE

In September, the Eastern District’s Probation Office held its second ‘Re-Entry Court Collaboration Day’ at the St. Louis Zoo’s McDonnell Center at River Camp. This was an all-day program for the Eastern District of Missouri’s six re-entry courts—which are cooperative undertakings of Eastern Missouri’s U.S. District and U.S. Magistrate Judges; the Probation, Pretrial Services, U.S. Attorneys, and Federal Public Defenders offices; and local treatment providers. Approximately 50 people attended the program.

The program provided opportunities for the re-entry court teams to collaborate on programming and to learn from both each other and outside organizations. The program consisted of three different topical modules that were sponsored by the **Opioid Response Network**. These modules were Trauma Informed Courts, Recovery Capital, and Revitalizing Resilience. The Revitalizing Resilience module included a zoo-wide scavenger hunt, organized by St. Louis Zoo staff, as a team building activity. Attendees from the six re-entry court teams were mixed & matched into five teams for the scavenger hunt, which was a successful exercise in team building.



- contribution by Roxanne Jolly

## Project EARN

Project EARN held a graduation ceremony for Eddie Randolph in November. U.S. Magistrate Judge Patricia L. Cohen presided. U.S. Magistrate Judges Stephen R. Welby and David D. Noce (recalled); representatives from Eastern Missouri’s Probation, U.S. Attorneys, and Federal Public Defender offices; and all current Project EARN participants attended. Graduations showcase the hard work and achievement of graduates and incentivize participants to maintain their commitment to successfully completing their term of supervised release via Project EARN.

- contribution by Adela Drinjak

## Project GRIP

Project GRIP is presided over by U.S. District Judge Henry E. Autrey. Currently there are six participants, but the goal is to have around 10 participants in the program at all times. Project GRIP focuses on cognitive behavioral modification therapy and developing positive peer groups in the community. The program also helps participants gain sustainable employment, a residence, and community belongingness by finding local resources that support them as they move through their lives. This program is one of only a few in the nation, and other districts have attempted to duplicate the program. A researcher at Fontbonne University is currently evaluating aspects of Project GRIP. Results will be available in early 2025 and will help us determine what programmatic changes may be beneficial.

- contribution by Roxanne Jolly

## STAR Court

In November, the STAR Court hosted its first chili cook-off at the Limbaugh Courthouse. Team members from the Court and resource network contributed entries. With a donation, guests tasted each chili and cast a vote for their favorite. Over \$600 was raised. Proceeds will fund STAR Court incentives and the urgent needs of participants throughout the year.



- contribution by Tori Caldwell

# PROBATION OFFICE

## Standard Sentencing Recommendations

To promote consistent sentencing recommendations across the nation, the Probation & Pretrial Services Office trained our Post-Conviction Unit on standards for computing recommendations for revocations. Officers were guided through the U.S. Sentencing Commission’s Guidelines Manual and the Federal Criminal Code and Rules to identify key citations as they relate to:

- the range of imprisonment authorized,
- the range of supervised release authorized,

- the grade of violation, and
- if an offense was a crime of violence or a controlled substance violation.

Officers were provided guidelines and templates for creating the expected documents with approved language, that are also consistent with our Investigation Unit’s Sentencing Recommendations. The Probation Office will continue to emphasize recommendation standards to ensure the Court receives comprehensive and accurate information for the revocation hearing.

- contribution by Monica Mannino

## STARR New-Users

In September, the Eastern District of Missouri hosted a ‘Staff Training Aimed at Reducing ReArrest’ (STARR) new-user training. Probation officers from Eastern Missouri, Eastern Arkansas, and Central Illinois participated in the 3-day training. While led by national staff, several probation officers from district courts taught skill development in break-out sessions. New STARR users will be coached throughout the year to develop their proficiency with this set of core correctional practices.



- contribution by Toni Smith

## Learning Trends in Drug Use

In October, the Probation Office hosted a one-day staff training on current and emerging drug-use trends in the United States. The training was led by Jermaine Galloway, a former law enforcement officer and founder of **Tall Cop Says Stop™**. Officer Galloway’s *High in Plain Sight* program provides training, education, and enforcement strategies for community substance abuse issues.

Staff learned about multiple forms of synthetic drugs that are sold at gas stations and convenience stations across the nation, the ingredients of these drugs, and their physiological impact on the user. The training also covered other types of drugs and how to find concealed drugs on a person through “stash” merchandise.



Officer Galloway (center) & PO staff

- contribution by Kalie Yeager-Thompson

## Tigrett Leadership Academy

In August, Probation Office management staff attended *Lessons From the Sea, Getting Your Staff “in the Same Boat” in Times of Change* in Mystic, Connecticut. **Tigrett Leadership Academy**, a business management consultant, reviewed leadership from the perspective of the American whaling industry from its early beginnings to its decline in the late 1800s. The training referenced Captain Ahab’s version of leadership, and how he appealed at various levels to his crew. The training also touched on leadership challenges caused by changing technology, public expectations, and needed skills in employees. While great lessons were learned in this small Connecticut town, attendees had fun learning basic rowing skills in a 30’ whaleboat and dining at Mystic Pizza.



- contribution by Jo Cooper

# PROBATION OFFICE

Wellness—Escaping Drama

In July, the Probation Office hosted part three of a four-part wellness training for its staff. **Great Oak Counseling** from Cape Girardeau provided a two-hour training on the three main personality disorders in the criminal justice system—Bipolar Disorder, Narcissism, and Anti-Social Personality Disorder. Staff were taught how to recognize the signs and symptoms of these disorders, and the life challenges faced by individuals with these disorders. Staff also learned ways to safeguard their own mental health while working with these challenging clients.

Communication is an important aspect of day-to-day interactions. The training brought a new model of communication to light, the **Karpman Drama Triangle**. This model describes three roles people often assume in conflict situations: the Persecutor, Victim, and Rescuer. Understanding each role allows individuals to change dysfunctional communication patterns. But to do this, we must first learn how to escape the drama. Five areas



*l-r* Training Presenter & USPO Kenny Lawrence

were identified to escape from drama:

1. Acknowledge that you are in it;
2. Learn to recognize the patterns;
3. Identify your role in it;
4. Identify options; and
5. Stand your ground and let the fever burn.

When escaping the drama and fixing broken communication patterns, learners were reminded to take nothing personally, make no assumptions, and always do one's best.

The concepts learned in this training will be valuable for Probation Office staff when working with individuals with a personality disorder.

*- contribution by Monica Mannino*

## Holiday Celebration of Gratitude

The Probation Office kicked off the holiday season with a celebration of gratitude. We gathered at Rockwell Beer Company and enjoyed food and fellowship with one another. In years past, supervisors have taken care of their respective units for the holiday season; however, at the beginning of 2024 staff began asking to celebrate the holiday season together. This led to the management team and the Sunshine Committee, formerly the Morale Corral, joining forces to plan the event. The management team committed to splitting the cost with the Sunshine Committee for this celebration. Site



visits to venues, menu review, and quotes were gathered. Information was shared with staff in a survey format and a vote was tallied of the preferred venue and menu ultimately leading to the selection of Rockwell Beer Company. The Sunshine Committee then began the task of raising funds for this gathering. The funds raised are primarily sourced from denim days, snack cart purchases, candy grams, and apparel purchases by staff. It was a great event and will likely be repeated.

*- contribution by Kim Bramlett*

## The Warrior Within

In September, Eastern Missouri hosted D.J. Eagle Bear Vanas—author, former U.S. Air Force officer, and member of the Ottawa Tribe of Michigan. Mr. Vanas shared stories of Native American heroes who reframed the path of those dedicated to service and shed light on key principles that transform mental, emotional, and physical well-being. These principles promote a disciplined and strengthened mindset that helps navigate fear, setbacks, and burnout. **The Warrior Within** was a reminder on passion and purpose, revitalizing the motivation and strength needed to be present in the call to serve community and self.

*- contribution by Savannah Gregory*



## Avoiding Phishing Attempts and Security Compromise in the Workplace

In today's digital landscape, phishing remains one of the most common and dangerous threats to workplace security. In fact, according to the U.S. Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), phishing and social engineering attacks are a major factor in breaches/security incidents. Hackers will often use phishing to gain initial access to a system and begin moving across the rest of the network. Verizon's 2023 Data Breach Investigations report found that more than 30% of breaches began with a successful phishing attack. Attacks involve fraudulent emails, phone calls, or messages designed to trick employees into revealing sensitive information like passwords, financial details, or access to credentials. These attacks often appear legitimate, using familiar logos or even mimicking trusted colleagues or business partners.

Local attorneys and law firms across the country were recently targeted by a widespread phishing campaign involving fake Notices of Electronic Filing (NEFs). The goal for this campaign was to get a recipient to reply to the initial email and click on a link to a malicious website in a follow-up email.

Staying up to date and aware of the latest trends in attacks is critical. As an example, AI and phishing are becoming increasingly intertwined—both attackers and defenders are using AI to enhance and defend against phishing campaigns.

To get a better idea of how hackers are utilizing AI, here are some of the tools used to enhance attacks:

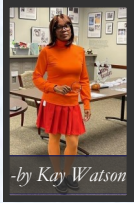
- **Personalized phishing (Spear Phishing)** – AI can analyze large amounts of publicly available personal data to create tailored phishing attacks. AI has the ability to scrape social media platforms, blogs, and public company directories to craft phishing emails that seem highly personal, making it harder for victims to recognize them as fraudulent.
- **Voice phishing (Vishing)** – AI can be used to generate voice calls that impersonate trusted individuals, such as colleagues, executives, or technical support agents. The attacker may use AI to synthesize a voice that sounds just like someone the victim knows, increasing the likelihood of the victim trusting the phone call and sharing sensitive information.
- **AI Automation** – Bad actors are able to generate convincing, targeted attacks in seconds. AI models use natural language processing to create natural and personalized emails for victims. AI can even be used to automate the creation of fake websites that replicate legitimate sites to capture login credentials, payment info, and other personal data.

To avoid falling victim to phishing attempts, users must be vigilant when interacting with unsolicited communications. Always verify the sender's identity, look for signs of inconsistency such as spelling errors, suspicious links, or unusual language, and avoid clicking on any links or downloading attachments unless you're certain the message is legitimate. Staying proactive is also key. Always use multifactor authentication (MFA) where available, ensure all devices have installed the latest security updates, and be wary of any public Wi-Fi networks. Finally, when it comes to passwords, be sure to make use of password managers. Password managers safely store and encrypt all of your passwords behind one complex "master" password. These password managers/vaults can also generate unique, strong passwords for each of your accounts without you having to memorize anything. By following these best practices, you can substantially mitigate your risk of being compromised.

- contribution by Justin Wagoner

Cybersecurity Month

The Eastern District’s annual Cybersecurity Month event, the Spooktacular—in keeping with the Halloween season, was a thrilling celebration featuring a laptop lock demo showcasing cable locks for laptop security, cybersecurity kiosks with fun educational games, and a lively costume contest with prizes. Stephen W. Holmes, Supervising U.S. Probation Officer gave a comprehensive



-by Kay Watson

presentation on protecting your identity and data

Ten Important Online Security Tips

1. Be careful with images & information posted on social media. What you wear and where you are can be clues to finding you in real life. Sanitize photos before posting. Blur out information like license plates and addresses.
2. Secure social media to only real life friends. Be careful of friends of friends.
3. Do not post vacation pics until after you get back.
4. Monitor your family members’ social media posts.
5. Remove yourself from online "people" search engines like **beenverified.com**.
6. Use **Google Results About You** to monitor what is posted online about you. Google can remove the results from a Google search. The information is still on the original website, but Google won't show the results if you ask them to remove the item from their service.
7. Use strong passwords and 2-factor authentication or authentication apps.
8. Use only notable sites to make purchases online. Look for HTTPS or the lock symbol in the address bar to make sure you are using a secure website.
9. Use credit cards online, not debit cards. Make sure it is a credit card with a good fraud protection feature.
10. Use electronic payment wallets, like Apple or Google Pay.

- by Stephen W. Holmes

District Court Information

The Honorable  
Stephen R. Clark  
Chief Judge

Nathan M. Graves  
Clerk of Court

Susan E. Hendrickson  
Chief U.S. Pretrial  
Services Officer

Kim Bramlett  
Chief U.S. Probation  
Officer

Eastern District  
Court Locations

Thomas F. Eagleton  
U.S. Courthouse  
111 South 10th Street  
St. Louis, MO 63102  
314-244-7900

Rush Hudson  
Limbaugh, Sr.  
U.S. Courthouse  
555 Independence Street  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703  
573-331-8800

Hannibal Federal  
Building  
801 Broadway  
Hannibal, MO 63401

Community Service

- The Clerk’s Office Community Service & Outreach Committee spearheaded many charitable donations these past 6-months. These include:
- ◆ **The Little Bit Foundation:** breaking down barriers to learning, helping students reach their fullest potential and shine on the world
  - ◆ **Vets Appreciation Run at Jefferson Barracks:** a demonstration of unity and respect for our servicemen and women
  - ◆ **Operation Gratitude—Write a Letter to Our Heroes:** envisioning a future where all who serve believe the American people care
  - ◆ **Operation Food Search—The Kaufmann Fund:** aiding Veterans with life's basic necessities through food, shelter, clothing, and more
  - ◆ **The Salvation Army’s Red Kettle Campaign:** volunteer bell ringing
  - ◆ **Cards for Hospitalized Kids:** spreading hope, joy and magic to hospitalized kids across America

Holiday Luncheon

The U.S. District & Magistrate Judges hosted the Eastern District of Missouri’s Court Holiday Luncheon in the Jury Assembly Rooms of the Eagleton and Limbaugh U.S. Courthouses.



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