Introduction

It is with great pride and pleasure that we present this anniversary publication to be read and enjoyed by all of the members of Minnesota Association for Court Management (MACM). This magazine is a compilation of personal accounts, opinions and historical articles of how the court system has grown and changed over the past 100 years. From the early days of holding court in a one-room shed to the modern, ergonomic, and aesthetically pleasing courthouses of today, we hope to take you on an entertaining journey through court administration over the past century.

As Oliver Wendell Holmes said, “The life of the law has not been logic; it has been experience.” Similar things can be said of the evolution of the “court clerk” since MACM’s inception in 1907. Through all the changes in our profession, both good and bad—MACM has been a constant presence standing behind court administrators, managers, and supervisors as the mission states:

MACM is an organization committed to the enrichment of its members through professional growth and development opportunities, promoting advancements and innovation in court administration, and partnering with other professionals working to improve the Justice System in Minnesota.

We look forward to seeing where the next 100 years will take us. Thank you MACM, for the support, networking opportunities and education you have provided. Happy 100 Year Anniversary!

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all who contributed an article for this magazine. Your experiences and perspectives are wonderful and will be enjoyed immensely by your readers. We also want to thank the Minnesota Historical Society for their assistance and the Minnesota Bar Association for graciously sharing some of their articles. Thank you also to the editorial team from the Fourth Judicial District for diligently reviewing all the articles prior to submission to our publisher—Nancy Peters, Jamie Smith, Vicki Albu and Ken Bergstrom—your work was invaluable.

Last, but definitely not least, a special and sincere THANK YOU to Pam Kilpela for spearheading and leading the production and formulation of this magazine. Your passion for history and the profession helped to make this magazine what it is—we could have not done it without you. Thank you also for keeping us all on track and for giving so selflessly your time and energy to this project.

MACM Membership Services Committee
Bruce Ahlgren, Patty Ball, Vicky Carlson, Gail Clapp, Annette Fritz, Pam Kilpela, Joanne Kopet, Becky Knudson, Susan Love, Karen Messner, Mike Moriarty, Charlotte O’Connell, Carol Renn, Jennifer Schlieper, Chris Volkers, Sandi Vrtacnik
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Historic Washington County Courthouse, Stillwater
MACM has been exceptionally served by a long list of officers and committee members who appreciated the importance of supporting a professional organization that supports us. Think about how busy you are today—the pace of work, the multi-tasking, dealing with staff and budget issues, addressing caseflow changes and demographic shifts. On top of this, think about taking on more work as a MACM Officer or committee member and committing to put in long hours to ensure training and educational opportunities for the members; to ensure that our voice is heard at the capitol; to keep the minutes and finances of the organization; to support and celebrate our members; to maintain the website and to facilitate communications. It takes a special type of person with the commitment and passion to be a MACM officer:

Someone who truly appreciates the value of MACM and does not take it for granted. Someone who knows they will get more out of serving than the work they put in. Someone who knows that an effective committee can take on any challenge and respond with collective and collaborative focus, spirited discussion, creativity, and laughter.

Someone who is willing to share talents even when it probably means the work is being done after hours or on a weekend.

Yes, we have been well served these last 100 years, and the current officers and committee chairs are no exception. Today we have a group of outstanding officers who are committed and working hard to carry on the work of our founders. The membership on our various committees has never been greater. The commitment of so many members volunteering and contributing is gratifying. On the following pages the chairs of our standing committees outline their committee mission and their activities. It is impressive.

The health and vibrancy of an organization is reflected in the quality of its leadership and the activities of its committees. At 100 years old, we are in great health. I think we are ready for the next 100.

Michael Moriarity
MACM Past President
District Administrator, 10th Judicial District
Key Dates in Court Management

1848  Minnesota’s first courthouse completed in Stillwater.
1849  Minnesota becomes a territory with a three person Supreme Court, three district courts, probate and justice of the peace courts.
1857  Hamline University opens first law school in Red Wing, MN. Tuition was $15 per year.
1858  Minnesota admitted to the Union. In the Constitution of the State of Minnesota, the Clerks of District Court were listed among the judiciary officials. The state was divided into six judicial districts.
1888  University of Minnesota Law School opens. Tuition was $30 per year.
1906  Roscoe Pound’s address to the ABA in St. Paul on “The Dissatisfaction with the Administration of Justice.”
1907  Records indicate Clerks of Court began meeting.
1909  Number of judicial districts expanded to nineteen.
1909  Legislative session passes the Clerks salary bill, which provided for a minimum Clerk of Court salary of $500 per year.
1917  Legislature creates juvenile courts, naming one judge in larger districts as juvenile judge, and designating probate courts in rural areas as juvenile courts.
1919  First conciliation courts created by Legislature in Minneapolis and Stillwater.
1921  Legislature provides for service of women on both grand and petit juries.
1927  Association of Clerks of District Court formalized. First Association Constitution is written.
1957  Number of judicial districts reduced from 19 to 14.
1959  Administrative responsibility for court operations is statutorily vested in Supreme Court. Number of judicial districts reduced from 14 to 10.
1963  Creation of the Office of Administrative Assistant to the Supreme Court with the designated function of assisting the legislative branch in compiling information relating to the operation of the courts, of assisting the chief justice in the administration of the courts, and of recommending policies for the improvement of the judicial system. (Name of office changed to court administrator in 1971.)
1972  Elected clerks of court became appointed.
1978  Manual SJIS, the state’s first case statistics gathering system is established.
1980  First pilot project for TCIS, trial court automated information system, is implemented.
1982  Constitutional amendment to create Court of Appeals.
1982–1987  Trial Court Unification, Court unification Act of 1982 merges probate, county, and municipal courts into a unified district court.
1990–2005  State Funding Transition.
1997  Nineteen individuals are sworn in as Minnesota’s first certified court interpreters.
Helen Keller said, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” This quote is a testament to our past, present, and future as we remember our history in celebration of 100 years as a professional association. What an exciting time for all of us. I am honored and privileged to be your President during this significant event in our history.

MACM, with nearly 300 members, exists for the distinct mission of being committed to the professional enrichment of our members. Being President of this association brings me satisfaction in doing something beneficial both for and with my peers. We provide many opportunities in education, networking, and growth. We are governed by an Executive Board of Directors. As President, I preside over this Board. The Board consists of the President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Secretary and immediate Past-President of the Association, the ten district chairpersons and one at-large representative who is elected by their peers. MACM’s Executive Board of Directors meet several times each year and consider such matters of policy, budget, and various administrative issues related to the association.

Plato said “The beginning is the most important part of the work.” Without the beginning by the clerks of court in 1907, there would be no today and no tomorrow for this association. The profession of court management in Minnesota has weathered the tests of time and change through the ongoing efforts of MACM. Throughout this magazine, many members past and present will speak to the significant events in the history of the judicial branch, court management, and MACM. We are honored to have historians among us. We are blessed with amazing members who dedicate their livelihood to the important work of assuring access to justice, administering justice, and increasing public trust and confidence—the core foundation of the Minnesota Judicial Branch.

Through our work and that of our former colleagues, we have helped create great leaders and provide great public service. Our past is a springboard to our future. The next 100 years will no doubt bring more changes, more challenges, and more opportunities.

As M. Scott Peck said “Share our similarities, celebrate our differences.” Thank you for 100 years, MACM.
2007 Executive Board: Back: Jill Goski (at-large), Lynae Olson (2nd District), Pat Kuka (10th District), Katie Brey (4th District), Rhonda Russell (7th District), Jim Attwood (3rd District), Greg Ess (1st District). Front: Mike Moriarity (Past-President), Karen Messner (Secretary), Chris Volkers (President), Carol Renn (1st Vice President), Susan Love (2nd Vice President), Joann Kopet (Treasurer). Not Pictured: Carol Jensen (8th District), Carol Melick (5th District), Larry Saur (9th District)

2007 MACM Officers: L-R: Michael Moriarity (Past-President), Carol Renn (1st Vice President), Chris Volkers (President), Susan Love (2nd Vice President), Joanne Kopet (Treasurer), Karen Messner (Secretary)
The Constitution of the state of Minnesota states that “Government is instituted for the security, benefit and protection of the people, in whom all political power is inherent, together with the right to alter, modify or reform government whenever required by the public good.” The purpose of the Legislative and Rules Committee is to do just that, help to alter, modify or reform our laws for the benefit of the people and the court system.

The committee is charged with the duty of being actively involved in legislative and rule-making processes; advising the Executive Board as to policy options and their implications; proposing and monitoring legislation; and recommending rules and proposed actions that could affect the courts. The committee is also charged with representing MACM in the legislative and rulemaking activities of other groups, such as the State Legislative Strategy Team and the Legislative Advisory Workgroup.

Through the creative ideas of its membership, MACM was successful in obtaining a number of legislative proposals enacted into law, such as transferring the duty of court administrators to serve delinquent taxpayers to the commissioner of revenue, clarifying the ability of the judicial branch to use revenue recapture to collect unpaid fines, and removing the requirement that the judicial branch process monetary awards in foreign currencies.

The Legislative and Rules Committee promotes a legislator ride-along outreach program. This is a collaborative effort with the bench and state court administration to educate and foster a relationship between the judicial and legislative branches of government. The ride-along program invites legislators to spend time with judges and court staff to learn about the everyday challenges of the court system.

Also, the committee hosts a “Day at the Capitol,” a day for the membership to spend time with their legislators. This initiative allows members to get to know their legislator as well as providing the legislator with a contact person in the judicial branch.

Membership on the Legislative and Rules Committee is a great way for MACM members to work with State Court Administration and the judicial branch in promoting the fundamental goals and mission of the judicial branch, while creating and fostering relationships within the Association.

Carol Renn
MACM 1st Vice President, Legislative & Rules Committee Chair
Court Administrator, Carver County
1st Judicial District (Chaska)
2007 Legislative & Rules Committee: Back L-R: Bruce Ahlgren (6th District), Wayne Minske (10th District), Pat Kuka (10th District), Lynn Fuchs (4th District), Van Brostrom (1st District), Karen Messner (Secretary), Sue Halpern (2nd District), George Lock (7th District). Front L-R: Janet Marshall (SCAO), Wanda Auser (10th District), Carol Renn (Committee Chair), Michael Moriarity (Past President), Paulette Lassig-Banks (2nd District), Chris Volkers (President). Not Pictured: Robert Langer (3rd District), Ken Bergstrom (4th District), Carol Bryne (4th District), Anna Lamb (4th District), Connie Belgard (5th District), Rhonda Russell (8th District), Kathy Narlock (9th District), Susan Love (2nd Vice President), Larry Anderson (Retired Member), Joanne Kopet (Treasurer)
The MACM Education Committee is comprised of court administrators, managers, supervisors, and leaders from judicial districts throughout the State of Minnesota. These leaders of the court system are dedicated to the pursuit of providing excellence in continuing education for the personal and professional development of their members. Academic courses offered focus on new methods and skills in the areas of leadership, strategic planning, finance, technology, human resources, change management, and more. As life-long learners, MACM members understand the significance of targeted training that places court leaders on the right path towards developing the skills and abilities needed to uphold and strengthen the justice system for future generations.

One of the most anticipated events of the year is the MACM Annual Summer Conference, planned and hosted by the Education Committee. This annual conference provides an opportunity for Minnesota court leaders to gather together to exchange management concepts, learn new methods for developing employees, discuss managing court operations, utilize cutting-edge technology, and receive leadership training. The Annual Summer Conference also provides MACM members with an opportunity to build strong working relationships with other leaders across judicial districts, thus serving to strengthen communication and collaboration throughout the Minnesota state judicial system.

Over the course of the last several years, the Education Committee has hosted the National Center for State Courts’ "Institute for Court Management" (ICM) Phase I courses, including: 1) Managing Human Resources; 2) Fundamental Issues of Case-flow Management; 3) Managing Court Financial Resources; 4) Managing Technology Projects and Technology Resources, and; 5) Court Performance Standards: CourTools. ICM is considered one of the country's foremost providers of educational programs in court administration. Upon completion of all five Phase I courses, participants are eligible to participate in a week-long concluding course, at the end of which they earn a “Certificate in Court Management”, a nationally recognized certification for court leaders interested in enhancing their careers in court administration.

The Court Operations Supervisor Winter Conference is the newest addition to the MACM Education Committee’s annual calendar of events. The winter conference provides court operations supervisors with a yearly opportunity to strengthen colleague relationships across judicial districts, share court management best practices, and develop leadership skills.

The acquisition of knowledge is a life-long investment; in the words of Benjamin Franklin, “Acquire the supreme wealth, wisdom, and you will have everything.” In this spirit, the MACM Education Committee is evermore dedicated to providing excellence in education to court leaders throughout the judicial system. In honor of MACM’s 100 Year Anniversary, the members of the MACM Education Committee celebrate the memories and accomplishments of the past, and look forward to endless educational possibilities in the future.

Susan Love
MACM 2nd Vice President, Education Committee Chair
Court Operations Manager, Hennepin County
4th Judicial District (Minneapolis)
2007 Education Committee: Back L-R: Doug Anderson (4th District), David Marchetti (2nd District), Sarah Lindahl-Pfieffer (10th District), Joanne Kopet (Treasurer), Sue Daigle (4th District), Pat Kuka (10th District), Connie Fischer (4th District), Pam Kilpela (4th District), Diane Fox (8th District), Patty Amberg (5th District). Front L-R: Lynn Wagner (10th District), Chris Volkers (President), Susan Love (Committee Chair), Robyn Boche (SCAO), Carol Renn (1st Vice President). Not Pictured: Bruce Ahlgren (6th District), Patty Ball (3rd District), Jeri Boetcher (1st District), Janice Cossette (7th District), Kate Fogarty (4th District), Jill Goski (SCAO), Diane Gross (9th District), Karen Messner (Secretary), Michael Moriarity (Past President), Lisa Pister (Tax Court), Leanne Ventrella (6th District)
It is an exciting time to be a member of MACM, particularly if you are on one or more of MACM's standing committees. Membership on a MACM committee provides its members with wonderful networking opportunities as well as a chance to be a part of an association that truly values its membership and is constantly working to improve court management.

The charge of the Membership Services Committee (formerly known as the Personnel Committee) is to recruit members and promote membership in MACM, monitor administrative and personnel policies and actions that could affect MACM members, and finally, recognize and publicly acknowledge individuals and programs through our various award programs, incentives and activities.

One of the most enjoyable and rewarding aspects of serving on the Membership Services Committee is the annual MACM Service Awards program. The Committee solicits nominations for these awards from the entire membership several times throughout the year. The Committee selects a winner in each of the following categories: Distinguished Service, Innovation, and Group Excellence. The winners are announced at the annual summer conference and presented with an award. The program is a great way to publicly recognize the achievements of our membership as well as keep MACM informed of initiatives and projects in other courts across the state.

Another great aspect of this committee is the fact that we are able to give away $2,000 in scholarship funding twice each year to select MACM members. The scholarship program is intended to promote the organization's efforts to improve judicial administration by financially supporting members' education in court administration and related fields. Those seeking a scholarship must apply by December 2nd or May 2nd of each year and the winners are selected and announced by the Membership Services Committee.

There are many other exciting and important activities going on in the Membership Services Committee. We recently revised MACM’s brochure and are redesigning the MACM website. The Committee is also working closely with the Education Committee in the planning and execution of MACM’s 100th Anniversary Celebration at the 2007 summer conference. Finally, we will soon expand our membership outreach efforts to groups and associations that have not previously been a part of MACM such as: tribal courts, guardians ad litem, Tax Court, and federal courts.

Serving on the Membership Services Committee is a great way to get involved with MACM and be a creative part of recognizing, expanding and promoting the judicial branch. If you have a creative spirit and like to work with an energetic group of people, please consider joining!

Jennifer Schlieper  
MACM Membership Services Committee Chair  
Administrative Services Manager, Washington County  
10th Judicial District (Stillwater)
2007 Membership Services Committee: Back L-R: Sandra Vrtacnik (5th District), Becky Knudson (8th District), Pam Kilpela (4th District), Joanne Kopet (Treasurer), Susan Love (2nd Vice President), Michael Moriarity (Past President), Vicky Carlson (1st District), Charlotte O’Connell (2nd District), Carol Renn (1st Vice President), Gail Clapp (4th District), Jennifer Schlieper (Committee Chair), and Chris Volker (President). Not Pictured: Patty Ball (3rd District), Annette Fritz (3rd District, Vice Chair of Committee), Bruce Ahlgren (6th District)