

Maricopa Lawyer  
Clerk's Corner  
*April 2018 Issue*

By Christine Kelly, Acting Clerk of the Superior Court

**Thank you, Clerk Michael Jeanes**

February 2018 marked the end of the Michael Jeanes era as Clerk of the Superior Court for Maricopa County. Michael was the ninth Clerk of the Superior Court in Maricopa County and was the county's second-longest serving Clerk since statehood in 1912. As noteworthy as Michael's time as the elected Clerk is, that was only a portion of the 37 years of public service Michael gave to Maricopa County over the course of his career.

When Michael joined the Clerk's office in the 1980s, the office maintained information in bulky docket books and courtroom clerks used steno pads for capturing and drafting the court's minutes. Over the years the office made widespread use of typewriters and carbon paper before eventually making the difficult change to computers. The office gained approval for a two-block long records center to store the mountains of paper received each day and filled that space to capacity years ahead of its designed capacity. In the early 2000s the office invested in scanning documents into images and then incorporated electronic filing. The office's move to electronic processes ultimately stopped and then reversed the accumulation of paper in the Clerk's records center. Along the way, many Clerk's office staff transitioned from jobs moving paper files to jobs reviewing electronic filings and auditing the conversion of paper to digital images.

What's next for the Clerk's office? Since Michael's retirement, I have filled the role of Acting Clerk, pending the governor's appointment of someone to complete Michael Jeanes' term. By the time this article goes to print, the governor may have appointed a new Clerk and the successful applicant will join the office halfway through its 2017-2019 Strategic Plan. Priorities within that plan include the expansion of electronic filing, more payment options similar to the private sector, electronically certified documents, enhanced training for staff, and an improved financial system with connections and tracking abilities previously unavailable. The new Clerk may modify, enhance, or add priorities for these plans, create new projects, expand the office's community outreach, or clarify any of these goals.

Under Michael Jeanes' charge, the Clerk's office enjoyed a reputation in the legal community as being accurate, dedicated to customer service, and responsive to feedback and input. As Chief Deputy before Michael's retirement, and as Acting Clerk since his retirement, I have worked to maintain and improve the office's reputation and I look forward to continuing to serve under the next Clerk. On behalf of myself, Maricopa County, the Clerks of Superior Court statewide, and the state of Arizona where Michael's contributions will be seen for years to come, our heartfelt thanks go to Michael with best wishes on a well-earned retirement. And thank you to Michael's family who supported his dedication to nearly four decades of public service.

*Christine Kelly earned a bachelor's and master's degree from the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism at Arizona State University. She served as the office's Chief Deputy for 12 years and currently serves as Acting Clerk of the Superior Court for Maricopa County until the governor appoints an individual to complete retired Clerk Michael Jeanes' term of office.*