



# MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

*John Nevin, Communications Director*

Ph: 517-373-0129 Twitter: @MISupremeCourt FB: facebook.com/misupremecourt

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Supreme Court Recognizes Outstanding Service of Judges and Court Staff** *Court Thanks Judicial Employees to Kick Off Public Service Recognition Week*

LANSING, MI, May 1, 2020 – To kick off [Public Service Recognition Week](#), the Michigan Supreme Court today recognized the outstanding service of judges and court staff statewide for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to innovation in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and throughout the year. Celebrated May 3 - 9, the program honors the men and women who serve our nation as federal, state, county, and local government employees.

“Michigan courts handle three million cases each year, treating everyone with dignity and respect and with a commitment to fairness, equal justice, and access for all,” said Chief Justice Bridget M. McCormack. “During this crisis, judges and court staff have shown the world what we already knew – Michigan’s judiciary is a national leader in serving the public.”

In response to the biggest public health crisis in a century, Michigan courts have expanded access to virtual courtrooms, allowing judges, staff, litigants, and the public to participate remotely. For example, since April 1, judges and other court officers have used Zoom more than 11,000 times for a total of nearly 50,000 hours of hearings. While this shift to remote hearings appeared seamless, the transition took unprecedented effort to make sure that proceedings followed court rules and were accessible to the public.

“In particular, I want to recognize the State Court Administrative Office team for their incredible effort supporting local trial courts,” said Chief Justice Pro Tem David Viviano. “For the past five weeks, our team has worked remotely, providing detailed guidance on topics ranging from custody and parenting time to planning for remote hearings. Their effort and passion to serve has been inspiring and has provided invaluable help to our colleagues across the state.”

Most recently, SCAO has provided advice to courts in a “[Return to Full Capacity Toolkit](#),” including a “triage” system for prioritizing cases so that they can effectively work through potential backlogs. In addition, extensive guidance was posted online to help self-represented litigants navigate the court system and access virtual courtrooms.

Public and the media are also benefiting from the ability to view court proceedings via YouTube. Courts statewide are posting their dockets online with links to watch on YouTube. In addition, SCAO is regularly updating a [clickable map](#) that allows the public to find available YouTube proceedings in their county.

[Public Service Recognition Week](#) has been celebrated since 1985 and is hosted by the Public Employees Roundtable and its member organizations.

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