



HON. WILLIAM D. KRAUT
MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGE
15TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTY OF CHESTER

STATE OF THE COURT 2016

District Court 15-2-03 Thornbury, Westtown, & West Goshen Townships

Dear Friends, Neighbours and Fellow Citizens:

I would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm personal greeting to you. I want you to know that I am personally thankful for your continued faith and trust in me. I am committed to continuing to protect and strengthen our community in the coming year. It is the sworn obligation of a Judge to ensure that every case tried in his or her court is adjudicated expeditiously, courteously, and according to law, with the fullest protection for the rights of all who are involved. I follow this belief daily.

This is my annual "State of the Court" address to the citizens of West Goshen Township. 2015 was a busy year for our court. I am proud to report that the state of Magisterial District Court 15-2-03 remains solid, sound and stable. In fact we were the 5th busiest Court in Chester County.

Pennsylvania's Magisterial District Courts are courts with limited jurisdiction. More than 90% of all litigation in Pennsylvania occurs in the courtrooms of Magisterial District Judges. Chester County currently has 17 Magisterial District Courts. All summary misdemeanor and felony criminal cases originate at the Magisterial District Court level. Magisterial District Courts are also the venue for lawsuits in civil cases for matters up to \$12,000.00 as well as the filing and disposition of minor criminal cases (summary cases) such as traffic violations, disorderly conduct, public drunkenness, truancy, game law violations, and parking tickets.

As a Magisterial District Judge I conduct preliminary hearings for all serious criminal offenders to determine which cases should be held for trial at the Court of Common Pleas (the trial court). I also set and accept bail and arraign defendants after arrest. This could happen day or night. I issue search warrants based upon testimony from our local police force, state police and the state's Attorney General's office.

Public trust and confidence begins with a fair and impartial judiciary. Every day I and the other District Judges work to provide resolution of disputes, to protect constitutional rights, and to uphold the rule of law. District Court 15-2-03 is one of the busier district courts in the county. Our caseload for the year 2015 was 6,722 cases filed. The cases filed in 2015 broke down as follows: 364 criminal cases, 269 civil cases, 4823 traffic cases, 197 Landlord Tenant cases, and 1021 summary cases. For the year 2015 the gross amount of revenue District Court 15-2-03 took in was \$1,132,130.39. Of that West Goshen Township received \$116,231.00.

District Court 15-2-03 is located at the Government Services Center (GSC) 601 Westtown Road, Suite 110 West Chester, PA 19380. Our telephone number is 610-436-5757, our fax number is 610-431-5755. The court's hours are Monday thru Friday 8:30 AM until 4:30 PM. The court's jurisdiction includes Westtown Township, West Goshen Township and Thornbury Township Chester County.

My door is always open. If you have any suggestions on making the court run more efficiently or how our court can better serve the public please let me know. Keep in mind that I cannot and will not discuss a case that I am to hear. The court staff nor I can give legal advice to the public, so please do not get angry at the staff when they tell you they cannot answer your questions. They are under strict orders not to give legal advice. The public and I are very fortunate to have the staff that is employed at our court. They are a dedicated, hard working and conscientiousness group of people. Without them the court would not run as effectively and efficiently as it does.

As always I am available to speak to civic groups, scouts, and schools. Tours of the court are available for schools and scouts.

In closing as I start each day I try to remember the following" the most extraordinary aspect of the judiciary in a free society is that even while exercising the authority entrusted to them, judges remain the servants, not the masters, of those on whom they sit in judgment."

William D. Kraut
Magisterial District Judge
District Court 15-2-03
Thornbury, Westtown & West Goshen