

SIDNEY PROGRESS REPORT
SHELBY COUNTY COMMON PLEAS COURT
JANUARY 2024

The year 2023 brought a slight increase in caseloads for the domestic relations and civil divisions of the Shelby County Common Pleas Court. There was a slight decline in criminal felony cases prosecuted; 320 felony cases in 2023 versus 345 in year 2022.

An important aspect of the criminal caseload is rehabilitation. This rehabilitation relies on an active probation department. As of December 31, 2023, the Shelby County Adult Probation Department was monitoring 191 offenders placed on community control by the Shelby County Common Pleas Court. There were 138 new people placed on community control through December 31st. There are 5 full-time probation officers in the department and one secretary/receptionist. From January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023, the probation officers performed 100 home visits, handled 2653 office visits, and 1722 collateral contacts (telephone contacts, counsel, employment, education, etc.). The department prepared 43 judicial release reports for the Judge, filed 114 probation violations and administered 743 drug tests to probationers.

The Shelby County Common Pleas Court Adult Probation Department was honored on October 12th in Columbus, Ohio as the recipient of the Clifford Skeen 2023 best prison diversion probation department in Ohio. The Shelby County Adult Probation Department was one of three prison diversion programs in Ohio nominated by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections Grant auditor. The probation department was nominated and selected due to the efforts of the probation officers to go above and beyond the normal standards and success rates with individuals placed on probation.

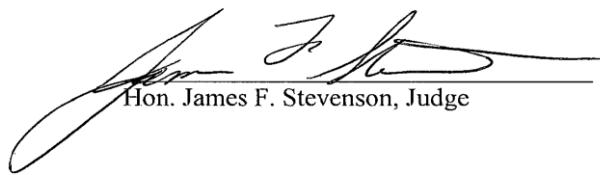
On the civil side, there were 238 new or reactivated cases filed compared to 226 filed in 2022. One troubling aspect of the civil cases was an uptick in mortgage foreclosures. The total number of foreclosures filed in 2023 was 65.

The domestic division also saw an increase in filings in year 2023. In year 2022, there were 336 new filings versus 361 new filings in 2023. I am pleased to report that Domestic Relations Magistrate Kristina Morris has been elected as a 3rd District Representative of the Ohio Association of Magistrates. The Mission of the Ohio Association of Magistrates is to assist Magistrates through education and professional development to serve the Justice System with integrity. Although Magistrate Morris' primary responsibility is the domestic relations division of the court, she also conducts criminal bond hearings and other matters assigned to her by the common pleas judge as needed.

The courthouse continues to see high traffic. Over 48,000 persons passed through courthouse security in 2023. During security checks 187 knives, 49 mace containers, one tazer and one screwdriver were discovered. The courthouse security committee continues to meet on a regular basis to find ways to improve security and the safety of both courthouse staff and courthouse visitors.

Of note, the court's official court reporter, Sandy Coon, retired at the end of 2023. She was the court's official court reporter for 45 years serving as court reporter for four judges: Judges Bauer, Lewis, Schmitt and Stevenson. She was a valued member of the court staff for those many years and performed her duties well. We wish her the best in her retirement.

In summary, the court was extremely busy during 2023. We continue to serve the needs of the community and work to resolve cases in a fair and just manner.



Hon. James F. Stevenson, Judge