

HIGHLIGHTING

GWENN S. KNAPP, MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGE

Gwenn S. Knapp was certified by the Pennsylvania Minor Judiciary Education Board in 2003 and elected to serve in West Chester's newly created magisterial district 15-1-04 beginning in 2004. West Chester Borough is the host community for West Chester University, and her court handles the largest non-traffic caseload in Chester County. "From the beginning, I have loved this job," she says, "because we work with so many different people, and people are endlessly interesting. Every day includes new stories and new challenges."

Judge Knapp initiated an evening-hours program to benefit those who are working or in school, allowing them to enter pleas and make payments outside of normal business hours.

She has also instituted a Teen Court program for juvenile offenders, and is piloting an alternative sentencing program through the Center for Resolutions. She developed this pilot program, Young Adult Community Conferencing (YACC), for summary offenders between the ages of 18 and 24 who have been cited for largely alcohol-fueled, quality-of-life crimes.

Judge Knapp was born in Toronto, Canada, although her family moved to the United States when she was very young. She began school in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania and then lived in Evanston, IL, where she became a naturalized citizen and first learned American government and history in the "Land of Lincoln."

After her family returned to Pennsylvania, she graduated from high school in Pittsburgh. She then went back to Lewisburg to earn her B.A. from Bucknell University and lived in New York City before moving to West Chester in 1984.

For almost 20 years, she owned and operated a small business communications company on a full-time basis. She is also an accomplished portrait artist. Putting her business skills to work for the court, she created the website JudgeKnapp.com to

provide the public with procedural information regarding citations, civil complaints, weddings, and other matters relevant to district court operations.

Currently active in the Special Court Judges Association of Pennsylvania, locally, she also serves at the state level on the Public Relations Committee of the Association.



The Honorable Gwenn S. Knapp

She is a member of Greater West Chester Sunrise Rotary, Greater West Chester Human Relations Council, United Way of Chester County Community Impact Team, the Prevention Board of West Chester Area Communities That Care, Civic Action Southeast (CASE) neighborhood association, the Hickman Art of Caring Arrangements Committee, Chester County Art Association, and the West Chester Cycling Club.

She is on the Board of Directors of Chester County Cares and on the Board of Trustees for West Chester Friends School. Magisterial District Judge Knapp has three adult children -- G. Elias Ganim, Esquire, an attorney; Emily Anmuth, a teacher; and Andrew Ganim, an engineer.

Thank you, Judge Knapp, for your service to our Association and to the Community!