



COURT  
ADMINISTRATION  
DIVISION

# THE COURT NEWSLETTER

## GUN COURT TO CLEAR BACKLOG BY JUNE 2021

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(Front Row from left) Court Assistant Ms. Kimiesha McLean, Court Coordinator Rohan Thompson, Secretary Ms. Monique Thompson, Court Assistant Mr. Akieno Hibbert, Court Assistant Avrie Scudder, (back row from left) Court Assistant Thishna Smith, Secretary Mrs. Ruth Thomas, Case Progression Officer Mr. Fabian Williams, Court Assistant Mr. Joel McCulskie and Chief Court Assistant Mr. Kevin Moore are members of the hardworking team at the Gun Court at the Supreme Court in Kingston.

The Gun Court is poised to become the first court in Jamaica to clear its case backlog by June 2021. A case is considered to be in a state of backlog, if it has been in the system for over two (2) years without being disposed. The latest Statistical Report shows the performance of the court means they could eliminate the backlog of cases by June 2021.

Court Coordinator for the Gun Court Rohan Thompson has attributed this success to his hardworking team members. He further pointed out that the clearly articulated vision of the Judiciary as outlined in its Strategic Plan, *"To be the best in the Caribbean in three years, and one of the best in the world in six years"*, was the foundation for the team's strategy.

The Court Newsletter sat down with Mr. Thompson to ascertain

## GUN COURT TO CLEAR BACKLOG BY JUNE 2021 (CONT'D)

how his visionary leadership and the sacrifices he and his team have made that has positioned them on this path.

**Court Newsletter:** How long have you been working with the Gun Court?

**Rohan Thompson:** I have been working with the Gun Court since 1996 and I was promoted to Court Coordinator for the Gun Court in 2017.

**Court Newsletter:** What do your job duties entail as Court Coordinator for the Gun Court?

**Rohan Thompson:** I ensure the smooth operation of the four Gun Courts (three trial court and one case management court).

**Court Newsletter:** What are some of the matters that are heard at the Gun Court?

**Rohan Thompson:** Firearm matters involving robbery, shooting, assault, rape and any other offences; however, murder cases involving a firearm are heard by the Circuit Court.

**Court Newsletter:** What is the average time of disposition from date of charge in the Gun Court?

**Rohan Thompson:** The average time of disposition is sixteen (16) months. This is very good and puts us ahead of the target set in the Strategic Plan, which is for cases coming into the courts to be disposed of within 24 months from the date of filing.

**Court Newsletter:** What does this mean in relation to clearing the backlog?

**Rohan Thompson:** Based on the performance of the court, the Gun Court will have cases that are two years old by the end of the year. In other words, no case filed before 2018 will exist in the Gun Court. This means that the backlog at the Gun Court will be cleared by June 2021.

**Court Newsletter:** How were you able to significantly reduce the backlog?

**Rohan Thompson:** I work seven days per week with my staff. The reason for this is because where the Gun Court used to be; it used to be in a situation where the results were not positive. On the weekends, we review the court list and contact the relevant persons to include members of the Jamaica Constabulary Force, lawyers and probation officer. We would even speak with judges as well. We put everything in place for the next court date (trial, sentence or mention date) to ensure the smooth running of the proceedings because we do not want any hiccup.

**Court Newsletter:** How do you win over the support of your staff?

**Rohan Thompson:** The first thing is the approach. You have to have a friendly approach not a 'backra massa' approach where you have a big stick. You have to actually sit with them and find out the ins and outs, the little situations/problems and talk to them. You have to say I was once where you guys were and I understand everything you are going through. Once that playfield is leveled, they actually see you as one of them.

**Court Newsletter:** How do you keep your staff motivated?



## GUN COURT TO CLEAR BACKLOG BY JUNE 2021 (CONT'D)

**Rohan Thompson:** I reward them. The first staff of the January to March quarter was awarded \$10,000. For the second quarter, I introduced prizes for second place (\$7,500) and third place (\$2,500); however, this initiative was interrupted by COVID-19.

**Court Newsletter:** What else accounts for the stellar performance of the Gun Court?

**Rohan Thompson:** The success is also due to the Judicial Case Management System (JCMS), which has assisted us with the timely scheduling of trial proceedings. This has significantly helped to reduce the backlog. The JCMS has indeed moved the Gun Court in a direction where it has never gone before.

**Court Newsletter:** What impact has the vision statement had on your leadership?

**Rohan Thompson:** It has impacted by leadership in a positive way. Since assuming leadership at the Gun Court, there has been a positive transformation in the attitudes of staff, the performance of the court and the quality of customer service.

**Court Newsletter:** What was the operation of the Gun Court like before the introduction of the vision statement in 2018?

**Rohan Thompson:** It was like business as usual. People would normally attend work and see it as a mean to an end. Since the introduction of the vision statement in 2018, the work environment has changed dramatically. First, I must commend the Chief Justice for allowing us to participate in seminars, workshops and other forms of training to increase our knowledge and improve our leadership skills. The Franklin Covey session was one of the first radical training that took place. As a result of that training, persons were able to work in a more goal-oriented manner. I have established charts. They contain the Widely Important Goals (W.I.G.) for the Gun Court. This has propelled me to get my staff more involved. Each member of staff is assigned to a WIG.

I have also hosted monthly meetings. This is where we discussed WIGs and have our cadence of accountability in terms of following-up on the WIGs. We asked ourselves the following questions: Are we achieving? Are there any difficulties? We find solutions to problems team members may encountered with their assigned WIGs.

Sometimes as leaders we assign a person to a particular area and the results are not seen. So what I do is to assess them and based on where their strengths lie, I will assign them to a particular tasks to maximize their true potential. That was never done before.

**Court Newsletter:** What support do you get from the Chief Justice?

**Rohan Thompson:** Chief Justice Bryan Sykes visits my office two or three times per week to ensure the smooth operation of the Gun Court.

**Court Newsletter:** This a phenomenal achievement Mr. Thompson! Congrats to you and the team!

## JUDICIARY REVIEWS STRATEGIC TARGETS IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19



The Judiciary of Jamaica has conducted a review of its Strategic Plan in light of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that it remains on track to achieving its vision statement of being the best in the Caribbean in three (3) years and one of the best in the world in six (6) years.

Chief Justice, the Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD, said the Annual Strategic Planning Retreat held in August was an apt time for the Judiciary to evaluate the team's fundamental direction against the background of COVID-19 to address any threats or to capitalize on any opportunities that the health crisis may present to the courts.

He noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has created an opportunity for the Judiciary to fast-track the use of technology in judicial proceedings. On the other hand, he noted that jury trials have been suspended because juror boxes do not allow for physical distancing. Despite the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Chief Justice Sykes is confident that there will be light at the end of the tunnel.

Chief Justice the Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes, OJ, CD at the Strategic Launch held at the Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel in St. Andrew on January 31, 2020.

"We are having delays now but we are really managing the process in a way that certainly towards the end of this year and beginning of next year, you should begin to see the result of the planning that we have been engaged in since August of this year," he said.

Chief Justice said all levels of the three-tier Strategic Plan are constantly being assessed to identify any gaps and to implement practical solutions.

"We have been reviewing and refining the strategic plan for the overall legal system in light of COVID-19. Then, we will be looking at the second level of Strategic Plan for the individual court. As a result, each Parish court, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court will have its own strategic plan that is linked to the overall Plan," Chief Justice Sykes said.

Chief Justice Sykes said the cooperation of every member of staff is paramount in order for the Judiciary to remain on course to achieve the strategic objectives.

## **JUDICIARY REVIEWS STRATEGIC TARGETS IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19 (CONT'D)**

“As in everything, plans are not self-executing. There has to be a real live flesh and blood person at the end of this who is going to be doing this. This is where tier three comes in which is the individual work plan for each person within the court. So there is an attempt to give more meaning, focus and direction to our efforts. With that being done, we should not be worse off because of the COVID-19 crisis,” Chief Justice Sykes emphasized.

The five-day strategic planning retreat was facilitated by Professor Mitchell Weisberg, who has over 30 years of experience in leadership and advising executives on strategic planning.

Professor Weisberg pointed out that a SWOT analysis is necessary to consider the external and internal environment. A SWOT analysis is a study undertaken by an organization to identify its internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as its external opportunities and threats.

“The external environment has to do with what we should be doing from the stakeholder perspective. The internal environment has to do with what we can do presently with our skills, knowledge and resources,” Professor Weisberg said.

Professor Weisberg also noted that the problem with many organizations that have failed to achieve their desired results is not with their strategies but the implementation of their strategies. “In 70% of cases, strategies fail not because of bad strategy, but poor execution. The balanced scorecard allows each group and individual to take ownership of the strategy. It links strategy to execution,” Professor Weisberg said.

He said that measurements are important because they are used to make rational decisions. Professor Weisberg added that “the Judiciary must focus on the right initiatives. It must do those things that will get us to the objectives. It must have process improvements that are guided by the strategy and not simply improve a process for the sake of improvement.”

The strategic plan, ‘Benchmarking the Future: Courting Success’, was launched in January this year and covers the period 2019 to 2023. The Judiciary’s strategic plan is rooted in the Balanced Scorecard, a strategic performance management tool that consists of four perspectives. These are learning and growth perspective, the internal processes, customer and financial perspectives. The scorecard consists of a set of measures, targets and initiatives designed to achieve the objectives selected from the various perspectives.



# THE GUN COURT



**The Gun Court was established by the Gun Court Act (1974) in response to rising gun violence in Jamaica.**

**There are three (3) divisions of the Gun Court. They are : Parish Court, High Court and Circuit Court Divisions.**

**Matters before the Gun Court are heard in-camera, meaning members of the public are excluded from observing these proceedings.**

**Matters at the Gun Court can be tried without a jury.**

**Any person found guilty of an offence under the Firearms Act could be liable to imprisonment, with or without hard labour for life.**



## PARISH COURT APPLICATIONS TO BE ACCESSIBLE ONLINE BY 2021



File Photo: Portland Parish Court

Chief Justice the Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes, OJ, CD has announced plans to make application forms for services at Parish Courts accessible online as the Judiciary seeks to improve efficiency and the use of technology within the courts.

Chief Justice Sykes was speaking at the annual Assize Service held under the theme *'Upholding Justice in Uncertain Times'* at the Webster Memorial United Church on Half Way Tree Road in St. Andrew on Sunday, September 13, 2020.

He explained that digitizing court processes will reduce transaction time and increase access to justice. Chief Justice Sykes added that the younger generation is no longer interested in a paper-based justice system and members of the legal profession will have to make adjustment to meet their needs.

“When persons are interacting with the courts, they really do not expect to see a lot of papers, they expect to access legal services online and that is one of the things that we are working towards. By early next year, persons will be able to access many of the applications at the Parish Courts online,” Chief Justice Sykes explained.

He pointed out that while the COVID-19 pandemic has been having a negative impact on the operations of the court, it has provided the catalyst for the Judiciary to incorporate the use of technology on a wider basis.

“Bail applications are still being done electronically certainly in the Supreme Court. The Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) has retrofitted areas at the Kingston Central Police Station, Half Way Tree Police Station and Freeport Police Station in Montego Bay to facilitate bail hearings remotely. The JCF is currently working on all its main stations in popular Police Divisions and within a few months, we will be able to have bail applications in the Parish Courts being conducted remotely at those stations. This is a significant development,” Chief Justice Sykes said.

While noting the importance of transitioning some service to an online platform, Chief Justice Sykes said a complete shift to online could hinder access to justice for some citizens due to low internet penetration in parts of the country.

“We must still remember that there are persons who are self-represented litigants and persons who for whatever reasons may choose not to participate in the process electronically. Therefore, we still have to find

## PARISH COURT APPLICATIONS TO BE ACCESSIBLE ONLINE BY 2021 (CONT'D)

ways and means to accommodate them. We do not want the transition to the digital era to become one of exclusion. Really, we should see it as a means of improving access to justice not just to litigants but also attorneys,” Chief Justice Sykes said.

### **Justice Ministry to improve ICT infrastructure in courts**

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Justice is to undertake a rapid assessment of the (Information Communication Technology) ICT capacity that will be necessary to support expanded use of ICT in the justice sector. It will also determine the gaps and areas for potential support; including safeguards that may be needed to ensure the protection of users’ rights.

Justice Minister Delroy Chuck made the disclosure at the annual Assize Service in St. Andrew. He said “we [Ministry] will shortly have consultants in place and look forward to collaboration and discussions with the Judiciary as we work to support your requirements and endeavours.”

The Justice Minister said the theme for the Assize Service was appropriate as the COVID-19 pandemic has presented a host of new challenges which require that justice institutions adjust their operations and become more efficient and agile.

“It has brought into sharp focus the need to create a resilience and responsive justice system. As we continue to navigate this period of uncertainty, I am proud that the Judiciary is providing guidance regarding court operation in a manner that is respectful of fundamental judicial principles and health and safety of the person. The success of our justice system and in deed the rule of law depends on public confidence and trust. This means that we cannot simply view our response in periods of uncertainty as temporary measures to bring us back to normal. They must be seen as opening the door imagining a new normal,” Mr. Chuck said.

In the meantime, President of the Jamaican Bar Association Emile Leiba said he is in agreement with the Chief Justice’s statement about a balanced approach regarding the digitization of the court system. He said it is important that no one gets left behind.

“For those who have ready access to tablets, phones and other computer devices and for those for whom that is a concept; it is as far away from them as is the east is to the west so we must be prepared to accommodate them,” Mr. Leiba said.

The Assize Service marks the commencement of the Michaelmas term of the Home Circuit Court. A service was also held at the St. James Parish Church in Montego Bay on Sunday, September 20, 2020 under the same theme. The service, which was streamed live, was attended by Attorney General Marlene Malahoo Forte QC, Director of Public Prosecution Paula Llewellyn CD, QC, judges, lawyers and staff members of the Court Administration Division.



## PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS ANNUAL ASSIZE CHURCH SERVICE-KINGSTON



(From left) Chief Justice the Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD, Chief Judge of the Parish Courts His Honour Mr. Chester Crooks and President of the Court of Appeal the Honourable Mr. Justice C. Dennis Morrison OJ, CD at the Annual Assize Service held at Webster Memorial United Church in St. Andrew on Sunday, September 13, 2020.



(In front row) Justice Minister Delroy Chuck, Attorney General Marlene Malahoo-Forte, (back row from left) Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Justice Sancia Bennett Templer and Director of Public Prosecutions Paula Llewellyn observing physical distancing at the Annual Assize Service held at Webster Memorial United Church in St. Andrew.



Parish Court Judge Her Honour Ms. Michelle Salmon dancing at the Annual Assize Service at the Webster Memorial United Church in St. Andrew.



Reverend Dr. Devon Dick delivered the sermon at the Annual Assize Service at the Webster Memorial United Church in St. Andrew and urged congregants not to stand in the way of justice.

## PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS ANNUAL ASSIZE CHURCH SERVICE-KINGSTON (CONT'D)



Director of Public Prosecutions Paula Llewellyn CD, QC and the Honourable Mrs Justice Nicole Foster-Pusey elbow-bumping at the end of the Annual Assize Service.



(From left) Justice Minister Delroy Chuck QC, MP, Attorney General Marlene Malahoo-Forte QC, MP Chief Justice the Hon. Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD and Reverend Dr. Devon Dick share a light moment at the Annual Assize Service.



President of the Jamaican Bar Association Mr. Emile Leiba gave remarks at the Annual Assize Service.



Members of the private bar participated in the Annual Assize Service at the Webster Memorial United Church in St. Andrew.



## SEVERAL STAFF TRAINED AND CERTIFIED IN BALANCED SCORECARD

Several judges, court administrators and directors at the Court Administration Division have been trained and certified in the world renowned Balanced Scorecard (BSc), which is a strategic planning and management system focusing on strategic objectives, measures, targets, and initiatives.

The Judiciary of Jamaica earlier this year launched its Strategic Plan entitled “*Benchmarking the Future: Courting Success*”. The plan is rooted in the Balanced Scorecard, which is an integrated strategic planning and performance management tool. Furthermore, the Balanced Scorecard helps to measure the objectives outlined in the Judiciary’s strategic plan and provide feedback to organizations. As a result, the Balanced Scorecard workshop will assist the management of the Judiciary and courts to become the best in the Caribbean in three years and among the best globally in six years.

The Balanced Scorecard workshop was held in July at the Courtyard by Marriott Hotel in New Kingston, St. Andrew and the thirty (30) participants took an online examination in August for the certification. The workshop was delivered by Managing Director of Lumen Solutions Inc. and a Faculty member of Northeastern University Professor Mitchell Weisberg using a blended approach. Professor Weisberg has over 30 years of experience in leadership and advising executives on strategic planning.

The workshop was welcomed by the participants. One participant the Honourable Mr. Justice David Fraser described the workshop as timely.

“Since we have the strategic plan in place, this will help us to go to the next step to drill down to the tier two and tier three levels so that persons are aware of their own role in the process and contribute to making the plan work,” Justice Fraser said.

Her Honour Miss Sanchia Burrell said “the workshop is promising in terms of how it will add value to what I already know and how it will help us as leaders to step out of our comfort zone and embrace technology and methodology.”

Chief Justice the Honourable Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD thanked the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Section (INL) at the U.S. Embassy for assisting the Judiciary to build the capacity of its staff as it seeks to create a world-class court system.

Meanwhile, the INL at the U.S. Embassy said it was pleased to work with the Judicial Education Institute of Jamaica and the Court Administration Division to facilitate the training and certification of participants in the world renowned Balanced Scorecard principles.

In a statement, the INL said “the Honorable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes, Chief Justice, has publicly recognized the importance of investing in human capital by equipping court staff with world class leadership and management training using the Balanced Scorecard strategic management tool. This investment is key to ensuring that court leadership has the capacity to successfully implement the Judiciary’s Strategic Plan.”

“This investment in the Judiciary is based on Honorable Chief Justice Bryan Sykes’ vision to translate this training into measurable improvements in the court system. INL is pleased to support judicial priorities based on the Judiciary’s Strategic Plan along with INL priorities,” the statement added.

## MEET THE GUN COURT STAFF AT SUPREME COURT



**Mr. Rohan Thompson**  
**Court Coordinator**



**Mr. Kevin Moore**  
**Chief Court Assistant**



**Fabian Williams**  
**Case Progression Officer**



**Ms. Kimiesha McLean**  
**Court Assistant**



**Mrs. Ruth Thomas**  
**Secretary**



**Ms. Kandice Francis**  
**Court Assistant**



## MEET THE GUN COURT STAFF AT SUPREME COURT



**Mr. Akieno Hibbert**  
**Court Assistant**



**Ms. Monique Thompson**  
**Secretary**



**Mr. Joel McCulskie**  
**Court Assistant**



**Thishna Smith**  
**Court Assistant**



**Ms. Avrie Scudder**  
**Court Assistant**

## CHIEF JUSTICE SYKES: “NO RIGHT TO A JURY TRIAL!”



Chief Justice the Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD speaking at the Assize Service held at the St. James Parish Church on Sunday, September 20, 2020.

Chief Justice the Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD said it remains unclear when jury trials will resume as the COVID-19 pandemic remains a threat to public health, adding that there is no right to a jury trial under the Jamaican Constitution amid reluctance from some attorneys to utilize bench trial (trial by judge alone).

Chief Justice the Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD made the announcement at the Assize Service held at the St. James Parish Church in Montego Bay on Sunday, September 20, 2020 to mark the commencement of the Michaelmas Term of the St. James Circuit Court under the theme “Upholding Justice in Uncertain Times”.

“The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC) has stated at least 20 years ago albeit under the old or previous Bill of Rights that there is no constitutional right to a jury trial. That was argued in the Queen against Trevor Stone and that settled the argument. “There is nothing in the new charter.... in fact the word

‘jury’ isn’t even mentioned in the Charter,” Chief Justice Sykes said.

He continued: “As far as I am concerned, there is no right to a jury trial. The right that is guaranteed under the Constitution is the right to a fair trial before a properly constituted and impartial court. In the event of an adverse verdict, the system provides the mechanism by which any injustice can be addressed.”

Chief Justice Sykes said the reporting conditions that defendants out on bail have to fulfil while awaiting jury trial could result in loss of employment opportunities. Additionally, he said that that accused persons could wait indefinitely for a jury trial with no end in sight for when the coronavirus pandemic will be over.

“The question then arises why are we hanging on to jury trials in a context like this where for nine months going up to the end of December where we will not be having jury trials? Who knows when the pandemic will subside? So if I understand my colleagues then, until that time comes, whether it is now, or two years from now, or three years from now, if you believe some experts no jury trials will take place. So what is going to be happening to those persons who are in custody? So I might urge members of the Bar to rethink their position on that,” Chief Justice said.

“What about the victims who have to relive the experience each time they are told their matters are set down for trial? They have to prepare themselves psychologically and emotionally to give evidence. Let us spare a thought for those persons as well. Doing justice in uncertain times require courage to do what is necessary and



## **CHIEF JUSTICE SYKES: “NO RIGHT TO A JURY TRIAL!” (CONT'D)**

right to changing processes, changing law, changing our thinking so that we can have a legal system worthy of Jamaica and Jamaicans," Chief Justice Sykes said.

Under the Criminal Justice (Administration) Act, as amended by the Jury (Amendment) Act 2015, Section 11A (1) prescribes that the prosecution and the defence must agree in writing for the offence to be tried by a judge alone. He pointed out that the vast majority of trials take place without a jury in the Circuit Court including serious offences such as; firearm offences other than murder and treason, offences under the Law Reform (Fraudulent Transactions) (Special Provisions) Act, colloquially known as the anti-lottery scam law and the Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organisations) Act, 2014, commonly called the anti-gang legislation.

“As it presently stands, if a defendant breaks into a house and sexually assaults someone and then inflicts some injury and leaves, it’s a jury trial. But if the same person breaks into the house and uses a firearm, then it is not a jury trial. So the indication whether it is a bench trial or jury trial simply turns upon whether the person had a firearm or no firearm. To me that is irrational and makes no sense. It is time for us as a mature country to remove that kind of nonsense from our criminal practices and procedure,” Chief Justice Sykes said.

In the meantime, the Attorney General Marlene Malahoo-Forte, who was also in attendance at the Assize Church Service, said “I have taken note of your views and I will bring it back to the executive and legislative branch to see how we can make progress and of course, we will do so in consultation with the bar.”

Mrs. Malahoo Forte added that “whatever it is that we do, we have to remember that we are in service of others. There is no view that we can hold so strongly that it becomes institutionalised around us and so thwart the ends of justice.”

Meanwhile, President of the Cornwall Bar Association Lambert Johnson said “the COVID pandemic is too good a crisis to waste”, and has promised to share the Chief Justice's recommendation to his colleagues.

“Your arguments were persuasive and I have listened and I will seek to bring your message in the most fulsome way that I can to my brothers and sisters in law, because as I have said, this is too good a crisis to waste. Of course, we would expect that while we do our part the judiciary will also do its part to ensure that what they do is without blame and without blemish. And so, members, I give you this commitment: I shall take the words of the learned Chief Justice. In fact, I shall embrace them and I shall seek to impart what has been said because it is very worthy of adoption by the private Bar,” Johnson said.

Jury trials have been suspended since March when Jamaica recorded its first COVID-19 case because juror boxes do not allow for physical distancing. As a result, persons who were scheduled for jury duty have been discharged without penalty.

## PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS ASSIZE CHURCH SERVICE-ST. JAMES



Chief Justice the Hon. Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD conversing with Senior Parish Court Judge at the St. James Parish Court Her Honour Mrs. Sandria Wong-Small at the Assize Service held at the St. James Parish Church on Sunday, September 20, 2020.



(From left) Chief Justice the Hon. Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD greeting one of the congregants at the St. James Parish Church with an elbow-bump to reduce the spread of the coronavirus.



Attorney General Marlene Malahoo Forte QC, MP being escorted to her seat by Acting Protocol Officer Jelani Clachar at the Assize Service held at the St. James Parish Church.



Custos of St. James Honourable Bishop Conrad Pitkin, CD getting his temperature checked by Court Administrator at the Trelawny Family Court Silma Ellis. Holding the bottle of sanitizer is Court Administrator at the St. James Parish Court Devene Gordon-Pheonix.



## PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS ASSIZE CHURCH SERVICE-ST. JAMES



President of the Cornwall Bar Association Lambert Johnson delivering greetings at the Assize Service held at the St. James Parish Church on Sunday, September 20, 2020. The event was held under the theme: 'Upholding Justice in Uncertain Times'.



Members of the congregation observing physical distancing at the Assize Service held at the St. James Parish Church on Sunday, September 20, 2020. This is the second time the Assize is being held in St. James.



Pastor of the King's Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mount Salem, Charles Brevitt delivered the sermon at the Assize Service at the St. James Parish Church. He urged accused persons who are guilty to plea guilty.



Deputy Superintendent of Police Pheonia Watson of the Montego Bay Police Station in St. James at the Assize Service to mark the commencement of the St. James Circuit Court.

## TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE TRAINING BEARING FRUIT



The Client Services, Communications and Information Unit of the Court Administration Division is reporting an improvement in the manner in which employees interact with customers via telephone and has attributed this to its telephone etiquette training, which was conducted in July.

The two-week training was delivered virtually as a result of the restriction on public gathering aimed at reducing the spread of COVID-19. It was administered by Customer Service Coordinator Mrs. Janet Duffus-Beale and Customer Service Officer Ms. Shana-Kaye Allman.

Ms. Allman said the objectives of the training were to improve the customer service experience and to protect the image of the Judiciary in keeping with the Standards of the Customer Service

Charter.

Fifty (50) persons ranging from front desk representatives, telephone operators, deputy clerks, accountants and attendants were trained in telephone etiquette, adding that these groups of workers were selected due to their engagement with members of the public.

“Once a first impression is made, if it is less than great, unfortunately it takes a long time to change it. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that we practice proper phone etiquette to allow our customers to feel a sense of trust and confidence in our system. With regard to internal customers, proper phone etiquette fosters a healthy professional relationship among staff because no one wants to be disrespected,” Ms. Allman said.

The Customer Service Officer pointed out that allowing the phones to ring without answering them communicates to the customers that “you are not interested in meeting their needs.”

Therefore, Ms. Allman is recommending that employees answer the call within the first two or three rings to always answer the call in a courteous and polite manner “to let customers know that their business is important to us. If we are not able to answer your phone because we are serving other clients, forward the call to your colleague or utilize the pickup feature. You are also reminded to check your voicemail and call back the customer as soon as you are able to do so.”

She added that it is important for staff to identify themselves, ask the customers their names so they can be referred to by their names, speak in a polite tone, listen actively and take notes and ensure that the callers’ needs are met before closing the call.

She added that satisfying the needs of these customers will allow the Judiciary to achieve its vision statement “to be the best in the Caribbean in three years and one of the best globally in six years.” Ms. Allman is urging staff to continue to practice proper phone etiquette so that it becomes a lifestyle.



## NINE JUDGES PROMOTED



Chief Justice the Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD, has congratulated the nine Judges who were sworn in to higher office by Governor-General His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen during a ceremony at King's House in St. Andrew on September 14.

"All nine persons are here on merit and we can be justly proud of having them to serve us. They are joining the judiciary at a time when Jamaica needs persons of character, determination and commitment to service above self," said Chief Justice Sykes.

Newly appointed judges showing off their Instrument of Appointments following a swearing-in ceremony held at King's House in St. Andrew on September 14, 2020.

David Fraser and Nicole Simmons were appointed as Judges of the Court of Appeal. Their appointments took effect on September 21, 2020. Marcia Dunbar Green was also appointed to act as Judge of the Court of Appeal from September 16

until December 18.

Five Parish Court judges were appointed to act as Puisne Judges. They are Natalie Hart Hines, Carole Barnaby, Icolin Reid, Vaughn Smith and Tara Carr, whose appointments took effect on September 16. Stephany Orr was appointed to act as Master-in-Chambers.

The Governor-General congratulated the Judges, noting that they have been appointed on their own merit, displaying outstanding qualities, such as personal integrity, experience and competence.

"These qualities will serve you in good stead as you discharge your duties. We are confident in our justice system and the efficacy of the rule of law. We value and respect your contribution to our democracy and wish you well as you assume your new positions," said the Governor General.

Meanwhile, Justice Hilary Phillips who gave remarks on behalf of President of the Court of Appeal, Justice Dennis Morrison, congratulated the Judges and lauded them for their dedication to the dispensation of justice.

"I have had the pleasure of either teaching some, working with others or simply observing their professional development over the years. We are familiar with their work over the years, the talent and commitment they have shown and the wealth of knowledge that they collectively bring to the table," she said.

Justice David Fraser, in his response on behalf of his colleagues, expressed appreciation for the confidence placed in them to execute the duties of this important office. "We pledge, by God's guidance, to stand up for justice, to work diligently and creatively and by our general deportment, integrity and performance, to demonstrate that we have come to our appointments for such a time as this," he said.

## SNAPSHOTS OF SWEARING-IN CEREMONY



Judge of Appeal the Honorable Mr. Justice David Fraser elbow bumping with Governor-General His Excellency Sir Patrick Allen while receiving his instrument of Appointment at King's House on September 14, 2020.



Judge of Appeal the Honorable Mrs. Justice Nicole A. Simmons signing her name as Governor-General His Excellency Sir Patrick Allen looks on at King's House on September 14, 2020.



The Honorable Mrs. Justice Marcia Dunbar-Green has been appointed to act as Judge of Appeal. The Governor-General looking on as she takes the Oath of Allegiance and Judicial Oath on at King's House on September 14, 2020.



Acting Puisne Judge the Honourable Mr. Justice Vaughn A. Smith taking the Oath of Allegiance and Judicial Oath while as the Governor General looks on during the ceremony at King's House on September 14, 2020.



Acting Puisne Judge the Honourable Ms. Justice Icolin Reid takes Oath of Allegiance and Judicial Oath while the Governor General looks on during the ceremony at King's House on September 14, 2020.



Acting Puisne Judge the Honourable Mrs. Justice Natalie T. Hart-Hines takes the Oath of Allegiance and Judicial Oath while the Governor General looks on during the ceremony at King's House on September 14, 2020.



## SNAPSHOTS OF SWEARING-IN CEREMONY



Puisne Judge the Honourable Miss Justice Tara A. Carr taking the Oath of Allegiance and Judicial Oath at King's House on September 14, 2020. Looking on is the Governor General.



The Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD (front-left) and the Honourable Miss Justice Hilary Phillips, CD (front-right) celebrating with the newly appointed Judges at the swearing-in ceremony at King's House on September 14, 2020.



Acting Puisne Judge The Honourable Miss Justice Carole Barnaby taking the Oath of Allegiance and Judicial Oath while as the Governor General looks on during the ceremony at King's House on September 14, 2020.



The Honourable Miss Justice Stephany C. Orr, who is appointed to act as Master-in-Chambers, taking the Oath of Allegiance and Judicial Oath while the Governor General looks on at King's House on September 14, 2020.

## WASILEWSKA BIDS FAREWELL TO JUDICIARY AND JAMAICA



(From left) Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Justice Sancia Bennett-Templer, President of the Court of Appeal, the Honourable Justice Dennis Morrison, European Union Ambassador Her Excellency Malgorzata Wasilewska and Justice Minister Delroy Chuck at the Court of Appeal on August 12, 2020.

After four years, Head of the European Union Delegation to Jamaica, Belize, Bahamas, Turks and Caicos Islands and the Cayman Islands, Her Excellency Malgorzata Wasilewska, bid farewell to Jamaica having spearheaded the development of a number of projects through funding from the Government and people of EU. One of these projects which Ambassador Wasilewska is extremely proud of is the major infrastructural development to the Court of Appeal.

President of the Court of Appeal Dennis Morrison gave Ambassador Wasilewska a tour of the court on August 12, 2020 as she bids the Judiciary farewell. He thanked her for the infrastructural upgrade and wished her all the best as she takes up her new post in the Barbados.

Ambassador Wasilewska exchanged a few words to staff, noting that the opening of the Court of Appeal is one of her most memorable events. The EU funded the infrastructure project, comprising 13 judges' chambers, three new courtrooms and two lounges, among other

facilities, in the sum of \$J846 million.

“We have made such an impact on the justice sector and the ambition is to make justice available for all,” said Ambassador Wasilewska.

Registrar at the Court of Appeal Stacie-Ann Brown said the “we [staff] are very grateful to the EU for the improvements in their work environment. She said they all feel comfortable and love the improvements.”

Meanwhile, Justice Minister Delroy Chuck said “Jamaicans are grateful for the contributions the European Union to help the Government in its efforts to create a first class Justice sector. The improvements made to the facilities will bolster productivity because workers are now comfortable in their work space. I wish you all the best Ambassador and you will be greatly missed.”

The European Union under the leadership of Ambassador Wasilewska also donated more than \$85 million worth of audio-visual equipment comprising of screens, microphones, cameras and supporting software. The donation of equipment was facilitated by the Justice, Security, Accountability and Transparency (JSAT) Programme, which seeks to improve efficiency in the justice and security sectors to reduce backlogs and corruption, as well as improve prosecutorial capacity. At the official handing over ceremony held in June, Chief Justice the Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD said the audio-visual equipment in the courts have significantly helped to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on the operations of the courts.



## PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS OF MoU SIGNING BETWEEN DFID/MOJ



Minister of Justice, Delroy Chuck (seated left), signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Country Representative, Department for International Development (DFID), David Osborne. The agreement, valued at £1,000,000, is intended to strengthen Jamaica's anti-corruption framework by building the capacity of select institutions to improve accountability and transparency.



Country Representative, Department for International Development (DFID), David Osborne, engages Chief Justice the Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes in a conversation at the event held at the Ministry of Justice's offices in St. Andrew on Tuesday, August 11, 2020.



(From left) Chief Judge of the Parish Courts His Honour Mr. Chester Crooks, Director of Public Prosecution Paula Llewellyn, Chief Justice the Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes, British High Commissioner to Jamaica, His Excellency Asif Ahmad, Justice Minister Delroy Chuck and Country Representative, Department for International Development (DFID) David Osborne.



This is the second MOU to be signed under the Unification of Prosecutorial Services Project. In March 2019, the Ministry received \$51 million to strengthen the overall operations of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). The funds provided for a review of the governance of the Clerks of Courts with a view to placing the officers under the supervision of the DPP's office.



MINISTRY OF  
**HEALTH &  
WELLNESS**

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**Wash your hands  
frequently  
with soap and water**



**Practise  
physical distancing**



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8th Floor, 25 Dominica Drive  
Kingston 5  
Jamaica W.I.  
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