



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Former Marion Circuit Clerk to work on statewide electronic filing project

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FAIRMONT, W.Va. – Retiring Marion County Circuit Clerk Barbara Core will go to work Sept. 1 as the liaison between the state judicial system and one of the private companies that will help West Virginia install electronic filing in circuit courts statewide.

Ms. Core retired Wednesday, August 28, after 26 years in office. A ceremony honoring her years of service and to swear in her replacement, Rhonda Starn, who had been her Chief Deputy Clerk for 16 years, was held in the Division II Courtroom of the Marion County Courthouse in Fairmont.

Ms. Starn was sworn in by Sixteenth Judicial Circuit (Marion County) Chief Judge David R. Janes. He also delivered the oath of office to new Chief Deputy Clerk Robin Tucker, who had been a deputy under Ms. Core.

Ms. Core will be a consultant for On-Line Information Services, Inc., of Mobile, Ala. That company will provide the electronic capability that will allow electronic filing using Software Systems of Morgantown's case management system. Electronic filing will be piloted in Marion County and thirteen other counties beginning this fall.

Marion County and Jefferson County will be the first to go online with electronic filing because employees in those offices already have scanned several years' worth of documents. Marion County has scanned circuit court documents dating back ten years while Jefferson County has scanned all documents ever filed in the Circuit Clerk's Office, including those relating to the John Brown trial in 1859, said Matt Arrowood, Director of Circuit Clerk Services in the Supreme Court Administrative Office.

Anyone who wants to file a case in a circuit court participating in the pilot project, or eventually any circuit clerk's office when the project is expanded statewide, will be able to file documents electronically themselves. If they so choose, self-represented litigants may give paper documents to clerk's office staff member to scan and file.

Confidential documents will be electronic but will remain confidential.

Public documents that have been scanned from previous years, as well as those filed every day at a circuit clerk's offices, will be available online in a PDF format. Any file available to the public in a circuit clerk's office will be available from any computer anywhere.

During the pilot project period, there will be no additional filing fee and no cost to view or download documents, said Steve Canterbury, Supreme Court Administrative Director. A committee will study the cost of the new system and determine what a reasonable filing fee and user fee should be once the system is expanded statewide.

“It will be paid for by the users, not by taxpayers,” Mr. Canterbury said. “So if you never file anything with the courts and never want to look at a court document, you never have to pay for anything.”

The Supreme Court is paying for the upgrade in technology in all circuit clerks offices. “It needs to be done,” Mr. Canterbury said.

Mr. Canterbury and Mr. Arrowood said Ms. Core is the perfect person for her new job because she has been a pioneer in electronic record-keeping in West Virginia. “There is nobody in the state who can do this better,” Mr. Canterbury said.

Sixteenth Judicial Circuit (Marion County) Judge John Aloï said, “The state is very blessed to have her in this new position.”

“It has been a dream of mine for ten years to go paperless,” Ms. Core said. During the ceremony Wednesday she thanked her parents, her friends, and her staff in the circuit clerk’s office. “They are fired up about the e-filing and ready to go,” she said.

The fourteen pilot project counties include Berkeley, Braxton, Cabell, Hampshire, Harrison, Lewis, Lincoln, Morgan, Ohio, Randolph, Upshur, and Wood.