

## Sleepless in Seattle??? Try Paperless in Westchester

With the full support and leadership of the Supervising Judge of the Family Courts, Hon. Kathie E. Davidson, Westchester Family Court has moved forward with its mandate of establishing a paperless environment in its three locations: White Plains, Yonkers and New Rochelle.

New high volume multi-feed and flatbed scanners in the Intake Unit enables all new public and agency petitions to be scanned through the Universal Case Management System (UCMS) and attached to a unique Family Unit number associated with each court file. Cumbersome files became a thing of the past as the program was expanded to include orders, affidavits, certain communications and reports. All are now easily accessible to judges, law clerks, part clerks and other authorized personnel with UCMS access.

Benefits of the paperless court not only reduces paper costs, but also saves employees' time and decreases postage expenditures. Notices, summonses, assignments, etc. can now be sent via email to attorneys and their offices. Transferring cases by mail (within the county, within the district or within New York State) is also in the rear-view mirror as is the multi-day wait for confirmation that the transfer has been effected. Providing copies of orders or petitions to the public is as simple as calling up the file on a computer and clicking "print". Hallways and walkways once used to temporarily store files awaiting further storage space can now be navigated without turning sideways.

But perhaps above all else, seeing a judge in the courtroom call up an old order or a current report on a computer screen with the click of a mouse rather than having to leaf through a file that has been through more than a few appearances (see below) is praise enough.



Left: Judge Davidson accessing case files electronically from the bench



Above: example of a typical size case file (pre-paperless)