



State of Michigan 3-B District Court St. Joseph County

P.O. Box 67 Centreville, MI 49032-0067 (269) 467-5627

Hon. Jeffrey C. Middleton Hon. Robert K. Pattison
Administrator/Magistrate: Tabitha Wedge
Magistrates: Mark Books & Autumnne Keifer

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MEDIA ADVISORY

3B District Court to Celebrate 50th Anniversary of Michigan's District Court System

- Who:** Chief Judge Jeffrey C. Middleton, Judge Robert K. Pattison, Retired Judge William D. Welty and Retired Administrator(s), David K. Recher and Carol Frohriep.
- What:** Special event to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the district court system in Michigan.
- When:** **FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 2019 @ 3:00 P.M.**
- Where:** **3B District Court, 125 W. Main St, Centreville, MI 49032**
- Why:** As required by the 1963 Michigan Constitution, legislation passed in 1968 to create our district court system. The effective date was June 17, 1968, and most courts began operation on January 1, 1969. The district court is often referred to as "The People's Court," because the public has more contact with the district court than with any other court in the state and because many people go to district court without an attorney.

The 3B District Court began with Judge William McManus and Court Administrator/Magistrate, David F. Recher. Judge William D. Welty, was elected in 2001 and served as the second District Court Judge. Currently elected and serving are Chief Judge Jeffrey C. Middleton and Robert K. Pattison.

The district court has exclusive jurisdiction over all civil claims for damages up to \$25,000, including small claims, landlord-tenant disputes, land contract disputes, and civil infractions. The court may also conduct marriages in a civil ceremony. The district court's small claims division handles cases in which the amount in controversy is

\$5,000 or less. The most common civil infractions are minor traffic matters, such as speeding, failure to stop or yield, careless driving, and equipment and parking violations.

District courts handle a wide range of criminal proceedings, including most misdemeanors, offenses for which the maximum possible penalty does not exceed one year in jail. In misdemeanor cases, the district court judge arraigns the defendant, sets and accepts bail, presides at the trial, and sentences the defendant. Typical district court misdemeanor offenses include driving under the influence of intoxicants, driving on a suspended license, simple assault, shoplifting, and possession of small amounts of marijuana. The district courts also conduct preliminary examinations in felony cases, after which, if the prosecutor provides sufficient proofs, the felony case is transferred to the circuit court for arraignment and trial.

Editor's Note: For more information, please contact the District Court Administrator, Tabitha Wedge 269-467-5502.