
The authors of Friends of the Court do not indicate their academic or professional backgrounds; however, through the publisher I learned that Aikman has degrees in economics and law, Miller has a law degree, and Elsner has a degree in statistics. All three are employed by the National Center for State Courts (Williamsburg, Virginia) at the Western Regional Office. Their findings demonstrate that volunteer lawyers are both qualitatively and quantitatively as effective as judges pro tempore.

Friends of the Court begins with a statement of the problem: “There is an urgent need to find ways of reducing what ought to be temporary backlogs without the permanent and costly response of increasing the number of judges” (p. xi). Arguing that volunteer lawyers within the court system will have a positive impact on the quick disposition of cases, the authors demonstrate the effectiveness of volunteerism within the court system by evaluating a number of different programs.

The book is intended for the widest possible readership. It is well written; its content and style suggest that it will appeal to attorneys in both criminal and civil suits, district attorneys, judges, retired judges, and state legislators, as well as to seriously concerned citizens. In fact, anyone with a real interest in the court system will find the book useful.

The book has three sections: (1) General Summary and Conclusions; (2) Evaluation Reports for Six Sites; (3) Five appendices with valuable information. Many readers, particularly those concerned about the condition of their local
court docket, will be interested only in the first section. Graduate students and professors involved in criminal justice policy and research will want to focus their attention on section two, while those who plan to develop a similar program (i.e., judges, lawyers, and state legislators) will need to study the entire monograph, including the appendices.

In the general summary, the authors stress that each court system has its own way of operating, and that each volunteer program develops its tasks in response to specific local needs. The authors evaluate each program according to quantitative, qualitative and financial dimensions. The uniqueness of each program forces the researchers to use three different evaluative methodologies: (1) the controlled experiment; (2) the before-and-after design; and (3) the case study. The authors seem to suggest that the forced use of different methodologies is a limitation, but I found it to be a strength of the study.

Many social science researchers would refer to the strategy of employing different evaluative methodologies as “triangulation.” Since each research method has particular strengths and weaknesses, there is always a danger that research findings will reflect, at least in part, the method of inquiry. In employing three different methods, the authors were able to balance the weakness of one method by the strengths of another. Indeed, they consistently arrived at the same conclusions through different research methods.

The second section of the book evaluates six programs that use volunteer lawyers in a judicial capacity. The programs are:

The Tucson Pro Tem. Judge Program.
The Portland Pro Tem. Judge Program.
The Arizona Court of Appeals Judge Pro Tem. Program.
The Connecticut Trial Referee Program.
The Minneapolis Mandatory, Court-Annexed Arbitration Program.

The Seattle Early Disposition Program.

With exceptional skill, the authors stimulate the reader to think about how programs can be implemented in his own locality.

Reading the details of these programs, I was profoundly impressed with the large number of attorneys who worked pro bono and who indicated that they would feel insulted if remuneration were offered. I was also impressed with the candor of the authors—a candor rarely found in this type of monograph. For example, they write:

Unfortunately, providing adjuncts with written instructions and orientation will not always eliminate inadequate performance. In Phoenix the court provided the adjuncts with a letter indicating what the court expected of them; yet in some instances the adjunct did not pay attention to the letter (p. 27).

The third section of the book consists of five appendices:

The Use of Judges Pro Tempore as Mental Health Judges.
Administrative Orders of Division One of the Arizona Court of Appeals.
Rules and Guidelines for Connecticut Trial Referee Program.
Fourth Judicial District Rules Regarding Mandatory, Nonbinding Arbitration.
Analysis of King County Superior Court Early Disposition Program.

The appendices are helpful to the state legislator who is interested in guidelines for implementation.

I have already recommended this book to colleagues involved in restructuring local court systems. Only one negative comment must be made: There is no index! This limits the book’s use by serious readers who plan to implement changes in their courts. Even completing this review was difficult
without easy access to the book's contents. I discovered that the National Center for State Courts does not own word-processing software that can generate an index. If the center is interested in making continued contributions to improving state courts, it should invest in appropriate software for indexing (or do it the old-fashioned way). *Friends of the Court* is, nonetheless, a most valuable book, and it has a delightful writing style that is quite rare for such a monograph. The authors must be applauded for their achievement.