

JOHN E. MARTINELLI  
JUDGE



FRANK S. LOMBARDI  
CLERK  
JULIA M. ROLLINS  
DEPUTY CLERK

PROBATE COURT OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE  
RHODE ISLAND

January 15, 1999

To The Honorable Vincent A. Cianci, Mayor and  
The Honorable Council of the City of Providence

I am proud to submit the annual report of the operations of the Probate Court of the City of Providence for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1997 and ending June 30, 1998.

The cash receipts for this period amounted to \$200,039.63. While this amount reflects a slight decrease from the previous year, our collections for the period of July 1, 1998 to December 31, 1998 actually saw an increase of \$7,067.44 for the same period last year. The collections for this period were \$96,235.94 up from \$89,168.50 for the previous year.

If the receipts continue as in the past, I would anticipate that the receipts for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1999 to be between \$212,000.00 and \$215,000.00.

Our staff has also seen an increase in the number of will filings. Wills filed for probate this past year was 236 compared to 222 from last year, and the number of petitions for administration was 94 as compared to 84 for the previous year. There were 8 custodianships granted, also representing an increase from the previous year.

The Court has seen a proliferation of guardianships and the clerical responsibility associated therewith. The number of guardianships granted by the Court for this fiscal year was 90 representing approximately a 16% increase from the previous year. In most cases these required special hearings. In addition thereto, the Court oversaw the filing of 175 status reports. This latter figure actually represents an underestimation since several status reports are filed by attorneys but never actually heard. Nonetheless they must be processed by the staff.

There were 108 name changes granted. In addition thereto, many were denied. The Court also heard 48 petitions for the sale of real estate filed by various executors, guardians and administrators. There were 556 miscellaneous petitions filed and granted or denied for various reasons. This latter figure represents a 13% increase from the previous year.

There were 329 inventories filed by the fiduciaries and the necessary fees calculated, collected and reflected in the total receipts of the year. It should be noted that each inventory is monitored individually by the Court staff to determine accuracy of the account and conformity to existing Court orders.

During the year there were 197 accounts filed and processed by guardians, conservators, executors and administrators. There were 201 affidavits of completed administration filed. Once again, the staff must monitor these accounts individually for accuracy and statutory compliance.

There were 5 new registry accounts opened for absentees totaling \$28,626.01. There were 6 new registry accounts opened for minors totaling \$115,170.29.

All of the above petitions were processed by the staff and advertised when required by statute. In addition, all petitions requiring a hearing were acted upon by the Judge or Acting Judge, in his absence. Needless to say, the Courts responsibility with monitoring and accountability of all estates has kept our staff extremely busy.

The Court has continued its' tracking of pending estates. While the Court has continued with its' manual tracking system of monitoring guardianship estates for the filing of annual accounts and status reports, it has continued the process towards computerization. The staff has written throughout the US and has travelled to a number of Courts seeking input herein. We have also met with the City's computer people for a specialized Probate program. This past year has seen an increase of our computerized files.

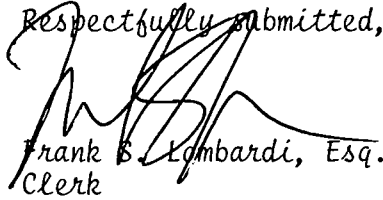
All registry accounts, which have dramatically increased, are currently computerized in two separate formats. This has facilitated the presentation of these accounts to the internal auditors. In short, auditors can be provided with "on the spot" current status of all registry accounts.

The ultimate goal is the installation of a program into our system and dissemination of the software to other Probate Courts throughout the State. Moreover, with computerization, timely filing of accounts will be facilitated through up-to-date communications with attorneys handling these pending filed. However, we are only at the infancy stage at this point, but we are moving ahead in this regard.

The Court also has been sending out notices and orders regarding petitions which have been pending for a considerable time without activity. In addition, we order attorneys and/or fiduciaries to file inventories, accounts, status reports and/or pay bond premiums, when said fiduciaries have failed to comply with the applicable statutes. During this report period, we have sent citations and orders to various attorneys and fiduciaries. The automation of the Court has facilitated in this endeavor as well. Compliance by attorneys is the ultimate goal of this Court in this regard. We have seen a dramatic increase in accountability to our Court. We are proud of this accomplishment.

The Probate Court, as stated above, has taken action, sua sponte in all estate matters, in order to insure that the fiduciaries are complying with Rhode Island General Laws. The Probate Court is committed to further improvements, despite being shortstaffed, in all of the above referenced areas.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Frank S. Lombardi, Esq.  
Clerk

IN CITY COUNCIL

JAN. 21 1999

READ

WHEREUPON IT IS ORDERED THAT  
THE SAME BE RECEIVED.

  
CLERK

FILED

JAN 15 9 42 AM '99

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PROVIDENCE, R.I.

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