

Surrogate Sheppard confirmed for Superior Court

By ERIC AVEDESIAN
Cape May Star and Wave

TRENTON — The state Senate confirmed Cape May County Surrogate Marlene Susan Sheppard of Ocean City to the Superior Court on June 29.

As a result of bail reform that went into effect in January, Gov. Chris Christie signed a law adding 20 Superior Court judges to the bench and appropriating \$9.3 million.

Christie on June 20 nominated Sheppard, who participated in confirmation hearings before the State Senate Judiciary Committee on June 26.

Days later, she discovered the full Senate confirmed her for the Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage.

"I'm very excited to have been nominated and to go through the process," Sheppard said.

Sheppard said she'll take her oath of office on July 12 in Cape May Court House.

The Atlantic-Cape Vicinage comprises Cape May and Atlantic counties, with courthouses in Atlantic

City, Mays Landing and Cape May Court House.

Divisions include Civil Division, Criminal Division, Family Division, Finance Division, Municipal Division and the Probation Division.

Sheppard hopes she'll be assigned to the family court in Cape May County.

"I'm very humbled and I'm blessed and very excited for the new opportunity. I'm looking forward to serving the public in this capacity," Sheppard said.

Sheppard was sworn in as Cape May County surrogate in December 2012, after being elected to a five-year term.

She's the county's first female surrogate, and replaced W. Robert Hentges who retired after serving for more than 40 years.

Before becoming surrogate, Sheppard served as vice director of the Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders. She was first elected as freeholder in 2010. Before that, Sheppard served as the third ward councilwoman for Ocean City from July 2008

to January 2011. While on Ocean City Council, Sheppard spent a year as that body's president.

Sheppard graduated from Villanova University in 1988 with a BS in Business Administration and a 1991 graduate of the Widener University School of Law.

She was an associate with the firm of Blank, Rome, Comisky & McCauley in Pennsylvania from 1991 to 1993. She was an associate and managing attorney with McCabe, Weisenbeg & Conway from 1993 to 2003, specializing in real estate law.

She served as assistant city solicitor of Atlantic City from 2003 to 2006 before opening her own law firm in Ocean City.

Sheppard said she always wanted to serve on the Superior Court, noting her father was a judge in Philadelphia.

"My dad sat as a trial judge for 30 years before he passed away," Sheppard said. "I watched how he was so respected and loved and how he helped so many people. I'm very happy to

follow in his footsteps."

Cape May County has had its share of nominees to the New Jersey Superior Court.

Michael Donohue, former Cape May County Republican chairman, and James Pickering, Jr., former Cape May County Democratic chairman, were the last superior court judges to be administered their oaths of office in April 2016.

Because Sheppard will become a Superior Court justice, she will resign from her position as Cape May County Surrogate.

Ocean City's Republican leader Michael Allegretto said the Cape May County Regular Republican Organization would nominate a candidate to run in the November general election in place of Sheppard, who was running for reelection.

"The Republican committee would appoint somebody to fill her spot on the ballot for the fall election," Allegretto said. "She (Sheppard) had won the primary back in June to run in the general election for another five-year term. Otherwise,

it would just be a committee replacement to the next election time."

Deputy Surrogate Karen Lynn Nailie will assume the duties of surrogate until the new surrogate is sworn in following the election, according to Allegretto.

Sheppard said she's "very excited" at this next chapter of her life.

"Everything that I've done, from council up has different type of service, but service to the public," Sheppard said. "It's very rewarding and fulfilling."

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Arrested

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tives from the Cape May Police Department received a report of a stolen 2016 Land Rover from the 400 block of Central Avenue in Cape May Point. Authorities said detectives received information that the two crimes may be related and a joint investigation was initiated by detectives from the Cape May County Prosecutor's Office along with the Cape May and Mantua Police Departments.

As a result of the investigation, the stolen vehicle and the Taurus used in the robbery were recovered and court-authorized search warrants were executed on both vehicles. Items of evidentiary value were recovered from the Taurus, authorities said.

Also identified as a result of the joint investigation were William Baberick, 21, of Haddon Heights, and Mercedes Stockton, 22, of Willingboro, who were located in the 300 block of South Lake Drive in Cape May Point.

Baberick was charged with possession of a weapon

Light

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the Cape May Lighthouse, World War II Lookout Tower, "A Day in Cape May Package," "Exploring Our History Package," "Lighthouse Storytime" and "The Keeper's On Duty."

"We regret this political impasse, for it disrupts thousands of visitors' plans for the holiday weekend and because it hurts non-profit organizations such as MAC," Zuckerman said. "We urge the governor and Legislature to come to a sensible agreement as soon as possible."

On July 1, a steady stream of cars stopped at the closed gate at Cape May Point State Park to read a paper sign stating "These facilities closed until further notice, no state services available." Most visitors stopped at the gate said they did not know the reason for the park being closed.

Kathy Wilkenson, of Haverford, Pa., who has a home in Cape May Point, said she was disappointed the park was closed.

"This is a travesty," she said. "It's a terrible weekend to do this because a lot of people go to this beach. It's not a swimming beach but you don't have to pay."

A family that had driven from New York with their children to see the lighthouse expressed their disappointment with the closing.

for an unlawful purpose, credit card theft, burglary and theft. He was processed and lodged in the Cape May County Jail pending court proceedings.

Stockton was charged with credit card theft, burglary and theft. She was processed and released with summons pending court proceedings.

Additional charges are pending from Mantua Township. Taylor stated this is an ongoing investigation and urges citizens who may have information concerning these crimes to contact the Prosecutor's Office at (609) 465-1135, Cape May City Police Department at (609) 884-9500, or anonymously through the Cape May County Sheriff's Tip Line at cmcsheeriff.net or Cape May County Crime Stoppers at (609) 465-2800.

Whale of a Day festival set for July 8 in NCM

NORTH CAPE MAY — The Cape May Beach Property Owners Association will hold its 19th annual Whale of a Day family festival from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, July 8.

More than 140 vendors will offer antiques, arts and crafts, baked goods, a history display, food, live music, a children's fun zone and white elephant items. There also will be basket raffles, a drawing for two bicycles, membership booth and Whale of a Day T-shirts, hats and other items.

Tables and chairs will be set up in the shade at Clubhouse Drive and Town Bank Road.

The event will be held rain or shine, with free admission and parking. Follow the signs to the Cape

May-Lewes Ferry, at the entrance keep right to Beach Drive and turn right, proceed just more than a mile to the event. Last-minute vendors are welcome.

Proceeds from the event benefit high school scholarships and various nonprofit groups.

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