

Hon. John J. Trucilla
2021 Retention Statement

Judge Trucilla is honored and privileged to have served the citizens of Erie County since taking the bench in 2002. Over the past 20 years, he has served in every facet of the Court of Common Pleas and has consistently maintained the highest standards of competence, integrity, and judicial demeanor. His record at both the trial and appellate court levels exemplify his ability to effectively and efficiently serve the citizens of Erie County. He has diligently worked to ensure access to the Courts for all citizens including indigent and pro se litigants and received the 2019 Bar Association Honorable Ronald D. Castille Award: In Support of Legal Aid - "Because the Law Is For All." Judge Trucilla has also worked closely with members of the Bar to uphold the integrity and dignity of the practice of law. This includes his participation as an instructor on assorted topics for Continuing Legal Education courses and as a panel member on Bar-related events. Throughout his judicial career, Judge Trucilla has worked to maintain the public's trust and confidence in the judiciary.

A non-exhaustive summary of Judge Trucilla's experience on the bench is set forth below.

From the Bench

During his tenure, Judge Trucilla has presided over every area of the law within the jurisdiction of the Court of Common Pleas, including criminal, civil, and family law/orphans' court cases. As part of his service to the Family Division, he hears cases addressing child custody, child support, divorce, adoption, protection from abuse, juvenile delinquency, juvenile dependency, and orphans' court matters. During his assigned criminal trial terms, he presides over cases ranging from homicide and major felonies to summary offenses.

Appellate Record

Since taking the bench in 2002, Judge Trucilla has been committed to upholding justice in his courtroom. His appellate record reflects his vigorous efforts in this regard. Judge Trucilla has issued hundreds of orders and opinions in all areas of the law and has authored over two hundred Pa.R.A.P. 1925(a) Opinions in support of his decisions, resulting in only one reversal. On several occasions, the Superior Court has adopted the language of his Opinions in part or in *toto*.

Judge Trucilla's appellate record includes the following notable cases: *Commonwealth v. Corrine Wilcott*, 876 A.2d 472 (Pa. Super. 2005) (criminal homicide under the Crimes Against Unborn Children Act); *In re K.A.P.*, 916 A.2d 1152 (Pa. Super. 2007), *aff'd sub nom. In re K.A.P., Jr.*, 943 A.2d 262 (Pa. 2008) (addressing a constitutional challenge to Act 21 and the Juvenile Sex Offenders Civil Commitment Statutes at 42 Pa.C.S. § 6401 et. seq.); *Lynn v. Powell*, 809 A.2d 927 (Pa. Super. 2002) (issues of paternity and estoppel, which garnered national attention and interest and was featured on ABC's "Primetime Live"); and *S.J.S. v. M.J.S.*, 76 A.3d 541 (Pa. Super. 2013) (analysis of the standards set forth in the newly-enacted Child Custody Act regarding child custody and relocation at 23 Pa.C.S.A. § 5321 et seq.).

Additionally, Judge Trucilla has also authored several 1925(a) Opinions in complex criminal cases, with each conviction being upheld and affirmed. See, e.g., *Commonwealth v. Beck*, 60 A.3d 587 (Pa. Super. Ct. 2012); *Commonwealth v. Hales*, 64 A.3d 28 (Pa. Super. Ct. 2012); *Commonwealth v. Gunter*, 2017 WL 1906089 (Pa. Super. Ct. May 8, 2017); *Commonwealth v. Smith*, 2018 WL 4997955 (Pa. Super. Ct. Oct. 16, 2018); *Commonwealth v. LeClair*, 2020 PA Super 174, 236 A.3d 71 (Pa. Super. 2020), *appeal denied*, 244 A.3d 1222 (Pa. 2021); and *Commonwealth v. Poole*, 241 A.3d 374 (Pa. Super. Ct. 2020), *appeal denied*, 2021 WL 1661060 (Pa. Apr. 28, 2021).

As demonstrated above, Judge Trucilla's careful and decisive adherence to applying the highest legal precedent and relevant caselaw to the specific facts before him results in the fair and efficient administration of justice.

Administrative Judicial Service

Following his unanimous selection by his judicial colleagues, Judge Trucilla proudly served as President Judge of the Erie County Court of Common Pleas from January 2016 through January 2021. Amongst his several administrative duties and responsibilities as President Judge, Judge Trucilla accomplished the following:

- Led the Erie County Court of Common Pleas through the COVID-19 pandemic by issuing 13 Emergency Judicial Orders;
- Established the Transformative Learning Center (TLC) for at-risk students to obtain a GED;
- Co-founded the Erie County Day Reporting Center;
- Introduced a therapy dog program, the Courthouse Comfort Canines;
- Appointed by Pennsylvania Supreme Court to the County Adult Probation and Parole Advisory Committee (CAPPAC);
- Co-founded Energize Erie;
- Active member of the Erie County Truancy Task Force and Truancy Initiative;
- Invited a panel of the Pennsylvania Superior Court to Erie in September 2018 for oral arguments;
- Implemented juror donation program in January 2020 (to date over \$30,000 raised for charitable organizations);
- Created Erie County Safety Coordinator position and spearheaded Active Shooter Training program for the Erie County Courthouse; and
- Obtained pay raises for court reporters, law clerks, and contract attorneys.

Additionally, Judge Trucilla served as Administrative Judge of the Family Division from January 2006 to January 2016. When his tenure as President Judge ended in January 2021, Judge Trucilla readily accepted the request to serve as Administrative Judge of the Family Division. Judge Trucilla has been proud to have served as AJ of the Family Division under four President Judges. His services as Administrative Judge included:

- Co-creator of the Parent Coordinator Program;
- Member of the Erie County OCY Oversight Committee;
- Assisted in creating an updated pamphlet and video regarding the PFA Act;
- Modified Family Motion Court practice;
- Assisted ECBA Family Law Committee and Orphans Court Rules Committee; and
- Founder of Children's Roundtable Initiative.

Service to the Community

In addition to his service on the bench, Judge Trucilla has remained active in the Erie Community. His community service over his career includes the following:

- Adjunct Professor at Gannon University (Criminal Law & Procedure)(January 2002-January 2004; 2010 to present);
- Gannon University Outstanding Adjunct Award - College of Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences (May 2021);
- Adjunct Professor at Penn State University-The Behrend College, Erie, Pennsylvania (Criminal Law & Procedure, Constitutional Law) (1989-1996; 2010-to present);
- Youth Leadership Institute of Erie Person of the Year Award (2011);
- Boys & Girls Club of Erie *Al Messina Community Service Award –For Commitment To Youth* (2018);
- Member- Association of Trial Lawyers of America;
- Member-American Judges Association;
- Member-Juvenile Court Judges' Commission;
- Member-Erie County Criminal Justice Coalition;
- Member-Erie Truancy Task Force;
- Member of PFA task force;
- Member-By-Laws Revision Committee of the PA Conference of State Trial Judge (2006);
- Past Member-Africa 6000 Advisory Board (Water project to save lives of African children); and
- Guest speaker and lecturer at various seminars, schools and civic organizations.

Past ECBA Plebiscite/Retention Results

During Judge Trucilla's inaugural judicial campaign in 2001, his candidacy was positively received by members of the ECBA as recognized by a 93% approval rating. In the 2011 Judicial Retention Plebiscite, Judge Trucilla received a 92% approval rating by members of the ECBA in support of his retention.

Judge Trucilla has demonstrated the necessary experience, temperament, wisdom, fairness, work ethic, and integrity to merit your support for another 10 year term. Therefore, in consideration of the above information and his 20 years of service on the bench, Judge Trucilla respectfully requests your vote for retention to the Erie County Court of Common Pleas.

Additional biographical information is available at: <https://eriecountypa.gov/elected-officials/judge-john-j-trucilla/>