

General District Court

History

There are little facts, notes or pictures available to tell us the history of the Henrico General District Court. What history does show is that it was part of “The Henrico Courthouses.”

The first courthouse was located at 22nd and Main Streets and was completed in 1752. At the end of the civil war, the courthouse was severely damaged in an evacuation fire on April 3, 1865. It had to be rebuilt and was not completely repaired until 1867.

The last courthouse at 22nd and Main Streets was built in 1896 at an estimated cost of \$40,000.00; however, its cost was reduced to approximately \$20,000.00 and finally completed on November 9, 1896. It provided not only a courthouse noted for its red brick neo-Romanesque façade and used as a courthouse until 1974, but a government center that housed many of the county’s departments until the late 1980s.

In 1974, the present courthouse was completed and that is where the Henrico General District Court has been located. The Henrico General District Court is located on the 1st floor of the courthouse annex and the Henrico Circuit Court on the 2nd floor.

The Henrico General District Court occupied only a small place on the first floor, with three departments, the criminal, traffic and civil division, as well as the magistrates, working in the small area. There were three judges appointed to handle the criminal, traffic, and civil cases filed in the General District Court.

Automation for the Henrico General District Court was not in place in 1974 and all criminal, traffic, and civil cases had to be manually entered into the record books. This was a time consuming effort for all the employees.

In the mid 1980s work for the employees became much easier with implementation of the Automated Case Management System to input cases; however, docket books still had to be maintained until the early 1990s with the implementation of the computer systems and financial management systems.

As the years progressed, the Henrico General District Court experienced many positive changes. An addition was added to the office which allowed the civil division to have a separate office to conduct its day to day business. Also, the magistrate’s office relocated next door to the jail.

History was made in the mid to late 1990s with the appointment of the first African American judge appointed to the bench, Judge Gary A. Hicks, and again in 2011 with the first female judge appointed to the bench, Judge Mary B. Malveaux.

Although the Henrico General District Court falls under the supervision of the Supreme Court of Virginia, all administrative services, i.e., budget, furnishings, etc., are under the direction of Henrico County. The County continues to provide excellent service and support to the Clerk's office.

The Henrico General District Court has seen a substantial increase in caseload over the past several years as indicated below:

- In FY 08/09, the court processed over 120,594 new cases.
- In CY 2009, the court processed over 124,620 new cases.
- In FY 09/10, the court processed over 129,187 new cases.
- In CY 2010, the court processed over 132,369 new cases.
- In FY 10/11, the court processed over 136,078 new cases.
- In CY 2011, the court has so far processed over 107,215 new cases.

The Henrico General District Court is ranked among the top 5 busiest jurisdictions within the Commonwealth. As the population of Henrico County continues to grow, so will the caseload of the Henrico General District Court.

Some of the past Clerk's of Court were:

Mr. James Cravens	198? to 1993
Ms. Beverly Higgins	1993 to 1998
Mr. Lawrence G. Sprader	1998 to 2012
Ms. Linda S. Knight	2012 to Present