

OFFICE OF THE APPELLATE DEFENDER

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Kathy Swedlow Joins MAACS as Deputy Administrator

Kathy Swedlow will soon join the Michigan Appellate Assigned Counsel System (MAACS) as its Deputy Administrator, announced Dawn Van Hoek, Michigan's Appellate Defender. Currently a Professor of Law at Western Michigan University Cooley Law School, Ms. Swedlow has diverse legal experience that she brings to MAACS, including service as Co-Director of Cooley's Innocence Project, and Acting Assistant Dean of Students. Work as a Staff Attorney for the United States Court of Appeals for the Second and Third Circuits led her to the Defender Association of Philadelphia's Federal Court Division, where she represented death-sentenced prisoners in post-conviction challenges filed in state and federal courts. Widely published in legal journals, Ms. Swedlow has contributed significantly to legal scholarship on DNA testing and evidence.

Ms. Swedlow joins MAACS as it enters a second year under the leadership of Brad Hall, who became Administrator in January of 2015. MAACS administers the assignment of appellate counsel in approximately 2500 criminal cases each year, maintaining a roster of 150 private assigned counsel who are trained and supervised in the work. Working closely with trial courts and counties, which pay private assigned counsel, Mr. Hall has led efforts to streamline the assignment process, reduce delays, improve access to record development, and improve attorney fees. Innovative pilot projects in the areas of case management and appellate investigation are underway, with results to be reported in the fall of 2016. "Kathy brings a wealth of talent to MAACS, enhancing our abilities to support and review roster attorney performance as well as our ongoing work with the trial courts to improve quality and efficiency," according to Mr. Hall.

The MAACS office is joined by the State Appellate Defender Office (SADO) in providing counsel to all indigent criminal defendants seeking appeal of their convictions and sentences: state-funded, SADO represents approximately 25% of the statewide total. An Administrative Order of the Michigan Supreme Court merged MAACS and SADO for management purposes in 2014, allowing Appellate Defender Van Hoek to more effectively provide resources to both private counsel and appellate defenders. MAACS and SADO are overseen by a Governor-appointed body, the Appellate Defender Commission, led by former State Bar of Michigan President Thomas Cranmer.