

Michigan Department of Justice  
State Court Administrative Office  
STATE OF MICHIGAN

BERRIEN COUNTY TRIAL COURT

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 1996-5

At a session of said Court held in the Berrien County Courthouse, St. Joseph, State of Michigan, on this 16<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1996.

Present: Honorable John N. Fields, Chief Judge

The Berrien County Trial Court shall consist of 11 judges. Ten (10) judges shall be assigned to sit primarily in St. Joseph and one (1) judge shall be assigned to sit primarily in Niles.

The Berrien County Trial Court shall consist of: the Chief Judge Division, the Criminal Division, the Civil Division, the Family Division, and the Niles Division. The judge assigned to serve in Niles shall hear all types of cases.

The Court shall designate, and may from time to time, change the number of judges assigned to a division, as well as the location for case filings of a division based on: the number and types of filings of cases, the location for case filings based on the location of the occurrence or event, the number of filings at various locations throughout the County, the locations of interested parties and other facts bearing on court efficiency and judicial parity.

In accordance with MCR 8.111, all cases within a division shall be assigned by lot among the judges serving within the division. An exception shall be drug and domestic violence cases. In those matters, the chief judge will be assigned to handle pretrial matters for the domestic violence cases and the drug docket, and other judges shall be assigned to assist as directed. Trials of domestic violence and drug cases shall be assigned to all judges of the Berrien County Trial Court on a rotation basis.

The presiding judge of a division and/or the chief judge or chief judge pro tem may assign or reassign cases from time to time in order to maintain court efficiency and judicial parity. Should a judge be unavailable to handle a case assigned to him or her, an available judge may handle the case, unless the chief judge determines otherwise.

IT IS SO ORDERED

Dated: Oct 16, 1996

  
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John N. Fields,  
Chief Judge