

## **DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER ROOM 691 CITY HALL**

The Dispute Resolution Center of the Court of Common Pleas provides a centralized location for mandatory settlement conferences. In so doing, it encourages uniform procedures for these conferences while offering litigants comfortable modernized facilities for the disposition of civil cases within historic City Hall. Frank E. Checkovage is the Director of the Dispute Resolution Center, which is located on the Sixth Floor of City Hall, in Room 691. The Center operates Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

### **MANDATORY SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE**

Mandatory Settlement Conferences are conducted in every major jury case. The conferences are presided over by a *Judge Pro Tempore* and are scheduled in accordance with the Case Management Order that is issued in all cases approximately ninety (90) days after commencement of suit. The court provides notice to all counsel of record and unrepresented parties approximately thirty (30) days before the scheduled conference advising them of the date, time, and place of their settlement conference. This information may also be obtained from the first page of the civil docket.

### **PRESIDING OFFICER**

*Judges Pro Tempore* (Judge(s) Pro Tem) are recruited from the Bar to preside over the settlement conferences. Judge Arnold L. New is frequently available to participate in the conference, if necessary and appropriate.

In preparation for the conference, the Judge Pro Tem reviews the case file in order to effectively discuss all issues with the parties. In the event a case does not settle at the conference, the Judge Pro Tem is available by telephone or for follow-up conferences and/or to assist the parties as requested. However, these follow-up conferences and calls will not delay the court's schedule for this case. At the conclusion of each settlement conference, the Judge Pro Tem must complete a settlement conference report. The report should include the range settlement value of the case and references to salient issues. This report is provided to the Judicial Team Leader along with the case file in preparation for the next scheduled event, the final Pretrial Conference.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNSEL AND PARTIES**

Counsel and unrepresented parties must file a settlement memorandum at least ten (10) days before the conference, appear at the settlement conference, on time and with settlement authority from their clients. The parties and claim representatives are not required to appear with counsel, but must be available by telephone during the conference. Failure of counsel to file a memorandum, appear, and/or failure of a party or claim representative to be available by telephone during the conference may result in the issuance of a Rule to Show Cause before the appropriate Judicial Team Leader. Should

the case settle before or after the conference, counsel shall notify the court immediately in writing.