



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

## NEWS RELEASE

**CONTACT:**

Jim Koval  
(717) 231-3324

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

[WWW.PACOURTS.US](http://WWW.PACOURTS.US)

### **Philadelphia Family Courthouse Project Advances**

**HARRISBURG, May 6, 2011**— Philadelphia has moved one step closer to a new Family Court facility to be located at 15<sup>th</sup> & Arch Streets.

The long-needed new courthouse will allow all juvenile delinquency cases and family court cases in the First Judicial District (FJD), Philadelphia's court system, to be held at a single location permitting a more cohesive and holistic approach to family court matters and finally allowing for the best practice of "one-family, one-judge" in family court cases. The new facility will move domestic relations cases from the current deplorable conditions at the 11<sup>th</sup> Street building into a safe, clean and welcoming environment. The classic 1801 Vine Street facility on the Parkway will be available for development.

"This is a great day for Philadelphia and a great day for some of the City's most vulnerable citizens," said Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice Ronald D. Castille. "In 2008 when I visited the family court facilities on South 11<sup>th</sup> Street, I saw the deplorable conditions in which our citizens, including young children and struggling mothers and fathers, were forced to face life-changing issues. It was abundantly clear to me that we needed to provide an appropriate facility for those sensitive cases," added Castille, who serves as the First Judicial District's Supreme Court liaison justice.

"The need for a modern Family Courthouse in Philadelphia has been apparent for more than 20 years, and I applaud all of those who have stayed the course and continued the battle to ensure that the need would be met," he added.

Today, the Pennsylvania's Department of General Services (DGS) acquired the air-rights to the 15<sup>th</sup> and Arch streets site from Northwest 15<sup>th</sup> Street Associates, the prior developer of the site. The acquisition of the air rights completes a complex bankruptcy settlement that enables DGS to build the courthouse using architectural plans commissioned by the FJD and paid for with \$7 million from the Family Court Facility Fund that was established for that specific purpose.

More

The Family Courthouse project will be the largest construction project in Philadelphia since the expansion of the Pennsylvania Convention Center and the renovation of the former 30<sup>th</sup> Street Post Office for the IRS. Construction is expected to begin within weeks according to Daniel J. Keating, the project's general contractor. DGS is developing the building and, upon completion, will lease it to the City of Philadelphia under a long-term lease on behalf of the First Judicial District. Don Pulver has agreed to continue to consult on the project as needed.

The Family Court project was put on hold in 2010 after questions were raised about the dual role of Jeffrey B. Rotwitt, the court's tenant representative who became a co-developer of the project. The FJD engaged Chadwick Associates, Inc., a Washington DC consulting firm, to examine the transaction, identify conflicts and quantify the FJD's claims against third parties. Chadwick has also guided the FJD through the steps necessary to ensure that the courthouse is built and that the FJD's investment in the project is fully realized.

# # #