

# LYNETTE WARD

## HALF-ADMINISTRATOR, HALF-EMERGENCY RESPONDER

In the nearly 20 years of being a court administrator, Lynette Ward has learned to “be prepared for a fire or two.”

As court administrator for the 50th District Court in Pontiac, Ward’s position requires her to wear many hats during the course of her packed day — from navigating a multimillion dollar construction project to greeting the public and assisting them with questions. And she still allows for no fewer than two “fires” per day. This is also something that her previous experience as an administrator at the 68th District Court in Flint taught her.

“I might be the only court administrator in Michigan who worked under the worst of financial times in two different cities and through the tenure of four different emergency managers,” remarked Ward.

She notes that in both Flint and Pontiac, there were years of massive cuts to court funding, but there were no layoffs, no furlough days, and no wage cuts.

“Of course, it was not easy, but during those times, we experienced what teamwork really means. Everyone pitched in, from the judges on down,” she recalled. “Those experiences brought us closer together as a court family, and the teamwork that brought us through continues to thrive.”

Ward came to her court administrative roles well equipped — earning a Bachelor’s degree in accounting, a Master’s degree in management, and then a law degree. She worked for General Motors in various accounting-related positions and took her first job as



*Court Administrator for the 50th District Court in Pontiac, Lynette Ward*

an attorney with the United Auto Workers–GM Legal Service.

Eventually, she shifted to the public sector and became an assistant prosecuting attorney in Genesee County. When a court administrator position opened at 68th District Court, she went for it.

“Because I enjoyed both the business and legal aspects of my background, being a court administrator seemed to be the ideal opportunity to blend the two disciplines,” Ward said.

Reflecting on her time in 50th District, Ward shares that she has been fortunate to have associated with people she considers the “best of the best” and refers to her working relationship with Chief Judge Cynthia Walker





as “remarkable.” The two even share a common bond and history, in a manner of speaking, having met back when Chief Judge Walker held the same position Ward currently holds.

“She was the court administrator at 50th District and I was the administrator at 68th District. We instantly hit it off,” said Ward. “As a leadership team now, we recognize and are able to rely on each other’s strengths, while assisting each other to strengthen where there is a weak point. And when we don’t agree, we always try to find a compromise that will include a little from each of our perspectives.”

The working relationship she has with Chief Judge Walker is based on their mutual approach to problem-solving, planning, and leadership, which Ward says are essential elements of her job.

“I have found that those who are most successful at this profession have a keen understanding of the purpose and role of the court, its significance in our government and society, and is able to convert that understanding into constructive actions,” she explained. “Being a good multi-tasker and having the ability to communicate and work well with all people on all levels certainly helps, too.”

This feeds into the court’s effort to stay involved with the community at large.

“We have always taken the position that we want to be part of the solution to move Pontiac forward,” explained Ward.

To that end, Ward explains that one of the court’s initiatives includes an early morning testing program that permits probationers to come in

as early as 7:00 a.m. to test, allowing them to make it to work or school on time. In addition, the court also participates with local schools to expose students to courtroom activities and speak with judges. “Our judges, particularly Chief Judge Walker, are involved in many community activities,” she added.

The best part of her job? “It really is the people that I work with as well as the vast diversity of the people I meet,” said Ward. “My mother imparted in me the ‘treat others as you want to be treated’ attitude. It’s simple, straightforward, and for me, it works.”

Ward remarks that the only part of her job that she dislikes is realizing there are some things that are beyond her control and not everything can be made “right,” no matter how much effort is expended. Although sometimes she’s even able to turn those moments into something positive.

“These moments are humbling, yet oddly inspiring, as well,” she shared. “It’s what lights a fire and pushes me to kick convention to the side, get creative, and make the best of a trying situation.”

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