

## DISTRICT COURT

District court was created by Act 154 of 1968, to commence functioning January 1, 1969. These courts replaced justice of the peace courts and circuit court commissioners, as mandated by the Constitution of 1963. The act also abolished municipal and police courts, but contained provisions allowing certain municipalities to retain their municipal courts. Six municipal courts still exist. The city of Detroit was not affected by the District Court Act of 1968 and the common pleas court of Detroit continued to function until abolished by Act 438 of 1980.

### *Jurisdiction*

The district court has exclusive jurisdiction of all civil litigation up to \$25,000; all misdemeanors where potential punishment does not exceed 1 year in jail; and the arraignment, setting and acceptance of bail, and conduct of preliminary examinations in felony cases. The district court also handles garnishments as well as eviction proceedings, land contract and mortgage foreclosures, and other proceedings. Juries in district court are limited to 6 members. In civil cases, 5 of 6 jurors must agree on a verdict while in criminal cases verdicts must be unanimous. District court became a court of record in 1973 and a verbatim record is kept of court proceedings. All appeals from district court decisions are made to the circuit court.

District judges may appoint magistrates. Magistrates may set bail and accept bond in criminal matters; accept guilty pleas; and sentence for traffic, motor carrier, and snowmobile violations and dog, game, and marine law violations. The magistrate may also issue arrest and search warrants authorized by the prosecutor or municipal attorney. Attorney magistrates may hear small claims cases. Magistrates may, at the direction of the chief judge, perform other duties allowed by statute.

A small claims division for civil cases up to \$1,750 is provided for in district court. In these cases litigants agree to waive their right to a jury, rules of evidence, representation by a lawyer, and the right to appeal from the district judge's decision. Small claims cases may also be heard by attorney magistrates whose decisions become final if not appealed to a district judge within 7 days. If either party objects, the case will be heard by the general division of the district court. Traffic bureaus may also be set up in district court to handle traffic offenses.

District judges are elected on nonpartisan ballots for terms of 6 years. Qualifications are the same as for other judges. The legislature sets their salaries, which may be supplemented by local governments.

### *Caseload*

In 1997, there were 3,250,836 new cases filed in district courts. This represents an increase of 66,590 filings or 2.1% from the previous year. Of new filings, 2,484,092 (76.4%) were traffic related, 429,178 (13.2%) concerned civil issues, and 337,566 (10.4%) concerned nontraffic criminal cases.

Nontraffic criminal filings increased by 13,071 or 4.0% between 1996 and 1997. Of the 337,566 nontraffic criminal cases filed in 1997, 249,221 (73.8%) were misdemeanor offenses, 76,018 (22.5%) were felony offenses and 12,327 (3.7%) were civil infraction filings. Between 1996 and 1997, felony cases increased by 2.1% (1,597), misdemeanor cases increased by 3.0% (7,276), and civil infractions increased by 51.6% (4,198).

Traffic case filings increased by 38,195 or 1.6% between 1996 and 1997. Of the 2,484,092 traffic cases filed in 1997, 1,883,901 (75.8%) were civil infractions, 537,109 (21.6%) were misdemeanors and 64,068 (2.6%) were OUIL/OWL misdemeanor or felony cases. Traffic misdemeanor cases increased by 1.0% (5,417), civil infraction cases increased by 1.8% (33,782) and OUIL/OWI misdemeanor or felony cases decreased by 1.6% (1,004).

Civil case filings increased from 413,851 in 1996 to 429,178 in 1997, for an increase of 15,324 or 3.7%. Of these filings, 160,441 (37.4%) were general civil cases, 99,824 (23.3%) were small claims cases and 168,913 (39.4%) were summary proceedings cases. General civil matters increased by 10,934 (7.3%), small claims decreased by 1,297 (1.3%), and summary proceedings increased by 5,687 (3.5%) from the previous year.

## DISTRICT COURT — JUDICIAL DISTRICTS



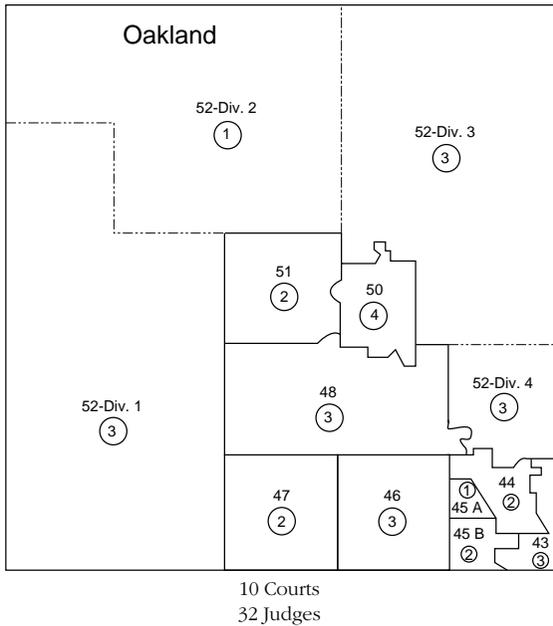
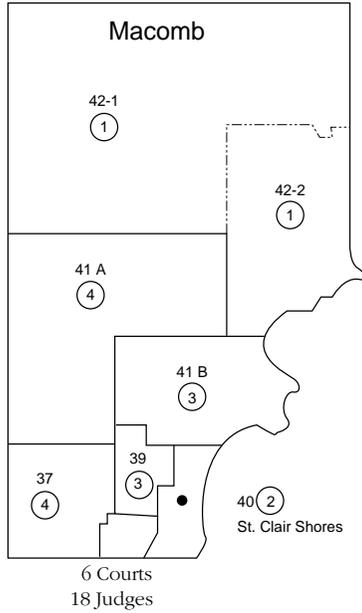
**Act 236 of 1961,  
Sec. 8101(1)**

“A district court is established in the state. The district court is a court of record. The state is divided into judicial districts of the district court each of which is an administrative unit subject to the superintending control of the supreme court.”

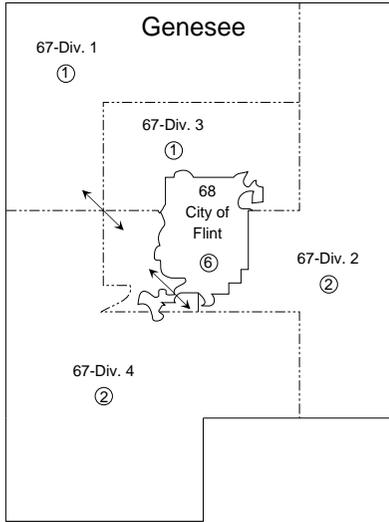
Unnumbered counties are shown in detail on the following pages.

LEGEND	TOTALS
# - District Court	259 - Judgeships
⊕ - Number of District Court Judgeships	104 - Number of District Courts

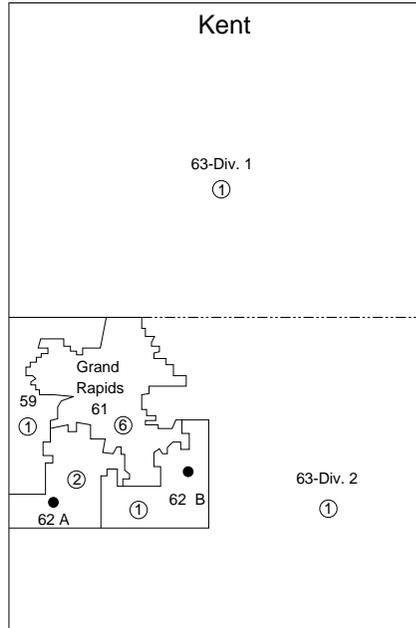
**DISTRICT COURT — JUDICIAL DISTRICTS (Cont.)**



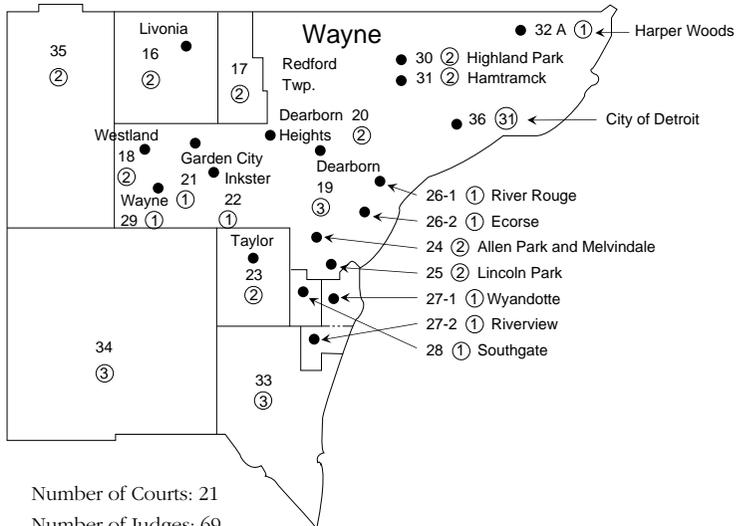
## DISTRICT COURT — JUDICIAL DISTRICTS (Cont.)



Number of Courts: 2  
 Number of Judges: 12



Number of Courts: 5  
 Number of Judges: 12



Number of Courts: 21  
 Number of Judges: 69