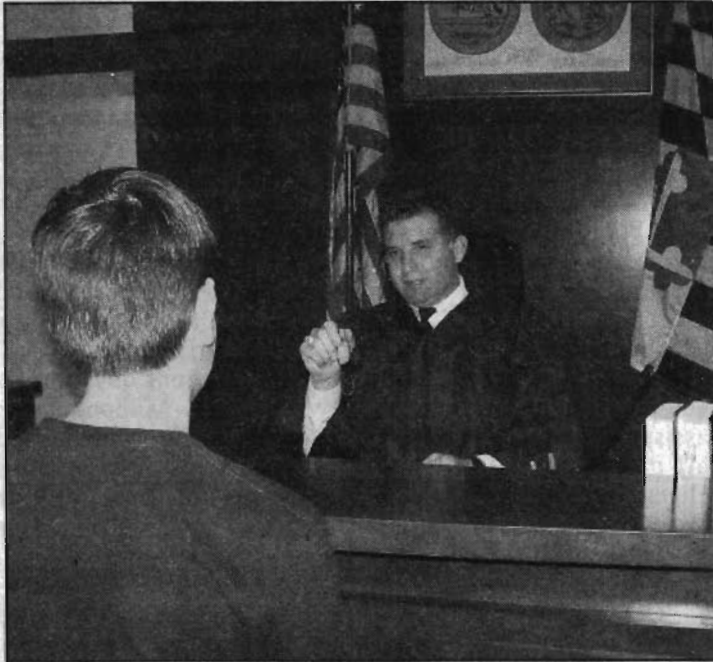


Bateman Passes Down Judgement



Sheriff Ron Bateman, who helped create Anne Arundel County's Teen Court program, serves as a District Court judge at the monthly proceedings held in early March.

Eleven years after creating Anne Arundel County's Teen Court program, Sheriff Ron Bateman donned a robe and literally became "Judge Bateman" at the Annapolis District Courthouse.

"This is a huge honor... to do this after all these years means so much to me," he said, referring to his role as judge. "(The Teen Court program) was the most comprehensive undertaking I ever had the pleasure of completing in my 29 years in law enforcement," he added.

In 1997, Police Chief Larry Tolliver called then-Lieutenant Ron Bateman into his office to give him his new assignment - the largest of his career to that point - create the county's first Teen Court. After months of hard work, Bateman's team - consisting of Jackie Bardelli and Corporal Don Higdon - launched Teen Court in January 1998.

This juvenile diversionary program was designed for first-time juvenile offenders 12-17 years of age who have been charged with non-violent misdemeanor offenses. To qualify for Teen Court, the charged juvenile must admit to the offense he or she has been charged with, agree to testify, and complete all sanctions handed down by their peers within 60 days. If the juvenile completes all sanctions, the offense that brought them to Teen Court would be wiped from their juvenile record.

Since January 1998, Teen Court has heard over 800 cases with a 10% recidivism rate. The teens who have entered the program, called respondents, have a completion rate of approximately 82% and have logged over 20,000 community service hours. Teen Court is held monthly at the Annapolis and Glen Burnie District Courts.