

THE STRATEGIC PLAN
OF THE
FSM SUPREME COURT
(2012 TO 2017)



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Message from the Chief Justice

Greetings: It is with pleasure and excited optimism that I present the initial Strategic Plan of the Supreme Court of the Federated States of Micronesia for the next five years, 2012 to 2017.

To be sure, an ongoing comprehensive planning process may not be important to some. However, in recent years the catch phrase is “plan or perish.” In government, business and academic circles, strategic planning is the topic of the day. “An organization or group without an articulated mission in life has no reason to exist.” “A person without a vision might as well be dead.” This type of sentiment not only goes to the opposite extreme on the issue but also beclouds the rationale for developing a court strategic plan.

The purpose of a strategic plan is to give the court a clear direction so that it will improve its services to the public in the future. The plan is also a device by which the court can share information with stakeholders and funding supporters.

In 2010, our court realized for the first time that the world had radically changed around us. A sea change is still taking place both inside and outside the FSM that for whatever reason we were unable to perceive or understand until last year. That was when informal discussion began on the need for embarking on a strategic planning process that would ensure achieving our ultimate goal of excellence in the administration of justice in the FSM.

In a rapidly changing modern world, ushering in new and innovative ways of doing things, the need to define a strategic direction for the judiciary cannot be overemphasized. The need for a sense of direction and destiny in the overall scheme of things can be met through a strategic plan embodying major goals and specifically defined objectives.

This initial strategic plan will guide the justices and staff of our court in the next five years as they fulfill our judicial mission to serve the people through the fair administration of justice based on the Constitution, laws, and customs and traditions of our unique Pacific-island Nation. In following the plan, which is the roadmap for navigating the court in the future, we envision that our court “will conduct itself as an independent, fair, impartial, and properly managed coequal branch of the FSM national government in rendering justice to all.”

Courts in general cherish and nurture certain values. Our court is no exception. We have identified ten core values in this strategic plan. These specific values, dear to our hearts, form the basis for our court’s essential vision and mission.

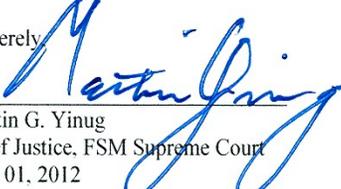
As an agenda setting forth concrete actions needed to be accomplished over the next five years, the strategic plan identifies five major goals: (1) adopt and implement sound management and administrative practices; (2) modernize technology, library resources, and court facilities; (3) meet the challenges of serving four geographically separated and culturally unique Pacific-Island States; (4) promote professionalism in the judiciary and the legal profession; and (5) increase public understanding and maximize access to the court. Several strategies and action items are included under each of the five stated goals in the plan. These strategies and action items are the necessary means toward the realization of the stated goals.

As the court proceeds in pursuing its vision as an independent, fair, impartial, and properly managed coequal branch of the government rendering justice to all, periodic review and assessment of the strategic plan will allow the court to measure progress, refine operations, and make necessary changes on a continuing basis. As an ongoing process, the plan will continue to be revisited and revised as circumstances in the judicial landscape warrant.

I wish to express gratitude to all the justices and employees of the FSM Supreme Court for their commendable contributions to the successful development and completion of this worthwhile project. The court extends its appreciation and thanks to Law Professor John Barkai and Judge Leslie Hayashi, our two consultants from Hawaii, without whose expertise and assistance this strategic plan would not have been possible.

Now that the plan is finished, our objective, to paraphrase Mr. Kapilly Capelle, our Director of Court Administration, is to make sure that the contents of the plan are aligned with the constitutional mandates of the FSM Supreme Court in a manner such that “they are achievable, sensible, realistic and relevant in this setting.”

Sincerely,


Martin G. Yinug
Chief Justice, FSM Supreme Court
May 01, 2012

Associate Justices of the FSM Supreme Court

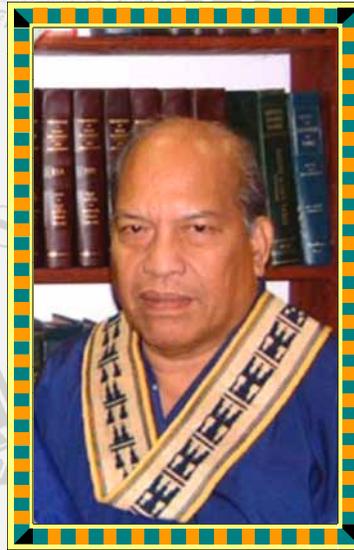


Honorable Dennis K. Yamase
Education: University of Hawaii
Richardson School of Law, (HI) Juris
Doctor -1986

Appointed to the Bench: 2002

Honorable Ready E. Johnny
Education: University of Papua
New Guinea, (PNG)
Bachelor of Laws-1987

Appointed to the Bench: 2007



Honorable Beaulen Carl-Worswick
Education: Gonzaga University
School of Law, (WA)
Juris Doctor-1990

Appointed to the Bench: 2010



Introduction

The Justices and Staff of the FSM Supreme Court, and other stakeholders, held meetings in Kolonia and Palikir, Pohnpei at the Yvonne's Hotel Conference Room and the FSM Supreme Court office from July 19-22, 2011 to discuss, review and reevaluate the purpose and goals of administration of justice by the highest court of the nation and develop a draft strategic plan as a roadmap to guide its endeavors toward those ends.

Further refinements, revisions, and editing of the draft strategic plan took place over the next several months, culminating in the adoption of a final Strategic Plan for the Supreme Court of the Federated States of Micronesia, Years 2012 to 2017. Based on our collective resolve, we aspire to abide by a set of standards of behavior that will guide what we do to lead us toward and/or achieve what we envision the highest court of this nation should be.

Our Values:

These ten core values, listed in alphabetical order, represent the FSM Supreme Court's organizational ideals and desired standards of behavior for its employees.

Accessibility

Certainty

Competence

Equality before the Law

Fairness

Impartiality

Independence of Decision Making

Integrity

Timeliness

Transparency



Neckpiece

Our Mission:

The mission of the Supreme Court of the Federated States of Micronesia is to serve the people through timely and fair administration of justice for all, by discharging its judicial duties and responsibilities in accordance with the Constitution, laws, and customs and traditions of our unique Pacific-Island Nation.

Our Vision:

The FSM Supreme Court will conduct itself as an independent, fair, impartial, and properly managed co-equal branch of the FSM National Government in rendering justice to all.



Justices and Staff in Pohnpei

STRATEGIC GOALS SUMMARY

- ▶ 1) Adopt and implement sound management and administrative practices.
- ❑ 2) Modernize technology, library resources, and court facilities.
- ❑ 3) Meet the challenges of serving four geographically separated and culturally unique Pacific-Island States.
- ❑ 4) Promote professionalism in the Judiciary and the legal profession.
- ❑ 5) Increase public understanding and maximize access to the court.



Strategic Planning Workshop

STRATEGIC GOAL No. 1:

Adopt and Implement Sound Management and Administrative Practices.

Goal/Strategy 1.1—Improve case administration.

Action Items:

- (a) By November 2012, with the assistance of the Chief Clerk and General Counsel the Chief Justice shall establish a written policy which streamlines the debt collection process. This policy will identify what role the court should play in the collection process.
- (b) By January 2014 the Chief Clerk shall create a memoranda bank for the clerks or some other organized way of making prior legal research available for current cases.
- (c) By January 2015 the Chief Clerk shall create and adopt a retention schedule setting forth how long closed case files should be kept.
- (d) On December 01 each year, the Chief Clerk shall compile and submit to the Chief Justice a report detailing the progress and completion of each of the action items in this section.

Goal/Strategy 1.2—Improve the case management system to track cases and increase timeliness of decisions.

Action Items:

- (a) Each quarter the Chief Clerk shall identify a specific action that the clerks' office can emphasize that will improve case assignment and case management functions including the assignment of cases to justices and assignment of staff attorneys to justices. This action item will be reported to the Chief Judge once every quarter.
- (b) Within three months after this plan is signed, the Chief Justice, Associate Justices, Chief Clerk and General Counsel shall meet and develop Timelines and Standards for management of all cases from filing to disposition.
- (c) During the fourth week of January every year the Chief Justice, Associate Justices, Chief Clerk, General Counsel and Secretary for the Chief Justice shall convene a meeting where the justices shall review how many of their assigned cases were decided within the time limits prescribed for disposition of legal actions and deciding pending motions.

Goal/Strategy 1.3—Improve the case assignment and scheduling system.

Action Items:

- (a) Within three months after this plan is signed, the Chief Justice, Associate Justices, Chief Clerk and General Counsel shall meet and develop a written plan that outlines a system of case assignment, workload, calendaring and docket management.
- (b) Within three months after this plan is signed, the Chief Justice, Associate Justices, Chief Clerk and General Counsel shall meet and develop a written plan that assigns justices with specific staff attorneys.
- (c) The Chief Clerk shall schedule appellate arguments twice a year.
- (d) The Chief Clerk shall, by January 15, 2013 submit a report detailing his efforts to comply with their above named action items.

Goal/Strategy 1.4—Develop an electronic filing system and use electronic records and archiving.

Action Items:

- (a) After the date this document is signed, the Chief Justice, Associate Justices, General Counsel, Chief Clerk, Director of Court Administration and Secretary to Chief Justice, shall meet monthly for 6 months, at a meeting where minutes are kept and recorded, for the purpose of creating a plan for e-filing in trial and appellate cases in all states
- (b) By August 01, 2012 the Chief Clerk and General Counsel shall develop guidelines and procedures for scanning of all court documents past, current and future official communications and cases. This plan shall include a system that allows and regulates electronic signatures.
- (c) By July 01, 2012 the Chief Clerk, General Counsel and Director of Court Administration shall acquire a scanner for each clerk's office to perform the above functions.
- (d) By January 01, 2013 General Counsel shall submit for promulgation review by the Chief Justice an amended version of the FSM Rules of Civil Procedure which require lawyers to submit electronic versions of their pleadings which can be posted on the court's website after scanning for viruses. By May 01, 2013 the Chief Justice shall promulgate or submit for public comment a finalized draft of these rules.

(e) By January 01, 2013 General Counsel submit for promulgation review by the Chief Justice an amended version of the FSM Rules of Appellate Procedure which allow filing of electronic motions and briefs in appellate cases where appeal is being made without physically appearing on Pohnpei.

(f) By January 15, 2013 General Counsel shall cause to be created an electronically searchable database which allows the public to search the cases in published the FSM Interim Reporter.

(g) By January 15, 2013 the Chief Clerk shall create a policy regarding which parts of prior files need to be scanned and retained. This retention especially pertains to justice's personal notes which would not be included in the public file.

(h) By September 15, 2013 the Chief Clerk shall create a policy and guidelines to scan all outgoing and incoming correspondence.

(i) By December 31, 2013 the Chief Clerk will have caused to be scanned 30% of the court's historical documents from closed cases as resources allow.

(j) Each of the members of the key court staff identified above shall, by January 15, each year this plan is in effect submit a report detailing their efforts to comply with their named action items.

Goal/Strategy 1.5— Develop an electronic court calendar.

Action Items:

(a) The Chief Clerk by December 2012 shall, create an electronic court calendar that the public can access from outside the court on court's website.

(b) By July 01, 2012 the Chief Clerk shall ensure that all court cases appear on the court's master calendar regardless of which state they were filed in.

(c) By August 30, 2012 the Chief Justice shall cause a system to be created which allows the Chief Clerk to maintain a master calendar for all pending cases, which shall be accessible in all states.

(d) By July 01, 2012, the Chief Clerk shall include the next hearing date or status for each case on the court calendar.

(e) By December 31, 2012, the Chief Justice and the Chief Clerk shall provide status reports on each of these action items for court excellence baseline measurement and subsequent fiscal year's performance-based budget planning.

Goal/Strategy 1.6—Review and amend court rules.

Action Items:

- (a) With the assistance of the General Counsel, Chief Clerk and Director of Administration the Chief Justice shall on or before October 2012, adopt and promulgate Rules of Judicial Conduct. These rules shall, among other standards of conducts, include a specific limit for how long a legal matter may be left pending without justification.
- (b) With the assistance of the Chief Clerk and General Counsel the Chief Justice, shall on or before October 2012, adopt a set of rules which govern the receipt, review and disposition of complaints of judicial misconduct.
- (c) With the assistance of the court's key staff the Chief Justice shall, by October 2012 amend court rules to privatize transcription services.
- (d) With the assistance of the Associate Justices, Chief Clerk and General Counsel, the Chief Justice shall by end of February 2013, establish written policy that limits continuances.
- (e) The court's key staff shall convene an annual meeting where they review existing court rules and make any necessary amendments.
- (f) On December 20, each year this plan is in effect the court's General Counsel shall submit a report to the Chief Justice which outlines the court's progress or completion of each of the action items under this section.

Goal/Strategy 1.7—Review and amend current court forms and create new forms if necessary.

Action Items:

- (a) The Chief Clerk and General Counsel shall meet regularly and/or as needed during the first six months of this plan, to review and discuss the need to amend the court's forms or create new forms.
- (b) At the conclusion of the first six months the Chief Clerk shall submit a report to the Chief Justice detailing the results of the meetings.

Goal/Strategy 1.8—Develop effective communications between court personnel.

Action Items:

- (a) The court's key staff and the Chief Justice shall conduct monthly staff meetings to discuss court operations.

(b) Staff in the FSM Courts outside Pohnpei should have input and access to these meetings and information by message or electronic meeting resources.

(c) Chief Justice, Justices and Key Staff should hold regular annual meetings to discuss, review and make recommendations to improve overall administration of the FSM Supreme Court.

(d) The secretary to the Chief Justice shall take written minutes at each of these meetings. By December 15 each year these minutes will be condensed into a brief report summarizing the results of the court's monthly meetings.

Goal/Strategy 1.9—Consider creating Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) programs.

Action Items

(a) The Chief Justice shall by January 01, 2013, designate the members of a three person Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee.

(b) The three person committee shall meet monthly and report to the Chief Justice quarterly on their goals and progress.

Goal/Strategy 1.10—Make wise use of judicial resources.

Action Items:

(a) Adhere to internal budget allocations on line-item expenses such as Travel, POL, Communications and Utilities.

(b) The Director of Court Administration and General Counsel shall, before October 01, 2012, devise a requisition form for office and facilities supplies to be filed with the Administrator, by each office and/or division supervisor at the beginning of each quarter, based on projected needs for that quarter.

(c) Except after a showing of excusable neglect the court's justices and staff shall plan activities, including travel, functions, meetings, and purchases, one month in advance.

(d) The Director of Court Administration and General Counsel shall, before August 01, 2012, reevaluate personnel regulations regarding leave administration and attendance, and establish rules regarding excessive absences.

STRATEGIC GOAL No. 2:

Modernize Technology, Library Resources and Court Facilities.

Issue Statement:

The FSM Supreme Court is hampered by outdated technology. Internet access is through slow dial up connections. Legal research is thereby limited. Obtaining current laws from various jurisdictions including the FSM States is sometimes difficult. The court's libraries consist mainly of donated books which may be of little value. This library also serves as a waiting room for litigants and parties, which raises security issues for the library collection, especially for newer and more desirable materials. For many years much of the nation has experienced rolling black outs. A generator is available only for the courtroom. Effectively the court must close when the electricity is unavailable.

Goal/Strategy 2.1— Provide high-speed and wireless internet connections in all FSM Supreme Court offices.

Action Items:

- (a) A member of the court's key staff shall be designated to compile a list of the court's technical issues regarding hardware, software and FSM Telecommunication support capabilities and problems each quarter. This list shall be provided to the Court Administrator in order to determine appropriate infrastructure and cost.

Goal/Strategy 2.2—Develop an FSM Supreme Court Website.

Action Items:

- (a) A member of the court's key staff shall before January 01, 2013, design and develop website for the FSM Supreme Court where court information including weekly court calendars, court forms, slip opinions, schedule of events and activities are regularly posted for public consumption.

Goal/Strategy 2.3—Ensure court offices have backup power and surge protection for electrical equipment.

Action Items:

- (a) A member of the court's staff in each of the trial courts in the FSM shall annually, one month before the end of the fiscal year, provide a list to the Director of Court Administration of the court's electrical equipment protection needs.

Goal/Strategy 2.4—Court facilities must be adequate to perform judiciary functions in all FSM States.

Action Items:

- (a) One month prior to the end of the fiscal year, each of the State Justice Ombudsman in Kosrae, Chuuk and Yap shall provide the Court Administrator

with a list of materials which ensures that the courtroom facilities are adequate to perform court functions and operations in all states. The Court Administrator shall plan for renovations where necessary.

(b) Before January 01, 2015 the Court Administrator shall resolve the lease issue for the court building in Chuuk.

(c) Before December 21, 2012 the Court Administrator shall ensure air-condition is in the courtrooms in all the states. While not using air-conditioning saves money, keeping buildings open adversely affects computer and recording equipment and the ability to conduct proper hearings in the courtrooms.

Goal/Strategy 2.5—Library resources must serve court needs and be a legal resource for the community.

Action Items:

(a) The Chief Justice shall annually designate a member of the court’s key staff to update the FSM Legal Information System (LIS) to include current opinions of the FSM Supreme Court.

(b) The Court Librarian shall, before January 01, 2013, acquire multiple hardcopy sets of the FSM reporter and digest.

(c) The Chief Justice shall annually designate a member of the court’s key staff to transfer FSM reporters to CDs, jump drives, and other electronic media that can be used when the Internet is not working.

(d) Before January 2014 the Court Librarian shall develop and present a plan to the Chief Justice which strikes an appropriate balance between hardcopies of materials and electronic resources and provides the capability to obtain legal research resources in court offices throughout the FSM. This plan shall show how the court will:

1. Obtain access to treatises, law review articles, and law from other jurisdictions, using free access to resources such as Google Scholar when ever practical and cost efficient. Obtain access to legal resources from other Pacific Island Nations such as the Republic of Palau (ROP), the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), American Samoa, and Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) that would be relevant to the legal issues in the FSM.

2. Ensure that recent amendments to national and state laws and codes are available to court personnel and the public.

3. Build a core collection of hardcopy legal materials in each state to serve the legal needs of the FSM Supreme Court and the people. These resources may include treatises, hornbooks, and outlines which summarize the law.

- (e) The Court Librarian shall submit annual report to the Chief Justice which reviews (by assessment, survey, or consultant) existing law library resources in each state and remove those that are not relevant or useful. Seek input from the justices, staff lawyers, legal agencies, and state governments. Initial work on this project should begin with the main FSM Supreme Court library in Palikir, Pohnpei.
- (f) The Court Librarian shall seek donations of current books from legal publishing companies and avoid accepting donations of old hardcopies of books that are not useful and take up precious space. His efforts shall be summarized in an annual report to the Chief Justice and Court Administrator.
- (g) The Court Librarian shall on or before January 01, 2013, reconfigure the library by removing many of the non-helpful case reporters from other jurisdictions, create more desk top working space, and install computers to access the web and for legal research.
- (h) Before January 01, 2013 the Court Librarian shall create circulation policies for the hardcopy resources and develop a security system for certain resources (this may require a "closed shelf" section of the library).
- (i) The Court Librarian shall provide training on how to use a library and how to do legal research on as need basis.
- (j) The Court Librarian shall develop a system to assist non-legally trained individuals in performing legal research and to answer their legal questions before January 01, 2015.
- (k) The Court Librarian shall create a separate library and training center at the FSM Supreme Court in Palikir, Pohnpei before January 01 2015.

Goal/Strategy 2.6—FSM Reporter

- (a) By December 01, 2012, the Chief Justice's Working Group for the FSM Reporter Project will report to the Chief Justice on its activities, issues and recommendations.
- (b) By August 2012, Chief Justice will designate replacement for several members of the Working Group who are no longer employees of the Court.

STRATEGIC GOAL No. 3:

Meet the Challenges of Four Geographically Separated and Culturally Unique Pacific-Island States.

Issue Statement:

Since the Federated States of Micronesia comprises the four states of Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap, resources and responsibilities must span and be spread among long distances. This presents various challenges. Coordination of work, staffing, and resources must occur within each state and also on the national level. The majority of the coordination occurs through key personnel located in Pohnpei, such as the Director of Court Administration, the Chief Clerk of Courts, and the National Justice Ombudsmen. The national capitol is located in Palikir, Pohnpei where the main offices of the three branches of the national government sit. Travel between the four states is limited to 2-3 flights per week in each direction and is costly. The culture and traditions of each state are unique and within each of the states of Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Yap are numerous islands with their own unique culture and traditions. For each of these three states, people living in the outer islands are part of the state and community, and these outlying islands are spread apart geographically and can be quite distant from the four state capitals.

Goal/Strategy 3.1—Create a strategy as to how justices can share court work and how they can adequately represent the interests of the court.

Action Items:

- (a) Before July 01, 2012, in each state where the service is available the court shall obtain high-speed internet access, interactive video conferencing, and other technology solutions.
- (b) The court's key staff shall meet quarterly to discuss the issues raised under (a) above.
- (c) The Secretary to the Chief Justice shall keep written minutes of each of these meeting and shall annually prepare and submit a report summarizing them.

Goal/Strategy 3.2—Continue to cooperate and coordinate with state courts.

Action Items:

- (a) The National Justice Ombudsman shall:
 1. Explore the use of shared resources, e.g., a network of probation resource for probationers

2. Continue to hold joint training sessions with the state courts

3. Explore creating a joint, searchable database with the state courts which includes prior cases. On December 31, the National Justice Ombudsman shall submit an annual report to the Chief Justice and Director of Court Administration detailing his efforts under this section.

(b) On December 31, the National Justice Ombudsman shall submit an annual report to the Chief Justice and Director of Court Administration detailing his efforts under this section.



Harmonizing cultural diversity

STRATEGIC GOAL No. 4:

Promote Professionalism in the Judiciary and the Legal Profession.

Goal/Strategy 4.1—Continue to train and professionalize the Judiciary.

Action Items:

- (a) The Chief Justice shall follow and/or modify the Judicial Education Development Plan (JEDP) for the Judiciaries of the Federated States of Micronesia, 10 Year Plan (2008-2017).
- (b) General Counsel shall create or provide access to bench books that can be used by the justices and judges in each court.
- (c) The Director of Court Administration shall continue to provide training from outside experts who can teach modern professional court management methods and procedures.
- (d) The Chief Clerk shall quarterly discuss and clarify for the staff, court rules which lawyers maintain a different interpretation that conflicts with the court's interpretation, e.g., signing blank subpoenas and other debt collections practices.
- (e) The Chief Clerk and General Counsel shall annually provide staff training on professional, accurate record preparation and keeping, taking notes, recording court minutes, and customer service.
- (f) The Chief Clerk shall annually provide training and policy in preparing transcripts and how to record various idiosyncratic speech ("uhmms," pauses, etc.).
- (g) The Chief Clerk, Director of Court Administration and General Counsel shall annually provide staff cross-training on common staff duties because with limited number of court personnel, the staff are often asked to cover for other unavailable employees.
- (h) The Chief Clerk shall, one month before the end of the fiscal year provide the Chief Justice and Director of Court Administration with a report detailing his needs and efforts under this section.

Goal/Strategy 4.2—Implement a performance evaluation program to measure productivity and commitment of court staff.

Action Items:

(a) By October 01, 2012, Director of Court Administrator with the assistance of the General Counsel, Chief Clerk and National Justice Ombudsman will develop a performance evaluation program policy for court staff for Chief Justice to review and approve for implementation by January 01, 2013. The policy will include:

1. Performance instruments, incentives and corrective measures
2. Successive Planning for future recruitment

Goal/Strategy 4.3—Organize and oversee the FSM bar and the legal profession.

Action Items:

(a) The Chief Justice shall designate a staff member to explore ways of facilitating and creating a bar association.

(b) The Chief Clerk and General Counsel shall by July 31, 2012, standardize an application form for FSM Bar Examination.

(c) By October 30, 2012, the Chief Justice shall establish a rotating system of assignment for the writing and grading of the FSM Bar Examination. The system shall consist of the following:

1. deadlines for review and approving each proposed written examination prior to applicants sitting for the examination;
2. deadlines for when the grading of the exam shall be completed and the scores distributed to the applicants.

(d) With the assistance of the Chief Clerk and General Counsel the Chief Justice shall before January 31, 2013, Amend the Rules to enable:

1. the court more time to conduct a thorough background check of applicants applying to take to the FSM Bar
2. Payment of annually member fees
3. Payment schedule fee of services provided by the court, i.e., issuance of Certificate of Good Standing, cost associate with background check
4. Assist when necessary in local legal training.

5. Mandates continuing legal education for attorneys.

(d) The Chief Clerk and General Counsel shall develop a system to improve communication between the court and the practicing bar through meetings between the justices and local practitioners before December 31, 2012.

(e) Before December 31, 2012, General Counsel shall create a procedural manual for lawyers assigned to prosecute disciplinary actions.

(f) The Court Administrator shall facilitate efforts to get more Micronesians into law school and become members of the FSM Bar.

(g) The Chief Clerk and General Counsel shall submit a report to the Chief Justice detailing their efforts under this section annually before December 31.

Goal/Strategy 4.4— Develop and implement a code of ethics for court staff.

Action Items:

(a) The Chief Justice shall create a committee as soon as possible to research, consult and develop codes of ethics for all court staff including those that are regulated by their professional rules of ethics, i.e. law clerks/staff attorneys. The process of compilation, review, promulgation and approval should be completed no later than December 31, 2012.



STRATEGIC GOAL No. 5:

Increase Public Understanding and Access to the Courts.

Goal/Strategy 5.1—Inform the public about their legal rights, court activities, and developments in the law and legal system.

Action Items:

(a) The Director of Court Administration and General Counsel shall create/ develop a plan to increase public education about the law by using local radio programs, creating free materials such as pamphlets or brochures, and the court's newsletter, before December 31, 2012.



(b) Before July 31, 2012, the Chief Justice shall assign a staff member to prepare a quarterly newsletter previously published by the Justice Ombudsmen.

(c) The Director of Court Administration and General Counsel shall design an outreach program to make legal information more widely available to the public before December 31, 2014. This program shall include:

1. creating programs such as school mock trial programs, court visits by school children, town hall informational meetings, etc.
2. sponsoring the FSM Law Day Debates
3. publishing an annual report for court activities, accomplishments and challenges
4. The Director of Court Administration shall submit a report to the Chief Justice detailing the court's efforts under this section annually before December 31.

Goal/Strategy 5.2—Provide greater access to court for self-represented (pro se) litigants.

Action Items:

(a) Before December 31, 2013, the General Counsel and the Director of Court Administration shall develop a manual or guide for self-represented litigants in paper brochures and also on the website.

Afterword

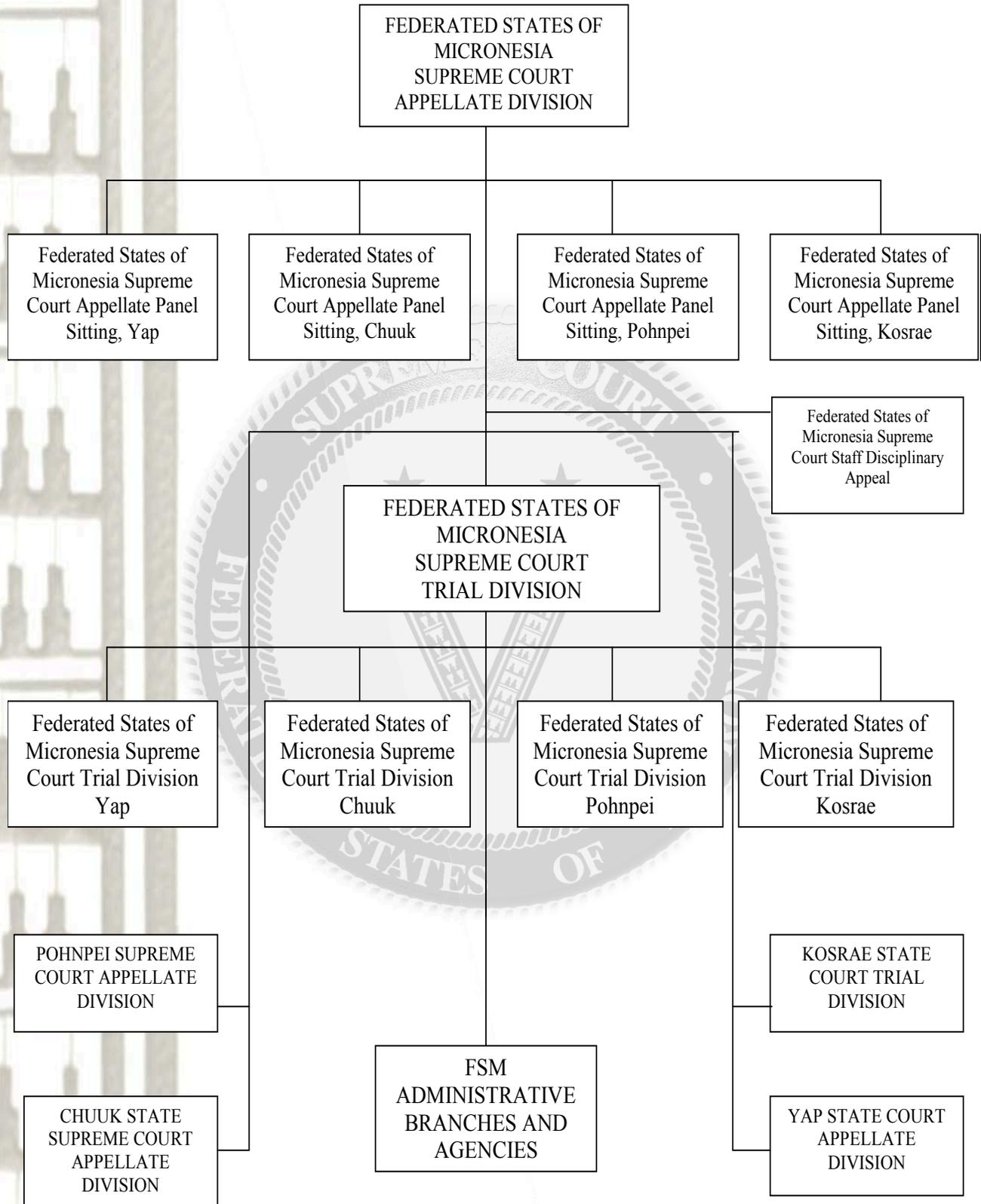
This strategic plan of the Supreme Court of the Federated States of Micronesia was put together with the input of all of the Justices and staff of the court. The strategic plan includes the court's mission, vision, and value statements. It includes strategic goals and action items that provide the court with a focused set of objectives to improve court operations over the next five years.

It is envisioned that this Strategic Plan will also assist in yearly budget preparation based on performance based budgeting. It should also provide support for seeking special grants and supplemental funding for special court projects not funded in the regular operations budget for the court.

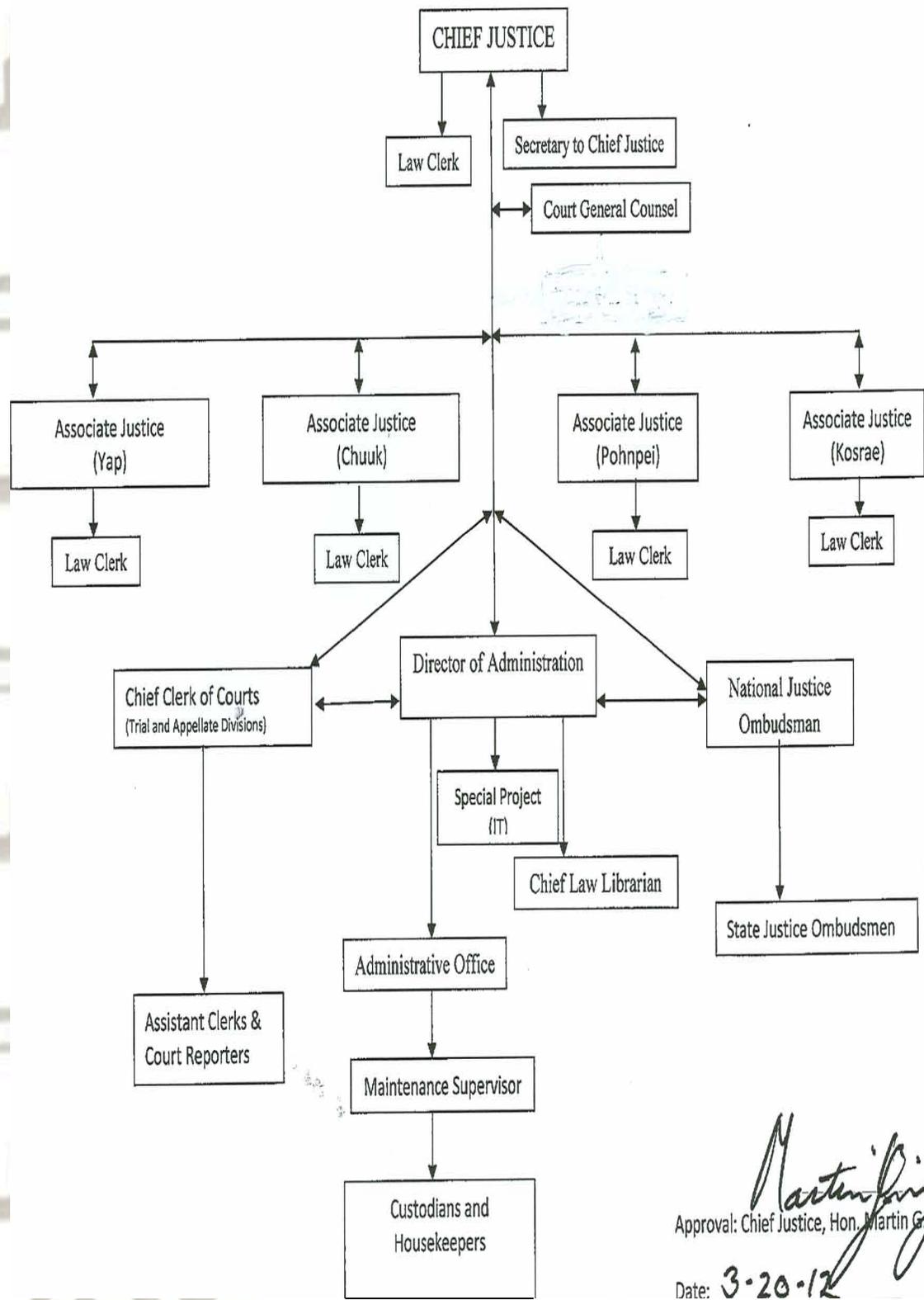
This strategic plan embodies the collective thinking of everyone working to improve the court's operations in order to better serve the people of the Federated States of Micronesia in carrying out the court's mission for the fair administration of justice for all.

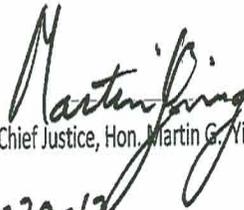


Appendix A: Structure of the FSM Supreme Court



Appendix B: Organizational Chart of the FSM Supreme Court



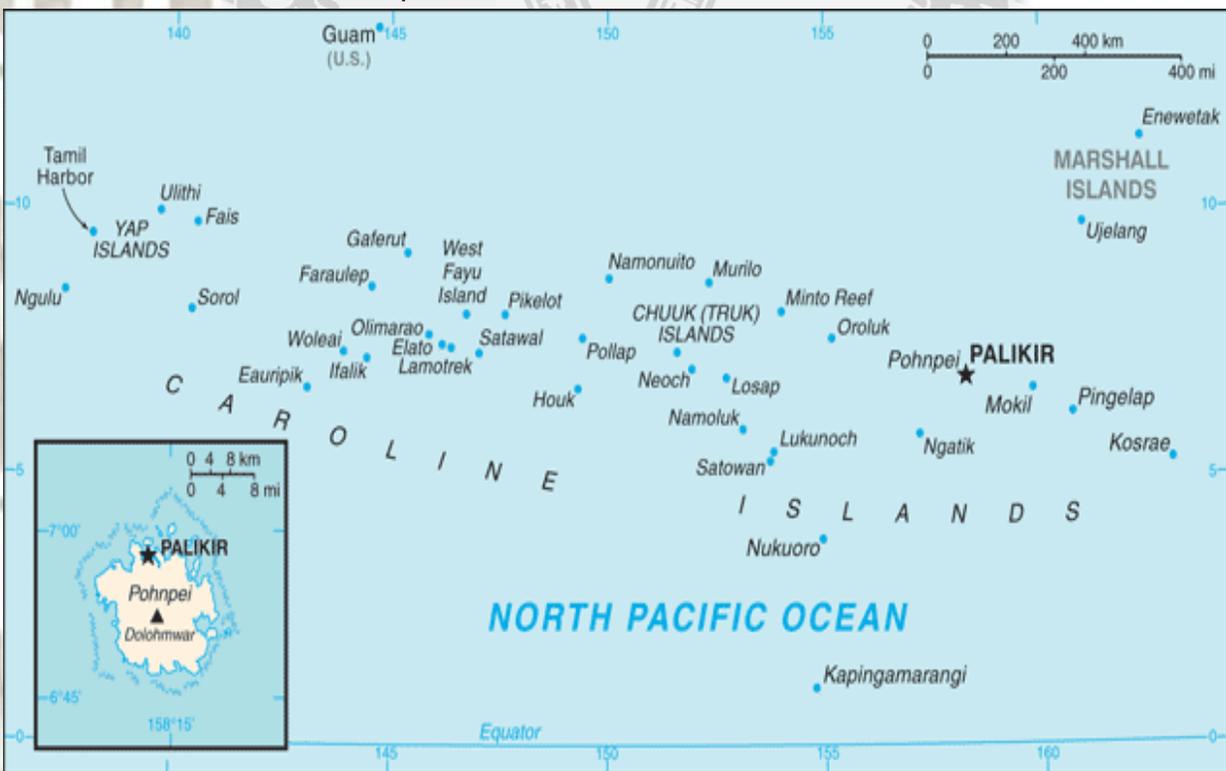

 Approval: Chief Justice, Hon. Martin G. Vinug
 Date: 3-20-12

Appendix C:

Background and Geographical Configuration of the FSM

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) became an independent sovereign nation on May 10, 1979. Formerly it had been a part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). Although its total land mass is only 270 square miles, it is spread across more than one million square miles of the Western Pacific Ocean. The FSM consists of four major island states (listed from west to east): Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae, and includes over 607 islands. Located just above the equator about 2,500 miles southwest of Hawai'i and about 1,800 miles north of eastern Australia and above Papua New Guinea, its total population is approximately 107,000 people (last estimated in 2000 with a 24,000 increase in the 20 years between 1980 and 2000) representing diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds. The populations of the states vary widely: Kosrae 8,000 people; Yap 11,000; Pohnpei 35,000; and Chuuk 54,000. (source, 2000 census).

Map of the Federated States of Micronesia



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The purpose for this new Strategic Plan is to establish the direction in which the FSM Supreme Court will chart for the next 5 years (2012 to 2017). Based on consultation with justices, court staff and non-judicial employee stakeholders priorities and values for the FSM Supreme Court were developed.

The following court officials, consultants and court staff contributed their wisdom, vision, time and effort to this very important undertaking.

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Associate Justice Dennis K. Yamase

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Associate Justice Beaulen Carl-Worswick

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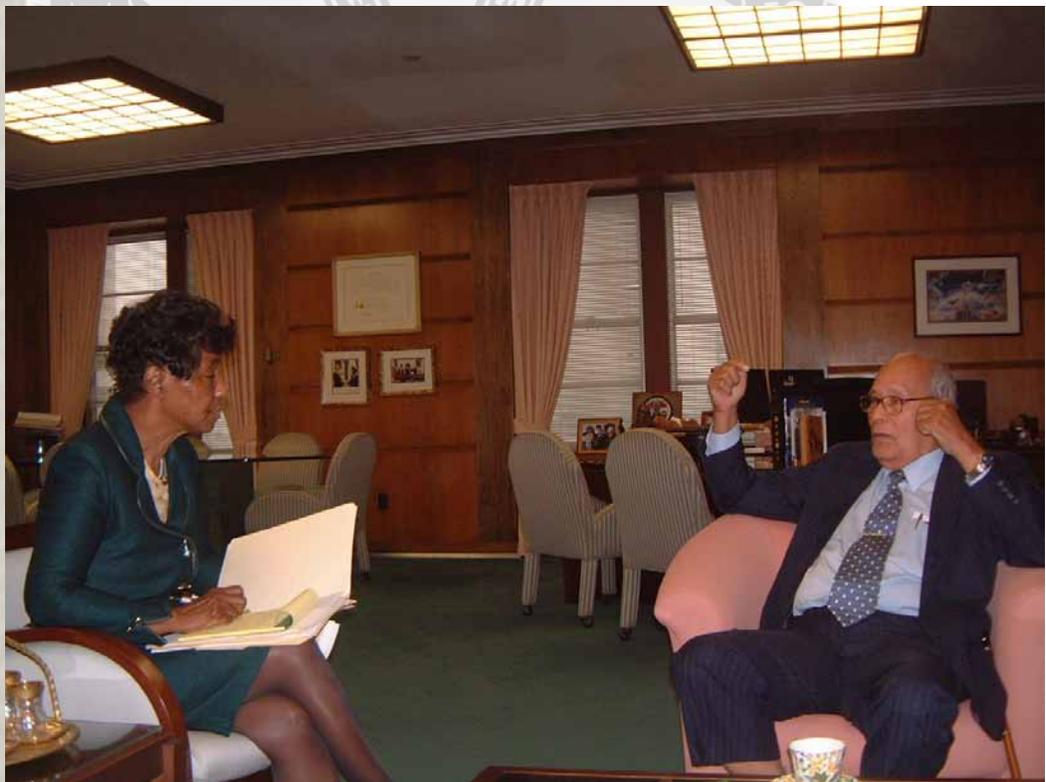
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FSM Judicial Education Strategy Discussion



Judge Hayashi



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