

In The Spotlight with: Judge Christopher J. Collier of the Medina County Common Pleas Court

By Kate Feeks

Jury service is an important civic duty required of American citizens that should be accepted with pride. Through a juror summons, citizens are instructed to come to the courthouse and appear for jury duty. They are asked to listen to the judge, lawyers and witnesses about an individual case(s). Jurors are then asked to swear that they will render a true verdict according to the law and evidence that has been presented to them. Jurors offer their judgment in fairness to fix a problem for the court. They have a direct hand in the administration of justice.

Judge Christopher J. Collier of the Medina County Common Pleas Court provides evaluations to his jurors to specifically address their views and opinions of their experience in his courtroom. As a prosecutor, as well as a criminal defense lawyer, Judge Collier has always been interested in knowing how juries work. He wants to know what jurors think about what is presented to them and what is most important to them.

Through his evaluation process Judge Collier directly communicates with his jurors to get their feedback and in turn help make a better experience for future jurors. “I’m a firm believer that one of the things that make us unique is the role of a juror in our legal process. This responsibility deserves our attention and respect” explained Collier.

The survey questions are asked to ensure each juror has the best possible experience during his or her service. Some examples include: What can I do to make this process better for you? How was the notification that got you here? How were the people that met you at the door? How were your accommodations in the jury room? What kinds of things do you think we could do to make this better?, and How can our court be more efficient for you? .

While striving to better the experience for the jurors, he also asks questions about whether his role as a judge is clear and acceptable to them. “I’m trying to be better for them from my perspective. Have I been clear? Have the instructions that I’ve given been understood?” Collier said. Jury duty is sometimes viewed as a negative process and Judge Collier wants to find out how he can change that.

Judge Collier conducts approximately thirty five to forty jury trials per year. He has presided over approximately 500 jury trials during his tenure of 13 years on the bench. Collier feels compelled to do his very best for each juror because of all that they sacrifice to be in the courtroom to serve our community.