

## Philosophy

- ▶ The justice system is accountable to the public.
- ▶ The public has a right to observe the process.
- ▶ We expect the judicial system to meet certain standards:
  - Be fair and consistent
  - Act in a professional and respectful manner
  - Take into account victim safety and public safety
  - Hold offenders accountable
  - Follow the Law

## Strategy

- ▶ Regularly monitor courts in order to:
  - Identify patterns of behavior
  - Obtain specific examples of larger problems or issues
- ▶ Use information gathered to:
  - Prompt further research
  - Report to courts and community

## Advantages

- ▶ Routine & Ongoing – regular monitoring reduces the fear that court monitoring is “targeting” certain individuals
- ▶ Effective – produces data that cannot be discounted as anecdotal
  - Highlights specific problems or patterns
  - Offer concrete suggestions for improvement

CourtWatch Florida, Inc. began as an initiative of the Orange County Domestic Violence Task Force.

CourtWatch is a volunteer-based, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that monitors cases of domestic violence and sexual assault in Orange and Seminole Counties, Florida.

Our mission is to provide an impartial assessment of the effectiveness with which domestic violence and sexual assault cases are handled by the Court.

## CourtWatch Florida

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# CourtWatch

*Justice doesn't just happen*

[www.courtwatchflorida.org](http://www.courtwatchflorida.org)

## Origins

CourtWatch began in 2004 when Ann Lickteig, a victim of domestic violence, saw that the criminal justice system failed to successfully prosecute her batterer. He was found not guilty of inflicting the injuries that required several hours of neurosurgery.

As a result of her experience, Ann vowed to monitor the courts so that other victims of domestic violence would not suffer a similar fate. She joined Orange County's Domestic Violence Task Force and has served as its co-chair. During that time, she met Laura S. Williams, another survivor of domestic violence who shared Ann's interest in the judicial system.

Laura, a former client of Harbor House, has been a Speaker's Bureau volunteer since 1998. In 1996, her estranged husband fatally shot their 2 year old daughter Sarah before he committed suicide. Because of her willingness to speak publicly about domestic violence, she was asked to participate in Orange County's Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Commission (2003-2005) and the Commission's Implementation Team (2005-2007). It was during this time that she joined the DV Task Force and became involved with establishing a court monitoring program.

CourtWatch monitors domestic violence and sexual assault cases in Orange and Seminole Counties to make sure the judicial system holds perpetrators accountable and doesn't re-victimize the victims.



Orange County Courthouse

## CourtWatch Offers

- ▶ **Volunteer and Internship Opportunities**  
Become a CourtWatcher and work to hold the justice system accountable.
- ▶ **Community Education**  
CourtWatch speaks to community groups about the dynamics of domestic violence and the workings of the justice system. We encourage public participation in the courts. To schedule a speaker for your civic, student, church or other group, contact us at 407-325-3052 or by email at [info@courtwatchflorida.org](mailto:info@courtwatchflorida.org)
- ▶ **Community Newsletter**  
To subscribe to our bi-monthly community e-newsletter, please email your request to [info@courtwatchflorida.org](mailto:info@courtwatchflorida.org)

## We Need Your Help

**Florida Department of Law Enforcement statistics reveal that in 2006, Florida averaged a DV fatality every 48 hours.**

In 2006, Orange County reported 8,451 DV crimes (with 15 fatalities) and Seminole County reported 2,038 (with 5 fatalities). Domestic violence affects up to 50% of all families in the US today, and in about 50% of these households, the children are physically abused as well.

According to a past director of the Office on Violence Against Women, "the number one way to reduce domestic violence is to have Court-Watch programs in every community across the United States."

It is easy and convenient to be a volunteer CourtWatcher. You can go as often or little as you wish. You will meet new people and have an opportunity to see how the court system works. You don't even need to commit to a whole day. There are morning and afternoon sessions. You would observe court for 3-4 hours once or twice a month - the schedule is flexible.

## CourtWatch is NOT:

- ▶ A vigilante or extremist organization "out to get" judges or defendants or to restrict judicial independence
- ▶ Affiliated with any political party or religious faith
- ▶ A provider of victim advocacy or direct services