

term. Judges must meet the same qualifications set out in the Constitution for judges of the appellate courts and courts of general jurisdiction. They must devote their full time to their judicial duties, and they are strictly prohibited from engaging, in any way, in the practice of law.

Within the District Court system there is a Chief Clerk appointed by the Chief Judge. The Chief Judge also designates from among the judges an Administrative Judge for each district. Each district also has an administrative clerk. In addition, a District Court Clerk for each county within a district and all other necessary court employees have also been chosen. Further, commissioners will be appointed by the administrative judge of the district with the approval of the Chief Judge to function in each county and in Baltimore City as may be needed. The commissioners will perform functions similar to the old Committing Magistrates with respect to issuance of arrest warrants, setting bail or collateral, or other terms of pre-trial release, pending a hearing or incarceration prior to hearing.

The District Court has jurisdiction in criminal, traffic, and civil matters. It has no equity jurisdiction and has juvenile jurisdiction in Montgomery County only. In criminal cases the court may conduct preliminary hearings in felony cases; it has general jurisdiction over misdemeanors, whether common law, statutory, or established by ordinance and over criminal violations of state and local regulations. In addition, it has jurisdiction over certain enumerated felonies if the amount or value of the goods taken or obtained by the party charged does not exceed \$500. Its jurisdiction is exclusive if the penalty may not exceed confinement for one day less than three years or a fine of \$2,999, or both. If the confinement is three years or more, or the fine is \$3,000 or above, the jurisdiction is concurrent with the Circuit Court.

The traffic jurisdiction of the court extends to almost every violation of the Vehicle Law, if the offense is not classified as a felony.

In civil cases, the District Court has exclusive jurisdiction if the amount claimed

does not exceed \$2,500 and in cases involving landlord and tenant, forcible entry and detainer, and grantee suits regardless of amount involved. Where the claim exceeds \$2,500 and up to a maximum of \$5,000, it has concurrent jurisdiction with the trial courts of general jurisdiction. If the amount in controversy in a civil suit is in excess of \$500 then either party has the right to demand a jury trial in which event, upon timely demand made, the case will be transferred from the District Court to a trial court of general jurisdiction. In criminal and traffic cases a right to trial by jury exists if demanded prior to trial, if the punishment for the crime may exceed confinement for a period of over three months. The State may not demand a jury trial.

Appeals from decisions of the District Court are taken to the Circuit Court in the county in which the judgment was rendered. In Baltimore City they are taken in criminal and traffic cases to the Criminal Court of Baltimore City and in civil cases to the Baltimore City Court. In criminal and traffic cases and in civil cases of less than \$500 the appeal shall be tried *de novo* unless the parties agree to an appeal on the record. In civil cases involving claims of more than \$500 the appeal shall be on the record. The time for noting an appeal in all cases must be within thirty days from the date of judgment in the District Court (Code 1957, 1973 Repl. Vol., Art. 26, secs. 139-157; Courts Article, secs. 1-601 to 1-608, 2-601 to 2-607, 4-301 to 4-304, 4-401 to 4-530, 6-403, 7-301-7-302, 9-201, 11-402, 11-701 to 11-703, 12-401).

## THE STATE REPORTER

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