

**Office of the Supreme Court Clerk of Court
Annual Report 2014**

The Supreme Court is the highest court in the Northern Mariana Islands. It was established in 1989, by Public Law 6-25, to review appealed decisions of the NMI Superior Court. Prior to the establishment of the Supreme Court, appellate jurisdiction was vested in the District Court of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Immediately after its establishment, Supreme Court decisions were appealed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. After May 2004, all appeals from the Supreme Court are filed with the United States Supreme Court.

The NMI Supreme Court is composed of a chief justice and two associate justices, who are nominated by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Each justice is appointed for an eight-year term, after which he or she is subject to a retention election.

The first justices of the Supreme Court were Chief Justice Jose C. Dela Cruz, Associate Justice Ramon G. Villagomez, and Associate Justice Jesus C. Borja. The current justices are Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro, Associate Justice John A. Manglona, and Associate Justice Perry B. Inos.

Justices 1989 to Present
<p>Jose S. Delacruz Chief Justice, May 1989 to May 1995</p>
<p>Ramon G. Villagomez Associate Justice, May 1989 to December 1997</p>
<p>Jesus S. Borja Associate Justice, October 1989 to February 1993</p>
<p>Pedro M. Atalig Associate Justice, February 1993 to December 1997</p>
<p>Marty W.K. Taylor Chief Justice, September 1995 to December 1998</p>
<p>Miguel S. Demapan Chief Justice, July 1999 to September 2011 Associate Justice, July 1998 to July 1999</p>
<p>Alexandro C. Castro Chief Justice October 2012 to Present Associate Justice, July 1998 to October 2012</p>
<p>John A. Manglona Associate Justice May 2000 to Present</p>
<p>Perry B. Inos Associate Justice March 2013 to Present</p>

To ensure efficient court management, the NMI Judicial Council was established on November 30, 2009. The chief justice, as the administrative head of the Judiciary, serves as the chairperson of the Council. The Council meets every second Wednesday of the month to set policies and procedures, and to discuss administrative tasks of the Judiciary.

The Office of the Supreme Court Clerk of Court assists the Court in discharging its constitutional responsibilities. The Clerk's Office receives, processes, and maintains permanent records of appeals, writs and petitions, and bar disciplinary cases. The Clerk of the Supreme Court, appointed by the Chief Justice, supervises the scheduling and assignment of cases, oversees the distribution and publication of Supreme Court opinions, administrative rules, and orders, and decides certain procedural motions filed with the Court.

Clerks of Court 1989 to Present



Charles Kaipat
1989-1997



Crispin Kaipat
1997-2006



Kenneth Barden
2006-2007



Jonathan Grayson
2007-2009



Daniel Stafford
2009-2010



Jennifer Dockter
2010-2012



Deanna Ogo
2012-Present

Since the implementation of the Judiciary's electronic filing system in June 2006, all filings with the Supreme Court are made electronically, which expedites the appeals process and reduces costs. In 2006, there were 553 documents e-filed. In 2014, over 750 documents were e-filed.

Also in 2014, the Clerk's Office completed its task of scanning all cases with paper filings. As a result, there has been an increase in available storage space, and court files have become easier to access. Currently, the Clerk's Office is in the process of uploading the scanned files onto the Court's case management system. With the help of local high school student volunteers, the Clerk's Office has scanned and uploaded all cases filed from 1996 to 2005.



A student from Kagman High School takes a break from uploading documents to smile for the camera.

The Supreme Court has a summer internship program that provides law students with the opportunity to become involved in the Judicial Branch of the CNMI. In 2014, students from Georgetown University Law Center and University of Texas School of Law interned with the Court, assisting law clerks research legal issues, draft memoranda, and certify opinions.



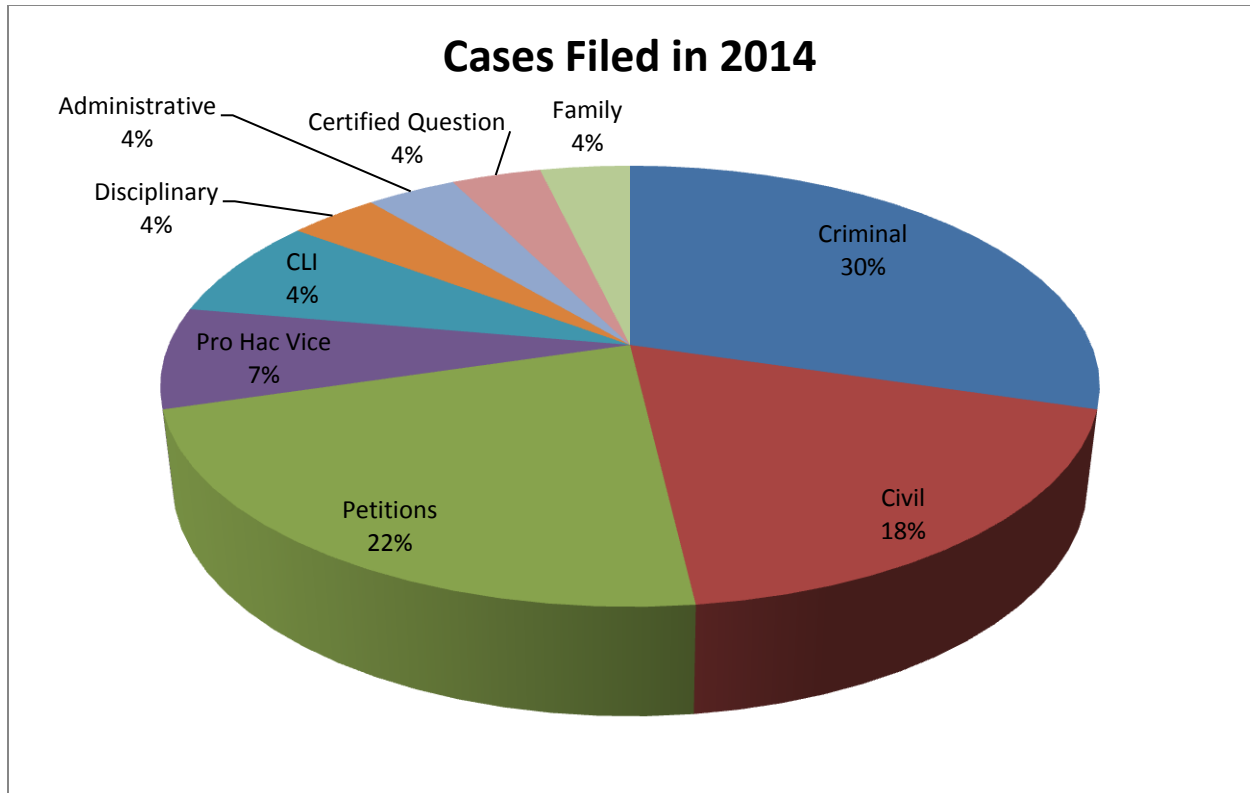
Supreme Court Cases Filed and Opinions Issued						
	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
Cases Filed	21	57	45	32	51	26
Opinions Issued	3	23	26	26	21	21

2014 Supreme Court Published Opinions	
Case Name	Justices
Commonwealth v. CUC, 2014 MP 21	Castro, Manglona, Bellas
Commonwealth v. Santos, 2014 MP 20	Castro, Manglona, Soll
Commonwealth v. Jin Song Lin, 2014 MP 19	Castro, Manglona, Inos
Commonwealth v. Crisostomo, 2014 MP 18	Castro, Manglona, Inos
Commonwealth v. Salasiban, 2014 MP 17	Castro, Manglona, Inos
Commonwealth v. Palacios, 2014 MP 16	Castro, Manglona, Wiseman
Commonwealth v. Guerrero, 2014 MP 15	Castro, Manglona, Bellas
Shinji Fujie v. Atalig, 2014 MP 14	Manglona, Wiseman, Camacho
Taisague v. Inos, 2014 MP 13	Torres, Carbullido, Bordallo
Commonwealth v. Cepeda, 2014 MP 12	Castro, Manglona, Soll
ANZ Guam, Inc. v. Lizama, 2014 MP 11	Manglona, Inos, Bellas
Commonwealth v. Calvo, 2014 MP 10	Wiseman, Camacho, Bellas
In re the Matter of Woodruff, 2014 MP 9	Inos
Commonwealth v. Taman, 2014 MP 8	Castro, Manglona, Inos
Commonwealth v. Calvo, 2014 MP 7	Wiseman, Camacho, Bellas
Commonwealth v. Fu Zhu Lin, 2014 MP 6	Castro, Manglona, Inos
Commonwealth v. Quitano, 2014 MP 5	Castro, Manglona, Inos
Commonwealth v. Guerrero, 2014 MP 4	Castro, Manglona, Bellas
Commonwealth v. Sanchez, 2014 MP 3	Castro, Manglona, Inos
Commonwealth v. Guerrero, 2014 MP 2	Castro, Manglona, Bellas
In re Yana and Atalig, 2014 MP 1	Manglona, Carbullido, Torres

Cases Pending January 1, 2014: 48

Cases Filed in 2014: 27

- Criminal: 8
- Civil: 5
- Petitions: 6
- Pro Hac Vice: 2
- Certified Legal Intern (CLI): 2
- Disciplinary: 1
- Administrative: 1
- Certified Question: 1
- Family: 1



Case Dispositions: 30

- Dismissed-Court: 5
- Dismissed-Voluntary: 4
- Opinions: 21

Cases Pending December 31, 2014: 45 Cases

Status of Pending Cases:

At the end of 2014, forty-five cases were pending (21 Criminal; 19 Civil; 5 Other). Eleven are awaiting certification from the Superior Court, five are stayed, twenty-six are in the briefing stage or ready for oral argument, and three are awaiting decision.

Attorney Admissions for 2014

- February Bar Exam:
 - 6 takers (5 regular | 1 attorney)
 - 6 passed
- July Bar Exam:
 - 4 takers (1 regular | 3 attorney)
 - 3 passed
 - 1 failed
- Seven Limited Admissions

An attorney may be admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth without taking the CNMI Bar Examination, provided that the attorney has been admitted to practice law in another U.S. jurisdiction, is in good standing, and is an employee of the Commonwealth government or Micronesian Legal Services. This bar admission is limited to a period of four consecutive years.

