

A photograph of a courtroom with a brass scale of justice on a wooden table in the foreground. The background shows rows of wooden desks and chairs, and a large wooden door at the end of the room. The lighting is warm and focused on the scale.

JUVENILE JUSTICE ADMINISTRATION

PETER C. KRATCOSKI

 CRC Press
Taylor & Francis Group

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Boca Raton London New York

CRC Press is an imprint of the
Taylor & Francis Group, an **informa** business

CRC Press
Taylor & Francis Group
6000 Broken Sound Parkway NW, Suite 300
Boca Raton, FL 33487-2742

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CRC Press is an imprint of Taylor & Francis Group, an Informa business

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Version Date: 20120321

International Standard Book Number-13: 978-1-4398-2161-9 (eBook - PDF)

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This book is dedicated to Lucille Dunn Kratcoski. During her many years of teaching, she has touched the lives of many children and adults not only through her excellent instruction but also through the guidance and counseling she has given to many students and even the parents of her students.

Contents

Acknowledgments	xi
Foreword	xiii
About the Author	xvii
Chapter Contributors	xix

Section I

INTRODUCTION TO JUVENILE JUSTICE ADMINISTRATION

1	The Juvenile Justice System	3
	PETER C. KRATCOSKI	
2	Administrative Principles and Tasks of Juvenile Justice Administrators	23
	PETER C. KRATCOSKI	
3	Management Theory and Administrative Models	43
	PETER C. KRATCOSKI	
4	Juvenile Justice Personnel	59
	PETER C. KRATCOSKI	

Section II

INTRODUCTION TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUVENILE JUSTICE AGENCIES

5	Administration of Agencies Serving Endangered Children	79
	PETER C. KRATCOSKI	

6	Family Law Pertaining to Children at Risk	117
	PETER CHARLES KRATCOSKI AND PETER CHRISTOPHER KRATCOSKI	
7	Law Enforcement Administration of Juvenile Justice in the United States	131
	PETER C. KRATCOSKI	
8	The Role of the Police in the Administration of Juvenile Justice in Canada: Balancing Criminal Justice and Social Welfare Concerns in a Risk Society	157
	STEPHEN B. PERROTT AND MARGARET K. DECHMAN	
9	Police and Juveniles in Japan	181
	MINORU YOKOYAMA	
10	School Security: A Comparison Between Austria and the United States	197
	PETER C. KRATCOSKI, MAXIMILIAN EDELBACHER, DAVID GRAFF, AND GILBERT NORDEN	
	<i>Section III</i>	
	INTRODUCTION TO THE JUVENILE JUSTICE PROCESS	
11	Juvenile Court Processing and the Administration of the Juvenile Court	219
	PETER C. KRATCOSKI	
12	Juvenile Law	267
	PETER C. KRATCOSKI	
13	Juvenile Justice Administration in Austria	287
	MAXIMILIAN EDELBACHER, NORBERT GERSTBERGER, AND GILBERT NORDEN	

Acknowledgments

In my initial conversation with the Carolyn Spence, justice editor for CRC Press/Taylor & Francis Group, I informed her that in this book I would focus on the administration of the juvenile justice system and also illustrate through examples or interviews with juvenile justice administrators and other personnel how the system functions in the real world. In addition, I hoped to achieve somewhat of a comparative analysis of juvenile justice systems by asking professors and juvenile justice practitioners to write chapters on the system in the country in which they reside. The readers of this book will have to determine whether these purposes for writings were achieved.

The writing of this book would not have been possible without the assistance of the many individuals who contributed through their willingness to write a chapters, agreed to be interviewed, or offered to assist in the editing. Those who authored or coauthored one or more chapter are as follows:

Christiaan Bezuidenhout
Margaret K. Dechman
Maximilian Edelbacher
Norbert Gerstberger
David R. Graff
Peter Christopher Kratcoski
Kevin Little
Gilbert Norden
Stephen B. Perrott
David E. Stucki (Foreword)
John Winterdyk
Minoru Yokoyama

The juvenile justice personnel who were interviewed, either electronically or in person, were as follows:

Denna Bryan, Administrator, Community Corrections Facility,
Multicounty Juvenile Attention System
Michelle L. Cordova, Chief Assistant Prosecutor, Juvenile Division,
Stark County Prosecutor's Office

Christa J. Cross, Child Forensic Interviewer, Stark County Job and Family Services
Richard DeHeer, Court Administrator, Stark County Family Court
Norbert Gerstberger, Judge, Criminal/Juvenile Court of Vienna, Austria
Richard McDonald, Constable, Halifax Regional Police
Joseph Petrucelli, Coordinator, Summit County Juvenile Court Re-Entry Program
John Saros, Executive Director, Summit County Children Services
Albert D. Shirer, Court Administrator, Wayne County Court of Common Pleas Probate and Juvenile Division
Linda Tucci Teodosio, Judge, Juvenile Court of Summit County, Ohio Juvenile Court
David Vanderwall, Superintendent, Multicounty Juvenile Attention System
Terry Walton, Probation Department, Summit County Juvenile Court, Ohio
Thomas Webb, Forensic Psychologist, Summit County (Ohio) Juvenile Court
Pierre Wessels, Acting Senior Magistrate, Juvenile Court of South Africa
Joseph Weyer, Juvenile Officer, Juvenile Bureau, Alliance Police Department

A special thanks to those who assisted with several of the interviews. They are Christiaan Bezuidenhout, Maximilian Edelbacher, and Stephen B. Perrott.

Special thanks is given to Carolyn Spence for her understanding and acceptance of my excuses for the delay in the completion of the work. The guidance and information provided by Jennifer Ahringer when questions arose pertaining to style and organization is also much appreciated.

Finally, a very special thanks to my wife, Lucille Dunn Kratcoski, first for her assistance in the editing of every chapter and the rewriting of several chapters and second for her understanding during the periods our social life had to be ignored to devote the time to writing the book.

Foreword

When I heard that this book on juvenile justice administration was being prepared, I readily agreed to write this foreword because I have long recognized the key role administrators, managers, and supervisors play in the success of juvenile justice functions. Having served as a judge with the Stark County Family Court for more than 18 years, and as the senior judge of that court for more than six years, I realize how important it is to have personnel who are working together as a team to accomplish the mission and specific goals of the court. As judges, we can set goals for the court that we want to achieve, but it is up to the court administrator, the heads of the various departments, and the line workers to actually accomplish these goals through their day-to-day operations.

Are leaders who have obtained a high degree of success using talents that are inherent to their personalities, or have they reached this degree of expertise through training and experience? This is a not a question that calls for an either-or answer. Those in leadership positions, to be effective, must utilize their personal traits and experiences, yet they also must be nimble enough to set aside these same traits in favor of evidence-based best practices learned through training and experience. In other words, sometimes the very personal traits that help one become a leader stand in the way of actually leading. An effective leader must constantly be developing and honing many skills. These include planning, organizing, staffing, innovating, budgeting, coordinating, and communicating. Communication is listed last not because of its relative importance. In fact, communication on all levels of an organization is perhaps the most important of all. As in any relationship from marital to business to social, ineffective communication leads directly to disaster. In our court, the Stark County Family Court, we conducted an extensive employee diversity training program some years ago with the goal to sensitize ourselves to the needs of the diverse population we serve as well as those of our diverse staff. That goal was achieved, and the diversity training was a great success. The real success of that process, however, was that it became an overarching performance evaluation of our court, including that of our leadership, philosophy, mission and vision, and the way we do business. A general observation that came out of the diversity training was that the way we communicated was deficient. As a result, many specific programs to improve communication, both internal and external, were developed and these programs are still being implemented successfully to this day.

Judges involved with the family or juvenile courts must communicate effectively with many agencies and individuals, including the police, the prosecutor's office, school administrators, children's services agencies, welfare agencies, volunteer organizations, parents, and victims of delinquent behavior or unlawful, abusive, or neglectful behavior by adults, as well as the children who come before the court because of delinquent or status offenses. Varying skills are needed to deal with each of these groups because they have contrasting concerns and agendas.

What sort of background, training, or education is needed to be an effective administrator? An effective administrator must have the educational background to understand the foundational basis for systems and be able to apply that education practically to the work of a court or other organization. To effectively do the practical work of the organization, the vision and mission of the organization must be a living, breathing, daily guide and not just a framed wall-hanging or stationary accouterment. By that, I mean all decisions made by administrators on down throughout the system must be guided by the organization's values.

During my tenure as judge, I constantly strove to be an innovator—to not be satisfied with the status quo, even when things were running fairly smoothly. I believe an organization can become complacent if the administration is not constantly looking for better ways of doing things and adapting the latest proven methods and technology available for dealing with the youths and the public we serve. Introducing new ideas and experimenting to achieve the court's goals through innovative means is vital to having an effective court system. I pride myself on doing this. For example, our court was one of the first juvenile courts in the state to develop a teen court program. We were successful in obtaining grant money to develop several other innovative youth programs that have been recognized statewide and nationally. These include pretrial diversion and the parent project. These programs would not have been successful without the concerted efforts of the different levels of personnel involved in their planning and implementation as well as the assistance and support of community agencies, volunteers, and concerned citizens who assist us.

I recently assumed new responsibilities at the state and national levels. I have been elected to the leadership chairs of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and I am on track to become the president of the organization in 2013. I also serve on the Global Advisory Committee and the Interstate Commission for Juveniles and in the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) Committee leadership on the Legislative, the Finance and Membership Committees. In addition, I am the acting chair of the Ohio Governor's Council on Juvenile Justice and serve as Ohio's primary representative on the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice. I found that my experiences as a county juvenile court

judge helped me tremendously to develop the leadership skills needed to be effective in these state and national organizations.

Although juvenile courts typically are administered at the county level, in my experiences as a judge, I have found that we are dealing with many youths who live and have concerns in their lives far beyond our jurisdictions. There is a need to think about juvenile justice beyond the local level. We can use national conferences, training seminars, and the findings from research to enhance the quality of the juvenile justice system throughout the nation. This is the main function of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

This book has several chapters describing the juvenile justice programs in other countries. This information is of great interest because I expect that in the future juvenile justice in the United States will become more internationally focused. The juvenile court system as developed in the United States already serves as the model for many countries throughout the world, and developing countries are replicating many of our programs and incorporating them into their juvenile justice legislation. For example, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by almost 200 countries. It represents a comprehensive document on the treatment of children that can be followed by judicial officials throughout the world. I expect many more such international conventions and agreements pertaining to juvenile justice to be developed in the future.

In summary, as system players, we all need to arm ourselves with the latest in knowledge, training, and experience to enable us to provide systems to promote and protect our world's most important resource, our children and families. This book is a good start; enjoy and learn.

David E. Stucki

About the Author

Peter C. Kratcoski received a bachelor's degree in sociology from Kings College, a master's degree in sociology from the University of Notre Dame, and a doctorate in sociology from Pennsylvania State University. He was selected for several postdoctoral study grants by the National Science Foundation. He was appointed assistant professor of sociology at Kent State University in 1969 and retired as a professor of sociology and justice studies in 1998. During his career, he served as chair of the Department of Criminal Justice Studies and professor of Criminal Justice Studies at Kent State University, the position he held at retirement. Other positions he held during his career include a three-year enlistment in the United States Marine Corps; instructor of sociology at St. Thomas University in St. Paul, Minnesota; temporary instructor at the University of Akron, College of Wooster, and John Carroll University; and guest lecturer at Eastern Illinois University. He currently holds the positions of emeritus professor of sociology and justice studies at Kent State University, temporary instructor in sociology and justice studies and director of the Justice Volunteer Center at Kent State University. His areas of specialization include juvenile justice, corrections, crime prevention, and international policing. He currently serves as official recorder of the International Police Executive Symposium (IPES) and is a member of IPES, the Society for Police and Criminal Psychology, and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. He has authored or edited several books and numerous book chapters and journal articles.

