

WATCH History

- 1992 WATCH is founded in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- 1993 The first volunteer monitors enter Hennepin County courtrooms carrying red clipboards to identify themselves.
- 1994 WATCH releases its first report *Hennepin County Criminal Courts: A View from the Outside*. The report highlighted issues of chronic delays, inaudibility of proceedings, insensitivity to victims, and lack of transparency and explanations for decisions.
- 1998 WATCH advocates with the state legislature and Minnesota Supreme Court for greater transparency and open hearings in juvenile court.
- 1999 WATCH receives a grant to establish the Hennepin County Fatality Review Team.
- WATCH receives the *Gloria Steinem Women of Vision Award* from the Ms. Foundation for Women.
- 2000 A designated Domestic Violence court is established to hear misdemeanor cases in Hennepin County; WATCH and many others advocated for it.
- WATCH reviews over 400 sexual assault cases and publishes *Criminal Sexual Conduct Cases in Hennepin County, 1997-1998*.
- 2001 WATCH produces the training manual *Developing a Court Monitoring Program* to make its model program accessible to others.
- WATCH publishes *Judicial Demeanor and Response in the Domestic Violence Court*, a look at the first year of the new court.
- WATCH publishes findings of an 18-month study of juvenile cases, *WATCH's Monitoring of Open CHIPS (Children in Need of Protection and Services) Cases in Hennepin County Juvenile Court*.
- 2002 WATCH is featured in the publication of the National Crime Prevention Council *50 Strategies to Prevent Violent Domestic Crimes*.
- 2004 WATCH closely monitors over 300 order for protection hearings and issues findings and recommendations in its *2004 OFP Report*.
- The Minnesota Women's Consortium honors WATCH as an exemplary organization working for justice.

The Hennepin County Attorney's office recognizes WATCH with a Community Leadership award.

- 2006 WATCH conducts landmark study of implementation of Minnesota's Victims Rights law and issues *Victim Impact Statements at Sentencing: Do They Matter?*

WATCH begins dissemination of its revised and updated *Developing a Court Monitoring Program* training manual, offering a step-by-step guide to replicating our model program.

Five years after its first scrutiny of the designated Domestic Violence Court, WATCH conducts another review of its operations and publishes *Hennepin County Domestic Violence Court Report*.

- 2007 WATCH launches the National Association of Court Monitoring Programs, which includes 16 members by the end of the year.

WATCH analyzes cases of domestic assault strangulation following the 2005 passage of legislation in Minnesota making strangulation during a domestic assault a felony. The report, *The Impact of Minnesota's Felony Strangulation Law*, includes recommendations for improved safeguards for victims of strangulation.

WATCH receives the *Celebrating Solutions* award from the Mary Byron Foundation. The award recognizes innovative approaches to ending domestic violence.

WATCH publishes results of its study of court timeliness. The report focuses on the court's responsibility to minimize delays and communicate with waiting parties when delays are inevitable.

Family Law Forum, a publication of the Family Law section of the Minnesota Bar Association, addresses domestic violence in its Fall 2007 issue, which includes an article by WATCH entitled, "Keeping safety front and center in order for protection hearings."

- 2008 WATCH sponsors first National Walk-in for Justice, with eight cities joining Minneapolis to shine a spotlight on the need for citizen monitoring of the courts.

WATCH launches a two-year project focused on increasing safety for abused and neglected children involved in Hennepin County child protection proceedings.

Membership in the National Association of Court Monitoring Programs grows to 26 projects in 20 states.

2009

WATCH is featured in *Chicago Tribune* articles on court monitoring and on domestic assault strangulation.