



Good Deeds

News from the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Chester County, PA 19380

Spring 2004

Office Officials:

Terence Farrell, *Recorder of Deeds*
Ruth C. Haganir, *Deputy Recorder*
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<http://rod.chesco.org/icris/splash.jsp>

Hours:

The office is opened Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. However, same-day document recording stops at 4:00 p.m. on all days. For your convenience, the Record Room opens at 7:30 a.m., weather permitting.

Fees:

For a full list of fees charged for services, see our website: www.chesco.org/recorder
Records on-Line:
<http://rod.chesco.org/icris/splash.jsp>

Reminder:

To save time and facilitate the filing and recording of documents in the Chester County Office of Recorder of Deeds, submitting parties should include two return self-addressed, stamped envelopes with the initial filing. The first envelope will be used to notify the submitting party the document has been received and the second envelope will be used to return the original recorded document. If return envelopes aren't included, the notification process will take longer to complete.

Terence Farrell Elected for Second Term



The voters of Chester County during the November 2003 General Election overwhelmingly elected Terence Farrell for his second term as Recorder of Deeds of Chester County.

"I'm honored to have been given such a big mandate by the voters of the county," Terence said. "I believe the voters recognized all of the important changes that were made in the Recorder of Deeds Office during my first term. The office now better serves the citizens of Chester County."

On Election Day Farrell received 44,677 votes, almost 60 percent of the total votes cast for the Recorder of Deeds Office.

"We've been improving the efficiency of the office step-by-step during the past four years," Terence said. "The office is now seen as one of the most progressive in the Commonwealth."

One of the most important changes in the Recorder of Deeds Office during Farrell's first term was the upgrading of the computer equipment and bringing Internet access to the public.

"When I took office the computer server was offsite and was malfunctioning too often," Terence said. "Also, there was no Internet access and our employees had dumb terminals at their desks. We've turned that around. Now the public has access to our office's records through the Internet and the staff has upgraded equipment with e-mail access from each terminal."

Another accomplishment during Farrell's first term was the handling of double the amount of documents without significantly increasing office expenses while greatly increasing revenue for the County.

When Farrell took over the office in the year 2000, the number of documents filed was 85,000. During 2003 that number increased to 190,000. The net revenue contribution to the County in 1999 was \$2.88 million but last year the Recorder of Deeds Office contributed \$9.11 million.

In 2002 the Recorder of Deeds received national recognition by receiving honorable mention in the category of Exemplary Systems in Government Awards for Enterprise Systems by The Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) for its innovative program to modernize the county's land records system.

"A cooperative effort of a number of county government departments was responsible for the national recognition," said Terence. "Our state-of-the-art system not only speeds up the processing of mortgages, deeds and other land records, but also generates hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in revenues for the county and allows us to save tax dollars by being more efficient."

Terence Farrell Sees Challenges In His Second Term as Recorder of Deeds of Chester County

As Terence Farrell begins his second, four-year term as Recorder of Deeds of Chester County, he has set a challenging goal for his office. Farrell also sees a number of difficult tests in the years ahead.

During his first term, Farrell opened the office's records from recent years to the public through the Internet. "My goal is to make a 40-year search available on-line," he said. "We are working on uploading document images from 1994 and we have a contract to scan microfilm back to 1960."

The records are public and the public should have easy access to the documents, according to Farrell. "Being able to do research on line from the 1960s would be a wonderful tool for the public," Terence said. "Also, the search will be quicker and valuable staff time will be spent

less often on aiding the public with their searches."

One challenge this year will be the planned physical move of the Recorder of Deeds office to Walnut and Chestnut Streets in West Chester from its current location at the Dague Building on Market Street. The Dague Building is being demolished and a new Justice Center is going to be constructed on the current site.

"Our goal is to have the office open each business day during the move," Terence said. "Our move to the location on Chestnut Street is temporary and the Recorder of Deeds Office will eventually be located at the historic courthouse when refurbishing is completed. Realistically, I doubt if the final move will be made during my current term in office."

Terence said in his second term he would stay involved in state and national governmental organizations. Currently he is chairman of the Large County Caucus of the Pennsylvania Recorder of Deeds Association (PRODA) and a member of the International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers, known as IACREOT.

"Our ongoing mission is to record documents as accurately as possible," Terence said. "We've had record numbers of documents being filed in recent years but I believe we have seen the peak. Commercial development is continuing but home refinancing is slowing. We shouldn't see the historic increases in the number of documents being filed."

Access records on-line at:
<http://rod.chesco.org/icris/splash.jsp>

Ruth C. Huganir becomes Deputy Recorder of Deeds



The new Deputy of the Office of the Recorder of Deeds of Chester County is Ruth C. Huganir.

"We are lucky to have someone of Ruth's experience and skill fill this important position," said Terence Farrell, Recorder of Deeds of Chester County. "She has already made a positive impact on the office."

Ruth joins the Recorder of Deeds staff after working at the MacElree Harvey, Ltd., law firm where she was

legal assistant to the senior litigation partner. She has worked for several other law firms during her professional career. Ruth is a graduate of Wesley College of Dover, Delaware, where she studied business administration. She also completed the Paralegal Certification Program at Pennsylvania State University and has completed various continuing legal education programs.

"This is a challenging job," Ruth said. "I've been working with civil law in the last few years and I'm now brushing up on Real Estate Law. I'm fortunate I'm able to rely upon our experienced Solicitor, Edward C. Sweeney, whose expertise is invaluable to our office."

One of her important duties is managing a staff of 24 employees. "The management side of the job does appeal to me," she said. "We have a wonderful staff and that makes this aspect of the job even more rewarding."

As for her personal goals, Ruth said, "I want to continue to assist

Terence and the staff to ensure our records are as accurate as possible, continue holding continuing education classes for our staff, along with becoming more proficient with the software packages we utilize. I plan on continuing to take education courses to keep on top of changes in the profession as well as the law."

Recorder of Deeds' Mission

The Mission of the Recorder of Deeds office is to preserve the integrity, accuracy and continuity of the designated public land records of the County of Chester so that the public and businesses can obtain accurate, timely information as efficiently as possible and thus can secure property ownership and engage in business involving real estate with confidence, now and in the future.