

Salary Of Judges Doesn't Add Up

To the Editor:

Massachusetts judges, and clerks whose salaries are based on a percentage of the judges' salaries, are not being treated fairly by the commonwealth.

Since 1984, the judges have sustained a very real loss in income compared to other employees in the commonwealth.

According to Circular Letter 312 of the Department of Industrial Accidents, the average weekly wage in Massachusetts in 1984 was \$341 per week. In 1988, it was \$444. In 1984, judges were paid \$71,520 and in 1988 they received an adjustment of their pay to

the amount of \$83,708.

According to the DIA Circular Letter 312 published Dec. 1, 2003, the average weekly wage in 2003 was \$884, almost double the average weekly wage in 1988.

If the salaries of the judges (and the clerks' salaries, which are a percentage thereof) were at the same purchasing power as an average Massachusetts employee in 2003, a Superior Court judge would have to be paid, based on the 1984 income of \$71,520, two-and-one-half times what he or she was paid in 1984 — namely \$185,950.

Based on 1988, the average weekly wage

has doubled. Accordingly, the judges' salary of \$83,708 in 1988 would have to double to \$167,416 to equal the same amount the average weekly employee in Massachusetts now enjoys.

As we can see, judges and clerks are vastly under-compensated. The organized bar and the public should pray that the court eliminates this financial injustice to our court personnel. We know that they are called upon to work in many cases in unsafe buildings, under very unpleasant circumstances, in a very stressful and many times unhealthy environment. They deserve no less.

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