

Court Review

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EDITOR'S NOTE

In this issue, we bring you special coverage of one of the most important topics faced by the judicial branch of government: maintaining and enhancing the trust and confidence of the public in the courts. To do justice to this subject, this is the largest issue of *Court Review* ever to hit the streets and, we think, one of the best as well.

We begin with full coverage of the National Conference on Public Trust and Confidence in the Justice System, held May 14-15, 1999 in Washington, D.C. All of the major presentations made at that conference are here, including the remarks of Chief Justice William Rehnquist, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and former New York Governor Mario Cuomo. (The titles placed on their remarks are ours; the rest of the words are theirs.) In addition, we have included the three panel discussions at which, in total, seventeen distinguished scholars, judges and leaders discussed public trust and confidence issues. In an overview at the start of this special issue, I have reviewed the conference itself in some detail, including results of voting among conference participants regarding which problems are the most important to address and which solutions bear the greatest promise.

In addition to coverage of the conference itself, we have also added some other articles and features to provide a more complete treatment of this subject. Our lead article, by David Rottman and Alan Tomkins, provides an in-depth review of the national public opinion survey first released at the conference. They conclude that there are significant warning signs in the data about public perceptions of the judiciary, but that judges can make a difference in how the courts are perceived. In a companion article, Joseph Aistrup and Shala Bannister look at a recent opinion survey in a single state, Kansas, and the relationship between court experience and confidence in the courts.

Our second major article, by Paula Hannaford, reviews the National Action Plan on Lawyer Conduct, adopted by the Conference of Chief Justices in 1999. Hannaford suggests that there is an appropriate and increased role for judges to play in improving the professionalism of lawyers, and that this can have its own positive effect on trust and confidence in the courts.

We also noted that the major addresses at the conference included only judges and politicians. While their comments are, indeed, noteworthy, we have added an essay by Margot Lindsay, an outsider with frequent contact with the courts, about some of her own experiences and the possibilities for greater public interaction with the courts.

Last, we have provided a detailed listing of resources, beginning at page 76, that may be of assistance to you in considering, or in working on areas that may affect, public trust and confidence in the courts. We hope you find this issue of *Court Review* to be of interest. If so, and if you don't already receive *Court Review* as an AJA member or as a subscriber, we hope that you will take a moment either to join AJA or to subscribe to *Court Review*. – SL



Court Review, the quarterly journal of the American Judges Association, invites the submission of unsolicited, original articles, essays and book reviews. *Court Review* seeks to provide practical, useful information to the working judges of the United States. In each issue, we hope to provide information that will be of use to judges in their everyday work, whether in highlighting new procedures or methods of trial, court or case management, providing substantive information regarding an area of law likely to be encountered by many judges, or by providing background information (such as psychology or other social science research) that can be used by judges in their work. Guidelines for the submission of manuscripts for *Court Review* are set forth on page 7. *Court Review* reserves the right to edit, condense or reject material submitted for publication.

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Letters to the Editor, intended for publication, are welcome. Please send such letters to *Court Review's* editor: Judge Steve Leben, 100 North Kansas Avenue, Olathe, Kansas 66061, e-mail address: sleben@ix.netcom.com. Comments and suggestions for the publication, not intended for publication, also are welcome.

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