

Court Review

THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION

Volume 41, Issue 3/4

Fall/Winter 2005

EDITOR'S NOTE

The National Forum on Judicial Independence, convened by the American Judges Association in October 2004 in San Francisco, forms the basis for this special issue of *Court Review*. The Forum, conceived by AJA's then-president Mike McAdam, sought to provide both a review of current threats to judicial independence and of actions judges can take to preserve it. In addition, while judicial independence is often discussed in an abstract way, the Forum emphasized its importance at the trial-court level.

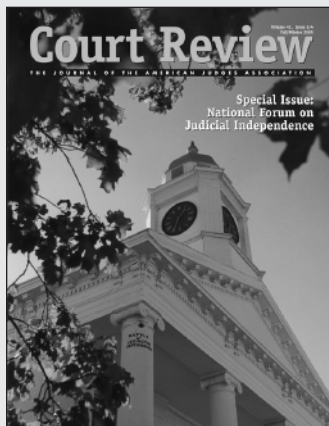
I hope you will take some time to review the Forum sessions, reprinted in this issue. Speakers included one of the nation's top experts on judicial elections, Roy Schotland, a public-opinion expert who advises groups like the ACLE, John Russonello, both the chief justice and the administrative director of the California courts, Ronald M. George and Bill Vickrey, and judges from throughout the United States. At day's end, one of the attending judges said (see page 52), "I'm fired up and I'm excited from today's forum." I think you'll find the discussions inspiring and interesting as well.

There are a great number of people and organizations to whom we express the thanks of the American Judges Association for their help with the Forum:

- The Joyce Foundation, which provided generous financial support. We thank Larry Hansen for his support and confidence in this project.
- All of those involved with the one-hour PBS program, *Inside the Law*, filmed at the conference: Associated Broadcast Consultants, Inc., and its producer, Gary Nenner, associate producer and editor, Melissa B. Butler, and host, Jack Ford.
- The California state courts, which, in addition to the presence of the chief justice and administrative director of the court system, provided invaluable logistic and other support through Bill Vickrey and his staff.
- The American Judges Foundation, which also provided financial support for the Forum.

For our Canadian readers, I recognize that this issue is predominantly about legal issues in the United States. I can tell you that the Canadian AJA members in attendance at the Forum did find the discussions there of interest. To the extent that there are materials you'd like to see in *Court Review* that would be of specific interest to you, though, please let me know.

In addition to the Forum proceedings, we have two other items of interest in this issue. First, we have our standard Resource Page on the last page of the issue, with some brief items of interest to judges. Second, we reprint excerpts from a recent decision of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eight Circuit (see page 68) that may have a great impact on the way judicial election campaigns are conducted in the United States.—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, Canada, and Mexico. 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 79 of this issue. *Court Review* reserves the right to edit, condense, or reject material submitted for publication.

Court Review is in full text on LEXIS and is indexed in the Current Law Index, the Legal Resource Index, and LegalTrac.

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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Photo credit: Mary S. Watkins (maryswatkinsphoto@earthlink.net). The cover photo is of the Lafayette County Courthouse in Lexington, Missouri, the oldest Missouri courthouse that has remained in continuous use as a courthouse. The courthouse was built in 1847 at a cost of \$14,382. During the 1861 Civil War battle of Lexington, the courthouse was fired upon; a cannon ball embedded in one of the columns can be seen in the photo.

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