



*San Diego, California, will be the site for AJA's 2011 annual conference.*

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## President's Message

*Judge Mary Celeste*  
Greetings, Judges.

In this column it is my intention to share with the AJA membership the status of all AJA matters of importance--so here it goes. I recently attended the NCSC [4th Symposium on Court Management](#) and the first Associate Leadership Workshop in Williamsburg, Va. At the leadership workshop there were presidents and other leaders from all of the NCSC-affiliated organizations, except COSCA and CCJ. The leadership day was great--so great that "we" all decided to perpetuate it, and to that end the next one will be hosted by National Association for Court Management (NACM) at their annual conference (luncheon or dinner) in 2011. I offered AJA's 2012 conference in New Orleans. I was able to network and offer the following propositions at this meeting:



- The Conference of Chief Public Information Officers (CCPIO) may join us at our 2012 midyear meeting in Nashville; they have also agreed to send us nominations for our media awards.
- The National Association of State Judicial Educators (NASJE) is considering joining us in New Orleans at our 2012 annual conference and has agreed to release their mail list of all NASJE educators to me.
- The National Association of Probate Judges (NAPJ) may join us somewhere on the East Coast--New York or Maryland, perhaps--in 2014.
- Judges Catherine Schaffer, Gayle Nachtigal, and Richard Kayne are looking at Seattle/Oregon for judge participation at our 2014 annual conference.

We also started discussions for a "leadership" track for those interested in becoming a chief or presiding judge--these programs would be coordinated with NACM, AJA, and Council of Chief Judges of the State Court of Appeals to run as a thread throughout everyone's education programming. I will be in touch about these potential ventures.

We are also working on funding for the California judges at our 2011 San Diego annual conference and Symposium on the Selection and Retention of Judges. I have spoken to the supreme court chiefs in Utah and Texas, who are very excited about the symposium. I am working on the proposal with NCSC and will keep you apprised. We are also working on a request to fund education, which may include judicial scholarships. Linda Caviness (NCSC) and Brian Mackenzie (new AJA Education Committee chair) are working on that proposal.

Finally, I participated in a conference call with Judges Libby Hines, Mike Cicconetti, and Kevin Burke regarding the BJA \$250,000 distance-learning grant and the \$100,000 education grant. Libby is coordinating with three national organizations who are experts in domestic violence and seeking their participation in the development of the scripts necessary for programs on this topic. I met with NCSC principals after the call to discuss our coordinated efforts--all meetings went well. I will keep you informed.

## **50th Annual Conference a Colorado High**

*Judge Elliott Zide*

Just in case you missed AJA's recent conference in Denver at the foothills of the Rockies (October 3-8), you might want to know why the 220 judges who did attend thought it was a Colorado Rocky Mountain High. The goal of the conference was to place AJA at the core of the discussion about who is qualified to be a judge and what qualities and behaviors judges should exhibit to be retained in office. The particular objective of the three days of judicial education was to equip judges with the best possible set of tools for doing their work in ways that inspire public confidence.

The entire conference benefited from a collaborative model that AJA developed and continues to perfect. This year we had support from the following: the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (Denver), the National Judicial College, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the American Judicature Society, the National Center for State Courts, the National Highway Safety Council, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Ohio Probate Judges Association, the Williams Institute, the Family Justice Center Alliance (San Diego), and, especially, the Administrative Office of the Colorado Courts. Colorado Chief Justice Mary Mullarkey helped open the conference and supported it from the beginning by encouraging Colorado judges to attend to earn all of their required annual CLEs.

AJA salutes the enormous contribution of the 57 faculty who put together the 24 individual education experiences. Their expertise, infinite hours of preparation, and teaching skills were offered for the sole purpose of facilitating the learning process, which helps to make us better judges. Some are AJA members, some are Colorado judges, some are lawyers renowned in their areas of practice. All are internationally recognized experts in the areas in which they teach.

During the conference there was ample opportunity for participants and guests to network with each other and with faculty in a truly fabulous venue where even the weather cooperated to make it all that much more memorable. On Sunday evening there was a well-attended reception at the Westin Tabor Center. It was a real high to see old friends and meet new ones. On Monday evening, the American Judges Foundation fund raiser at the fantastic home of Denver magistrate and former Redskin football star John Hoffman and his wife, Dr. Jody Mathie, offered an opportunity to sample elegantly prepared Colorado fare. A highlight of the evening was a sing-along around the Hoffman's grand piano. On Wednesday, evening a number of Colorado

organizations hosted a reception in the atrium of the new Denver County Justice Center. Hon. Mary Celeste (Colorado) was inaugurated as the 51st president at Thursday's black-tie-optional banquet.

So check out the [pictures](#) on the AJA website. If you have pictures, share them with us. If you missed the experience, don't just eat your heart out--join us in San Diego for the 51st conference, September 11-16, 2011.



*Howard Pankratz, Ari Shapiro, and Judge James McKay at the 2010 annual conference.*

## **AJA Presents 1st American Gavel Awards at 2010 Annual Conference**

### **NPR's Ari Shapiro Receives National American Gavel Award**

When AJA established its American Gavel award for Distinguished Reporting about the Judiciary, it had in mind reporters like Ari Shapiro, now White House reporter for National Public Radio. His stories appear on all of NPR's newsmagazines, including *All Things Considered* and *Morning Edition*, where he is also a frequent guest host. Shapiro began covering the White House in 2010 after five years as NPR's justice correspondent, during which time his coverage of Justice Department policies and controversies chronicled one of the most tumultuous periods in the department's history.

Shapiro was promoted to correspondent before age 30. He covered some of the most significant court cases in recent history, including Supreme Court rulings on Guantanamo detainees, the perjury trial of top White House official Lewis "Scooter" Libby, and the fraud trial of Alaska senator Ted Stevens. He has also broken stories about the government's evolving approach to counterterrorism, detention, and interrogation policies. He investigated abuses of Iraqi detainees at Abu Ghraib prison and covered the legal proceedings against American soldiers accused of those abuses.

Before covering the Justice Department, Shapiro was NPR's regional reporter in Atlanta and then in Miami. In 2003 he was an NPR reporting fellow at WBUR in Boston.

Shapiro is a magna cum laude graduate of Yale. He began his journalism career in 2001 in the office of NPR legal affairs correspondent Nina Totenberg. Shapiro was born in Fargo, North Dakota, and grew up in Portland, Oregon. He was presented his award by Judge Brian MacKenzie (Michigan) at the AJA Annual Conference in Denver.

### **Denver Post's Howard Pankratz Receives Regional American Gavel Award**

Judge Larry Bohning of Denver presented the first Regional American Gavel Award to *Denver Post* reporter Howard Pankratz, who began his journalism career working for the *Kansas City*

*Star*, the same paper where Ernest Hemingway started. Among other important assignments, Pankratz covered the numerous legal issues and lawsuits stemming from the Columbine High School massacre and was part of the *Denver Post* team that received the Pulitzer Prize for coverage of the Columbine tragedy.

Following the death of Jonbenet Ramsey in Boulder, Colorado, Pankratz was assigned to work on the John and Patsy Ramsey stories. He also covered the investigation and trials surrounding the Oklahoma City bombings. Earlier this year he received the Keeper of the Flame Award from the Colorado Society of Professional Journalism for extraordinary dedication to ethically responsible and professional journalism.

#### **About the Award**

The American Gavel Award for Distinguished Reporting about the Judiciary was created by AJA in 2009 to recognize the highest standards of reporting about courts and the justice system. The award recognizes legal journalism at its best and highlights the importance of journalism in educating the public about the legal system and the fundamental principles and values upon which that system is based. The national award is given for entries about the justice system that have the widest application, regardless of the area. The regional award is given to entries about the justice system that have more of a local focus.

If you are interested in making a nomination for the award, address questions or applications to:

American Judges Association  
300 Newport Avenue  
Williamsburg, VA 23185-4147  
(757) 259-1841 - phone  
(757) 259-1520 - fax  
[aja@ncsc.dni.us](mailto:aja@ncsc.dni.us)

#### **AJA Elects Officers for 2010-11**

The American Judges Association elected new officers at its 2010 annual conference in Denver, October 3-8.

*President:* Judge Mary Celeste, Colorado

*President-elect:* Judge Kevin S. Burke, Minnesota

*Vice President:* Judge Toni Manning Higginbotham, Louisiana

*Secretary:* Judge Elliott Zide, Massachusetts

Judge James McKay (Louisiana) is *immediate past president*. Judge Harold Froehlich (Wisconsin) still serves as *treasurer*.



### **Virginia Law Student Wins 1st Place in AJA Essay Contest**

George B. Milam, a graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law, won AJA's 2010 Law Student Essay competition. The title of his winning entry was "Confronting State Experimentation in the Wake of *Melendez-Diaz*." Judge James McKay (Louisiana) is shown above presenting the first-place-award plaque, and check for \$3,000, to Mr. Milam.

Second prize (\$1,500) went to Sarah Martin of the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law for her essay "In Search of a New Rationale: The Effects of *Melendez-Diaz* on the Admission of Lab Results." Justin Fine of the University of Baltimore School of Law received third prize (\$1,000) for "The Procedural Sweet Spot Between the Confrontation Clause and the Administration of Justice Regarding Forensic Analyst Reports."

AJA congratulates all three winners of the Law Student Essay Competition.

### **AJA Members in the News**

#### **AJA President-elect Quoted on NPR**

Judge Kevin Burke of Minnesota was featured in a story on National Public Radio's *Morning Edition* about the effect of the increasing number of foreclosures on the courts (see Wendy Kaufman, "[Tainted Foreclosures Concern State Judges](#)," October 25, 2010). Judge Burke discusses the strain that foreclosure cases place on judges--particularly when they may have sympathy for defendants and there is "legally little [they] can do."

#### **In Memoriam: Judge Paul Stewart Hickman and Judge Beverly Jean Hayes-Sipes**

AJA extends condolences to the families of Paul Stewart Hickman, who died in Reno, Nevada, in October at age 66, and Judge Beverly Jean Hayes-Sipes, who died in Detroit in November at age 68.

Judge Hickman took a rather circuitous route to the bench. He taught piano at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas for four years and worked for Western Union while pursuing a degree at the University of Nevada, Reno to prepare for teaching music in public school. A car accident left him partially paralyzed and confined to a wheelchair in October 1978. He earned a law degree at McGeorge School of Law, clerked for Nevada Supreme Court Justice Charles Springer, and joined the Reno City Attorney's staff in 1986. In 1991 Judge Hickman was appointed to the Reno Municipal Court bench, a position he held until his death.

Judge Hayes-Sipes was a member of the AJA Board of Governors, District 10. After receiving her undergraduate and law degrees from Wayne State University and the Detroit College of Law

at Michigan State University, she taught mathematics at both the high-school and college levels. Her legal career began in 1981 in Springfield, Massachusetts, where she became the first African-American assistant district attorney for Hampden County. She also served as an assistant attorney general and as general counsel for the Massachusetts Health Department before returning to Detroit, where she was elected to the 36th District Court bench in 2002.

## **National Study Focuses on Courts' Use of, Concerns with Social Media**

More than a third of state judges and magistrates use social media, such as Facebook, in their personal or professional lives, according to the first-ever nationwide survey on "new media" and the courts. This survey was conducted by the [Conference of Court Public Information Officers](#) with the assistance of the National Center for State Courts and the E. W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University (see "[New Media and the Courts: The Current Status and a Look at the Future](#)").

Although a large number of judges and magistrates use social media, nearly one half of the judges responding to the survey believed that such use can compromise judicial ethics. In addition, very few courts have established any sort of social-media presence. That being said, the report predicts that more courts will develop "official presences" on sites such as Facebook and Twitter in the future.

In a related story, the [Florida Supreme Court](#) has required judges to warn jurors not to use electronic devices, such as computers and cell phones, after they take their juror's oath.

## **NCSC Surveys Use of Videoconferencing in Courts**

The National Center for State Courts, under a grant from the State Justice Institute, conducted a [survey of how courts use videoconferencing](#). Topics included the source of funding for videoconferencing, obstacles to its use, types of proceedings, and statutes.

NCSC received responses from 164 jurisdictions. Seven of the responding courts had been using videoconferencing for hearings and other proceedings for more than 20 years. The three main benefits of videoconferencing, according to the respondents, were savings in time, staff, and fuel.

## **NCSC Releases New Publications**

### ***Retrospective of Courthouse Design 2001-2010***

NCSC's [Retrospective of Courthouse Design](#) was published in November 2010. This is the only publication dedicated exclusively to courthouse architecture and chronicles major courthouse design trends between 2001 and 2010.

The publication serves both the judiciary and design community as a comprehensive reference for future development efforts and illustrates the architectural innovations and solutions sought to address the evolving judicial work environment. The book features architectural designs from various court jurisdictions, including federal, state, and local courts.

### ***Examining the Work of State Courts: An Analysis of 2008 State Court Caseloads***

NCSC's [Court Statistics Project](#) (CSP) examines nationwide court activity from the 2008 (the latest year for which complete data are available) in this year's edition of *Examining the Work of State Courts*. Here are a few findings:

Trial courts received 106 million case filings in 2008-the most ever in the project's 35-year history.

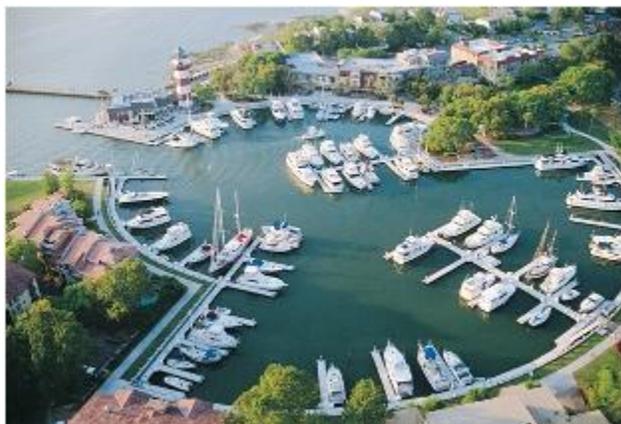
Over 21 million criminal cases were reported in 2008.

Juvenile caseloads make up the smallest share of all incoming cases.

CSP also presented three Reporting Excellence Awards-to the Tennessee appellate courts, the Arizona limited-jurisdiction trial courts, and the Minnesota State Court Administrator's. These awards recognize improvement in the reporting of civil- and criminal-court data.

### ***Survey of Judicial Salaries (Vol. 35, No. 2)***

The average annual increase in the salaries of judges nationwide was a scant .47 percent, according to the latest [\*Survey of Judicial Salaries\*](#). The *Survey*, which is published by NCSC twice each year, reflects judicial salaries as of July 1, 2010.



*AJA's 2011 midyear meeting will be held on Hilton Head Island, S.C.  
Photo courtesy of the Hilton Head Island Visitor and Convention Bureau.*

## **AJA Future Conferences**

**2011 Midyear Meeting:** Westin Hilton Head Island, Hilton Head, South Carolina, April 14-16  
\$209 single/double

**2011 Annual Conference:** Westin Gaslamp, San Diego, California, September 11-16  
\$199 single/double

**2012 Midyear Meeting:** Doubletree Hotel, Nashville, Tennessee, May 17-19  
\$129 single/double

**2012 Annual Conference:** New Orleans, Louisiana  
Dates and hotel to be determined

**2013 Annual Conference:** The Fairmont Orchid, Kohala Coast, Hawaii, September 22-27  
\$219 single/double

## **American Judges Association**

*"The Voice of the Judiciary"*

300 Newport Avenue  
Williamsburg, VA 23185-4147  
(757) 259-1841

*President*

*Editors*

Judge Mary Celeste  
Denver County court  
1437 Bannock Street  
Denver, CO 80202

*President-elect*  
Judge Kevin S. Burke  
Minneapolis, MN

Edward L. Schumann  
California

Judge Mike High  
Nebraska

*Managing Editor*  
Charles Campbell  
National Center for State Courts