

# AJA BENCHMARK

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## AJA Enjoys Canadian Hospitality at Annual Educational Conference

### Bonjour chers amis!

The American Judges Association Annual Educational Conference was held in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, September 14–19, 2003. The conference offered both an educational experience and an opportunity to experience French culture, language, cuisine, and museums, which make this city unique in North America.

### Educational Sessions

Judge Francis Halligan, president of AJA, called the conference to order. Mr. Justice Charles Gonthier, of the Supreme Court of Canada, introduced the keynote speaker, the Honorable Chief Justice of the Court of Appeal of Quebec, Mr. Michel Robert, who delivered the Honorable Tom C. Clark lecture. The main theme of his presentation was the importance of judicial independence and impartiality as experienced by Canadian judges. His lecture was particularly enlightening to the American judges present, as he discussed the problem in the context of Canadian case law that has developed since Canada adopted the equivalent of the American Bill of Rights in 1982.

The conference offered quite a variety of educational sessions. The sessions featured such topics as Developing



*Judge Francis X. Halligan swears in AJA's new president, Judge Mike McAdam.*

Rights for North American Justice; Stress in the Courtroom; Domestic Violence (including firearms issues and unified family courts); Innovative Sentencing Ideas for Non-"Drug Court" Judges; Judicial Impartiality; the Judge's Role in Reducing the Incidence of Impaired Driving; Therapeutic Jurisprudence; Native American-Aboriginal Law and Its

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## AJA Member to Receive Rehnquist Award

**D**istrict Court Judge Kevin S. Burke (Hennepin County, Minn.) will receive the National Center for State Courts' (NCSC's) 2003 William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence. This award is presented annually to a state court judge who exemplifies the highest level of judicial excellence, integrity, fairness, and professional ethics.

"I don't know of a more innovative trial judge in America, or one who has had a greater national impact," said Roger K. Warren, NCSC's president. "Judge Burke has traveled extensively around the United States—and overseas—to share successful approaches with other judges. Judge Burke is indefatigable in the pursuit of judicial reform."

Judge Burke is credited for his numerous achievements and innovative leadership style during his 20 years on the

bench. He was instrumental in establishing Minnesota's public defender system, and he worked effectively to improve judges' courtroom communications skills, which has bolstered public trust and confidence in the courts. He served on NCSC's Board of Directors and received its 2002 Distinguished Service Award.



Chief Justice William Rehnquist will present the award to Judge Burke at a ceremony in the Great Hall of the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., on November 20, 2003. 