

# Web Site Helps Courts and Self-Represented Litigants

**M**ore and more citizens are choosing to represent themselves in court, and courts often find themselves straining to serve these usually inexperienced litigants. Where can litigants and courts turn for help in pursuing these cases and in guaranteeing an open justice system for all? Both can turn online to [www.selfhelpsupport.org](http://www.selfhelpsupport.org), which is a part of Pro Bono Net.

The mission of [selfhelpsupport.org](http://selfhelpsupport.org) is “to support practitioners in the courts, community, and legal profession through the dissemination of relevant information on self-help and legal aid programs.” The Web site offers an extensive online library of useful resources for courts and support organizations to use in building and improving programs for self-represented litigants.

Topics include:

- Program Development
- Program Administration
- Ethics
- Technology

Courts can also contribute resources to the site.

Participating organizations in [selfhelpsupport.org](http://selfhelpsupport.org) are the American Judicature Society, Legal Services Corporation, National Center for State Courts, Pro Bono Net, State Justice Institute (who provided the funding for the site), and Zorza Associates. Membership in [selfhelpsupport.org](http://selfhelpsupport.org) is free. 

## AJS Opens Nominations for Opperman Award

**T**he American Judicature Society (AJS) is seeking nominations for the first annual *Dwight D. Opperman Award*. This award will be presented to a state judge of a trial or appellate court who has had a career of distinguished judicial service. Any interested person or organization may submit a nomination.

The *Opperman Award* will be given to a qualified judge whose career is characterized by:

- Decisions that, through their wisdom, humanity, and commitment to the rule of law make clear that bench, bar, and community alike would willingly entrust that judge with the most complex cases of the most far-reaching importance.
- Writings, including opinions, lectures, or other publications, that reveal scholarship and dedication to the improvement of the judicial process.

- Activities that have helped to improve the administration of justice, advance the rule of law, reinforce collegial ties within the judicial branch, or strengthen civic ties within local, national, or international communities.

Each nomination should include a statement in support of the nomination not to exceed five pages in length, and all available contact information for the nominator and nominee. Nominations should be post-marked by **February 29, 2004**, and addressed to the American Judicature Society, Attention: Opperman Selection Panel, 2700 University Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50311. 

### AJA and CTC8, *continued*

The following morning, I was again at the main podium of the Kansas City Convention Center’s Music Hall introducing the final day’s keynote speaker, Peter Bensinger, who has been called “the most wired lawyer in America.” Mr. Bensinger, to my chagrin, was able to use a digital picture he took of me on the stage to demonstrate the ease of using available technologies in the courtroom.

I believe that AJA benefited greatly from its involvement with CTC8. Judges and other court professionals from the United States and around the world

now know about our organization. As a result of our exposure at CTC8, several vendors have indicated a strong interest in participating in the AJA’s vendor show in San Francisco next fall. These are good results and the product of the hard work of a corps of four Kansas City lawyers: Lisa Gentleman, Andrea Welch, Rebecca Wood, and Molly Williams (wife of Judge John B. Williams). The success of the reception was entirely due to their voluntary efforts. AJA owes them a big “Thank you” for a job well done. 