

AJA BENCHMARK

A Publication of the American Judges Association • Vol. 27, No. 1 • Spring 2004

AJA Holds Midyear Meeting in Savannah

AJA President Michael R. McAdam

The American Judges Association met in Savannah, Georgia, at the Hyatt Regency for its midyear meeting from January 31 to February 3, 2004. This was an important meeting because it marked the first joint meeting between AJA and the National Association for Court Management (NACM).

NACM provided an extensive and valuable education program centered on the theme of "Best Practices in Overcoming Unequal Treatment in the Justice System." The quality and content of the program was impressive. Even more impressive was the warmth and friendliness of the court administrators, clerks, and judges in their interaction with each other. President Larry Myers of NACM and I had discussed the need for such interaction when planning the meeting, and we wondered how it would pan out. We needn't have worried. It was important for the clerks to mingle with judges in a casual setting outside the courthouse, and it was good for the

judges to spend some time learning and discussing the critical issues that face the judicial system in general and court management in particular.

The conference got off to a great start with a keynote address by the Honorable Herbert Phipps of the Georgia Court of Appeals: "Unequal Treatment in the Justice System: Fact or Fiction?" Judge Phipps's speech was delivered with wisdom and passion and made it crystal clear that our mission to provide equal justice under law remains unaccomplished despite our progress toward that goal. Other educational sessions included ways to overcome poverty barriers to equal treatment, service for self-represented defendants, a "Courtroom 21" demonstration, and a discussion of the "wired" courthouse.

The social highlights of the meeting included a tremendous Super Bowl Party hosted by NACM, where

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The American Judges Association Invites You to Its 44th Annual Educational Conference October 24-29, 2004 • San Francisco Grand Hyatt on Union Square

Watch your mail for the registration brochure, which will provide complete information on the education sessions, the facilities and accommodations of the beautiful Grand Hyatt, the planned optional tours to see and experience the lovely and intriguing Bay Area, and the other activities that await you in San Francisco. The brochure also will be available in the "Members Only" section of the AJA Web site. Check out <http://aja.ncsc.dni.us> and join us for an outstanding conference this fall. Discount registration fees are available until July 15.

