

# AJA BENCHMARK

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## AJA Meets in San Francisco

**T**he 44th annual educational conference of the American Judges Association was held October 24 to 29 at the Grand Hyatt in San Francisco. The conference host, Judge Tam Nomoto Schumann of the Orange County Superior Court in Fullerton, California, organized many activities that enabled all participants to enjoy the conference and the amenities of San Francisco. Her efforts were appreciated by all who attended.

### Judicial Independence Highlights Educational Program

President Mike McAdam called the conference to order, and Chief Justice Ronald George of the California Supreme Court delivered the keynote address. Participants enjoyed an excellent educational program, which featured a variety of speakers on diverse topics, including "A Prosecutor's Story of Justice in the Medgar Evers Case," "Problem-Solving Courts: Principles and Methods," and a "Judicial Leadership Symposium."

One highlight was the National Forum on Judicial Independence, which gave participants a chance to discuss the issues raised by problem-solving courts, judicial elections, and court accountability, as well as other topics (see page 2).

Another highlight of the educational program was Professor Charles Whitebread's ever-popular annual lecture on "Recent Decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court," which is always entertaining and informative. His book on recent decisions of the Supreme Court was made available to attendees through a generous grant from the American Judges Foundation.



*Gayle Nachtigal is sworn in as AJA's new president.*

### AJA/AJF Elect New Officers

The annual AJA conference affords the members the opportunity to conduct business, in addition to the wonderful education sessions. Members at the general assembly elected these new officers for 2004-05:

- Gayle Nachtigal, Hillsboro, Oregon—president
- Michael Cicconetti, Painesville, Ohio—president-elect
- Steve Leben, Olathe, Kansas—vice president



*Photo by AJA member Jeff Rosinek*

- Eileen Olds, Chesapeake, Virginia—secretary
- Michael McAdam, Kansas City, Missouri, is AJA's immediate past president, and Harold V. Froehlich, Appleton, Wisconsin, remains as treasurer. The House of Delegates and Board of Governors met as well.

AJA operates through many committees dedicated to specific tasks that result in great benefit to the judicial profession (see committee list, page 4). Members are encouraged to become active by contacting AJA and joining a committee. More information may be obtained *continued on page five*

### Winners of AJA's Annual Law Student Essay Competition

**1st Place (\$3,000):** Elizabeth Chorvat, University of Virginia Law School, for "Judge Level and the Post-Texaco Revolution: The Judicial Enforcement of Business Norms."

**2nd Place (\$1,500):** Moira Brennan, California Western School of Law, for "Out of the Problem, Into the Solution: How Juvenile Multisystem Services and Mental Health Courts Are Decreasing Delinquency While Enhancing Social Welfare, Saving Lives and Saving Money."

**3rd Place (\$1,000):** Keith Becker, Harvard Law School, for "A Defense of Rules of Evidentiary Admissibility in Civil Non-jury Trials."