

# President's Column

Eileen Olds

I can hardly believe that I am halfway through my term as your president. Time really does fly when you're having fun! Fun I have had, but more importantly, I have had the opportunity to represent this prestigious, premier organization of judges in many different venues. As an organization, we are addressing critical issues facing our judiciary. With our initiatives, such as our "Tell It to the Judge" project, we are also examining those issues relevant to the public that we serve. Through it all, I have been proud to witness the stature that AJA enjoys all over the country.

Just recently, I had the fascinating opportunity to participate in a roundtable discussion in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Center for Court Innovation regarding the future of problem-solving courts. Problem-solving courts take many forms: drug courts, mental-health courts, prostitution courts, housing courts, and domestic-violence courts, to name a few. We took a critical look at the successes as well as the challenges encountered in these specialized courts. At the forefront was the discussion of whether statewide coordination should be implemented. That is perhaps something we all should deliberate about as the need for such courts continues to grow. As individual judges, we are all problem-solvers. Our inclusion as a participant is but one example of how AJA benefits from its recognition as an organization "of judges, for judges, by judges." When and where significant discussions are being held, **we are at the table.**

As the "Voice of the Judiciary," we are not only speaking, but we are being heard. At every turn, newspapers, respected legal journals, and scholarly publications seek our input. Other judicial organizations are joining forces with us to make our judicial system all that it should be. Whether it is convening with other judicial officers at their meetings and conferences, or answering calls and emails on topics of concern to others, collaboration is necessary. The old adage, "It's not just what you know, but who you know," is applicable to the relationships we have been afforded.

Because of our rich history, we are fortunate to have the

credibility to call on the expertise and assistance of others. I am convinced that collaborative efforts are a necessary hallmark of this organization. Collective resources and information sharing of trends and best practices—as they emerge—keep us on the cutting edge. All of us should be grateful for the partnerships we enjoy with such organizations as Justice at Stake, the National Judicial College, the National Association of Women Judges, the National Bar Judicial Council, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the Conference of Chief Judges, the Conference of State Court Administrators, the National Association for Court Management, and for the immeasurable assistance given by the National Center for State Courts, among others.



In closing, let me take this opportunity to welcome some of you in advance, and to invite others of you to our 2008 annual education conference. This is where much of the collaboration ignites. It is at our meetings that collegiality is also at work. Our well planned and well executed annual meetings allow members, their families, and guests to become familiar with those who they otherwise would never meet. The conference allows for an exchange of ideas and as a foundation for life-long affiliations: **Collaboration and Collegiality.** Our meetings are a distinct opportunity to renew old friendships and to make new ones. They allow each of us to reach out to other judges to discuss common concerns; or to just catch up on what is going on in each other's lives. Even with our differences, we are united in our common bond—our profession. I know that there are those of us, like me, who have not missed an annual conference once we started. We were hooked from the start. For those of you who have put it off, give it a try. Mark your calendars!! Maui, Hawaii, awaits you. What better time or location to get acquainted with what AJA has to offer? You won't want to miss it! I promise you will leave well-educated, revived, and renewed to forge ahead in this most honorable profession. I look forward to seeing you.