

President's Column

Mary Celeste

This issue of *Court Review* contains the AJA White Paper *The Debate over the Selection and Retention of Judges: How Judges Can Ride the Wave*, and the next issue is scheduled to have an article by Professor Roy Schotland discussing the recent 2010 judicial elections. The information contained in these two articles should give judges information that could assist in retaining their employment.

Aside from being a full-blown politician, being a judge is probably one of the few jobs where even with exemplary performance you could be ousted for reasons unrelated to your performance. Politics, money, and data all play a role in the retention or election of a judge. With regards to politics, one need not look any further than what happened in this past election cycle to the Iowa State Supreme Court justices or the New Jersey governor's announcement that he will be withholding appointments to the state supreme court of known Democrats. With regards to money, as an elected judge you may face a rival candidate who could be a subpar individual but have an enormous war chest. And with regards to data, as a merit judge you may face a "do not retain" by a judicial performance commission that may be based upon statistically insignificant data collection.

So how do judges ward off these potential challenges and keep their jobs? I recommend a continued membership in the AJA for starters. There is not only power in numbers, but a myriad of available resources through the AJA. The AJA is a member organization of the National Center for State Courts, along with 25 other national court-related organizations, including the Conference of Chief Justices, the Conference of

State Court Administrators, the National Association for Court Management, and the National Association of State Judicial Educators. The AJA publishes White Papers and the *Court Review* to keep judges abreast of pertinent issues facing them; responds as the Voice of the Judiciary® to national media concerns and questions related to judges and the courts; comments on state proposals to modify laws affecting the judiciary; has an informative website; holds well-renowned educational conferences; and is a member of "Justice at Stake," an organization that serves as a "watchdog" of all initiatives across the country that may affect the courts and the judiciary.



If knowledge is power, with approximately 2,000 members from mostly the United States and some from Canada, there is not a bigger and better knowledgeable judicial organization in North America than the AJA on matters related to the judiciary. So if you are a member, stay and continue to renew; if you are not a member or your membership has lapsed, join or rejoin. Not only

will you learn how to keep your job, by attending the AJA conferences you will strengthen your knowledge about substantive law while simultaneously meeting members from every region of the United States and Canada at every level. Get involved as there are committees on almost every pertinent judicial subject matter, including domestic violence, education, access to justice, and the newly developing criminal and juvenile justice committee. I hope to see you at one of our upcoming conferences (see below and the back cover), and I hope that you enjoy this issue of *Court Review*.

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION FUTURE CONFERENCES

2011 Midyear Meeting
Hilton Head, South Carolina
Westin Hilton Head Island
April 14-16
\$209 single/double

2011 Annual Conference
San Diego, California
Westin Gaslamp
September 11-16
\$199 single/double

2012 Midyear Meeting
Nashville, Tennessee
Doubletree Hotel
May 17-19
\$129 single/double

2012 Annual Conference
New Orleans, Louisiana
Dates and hotel to be determined

2013 Annual Conference
Kohala Coast, Hawaii
The Fairmont Orchid
September 22-27
\$219 single/double