

President's Column

Elliott Zide

It has been my privilege to represent the American Judges Association at a great many meetings and conferences over the past year. Our organization is widely respected.

The organization and its leadership are acknowledged as an effective “Voice of the Judiciary®,” for “Making Better Judges®,” for high-quality conferences, for excellent judicial-education programs, and for the developing AJA brand in the area of procedural fairness. At our midyear meeting in May, the new Arizona Chief Justice, Scott Bales, particularly commented on the value of *Court Review*, our quarterly journal, as a scholarly yet practical tool for judges at all levels to learn more about cutting-edge topics such as those in this edition.

During the many conversations I've had with judicial leaders, I've often heard the statement, “We need to collaborate.” AJA is establishing itself as an important collaborator in the constellation of organizations seeking to improve access to fair and impartial justice for all.

AJA is now collaborating with state organizations in the United States, provincial court organizations in Canada, and volunteer organizations on a number of criminal- and civil-justice reforms. Here are some examples. In October, I represented AJA at the National Association of Drug Court Professionals' two-day Doing Justice Executive Summit on criminal sentencing and pretrial reform. That led to the development of an important resolution now adopted by CCJ/COSA and AJA calling for all criminal-justice reform efforts to be explicitly informed by evidence-based practices. The AJA has a designated place on the Pretrial Justice Working Group, a standing, multi-disciplinary working group of national leaders in criminal justice, which works on issues of pretrial justice reform. In June, I participated in the Working Group's Pretrial Justice Reform Forum to foster state-court leadership on evidence-based pre-

trial practices. Attendees included representatives from the states of Arizona, Wisconsin, Idaho, and Indiana. The AJA boasts active membership in each of those states.

Next year, we look forward to a collaborative conference on “Justice for All” with the State of Washington's Administrative Office of the Courts and the National Association of State Judicial Educators to be held in Seattle on October 4-8, 2015. The AJA is collaborating with the National Association of Women Judges' award-winning Informed Voter Project. And our new

collaboration with the Conference of Chief Justices' Judicial Family Institute will bring a wide variety of resources that will support the security, mental, physical, and financial wellness of AJA members and their families.

Networking over the past year has informed me that all of our peer organizations are finding it challenging to attract new and younger members. It is key to the vitality of organizations like

AJA that new and younger members be added to our active rosters. It's equally important that new and younger judges appreciate the benefit of belonging to organizations like AJA, so we need to learn how to make a better case for that proposition.

Our members are nationally respected for work they do in their own states. The AJA is pleased to honor many at our annual meetings. This year AJA is very proud to congratulate Past President Steve Leben, a judge on the Kansas Court of Appeals and the coeditor of *Court Review*, on receiving this year's William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence. That award will be presented to him by Chief Justice of the United States John H. Roberts Jr. at a dinner at the United States Supreme Court on November 20.

I've loved my year as your president, and I look forward to our annual conference in Las Vegas, October 5-10, 2014. Please come too.

