

## The Rundown

Hello,

This is the second release of The Rundown, which hopefully will be a series of broadcasts aimed at explaining some of what the American Judges Association, and I as your president, do on behalf of the members of the association.

Three weeks ago, I had occasion to represent the American Judges Association at the midyear conference of the National Association of Court Managers (NACM). NACM's conference was held just outside of Austin Texas. The opening keynote presentation entitled "The Foundation of Public Trust and Confidence" was given by Judge John Cleland from Pennsylvania. Judge Cleland spoke about how the Pennsylvania judiciary was impacted by the public corruption charges against judges of the Philadelphia juvenile court bench. Beyond the harm done to the children, he asserted that these judges had damaged the reputation of the judiciary more generally. At its core this presentation was about the individual need to honor the position that a judge holds and by so doing protect the judiciary as a whole. This is an idea that each of us should think about every day before we take the bench.

As each of you know the burdens placed upon the judiciary occur nowhere else in American society. No other governmental officials are subject to the additional scrutiny that comes with being a judge. In part, this is true because the power given to the judiciary is often so personal. Legislators and executives in the main deal with the general public, but judges, particularly trial judges, deal with individuals. The effect of the judge's decision on an individual is often enormous and that type of power requires a different form of scrutiny.

As part of that burden a judge is expected to make their decision alone, without consulting with others or seeking outside advice. If a judge does discuss a pending case, it can result in negative publicity and even sanctions. This compounds the normal stress of our job, by increasing the isolation that a judge feels.

In that regard, the American Judges Association's midyear conference, which will be held April 23 through the 25th in Fort Myers Florida, will look at the problem of judicial stress as it affects both the judge and their family. You might want to go to our website, and take a look at the

conference and perhaps consider joining your colleagues in Florida and learning how you can better combat that sense of isolation and stress.



One of the ways, of course, to combat stress is to have a little fun. My wife Karen and I took an opportunity to have some fun just before the start of the NACM conference. We rented a car and drove to Lockhart, which calls itself the barbecue capital of Texas. After looking at several of the barbecue places we picked Smitty's. Smitty's building had all the glamour of old industrial warehouse, but their barbecue was amazing.

I personally believe that conferences should be strong in their educational component, but you should also have a little fun. If you decide to come to the American Judges Association's midyear conference you will learn how better to cope with judicial stress and you might lose some of that stress by having a little fun on the

beach too.

That is it for now. I hope to write again soon. Thanks and be well. Brian