

The Rundown

Hello,

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

Recently I had the opportunity to attend the mid-year meeting of the Conference of Chief Justices which was held in San Antonio, Texas. The Conference is made up of the all of the State Chief Justices from around the US, and the Chief Justices of the various territories including Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands. By the way, the Chief Justices of Guam and the Virgin Islands are both great people, and they said to invite all of you to come visit.

Actually, all of the Justices I met were hard working and friendly and while I could not attend every session, their conference was filled with things that might interest you. Let me simply mention two of them. The Amicus Review Team met to discuss the conference's amicus brief filled in the case of Yulee v. the Florida Bar Association. The plaintiff in Yulee, as many of you know, sued to overturn the ban on direct judicial fundraising. The Justices on the committee discussed their brief in support of the Florida ban and possible outcomes including how the ethics rules in all of the states that have elections would have to be changed if the plaintiff prevails. Those of you in states with judicial elections might want to take a moment to read the transcript of the Supreme Court argument:

http://www.supremecourt.gov/oral_arguments/argument_transcripts/13-1499_bq7c.pdf

William C. Hubbard, the President of the American Bar Association was the keynote speaker for the judicial luncheon. He spoke about the problem of over-incarceration, noting that while the

United States has only five percent of the world's population it has twenty-five percent of the world's prisoners. He pointed out that sentencing reform was one of the few places where the ACLU and the Heritage Foundation are in agreement. He argued there is a need to reform the way we sentence defendants. His speech received a warm reception from the Justices. I had a chance to speak with him later at a social event and found him to be quite the southern gentleman.



On the evening of the second day of the conference we attended a special dinner event at the Mission San Jose, known as the "Queen of Missions". This Mission is the largest in the United States, and was fully restored by the WPA in the 1930's. As you can see from the picture, it was a wonderful place for a meal and conversation.

Finally, my wife and I had a chance to enjoy the Riverwalk and to visit the Alamo. There I learned, to my everlasting disappointment, that John Wayne's movie had it wrong. If you too want to be disappointed, here is a link telling the actually story of the Alamo: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2026338/Davy-Crocketts-defiant-stand-Alamo-lasted-just-20-minutes-claim-historians.html>

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

