

AJA BENCHMARK

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AJA Enjoys Canadian Hospitality at Annual Educational Conference

Bonjour chers amis!

The American Judges Association Annual Educational Conference was held in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, September 14–19, 2003. The conference offered both an educational experience and an opportunity to experience French culture, language, cuisine, and museums, which make this city unique in North America.

Educational Sessions

Judge Francis Halligan, president of AJA, called the conference to order. Mr. Justice Charles Gonthier, of the Supreme Court of Canada, introduced the keynote speaker, the Honorable Chief Justice of the Court of Appeal of Quebec, Mr. Michel Robert, who delivered the Honorable Tom C. Clark lecture. The main theme of his presentation was the importance of judicial independence and impartiality as experienced by Canadian judges. His lecture was particularly enlightening to the American judges present, as he discussed the problem in the context of Canadian case law that has developed since Canada adopted the equivalent of the American Bill of Rights in 1982.

The conference offered quite a variety of educational sessions. The sessions featured such topics as Developing



Judge Francis X. Halligan swears in AJA's new president, Judge Mike McAdam.

Rights for North American Justice; Stress in the Courtroom; Domestic Violence (including firearms issues and unified family courts); Innovative Sentencing Ideas for Non-“Drug Court” Judges; Judicial Impartiality; the Judge’s Role in Reducing the Incidence of Impaired Driving; Therapeutic Jurisprudence; Native American-Aboriginal Law and Its

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AJA Member to Receive Rehnquist Award


District Court Judge Kevin S. Burke (Hennepin County, Minn.) will receive the National Center for State Courts’ (NCSC’s) 2003 William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence. This award is presented annually to a state court judge who exemplifies the highest level of judicial excellence, integrity, fairness, and professional ethics.

“I don’t know of a more innovative trial judge in America, or one who has had a greater national impact,” said Roger K. Warren, NCSC’s president. “Judge Burke has traveled extensively around the United States—and overseas—to share successful approaches with other judges. Judge Burke is indefatigable in the pursuit of judicial reform.”

Judge Burke is credited for his numerous achievements and innovative leadership style during his 20 years on the

bench. He was instrumental in establishing Minnesota’s public defender system, and he worked effectively to improve judges’ courtroom communications skills, which has bolstered public trust and confidence in the courts. He served on NCSC’s Board of Directors and received its 2002 Distinguished Service Award.



Chief Justice William Rehnquist will present the award to Judge Burke at a ceremony in the Great Hall of the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., on November 20, 2003. 

Relation to U.S. State and Canadian Provincial Law; and the always popular annual lecture by Professor Charles H. Whitebread II on Recent Decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court. Each session provided ample and enlightening exchanges between the participants.

AJA/AJF Business Meetings

The conference featured opportunities for the American Judges Foundation members to meet, as well. The foundation awarded scholarships to law students whose prize-winning essays will be featured in upcoming issues of *Court Review*. The foundation raised over \$3,000 in its annual silent auction to further its goals of providing scholarships and underwriting the cost of Professor Whitebread's book, which was provided to each AJA member who attended the conference.

The AJA General Assembly and Board of Governors met as well to conduct the business of the association. Judge Halligan, who served AJA with distinction as president during the preceding year, relinquished his role to Judge Mike McAdam. Other officers elected were Judge Gayle Nachtigal, president-elect; Judge Mike Cicconetti, vice president; Judge Steve Leben, secretary; and Judge Harold Froehlich, treasurer. (Note: AJA combined the first and second vice president positions into one vice president last year, so Judge Leben is serving his second year as secretary.)


The AJA continues to thrive, and President McAdam made it clear that his goal is to promote AJA to our colleagues to continue the growth of this organization that offers so much for its members.

Social Events

Despite the heavy agenda of educational topics, there were opportunities to enjoy the amenities of

Montreal. AJA members were treated to a dinner cruise, which incorporated an evening of mystery theatre,

on the St. Lawrence River. Additionally, at the installation banquet, President Mike McAdam expressed his appreciation for a gala affair that all enjoyed.

We appreciate all the hospitality extended to us by Judge Morton Minc and his community of Montreal. We extend a hearty *Merci!* We look forward to reconvening January 30–February 4, 2004, for the midyear meeting in Savannah, Georgia, at the Hyatt Savannah. We hope you will attend. 



Billy Cypress, chief appellate officer and chairman of the Miccosukee Nation, addresses AJA.



A police officer confronts some "suspicious characters" during the mystery theatre dinner cruise.



Above: Judge Morton Minc, our conference host, with Justice Rosalie Abella of the Ontario Court of Appeal. Left: Judge Steve Leben discusses therapeutic jurisprudence.

How Are Courts Using STOP Grants?

Court-based programs are entitled to 5 percent of the monies awarded to states as STOP (Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors) Grants under the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). These grants were intended to develop and strengthen the justice system's response to violence against women and enhance services for victims.

The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) has conducted several projects to evaluate how courts are using the funds, provide courts with comparative information, and recommend enhancements to the STOP program. In May 2002 Madelynn Herman of NCSC's Knowledge and Information Services used NCSC's Court2Court listserv and the Conference of State Court Administrators' listserv to survey the courts about their use of STOP funds. The results can be found online at http://www.ncsconline.org/WC/Publications/KIS_VAWAcourtFundingPub.pdf.

Brenda Uekert, chair of NCSC's Family Violence Community of Practice, surveyed state court administrators in June 2003. Respondents were asked to identify the most-promising STOP-funded projects in their states or territories. These projects included

- Judicial training programs in Alaska, California, New York, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and West Virginia
- Training for support staff in Hawaii, Oregon, and Utah
- Automated protection order registries in Arizona, Missouri, and North Dakota
- Coordinated community responses in Georgia, Northern Mariana Islands, and Wisconsin

The majority of the responding offices indicated that they were receiving the 5 percent of their states' STOP funds earmarked for the courts, but seven offices noted that their courts were not receiving all of the funds to which they were entitled, and eight other offices were not sure.

Another NCSC evaluation conducted by Dawn Marie Rubio of NCSC's Court Consulting Services in Denver, under a grant from the National Institute of Justice in 2002, showed that many STOP grantees, which include courts, law enforcement agencies, and domestic violence organizations, used the funds to meet basic local needs for equipment, such as computer hardware and software and fax machines.

Respondents to this survey felt that STOP funding was critical to the development of data collection and commu-
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Some Programs that Have Benefited from STOP Grants

(Taken from "Evaluating Data Collection and Communication System Projects Funded Under the STOP Program," National Center for State Courts, August 30, 2002.)

Sexual Assault Recovery and Prevention Center (San Luis Obispo County, CA): Enabled the center for participate on the county-wide Sexual Assault Recovery Team.

LaGrange Police Department (Troup County, GA): Purchased computer hardware to improve access to data needed in domestic violence cases.

Council Against Domestic Violence (Lansing, MI): Supported staff and operations of the Personal Protection Orders Office of the 30th Judicial Circuit Court.

Missouri Office of the State Courts' Administrator (Jefferson City, MO): Provided funds to pilot Web-based electronic filing of personal protection orders.


What's New in Pro Se?

Courts everywhere are feeling the impact of the growing number of people wanting to represent themselves in legal matters. For the most up-to-date information on how your court can adapt to meet the needs of self-represented litigants, turn to NCSC's CourTopics at www.ncsconline.org.

CourTopics is NCSC's virtual filing cabinet on the Web. Look for Pro Se in the alphabetical list of topics or go to the CourTopics Access and Fairness folder. In the Pro Se section you will find:

- Resource Guides—NCSC analysts have compiled a list of white papers, Web sites, books and other research resources, providing you with a guide to the universe of available information on the topic.

- NCSC Documents—Hyperlinks to all NCSC information available on the Web
- Frequently asked questions—Answers to questions NCSC knowledge analysts are asked by state courts.
- Overview—A summary of important issues in the area are addressed by an NCSC expert.

In addition, from the National Center's home page, you may access a new State Justice Institute project that has been developed to build a national resource center for pro se practitioners. You can find that SJI-funded Web site—selfhelpsupport.org—on the NCSC's home page under Quick Links. 

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Judicial Salaries Reflect Current State Budget Woes


Salaries for judges of state general jurisdiction trial courts, intermediate appellate courts, and courts of last resort increased by little more than 2 percent, on average, in 2002, according to the latest *Survey of Judicial Salaries* (vol. 28, no. 1) published by the National Center for State Courts. Increases for state court administrators were a little shy of 4 percent. This is compared to an average increase of 4 percent annually for each group from 1996 to 2001.

Here is a quick look at judicial salaries as of April 1, 2003:

- Salaries of state chief justices ranged from \$90,842 to \$185,773, with a mean of \$128,886 and a median of \$125,018.
- Salaries of associate justices ranged from \$89,381 to \$170,319, with a mean of \$124,738 and a median of \$121,740.
- Salaries of intermediate appellate court judges ranged from \$91,469 to \$159,657, with a mean of \$121,251 and a median of \$116,521.


- Salaries of general jurisdiction trial court judges ranged from \$82,600 to \$154,700, with a mean of \$112,229 and a median of \$109,810.
- Salaries of state court administrators ranged from \$82,567 to \$175,728, with a mean of \$111,664 and a median of \$107,900.

The *Survey* breaks down salaries state by state and provides selected cost-of-living adjusted figures for the 50 states and 30 cities.

NCSC's Knowledge and Information Services publishes the *Survey of Judicial Salaries* twice each year. Printed copies can be obtained for the cost of shipping and handling from NCSC's fulfillment house by calling (888) 228-6272, e-mailing ncsc.orders@aidcvt.com, or using the online Publications Catalog (log on to NCSC's Web site at www.ncsonline.org and click on "Publications"). The *Survey* is also available online as a pdf document on NCSC's Web site. 

How Are Courts Using STOP Grants?, *continued*

communications systems and that many systems for collecting, analyzing, and sharing information would not have been possible without it. However, the survey showed that little emphasis was being placed on interagency communication and that the grantees' efforts so far have improved services to victims but have done little to prevent domestic violence, one of VAWA's major goals.

You can find more information on what courts are doing to improve services to victims of domestic violence by consulting NCSC's CourTopics database at www.ncsonline.org. Another good source is the Family Violence Community of Practice's *Family Violence Forum* e-newsletter, which can be subscribed to through NCSC's Web site. 

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AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION Future Conferences

2004 Midyear Meeting

Savannah, Georgia
January 30-February 3
Hyatt Regency Savannah
\$135 single or double
*(joint meeting with National Association
for Court Management)*

2004 Annual Conference

San Francisco, California
October 24-29, 2004
Grand Hyatt
Room rates to be determined

2005 Midyear Meeting

Florida Gulf Coast
Dates and location to be determined

2005 Annual Conference

Anchorage, Alaska
September 18-23, 2005
Captain Cook Hotel
Room rates to be determined

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