

# National Forum Held on Judicial Independence

**A**JA's National Forum on Judicial Independence—held on the first day of the 2004 annual conference in San Francisco—exceeded expectations and will lead to future events as well.

The brainchild of last year's AJA president, Michael McAdam, the Forum was an all-day conference focused on judicial independence, especially at the trial-court level. It consisted of five separate panel discussions, with healthy interaction with the AJA members in attendance.

The Forum was supported by a generous grant from the Joyce Foundation, which allowed the inclusion of several notable speakers, many of whom prepared articles for *Court Review* to provide a framework for the discussion. Follow-up articles, and edited transcripts of the panels, will be featured in a future issue of *Court Review*.

A notable “buzz” surrounded the Forum not only because of the excellent panel discussions, but also because a film crew was on hand for the syndicated PBS program *Inside the Law*. A separate panel discussion on judicial independence issues was filmed for that program, including AJA's officers and several of the speakers from the Forum.

Jack Ford, former chief legal correspondent for *NBC News* and a part-time anchor for *Good Morning, America*, the *Today* weekend edition, and *Court TV*, moderated the PBS panel discussion. A one-hour *Inside the Law* program will be available to PBS stations for broadcast sometime in 2005.

Among the panelists in the Forum were:

- Bill Vickrey, administrative director of the California court system
- Mike Buenger, administrative director of the Missouri court system
- Roy Schotland, Georgetown law professor and expert on judicial elections



Inside the Law's Jack Ford interviews the panel at the Forum on Judicial Independence.



AJA member Kevin Burke



Mary McQueen, president of the National Center for State Courts

- Malcolm Feeley, University of California-Berkeley law professor
- Kevin Burke, former chief judge of the Hennepin County District Court in Minneapolis
- Mary McQueen, president of the National Center for State Courts
- Larry Myers, court administrator in Joplin, Missouri, and past president of the National Association for Court Management
- John Russonello, a public opinion pollster and consultant
- Jeff Rosinek, circuit court judge in Miami, Florida, and past AJA president
- AJA's current officers 