

Court Review

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EDITOR'S NOTE

In this issue, we start with an intriguing, and sometimes disconcerting, report from a team of researchers in the criminal justice system, *Judicial Strategies for Evaluating the Validity of Guilty Pleas*. An almost daily part of the life of most judges is the criminal plea colloquy. This group of authors undertook painstaking research into the dynamics of the plea colloquy. You will be surprised by their findings until you reflect on how mechanical that colloquy process can become after hundreds and thousands of repetitions for all participants save one. I suspect most of us will make at least one modification to our plea colloquy after reading their findings.

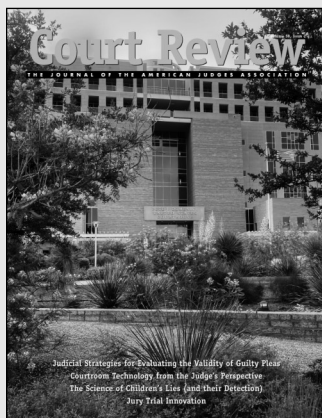
Next we visit an update of that perennially fast moving target of technology from Prof. Fredric Lederer. Prof. Lederer gave us his first a cutting edge overview back in 1998. Whether we like it or not, our courtrooms are on the leading and bleeding edge of technology. Prof. Lederer leads with modern mass data and data analytics that are being presented every day in our courtrooms. We judges need some basic understanding of the concepts to be equipped to deal with what is already happening in our courtrooms. Does your court use a pretrial detention screening tool? Did you know that is based on an algorithm? How does streaming affect the operations of your courtroom? Update your mental operating software with the aid of Prof. Lederer.

Next we turn to the always stressful work of addressing child witness testimony. A pair of researchers from the world of psychology talk to us about the unique contours of credibility when child witnesses are involved in *The Science of Children's Lies (and their Detection): A Primer for Justice Practitioners*. We all have many principles of handed down wisdom about the challenges and vulnerabilities of child testimony. Most of those turn out to be mythology. This Primer will help you identify the legitimate precautions to be taken in your courtroom when dealing with issues of child testimony. The wisest observation I saw was this: Rather than trying to detect liars, research has shown the value of taking a neutral stance and of establishing and maintaining an environment in which witnesses are more likely to disclose information, which, depending on context, can be subsequently corroborated with other testimonial or physical evidence.

We then turn to Judge Gregory Mize's talk with us about innovations in dealing with jurors and the jury selection process. This is another area, like the plea colloquy and witness credibility, where we fall into habits of simply following inherited wisdom and practices but too infrequently ask "why do we do it this way?" and "Is there a better way to do it?" Judge Mize presents some excellent ideas to prime the pump for his closing challenge to all of us to improve the quality of jury justice in our legal systems. You will find particularly informative and entertaining his example of the-defendant-is-my-fiancee.

Of course, we also bring you a message from our AJA president, insights from Canada, the Resource Page, and the crossword. The hardworking team at Court Review hope you find this issue informative and thought provoking.

—David Prince



Court Review, the quarterly journal of the American Judges Association, invites the submission of unsolicited, original articles, essays, and book reviews. *Court Review* seeks to provide practical, useful information to the working judges of the United States and Canada. In each issue, we hope to provide information that will be of use to judges in their everyday work, whether in highlighting new procedures or methods of trial, court, or case management, providing substantive information regarding an area of law likely to be encountered by many judges, or by providing background information (such as psychology or other social science research) that can be used by judges in their work. Guidelines for the submission of manuscripts for *Court Review* are set forth on page 15 of volume 59, issue 1. *Court Review* reserves the right to edit, condense, or reject material submitted for publication.

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On the cover: Located in downtown Albuquerque, New Mexico, the Pete V. Domenici U.S. Courthouse stands as an architecturally distinctive landmark. It combines elements of postmodernism with the natural beauty of the New Mexico landscape, resulting in a design that captivates both visually and functionally. Completed in 1998 and named in honor of Senator Pete Domenici in 2004, the courthouse features a visually striking exterior crafted from materials like stone, glass, and metal. The design emphasizes abundant natural light throughout the building, achieved through strategically placed large windows, skylights, and light wells, fostering a sense of openness and connection to the outdoors. Photo credit by Eve Brank.

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