

THE NATIONAL JUDICIAL COLLEGE

Est. 1963

Annual report to stakeholders, 2023





BUILDING ON A LEGACY



The past year was an extraordinary one for the NJC and the democracy we cherish. It was inspiring to celebrate the College's 60th anniversary with many of you as we traveled to six cities across the country to hold events that both educated and encouraged. We loved hearing about how the NJC has enhanced your judicial careers and lifted your spirits over the years. Reflecting on the legacy of the NJC and its impact on the judiciary as a whole, and on individual judges, was truly humbling.

More importantly, 2023 marked the first year that felt "normal" as many judges returned to in-person courses in Reno and other cities. Although our business model has evolved and we will continue to expand our online offerings, we, and the judges we serve, always prefer to learn in



person whenever possible. As you know, judging can be difficult and often quite lonely. The kinship and support the NJC provides is unmatched.

This past year, several major events have significantly impacted the judiciary. Notably, the increased attacks on our judicial system and individual judges have been concerning. These challenges underscore the critical role that the judiciary plays in preserving democracy. It has been frustrating to watch these attacks grow instead of subside, but we are reminded that the judiciary is often the last line of defense in preserving our democratic values.

Amid these challenges, we launched the NJC's new five-year strategic plan titled "Stepping Forward," where we

committed to promoting the independence and impartiality of the judiciary as our number one priority, as we work to achieve our mission of making the world a more just place. This strategic plan will guide us as we navigate the complexities of the significant disruptions, including challenges to our democracy.

Hon. Benes Z. Aldana (Ret.)
President & CEO



Edward Blumberg, Esq.
Board of Trustees Chair





2023 COURSES

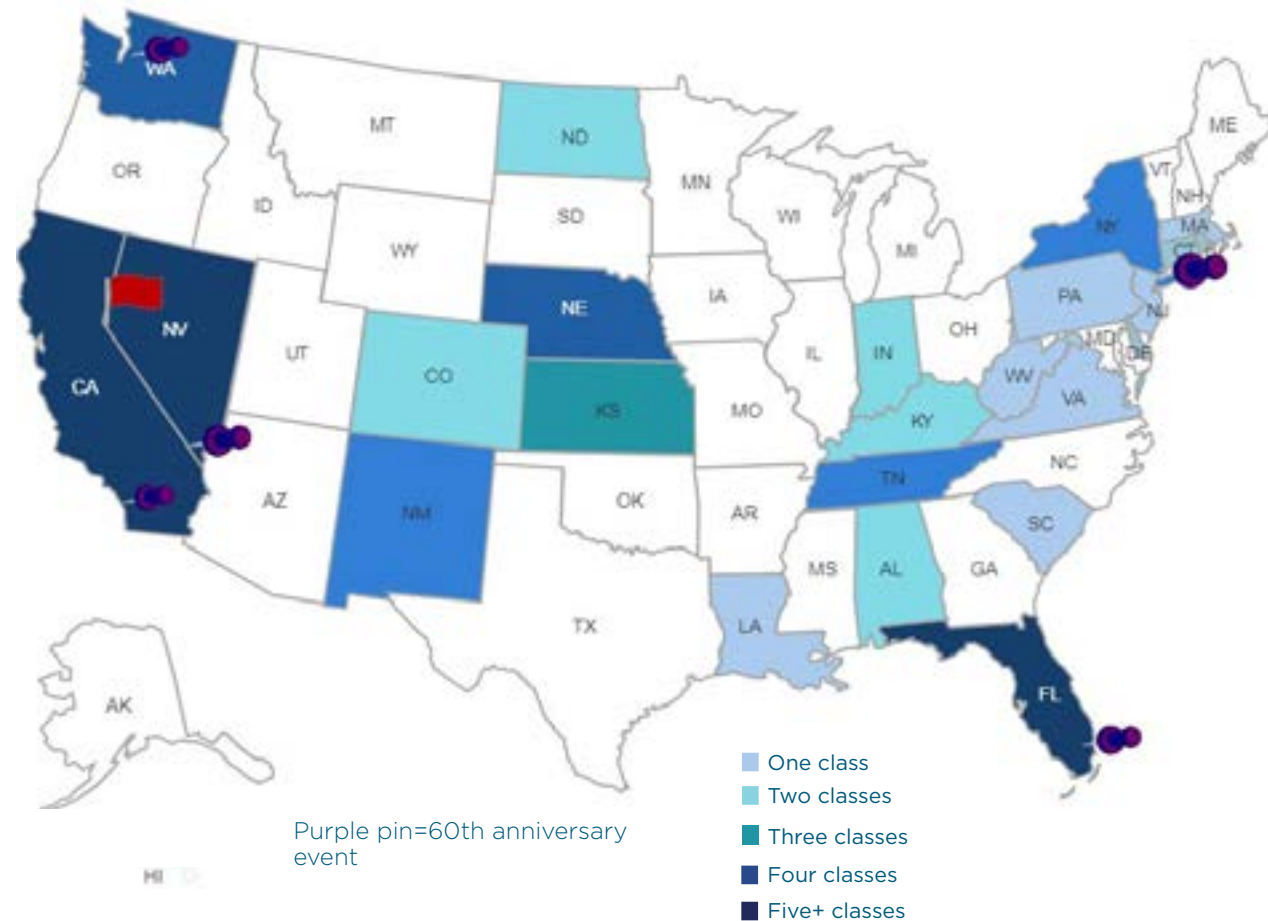
NJC holds in-person classes in 26 states in 2023

The National Judicial College held in-person education events for judges and court staff in 26 states, visiting California and Florida more than six times and Nebraska, Washington, and Kansas four to five times.

In total, 56 in-person classes were held outside of Nevada (the NJC's home state) and 26 in-person classes were held on campus at the National Judicial College in Reno.

Most in-person sessions include substantial class engagement and participation, a tactic taught to faculty during our faculty development workshop. In addition, in-person classes in Reno use breakout/discussion groups extensively throughout the class, giving participants a chance to unwrap and apply what they have learned.

A spring 2023 *General Jurisdiction* participant had this to say about the breakout sessions: "The group sessions were some of the best sessions held. The bonding and building of camaraderie achieved by my group will continue into the future. I truly believe any of the Judges in my group will be ready to respond if called by another member. Our group shared personal cellphone numbers and emails and plan to be readily available for future discussions."





2023 COURSES

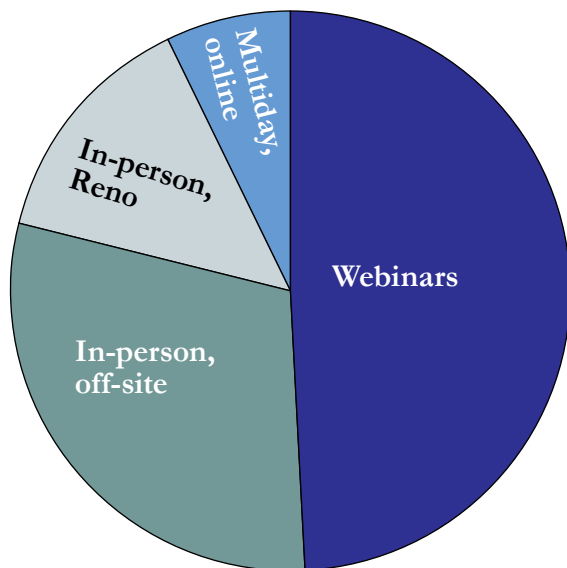
NJC offers 187 classes in 2023

There were 10,919 enrollments across all product types in 2023. This included over 6,100 enrollments for in-person courses, which is the first time enrollments for in-person education exceeded 6,000 since 2019. Tuition enrollment also rose to a four-year high.

The fall 2023 *General Jurisdiction* course enrolled 99 judges, a 30-year high. In addition to its flagship courses, the NJC offered several innovative courses in 2023, including *Judicial Renaissance III* in Athens, Greece; *Mindfulness for Judges*; and *The Antiracist Courtroom: Theory and Practice*, which scored a 7.0/7.0 on evaluations. One attendee wrote, “Phenomenal course in all respects. Life-altering. Seamless and beautifully orchestrated. My colleagues and I were first-time NJC course takers. We are going back to our state and telling them we need to take 1 or 2 training courses every year. I am still incredibly overwhelmed. I am going back to my court transformed.”



General Jurisdiction remains one of the NJC’s flagship courses and is often one of the first courses new judges take when they transition from bar to bench. Over the years, the class has evolved substantially as faculty address emerging ethical and legal issues. The College hosts two classes of *General Jurisdiction* a year — in the spring (pictured above) and the fall (pictured below).





NJC adds to Board of Trustees

In January 2023, Miami trial attorney and former Florida Bar President Edward Blumberg began his term as chair of the 21-person Board of Trustees of the College.

First elected to the Board of Trustees in 2016, Mr. Blumberg is a partner and founder at the Deutsch, Blumberg & Caballero law firm with a Florida statewide practice in medical malpractice, products liability, and catastrophic personal injury cases.

“I’m honored to lead the governing board of this unique organization at a time when the judiciary really represents democracy’s last line of defense,” Blumberg said. “There’s never been a time in the history of the United States when it was more important to have an independent and impartial judiciary.”

Additional trustees and officers elected to serve on the Board in 2023 include:

Tani Gorre Cantil-Sakaue, the president and CEO of the Public Policy Institute of California. In January 2011, after a statewide election, she was sworn in as the 28th Chief Justice of California, becoming the first person of color and the second female to hold that position. She retired from this position at the end of December 2022. Prior to her tenure on the Supreme Court, she served more than 20 years on California trial and appellate courts, including six years on the Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District, in Sacramento.

Eileen M. Letts, partner in the Chicago office of the law firm Zuber Lawler. Having completed dozens of jury trials and more than 100 bench trials, often involving Fortune 500 companies and government entities, Ms. Letts is considered a premier civil trial attorney. She has won high-stakes trials in a wide variety of subject matter areas, including product liability, complex tort, and commercial disputes.

Loida Nicolas Lewis, chair and CEO of TLC Beatrice, LLC, a family investment firm. Admitted to practice in both the Philippines and New York, she was the first Filipino woman to pass the New York bar without attending law school in the United States. Ms. Lewis served as chair and CEO of TLC Beatrice International, a \$2 billion multinational food company, from 1994-2000. She assumed its leadership after the death of her husband, Wall Street financier and dealmaker Reginald F. Lewis who, in 1987, engineered a leveraged buyout for \$985 million of Beatrice International Food, thus becoming the first African American to lead a billion-dollar company.

Chair-Elect **Margarita Bernal** served as a municipal court judge for 26 years in Tucson, Arizona. Prior, her legal practice specialized in criminal and public access litigation and immigration law. A child of immigrants from Mexico, she is a first-generation American and was a legal aid honor student and prestigious Reginald Heber Smith Fellow. She was the first Latina faculty member of the NJC and taught for 25 years. She has served as the chair of the Specialized Courts Conference of the Judicial Division of the American Bar Association. She also served on the Judicial Council of the Arizona Supreme Court and was a judicial

educator with the Arizona Supreme Court from 1989 to 2011. She continues to practice law as a criminal defense attorney and member of the Criminal Justice Act Panel of the federal court bar of Arizona.

Treasurer **Norma Barnes-Euresti** is the chief legal officer at WK Kellogg Co. Previously, she served as vice president and chief counsel for labor-employment, ethics and compliance at the company. Prior to her work at Kellogg, she served as an administrative law judge for the Illinois Human Rights Commission.

Secretary **Angelina Tsu** is a former vice president for community development, community affairs and diverse markets for Zions Bank in Salt Lake City. She is a past president of the Utah State Bar and practiced with Ray Quinney & Nebeker P.C. Currently, she is an entrepreneur with multiple businesses and is involved in a broad spectrum of philanthropic endeavors.



Dynamic group of experts lead panel discussion for Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg Lecture



The 2023 Ruth Bader Ginsburg lecture featured a panel discussion on a subject the justice was well known for: “Voice Through Dissent.”

An introduction was provided by:

- **Solicitor General Elizabeth Barchas Prelogar**; former clerk for Justice Ginsburg and Justice Elena Kagan, as well as Attorney General Merrick Garland

Panelists included:

- **Rachel Bayefsky**, associate professor of law, University of Virginia School of Law, former Rhodes Scholar and clerk for Justice Ginsburg.
- **Dahlia Lithwick**, journalist, author, and senior editor at Slate Magazine. She has written Slate’s Supreme Court Dispatches and Jurisprudence columns since 1999, and she hosts Amicus, Slate’s award-winning podcast about the law and the Supreme Court.
- **Anna-Rose Mathieson**, partner, Complex Appellate Litigation Group, San Francisco; former clerk for Justice Ginsburg.

The panel was moderated by **Scott Dodson**, the James Edgar Hervey Chair in Litigation, the Geoffrey C. Hazard Distinguished Professor of Law, and the Director of the Center for Litigation and Courts at the University of California College of the Law in San Francisco. He is the author or editor of eight books, including *The Legacy of Ruth Bader Ginsburg*.

The Ginsburg lecture was founded in 2021 and is traditionally held on March 15, the late justice’s birthday.

“Dissents are not written for today, but for tomorrow. She saw herself speaking to a future age when her dissenting view might become the prevailing one.”

—Elizabeth Barchas Prelogar
United States Solicitor General



Federal Judge Zobel honored with Sandra Day O'Connor Award

Senior U.S. District Court Judge Rya Zobel, who survived a childhood in Nazi Germany to become one of the most respected trial judges in the federal judiciary, was selected as the 2023 winner of the Sandra Day O'Connor Award, the College's highest honor.

All of her colleagues on the Massachusetts court co-signed a letter from Chief Judge F. Dennis Saylor IV nominating her for the award. The letter described her as "the best trial judge in the District and one of the best in the nation of the past four decades." The letter also said that it was an adage among judges on the court that when faced with a difficult decision, "Just do what Rya does; she is always right."

Judge Zobel became the first woman appointed to the federal bench in New England after being nominated by President Jimmy Carter in 1979. In 2020, she received the Edward J. Devitt Distinguished Service to Justice Award, the highest honor bestowed upon a federal judge. She was the first woman federal trial judge to receive the award.

An orphaned immigrant

Rya Weickert Zobel grew up in Zwickau, a small town in eastern Germany. Her mother was a concert violinist, her father managed a literary arts publishing company. As World War II neared its conclusion, American troops were the first to reach Zwickau. But the postwar partition of Germany ultimately placed the city under control of the Soviet Army.

In July, 1945, Russian soldiers arrested Judge Zobel's father

and, a few hours later, her mother. No reason was ever given, but it was suggested that the Russians thought the Weickerts had been too friendly with the Americans. Judge Zobel never saw her father again. Her mother was eventually sent to a Siberian Gulag for 10 years.

Suddenly orphaned, Rya, 13, and her 10-year-old brother were taken in by family friends. After hearing of the family's fate, her father's sister in West Germany sent a messenger to rescue the children. Their escape included several days traveling by train, at times in a cattle car. The train stopped at the Russian/American border early in the morning. Crossing a barbed-wire fence was the last part of the journey.

In 1947 the children emigrated to the United States to live with one of their mother's brothers in New York City. They had come to New York aboard the SS Ernie Pyle, a former troop ship that was used to carry displaced persons after the war. As the ship turned into New York Harbor, the passengers ran to the deck en masse to see the Statue of Liberty.

Seventy-five years later, Judge Zobel said, "I still get choked up thinking about it...that was just an amazing experience."

One of her favorite duties as a judge remains officiating at naturalization ceremonies for new United States citizens.



"I can relate to these people and have such admiration for the hardships which they endured to get to America and become citizens," she said. "I feel so lucky to be able to share my experience with them."

After graduation from high school and Radcliffe College, Judge Zobel was admitted to Harvard Law School, where she became one of only 13 women in a class of 500. The school had begun admitting women only two years earlier.

Even with a Harvard law degree, when she graduated in 1956 the only job open to women at law firms was as a legal secretary. But Chief Judge George Sweeney of the U.S. District Court for Massachusetts needed a law clerk and hired her. She remained his law clerk until his death 10 years later.

Her first job after the clerkship was as the first woman associate at Hill & Barlow, one of Boston's oldest and most prestigious firms. Several years later, she joined Goodwin, Procter & Hoar and ultimately became its first female partner.

When, in 1979, she was confirmed as a judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts, it was a homecoming because this was the same court where she had served as a law clerk.

Whether handling complex intellectual property cases such as Polaroid Corporation v. Eastman Kodak Company, which involved allegations of patent infringement, to asbestos insurance coverage cases, which established the insurance standard for thousands of claims, or, more recently, a criminal case with 60 defendants, Judge Zobel



“I have been a member of the bar for nearly 50 years. In all that time, I have never encountered a judge who was, and is, so universally admired, respected and beloved as Judge Zobel.”

-Boston attorney Alice E. Richmond

has earned a stellar reputation for management of complex cases. It is estimated that she has issued about 2,000 decisions. Even in her current status as a senior judge, she continues to manage about 150 cases, civil and criminal.

In 1995, she became the first woman director of the Federal Judicial Center, a counterpart to The National Judicial College that serves only the federal bench. She was chosen by the center’s board of directors, which at that time was chaired by Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist. As director, she instituted new programs and was responsible for educating scores of new federal judges.

She also got to know Justice O’Connor. The two of them are said to have “liberated” a portion of the Supreme Court’s gym facilities to make room for a women’s exercise class.

In 1999, when her term as FJC director ended, she returned to the District Court in Massachusetts.

In nominating Judge Zobel for the O’Connor Award, Boston attorney Alice E. Richmond wrote: “I have been a member of the bar for nearly 50 years. In all that time, I have never encountered a judge who was, and is, so universally admired, respected and beloved as Judge Zobel.”

Judge Zobel was presented her award at the Appellate Judges Education Institute during a ceremony held at the Library of Congress. The ceremony was sponsored by Sharon & Ivan Fong and The Goodwin Law Firm.





Justice Jackson Lectures feature Judge M. Margaret McKeown, journalist Domenico Montanaro

In April, the 142nd Justice Jackson Lecture at the NJC was delivered by Judge M. Margaret McKeown of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit. She spoke about the environmental legacy of Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas.

Judge McKeown has served as an appellate judge for almost 25 years after being nominated by President Bill Clinton.

She has lectured and taught throughout the world on intellectual property, international law, human rights law, litigation, ethics, judicial administration, and constitutional law and has participated in numerous rule of law initiatives with judges and lawyers.

She assumed senior status in September 2022 and is the author of *Citizen Justice: The Environmental Legacy of William O. Douglas—Public Advocate and Conservation Champion* (Potomac Press, 2022).

The 143rd Justice Jackson Lecture, held in October 2023, featured Domenico Montanaro, senior political editor/correspondent for National Public Radio.

Based in Washington, D.C., Montanaro appears on air and online delivering analysis of the political climate in Washington and campaigns. He has also helped edit both political and judicial coverage, including the work of Nina Totenberg, NPR's legendary legal affairs correspondent.

Montanaro joined NPR in 2015 and oversaw coverage of the 2016 presidential campaign, including for broadcast and digital.

Before joining NPR, he served as political director and senior producer for politics and law at PBS NewsHour. There, he led domestic political and legal coverage, which included the 2014 midterm elections, the Supreme Court, and the unrest in Ferguson, Missouri.



A lot of people don't understand the job a judge has to do, which can leave you open to political attacks. What you do is vital. Having seen the decline in approval ratings, it makes me nervous about the direction of democracy."

-Domenico Montanaro
National Public Radio

Prior to PBS NewsHour, he was deputy political editor at NBC News, where he covered two presidential elections and reported and edited for the network's political blog, First Read. He has also worked at CBS News, ABC News, The Asbury Park Press in New Jersey, and has taught high school English.

The Justice Jackson Lecture Series is named for

Judicial Academy graduates continue success

The Judicial Academy helps lawyers who are interested in becoming judges learn about the profession and prepare for appointment or election to the bench. During the four-day program, lawyers learn about judicial ethics, campaigning, judicial selection, and the basics of judging.

As of spring 2024, 28 alumni of the first four Judicial Academy classes had become judges.

- Judge Olga Álvarez '19, Superior Court of San Diego County, California
- Associate Justice José Scher Castillo '19, California Court of Appeal
- Judge Jaime Hawk '19, Superior Court of King County, Washington
- Judge Marie Avery Moses '19, 2nd Judicial District Court of Denver, Colorado
- Judge Patrice “Patti” W. Oppenheim '19, 22nd Judicial District Court for St. Tammany and Washington Parishes, Louisiana
- Judge Rania Rampersad '19, East Division District Court, King County, Washington
- Associate Judge Jeffrey L. Phillips '19, Nez Perce Tribe, Nez Perce County, Idaho
- Judge Lorrie Sinclair Taylor '19, General District Court, Loudoun County, Virginia
- Judge Thanh H. Tran '19, Circuit Court of Clackamas County, Oregon
- Judge Tsering D. Cornell '21, Superior Court of Clark County, Washington
- Judge Christine J. Gonong '21, Superior Court of Los Angeles, California
- Judge Amyra Cobb-Hampton '21, Superior Court of Solano County, California
- Judge Andrew Luxen '21, 2nd Judicial District Court of Denver, Colorado
- Administrative Law Judge Josh Patrick '21, U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission
- Judge Chris Sease '21, District Court, Rowan County, North Carolina
- Judge Catherine Taylor '21, Los Alamos County Magistrate Court, New Mexico

- Judge Sherry Thompson-Taylor '21, Superior Court of San Diego County, California
- Chief Judge Natasha K. Anderson '22, Nez Perce Tribal Court, Idaho
- Commissioner Latrice A.G. Byrdsong '22, Superior Court of Los Angeles, California
- Judge Travis Flieman '22, Darke County Court of Common Pleas, Ohio
- Judge Robert Lara '22, Division 2, 3rd Judicial District Court of New Mexico
- Judge Danna W. Nicholas '22, Superior Court of San Diego County, California
- Associate Judge Amy K. Peterman '22, 17th Judicial Circuit Court, Illinois
- Judge Bryan F. Clavecilla '23, Superior Court of Orange County, California
- Administrative Law Judge Heather Daly '23, U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission
- Judge-Elect Selina Saenz '23, 65th Judicial District Court of Texas (El Paso) (taking office January 2025)
- Special Justice Kiah D. Spinks '23, 31st District Court of Virginia
- Judge-Elect Nikole Hecklenger '23, King County Washington (taking office January 2025)
- Jacqueline Smith-Tingle '23, Virginia District 19, Magistrate
- B. Ashley Andrews '22, North Carolina, District Court Judge, 27th Judicial District



At robing ceremony for Hon. Latrice A.G. Byrdsong '22, Superior Court of Los Angeles County with fellow Class of 2022 Judicial Academy alumni Hon. Danna W. Nicholas, Superior Court of San Diego County, and Patricia Taitano-Valdovinos.



NJC engagements for 2023

NJC President Benes Z. Aldana and senior staff members participated in many outside judicial and legal engagements throughout the calendar year. The engagements are key to keeping abreast of trends and needs in the judicial system as well as educating about the mission and opportunities of the NJC.

- ABA Mid-Year Meeting, New Orleans, LA
- NASJE Mid-Year Board Meeting, Oxford, MS
- The Academy of Court-Appointed Neutrals Annual Meeting, San Diego
- Nevada Limited Jurisdiction Annual Winter Conference, Las Vegas
- National Indian Child Welfare Association – 41st Annual Protecting Our Children Conference
- 20th Annual Hawai'i International Summit on Preventing, Assessing & Treating Trauma Across the Lifespan Prevention, Resilience, Connections & Wellness
- Jackson Day by the Robert H. Jackson Center, Warren, PA
- ABOTA Civil Trial Bar Roundtable, Washington, DC
- Federal Bar Association 2023 Indian Law Conference, Albuquerque, NM
- 2023 American Indian Justice Conference, Reno, NV
- Lifesavers National Conference on Highway Safety Priorities, Seattle, WA
- The Aspen Forum for Community Solutions – Opportunity Youth Forum Spring Convening, Austin, TX
- U.S. Global Leadership Coalition Annual Global Impact Forum, Washington, DC
- Walmart Executive Leadership Annual Meeting, Bentonville, AR
- IALGBTQ+ Judges' Conference, Chicago, IL
- ABA Annual Meeting, Denver, CO
- Appellate Judges Education Institute Board Meeting, Denver, CO
- National Association of State Judicial Educators Annual Conference, Columbus, OH
- Governor's Highway Safety Association Annual Meeting, New York, NY
- Central Panel Directors Annual Conference, Seattle, WA
- Aspen Forum for Community Solutions, Aspen, CO
- National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, Indianapolis, IN
- Judicial Research and Training Institute, International Conference, Seoul, South Korea
- Seattle University Luminary in Law Lecture, Seattle, WA

NJC works on model ESI publication

The NJC worked with The Future Society to assist in publishing the Model Protocol for Electronically Stored Information - Text and Commentary. President Aldana and Distinguished Fellow Keith Fisher, along with other NJC faculty members including Judge Herbert Dixon (Ret.), Judge Paul Grimm (Ret.), and Professor Maura Grossman served on the Review Group for the publication. The protocol is complemented by the supporting Guidelines. The model protocol will assist parties in establishing the trustworthiness of advanced tools used to review ESI during legal discovery. The effort was led by Dr. Bruce Hedin and aims to provide a statistically robust method for evaluating the results of an AI-assisted review of ESI in legal discovery, thereby reducing the barriers in the way of the effective adoption and use of such tools. The protocol also serves as a model for the rigorous assessment of advanced tools, including AI systems based on Large Language Models or foundation models in other domains.

State of Nevada provides large grant for technology upgrades

Nevada Governor Joe Lombardo signed into law a bill appropriating \$400,000 for technology improvements to The National Judicial College to help update technology infrastructure. The NJC building on the University of Nevada, Reno campus includes a model courtroom with substantial technology features as well as audiovisual equipment to produce hybrid classes, videos, and podcasts.

Dividing the Waters – first states contribute to new western consortium

In December 2022, a colloquium of justices and judges showed interest in an interstate judicial training program on water. In 2023, state judicial branches started contributing to the creation of the Western Judicial Consortium on Water Law, with Washington, Colorado and New Mexico leading the way. In recent years, the Nevada Legislature appropriated \$25,000 to NJC every two years to develop educational programming on water rights issues.

New online water education program launched by Dividing the Waters

The Utah Judicial Council granted \$40,000 to

Southern Utah University (SUU) to develop the first course of an online water education program for judges. SUU will match an in-kind contribution for the webinar, focused on hydrology. In the future, the NJC will work with SUU and others to develop an interstate judicial education program on water. *Dividing the Waters* will contribute by identifying program topics and subject matter experts.

NJC presents at tribal conference

The NJC, along with tribal court judges, presented a program on virtual hearing effective practices at the 17th Annual National Indian Nations Conference on the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Reservation. This conference, sponsored by the Office for Victims of Crime, drew more than 1,500 attendees including victim advocates, prosecutors, law enforcement officials, judicial personnel, social services personnel, health and mental health professionals, survivors, volunteers and other stakeholders.

Grant to focus on substance misuse

The NJC received a \$40,000 grant from the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry (AAAP) through a subcontract from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. With this funding, NJC will offer 16 webinars on Opioid Use Disorder/Substance Use Disorder topics through September 29, 2024.

President of Greece opens Judicial Renaissance program

In September, during a ceremony held at the Alkis Argyriadis Amphitheatre of the National and Kapodistrian University in Athens, Greece, the President of the Hellenic Republic, Katerina Sakellariopoulou, officially opened Judicial Renaissance 2023, organized by the National Judicial College, NKUA's School of Law, and the Hellenic Council of State.



President Sakellariopoulou and members of the Greek delegation.

During Judicial Renaissance, judges rediscover the foundations of justice as embodied within the scope of lasting human achievements. Greece has been called the Cradle of Western Civilization and Athens the birthplace of democracy. Socrates famously described the four essential qualities of being a good judge as, “To hear courteously; to answer wisely; to consider soberly; and to decide impartially.”



AJEI Summit for appellate judges, attorneys

The Appellate Judges Education Institute headed to Washington, D.C., where it attracted a stellar line-up of speakers and panelists including Justice Brett Kavanaugh, Solicitor General Elizabeth Barchas Prelogar, and a host of distinguished judges and guests.

In addition to case updates and a preview of the upcoming Supreme Court term, the annual summit also included sessions on writing, special jurisdiction, *voir dire* standards, and a special session on “The Words of Lincoln and King on the Anniversaries of the Gettysburg Address and ‘I Have a Dream’ speech.”

National Judges Association conference

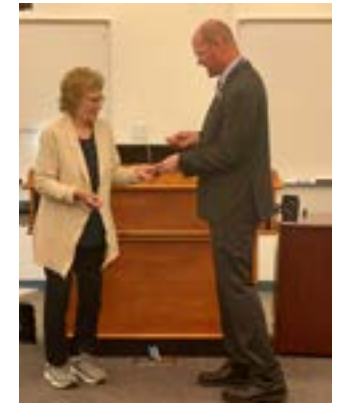
Dozens of judges from around the country attended NJA’s successful annual educational conference, Building Partnerships & Judicial Fellowship. The NJC was a proud co-sponsor of the event, which was held in Reno.



Professor Francis honored with teaching award

The NJC presented Professor Elizabeth Francis with a 40-year teaching award in 2023. Professor Francis has taught *Judicial Writing* and other classes at the NJC. She is an associate professor emerita of English and judicial studies at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Professor Francis played a key role in the founding of the field of judicial writing in 1982. Since then she has taught thousands of judges at the NJC and in court systems, agencies and conferences throughout the United States.



Professor Francis receives her award from NJC staff member Bryan Walker.

Dr. Francis also is a key part of the judicial studies program at the University of Nevada, Reno, where she serves as thesis adviser for judges seeking master’s and Ph.D. degrees in judicial studies.



Professor Beazley receives her award from NJC staff member Bryan Walker.

Professor Beazley presented with teaching award

The NJC presented Professor Mary Beth Beazley with her five-year teaching award. Professor Beazley teaches *Judicial Writing*, *Opinion Writing for Appellate Courts*, and *Logic and Opinion Writing* as well as custom writing courses.

Professor Beazley has taught legal writing for 40 years and is on the faculty of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas William S. Boyd School of Law, which consistently ranks as the top legal writing program in the nation. She has held numerous leadership positions in legal education, including President of the Legal Writing Institute, Chair of the ABA’s Communication Skills Committee, and President of the Association of Legal Writing Directors. She has written several books on legal writing.

Yeend receives Payant Award, celebrates retirement

Nancy Neal Yeend, who taught at the NJC for 28 years, retired in 2023. Yeend taught over 60 classes of *Civil Mediation* from 1994 to 2023. The NJC recognized her with the V. Robert Payant Award for Faculty Excellence, the College's highest faculty honor. Yeend received her award at the NJC 60th anniversary event held in New York City.



For over 40 years Yeend mediated civil cases, including real estate, construction, employment, intellectual property and related business issues, and served on trial and appellate panels. She trained more than 6,000 mediators nationally in the art of mediation. She has numerous publications to her credit on a wide variety of ADR related topics, including the first national study of appellate ADR in state courts.



NJC Recognizes Judge Keasler with Payant Award

The NJC awarded Judge Michael Keasler with the V. Robert Payant Award for Faculty Excellence, the College's highest faculty honor. Judge Keasler served on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals from 1999 until his retirement in 2020. He was a judge in the 292nd District Court in Dallas from 1981 until his election to the appellate bench. At the NJC, Judge



Keasler taught *Ethics for Judges*, *General Jurisdiction*, and other courses from 1992 to 2022.

Select custom courses offered in 2023

- Administrative Law Best Practice Webinars for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- Fair Hearing Principles and Practices for the Florida Department of Children and Families, Tallahassee, FL
- Judicial Ethics for the Navy-Marine Trial Judiciary, Coronado, CA
- The Brain, Decision Making, and Identity for the Navy-Marine Trial Judiciary, Coronado, CA
- Fair Hearing Principles and Practices for the Social Security Administration
- Designing and Presenting Effective Courses: A Kentucky Faculty Development Workshop, Lexington, KY
- Opinion Writing for the Nebraska Court of Appeals, Lincoln, NE
- Doing More with Less for Rural Courts, Wichita, KS
- Combating Government Corruption, A Regional Project for Europe
- Determining Impairment in the Field, Wichita, KS
- Administrative Law Advanced for the Department of Energy
- Administrative Law Best Practices for the Minnesota Department of Human Services
- Administrative Law: Best Practices for the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Tampa, FL
- Leadership for Judges of the Colorado 18th Judicial District
- Artificial Intelligence and Admitting Evidence for the Nebraska Judiciary: Deep Fakes and AI
- Judicial Writing for the North Dakota Judiciary and Support Staff
- Fines, Fees, and Costs: A Social Justice Movement Iowa Needs to Be Aware Of
- Vicarious Trauma for the Nebraska Court Personnel



60 Years of Making the World a More Just Place

Los Angeles

Celebrating a Diverse Judiciary



“

I cannot overstate the symbolic power of having someone like me in the position that I am in.”

*-Justice Monica M. Márquez,
Colorado Supreme Court*

Making the World a More Just Place Honorees

Judge J. Michelle Childs, United States Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit

Justice Serge Georges, Jr., Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court

Judge Holly J. Fujie, Superior Court of Los Angeles County

Justice Monica M. Márquez, Colorado Supreme Court

Judge Esther Salas, United States District Court, District of New Jersey

Judge Sunshine S. Sykes, United States District Court for the Central District of California



Diversity matters because when the people that come before us see individuals that look like them, sound like them... that is how we continue to maintain democracy and keep the public's trust. No matter what the attacks are, we know who we are, we know why we are here and we know the tremendous responsibility that each of us holds."

-Judge Esther Salas, United States District Court, District of New Jersey





60 Years of Making the World a More Just Place

Miami

Upholding the Rule of Law



“

The existential threat we are facing right now is the toxic polarization that is like nothing we have seen since 1850.”

***-Judge Thomas B. Griffith
(Ret.)***



Making the World a More Just Place Honorees

Judge Rosemary Barkett, Iran–United States Claims Tribunal, The Hague; former judge, United States Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit; former Chief Justice, Florida Supreme Court

Judge DeAndrea Gist Benjamin, United States Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit

Judge Thomas B. Griffith, U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit

Senator Doug Jones, former U.S. Senator from the state of Alabama

Former Acting Solicitor General Neal Katyal, partner at Hogan Lovells in Washington, D.C.



Chair Edward Blumberg accepting a proclamation from the Miami Mayor's Office.



As a private lawyer, I think we have an obligation to resist those laws, challenges those laws, to bring those cases, to speak out, to do all the things that did not happen in Germany in 1941.”

-Former Solicitor General Neal Katyal, partner at Hogan Lovells in Washington, D.C.



60 Years of Making the World a More Just Place Seattle

Healing and Restoring Our Community



“

The idea is not just to resolve conflict but to problem-solve. That is how we get in the prevention game.”

-Justice Bobbe Bridge (Ret.)

Making the World a More Just Place Honorees

Hon. Bobbe Bridge (Ret.) – former justice of the Washington State Supreme Court

Chief Justice Steven C. González – Washington State Supreme Court

Judge Lauren King – United States District Court for the Western District of Washington

Judge M. Margaret McKeown – U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit

William H. Neukom – former principal legal counsel for Microsoft, chair of Preston Gates & Ellis, LLP and co-founder and CEO of the World Justice Project

Judge Trina L. Thompson – United States District Court, Northern District of California



Restorative Justice Panel

Saroeum Phoung, Founder & CEO of PointOneNorth Consulting

Tarra Simmons, Washington House of Representatives

Professor Thalia González, Professor of Law and co-director for Racial & Economic Justice at University of California College of Law, San Francisco

Jimmy Hung, King County Juvenile Division Chief Deputy Prosecutor

Moderator: Judge David Keenan, King County Superior Court





60 Years of Making the World a More Just Place

New York

Being Heard and Ensuring Fairness

Making the World a More Just Place Award/ Being Heard & Ensuring Fairness Panel

Attorney Steven Banks, special counsel for pro bono practice, the New York City office of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP

Judge Jennifer Choe-Groves of the New York City-based U.S. Court of International Trade

Mario Gabelli, founder, chair and CEO of Gabelli Asset Management Company Investors, based in Greenwich, Connecticut*

Attorney Hank Greenberg of the Albany office of Greenberg Traurig, LLP, chair of the Commission to Reimagine the Future of New York's Courts

Attorney Adriene Holder, chief attorney, civil practice, The Legal Aid Society of New York

Edwina G. Richardson-Mendelson, Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives of the New York State Unified Court System

First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George of the New York State Unified Court System

Chief Justice Robert J. Torres of the Supreme Court of Guam

Chief Judge Rowan Wilson of the New York State Court of Appeals

Chief Administrative Judge Joseph Zayas of the New York State Unified Court System

Chief Judge Thomas Zonay of the Superior Court of Vermont

*spoke during Author's Panel

Author's Panel

Loida Lewis, Chair and CEO of TLC Beatrice, LLC
Why Should Guys Have All the Fun?: An Asian American Story of Love, Marriage, Motherhood, and Running a Billion Dollar Empire

Judge Mark Dillon, Associate Justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, Second Judicial Department
The First Chief Justice: John Jay and the Struggle of a New Nation

Judge Albert Rosenblatt, former Associate Judge of the New York Court of Appeals
The Eight: the Lemmon Slave Case and the Fight for Freedom

Bruce Jackson, Associate General Counsel & Managing Director for Strategic Partnerships out of the Office of the President at Microsoft
Never Far From Home: My Journey From Brooklyn to Hip Hop, Microsoft, and the Law

Moderator: **Judge Bernice B. Donald (Ret.)**, former judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
 Co-Editor, *Extending Justice: Strategies to Inclusion and Reduce Bias*





60 Years of Making the World a More Just Place

Reno

Reflections on the NJC's History



“

The NJC has evolved into an institution of service for all 50 states.”

-Judge William F. Dressel (Ret.), President Emeritus



Chief Justices' Panel - Next Generation: Bench, Bar, & Bots

Chief Justice Shannon Bacon, New Mexico

Chief Justice Susan Larson, Iowa

Chief Justice Lidia Stiglich, Nevada

Moderator: **Chief Justice Robert J. Torres**, Guam

Making The World A More Just Place Awards

Hon. C. Shannon Bacon, Chief Justice, New Mexico Supreme Court

Hon. Janet Berry (Ret.), Nevada, Co-Chair 60th Anniversary Committee

Mark F. Bruce, NJC Board of Visitors

Hon. Susan Christensen, Iowa Supreme Court

E.L. Cord Foundation, Reno, Nevada

Joseph N. Crowley, former President, University of Nevada, Reno

John Farahi, CEO Monarch Casino & Resort

Elizabeth A. Francis, Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno & NJC faculty

Rew R. Goodenow, NJC Board of Visitors

Hon. Procter R. Hug, Jr., Reno, Nevada

Hon. Michael R. Montero, Winnemucca, Nevada

Peter Chase Neumann, Reno, Nevada

Northern Nevada International Center, Reno, Nevada

NV Energy Foundation, Las Vegas, Nevada

Hon. Shelly T. O'Neill, Reno, Nevada

Senator William Raggio & Mrs. Dale Raggio, Reno, Nevada

James T. Richardson, Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno

Hon. Larry Sage (Ret.), Sparks, Nevada

Hon. Brian Sandoval, President, University of Nevada, Reno

Yvonne Stedham, Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno

Hon. Lidia Stiglich, Carson City, Nevada

Hon. Robert J. Torres, Guam

Mark Tratos, NJC Emeritus Trustee

Gordon I. Zimmerman, former NJC faculty



60 Years of Making the World a More Just Place

Las Vegas

Focus on Artificial Intelligence



Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr.,



The hope that AI has is to expand the ability to do justice for all.”

*-Mark Tratos,
NJC Emeritus Trustee*



Making The World A More Just Place Awards

Richard Bryan, former Nevada Governor and Senator

Marvin D. Carr, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Walmart

Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr., co-founder & co-chair, Commission on Presidential Debates

Richard A. Harris, Founding Partner, Richard Harris Law Firm

Lexy Lionel and the late **Sam Lionel**, Philanthropists

Melissa Piasecki, M.D., Senior Associate Dean, University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine

Artificial Intelligence Panels

Hon. Linda M. Bell, Justice of the Nevada Supreme Court

I. Scott Bogatz, Founding Partner, Reid Rubinstein & Bogatz

Anna Mercado Clark, Partner, Governing Committee, Phillips Lytle LLP

Mike Dahn, head of Westlaw Product Management

Mark Davies, Partner, Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP

David Freeman Engstrom, LSVF Professor in Law, Stanford Law School

Leah Chan Grinvald, Dean, UNLV Boyd School of Law

Donna Haddad, Vice President, Associate General Counsel,
IBM Corporation

Daniel M. Hooge, Bar Counsel, State Bar of Nevada

Abe Melamed, Mediator, Signature Resolution

Jay Nogle, Chief Technology Officer, Greenberg Traurig, LLP

Rachel See, Senior Counsel and Vice-Chair for Emerging Technology,
People Analytics Practice Group, Seyfarth Shaw LLP

Mark Tratos, Founding Shareholder, Los Vegas office,
Greenberg Traurig, LLP





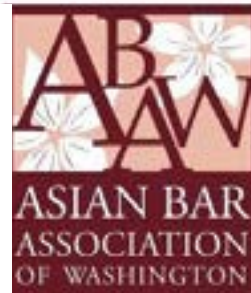
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The National Judicial College would like to extend its sincerest gratitude to the nearly 100 sponsors of our 60th anniversary. The College would not be what it is today without the exceptional support of the legal and business communities coast-to-coast. Thank you for a wonderful year of celebration and thoughtful dialogue, and we look forward to building a future with a strong, independent judiciary together.

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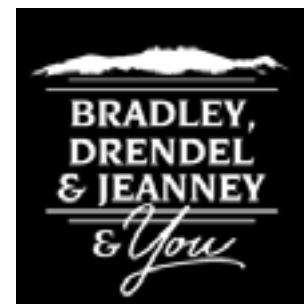
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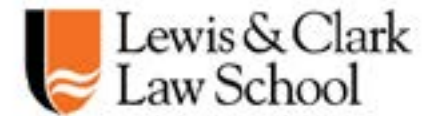


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60 Courageous Judges to mark 60 years

As it observed the 60th anniversary of its founding, The National Judicial College called for nominations of 60 Courageous Judges. The list includes well-known figures from history, such as Frank M. Johnson, the federal judge in the Rosa Parks back-of-the-bus trial in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1956. But the overwhelming majority of the honorees are lesser-known state-court and administrative law judges from around this country and, in a few cases, from foreign countries. There are four tribal judges. Ten of the honorees, including Johnson, are deceased.

“We hope this list raises people’s awareness of and appreciation for the thousands of steadfast judges who keep the promise of equal justice under law every day, including those days when it would be more popular or convenient for them to do something else.”

-Hon. Benes Z. Aldana (Ret.)

The honorees

Hon. William Alsup

Senior Judge, United States District Court, Northern District of California

In 2017, while presiding over a case involving claims related to climate change, he took the unprecedented step of organizing a climate science tutorial in the courtroom in an effort to reach an informed decision in the case.

Hon. Victor Bolden

United States District Judge for the District of Connecticut

In 2023 he ruled that a famed forensic scientist, Henry Lee, fabricated evidence that led to the 1989 murder convictions of two men. He granted a motion for summary judgment in a lawsuit against Dr. Lee. A different judge vacated the murder convictions in 2020.

Hon. James T. Brand*

Oregon Supreme Court Justice; Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal member

Justice Brand was the presiding judge of the Nuremberg panel that adjudicated the guilt of high-ranking Nazi judges, Ministry of Justice officials, and prosecutors. He is thought to have been the inspiration for Spencer Tracy’s portrayal of Judge Dan Haywood in the popular 1961 movie *Judgment at Nuremberg*.

Hon. John Browning

Retired Justice of Texas’s Fifth District Court of Appeals

A White judge in a conservative state, he has for years worked for the posthumous bar admission of minority aspiring lawyers from the 19th and early 20th centuries who were denied admission to the bar because of the color of their skin.



Hon. Charles Patrick Burns

Cook County (Illinois) Circuit Court Judge

National leader in the treatment court field whose drug court, which has operated for 13 years, has earned a national mentor court designation from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. He was voted into the Stanley Goldstein Hall of Fame by AllRise (previously known as the National Association of Drug Court Professionals).

Hon. Adrienne N. Heely Caires

Hawaii Family Court Judge

Evacuated during the 2023 fires on Maui, she continued to come to work to help children and families in Family Court. That included making sure that foster children were safe. She found new shelters and provided psychological first aid for many.

Hon. Dennis Challeen*

District Court Judge, Winona, Minnesota

Longtime National Judicial College faculty member and sentencing-reform advocate who is credited with inventing the concept of sentencing to community service in 1972.

Hon. Samuel B. Cole

Federal Immigration Judge

For the past five years, Judge Cole has served as litigation lead counsel in a number of very high-profile legal battles with the U.S. Department of Justice with the aim of preserving judicial independence for the immigration judge corps.

Hon. Leona Colegrove

Chief Judge of the Quinault Tribal Court in Washington State

She led the development of the Quinault Adult, Family, & Juvenile Wellness Courts. She also led the creation of the joint jurisdiction Hoopa Valley-Humboldt County Wellness Court.

Hon. Angela M. Cox

Florida Circuit Court Judge

Beat the odds as a youngster from a violent Detroit neighborhood, where her older brother was murdered, to become the first African-American woman appointed to the circuit bench in Florida's 4th Judicial Circuit. As the Dean of the Florida Judicial College, she is the first woman and African-American to lead the college in its almost 50-year history.

Hon. Eric Dooyema

Chief Judge, Spokane (Washington) Tribal Court

Known as a fair and impartial judge with a history of ignoring political pressure and is not afraid to make rulings that could jeopardize his position on the bench.

Hon. Marguerite Denise Downing

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge

Former public defender who recognized the issues incarcerated parents faced in trying to participate in dependency cases. Formed a countywide stakeholders work group to identify and eliminate barriers to reunification and participation. Currently trains attorneys and judges across the nation on the effects of parental incarceration on children in the child welfare system.

Hon. Danielle Ta'Sheena Finn

Associate Judge, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

Drives six hours each day to appear in court. Known for effectively balancing contemporary legal standards with cultural customs.

Hon. Tommy Fowler

Judge, Craighead County (Arkansas) District Court

Upon taking office in 2017, Judge Fowler terminated the services of a private, for-profit probation company that had been operating illegally in Craighead County for decades. In response, the company sued him in federal court in his individual and professional capacity. The probation company was known for its predatory practices and for using the court as an arm of its collection operations. After 2½ years, the case was dismissed by the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals on the grounds of judicial immunity.

Hon. Robert Robinson Gales

Chief Administrative Judge, Defense Department Office of Hearings and Appeals

Stood up to Department of Defense officials who complained that the administrative judges in the Defense Office of Hearings and Appeals were going too far in ensuring due process. The department backed down.

Hon. Maya Guerra Gamble

Presiding Judge, 459th District Court of Travis County, Texas

Presided, with intense media scrutiny, over the *Heslin v. Jones* trial that arose out of conspiracy theorist Alex Jones accusing parents of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting victims of being actors in a hoax. She received harassment and threats for her rulings against Jones and also for issuing a TRO blocking a law that would allow private citizens to sue anyone who "aids or abets" abortion after six weeks.



Hon. Ishfaq Ahmad Ghazi

Civil Judge, Judicial Magistrate, District Khyber, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Served as a judge during the peak of terrorist activity in his jurisdiction, a region where people are also skeptical of government-administered justice.

Hon. Donna Leone Hamm

Retired lower-court judge in Coconino and Maricopa counties, Arizona

In 1981 she initiated new ways for defendants to resolve convictions, including many community-service projects. She stood firm when county commissioners objected because community-service sentences reduced county revenues from fines. In retirement she leads a prison-reform organization.

Hon. Paul G. Hatfield*

Judge of the United States District Court for the District of Montana

During a brief tenure in the United States Senate, when he filled a seat vacated by the death of the incumbent, Judge Hatfield cast the deciding vote approving President Jimmy Carter's Panama Canal Treaty. He knew the vote would be extremely unpopular in Montana, and, in fact, it cost him his retention election. But he considered it the right decision. The primary candidate who defeated Hatfield called him "one of the most decent and thoughtful people I've had the privilege of knowing."

Hon. Peggy Fulton Hora*

California Superior Court Judge (Alameda County)

Longtime National Judicial College faculty member who established the second drug treatment court in the United States. She was also the first woman judge in southern Alameda County. After retiring from the bench, she promoted treatment and problem-solving courts all over the world.

Hon. Robin Hudson

Retired Associate Justice, North Carolina Supreme Court

Authored a 2022 opinion striking down North Carolina legislative and congressional districts as partisan gerrymanders that violated the state constitution. The U.S. Supreme Court reversed that part of the opinion but agreed with her that the "independent state legislature" theory was inconsistent with the U.S. Constitution.

Hon. Frank Minis Johnson*

Judge of the United States District Court and Circuit Court of Appeals

Made landmark civil rights rulings in cases, such as the Rosa Parks back-of-the-bus case, that helped end segregation and disenfranchisement of African Americans in the South.

Hon. Joel Ballard Johnson

Texas District Court Senior Judge

Small-town judge known for upholding the rule of law in the face of criticism. He was also known for modeling humility in court by eschewing a robe and sitting in the same chairs afforded defendants, jurors, attorneys and spectators.

Hon. Robert J. Johnston

Former U.S. Magistrate Judge

During most of his career he quietly visited Nevada prisons to listen to and teach inmates.

Hon. Leslie D. King

Mississippi Supreme Court Presiding Justice

In an extremely conservative state, he adhered to the rule of law as established in *Obergefell v. Hodges* shortly after the Supreme Court's decision came down.

Hon. Michael Luttig

Former Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit

Republican who convinced Mike Pence that the vice president had no authority to overturn President Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential election. His running mate, President Trump, insisted otherwise.

Hon. Alli Majeed

Retired Florida County Court Judge

Muslim immigrant from humble beginnings who, against many people's advice, quit his job as a prosecutor and ran for judge in a very conservative county. He won, repeatedly.

Hon. Roy J. Manfredi

Municipal Court Judge in Raton, New Mexico

In 2013, when New Mexico made gay marriage legal, every other judge in Colfax County chose to stop performing ALL marriages in protest. Judge Manfredi chose to follow the law and continued to perform all marriages in the face of public sentiment against his stance.

Hon. Karen Elizabeth Mayberry

Retired Chief Appellate Judge, U.S. Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals

For three years she served as chief defense counsel for the U.S. Military Commissions at the U.S. Naval Station, Guantanamo, Cuba. In that role, she oversaw the individual civilian and military defense counsel providing ethically required legal representation for alien detainees confined for alleged terrorist acts against the United States. These acts included the 9/11 attacks and the bombing of the USS Cole.



Hon. Patrick F. McAllister

Surrogates Court Judge, Steuben County, New York

Struck down a congressional districting map drawn by the state legislature for being unconstitutionally gerrymandered. The Court of Appeals upheld his decision.

Hon. Karen Morris

Brighton (New York) Town Justice

Created Ticket2Ride, an organization that raises money to provide free bus passes to indigent defendants so they can attend court and parole and probation meetings, among other appointments. This reduces bench warrants, wasteful diversion of police time, and unnecessary jail nights.

Hon. Constance Baker Motley*

Judge of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York

From the late 1940s through the early 1960s, she played a pivotal role in the fight to end racial segregation. She often put her own safety at risk in one racially charged situation after another. She was the first African American woman to argue a case before the Supreme Court and the first to serve as a federal judge.

Hon. Sophie Nomee

Associate and Traditional Judge for the Colville Tribal Court

Has represented tribes at many Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) and opiate conferences while enduring many personal hardships, including the loss of her son and her husband.

Hon. Maureen O'Connor

Former Chief Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court

Demonstrated judicial independence and devotion to the rule of law when she was the lone Republican on the Ohio Supreme Court who consistently ruled that members of her own party had drafted political districts that were unconstitutionally gerrymandered. Ohio's first female chief justice, she served in a statewide elected office longer than any woman in Ohio.

Hon. Patrick Oishi

Presiding Judge, King County (Washington) Superior Court

Born and raised on Maui to public educator parents, Judge Oishi taught seventh grade before attending law school. As a prosecutor, he tried more than 90 jury trials. Judge Oishi overcame cultural norms rooted in his Japanese heritage by pursuing a judicial career. He has strived to improve diversity in the legal profession by mentoring diverse law students and attorneys. Judge Oishi is King County Superior Court's first Presiding Judge of color in 30 years.

Hon. Shanta Owens

Alabama Circuit Court Judge

In 2022, Judge Owens formally dismissed charges against two African-American men in Alabama who had been convicted of rape in 1993 and had spent two decades behind bars. She ruled that they had been wrongfully convicted because the state withheld exculpatory evidence from the defense whereby a police report showed that the victim identified another individual as the perpetrator of the crime.

Hon. Aaron R. Petty

Appellate Immigration Judge, U.S. Board of Immigration Appeals

From October 2022 to March 2023, Petty, who is a major in the U.S. Air Force Reserve, deployed to various locations in Africa as the chief legal advisor for a Special Operations Task Group. He provided legal support for missions ranging from medical evacuations to diplomatic engagement.

Hon. James L. Pohl

Retired U.S. Army Judge

While serving as the presiding judge in the Abu Ghraib prison-abuse cases, he countermanded the order of President George W. Bush by stopping the demolition of the prison because it was a crime scene. He later insisted that due process and the rights of the accused be respected when he presided over the military commission trial at the U.S. base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, of five prisoners related to the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Hon. David M. Porter

Polk County (Iowa) District Court Judge

Has refused to bow to political pressure and concerns for his own safety while overseeing the high-profile case of Pieper Lewis, a young woman who at age 15 killed a man to whom she had been sex trafficked.

Hon. Jacob L. Rambo

California Public Utilities Commission

In 2018, he received increasing pressure from managers at a former employer to rule more favorably toward the agencies from which he heard appeals. He was later confronted by a supervisor and pressured to change an adverse ruling against the state. He later disclosed extensive ex parte communications between the employer's counsel and the chief judge.



Hon. Kristin L. Rosi

Chief Administrative Law Judge, California Department of Insurance

Champion of judicial independence who guards against potential political influence at California's Department of Insurance Administrative Hearing Bureau. She also serves as president of the International Association of LGBTQ+ Judges, as programs chair of the ABA Judicial Division, and as chair of the State Bar of California's Council on Access and Fairness.

Hon. Larry Guy Sage

Retired Judge of the Sparks (Nevada) Municipal Court

Decorated Army veteran who helped create Nevada's first limited jurisdiction Alcohol & Other Drug Court and the first Native American Driving Under the Influence Victim Impact Panel for the Washoe, Paiute and Shoshone tribes. During three years in war-torn Afghanistan, he trained judges and prosecutors. As a peace monitor in South Sudan, he located dozens of child soldiers, later freed.

Hon. Esther Salas

Judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey

Survived a gunman's attack at her home in 2020 that killed her son and seriously wounded her husband. She now often speaks publicly and works to pass legislation giving greater protection to judges, including measures to keep their home addresses private.

Hon. Burton A. Scott*

Chief Judge of the Wisconsin Court of Appeals

Former associate dean of The National Judicial College who was known for standing up to administrative officers as chief judge to defend the independence of the appellate court.

Hon. Collins J. Seitz*

Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit

During his tenure as chancellor of the Delaware Court of Chancery, he ruled on a case later combined with several other cases into the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. He determined that segregation was intrinsically discriminatory but that the Supreme Court forbade a ruling on such a basis in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which established the doctrine of separate but equal. Despite this limitation, he ruled that conditions were unequal and that the only remedy that could suffice was integration.

Hon. Kathy Seeley

District Court Judge in Helena, Montana

Made headlines nationally in 2023 with her landmark ruling in a case brought 16 youth plaintiffs. The group argued that the state's fossil fuel policies violated Montana's own constitutionally guaranteed right to a healthy environment. The ruling was particularly unpopular in Montana, a state rich in oil and natural-gas deposits.

Hon. Waqar Ahmad Seth*

Chief Justice of Peshawar (Pakistan) High Court

Judicial leader who stood for constitutionalism, independence of the judiciary, and protection of fundamental rights and civil liberties as enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan.

Hon. John T. Simpson

Coweta (Georgia) Superior Court Chief Judge

Repeatedly challenged the status quo by creating Parent Accountability, Drug, and Veterans' courts that have collected millions of dollars, dramatically shortened wait times, kept people out of jail and become model courts statewide and nationally.

Hon. Thomas Tang*

Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit

Lost re-election as a juvenile court judge in Maricopa County, Arizona, after he sentenced two teenage juveniles who had killed another high school student to probation until they turned 21. He argued that a juvenile court's principal aims should be "correction, rehabilitation and treatment."

Hon. Elizabeth Frances Tavitias

Judge of the Indiana Court of Appeals

Former prosecutor, juvenile defender, juvenile court referee, and family court judge in Gary, Indiana, who was known for serving troubled children and families. She chaired a statewide task force that has proposed guardian ad litem guidelines for civil family law cases.

Hon. Niki Tobi*

Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria

First Nigerian judge to uphold women's rights to inheritance. Known also for his work to advance Nigeria's democracy.



Hon. Lissette Toro Vélez

Regional Administrative Judge, Ponce Region, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

After experiencing first-hand the severe impacts of climate change in the island nation, she received a recognition as a Judicial Leader in Climate Science. She is now a leader regarding the rise in climate-change-related litigation and has promoted an educational program for judges and other government officials on the matter.

Hon. Lisa Walsh

Miami-Dade County (Florida) Circuit Court Judge

Leader of a special program of the National Association of Women Judges that is assisting more than 30 refugee Afghan judges in the United States.

Hon. Reggie Walton

Senior United States District Court Judge for the District of Columbia

A judge known for his integrity in handling several high-profile cases, including those of Trump supporters accused of attacking the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2020, and Scooter Libby, the then-chief of staff to Vice President Dick Cheney. Libby was convicted of leaking the identity of a CIA agent.

Hon. Monica F. Wiley

Supervising Judge, San Francisco Unified Family Court

Has spent the majority of her judicial career working in family law and with system-involved youth to ensure that they are both held accountable and have the opportunity and resources to take a different path. Also involved in raising sometimes unpopular judicial education issues, including implicit bias and its impact on decision making.

Hon. Noël Wise

Judge of the Superior Court of Alameda County, California

In the wake of intense scrutiny directed at the criminal justice system following the police killing of George Floyd, she became the first California judge to write that all judges have an ethical obligation to speak out against racial injustice. Her article is now part of the statewide curriculum in the mandatory New Judges Orientation program.

Hon. Rhonda K. Wood

Associate Justice, Arkansas Supreme Court

Co-host of the Lady Justice: Women of the Court podcast, which educates the public about the role of state courts. Launched in 2020, it is the only podcast hosted by both sitting and former justices of state supreme courts, and it focuses on the hosts' experiences on their state's highest court.

Hon. Genevieve Woody

Navajo Nation Tribal Court District Judge in Shiprock, New Mexico

Judge near the border of the Navajo Nation who has presided over history-making cases. In 2016 she found a fellow Navajo Nation judge guilty of abusing his office and ordered him to forfeit his position.

Hon. E. Kenneth Wright

Presiding Judge, Municipal Department, Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois

Judicial innovator, mentor and frequent public voice for the judiciary who heads the largest district in Cook County, which includes Chicago. Judge Wright is known for eschewing the safe approach in hiring clerks. Instead he often gives opportunities to first-generation college graduates and young people who, often for reasons beyond their control, might not appear on paper to be star candidates. His innovations include creating a Flex Court for people who can't afford to attend court during business hours.

Hon. Nandakishor Prasad Yadav

District Judge, Bajhang, Nepal

Judge whose docket includes organized crime cases in Nepal. In 2021 the country finally achieved the standards to graduate from the United Nations' list of Least Developed Countries.

*deceased



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