

COURT COLUMN

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A NEWSLETTER OF THE JUDICIARY OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA



The Louisiana Supreme Court receives nearly 3,000 filings annually and consistently maintains a current docket.



The Louisiana Protective Order Registry (LPOR) provides around-the-clock service receiving --21,600 in 2009-- and verifying court orders prohibiting domestic abuse and dating violence. LPOR received the prestigious Criminal

Justice Information Services Division Assistant Director's Award for Outstanding Contribution to State and Local Public Safety. It was the first of 45 state registries and the only court-managed program to win the award.



There are 48 drug courts and one family dependency court operational in Louisiana and overseen by the Louisiana Supreme Court Drug Court Office. 19 drug courts have been in operation over 10 years, approximately 3,300 clients are supervised monthly and as of December 31, 2009 there have been 988 drug court graduates. The recidivism rate is 9.7% after one year of graduation; 5.4% within two years of graduation.



In 2008/2009 new lawyer advertising rules were adopted to improve the existing rules and to better protect the public from unethical and potentially misleading forms of lawyer advertising.



In concert with the executive and the legislative branches of government, the judiciary enacted a financial disclosure rule for state court judges in an effort to raise the standard of government transparency.



Several judges and court personnel currently serve in leadership positions of a number of national organizations including: the American Judges Association; the American Bar Association; the National Conference of Court of Appeal Judges; the National Association of Court Managers; the Conference of State Court Administrators; the National Court Appointed Special Advocates Association.



The Louisiana Supreme Court award-winning web site includes a language translation tool which translates 31 languages, a news release alert service and live online tech support. Additionally, Louisiana Supreme Court oral arguments are streamed live on the court web site for anyone, anywhere to see.



The Judicial College, which operates from LSU Law School, provides continued legal education for members of the judiciary. In Louisiana judges and lawyers are required to earn 12.5 hours of continuing legal education hours annually to keep them abreast of important developments in key areas of law including ethics, professionalism and law office management.



Ahead of the trend, in 2002 the Louisiana Supreme Court established a Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee to help deter impermissible judicial campaign conduct through education and oversight. To date 17 of 39 states who elect judges have followed suit.



Using the Judges in the Classroom handbook developed by the Louisiana District Court Judges Association, judges across the state have reached out to schools by participating in civics classes and by encouraging students to become future lawyers, probation officers, or judges rather than defendants. Additionally, through the Supreme Court Ride-Along Program, state judges have hosted legislators for a day "on the bench" to allow them to experience firsthand the complexity and volume of cases handled day-to-day by a judge. Drug Court Ride-Alongs have been a particularly successful outreach effort.

10 ways Justice works for you



Justice Bernette Johnson receives Distinguished Civil Rights Advocate Award

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law presented Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Bernette Johnson with its Distinguished Civil Rights Advocate Award at a reception hosted in conjunction with the National Bar Association's 85th Annual Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana. In keeping with the Lawyers' Committee's annual tradition of recognizing a champion of equal justice from the local community during the reception, Justice Johnson was honored "for stellar civil rights achievements and efforts to champion the cause of equal justice.

"Her extraordinary legacy as a public servant, advocate on behalf of poor and disenfranchised persons and mentor and role model for women and youth has impacted countless lives," said Lawyers' Committee Executive Director Barbara Arnwine.

In addition, Justice Johnson was also inducted into the National Bar Association Hall of Fame during its 24th Annual Hall of Fame Ceremony during the annual convention.

The National Bar Association Hall of Fame was inaugurated in 1986 by then President Fred D. Gray, Sr., to honor those lawyers who have been licensed to practice for forty years or more and who have made significant contributions to the cause of justice including those "who have by, through and within institutions in their communities, states and this nation, extracted and demanded the greater good for all."

"I am thrilled to receive this award from the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights," said Justice Johnson. "Your organization has always been on the front lines, fighting for equal justice for all Americans. I could not ask for a better gift then to receive this award in my hometown at the 85th Annual Meeting of the National Bar Association."

For more information about the LCCRUL, visit www.lawyerscommittee.org.



(l to r) National Bar Association Executive Director Robert Carr, honoree Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Bernette J. Johnson, CNN's Soledad O'Brien, who accepted the Distinguished Civil Rights Advocate Award on behalf of the network, and Lawyers' Committee Executive Director Barbara Arnwine.



(l to r) Prudential Foundation President Gabriella Morris, Louisiana Supreme Court Justice and 2010 National Bar Association Hall of Fame inductee Bernette J. Johnson, National Bar Association President Mavis Thompson, Rachael Johnson and U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Carl E. Stewart.

Stinson Honored for NACM Service

Suzanne H. Stinson, 26th Judicial District Court Administrator, received an award of appreciation from the Louisiana Court Administrators Association (LCAA) in recognition of her distinguished service and outstanding achievement as the 25th President of the National Association of Court Administrators (NACM). The award ceremony took place during the NACM annual conference held in New Orleans July 20-24, 2010. The award was presented to her by Louisiana Supreme Court Judicial Administrator Hugh M. Collins, Ph.D. on behalf of LCAA.

According to Collins, "The award honors Stinson's national achievement and leadership in serving this past year as President of NACM, the largest organization of court management professionals in the world. She represented NACM, an organization with 2,000 members from the United States, Canada and Australia with excellence, and in so doing, made Louisiana proud."

Stinson graduated magna cum laude from Louisiana Tech University and has a Master of Business Administration degree and a Master of Arts degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Louisiana Tech University. She also received her Fellowship from the Institute for Court Management. She is a past-president of the Louisiana Court Administrators Association and is a member of the American Judicature Society, Bossier City Mayor's Commission for Women, Junior League of Shreveport/Bossier City, Bossier Parish Truancy Interagency Committee, and the Forum on Advancement of Court Technology. She is also a member of the board of directors for the National Center for State Courts, on the advisory board of the Institute for Court Management and is a past-president of the Rotary Club of Benton. Stinson served on the Louisiana Supreme Court's State Court Rules Committee and the Disaster Recovery Planning Committee. She was appointed by Governor Jindal to serve on the Louisiana Board of Examiners of Certified Shorthand Reporters.

In 2010-2011, Stinson will continue to hold a significant leadership role in NACM now serving as the Immediate Past-President.



(l to r) 26th JDC Judge Ford E. Stinson, 26th JDC Court Administrator Suzanne Stinson, Caddo Juvenile Court Administrator Ted Cox, and Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Deputy Judicial Administrator Tim Palmatier.

Deuce is a Boost at Drug Court Graduation

At an August 2010 Drug Court graduation ceremony held at Orleans Criminal District Court, former New Orleans Saints running back Deuce McAllister, who played for the team 2001-2008 and rejoined the team briefly for their play-off run to the Super Bowl XLIV championship, served as the keynote speaker to the group of 12 adults determined to turn their life around.

Deuce McAllister



Judge Lemmon presides over drug court graduation

29th JDC Judge Lauren Lemmon recently presided over a graduation ceremony for six St. Charles Parish residents, bringing the total of graduates to 71 of the parish's Drug Court program.

"It's really a privilege for me to be able to hand these people those certificates," said Judge Lemmon. "Helping people and seeing people succeed to me is what this is all about."

In 2001, St. Charles Parish began its Drug Court program and is still led by Program Coordinator Jackie Cristina.

"Before I got involved with Drug Court, I didn't realize the struggle that an addict goes through," said Cristina, who discussed the difficulties program participants face. "Now I understand it. It's a shame that these people have to have this convicted felon stigma hanging over them because they're all good people and they want to do good."

By coincidence, one graduate taking part in the ceremony was able to show that very fact to the attorney who was originally responsible for enrolling her in the drug court program and who was now presiding over her graduation - Judge Lauren Lemmon.

"I've kind of come full circle," said Judge Lemmon, who serves alongside the parish's other judges, Emile R. St. Pierre and Robert Chaisson, in presiding over the drug court program.

29th JDC Judge Lauren Lemmon with a graduate of the program, who Lemmon enrolled when she served as her attorney.
Photo by Dwan Switzer, St. Charles Parish Government



Portrait of Justice Revis O. Ortique, Jr., Is First to Hang On SULC Alumni Judicial Wall of Fame

The unveiling of a portrait of the late Justice Revis O. Ortique, Jr., which will be hung in the new North Wing of the Southern University Law Center, was the opening highlight of the 2010 Justice Revis O. Ortique, Jr., Symposium on Law, Politics, Civil Rights, and Justice.

The portrait by artist Jim Thorns was presented to the Law Center by the Ortique family. During her remarks, Miriam Ortique, wife of the late Justice, announced that the family will establish a book scholarship at the Law Center to be awarded during next year's symposium.

Chancellor Freddie Pitcher, Jr., stated that the Law Center family wholeheartedly accepts the portrait, as well as additional support to law students through the book scholarship. In welcoming the late Justice's wife and daughter, as well as Thorns, he said, "This portrait is appropriately the first to be hung on what we plan to dedicate as the alumni judicial wall of fame."



Pictured from left: artist Jim Thorns, Miriam Ortique, Rhesa McDonald, and Chancellor Pitcher.
Photo by Michelle Jackson

32nd JDC Judge Randy Bethancourt's outreach numbers total 13,000

32nd JDC Judge Randy Bethancourt may not have seen them all - but he's pretty close. Since he first developed his "Judges in the Classroom" program in January 2003, Judge Bethancourt has had 13,000 Terrebonne Parish students participate in the program.

"We try to instill in the students some basic principles - respect for authority, telling the truth, orderly conflict resolution, and being held accountable for your own actions, all of which are principles upon which our court system is based," said Judge Bethancourt. "I believe you are never too young to begin learning about these basic fundamentals."



32nd JDC Judge Randy Bethancourt and students from Archbishop Rummel High School discuss the system of government during his Judges in the Classroom Program.

Along these lines, Judge Bethancourt has developed educational, grade-appropriate programs (one hour, two hour, or three hour formats), suitable for kindergarten through twelfth grades. For the program Judge Bethancourt either hosts the students at the courthouse or visits them at their school. At his direction, the students take part in mock legal exercises designed to involve them in the decision-making process, allowing them to debate and make choices on their involvement in actions, the guilt or innocence of those involved and thought processes in reaching the conclusion of guilt or innocence. To this end, Judge Bethancourt explains how laws are applied in court and the roles the three branches of government each play.

At the conclusion of the session, each student receives a certificate for attending a court education program. Additionally, Judge Bethancourt also sends a letter home to each student's parent or guardian with information on their participation in the Judges in the Classroom program.

"I hope that by introducing students to the legal system in this fashion, giving them the opportunity to learn about the court, and ask questions and gain a better understanding of the process, we can have them return to the court as a lawyer or judge, instead of someone in trouble with the law," said Judge Bethancourt.

Judge Bethancourt's involvement in the Judges in the Classroom program began after his introduction to it by 4th JDC Judge Ben Jones. For more information on Judge Bethancourt's program, contact his office at (985) 873-6580.

COURT COLUMN SUBMISSIONS

We would like to encourage judges, clerks of court and court administrators to submit any outreach activities, awards received, or other "good news" about your court to rgunn@lajao.org for publication in future issues of Court Column.

First Circuit Court of Appeal Judges Hold Court at LSU & Southern Law

Judges from the Louisiana First Circuit Court of Appeal riding circuit at SULC were (from left) Judge John Michael Guidry, Chief Judge Burrell J. Carter, and Judge John T. Pettigrew.



Earlier this year, Judges of the Louisiana First Circuit Court of Appeal held hearings at Southern University Law Center, with oral arguments being presented before a three-judge panel consisting of Chief Judge Burrell J. Carter and Judges John Michael Guidry and John T. Pettigrew.

Prior to that, the First Circuit held hearings in the David Robinson Courtroom at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center, with oral arguments being heard by the judges sitting in three-judge panels. The first set of hearings were before Chief Judge Burrell J. Carter, and Judges John Michael Guidry and John T. Pettigrew; the second set were before Judges Randolph H. Parro, James E. Kuhn, and J. Michael McDonald; and the third set of hearings were before Judges Bob Downing, Edward James Gaidry, and Page McClendon.

The hearings were before nearly 450 people at the LSU and Southern Law Centers combined.

"Each spring, we are invited to LSU's and SU's law centers," said Chief Judge Burrell J. Carter. "Holding court at the schools gives the students an up-close and intimate look at courtroom decorum and procedure—an opportunity to see actual judges, lawyers, and court employees interact. The students attending are the future of our profession. It's an honor to contribute, in some small way, to their education and professional development."

On occasion, as part of its educational outreach program, the First Circuit travels to various locations within its jurisdiction, such as Southern University or Louisiana State University, to hold court. Chief Judge Carter invites the public to attend the hearings, with a special invitation extended to law, government, criminal justice, and civics classes. The court is domiciled in Baton Rouge and normally holds hearings at its courthouse located at 1600 North Third Street.

City Court of Slidell Launches Web Site

In an effort to better serve the community, City Court of Slidell launched its new web site: <http://www.citycourtofslidell.com>. Members of the community can now pay most traffic tickets online as well as now having the ability to fill out and print the most frequently requested Court forms. All this plus the most frequently requested Court information is now available around the clock, not just during Court hours.

"We did a lot of research because we felt it critical to have a web site that would be friendly and useful as a community resource. That enabled us to zero in on what services could reasonably be offered online," said Judge James "Jim" Lamz. "I believe this also benefits our continual effort to be more efficient in delivering our services."

Linked easily from the web site's main page is the portal to paying a ticket online. Most tickets are eligible; tickets that cannot be paid online are violations that require a Court appearance and some tickets where the Court appearance date has already passed, Lamz said. For those opting to pay their tickets online, an administrative fee of ten percent will be automatically levied.

"More people come to the courthouse to pay a traffic ticket than for any other reason," Judge Lamz said. "With the lack of parking in the area, on busy Court days this can make it a real hassle for people who just need to pay their tickets. Plus, so many people in our community are more and more reliant on being able to go online to pay bills that we believe they will appreciate this as a convenience."

In addition to paying tickets online, Judge Lamz said a large segment of the population turns to the Internet first to get information about agencies such as the Court. This drove the need to make the web site easy to navigate so the most frequently needed information was simple to find. Among the most frequent reasons people call the Courthouse are for directions to the Courthouse, information on filing evictions and information on filing in Small Claims Court, Lamz said. That's why visitors to the web site will find all this information prominently accessible from the main page. On the main page, there is also a clickable map to help drivers plot their route to the Courthouse, whether they live in the city or in another area.

The two most frequently requested forms are now available online, Lamz said, for use by anyone filing an Eviction or a Small Claims suit in Slidell City Court. These forms are designed for visitors to be able to type in the required information, print them and bring them to the Courthouse for deputy clerks and the Marshall's office to finish with official information and signatures before they are officially filed. The Court will begin uploading other forms to the web site as well, based on demand.

In addition to a FAQ page, the web site also has pages to assist those who must come to a Court session. There is information and advice on proper Court decorum, dress codes and arranging for hearing assistance or an interpreter. For adults in the probation program, a separate page has extended information most commonly requested by participants, Lamz said.

Lamz said he hopes users of the web site will send any suggestions for improvement or correction to the Court. A hotlink to the Court's e-mail address on the main page makes this very convenient, he said. Future improvements to the web site will be influenced by this feedback, he said.



Court Tours

Associates study *Plessy v. Ferguson* docs



Summer associates from Irwin Fritchie look over the filings from *Plessy v. Ferguson* on display in the Louisiana Law Museum, located on the first floor of the 400 Royal Street building.

Azerbaijan officials visit Supreme Court



Officials from Azerbaijan visited the Louisiana Supreme Court and toured the Law Library of Louisiana as well as the courtroom.

Academy of Law & Public Service Tour



Students from Pensacola High School's Academy of Law & Public Service traveled to New Orleans to visit the Louisiana Supreme Court as part of their continuing education on the judicial system.

Court Tours

Justice Guidry meets with French political leaders



Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Greg G. Guidry (l), met with two political leaders from France, Fabien Robert, Deputy-Mayor, City of Bordeaux and Council Member, Bordeaux Urban Community; and Pierre-Yves Jean Bournazel, Municipal Councilor, City of Paris, 18th Arrondissement and Regional Councilor. These leaders visited several cities in the United States as part of the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program and explored U.S. systems of government at all levels and the U.S. political process.

Chaffe McCall Summer Associates



Head of Technical Services Miriam Childs informs Summer associates from Chaffe McCall about the collection of rare books held by the Law Library of Louisiana.

Your Honors



Louisiana Supreme Court Justice **Bernette J. Johnson** was a 2010 inductee into the Louisiana Justice Hall of Fame.



Orleans Criminal Court Judge **Arthur L. Hunter, Jr.** became the first recipient of the "Sara J. Harper Humanitarian Award." Judge Hunter received the award at the National Bar Association's 39th Annual

Meeting 10th Annual Thurgood Marshall Judicial Awards luncheon.



4th JDC Judge **Wendell Manning** was recently awarded the Louisiana State Bar Association's Crystal Gavel Award for his many years of service educating students about legal matters, volunteering

with the American Red Cross and working with the court system to make it more hospitable for victims of crime.

32nd JDC Judge **Randall L. Bethancourt**, 3rd Circuit Court of Appeal Judge **Sylvia R. Cooks**, and 24th JDC Judge **John J. Molaison** were named board members of the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education. 4th JDC Judge **C. Wendell Manning** is immediate past president.

24th JDC Judges **June Berry Darensburg** and **Ellen Shirer Kovach** were honored by Victims and Citizens Against Crime, Inc. for their work to help improve the justice system.

4th JDC Judge **Daniel Ellender**, 22nd JDC Judge **Allison Hopkins Penzato**, New Orleans Municipal Court Judge **Sean Early**, and Orleans Criminal District Court Magistrate Commissioner **Marie Bookman** were named Fellows of the Louisiana Bar Foundation.



Judge **John Michael Guidry**, a 1987 graduate of the Southern University Law Center, was one of six alumni to be inducted in the 2010 SULC Hall of Fame.

Judges **Leon L. Emanuel, III** and **Ramona L. Emanuel** of the 1st JDC, and Orleans Parish Criminal District Court Judge **Benedict "Ben" Willard** were presented with 2010 Alumni Leadership Awards by Southern University Law Center Chancellor **Fred-die Pitcher, Jr.**, during the 85th National Bar Association Annual Convention held recently in New Orleans.

The judges were honored for their leadership, service to the legal community, and dedication to the Southern University Law Center.



Judicial Family Institute re-launches Web site

The Judicial Family Institute has announced that the redesigned JFI web site is online to view and use all its resources and materials at <http://jfi.ncsconline.org/>.

The redesigned site was built based on comments and suggestions from JFI members and chairs, as well as the JFI board, with the goal of making the site a useful tool for members of the judiciary and their families.

Feedback and comments from members are vital in making the web site a useful tool. A 'How Are We Doing' evaluation at this link <http://www.ncsconline.org/SelectSurveyNET/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=92L1912> will take users to a feedback evaluation form which can be submitted. Users will also find this feedback evaluation under Contacts, then click on 'How are we doing?'

"We want to continue to keep this web site current, relevant, and a valuable resource you will use and share in the years to come," said **Isabel Picó-Vidal**, who served as JFI chair during the redevelopment. "This site is a perfect way to connect with your colleagues, review what other states have available, and to share resources."