

2003 State of the Judiciary Address

Excerpts from the 2003 Address to the Louisiana House and Senate

On behalf of the Louisiana Supreme Court, thank you for this opportunity to speak to you on the state of the judiciary.

This is my fifth "State of the Judiciary" address. I look forward to speaking to you every two years. My regularly-scheduled remarks represent a relatively new tradition, although prior to 1996, Chief Justices occasionally addressed this esteemed body. I believe our presence here serves a dual purpose of updating you on the performance of the state judiciary while serving as a reminder of the functions and nature of our respective branches of government.

My own experience and that of the other Justices is an appreciation and deep respect of your role in our state government. This bicameral legislature is inferior only to the Constitution of Louisiana as adopted by the people of our state. As legislators, you pass the laws for our state. Under the state Constitution, we are required to respect, interpret, and apply those laws, and on occasion, to determine whether a law that you pass comports with our state and federal constitutions.

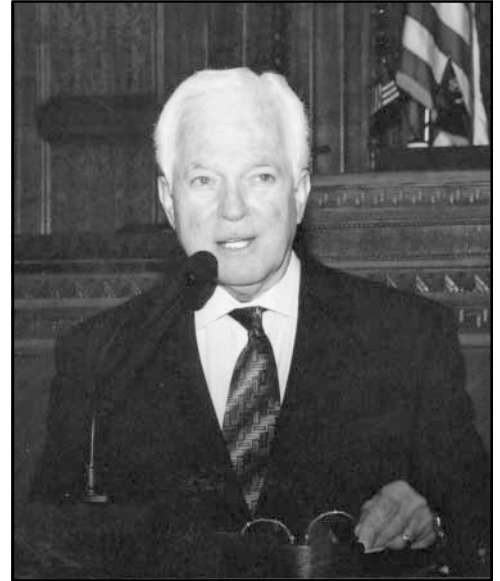
Last week I marked my 13th year as your Chief Justice, and I thank each of you for your courtesy and your friendship over the years, and for the respect you accord the Supreme Court and its Justices. I also would like to thank all of you and Governor Mike Foster for your assistance and cooperation.

I especially commend you for providing the funds to complete the renovation of 400 Royal Street to house the Supreme Court and the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal. I promise that this precious landmark will become one of the great jewels in this state's rich treasury of historic buildings, and a fitting symbol for justice in Louisiana.

Since I last spoke to you, we bade a fond farewell to Justice Harry T. Lemmon of Luling who retired in May 2001 after 21 years of distinguished service on the Court. John L. Weimer was elected in the fall of 2001 to succeed Justice Lemmon and to complete his unfinished term. In the fall of 2002, Justice Weimer was reelected from the Sixth Supreme Court District to a full ten year term. We were also saddened by the loss of retired Supreme Court Chief Justice John A. Dixon, Jr. of Shreveport who died just last month.

Much has occurred both in the world and in the state judiciary since I last appeared before this body. We all experienced the horror and the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The historic courthouse in Pointe-a-la-Hache was destroyed in a tragic fire. Tropical Storm Isidore and Hurricane Lili disrupted court dockets and courthouses throughout the state. Every district judgeship was up for election in the fall of 2002, and we welcomed many fresh faces to the bench. The Supreme Court traveled from one end of the state - Nicholls State University in Thibodaux - to the other end, University of Louisiana at Monroe - for oral arguments, and several Canadian judges from Quebec traveled to New Orleans to participate in our annual Fall Judges Conference last year. In response to your request that funding for state drug courts be channeled through the Supreme Court, we created a Supreme Court Drug Court office which is responsible for the disbursement of state funds to district courts that are operating drug courts with the goal of sustaining and improving the operation of the drug court. I am pleased to report that this effort is proving quite successful.

In 2001, the Court also completed its work on the issue of permanent disbarment of attorneys. Months of study and deliberation culminated in the issuance of an Order codifying the Court's ability to disbar an attorney permanently in the most egregious cases and to ban him or her from applying for readmission. Another long-standing and



Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero, Jr. addresses the Louisiana Legislature during his biannual State of the Judiciary Address.

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C O R N E R

C O L L I N S



*Terence H. Sims, Ph.D.
Judicial Administrator*

There is a new deputy in town... by that I mean a new Deputy Judicial Administrator in the Judicial Administrator's Office. **Terence H. Sims**, a Certified Public Accountant and Certified Forensic Examiner, with a Master of Science degree in Accounting/Taxation from the University of New Orleans and over 15 years of experience in progressively responsible accounting positions, is now heading up our Accounting Services Department.

The Accounting Services Department, formerly the Fiscal Department, is tasked with providing responsible fiscal management for the judicial branch of the State of Louisiana. With Terence Sims comes a renewed commitment to efficiency, skilled accounting services and financial management, and attentive customer service. He is supported by a strong team of experienced professionals who work together to keep the department's wheels turning, including: **Randy Certoma**, Fiscal Manager; **Melissa Geohegan**, Accounts Payable Specialist; **Melanie Ahern**, Payroll Accounting Specialist; **Patrick Stoufflet**, Grants; **Nioka Wilson**, Accounting Clerk; and student worker **Shanté Sullen**.

One of the first improvements made in the Accounting Services Department under the new leadership was an intensive week-long training to cross-train staff and to advance their technological proficiency. Other innovative approaches to enhance productivity are currently on the drawing board and with this talented group of individuals working together I expect good things to come.

For more information about the Accounting Services Department of the Judicial Administrator's Office contact Terence Sims at (504) 568-2032.

Supreme Court Law Day 2003 Poster Contest

25 entries were received for the "What Law Day Means to Me" poster contest sponsored by the Louisiana Supreme Court. The contest was open to Louisiana middle and high school students participating in the Celebrate Your Freedom Youth Summit conducted by the Louisiana Center for Law Related Education on Thursday, May 1, 2003.

Winning entries were chosen by a panel of Louisiana Supreme Court staff members based on creativity, interpretation of theme and artistic expression. The winning entry was on prominent display at the Louisiana Supreme Court for the month of May 2003, and is posted on the Court's web site, www.lasc.org.

Additionally, the winning school, St. Mary's School in Natchitoches, also received a visit from the justice elected from that district, Justice Jeffrey P. Victory of the Second Supreme Court District, who visited with the entire law-related education class.

1st Place: Melanie Quintero (l) of St. Mary's School in Natchitoches, La., is congratulated by Executive Counsel Sandra Vujnovich of Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero Jr.'s Office.



Justices Honored at New Orleans Bar Event

The Justices of the Louisiana Supreme Court were recently guests of honor at the New Orleans Bar Association's Supreme Court luncheon. Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero, Jr. served as the guest speaker for the event. Over 200 attendees from New Orleans area firms attended the luncheon.

Justices of the Louisiana Supreme Court gather with the past presidents of the New Orleans Bar Association.



Supreme Court Hosts Visitors from Near East



Louisiana Supreme Court Clerk of Court John T. Olivier explains the system of law and the structure of the court system in Louisiana to a group of visiting judges, attorneys and legal professionals from the Near East.

The Louisiana Supreme Court hosted a group of visitors from the Near East which included judges, lawyers, and other legal professionals from Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Ramallah and Yemen.

While at the Court, the group learned about Louisiana's judicial system and court structure, the appeals process, judicial districts and the election of judges, the filing of cases, and the influence of Civil Law on Louisiana's courts.



Judges Gray and Konrad Address Legal Issues Affecting Children

Orleans Parish Juvenile Judge Ernestine Gray and Jefferson Parish Juvenile Judge Nancy Konrad were featured speakers at the Women's Leadership Initiative's (WLI) 2nd Annual Public Policy Breakfast, *Children — Our Focus and Our Future* held at the Audubon Tea Room in New Orleans. Over 400 WLI members and guests were given a view from the bench of the workings of the child protection system.



Judge Ernestine Gray



Judge Nancy Konrad

Joining them for the program which specifically addressed the issues of child abuse and neglect, foster care and prevention were Marketa Gautreau, President and CEO of Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana, and Kären Hallstrom, Louisiana Supreme Court Deputy Judicial Administrator — Children and Families, who served as moderator.

According to Hallstrom, "The Women's Leadership Initiative has taken a courageous step today by taking a hard look at the very uncomfortable topics of child abuse, neglect and foster care. It is encouraging that this dynamic association recognizes the importance of proactive involvement in improving the welfare of children."

Judge Gray provided a procedural overview of what happens once an abused and neglected child enters the court system up to

adjudication and Judge Konrad continued with what happens to the child from adjudication through permanent placement. The judges' comments also included information on the federal law on safe and permanent placement of children, volunteer efforts such as CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), mediation in child abuse and neglect cases, and the work of the Louisiana Juvenile Justice Commission.

Gautreau discussed Louisiana's child abuse and neglect prevention efforts and the *Platform for Children and Youth of Louisiana*, a plan designed to transform Louisiana from its low national ranking (49th) in its care of children.

The highlight of the program were comments and a musical performance by Robbie Steiner, a recent Metairie Park Country Day School graduate, an accomplished composer and musician and a former foster child "success story" from the Greater New Orleans area.

The WLI, an arm of the United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area, is comprised of hundreds of corporate, civic and community leaders with a mission to support the unique health and human service needs of women and children in the Greater New Orleans Area through leadership, philanthropy and advocacy.

Supreme Court Approves Appellate Pilot Mediation Program

The Louisiana Supreme Court has approved an appellate Pilot Mediation Program proposed by the First Circuit Court of Appeal. The Court will fund the one-year program designed to resolve disputes as early in the appellate process as possible and participation in the mediation program will be at no cost to the parties.

"This pilot mediation program will aid the First Circuit Court of Appeal by resolving cases in a timely fashion which will ultimately benefit the attorneys, litigants, judicial system and society at large. Having served as a mediator before becoming a judge, I have seen firsthand that mediation is an effective tool in dispute resolution," said Louisiana Supreme Court Justice John L. Weimer.

Participation in the mediation program is completely voluntary. If all parties agree to mediation, mediation will take place within 60 days of the agreement to participate. Mediations will take place only in those cases where all parties agree to participate.

According to First Circuit Court of Appeal Chief Judge Burrell J. Carter, "Confidentiality is an important component of the program. All material received by the mediation program will be maintained separate and apart from the regular court records and will not be accessible to members of the court and will only be available to the mediators and staff assigned to administer the program. The judges of the First Circuit will not be advised which cases have been selected for the program and whether or not the parties elect to participate."

The state court appellate Pilot Mediation Program adopted by the First Circuit Court of Appeal was modeled after the federal court mediation program which has been successfully in operation at the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans since 1996.

For more information on the First Circuit Court of Appeal Pilot Mediation Program contact Chief Judge Burrell J. Carter at (225) 222-4171, Judge Page McClendon at (985) 624-3310, or Clerk of Court Chris Crow at (225) 342-1500.

CYBER COURTS

National Center for State Courts Court Technology Conference, CTC8
www.ctc8.net

Law Library of Louisiana Online Catalog
<http://207.67.203.47/L20013/Index.asp>

National Criminal Justice Reference Service
www.ncjrs.org

National Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Judicial Campaign Conduct
www.judicialcampaignconduct.org



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much debated issue which came to fruition since we last met was the adoption of uniform Court Rules for the district courts throughout the state with appendices which respect some necessary local situations. These Court Rules for civil and criminal proceedings have been in effect since April 1, 2002. And in a continued effort to be accessible and “user friendly” to attorneys and the public, the Supreme Court launched a redesigned web site which can be found at www.lasc.org and I invite you to visit our site.

The fall 2002 judgeship elections saw the newly created Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee in action throughout the state. In response to a request by the Oversight Committee, 216 incumbent judges and judicial candidates signed a Campaign Conduct Acknowledgment form in which they acknowledged that they had read, understood and were bound by the judicial campaign ethical provisions of the Louisiana Code of Judicial Conduct. The Oversight Committee also conducted six comprehensive and lengthy educational presentations statewide which focused on the restrictions on judicial campaign activities enumerated in the Code of Judicial Conduct.

During the fall judicial elections, the Oversight Committee received 32 complaints concerning judicial campaign conduct, and issued one public statement. The 15 member Oversight Committee, chaired by New Orleans attorney Harry Hardin, worked tirelessly and did an exceptional job. In my view, the general tenor of this year’s judicial campaigns was much improved over past campaigns, and I look forward to the continuing involvement of the Oversight Committee in future judicial campaigns.

The Supreme Court has also continued to comply with the Judicial Budget and Performance



(l to r) Supreme Court Justices John L. Weimer, Jeannette Theriot Knoll, Jeffrey P. Victory and Catherine D. “Kitty” Kimball await the 2003 State of the Judiciary Address from Chief Justice Pascal F. Calogero, Jr. to the Louisiana Legislature.

Accountability Act of 1999. We have completed Strategic Plans at all court levels, and each year we submit an Operational Plan to you. Also, each year, we issue a State of Judicial Performance report, which is entitled “Justice at Work”. And since passage of the Act, we have conducted four successive annual Performance Audits, including review of state courts’ compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act; review of state courts’ compliance with the Adoption and Safe Families Act; review of our Attorney Disciplinary system; and the most recent audit, a review of the Court’s Judicial College.

Despite these examples of progress in the state judiciary, we have also seen some missteps. Some say our state judiciary, much like our society in general, has recently witnessed untoward events. Over the last two years, five members of the judiciary have been suspended from their

“The purpose of a judicial system is justice. I have been part of the judicial system as a justice for 30 years and I can say with conviction that we are not doing justice by our children, or for our society at large, because the juvenile justice system is terribly flawed. It must be changed. It should be changed now.”

offices, two on an interim basis. One judge was removed from office, while another recently pleaded guilty to criminal charges. The number of judicial discipline cases has the Judiciary Commission working overtime. Some commentators and pundits will, no doubt, make much of these facts to argue that our system is broken and needs to be fixed. My view is just the reverse. I believe that the increased number of prosecutions in the judicial discipline system, as well as the bar discipline system, demonstrate that both systems are working quite well. These systems are staffed with highly competent administrators and highly dedicated judge, attorney and lay volunteers who have more than proven to be up to the challenges presented recently.

About a decade ago, we first started using the terms “professionalism” and “civility”, and there seemed to be an outcry that the legal profession was no longer either civilized or professional. The litany was that the legal profession, once held in such high esteem, had fallen below the rank, in reputation, of a used car salesman. However, over the past ten years, because of the work of both the bench and bar, I have seen a dramatic increase in attention and dedication to the improvement of our legal profession from within. This commitment has been directly proportionate to the growing increase in numbers in our ranks. Today we have approximately 20,000 attorneys in Louisiana, which is up from 18,000 only a few years ago. The legal profession, in spite of the jokes and aspersions cast upon it, continues to be an attractive profession. Surely college students and others considering law school are well aware of the significant proliferation of lawyers. But perhaps they believe the truism that “there are never enough good lawyers.”

And so they enter this profession today from all walks of life — rich, poor, young, old, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, etc. The legal profession is no longer a reflection of the privileged and educated upperclass. Rather, it has become reflective of the society that we live in. As the ranks of the legal profession have become more open and diverse, so too have the ranks of the judiciary. Take our Supreme Court. We are a Court of seven members, four male justices, three female justices, one African-American, Democrats and Republicans (although I will refrain from noting how many of each), with an age spread spanning almost 1/4 of a century from myself as the oldest to our newest elected Justice, John Weimer, who, at 48, is the youngest. I am encouraged by this growing diversity in the state



judiciary, and I believe this diversity is good for the system and for the public in general.

Turning now to another matter, I would like to thank you, the Legislature, and the Governor for accepting my request two years ago for "all three branches to examine the issue of the current state of our juvenile justice system and to take bold steps to improve it." Your immediate action and commitment to this endeavor was impressive and of great credit to this body, and in a recent resolution adopted by the Supreme Court, we officially and unanimously acknowledged and commended the Louisiana Legislature for creation of the Joint Legislative Juvenile Justice Commission and its Advisory Board.

On the basis of the excellent work of the Commission and all those participating in the Commission's process, you now have before you an Omnibus Juvenile Justice Reform Bill, an Omnibus Juvenile Justice Reform Resolution, and other affiliated legislation. I am informed by the Commission's chair and by others that a remarkable consensus has been reached on the need for reform and on the general vision, goals, and strategies proposed by the Commission in this legislation. Whatever disagreements remain, I am told, are primarily over means and not ends and over the timing of implementation. Let us hope that this analysis is true.

I wish to speak to you today on this issue, not as a spokesperson for the Supreme Court, not even as a Justice, but as a concerned citizen and parent who has been deeply involved in the judicial and legal process for many years - a concerned citizen and parent who is horrified by gang shootings and murders in our schools, and who sees reform of our juvenile justice system as perhaps preventing such future violence by ensuring that juveniles in the system do not just bide their time there waiting for their release and learning how to become hardened criminals.

It is now decision time in Louisiana. And the whole nation is watching to see whether we will truly deliver comprehensive juvenile justice reform.

There are those who may recommend that you enact only cosmetic changes this session and not tackle the full scope of reform. There are those who may ask you to postpone consideration of the entire package until the next session. And there are those who may recommend delays in the implementation of the reform until further studies or pilot programs are completed. But I am here to urge you to support the reform bills and resolution this session essentially as presented.

The success of the entire reform effort rests upon the adoption of two key recommendations. These key recommendations, in my opinion, are first, the establishment of a Department of Children, Youth and Families, which will ensure greater coordination, communication and collaboration among those who deal with the needs of children, youth and families. A single

"It is now decision time in Louisiana. And the whole nation is watching to see whether we will truly deliver comprehensive juvenile justice reform."

Department will facilitate a more effective system of delivering services to our juveniles through a single point of entry and decentralization of service delivery through community-based, school-based and regionally based organizations. A single Department will also save money by eliminating redundancies. Such savings can be reinvested into local and regional treatment programs. Further, a single Department can concentrate on developing a more appropriate culture and system for implementing all reforms relating to youth corrections.

The second recommendation of the reform effort is to begin the process of developing a balanced juvenile correctional system as quickly as possible. A balanced system will place more money into initiatives at the front end, such as prevention and early intervention, rather than back-end services such as secure detention. It will also place considerable resources into sanctions for juvenile delinquency that are more effective and less expensive than incarceration. Finally, a balanced juvenile correctional system will use smaller secure detention facilities located in local areas for local youth with a continuum of services for rehabilitating offenders.

We need to reduce juvenile incarceration rapidly, providing for those offenders who can be moved to more effective and less expensive alternatives, and reinvesting the savings into prevention, early intervention, and other alternative sanctions, as an abundance of national research recommends, until we have achieved the right balance of services and sanctions.

Failure to enact these two critical recommendations - establishment of a single Department of Children, Youth, and Families and development of a balanced juvenile correctional system - will, in my opinion, significantly reduce the effectiveness of all other of the Commission's recommendations and will constitute a failure to achieve reform in this session.

Some may say that more time is needed to study these issues. But the Commission has already spent two years doing just that. It has conducted 21 public hearings in which more than 2,000 people participated. It has surveyed more than 500 people on the principles of the comprehensive strategy. It has also received advice

and information from some of the best national think tanks in the nation as well as from local university researchers. And, from what I have read and understand, the Commission has built into its recommendations more than enough time for planning and studying these issues during the process of implementing them.

Others may say that these reforms are too comprehensive to address during an election year and that we should wait to consider these issues at the next session with a new governor. But what better time is there to debate and decide this issue? We have momentum, consensus, media and popular support, and national attention. Furthermore, the people of Louisiana have waited long enough. The reform will take years to achieve. But let us not delay its beginning. The time to begin is right now and the place to begin is right here.

The purpose of a judicial system is justice. I have been part of the judicial system as a justice for 30 years and I can say with conviction that we are not doing justice by our children, or for our society at large, because the juvenile justice system is terribly flawed. It must be changed. It should be changed now.

In conclusion, let me again say what an honor and privilege it is to be before you today. I would be remiss if I did not mention the employees of all of our state courts, their relatives, and the employees, relatives and friends of you, the members of the Legislature, who are at this moment fighting in a distant land to promote, protect and preserve the freedoms and democracy that we enjoy, and which give us the opportunity to be here today, participating so actively in our state government. On behalf of the state judiciary, thank you to our soldiers, especially our Louisiana sons and daughters. May all of you return safely home soon. And thank you, the dedicated members of our state Legislature, for opening your chamber to us today, for your attention to my remarks, and for your unfailing devotion to the people of Louisiana.



The Louisiana State Capitol Building in Baton Rouge



Law Day 2003 - "What Freedom Means To Me"

In recognition of Law Day 2003 theme, *Celebrate Your Freedom: Independent Courts Protect Our Liberties*, Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Bernette J. Johnson presided over a mock trial presented at the Louisiana Supreme Court by 36 fifth-grade students from Port Sulphur High in Plaquemines Parish.

The mock trial is the culmination of a 12 week program, Project L.E.A.D. (Legal Enrichment and Decision-making), which is sponsored by the Plaquemines Parish District Attorney's Office and provides several Assistant District Attorneys to teach the L.E.A.D. classes.

"The L.E.A.D. classes are designed to help students recognize and analyze potential consequences of the difficult decisions they face during adolescence and beyond. By focusing on peer pressure, responsibility, self-respect, self-control and self-esteem, Project L.E.A.D. gives students the tools necessary to avoid many of the pitfalls and traps that often lead to delinquent conduct and criminal activity," said Plaquemines Parish District Attorney Darryl W. Bubrig, Sr.

The Project L.E.A.D. mock trial revolves around a fictitious case where a student is charged with selling drugs on the Plaquemines High School campus. According to Justice Johnson, "Using this law-related education model, these students have



Justice Bernette J. Johnson presides over the Project L.E.A.D. mock trial involving 5th grade students from Port Sulphur High School at the Louisiana Supreme Court.

learned firsthand that the rule of law protects our freedoms in a democracy and that legal cases are decided by applying the law to the facts, not by the passions of the moment or by public opinion. This program is a shining example of what Law Day is all about."

Law Day, May 1, was established by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1957 in an effort to celebrate the American legal system and strengthen understanding of the American heritage of liberty, justice and equality under the law.

In addition to hosting the mock trial, the Louisiana Supreme Court also sponsored a "What Law Day Means to Me" Poster Contest for Louisiana middle and high school students participating in the Celebrate Your Freedom Youth Summit conducted by the Louisiana Center for Law Related Education.



The Project L.E.A.D. mock trial at the Louisiana Supreme Court.

Justice Weimer at New Iberia Law Day Event



(l to r) Louisiana Supreme Court Justice John L. Weimer, Iberia Parish Sheriff Sid Hebert, Theresa LaCour, Major Richard Boudreau and Chief David Landry speak with students at Belle Place Middle School in New Iberia as part of Law Day 2003 outreach programs.



Project L.E.A.D. signboards provides students with additional direction for their mock trial.



Curly Pig Provides Lesson in Law to Monroe Kids

Members of the Tri-District Boys and Girls Club of Monroe learned valuable lessons on law during a Law Day mock trial at the 4th Judicial District Court in Monroe.

4th JDC Judge Carl Sharp served as an observer for the event which saw Curly Pig accused of attempted wolf-boiling of Big B. Wolf.

Danny Ellender, incoming president of the Monroe Bar Association, said the mock trial was held to teach elementary school children about the judicial system and the law.

"It was a great experience for me," said Tara Harris, a Madison James Foster Elementary student who presided over the proceedings. "I learned the process that judges go through in court."

Ultimately, a jury made up of Boys and Girls Club members found Curly Pig not guilty.



4th JDC Judge Carl Sharp and acting judge Tara Harris observe as a Boys and Girls Club member undergoes cross examination during the Curly Pig v. Big B. Wolf Trial in Monroe.

Photo by Michael Dunlap/Monroe News-Star

Wolf and Pigs Square Off in Court for Hammond Fifth-Graders

A not guilty verdict was handed down by fifth-graders from D.C. Reeves Elementary following the mock trial of "Wolf and Pigs Square Off in Court" at Hammond City Court.

The mock trial, held in conjunction with Law Day events, was presented by Hammond and Pontchatoula High School students. The goal was to allow the young students to see firsthand how court cases are tried in real life said Rob Carlisle, Director of Juvenile Services for Hammond City Court.

Hammond City Court Judge Grace Bennett Gasaway and retired judges John Kopfler and Leon Ford III were joined by Court officials as well as a number of city and parish officials and educators to witness the program.

Judge Gasaway's program, which has been in place since 1997, targets all third- and fifth-graders in the 7th Ward to learn about juvenile laws and family and school rules.



Judge Grace Gasaway and the Mock Trial participants

Justice Knoll Keynote Speaker at Joint Law Day Ceremony



Justice Jeannette Theriot Knoll served as the keynote speaker at a Law Day Ceremony held by the 14th and 38th Judicial District Courts.

The ceremony, held in Courtroom A of the 14th JDC, recognized a number of citizens for their work in aiding the administration of justice including Kathy Haas with the Office of Family Court with the Liberty Bell Award. Other awards presented included the Law Enforcement

Award and The Albert Tate Chapter of the American Inns of Court Professionalism Award.

First-place winners from local schools in the courts' Law Day Poster and Essay contests were announced and were presented with a medal and items from the state Supreme Court by Justice Knoll.

National Association of Women Judges Introduce Students to the Law and the Judiciary

As Director of District Six, National Association of Women Judges, 40th JDC Judge Mary Hotard Becnel presented The Color of Justice Program on May 2, 2003. 40th JDC Judges Becnel and Madeline Jasmine co-sponsored the program.

The purpose of the Color of Justice program is to encourage minority students in the 8th through 12th grades to consider the law and judgeships as career goals. Schools in St. John the Baptist Parish that have grades 8 through 12 chose students to participate in the program.

A diverse group of faculty panelists, consisting of judges, lawyers, law clerks, law school professors, and law school administrators, shared personal testimonials with the students participating in the program. One of the judicial panelists, Judge Sylvia Taylor-Steib, stated that it was "Inspirational and commendable to let students know that their dreams and goals are attainable and that they can achieve if they believe."

After the program, students participated in discussions during lunch with the faculty panelists, thus furthering their opportunity to discuss the many possible careers in the legal profession.

For further information contact 40th JDC Judge Mary Hotard Becnel, or Paula Adams Ates, Judicial Law Clerk at (985) 497-3855 x 214 or la40jdc2@eatel.net.



Presiding: 40th JDC Chief Judge Mary Hotard Becnel, NAWJ District 6 Director, LA, MS, AL, TN. From Left: Orleans Parish Civil District Court Judge Michael G. Bagneris, 40th JDC Judge Madeline Jasmine, Hon. Sylvia Taylor-Steib, Judge, Office of Workers' Compensation, Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal Judge Thomas F. Daley.



IPSO FACTO... *The Sun Shines On*

When sitting as a district court judge, Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Catherine D. "Kitty" Kimball presided over family matters where all too often she saw children who never seemed to hear a kind word. "It was my dream to find a way to bring that kind word to each and every Louisiana child." In 1998 her dream came true in the form of a book entitled *You Are Sunshine*, authored by her friend, psychotherapist Shirley Porter and brightly illustrated by Lisa Homan-Conger. *You Are Sunshine* is written to address issues that affect young children's self-esteem and while it is designed to be read to children, it also contains information on ways parents and caregivers can build a child's self-concept.



IT'S A FACT:

In 1998, there were originally 18,000 copies of *You Are Sunshine* in print. The long-term goal was to print and distribute 160,000 copies of the book to Louisiana four and five year olds. Five years later, the **You Are Sunshine Foundation, Inc.** has printed and given away 300,000 books. The distribution of the books has been a project adopted by the Louisiana National Guard. Uniformed guardsman visit classrooms across the state to read *You Are Sunshine* to the children and to give copies away. Recently 5000 copies of a French language edition of *You Are Sunshine* were created for children in Acadiana's French immersion classrooms. The next place *You Are Sunshine* is likely to pop up is at the Governor's Mansion....a "Sunshine Garden" is planned for the grounds in recognition of the book and its very important message. For more information about the Sunshine Foundation, Inc. contact Shirley Porter at (225)751-5800 or visit the web site at www.sunshinefoundationinc.org.

YOUR HONORS

■ 14th JDC Judge Patricia A. Minaldi was confirmed by the U.S. Senate to fill a vacancy as U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana. She was sworn in on June 19 at a ceremony in the Calcasieu Parish Courthouse.



■ Retired Third Circuit Court of Appeal Judge Henry Yelverton was named the 2002 Distinguished Jurist by the Louisiana Bar Foundation

■ Orleans Parish Civil District Court Judge Piper Griffin was named a 2003 Honoree at the 37th Data News Trailblazer Unsung Heroes Celebration.

■ 16th JDC Judge John E. Conery was appointed to the Board of Governors of the American Judges Association (AJA) to fill a vacancy in AJA's 6th District which covers Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. He will be eligible for election by the membership to a full three-year term at the Association's annual conference in September.

■ Eleven judges from Orleans Parish, all graduates of St. Augustine High School in New Orleans, were honored by the school during a recent ceremony. Honored were Judges Dennis Bagneris, Michael Bagneris, Herbert Cade, Dennis Dannel, Arthur Hunter, Charles Jones, Robert Jones, Bruce McConduit, Lloyd Medley, Kern Reese, and Benedict Willard.



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