

NEWS RELEASE



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Louisiana Chief Justice to Receive Opperman Award

Des Moines, Iowa – Pascal Calogero, Jr., chief justice of Louisiana, is the winner of the Fourth Annual Dwight D. Opperman Award for Judicial Excellence. Chief Justice Calogero was chosen by a three-member panel: Judge Richard Cooch, Superior Court of Delaware; Judge Marc Amy, Louisiana Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit; and Chief Justice Ronald George, California Supreme Court. The award will be presented later this year.

The American Judicature Society (AJS) is a national nonpartisan organization which works to improve the administration of justice and public confidence in the American justice system. AJS created the Opperman Award to honor a sitting state judge of a trial or appellate court who has had a career of distinguished judicial service.

Chief Justice George, chair of the selection panel and last year's Opperman Award recipient, said, "Chief Justice Calogero has rendered extraordinary service to the people of Louisiana during his 34 years of service as a member of that state's Supreme Court, including almost 17 years as Chief Justice, both through his decisions demonstrating commitment to the rule of law and his leadership in bringing about numerous advances in the administration of justice."

Chief Justice Calogero was nominated by four individuals: James Coleman, Sr. of Coleman, Johnson, Artigues & Jurisich; Hon. Eldon Fallon of the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana; Harry Hardin of Jones, Walker, Waetcher, Poitevent, Carrere & Denegre; and Dr. Norman C. Francis, President of Xavier University of Louisiana. In the nomination letter, the nominators said of Calogero:

"As Chief Justice since 1990, he has been at the forefront of judicial reform in Louisiana, and the number and the significance of the reforms he has instituted in this period to improve justice in Louisiana are nothing short of remarkable."

Chief Justice Calogero was elected to the Louisiana Supreme Court on four separate occasions, and is currently serving his last term of office. Upon the expiration of the current term on December 31, 2008, Calogero will be mandated to retire, and will hold the title of the longest serving Justice in the history of the Louisiana Supreme Court.

It was in his role as Chief Justice of Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina that Chief Justice Calogero showed truly outstanding leadership. Because of Calogero's quick action to temporarily relocate the Supreme Court to Baton Rouge, the Louisiana Supreme Court never stopped operations, thus no case backlog occurred during the recovery process. Under Calogero's leadership, the Louisiana Supreme Court also authorized out of state lawyers to practice law in Louisiana on a limited basis in order to provide pro bono assistance to hurricane victims.

The award is named for Dwight D. Opperman, former chairman and CEO of West Publishing Company. Opperman is a former AJS vice president, director, and executive committee member. In 2004, Opperman was honored by the National Center for State Courts with its Distinguished Service Award. He currently serves on the AJS Board of Directors as a Distinguished Lifetime Director.

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