

Courtside

NEWS FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO SUPERIOR COURT

FALL 2009

The Success of E-Filing

During my nearly 38 years in the San Francisco Superior and Municipal Courts, I have been impressed repeatedly by staff and Bench members when it comes to creative problem-solving and efforts to achieve efficiencies. This is especially true when it comes to e-filing, which involved the leadership and perseverance from both groups as well as members of the asbestos bar and an existing service provider.

Five years ago, a committee formed to explore solutions to a paper-intensive asbestos caseload that was proliferating in our Court. Since 1998, mandatory e-filing was in place for a handful of complex civil cases. In addition, voluntary e-filing was available for all asbestos cases. But the problem with the program was that less than 10 percent of the asbestos filings were voluntarily e-filed — which did little to reduce the Court's growing filing and storage needs. It was clear the need to manage paper-intensive asbestos cases was urgent. Of California's 58 Superior Courts, our Court carries the largest asbestos caseload — more than 1,660 active pending cases, which account for about two-thirds of the entire asbestos caseload in the state.

The success of mandatory e-filing for asbestos cases has some judges eager to expand the practice beyond asbestos cases. The IT Committee, led by Judge Curtis E.A. Karnow, is exploring what steps would be necessary to offer e-filing in single-assignment and other complex cases.

Expanding e-filing would definitely require new rules, as was the case five years ago when Judges Tomar Mason and Ernest Goldsmith worked with representatives of the asbestos bar and representatives of LexisNexis File and Serve, to draft a new general order and necessary agreements to establish mandatory e-filing and service for all asbestos cases. The committee members who worked on this significant undertaking devoted many hours over more than two years to draft, finalize and implement the Court's general order mandating e-filing and service, according to Judge Mason.

On August 14, 2006, General Order 158, which mandated e-filing and service for asbestos cases, was signed and issued. This order allowed the Court to better manage these paper-intensive filings and also provided tremendous cost savings to litigants. Every filing is done electronically, with the exception of the initial complaint.

The work has paid off. Three years later, nearly 4 million pages have been filed electronically in asbestos cases through the LexisNexis File & Serve service. This service has transferred more than \$13.3 million in statutory filing fees to the Court electronically thereby saving Court staff the need to receive and receipt fees in the traditional manner. In addition to cost savings achieved through not having to produce paper copies, litigants have realized thousands in savings by not having to serve filings by mail, through delivery services or by other means. *continued on page 2*



San Francisco Superior Court Hosts Spectacular Training Day

By Jeanie Dobbs

On Saturday, March 21, 2009, the San Francisco Superior Court hosted the largest California Court Association Northern Training Day in history. Three hundred court personnel from all over California turned out for this immensely successful day-long training at the San Mateo Marriott Hotel.

Presiding Judge James J. McBride keynoted the lunchtime merriment following morning classes that kicked off after Assistant CEO Sherri D. Camps welcomed the clerks in the general assembly session. Workshop choices included Defaults, Criminal, DMV,

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Adrienne Williams and Larrisa Dotson take a break to enjoy a successful Training Day after many hours of planning.

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Courtside

SUPERIOR COURT OF
CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

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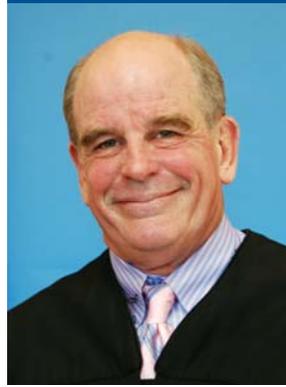
About this Publication

The Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco, publishes *Courtside* periodically to highlight the achievements of the Court's Judicial Officers and staff.

It currently is an electronic newsletter distributed to San Francisco Superior Court staff, Judicial Officers and Court professionals throughout California.

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Presiding Judge



James J. McBride

Communication is More Essential than Ever

The Court's \$9.8 million budget deficit for Fiscal Year 2009-2010, a 10.7 percent reduction, requires close daily scrutiny of spending and *Courtside* is no exception. Beginning with this issue, *Courtside* will be printed in a reduced page count. To achieve further savings, *Courtside* is now an electronic newsletter, which means that it will be distributed to recipients' in-boxes, posted on our Web site and on the Intranet.

Last year, the Court published two issues of *Courtside* and incurred design and printing charges of \$14,626. This issue of *Courtside* cost \$750 to produce, and the Court is planning two 8-page issues this fiscal year.

These cost reductions do not diminish the importance of this internal publication for our Judicial Officers or staff. We know from the feedback that we have received that *Courtside* has been valuable and effective in promoting communication and camaraderie among the various elements of the Court. However, there is no getting around the fiscal restrictions faced by this Court and the Judicial Branch as a whole — especially when employees are facing 10 unpaid court closure days between September 2009 and June 2010.

To address our current deficit, the Court has instituted a hiring freeze, a travel freeze and adopted a voluntary furlough program. The Court also has deferred facilities projects and dipped into its fund balance reserves to solve the budget gap, leaving us in a precarious position next July 1, when we anticipate having just \$500,000 in Court reserves.

Predictions are that next year the State and the Judicial Branch will face another deficit in an amount that remains uncertain. We all will be challenged to find new ways to manage on a restricted budget. However, the Court's Judicial and Executive leadership remains committed to the goals of preserving staff and avoiding layoffs while maintaining services to the public. Many of you have attended the budget meetings I held with CEO Gordon Park-Li and members of the Administrative staff. During these four series of meetings since January 2009, we have given you budget updates and answered your questions. We will continue to share information with you as we monitor our spending plan for the current fiscal year and size up the storm clouds that loom for the next fiscal year.

These are challenging economic times and they are cause for concern. But I want you to know that during my 2-year term as the Court's Presiding Judge, communication — inside and outside the Court — is an important value for me. *Courtside* — even in its scaled down version — is one way to accomplish that commitment.

James J. McBride
Presiding Judge

The Success of E-Filing

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We can draw strength and confidence from this powerful example of successful collaboration among the Court, the asbestos bar and private entities — teamwork at its best. In the midst of the worst economic crisis in our lifetimes, the Court will need to replicate this type of success as we seek more efficient ways to do business and save money. Presently, staff members are engaged in proactive efforts to change long-standing inefficiencies. We look forward to sharing those details with you in upcoming issues. Until then, keep up the great work and thank you for all that you do to distinguish our Court.

Gordon Park-Li
Chief Executive Officer

On My Honor: Chief Justice Lauds Public School Teachers

Twenty-five school teachers excitedly gathered in San Francisco for a reception with California Supreme Court Chief Justice Ronald M. George, who commended their dedication to teaching students about the Judicial Branch.

The teachers, who participated in the *California On My Honor: Civics Institute for Teachers* in Summer 2008, came to the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) on Oct. 24 to display their students' work on the Judicial Branch. The goal of the program, sponsored by the AOC, is to increase the public's understanding of the role of the Courts in California and foster greater awareness about the Judicial Branch.

"As educators you've played a pivotal role in our society by teaching children about the values and expectations that underlie our system of democracy," Chief Justice George said. "The teacher can have a profound effect on a child that is manifested long after he or she has left his classroom. Teaching is much more than simply imparting knowledge. Teachers can inspire, open new doors, help reach goals and help set new ones. It's a weighty responsibility and we in California are most fortunate to have individuals like you willing to take the challenge."

On July 8, 2008, the group of 25 teachers spent a week at the Institute, held at the AOC. (Editor's Note: The program also was held in Summer 2009.) During their study, the K-12 educators came to the San Francisco Superior Court to meet with judges and staff and observe Court proceedings. Then-Presiding Judge David L. Ballati and Chief Executive Officer Gordon Park-Li also joined the group for lunch that day to talk about the Court and answer questions.

The enthusiasm the teachers brought back to their classrooms was evident in the gallery of students' work, which included thoughtful and detailed projects demonstrating the students' focus on the role of the Superior Courts in California.

"As teachers you are training the next generation of participants in our society," Chief Justice George told the teachers. "Understanding our system of government and the principles that underlie its structure and its role are fundamental attributes of an informed public. Unfortunately, all too often we have found that public information about the government ... and the Judicial Branch



(Left) Chief Justice Ronald M. George takes questions from California public school teachers.



(Below) Fran Chadwick, an assistant professor and organizer of the *Teacher's Institute*, is pictured with a California school teacher's classroom project. Also pictured are: Sherri D. Camps, ACEO; Marilyn Sage, Managing Court Reporter; Joyce Long, Court Reporter; and Catharine Price of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

and the role of the Courts in particular, is sadly lacking."

Praise for the Professor

Gregg Primeaux, a high school civics teacher in Orange County, praised Fran Chadwick, an Assistant Professor at Cal State San Marcos, for running the program with the help of Catherine Price, Senior Court Services Analyst with the Executive Office Programs Division.

"Her leadership is the key to keeping the passion and the fire in the Institute," he said of Professor Chadwick.

Primeaux said one of the Institute's strengths is collaborative lesson planning that result in classroom curriculums that achieve the goal of increased student learning about the Courts. The creativity displayed by teachers and students was evident in the gallery, he said.

"To see it done a different way is the best professional development we can do as educators," he said.

Primeaux said he was especially impressed with creativity displayed by elementary school teachers. "It's amazing how much work they do," he remarked.

Chief Justice George expressed gratitude to the teachers for their commitment to advancing education about the Judicial Branch.

"We're very grateful that each of you has taken the time to invest in learning more about the subject of civics and especially the role of the Judicial Branch," he said. "We estimate that the participants to date in the Civics Institute will have the opportunity to share their knowledge with 15,000 students statewide this coming academic year."

Improving Court Access

Chief Justice George acknowledged that the AOC was relying on the teachers to help impart core values important to the state's 58 trial courts.

"For the past several years, the Courts have focused on how to best improve their ability to provide fair impartial and accessible justice for all," the Chief Justice said. "Fair and impartial justice ... is the cornerstone of a judicial function." He added that the public's access to justice is essential because "if the Courts are not accessible to everyone who needs their services, then they truly cannot be said to ensure justice for all."

Black History Month Event Focuses on ‘Change Through the Years, A New Birth of Freedom’

Diversity certainly is a known strength of the San Francisco Superior Court — but the 5th annual Black History Month celebration also showcased the extraordinary artistic talents among staff and judges.

Held Feb. 17 at the Hiram W. Johnson State Building, Milton Marks Conference Center, San Diego Room, Court staff and judges were treated to a delicious buffet. The program of events that followed focused on educating the audience about Black history, accomplishments achieved by overcoming oppression and artistic contributions that have made a lasting impact on American history and culture.

The menu lived up to its billing, with a tasty selection of Black History Month luncheon favorites, including fried catfish, fried chicken, barbecue ribs, cornbread, greens and macaroni and cheese. The delectable dessert selections included red velvet cake, peach cobbler and coconut cake. The guests enjoyed the buffet while chatting with fellow Court employees at tables festively decorated with African American artifacts. The celebration's costs were covered by attendees, who eagerly paid \$15 for the hot lunch, dessert and program of events.

Staff Talents Shines

When it was time for the program in the auditorium of the Hiram W. Johnson State Office Building, the audience rose for the singing of “*Lift Every Voice and Sing*,” the Negro National Anthem. Judge Teri Jackson, who served as the event's Mistress of Ceremony, urged people to sing the anthem often — not just during Black History Month celebrations.

“It is a song that should be learned by our children and we should sing it at every opportunity,” said Judge Jackson, who recounted that as a child, her father required her and her sister to sing the beginning of the anthem before the family sat down for dinner.

A crowd favorite — and one of the Court's best-kept-secrets — came when Instructional Designer Orin Johnson performed acappella — to the crowd's delight.

Johnson wowed the audience with his moving solo performance of “*Since I Fell for You*” (music and lyrics by Buddy Johnson (1941).

Judges Take the Stage

Judge John Dearman discussed the impact of the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of*



(Above) Nicole Davis eloquently recites a poem during the San Francisco Superior Court's Black History Month celebration.

(Below) Judge Jeffrey Tauber takes center stage to entertain Judges and Court staff.



Education decision, in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that separate public schools for children based on race was unconstitutional. He recalled that he was a senior in a Black college in the South when the decision came down.

Judge Dearman, the longest-serving member of the San Francisco Bench who retired in March, also detailed other Civil Rights-era struggles, including voter registration efforts. “They used all kinds of tricks to prevent Black people from voting,” including poll taxes, Judge Dearman told the audience.

“We've made tremendous progress,” Judge Dearman said. “But when you think about all of the things that Black people ... had to go through to get where we are, you'll understand why now that Black people have seemingly arrived. But we still feel that to get to where we are — what we had to go through, it's a miracle that we have gotten to where we are today,” which elicited enthusiastic applause from the audience.

Visiting Judge Jeffrey Tauber entertained the audience with several numbers, including his saxophone rendition of “*Mercy, Mercy*,” which he said reflects “a lot of what was going on in the 60s and 70s.” He also shared some photographs of a dozen East Bay Blues' clubs where he said he has the privilege of learning how to play from talented musicians.

“It's sad that they've left us because none of those clubs are here anymore,” he recalled. “In a sense I was very lucky because I had an opportunity to learn how to play music with some amazing players and some great teachers. And so this is a little bit of tribute to that time.”

The Historic 2008 Presidential Election

Donna Guillory, Supervisor, Counselor/Mediator, reflected on the pride and emotion many African Americans experienced since Barack Obama was elected as America's first Black president.

“Here today I think many of us can really feel in ourselves that this is the most exciting time,” Guillory said. “But we have to remember the African American experience includes the unspeakable horrors that we've talked about ... (and) determined resistance. Our rise to full citizenship speaks to the universal truths of the Declaration of Independence, the Underground Railroad and all of the other marked achievements that have brought us here today.”

This year's celebration reflected a chronology of “Change Through the Years: A New Birth of Freedom.” The amount of planning and research for this year's program was evident in oral presentations as well as the Souvenir Educational Booklet, both of which detailed African American history from The Birth of the Bondage Period — 1600s – 1890s, through the historic achievements of 2009: President Obama's inauguration as the 44th President of the United States, as well as the NAACP's 100th anniversary on Feb. 12, 2009.

The other sections focused on: The Harlem Renaissance Period; The Civil Rights Period; The Great Achievements Period (1980s – 1990s); and the New Leadership Period.

“We have made a long, long journey towards progress,” Court Administrator Barbara Cockerham said from the podium. “Change has come to America. Change will continue to come to America. Of course that doesn't mean that the struggle is finished. It only means that we're getting closer and closer to the finish line.”

Brandon Riley, Training Director, thanked CEO Gordon Park-Li, Assistant CEO Sherri D. Camps, and Presiding Judge James J. McBride for their support. He also acknowledged the Planning Committee for its work on another successful Black History Month celebration.

Court Employees Donate Toiletries to Needy

In October, the Office of Collaborative Justice sent out a court-wide dispatch for donations to its “Just the Essentials” drive. Court employees generously responded, quickly filling the collection boxes to the brim with toiletries during the first two weeks of November.

Lisa Lightman, the Director of the Office of Collaborative Justice Programs, said she was amazed at the Court’s response to the drive, which benefits clients who are transitioning from custody to one of the Court’s Collaborative Justice Programs.

Boxes Overflow

“I can’t say enough,” Lightman said. “The Court was amazing. I thought when I sent out that original email that maybe there would be a few people who would respond, but it was just overwhelming.”

Lightman said she and her staff were delighted when they repeatedly received calls from employees who told her that the boxes in Room 205 at the Civic Center Courthouse and Room 101 in the Hall of Justice were overflowing with soap, shampoo and other hygiene products.

“It was a win-win because no one knows what to do with all of those items,” Lightman said. “You can’t use it all. It was something that people could give but it didn’t cost them anything.”

Lightman added that some people donated money or toiletries that they bought especially for the drive. Other people dipped into their closets for the hotel items they brought home with them but never got around to using.

Lightman said the idea for the drive originated with case managers at the Drug Court Treatment Program.

“The case managers said this is really a problem when clients are leaving jail to enter into a treatment program,” Lightman said. “Oftentimes they are homeless or marginally housed and their personal hygiene is compromised.”

Kate Godsey, the Drug Court Coordinator who runs the Treatment Access Program at 509 6th St., thanked Court employees for their generous donations. She has witnessed many grateful clients in



Kate Godsey checks the availability of donated toiletries in a bin at the Treatment Access Program.

crisis who needed the products as they transition into treatment.

“I never dreamed it would work,” recalled Godsey, who said she was initially skeptical of the drive’s success. “People really responded. It was incredible. People kept coming with new shampoos and new big bottles of things.”

At the end of the drive on Nov. 14, Megan LaFrenz, the Collaborative Justice Courts Program Coordinator, joined Jeannie Kilmer, Administrative Manager of the Drug Court Treatment Access Program, on a weekend to sift through the donated items. They spent that day on their own time organizing the shampoos, soaps and other items into plastic bags.

Grateful Clients

Godsey said she has seen people break down in tears when they received the bags of products. “They’re so grateful for anything,” she said.

Recently Godsey said her staff was able to give a woman a bottle of perfume. “She thought that was the greatest thing — to have something like that — a little luxury. It’s not something essential, but just something to make them feel cared for and nurtured.”

The treatment center used to have hygiene packets to hand out to clients, which were donated by a company, Godsey recalled. However, those packets are no longer available to clients entering treatment who often have neglected basic personal hygiene.

Court employees should know that their donations are making a huge difference to people in need, Godsey said. “They didn’t know that it really mattered to somebody,” she said. “When people have nothing, and they haven’t had any type of nurturance for a long time, it really makes a difference.”

On January 29, 2009, the LEAP Program held the first LEAP Awards Ceremony for the Court, an event the graduates designed to acknowledge their milestone. The LEAP Awards Ceremony recognized the specific accomplishments of those participants in the Court’s new professional development program. The awards, as well as the ceremony, represented the adjourning phase of the group’s yearlong learning process.

The LEAP Program presented awards in the following four categories — Program Completion, Stars of Distinction, Competitive Evaluation and Participant Nomination.

CATEGORY I: LEAP Graduates 2009 (Program Completion) - Each of the individuals listed have received a LEAP 2009 Completion Certificate. These certificates are only awarded to individuals who have attended all of the courses and completed the LEAP program’s related assignments:

Angevic Agdeppa; Ruby Gumpal Alberto; Geraldine Anderson; Michael Bareng; Nancy Bautista; Dena Braley; Beverly Bramlett; Cheryl Consing; Leslie Garcia; Leslie Gomez; Gina R. S. Gonzalez; Dianne Hakewill; Tim Kneis; Tim Lavorini; Elina Leino; Sadie Li; Yolanda McGary-Beitia; Ruel Ongchangco; Annie Pascual; Hortensia Ponce; Maura Ramirez; Louisa Salas; Rosalind Spears; Dennis Toyama; William Trupek; and Frances Yokota.

CATEGORY II: The LEAP Stars of Distinction (Unsung Heroes) - This award is specifically for all of those that are our unsung heroes during the LEAP course. Selection criteria includes, but is not limited to, people who were identified and volunteered for participation in the LEAP program’s impact interviews. Other recipients emerged during the year through their notable experiences or contributions to the development of the LEAP program. Geraldine Anderson; Dena Braley; Beverly Bramlett; Cheryl Consing; Elina Leino; Yolanda McGary-Beitia; Ruel Ongchangco; Louisa Salas; Rosalind Spears; and William Trupek.

CATEGORY III: The LEAP Awards (Competitive Evaluation) - The following awards were determined by test scores, the

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workplace portfolios, and participation in the planning and execution of the LEAP Awards Ceremony respectively.

- LEAP Concept Knowledge Achievement 2009 - Ruby Gumpal Alberto and Leslie Garcia
- LEAP Individual Leadership Achievement 2009 - Geraldine Anderson
- LEAP Group Leadership Achievement 2009 - Annie Pascual

CATEGORY IV: The LEAP Awards (Participant Vote) - The last five awards were determined by peer nominations in each section of the program. These nominations were narrowed to the top two individuals in each category, followed by a formal ballot vote to determine the winners by section.

- LEAP Supportive Achievement 2009
 1. Diane Hakewill (Section A)
 2. Gina R. S. Gonzalez (Section B)
- LEAP Creative Achievement 2009
 1. Annie Pascual (Section A)
 2. Tim Lavorini (Section B)
- LEAP Concept Application Achievement 2009
 1. Nancy Bautista and Tim Kneis (Section A)
 2. Michael Bareng (Section B)
- LEAP Individual Change Achievement 2009
 1. Leslie Gomez (Section A)
 2. Leslie Garcia and Dennis Toyama (Section B)
- LEAP Best All-Round Achievement 2009
 1. Annie Pascual (Section A)
 2. Ruby Gumpal Alberto and Maura Ramirez (Section B)

Congratulations to the graduates for their hard work and accomplishments. A special thanks to staff members who helped to make the graduates' success possible by covering when the participants were working to achieve their certificates. There is another LEAP class under way.

Volunteer Information Desk Serves Hundreds

Using interns and volunteers only, the ACCESS Center established a Self-Help Information Desk in the Civic Center Courthouse lobby at the end of October 2008. Since then, those volunteers have answered questions for the more than 4,750 customers who wandered over for help.

This service is another stellar example of the quality of self-help in San Francisco Superior Court.

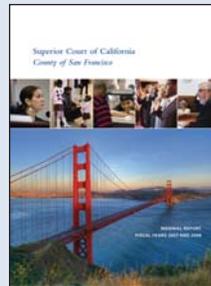
"In many California courthouses, a customer information desk has been shown to greatly reduce frustration of court users trying to navigate the courthouse halls," said Judy Louie, Director of the ACCESS Center. "Customers have increased satisfaction when their experience visiting a courthouse allows them to easily locate a jury room, a courtroom, a self-help center, the clerk's office, a specific court division or the court's administrative office."

Since the launch of the Information Desk, the volunteers working at the desk

have been JusticeCorps members (see page 26 in the Biennial Report); Bridge interns (see page 22 in Biennial Report); YouthFirst interns, who are high school students from the Jewish Family and Children Services; other high school interns; undergraduate students; a paralegal; and several others seeking volunteer opportunities.

The volunteers most frequently answer questions about civil harassment orders; small claims matters; unlawful detainers; family law matters; and jury service. Other typical inquiries are focused on finding the Sheriff's Department (in City Hall) to serve restraining orders, bank levies or eviction notices, Louie said. Customers also frequently have other City Hall-related inquiries.

Louie thanked CEO Gordon Park-Li for his support of the project, and Rick Hines and Barbara Compton "for finding the furniture."



The Court's Biennial Report is Well-Received

The publication of the Court's Biennial Report in early August has provided much-deserved

exposure for the Court's hard-working staff and Bench members. The 54-page report, which covers Fiscal Year 2007 and Fiscal Year 2008, has garnered positive feedback from inside and outside the Court.

"Honestly, I've worked for the City since 1985 and been on three juries and never had any idea of the breadth of services the court provides or the number of people you serve," said Eileen Hirst, Chief of Staff for Sheriff Michael Hennessey. "It contains so much information and is so visually gorgeous!"

CEO Gordon Park-Li and then-Presiding Judge David L. Ballati identified the publication of an annual report as a key priority for Communications Director Ann E. Donlan when she was hired in January 2008.

The report contains:

- Statistics on Court filings, dispositions and the spending plans for FY 2007 and FY 2008;
- Detailed narratives on Court operations and achievements from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2008;
- An organizational chart that includes staffing information;
- Photographs of most Judges and Commissioners;
- Information on Court governance; and
- Details on improvements made to the Court's four facilities.

An electronic copy may be viewed on the Court's Intranet site as well as the Court's Internet site on the media page. Hard copies may be obtained by emailing Ann E. Donlan at adonlan@sftc.org or calling 551.5957.

Commissioner Frank by Night, Jane T. Robe by Day

Court employees know her as the nighttime San Francisco Superior Court Emergency Protective Order Commissioner Cheryl Frank. However, to the literary world, she is author Jane T. Robe whose latest novel, *The Dead Lawyer Conspiracy*, was recently published.

Set in San Francisco, this mystery involves a freshly minted attorney who accidentally discovers a conspiracy to steal millions of dollars for nefarious purposes. Joined by several high-profile lawyers, she embarks on a dangerous search for the stolen funds, soon filing a lawsuit implicating powerful government officials of illicit activity.

As a Finalist at the 2009 Indie Book Awards, and winner of an Editor's Choice Award, *The Dead Lawyer Conspiracy* is garnering a lot of attention. Jane T. Robe was recently interviewed on KOFY TV, and reviewed in a Bay Area publication.

Visit www.thedeadlawyerconspiracy.com to learn more.



Ethics, Lead/Senior Worker, Customer Service and Performance Evaluations. The experts who led the workshops provided practical tools that clerks and supervisors can use on the job.

The theme of the event was the Denzel Washington movie, "Training Day." A DVD of the movie went home with each attendee. Novelties of a police nature dominated the "goodie bags." K-9's made of balloons guarded the exits, and everyone got dog tags for this event, which was funded by participant fees and creative volunteer efforts to raise funds.

Spirits were high as people enjoyed the classes, traded ideas, networked with court staff from other counties and shopped at the "Courtique." Prizes were given away at lunch, including 15 prizes of \$100 each.

Larrisa Dotson, Deputy Court Clerk II, and Adrienne Williams, Training Technician, organized a remarkable platoon of 60 volunteers to help with the details. After the Saturday training, enthusiastic attendees praised the Court as a whole and the individuals who donated their time to assure a successful event.

"Many thanks to our FABULOUS Training Day Team Leaders, Larrisa Dotson and Adrienne Williams," said Yvette King. "It is their leadership, dedication and support that brought all of our work together and made the event a success. I had a great time working with them!"

The accolades went both ways, as Larrisa and Adrienne also thanked volunteers for their contributions. "We would just like to express our gratitude and appreciation for all the dedication and teamwork that the San Francisco Superior Court employees showed on Saturday at the Training Day," Larrisa wrote to fellow Court employees. "The day was filled with informative classes, a fabulous lunch, a fantastic opportunity to network and great gifts!"

Judge McBride summed up the day's success: "I was very impressed with the whole thing." As a Court, we looked stellar that day.



Judge Donna J. Hitchens and Sen. Mark Leno, D-San Francisco, join in the fun after a family's adoption hearing.

Reception Honors Adopted Children and their Families

The Unified Family Court held a reception for adopted children and their families in conjunction with statewide efforts to recognize National Adoption Day in California.

Seven families enjoyed the reception, which was held in the 4th Floor Rotunda of the Civic Center Courthouse. State Sen. Mark Leno, D-San Francisco, joined Judge Donna J. Hitchens during the adoptions, held in November 2008.

During the reception, Sen. Leno awarded Judge Hitchens with a proclamation commending her for bringing together families for the past eight years.

Judge Hitchens told the *BASF Bulletin* in an interview that the event brings attention to "the plight of children who end up in the foster system" while celebrating "the success of finding permanent and loving homes for some of these children."

Next Court Closure: October 21

The San Francisco Superior Court closed its doors Sept. 16 for the first of 10 state-mandated Court closure days.

Employees will not report to work for these unpaid Court holidays. Court operations will be closed in all four facilities on these days: October 21, 2009; November 18, 2009; December 16, 2009; January 20, 2010; February 17, 2010; March 17, 2010; April 21, 2010; May 19, 2010; and June 16, 2010.

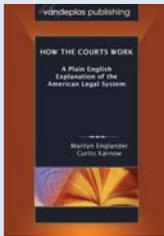
The closures are the result of the unprecedented statewide fiscal crisis and judicial branch budget reductions. Under Government Code section 68106, all Superior Courts, the Courts of Appeal; and the Supreme Court will be closed for the transaction of judicial business on the 10 designated Court closure days.



Team Court: Volunteers from the San Francisco Superior Court display their pride after hosting a memorable Training Day.

San Francisco Judicial Scribe Publishes Book

Judge Curtis E.A. Karnow teamed up with his wife Marilyn Englander to co-author *How The Courts*



Work: A Plain English Explanation of the American Legal System (Vandeplas Publishing). Dr. Englander operates a private middle school and teaches American history, government and conflict resolution among other subjects.

Judge Karnow said the book was written with “self-represented litigants in mind” to help them navigate an often complex system made for attorneys. The project was started after a jury selection at the Hall of Justice at which panelists expressed confusion and bewilderment at the role of the lawyers and the court. Judge Karnow drafted the book over the next few weekends, and then he and his wife took the book through two more drafts. While not the first book he has written, Judge Karnow notes this is the first addressed to a lay audience. After chapters on the role of the courts, judges, federal and state systems, how a case progresses through the systems and other introductory materials, *How The Courts Work* tells the fictionalized story of parallel civil and criminal drunk driving cases, step by step through the process, told from the viewpoint of the lawyers and judges.

The publisher has made the book available to California courts (such as self-help centers) for a reduced rate, and for which the authors forego royalty payments. It is a recommended text at the Hastings College of The Law, and in use by a variety of law schools and paralegal schools.

Gov. Schwarzenegger Announces Appointments to SF Bench, First District Court of Appeal

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger earlier this year made three judicial appointments to the San Francisco Bench. The governor also elevated Judge Robert L. Dondero to the First District Court of Appeal.

Judge Dondero, a San Francisco Superior Court Judge since 1992, is now a Justice on the First District Court of Appeal, Division One.

Gov. Schwarzenegger also recently made the following judicial appointments to the San Francisco bench:

- **Judge Richard B. Ulmer, Jr.**, who is filling the vacancy created by the April 2008 retirement of Judge Philip J. Moscone. Judge Ulmer had been a partner at Latham & Watkins since 1995. He previously was an associate for McCutchen, Doyle, Brown & Enerson from 1986 to 1995. Judge Ulmer earned a Juris Doctorate degree from Stanford Law School and a Bachelor’s degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.
- **Judge Ron Albers**, who had been a San Francisco Superior Court Commissioner since 2002. Judge Albers is filling the vacancy created by the conversion of Commissioner Dorothy L. McMath’s position. Commissioner McMath retired in 2008. From 1979 to 2001, Judge Albers served as a trial attorney, then head attorney, for the San Francisco Public Defender’s Office. From 1978 to 1979, Judge Albers was a trial attorney with Legal Services for Children. Prior to that, he served as the

director for the Juvenile Research Project. In 1974, he was a sole practitioner. Judge Albers earned a Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School and a Bachelor’s degree from Cornell College.

- **Judge Bruce E. Chan**, who had been a San Francisco Superior Court Commissioner since July 12, 2004. He fills the position which became vacant with the retirement of Judge John J. Conway in November 2007. Chan has presided over the Court’s Discovery calendar in Dept. 610, deciding motions for all matters arising under or related to the Civil Discovery Act, the Production and Preservation of Evidence Act, and other related matters.

Before his tenure with the Court, Judge Chan was Chief Counsel to the California State Assembly’s Committee on Public Safety from 2000-2004. In that position, he advised the Chair and Assembly members on proposed criminal justice legislation. He also drafted legislation, conducted committee and informational hearings and prepared policy analyses. In 1999, he served as Counsel to the same Committee.

Judge Chan also worked for the San Francisco Public Defender’s Office as a Senior Trial attorney from 1989-1999, and as a Trial Attorney from 1981-1986. A 1978 graduate of Stanford University with a major in political science and economics, Judge Chan earned his J.D. in 1981 from the University of California, Davis.

Judge Marla Miller Receives Barristers Choice Award

The Barristers Club of The Bar Association of San Francisco recently presented its Tara L. Riedley Barristers Choice Award to Judge Marla J. Miller.

During a July reception attended by more than 250 members of the legal community, Judge Miller accepted the award, which recognizes a jurist who has made notable efforts to educate attorneys new to the courtroom.

Judge Miller was recognized for her mentoring of young attorneys in her courtroom. She received praise for working with the Barristers Club to expand the San Francisco Mock Trial Program. Judge Miller also helped to develop the curriculum for the Law Academy Summer Institute.

Judge Miller received the award during the 25th annual Judges Reception, held in the Green Room of the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center.



Photo by Jim Block