

## **JUDICIAL DIVISION SUMMIT A SUCCESS!!**

by: Jack L. Brown

The Judicial Division Summit on Judicial Outreach presented by the Judges Network and co-sponsored by the ABA Justice Center was a tremendous success according to attendees at the February 7, 2003 program. Held at the Seattle Sheraton during the ABA Mid-Year Meeting, the Summit participants crafted a consensus resolution that encourages judges, courts and judicial organizations to consider it part of a judge's functions to develop, support and actively participate in public education programs about the law and justice system. The resolution, approved by the Judicial Division Council at their meeting in Seattle, seeks to further the public's understanding of and confidence in the American system of justice in addition to maintaining an independent judiciary.

The Judicial Division will sponsor the resolution in the ABA House of Delegates at the San Francisco Annual Meeting in August, 2003. The resolution replaces and updates ABA policy developed in 1992 to encourage judicial outreach.

Judge James S. Sledge, Judicial Division Chair, served as moderator of the Summit. Judge Sledge summarized the recent ABA survey on "Perceptions of the U.S. Justice System" which disclosed that ninety percent (90%) of the respondents wanted to learn more about the justice system from judges. Judge Sledge introduced the first panel of speakers who addressed the ethical considerations involved in performing judicial outreach.

Judge Dale Ramerman, King County Superior Court Judge; John Strait, Seattle University Law School professor and Reiko Callner, an attorney for the Washington State Judicial Conduct Commission gave insightful presentations on ethical matters. "Read and know your canons of judicial conduct" was the principal message of Ms. Callner, who investigates and enforces the canons in her work for the Commission.

Robert J. Grey, Jr., ABA President Elect Nominee, spoke to the Summit about the ABA's commitment to public trust and confidence in the justice system. Grey was enthused about the Judicial Division's outreach initiatives and challenged Summit attendees to utilize him and the resources of the ABA in their outreach work.

The Summit Program shifted to the next panel who gave presentations on collaborative efforts by state and local bar associations along with community organizations on judicial outreach programs. Cindy Zwick, Executive Director of the Arizona Bar, summarized her state's strategic plan for statewide outreach with Arizona judges. Gerry Alexander, Chief Justice of the Washington Supreme Court emphasized the Court's agenda by inviting the public to hear oral arguments before the Court at locations throughout the state. In addition, the Court's hearings are televised statewide on public television.

The panel topics concluded with a presentation by Young Lawyers Division Representative, Paul Davis on the nationwide Junior Judges Program. The Judges Network,

along with the Young Lawyers Division and Litigation Section, are developing a collaborative plan to institutionalize the delivery of judicial outreach programs at the local level nationwide.

The day preceding the Summit was devoted to the presentation of three highly successful judicial outreach programs by Seattle area judges. All three programs are available on the Judges Network website. Presenting the "Dialogue on Freedom Program" at four Seattle high schools was Judge Dean Lum. Recognized as a prolific facilitator, Judge Lum was amazing in his efforts to stimulate the minds of high school students' on the freedoms they too often take for granted in this country.

After Judge Lum summarized the Dialogue Program, Judge Michael Hurtado presented excerpts from his spirited outreach program, "Courts in the Classroom". The panel concluded with Judge Eileen Kato's presentation on the ABA's nationally acclaimed program entitled, "National Issues Forum". Judge Kato served as coordinator of the Seattle demonstration programs. She presented the Forum at South Seattle Community College.

Focused on the issues facing judges doing outreach, the Summit moved into roundtable discussions. The topics included a judge's duty to participate in judicial outreach, obstacles to performing judicial outreach and strategies for overcoming the obstacles. The roundtable discussions were led by the Honorable Sophia Hall, Honorable Andre Davis, Honorable Michael Pietruska, Honorable Ruth Kleinfeld, Honorable Louraine Arkfeld and Honorable James Wynn, Jr.

Table moderators, Joan Irion and Dan Gourash, followed a "speaking points" document prepared by Dan Gourash, Vice-Chair of the Judges Network. Conclusions from the roundtable discussions were presented by the table moderators to Summit attendees. Among the many excellent conclusions, participants determined that outreach should not be mandatory among judges, but should be strongly encouraged among a judge's many judicial functions. Another key conclusion was to focus efforts on presiding judges and state supreme courts on the vital need for judges to undertake outreach programs and to urge judges to participate.

From the conclusions, the Summit then word-smithed a draft resolution:

RESOLVED, that the American Bar Association encourages judges, courts and judicial organizations to consider it part of a judge's functions to further the public's understanding of and confidence in the American system of justice, and to develop, support, and actively participate in public education programs about the law and justice system to promote the trust and confidence of the public that is crucial to maintain an independent judiciary.