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President's Message

My original message was to explain the recommendations of the Compensation Review Board. With the recent events regarding the COLA, a different approach regarding the constitutional guarantees of judicial compensation must be addressed. Our sincere thanks go to Kevin Forde and the Compensation Review Board for their recommendations concerning the reduction of pension contribution as well as a salary adjustment for Associate Judges. We are also very fortunate that Richard Prendergast and Lawrence Pusateri of the ISBA/CBA joint committee have a deep concern for the independence of the judiciary regarding fair and reasonable compensation of judges. Judge Ann Jorgensen and I testified before the committee and were grateful that they responded favorably to our testimony. All of this now seems a world away since the passing of a bill by the Senate freezing the COLA for the year 2002 (SB 2313). A similar bill was originally passed in the House, but in that bill the judiciary was exempted. The Senate bill included the judiciary with all Senate members registering as co-sponsors. Whether or not the House will call for this bill to be voted on, and if they do, whether it is approved by the Senate is anyone's guess. The real question is what the IJA does in regard to this action by the legislative branch of government. There are no easy answers from a legal, political or public relations aspect. The Government Affairs Committee headed by Mike Galasso and Tim Evans, met April 16th to discuss these issues and will advise the Executive Committee for its April 18th meeting. Please contact me at the IJA e-mail (info@ija.org) or my e-mail address (stunudel@msn.com) or by telephone (312/603-5110) or the IJA's phone (888/431-1283).

Happenings...

- The Illinois Judges Association, the Illinois Judicial Council and the Cook County Bar are sponsoring an event for high school students on May the first at the Richard J. Daley Center in Chicago. High school students from across the city will visit judges in their chambers and courtrooms to observe how the system of justice works in the state of Illinois. Many judges have volunteered for this event, including Supreme Court Justice Mary Ann McMorro, Appellate Court Justices Anne Burke and Ellis Reid and trial judges Sophia Hall, Colleen Sheehan, Leon Wool and others too numerous to mention. Thank you for your support of this innovative and educational event. Special thanks to Judge Gay-Lloyd Lott, President of the Illinois Judicial Council and Andre M. Grant, President of the Cook County Bar Association.
- Judges James Borbely and Dennis Cashman are in the process or by the publication of this newsletter presenting the IJA/ISBA *You Drink, You Drive. You Lose* Program. Approximately half of the requests for this eye-opening presentation are coming from high schools out of Cook County. If you need any information about the program, please contact Judge Patrick McGann, the chairperson or Maureen McClelland at the IJA headquarters.
- We have received the Illinois Judges Association's "Official" lapel pin. All paying members will receive one. We hope to get you yours soon. Enjoy and wear it proudly.
- HELP!!! We need information on what's happening where you work so we can pass on important information about you in our newsletter and/or *The Gavel*. Please call, e-mail or write Maureen McClelland.
- Thanks go out to the Criticism Response Committee and the American Board of Trial Advocates on their quick and successful efforts for the members of the Illinois Judges Association. They worked on two cases last month alone to the satisfaction of the judges involved.
- *Judicial Perspectives* is a monthly television show hosted by the Illinois Judges Association. Each program focuses on a specific issue of the law or the operation of the Illinois courts. At the present time, the show is broadcast on Chicago Access Cable as well as some suburbs in Cook County. We hope in the near future that this show will be seen statewide.
- The ISBA recently concluded its *Future of the Courts Conference*. Many judges and attorneys from around the state took part as participants and presenters in this multi-faceted forum. President Tim Eaton and the ISBA deserve kudos for the calling of this symposium. Reports and recommendations should be available in the near future for all those who are interested.