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President's Message

Kudos: Congratulations to newly elected Chief Justice Robert R. Thomas of the Illinois Supreme Court. We look forward to a cooperative working relationship over the next three years. And we expect great things from the first female Chief Judge of the 18th Judicial Circuit, Ann Jorgensen, Past President of the Illinois Judges Association.

Judicial Intern Opportunity Program - Nearly 20 Illinois judges in judicial districts outside of Cook and Lake Counties have become new participants in the American Bar Association (ABA) Judicial Intern Opportunity Program (JIOP). The program, which was launched five years ago by the

American Bar Association, places minority and financially-disadvantaged law students in full-time, six-week internships during the summer. The goal is to foster a judiciary that reflects the society it serves in order to ensure fairness and access to justice. The ABA Section of Litigation oversees the project which placed more than 100 students in courts in Miami, Texas and Illinois this year. Interns have been placed with judges in

Bloomington, Danville, Edwardsville, Freeport, Kankakee, Mt. Carroll, Mount Vernon, Monticello, Murphysboro, Ottawa, Peoria, Rockford, Springfield, Vandalia and Wheaton. The interns receive a \$1,500 stipend through donations made by the IJA and four other sponsors, including the Illinois State Bar Association, Illinois Bar Foundation, Illinois Trial Lawyers Association and the Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel. Most judicial circuits don't have the resources to hire judicial law clerks. The internship program is a "win-win" situation for both judges and interns.

Judges receive much needed help while students obtain practical experience and get paid. For more information about the Judicial Intern Opportunity Program, visit the ABA Section of Litigation Web site: <http://www.abanet.org/litigation> or contact Gail Howard at (312) 988-6348 or: howardg@staff.abanet.org.

Funding of the Courts: IJA, ISBA, CBA, Illinois Association of Defense Counsel, Illinois Trial Lawyers Association and many other groups recognize the inequity of a court system dependent upon funding by County governments. This organization stands ready to work with those

groups to fashion a solution. Interested judges should contact Judge Wexstten.

Pension: This involves an ongoing effort to monitor underfunding and work closely with the legislature and other groups to insure the security of the retirement system.

Speakers Bureau Protecting the independence and integrity of the judiciary was the subject of a recent meeting Judge Wexstten held with Chief Judge Joel Flaum, of the Seventh Circuit, Chris Ruys of the IJA, Dave Anderson from the ISBA, Terry Murphy, executive director of the CBA and

Debbie Weixel from the ABA. The consensus was that the best approach is to inform citizens as to the workings of the judicial system and its importance to a free society. Under the leadership of Judge Mark Schuering our speakers' bureau has been rejuvenated and reinvigorated. Please contact Judge Schuering or Maureen McClelland in the office to become involved.

Membership report: Last year was a banner year for the IJA with membership at 1072. We hope to top that this year. Please encourage everyone to remember the importance of the Association.



Judges Thomas Donnelly, Edward Jordan, John Steele, Jesse Reyes, Veronice Mathein, Mark Schuering, William Madden, James Wexstten and Stuart Nudelman attended a planning session for the seminar on *Delivering the Message: How to make sure the public "gets it"* to be held during the Annual Convention on December 9