

*Draft Minutes of the Judicial-Media Committee's Events Subcommittee*  
*Public Meeting Via Conference Call, Monday, June 25, 2007*

Present: Attorney Stanley Twardy Jr., Ms. Lynne Tuohy of The Hartford Courant, Mr. Paul Giguere of CT-N, Judge Susan Handy, Judge Robert Holzberg, Attorney Lou Pepe, and Victim Service Advocate Adriana Venegas-McCormick.

Absent: Ms. Dana Neves, Judge Michael Shay.

*Agenda Item No. I: Call meeting to order*

Attorney Twardy called the meeting to order at 4 p.m. and thanked Attorney Pepe for agreeing to serve on the subcommittee.

*Agenda Item No. II: Approval of Minutes from last meeting*

The subcommittee unanimously approved the minutes of its meeting on May 14, 2007.

*Agenda Item No. III: Brainstorm on ideas for panel/program involving judges/journalists*

Attorney Twardy mentioned the subcommittee's previous idea to find a moderator and panelists to open a dialogue between judges and the media. Judge Holzberg asked whether this idea of a panel/public forum is something that the group wants to pursue. Judge Handy responded that she thought it would be a good idea.

Judge Holzberg asked what topics might be considered at such a forum. Attorney Twardy suggested focusing what judges can and cannot talk about. This can be frustrating to the media, he said, also citing the ethics rules that judges are bound by. Both Judge Handy and Judge Holzberg agreed that this would be a good topic. Judge Holzberg suggested two other potential topics: 1) the sealing of court documents; and 2) to what extent should the Judicial Branch have controls imposed on it?

Ms. Tuohy suggested as a topic public access in hotly contested divorce cases. She said she'd been covering such a case, and that it had had some interesting access issues, with the judge having to balance public access with the best interests of the children. Judge Handy cautioned that the judge overseeing the case likely would be very leery of talking about it.

Attorney Twardy asked whether there's a need for a review of the current law regarding closing courts. Judge Holzberg responded that he and Judge Michael Sheldon currently are putting together a program on closing courts and sealing/unsealing documents. Both Ms. Tuohy and Judge Handy indicated they would welcome such a program. Ms. Tuohy also said that she would like to see the issue of gag orders addressed.

To be fair and balanced, journalists' obligations and responsibilities should be explored as well, Judge Holzberg said, adding that he would be interested in hearing what guidance editors take into account.

Judge Handy asked who would be the audience at such an event and how to get judges to the forum. She expressed concern that a lot of judges might not go because of their responsibilities in court and other judicial obligations. For that reason, Judge Handy said, it might be worth making such a program part of the annual Judges Institute, during which court is not in session.

Judge Holzberg responded that he thought of the event having more of a general appeal. Ms. Tuohy said she also pictured a much broader audience, and Attorney Pepe added that he thought attorneys would be interested as well. In addition, if CT-N filmed the event, people will watch it, Ms. Tuohy said. Mr. Giguere suggested that partnering with other groups might be a way to expand the audience.

Ms. Venegas mentioned that she had spoke with Mario Gaboury of the University of New Haven, who specializes in victims' issues. She has been doing research regarding people who have expertise in victim/media issues and what other states are doing. Ms. Tuohy added that this topic could be an important part of a panel. Crime victims are a big piece of the picture, especially those affected by violent crime and sexual assault, according to Judge Handy. She added that judges are very sensitive to this.

Attorney Twardy asked whether the group had any thoughts on panelists, moderators and timing. Ms. Tuohy answered that she would like to do some research now that the group had some potential topics. The group agreed that the event would occur sometime in 2008, and that it would be difficult to pull together this year.

*Agenda Item No. IV: New Business*

The subcommittee scheduled its next meeting for Monday, July 16, 2007, via conference call. The group also decided it would meet in person sometime in September.

*Agenda Item No. V: Adjourn*

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5 p.m.