

Judicial-Media Committee

Minutes of the meeting on June 7, 2010

Present: Claude Albert, co-chair; Tom Appleby; Judge Patrick Clifford; Joe D'Alesio; Melissa Farley; Karen Florin; Judge David Gold; Judge Barbara Bailey Jongbloed; Morgan McGinley; Tom Scheffey; Adriana Venegas.

Also present: Judge Barbara Quinn; Jim Maher; Scott Hartley; Ace Worthington; Heather Collins; Rhonda Stearley-Hebert

I. Open meeting

Mr. Claude Albert opened the meeting at 3 p.m. and welcomed Judge David Gold as the newest member appointed to the committee. He cited Judge Gold's work on the Pilot Program Committee and his role as "co-anchor" for the recent *Law School for Journalists*.

II. Committee reports

a) Events Subcommittee: Mr. Albert reported that the *Law School for Journalists* program in June was very well done and well-attended. Journalists attending the program had the opportunity to weigh in on actual sentencings that had occurred before Judge Gold and Judge Susan Handy, and both Mr. Albert and Ms. Karen Florin, subcommittee co-chair, complimented the judges on all the work they did to make the program such a success. Ms. Florin added that the feedback from the program has been very positive.

b) Pilot Program Committee: Judge Barbara Quinn attended this portion of the meeting to update committee members on the recommendations they approved last year regarding cameras in court.

The recommendations have been presented to the Rules Committee, and a special meeting of the judges may be called in September or October, she said. Judge Quinn added, however, that she's not sure when that special meeting would occur. In the meantime, the pilot program will remain in effect, she said. Judge Quinn also said she did not know how quickly the Rules Committee would vote on the recommendations because there may be other matters to deal with.

Mr. Tom Appleby and Judge Patrick Clifford spoke about the Rules Committee meeting they attended on May 24, during which Rules Committee members discussed the recommendations. Mr. Appleby recalled that one of the questions was: "Did we ever discuss the philosophy of this?" That question, Mr. Appleby said, was a surprise to him given the extensive discussion that has occurred previously regarding cameras in courts. Judge Clifford added that he doesn't believe the Rules Committee is done discussing the issue.

Mr. Albert said he believes it's important the members of the Judicial-Media Committee be at the meetings of the Rules Committee whenever the recommendations are discussed. The Rules Committee has a lot on its plate, but, Mr. Albert said, the

Judicial-Media Committee should keep the Pilot Program recommendations front and center as much as possible.

III. Enhancing Access to the Court Record and Court Documents

This portion of the meeting focused upon the digital revolution and how it is impacting the Judicial Branch. Present for this portion of the meeting were Mr. Jim Maher, director of administration, Superior Court Operations, and Attorney Scott Hartley, deputy director of Court Transcript Services. Mr. Albert and Attorney Joe D'Alesio also addressed the group.

Mr. Albert, who is a member of the Branch's Committee on Court Recording Monitors and Court Reporters, provided the following background: Documents currently are e-filed for civil cases, and the committee on which he serves has been studying new ways to make a court record. Enhanced public access is a critical component of this review, and lower costs are another potential advantage. Changes also will impact court reporters and monitors, and the role of transcripts; it is, he said, an issue "with a lot of tentacles."

Attorney D'Alesio summarized the work of the committee, and Mr. Maher described the job of a court reporter/monitor and the equipment they use – stenographic machines, Sony tape recording machines and computer-based digital recording systems. He and Attorney Hartley also provided a demonstration of the computer-based digital recording systems. With FTR, information is archived securely and centrally, and the system is very accessible, they explained. Using FTR, Mr. Maher said, would allow public access to audio recordings of court proceedings.

Attorney D'Alesio added that the Court Recording Monitors and Court Reporters Committee is looking at selling audiotapes of proceedings at minimal cost. However, he said, there are significant personnel issues involved.

Mr. Albert noted that one thing that struck him (as a member of the Monitor and Reporters Committee) were lawyers mentioning that ordering daily transcripts can cost \$30,000 over the course of a trial. Providing audio transcripts at a lower cost would enhance access to the courts, Mr. Albert added.

IV. Schedule next meeting adjourn

The Judicial-Media Committee set its next meeting for Monday, Oct. 18, at 3 p.m.