

Judicial-Media Committee

Minutes of meeting on September 24, 2018

Members present: Co-chairs Karen Florin and Judge Robert J. Devlin, Jr.; Judge Patrick J. Clifford, Attorney Tais C. Ericson, Attorney Melissa A. Farley, Judge David P. Gold, Alaine Griffin, Judge Susan B. Handy, Attorney Paul Hartan, Judge Barbara Bailey Jongbloed, Eric Parker, Chris Powell, Gary A. Roberge, Thomas Scheffey, Judge Hope C. Seeley, Lauren Sellev, Andy Thibault, Judge Dawne G. Westbrook and Judge Omar A. Williams. Also in attendance were Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson, Chief Court Administrator Patrick L. Carroll III, Deputy Chief Court Administrator Elizabeth A. Bozzuto and Branch liaison Rhonda Stearley-Hebert.

- I. Judge Robert Devlin opened the meeting at 3 p.m.
- II. The committee approved minutes from its meeting on April 23, 2018.
- III. Chief Justice Richard Robinson thanked the committee for its work and said he plans on attending future meetings. He stated his goal of openness and transparency for the Judicial Branch, and that the media plays an important role in holding the courts accountable. Being criticized is no fun, he said, however it often challenges the courts to be better. The chief justice added that a workshop on appellate process would be good, so that the media better understands the work of the Supreme and Appellate Courts. Additionally, Chief Justice Robinson told the committee that audio recordings of Supreme Court arguments would soon be posted to the Judicial Branch's website.
- IV. Karen Florin updated committee members on the 2018 *Law School for Journalists* held in May.
- V. Committee members continued their discussion of a suggested rule change that would give judges the discretion to decide whether to allow in cameras at proceedings where the victim was sexually assaulted and murdered. Judge Devlin said he would submit a proposal to the Rules Committee that would allow camera coverage of a homicide trial involving sexual assault provided the victim's family affirmatively consents to such coverage.
- VI. The committee next continued its discussion of hospital arraignments. Ms. Florin began by summarizing a discussion she had with the Connecticut Hospital Association, adding that the association did not take a position on the matter. Andy Thibault added he does not believe the hospital is a legitimate party in the matter and that a courtroom is a courtroom, regardless of whether it is in the hospital, and must

be open to the public. Attorney Melissa Farley added that when hospital arraignments do occur, transcripts are provided to the media either the day of the arraignment or the next day, if the arraignment occurs too late in the day.

Committee members went back and forth on whether a pool reporter – without a camera – could attend the hospital arraignment. There was also discussion about whether the arraignment could occur after the defendant’s release from the hospital.

Judge Devlin wrapped up the discussion by suggesting that such requests be considered on a case-by-basis for now.

- VII. The committee adjourned at 4:05 p.m., and scheduled its next meeting for Monday, April 22, 2019, at 3 p.m.