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The Resource Page



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

BRYAN GARNER COMES COURTING

<http://www.lawprose.org>

Bryan Garner has been the editor for the last two editions of *Black's Law Dictionary*. He also is the author of *Garner's Modern American Usage*, *A Dictionary of Modern Legal Usage*, *Legal Writing in Plain English*, and *The Redbook: A Manual on Legal Style*.

But he is best known for giving great seminars on legal writing and editing—including an in-house workshop that he has conducted for many state and federal courts on judicial writing. Starting this August, he will be conducting those once-private workshops as part of his regular series of public sessions. We think many judges will be interested.

Garner's "Advanced Judicial Writing" seminar emphasizes techniques used by first-rate judicial writers. Garner has identified 12 different ways to open judicial opinions; he discusses the way in which the opening paragraphs determine the style of what follows and shows which of these ways may best frame the determinative issues of the case. The seminar also demonstrates effective editing techniques, taking materials taught successfully for many years in his seminars for lawyers and adapting them to the unique issues faced in writing judicial opinions.

This year's Advanced Judicial Writing seminars will be held in San Francisco (August 14), Dallas (August 16), Washington, D.C. (August 21), and New York City (August 22). Registration fees for the full-day seminar are \$345.

Those who don't want to attend the seminar can get much of Garner's writing and editing advice in *Legal Writing in Plain English*. For usage tips, both of the usage manuals cited above are good; *A Dictionary of Modern Legal Usage* has a

brief discussion of opinion-writing (under "Opinions, Judicial").

Last, the *Redbook* is the legal-style-manual equivalent of the legal-citation *Bluebook*. Garner asked attendees at his seminars for three to four points of legal style they would like to have answered. The book covers those and more, with basic sections on punctuation and grammar as well as word choices often found in legal writing.

PBS SERIES ON THE U.S. SUPREME COURT

<http://www.ambrosevideo.com>

A four-hour video series on the United States Supreme Court ran on most PBS stations in January and February 2007. The series is available on DVD for \$79.99 and, in addition to being sharply produced, interesting, and well presented, it could have great potential for use in educational settings.

Chief Justice John Roberts and retired Justice Sandra Day O'Connor each gave in-depth interviews for this series. The program aired in four parts. Part one examined the time from the court's creation through the *Dred Scott* case in 1857, which New York Law School Dean Emeritus James Simon describes as "the worst opinion ever written" by the court. Part two reviews issues that arose between the Civil War and the 1930s. Part three focused on the court's rulings in civil rights from the 1940s to the present. Part four focused on the changes brought about by the Rehnquist court, after President Nixon had been given the opportunity to name four of the nine members of the court.

A separate website for educators, providing teaching resources that would be quite helpful to judges, is found at www.historyofsupremecourt.org. The series does a good job of providing both legal history and biography of key players, including litigants before the court. Actor David Strathairn narrates the series.



WEBSITES

NEW RESOURCE ON PROBLEM-SOLVING JUSTICE

<http://www.ncsconline.org/PSC>

Two years of effort have resulted in a new, online and interactive resource for judges and courts interested in using a problem-solving court approach. The National Center for State Courts has launched the Problem-Solving Justice Toolkit on its website. The toolkit is interactive, so that you can move easily to resources that would be most of interest to you. It includes explanatory text, hundreds of links to online resources, and videoclips from 22 judges, attorneys, social workers, and court managers discussing topics related to problem-solving justice.

Until now, discussion of problem-solving techniques has often been limited to judges assigned to specialty courts—drug courts, family courts, or mental-health courts, for example. The toolkit attempts to take a step toward achieving two separate goals: providing resources for judges in specialized dockets like those, while also providing resources for judges with more general dockets.

To use the toolkit, go to the section marked "Initial Assessment Questions." Based on what you are most interested in (such as resources available to address problems you've been seeing), you'll be taken to the resources in that area.

Two AJA leaders—Libby Hines, a trial judge in Michigan, and Steve Leben, a trial judge in Kansas—served as members of a 20-person advisory committee that worked with National Center staff on development of the toolkit. For more information, or if you have comments or feedback on the toolkit, contact researcher Pam Casey, project director for the toolkit, at the National Center for State Courts (pcasey@ncsc.dni.us).