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President's Column

Mary Celeste

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President's Column

Mary Celeste

Time flies when you are having fun! This will be my last message to you as president of the AJA. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the membership, the Board of Governors, the Executive Committee, and Shelley Rockwell, our Association Manager, for giving me this opportunity and for your continued support.

I would like to highlight some of the activities during my tenure. Along with attending national conferences, I am organizing and coordinating the AJA Symposium/Workshop scheduled for the 2012 midyear conference in Nashville—a midyear meeting NOT to be missed!

I have also participated in "branding" the AJA. This branding has established a website address that specifically utilizes the AJA name as opposed to an address with an address flowing from the National Center for State Courts' website. The new website address is www.americanjudgesassociation.net. The .org was already taken by the American Jailers Association—somewhat of a far cry from our mission. In that vein, I have also worked to further the reach and use of our exclusive trademark, the "Voice of the Judiciary.®" I am also developing a children's school education project with Judge Charles Gill's nonprofit organization. We are hoping to secure joint funding from the Bill Gates Foundation.

Lastly, and I believe most importantly, I continue to foster relations with National Center for State Courts (NCSC), the National Association for Court Management (NACM), the National Association of State Judicial Educators (NASJE), and the National College of Probate Judges (NCPJ). We just contracted with NCSC to assist the AJA in securing more vendors for our conferences and, therefore, more conference revenue. I attended the NACM midyear meeting and participated in a panel discussion; they are reciprocating by sending panelists to our San Diego conference. We attempted to join NASJE for a conference but were unable to do so at this time. But did however connect with NCPJ for a joint conference in 2013 or 2014. And we positioned the AJA very well for joint judicial conferences with conference-site states as we did in Colorado. We will be having a joint conference with California judges in San Diego this September, with Louisiana judges in 2013, and potentially with Washington, Oregon, and Canadian judges in 2015.

As I reflect upon my tenure, I keep thinking about the future of our association. Will we have the leadership necessary not only to carry out the mission of the association but to grow it? We have had many great leaders over the years, and as l look at the faces that continue to participate in committees and conferences, I am hopeful that more judges will come forward and take the wheel.

We now have in place a strategic plan. Keep your eye out for a special update report on it. With this plan, inspired leadership, and a motivated membership, we can continue to develop this association as the preeminent judicial organization. So if you have a desire to become a leader in this association, now is the time to come forward. Apply for the officer and Board of Governor's positions. Attend an Executive Committee meeting and bring yourself and your ideas along. An organization is only as good as its members. Farewell.

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION FUTURE CONFERENCES

2011 Annual Conference
San Diego, California
Westin Gaslamp
September 11-16
$199 single/double

2012 Midyear Meeting
Nashville, Tennessee
Doubletree Hotel
May 17-19
$129 single/double

2012 Annual Conference
New Orleans, Louisiana
Sheraton New Orleans
September 30-October 5
$169 single/double

2013 Annual Conference
Kohala Coast, Hawaii
The Fairmont Orchid
September 22-27
$219 single/double