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Peter Sferrazza

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# President's Column

Peter Sferrazza

Welcome AJA members and colleagues to the latest issue of *Court Review*.

Treatment courts have become an important part of our judicial system.

I have presided over a DUI court in Reno, Nevada for the past two years. In the beginning of November, I had the good fortune with my team to attend the National Center for DWI Courts training in El Paso, Texas.

We had excellent presentations on the 10 guiding principles of DWI courts. Julie Seitz and Shane Wolf were the project directors from the National Center for DWI courts. Other presenters included Judge Diane Bull, Mary Jane Knisely, Maggie Morales-Aina, and Mark Pickle.

The 10 principles are: 1. Determine the population; 2. Perform a clinical assessment of the impaired driver; 3. Develop the treatment plan; 4. Supervise the offender; 5. Forge agency, organization, and community partnerships; 6. Take a judicial leadership role; 7. Develop case management strategies; 8. Address transportation issues; 9. Evaluate the program; 10. Ensure a sustainable program.

El Paso Judge Robert Anchondo demonstrated the importance of the judge as a vital member of the DWI court team. As team leader, he was committed and willing to recognize and understand the complex and often troubled lives of those who stood before the bench. He involved their families and expressed a sincere commitment and strong personal belief that only by addressing the underlying problems of substance abuse, through intense treatment and accountability, can a participant acquire the ability to stop driving while impaired. The success or failure of a DWI court in large part depends on the strength shown by the judge as leader of the program.

If you are considering starting a DWI Court or already have one I would strongly recommend that you attend this program.

As president of the American Judges Association, I had the honor to attend the William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence at the United States Supreme Court. Past recipients include American Judges Association members, Judge Elizabeth Hines, Judge Steve Leben, and Judge Kevin Burke. This year's recipient is Tennessee Circuit Court Judge Duane Stone. He co-founded the Fourth Judicial District Drug Recovery Court in 2009 and co-founded a Veteran's Treatment Court in 2015. He implemented a neonatal abstinence syndrome prevention initiative that focuses on empowering people in jails and on probation with information about the dangers of in utero drug exposure.

In 2011 Judge Sloan and his wife adopted an infant son who was born suffering from withdrawals as a result of his birth

mother's opioid use. Judge Sloan gained a different perspective about addiction once his son came into his life. He sought information from medical professionals who explained substance use disorder as a chronic brain disorder. This knowledge helped him treat the participants in his program.

He started by identifying three simple steps all courts should implement regardless of charges people face:

Universal testing of everyone processed into jail for opioid use;

If tests are positive, conduct a clinical assessment and provide treatment; and

Supervise individuals in treatment and recovery for as long as it takes.

His court serves as a model for treatment courts throughout the country. We congratulate Judge Sloan on his award.

The Honorable Mark S. Cady, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Iowa and President of the Conference of Chief Justices, was on the program to make the opening remarks at the Rehnquist Award dinner. Unfortunately, we learned of his untimely death. We express our condolences to his family. He will be missed by his colleagues throughout the nation. He was married to Rebecca Cady and had two children. He died on November 15, 2019 after suffering a heart attack while walking his dog. He was 66

years old.

As a justice, he wrote the opinion in *Varnum v. Brien*, a unanimous decision in 2009 that made Iowa the third state to permit same-sex marriage. Justice Cady demonstrated the courage of his convictions and the importance of an independent judiciary. In 2010, Iowa voters defeated the retention of three of the judges responsible for the decision.

We will honor Judicial Independence at our Annual Meeting in Philadelphia from September 13-17, 2020.

Don't forget that our 2020 Midyear Meeting will be at the Napa Marriott from April 23-25, 2020, in Napa, California. The focus will be Pretrial Proceedings and Reform.

There will be presentations on the various pretrial programs currently implemented across the United States addressing challenges, barriers, best practices, and recommendations for improvements.

The presentations will share research regarding risk factors and impaired driving, the reliability and validity of various risk assessment tools, important limitations, as well as implementation issues. There will also be presentations on Juvenile Pretrial Reform and Strategies for Countering the Paper Terrorism of Sovereign Citizens. I encourage your participation. Napa will be informative and fun.

