

COURTLY CURRENTS



Standing Committee on Federal Judicial Improvements

Standing Committee on Judicial Independence

Fall 2010 - Volume V

SCFJI Welcomes New Chair Judge Norma L. Shapiro

Standing Committee on Federal Judicial Improvements ("SCFJI") welcomes Judge Norma L. Shapiro as its new Chair. Judge Shapiro was appointed to the U.S. District Court by President Jimmy Carter on August 11, 1978 as the first woman judge to sit in the Third Circuit. After graduating with a J.D. degree Magna Cum Laude from the University of Pennsylvania (1951), she served as a law clerk to Justice Horace Stern, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, and then was an instructor in Law and Psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Prior to her appointment to the bench, she was in private practice as a partner with the Dechert law firm from 1973-1978.



A long-standing member of the ABA, Judge Shapiro most recently completed her terms as a member of the Standing Committee on Judicial Independence (2007-2010) and the John Marshall Award Selection Committee (2007-2010). She was reappointed to serve a second term as ABA Representative to the Board of Directors of the Appellate Judges Education Institute (2010-2013) (2006-2010). Judge Shapiro is also a member of the Pennsylvania Bar Association ("PBA") and is Chair of its Leadership Development & Recruitment Committee. She is a member of the PBA Commission on Women in the Profession, the National Association of Women Judges, and has been active in professional, religious, and community service organizations.

Judge Shapiro is a recipient of numerous prestigious awards, including the ABA Margaret Brent Award (1999), the Meador-Rosenberg Award (2003), and the John Marshall Award (2006).

Judicial Disqualification Forum: Finding Prompt and Meaningful Solutions for State Judiciaries

The Standing Committee on Judicial Independence ("SCJI") held the *Judicial Disqualification Forum: Finding Prompt and Meaningful Solutions for State Judiciaries*, during the 2010 ABA Annual Meeting on Saturday, August 7. The forum was widely-attended and encouraged audience comments and suggestions on the draft judicial disqualification recommendations and report. SCJI will submit the now revised recommendations and report to the House of Delegates ("HOD") at the 2011 Midyear Meeting. As of October 13, 2010, the Judicial Division is a co-sponsor.



Hon. William A. Van Nortwick, Jr. of the JD Ethics and Professionalism Committee providing commentary at the judicial disqualification forum.

ABA President Zack Establishes Task Force on Preservation of the Justice System

As one of his four core initiatives for the 2010-2011 year, ABA President Stephen N. Zack has established the Task Force on the Preservation of the Justice System to address some of the most critical issues facing the legal profession today: the severe underfunding of our justice system, depletion of resources, and the courts' struggle to render their constitutional function and provide access to justice for countless Americans. The Task Force, co-chaired by David Boies and Theodore Olson, is comprised of distinguished attorneys and judges from across the nation. In the [August 6, 2010 ABA press release](#) announcing the Task Force, President Zack stated, "Our system of government was created with the basic belief that the doors to our courts would always be open to all citizens. Equal justice under law is the birthright of Americans. It is a promise enshrined in our Constitution and written over the entrance of our Supreme Court. We need to make good on this promise." The Justice is the Business of Government Task Force, which grew out of the ABA Commission on Fair and Impartial State Courts created by ABA past President H. Thomas Wells, Jr. (2008-2009), will work closely with Mr. Zack's Task Force to address the adequate funding of the justice system. Please [click here](#) to read the related November 1, 2010 *ABA Journal* article written by President Zack.



Judge M. Margaret McKeown Receives 20th Annual Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award

Past Chair (2006-2009) and SCFJI special advisor [Judge M. Margaret McKeown](#) received the [20th Annual Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award](#) on August 8 at the 2010 ABA Annual Meeting in San Francisco. To view the video introduction of Judge McKeown during the award



ceremony, please [click here](#). The Award, established by the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession in 1991, recognizes and celebrates the accomplishments of women lawyers who have excelled in their field and have paved the way to success for other women lawyers.

(L-R): Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award honorees Hon. M. Margaret McKeown, Brooksley E. Born, Laura Stein, Willie Stevenson Glanton, and Elizabeth J. Cabraser.

Annual Meeting HOD Highlights

The HOD approved [Resolution 11-3](#), amending §31.7 of the ABA Bylaws to increase the size of the SCFJI from nine to eleven members.

SCFJI co-sponsored Section of Litigation "Model Access Act" [Resolution 104](#) and Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defendants "Basic Principles of a Right to Counsel in Civil Legal Proceedings" [Resolution 105](#), which provide guidance to jurisdictions interested in implementing a civil right to counsel.

With the support of SCJI as co-sponsor, the HOD approved ABA Standing Committee on Public Education [Resolution 110](#), encouraging all lawyers to consider it part of their fundamental responsibility to ensure that all students experience high quality civic learning, including the study of law, government, and history.

Joint Committee Dinner

Members of SCJI and SCFJI convened during the 2010 ABA Annual Meeting in San Francisco on Thursday, August 5 for a joint committee dinner at Le Colonial. The committees bid farewell to outgoing SCFJI Chair Judge Nancy F. Atlas (2009-2010). Among the guests were former SCFJI Chairs Judge M. Margaret McKeown (2006-2009), Edward W. Madeira, Jr. (1993-1996), and incoming SCFJI Chair Judge Norma L. Shapiro (2010-2013).



(L-R): Hon. Nancy F. Atlas, Edward W. Madeira, Jr., Hon. Norma L. Shapiro, and Hon. M. Margaret McKeown at the 2010 ABA Annual Meeting joint committee dinner.

Judging Aging: The Quiz Show

SCFJI sponsored an informational CLE program, *Judging Aging: The Quiz Show*, at the 2010 ABA Annual Meeting in San Francisco on Friday, August 6. The program was chaired by SCFJI member, Judge Delissa A. Ridgway. The panel included neuropsychologist and SCFJI consultant Dr. Wilfred van Gorp, Judge D. Brock Hornby of the U.S. District of Maine, and Judge M. Margaret McKeown of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. The program opened with a Fox news report titled [Aging Justice](#). Program attendees were challenged with quiz questions related to the topic. This program originated from a SCFJI *Judging Aging* program held at last year's ABA Annual Meeting in Chicago.



Dr. Wilfred van Gorp addressing audience members at Judging Aging: The Quiz Show.

SCJI Unveils its Judicial Independence Clearinghouse Web site

In conjunction with the goal of SCJI to "act as a clearinghouse for the Association's activities dealing with the judicial independence of state, local and administrative judiciaries," the SCJI [Judicial Independence Clearinghouse](#) incorporates all information the ABA has to offer on the issue, along with materials gathered from outside sources. The *Judicial Independence Clearinghouse* serves the ABA mission by providing the public with the knowledge and tools to understand and spread the concept of judicial independence. The Committee encourages you to visit the site and discover its practical approach to locating judicial independence resources.

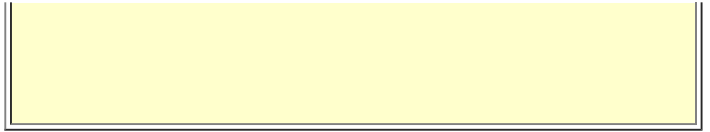
SCFJI Pro Bono Employment Litigation Project Shares a Valuable Resource

SCFJI has researched the assignment of pro bono counsel in *pro se* employment cases at the federal court level. As a result of these efforts, SCFJI has learned of the existence of the [Eastern District of Pennsylvania Plaintiffs' Employment Panel \("PEP"\)](#). PEP is the only federal court assistance program focused on employment law and is a joint effort of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and local bar associations. SCFJI believes that organized systems for appointment of counsel in employment cases, such as PEP, are a valuable resource for all federal district courts. Please visit the [SCFJI Web site](#) for additional information on PEP.

Courtly Currents is a publication for members and collaborators of the Standing Committee on Federal Judicial Improvements and the Standing Committee on Judicial Independence. Opinions expressed herein are not to be deemed to represent the ABA unless and until adopted by the ABA.

Honorable Norma L. Shapiro, Chair
Standing Committee on Federal Judicial Improvements

William K. Weisenberg, Chair
Standing Committee on Judicial Independence



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