

# **DIRECTOR OF STATE COURTS' ADDRESS 2018**



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**Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin Judicial Conference**  
October 31, 2018  
Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

## **2018 Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin Judicial Conference**

### **State of the Director's Office Remarks by Hon. Randy Koschnick Director of State Courts**

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Good morning. Thank you, Chief Justice Roggensack.

I'm always amazed to see so many familiar faces at a large conference like this. It must be a sign that we all belong together. Or, I guess it could be a sign that I've been around too long. Anyway, it's great to be here and to see you all again.

As you've heard, the theme of this year's conference is "Judicial Excellence." One of the keys to having excellent judges is to provide excellent opportunities for judicial education. This conference is an example of that.

I want to thank the planning committee, its co-chairs, Judge Maria Lazar and Judge Michael Fitzpatrick, and the Office of Judicial Education. They did a great job. Please take full advantage of as many sessions as possible while you are here.

During the next couple of days, we'll hear presentations or sessions on a variety of topics, from the handling of civil, criminal, and family cases, to new developments on legal issues related to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Amendments and their Wisconsin Constitution counterparts.

We'll hear how disruptive technology may change the way we handle cases and even live our lives, whether we like it or not. And, we'll see a video on how digital audio recording is being used to help us take and make the record in light of a shortage of stenographic court reporters.

Some of our breakout sessions address treatment court standards, high-profile cases, bias, the new data warehouse project, and fees fines, and forfeitures, among others issues. Rapid-fire sessions include presentations on use of the judicial dashboard, juvenile law, and victims rights. This year's agenda also includes presentations or panels on a variety of topics, such as the federalist papers, and, what it takes to be an excellent judge.

In the process, we can expect to gain perspective from two former Wisconsin governors, two former Wisconsin Supreme Court justices, and a few noted legal experts. And of course, we have a strong showing of knowledgeable and experienced circuit court judges, delivering presentations on a variety of topics.

I expect this will be a great conference, with ample opportunity for you to learn from each session and each other.

However, judicial education doesn't end when a conference like this is over. Learning is a continuous process, and we want all of you to be able to seek the knowledge and judicial education opportunities you need to do your job well.

In the past, I know some of you have not been able to take advantage of all the opportunities that you would have liked, especially outside Wisconsin. We've had limits on out-of-state travel, and the approval process hasn't always been clear.

I want to re-affirm that judicial education is a top priority, and we want to make it possible for you to take advantage of such opportunities.

I am announcing that, as of today, there is no longer a formal ban on state-paid, out-of-state travel for judicial education purposes. I will soon be issuing an administrative bulletin that clarifies this new policy.

We are also simplifying the approval process for judges to attend programming in other states. From now on, you will be able to use one form to apply in advance for both judicial education credits and travel re-imbusement.

The administrative bulletin also explains more about this process and what is required to take advantage of out-of-state programming. In the past, the approval process seemed like a bit of a mystery, and I am convinced this new approach will be a big improvement.

Of course, just because you apply for credit and reimbursement doesn't mean your proposal is approved. The Office of Judicial Education and the Judicial Education Committee will still determine if credits count. And, my office will let you know if re-imbusement is going to be available.

The advantage is that now you should know in advance. The main thing you need to do, is to submit your request at least 45 days before an event.

And, we have one other request: If you attend out-of-state programming, we ask that you to come back to Wisconsin and share what you've learned with your colleagues. In other words, we would like you to help us get more bang for our judicial education buck.

We have already found ways to improve access to judicial education where possible. Earlier this year, we took a new approach to make sure that any judge who wanted to attend a treatment court training program could do so. Instead of paying based on the price for each individual

judge, we negotiated a group rate. This opened the door for anyone who was able to go, and the price didn't go up.

We are also looking to technology to improve the way we deliver some programming. In fact, we just added instructional video production capability to the Office of Judicial Education. This is not a substitute for in-person learning opportunities. And clearly, there is no replacement for connecting with colleagues at gatherings like this conference.

But video instruction makes a great deal of sense in some applications, and it is content that can be viewed at your convenience, when and where you like.

As an example, the Office of Judicial Education has already produced a short explanatory video and tutorial on the change in the approval process for out-of-state programming. This is will be available on CourtNet, so please take a look when you get a chance, and certainly if you plan to seek credits for out-of-state programming.

We are also using technology to help you do your jobs and to make it more convenient for you to access the information you need. You may notice as you look around that many judges are now using court-issued laptops.

In fact, CCAP has already issued more than 140 laptops to judges. That means more than half of you have received conference materials on a USB flash drive.

Obviously, you can still print copies of select materials if you'd like. But overall, it's better for you to have this information at your fingertips, easily searchable, here and when you get back home.

We are well on our way to killing one of the time-honored traditions of this conference, and that is lugging around large binders of materials. Maybe some of you will miss that; I will not. Conference materials are also available on CourtNet this year, so you won't even need to go digging for your flash drive, if you lose track of it. And, just to make sure you can access everything you need, we've had CCAP make sure the WI-FI here is amped up to meet our needs.

The CCAP laptops are not only convenient, they can also help when things don't go quite as planned. For example, when state, federal, and local law enforcement took over a large portion of the Barron County Courthouse during a recent large-scale criminal investigation, Circuit Court Judge Judge James Babler turned to his laptop.

After being squeezed out of his courtroom on short notice, Judge Babler used his laptop to set up and run his court on a temporary basis out of the Barron Municipal Court. Thanks to Judge Babler's foresight, he had the right tool in his hand at the right time. And, Barron County avoided what could have been a much worse situation.

Likewise, our goal in judicial education is to provide you with the right learning opportunities for you to be excellent judges.

And, speaking of excellent judges – and we have a roomful here – I would like to introduce Chief Judge Maxine White, who has a special presentation.

Thank you.