Edward B. McConnell, the first president of the National Center for State Courts, passed away August 10, at the age of 95. Mr. McConnell served as NCSC president from 1973 to 1990. Before becoming NCSC president, he was appointed administrative director of the New Jersey courts in 1953, becoming the first professional state court administrator in the country. He received many recognitions for his accomplishments, including the Herbert Lincoln Harley Award from the American Judicature Society, the Glenn R. Winters Award from the American Judges Association, the Warren E. Burger Award from the Institute for Court Management (which later became part of NCSC), and the Award of Merit from the National Association for Court Management. “Ed was one of the true founders of judicial administration not just in the United States but globally,” said NCSC President Mary McQueen. “Without Ed there would not be an NCSC. His commitment and vision were seeds that flourished to become the institution that is recognized around the world for service and leadership to courts. Ed McConnell was an amazing man and a steadfast friend to NCSC.”

Former Arkansas Chief Justice Jim Hannah, who served as NCSC chair and as president of the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) in 2014 – 2015, passed away January 14, 2016 at the age of 71. It was under his leadership that the Pandemic and Emergency Response Task Force was formed. He served as chief justice of Arkansas from 2005 – 2015. CCJ President David Gilbertson, chief justice of South Dakota said, “Every person who respects the rule of law has lost a good friend. Besides providing outstanding legal leadership to the citizens of Arkansas for many years as its chief justice, Jim was a dominant force on various judicial issues on the national level.”

Judith Kaye, the former chief judge of New York, passed away in New York City January 7, 2016 at the age of 77. Chief Judge Kaye served as chair of NCSC’s Board of Directors and as president of the Conference of Chief Justices in 2002 – 2003. Colleagues have praised Chief Judge Kaye as a judge, as an administrative leader, and for her compassion. She was the first woman ever appointed to the highest court in New York, and served as chief judge from 1993 – 2008—longer than any of her predecessors.
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Front row from left: Chief Justice Maureen O’Connor, Judge Ronald Adrine, Luther Battiste III, Patricia Griffin, Chief Justice David Gilbertson, Mary McQueen, Justice Peggy Quince, Simon Lorne, Chief Justice Michael Heavican, Anne Milgram.

The year 2015 marked the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta—the first social contract stating that a society’s laws applied to everyone, including kings. This compact between England’s King John and his barons paved the way for other innovations in the rule of law. The official seal of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) features a likeness of the tree under which Magna Carta was signed, along with this quotation from the document: “Nulli vendemus nulli negabimus” (“to no one will we sell, to no one will we deny, justice”).

The equal application of the rule of law is essential to our society, especially because the courts are where most citizens have direct contact with the government—for example, by filing a small-claims suit or participating on a jury panel. Efficient, fair justice is essential to building public trust and confidence not only in the courts, but also in the other two branches of government. This concept is emphasized in Magna Carta:

No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgment of his equals or by the law of the land.

In other words, the rule of law is essential if a government is to be worthy of the people’s trust.

NCSC is dedicated to improving the administration of justice and the rule of law. We see the importance of this mission in the faces of all those who work in and use the courts. We see it in the faces of

- elementary school children participating in our annual civics-education essay contest or reading our Justice Case Files series of graphic novels, which in 2015 tied in the development of the Magna Carta to the contemporary issue of bullying in our schools;
- dedicated court staff when we provide technical assistance in court security, technology, architecture, and many other areas or collect data for original research into court operations;
- journalists and students who request information to improve their understanding of our courts; and
- citizens who speak English as a second language when they are provided a qualified court interpreter.

In The Federalist Papers, Alexander Hamilton wrote that “the ordinary administration of criminal and civil justice” is essential “to impressing upon the minds of the people, affection, esteem, and reverence towards the government.” This harkens back to the spirit of what took place at Runnymede 800 years ago: the signing of Magna Carta. NCSC’s staff is dedicated to improving the “ordinary administration of criminal and civil justice,” which, in turn, improves public trust and confidence in the government.

Mary Campbell McQueen
President

David Gilbertson
Chief Justice
South Dakota Supreme Court
FROM THE CLERK’S DESK TO THE COURTROOM, state courts need fresh perspectives about their operations, backed up by relevant data, to improve their service to the public. NCSC collects and analyzes court-related data to provide a national, state, and local perspective on how well the courts are performing their mission to provide accessible justice.

NCSC measured and described the national public perspective of the courts through its annual “State of State Courts” survey. According to the October 2015 survey, which involved more than 1,000 registered voters and was conducted by GBA Strategies, courts remained the most trusted branch of government, and Americans recognized the courts’ unique role in protecting individual rights. However, there was still concern about efficiency and unfairness. African-Americans, in particular, expressed significantly less faith in courts than the public as a whole.

NCSC’s Court Statistics Project (www.courtstatistics.org) provided another, more detailed national perspective on court operations via Examining the Work of State Courts. This report compiled the latest data about criminal and civil caseloads and provided an important framework for discussing court operations. Users can build their own profiles of court operations, using in-depth state-level statistics, with CSP’s online Dataviewer.

NCSC’s Court Organization Reports (www.ncsc.org/sco), another online resource, allows users to focus on specific characteristics of courts. NCSC also examined how work at the state and local level can benefit courts nationwide.

NCSC’s Civil Justice Initiative (CJI) is exploring how courts handle civil litigation in small and large cases. CJI’s The Landscape of Civil Litigation of State Courts, released in 2015, examined case characteristics and outcomes for civil cases disposed during a one-year interval from courts in ten urban counties—about 5 percent of civil cases nationally. CJI’s work regarding Utah’s new rules on discovery in civil cases noted a significant reduction in delay and the number of discovery disputes in the state.

NCSC also continues to identify policies and practices that increase the effectiveness of criminal case processing and decision making. NCSC’s Pretrial Justice Center for Courts, funded by the Public Welfare Foundation, works closely with the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ), and the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) to implement their resolution recommending evidence-based assessment of risk in setting pretrial release conditions and the presumptive use of non-financial release conditions consistent with assessments of risk. Likewise, NCSC’s Center for Sentencing Initiatives, funded in part by the Pew Charitable Trusts, works with CCJ and COSCA to implement their resolutions supporting evidence-based sentencing practices that promote public safety and reduce recidivism. The Centers conduct research, provide information and tools, offer education and technical assistance, facilitate cross-state learning and collaboration, and promote the use of evidence-based pretrial and sentencing practices for courts across the country. In 2016, the work of both Centers will be complemented by a new initiative funded by the MacArthur Foundation’s Safety and Justice Challenge that is focused on reducing the over-reliance on jail incarceration based on the use of evidence-based practices.

Courts learned about innovations in other states that could be applied to their own operations through NCSC’s Trends in State Courts 2015. This annual NCSC publication, which makes courts aware of key societal trends that affect court operations, explored leadership and technology in the courts. Topics included judges and court administrators working together as “productive pairs,” development of an online benchbook in North Carolina, Web portals for self-represented litigants, and how Minnesota’s Fourth Judicial District became a “high-functioning court.”

Trial courts in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico reported a combined total of 94.1 million incoming cases for 2013, the latest year for which complete data are available.

Examining the Work of State Courts: An Overview of 2013 State Court Caseloads (NCSC. 2015)
In recent years, the Navajo Nation has experienced a rapidly expanding workforce brought on by several economic, social, funding, and reorganization initiatives. As a result, the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch in Arizona needed expertise to develop a customized wage study for its court system to better manage employee turnover and retention.

NCSC developed a comprehensive employee wage survey, compensation evaluation, and report, which addresses both retention and recruitment and allows the court to more efficiently hire and retain employees. This project serves as a model for courts looking to address the complexity of the classification and compensation systems that are exclusive to courts.

The Navajo Nation operates a sophisticated court system with an average workforce of more than 250 full- and part-time employees. All positions, except judicial officers, were reviewed for both classification and compensation matches.

Traditionally, courts go through classification and compensation reviews conducted by agencies that specialize in a wide variety of organizations and are not specific to courts. NCSC has recognized the justice system’s need for expertise in classifying and compensating court employees. To date, NCSC has conducted 11 similar studies for courts in the United States.
NCSC HELPS COURTS RESPOND QUICKLY to issues that arise that directly impact the courts and the public’s interaction with the courts.

In the aftermath of Michael Brown’s death in Ferguson, Missouri, questions were raised not just about the city’s police department but about fairness, oversight, and funding of municipal courts. The Missouri Supreme Court turned to NCSC to survey the state’s municipal courts and to identify best practices for operating and managing limited jurisdiction courts in the United States and to suggest how those practices can be applied to Missouri municipal courts. The report was funded through a State Justice Institute (SJI) grant. NCSC reviewed studies and reports on Missouri’s municipal courts, examined data on court performance; visited, observed, and interviewed judges, lawyers, and court staff in a select number of municipal courts throughout the state; and met with the Missouri Supreme Court.

The situation in Ferguson and other courts around the country, brought to light the issue of inequality in some jurisdictions of court fines, fees, and bail practices. The Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators established a National Task Force on Fines, Fees and Bail Practices to address the ongoing impact that court fines and fees and bail practices have on communities – especially the economically disadvantaged. The Task Force is comprised of national judicial and legal leaders; legal advocates; policymakers from state, county and municipal governments; academics; and the public interest community. The Task Force is working with the support and commitment of the State Justice Institute (SJI) and is coordinating with key stakeholders, including the Department of Justice. The Task Force co-chairs have formed three working groups:

- Access to Justice and Fairness
- Transparency, Governance and Structural Reform
- Accountability, Judicial Performance and Qualifications, and Oversight

The Conference of Chief Justices, the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts, and the National Center for State Courts in partnership with and support from the State Justice Institute launched a national initiative in 2015: Community Engagement in the State Courts, which is building a strategy to bridge the gap between communities of color and the courts. The initiative is being led by an advisory group chaired by Chief Judge Eric T. Washington of the D.C. Court of Appeals.

The project involves developing a two-way dialogue that brings community leaders to the courts to establish a meaningful relationship built upon trust, respect, and understanding. Out of these dialogues the initiative will develop tools and resources that assist state court leaders in engaging marginalized and disenfranchised communities to ensure equal access to justice for all. One of the committee’s initial projects is to conduct up to three Town Hall meetings in cities across the country that will bring court leaders together with members of the minority communities to discuss issues and solutions.

Above: (From left) NCSC President Mary McQueen with Nebraska Chief Justice Michael Heavican, Susan Buffett, and Nebraska State Court Administrator Corey Steel.

On page 7: Sen. Al Franken speaks about his Mental Health Act during an NCSC press briefing with NCSC President Mary McQueen, Chief Justice David Gilbertson, Judge Steve Leifman, and Dr. Renee Binder. Also, Chief Justice David Gilbertson with Judge Steve Leifman speaking at the Mental Health Awareness Panel.

Burger Award Recipient Russell R. Brown III
NCSC raised awareness about the overwhelming number of mentally ill people who are in the justice system by selecting Florida Judge Steve Leifman for the 2015 William H. Rehnquist Award. Judge Leifman was recognized for his groundbreaking work helping the transform the way people in the criminal justice system with mental illnesses are treated.

In Washington, D.C. in November, NCSC held a press briefing with Judge Leifman, Sen. Al Franken, and Dr. Renee Binder, president of the American Psychiatric Association.

Sen. Franken spoke about legislation that he co-sponsors, the Comprehensive Mental Health and Justice System Act.

Judge Leifman in 2000 created the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Criminal Mental Health Project, which diverts individuals with serious mental illnesses who do not pose a risk to the public away from criminal justice system and into community-based treatment and support services. This has resulted in fewer arrests and incarcerations of people with mental illness, reduced crime, reduced injuries to law enforcement officers, improved public safety, reduced cost to taxpayers, and improved the administration of justice.

Since this project’s inception, Judge Leifman also has developed the nation’s largest Crisis Intervention Team training program that teaches law enforcement offices to recognize signs of mental illness and to respond more effectively to individuals in psychiatric crisis.

See more about Judge Leifman on pg. 16

We have criminalized mental illness, so people with mental health conditions are disproportionately arrested and incarcerated.”

Sen. Al Franken
Speaks about his bill, The Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act.

COURT ADMINISTRATOR WHO HELPED IDENTIFY BEST PRACTICES FOR MUNI COURTS RECIPIENT OF WARREN E. BURGER AWARD

Russell R Brown III, court administrator of the Cleveland Municipal Court, was the 2015 recipient of the Warren E. Burger Award for excellence in court administration. Named for the late Chief Justice of the United States who helped found NCSC, the Warren E. Burger award honors a state court administrative official who demonstrates professional expertise, leadership, integrity, creativity, innovativeness, and sound judgment.

“Russell Brown is an exceptional leader, possessing vision, knowledge, and determination to make a difference and improve justice. He has effectively led the Cleveland Municipal Court, introducing and implementing numerous innovative programs that improve lives,” says NCSC President Mary McQueen.

Brown’s strong leadership has improved courts nationally as well as in Ohio. Recently, he served on a national committee that established best practices for municipal courts as part of a review NCSC conducted for the Missouri Supreme Court.

As Cleveland Municipal court administrator, Brown manages and administers a court system of 263 employees. The Cleveland Municipal Court is one of the largest trial courts by volume in the state of Ohio, handling up to 180,000 case filings per year.

Under Brown’s leadership, the court has earned a reputation for being proactive and innovative. Brown has overseen the implementation of a number of the court’s most effective initiatives, including a new case management system, certification of specialized dockets in mental health, veterans’ treatment, human trafficking, and revision of the court’s Dedicated Domestic Violence Docket. He also has facilitated community outreach programs providing avenues to bring people with outstanding warrants back onto the court’s docket, including Fugitive Safe Surrender and the Clerk of Court’s In the Neighborhood programs.
HELPING COURTS TO IMPROVE LIVES

THE WORK OF THE COURTS IS MORE THAN JUST CASE NUMBERS on a docket, and legal decisions can have a profound effect on people’s lives. NCSC’s work extends beyond the courthouse door to improve the lives of those who come in contact with the justice system.

NCSC has supported ongoing research to help the most vulnerable members of society. For example, in September 2015 NCSC’s Center for Elders and the Courts presented a webinar, “How to Protect Our Nation’s Most Vulnerable Adults through Effective Guardianship Practices,” based on the National Association for Court Management’s Adult Guardianship Guide. The webinar discussed standards that can help courts develop robust practices that enhance efficiency and oversight, presented action steps to improve guardianship practices, and offered concrete examples of innovative approaches and collaborative efforts.

In October 2015, a Violence Against Women workshop—hosted at NCSC headquarters and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office on Violence Against Women—provided resources to improve court policy related to violence against women. Another NCSC report describes how states are using Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funds in court reform. As of August 2015, all but four states had a designated VAWA point of contact in their state court administrative offices, and STOP funds were being used to support judicial and court staff training about domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Children are another vulnerable segment of our society. NCSC continues its partnership with Casey Family Programs, which is supplying seven states—Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, and Wisconsin—with intensive technical assistance to support reform of dependency court systems. This partnership works to keep children safely in their homes, ensuring timely exits to permanency, and giving full consideration of children’s well-being and to compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act.

With funding from the MacArthur Foundation, NCSC coordinated two regional Juvenile Justice Summits. One summit is planned for 2016, and another is planned for 2017. State teams—composed of justices, state court administrators, judges, probation officers, and other juvenile justice experts—developed action plans that focus on areas of juvenile justice reform specific to their states. The plans include action steps, responsible parties, timelines, available resources, and a 90-day benchmark. To help develop the action plans, the teams attended education sessions on neuroscience and adolescent development, juvenile defense standards, alternatives for youth charged with status offenses, racial and ethnic disparity, school discipline problems, dual-status youth, and mental health needs.

“OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS, . . . the number of children in out-of-home care in Arizona doubled. The court, the bar, the child welfare agency and the community were all struggling to respond to this crisis when Judge Patricia Macias . . . offered assistance through the Casey Family Programs Judicial Engagement Team (JET) and their partnership with the National Center for State Courts. . . . The JET partnership brought us expert advice, technical support, and assistance and provided a format to bring together the executive and judicial branch to lead a community-wide effort to develop strategies to safely reduce the number of children in care. . . . The help and support offered to our court through this dynamic partnership has been invaluable.”

Hon. Colleen McNally, Juvenile Presiding Judge, Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County

NCSC Annual Report 2015
NCSC IS ON THE FOREFRONT OF COURT TECHNOLOGY, from helping courts implement electronic filing to teaching courts how to manage digital evidence to connecting court leaders with the technology that is right for their courts. NCSC accomplishes this through providing technical assistance and education to the courts. Every other year, NCSC sponsors the Court Technology Conference to educate court leaders from around the world about advances in court technology.

“When it comes to courts there are a lot of challenges with innovation,” said CTC 2015 keynote speaker Mark Britton, founder of legal services company Avvo. “But what we need more than anything is to start the conversation.”

CTC 2015 jumpstarted that discussion. More than 1,500 court leaders representing 49 states and 15 countries attended the conference held September 22-24 in Minneapolis. Britton’s keynote set the tone for the two-and-half days of education sessions that ranged from electronic records to the judiciary in a virtual, mobile, and social world, to how IT can deliver solutions to create high-performing courts.

CTC 2015 featured six educational tracks: Tools for the 21st Century Judge; Managing Electronic Records; How IT Can Design and Deliver Solutions to Create a High Performance Court; The Judiciary in a Virtual, Mobile, Social World; Access to Justice; and Courthouse of the Future.

Ohio Judge Gary Byers said CTC 2015 positioned him to be with court leaders facing the same challenges as his court. “This gave me the opportunity to interact with folks who are talking about the same issues that affect me … I’m learning about new technologies and how they affect my world in a meaningful way,” he said. Slides for all presentations, along with several recorded sessions, are available at ctc2015.org.

Right: (Top to bottom, left to right) NCSC President Mary McQueen, left, and Minnesota Chief Justice Lorie Gildea, welcome CTC 2015 keynote speaker, Mark Britton, to the conference.

Technology strategist Tara Thomas speaks to CTC 2015 attendees about the latest tech tips.

CTC Vendors and Attendees at the conference vendor sessions.
MEETING THE CHANGING NEEDS OF SOCIETY & THE COURTS

COURTS ENCOUNTER MANY ISSUES, a number of them unexpected, during day-to-day operations. An important part of NCSC’s mission is to help courts adjust to changing needs and habits of society.

Many people, particularly seniors, have been victims of criminals who try to collect “fines” in the name of a court through elaborate jury-service scams. To raise awareness on the issue, NCSC designed a Jury Service Scam Toolkit and an informational poster for the court community. Each product was produced at the request of multiple state courts to help curb an epidemic of fraud involving jury service.

The toolkit includes a history of how jury scams are impacting the courts and a template of a press release, audio public service announcement, editorial, and handout for seniors that can be customized for each court. The poster advises the public on how to protect itself against jury-duty scams. NCSC mailed more than 3,500 posters without cost to federal, state, local, and tribal courts.

Another growing issue facing courts is juror use of Internet technologies, which can cause serious complications for judges presiding over jury trials. Media stories regularly describe disrupted trials or cases in which a verdict was overturned because jurors researched the case or used social media to communicate with friends. Hundreds of court opinions have been filed in response to allegations of Internet-related juror misconduct.

Although courts have developed tools to discourage jurors from using the Internet while serving, not all judges use these tools consistently. To help judges meet these challenges, NCSC developed a curriculum on “Preventing and Addressing Internet-Related Juror Misconduct.” The curriculum familiarizes judges with Internet technologies and jurors’ expectations about these technologies, describes techniques to discourage juror use of these technologies, and provides a checklist of factual issues for assessing the risk of prejudice resulting from juror misconduct given the applicable law in each state.

CIVICS EDUCATION

Civics education is another way NCSC helps society understand the courts. 2015 marked the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, which was sealed by King John in a field in Runnymede, England. NCSC recognized this historic document that established the foundation for the rule of law, throughout the year and in numerous ways. In January, NCSC released Justice Case Files 5: The Case of the Cyberbully, which teaches about due process and the rule of law against the backdrop of modern-day students bullying each other online. After all, King John was a notorious bully!

NCSC CONNECTED COMMUNITY

NCSC launched a new online networking community in 2015 called NCSC Connected Community, for use by those in the state courts and their associated justice partners. This came about after many of our association boards and working groups asked for a secure online space in which to network, share, and archive their information.

Current members include judges, court administrators, court clerks, staff, and IT professionals. One clerk of court summarizes her reason for following NCSC Connected Community:

“Courts face challenges every day, and often it may seem as if the issues we are faced with are unique to our respective jurisdictions. NCSC’s Connected Community provides an outlet for court personnel to share our experiences and successes. No matter the distance and no matter the size of your court, the information and resources that have been shared have been very useful.”

And a judge finds the community to be “a valuable resource not only in providing information about how other jurisdictions function, but in raising issues that ought to be discussed, like the mentally ill and cost collection.”

Members can choose to receive either real-time email alerts of activity and comments in their selected communities, or a once-a-day “digest” email that rounds up the previous day’s activity. You don’t have to log on to the site to find out what comments are circulating or what new files have been posted.

Join the discussion at connected.ncsc.org.

“I always get excited to receive an email from ‘Ask NCSC!’ because the information in one way or another is relevant in the work that I do.”

Danielle T. Rosete, Esq.
Clerk of Court, Superior Court of Guam

NCSC Annual Report 2015
Using the lessons from the graphic novel, NCSC developed a comprehensive civics program for middle-school students across the country. “Our 8th-grade students now know the significance that Magna Carta had on our Constitutional process, thanks to the informative, insightful, and engaging program presented to our students by NCSC staff … Bringing the past and impacting the here and now is so important in education, and this program achieved what all educators look for—engagement and understanding,” said Mary Beth Moss, civics/economics teacher, Grafton Middle School, Yorktown, Virginia.

Throughout the year, NCSC carried out several civics exercises to educate students about the justice system and Magna Carta. NCSC’s annual civics education essay contest asked students from three grade groups to answer “What is the Magna Carta and why is it important?” More than 350 students from across the country entered. In addition, two Williamsburg, Virginia, high school social studies teachers presented “Bullying + Graphic Novels = A Gateway to Engagement” at the Virginia Council for the Social Studies Annual Conference in Norfolk. The program incorporated engaging activities and discussed how teachers can use Justice Case Files 5 in their classrooms.

As part of the 800th anniversary, NCSC also produced several “mini-Cartas,” short videos explaining the significance that this 800-year-old document has today.

Charles Keller
MA, CPM, Community Access and Outreach Administrator, Trial Court Administrator’s Office, 26th Judicial District of North Carolina

“THE NCSC’S JURY SCAM POSTER has been a valuable tool in our fight to combat scammers victimizing citizens in our judicial district. We have distributed the poster to various community partner organizations to display in their locations, as well as in our courthouse to help alert the public and raise awareness of this scam. I truly appreciate the work that went into creating and distributing this poster.”

Charles Keller
MA, CPM, Community Access and Outreach Administrator, Trial Court Administrator’s Office, 26th Judicial District of North Carolina

Above: At Grafton Middle School in Yorktown, VA., students participated in a civics education program that discussed the Justice Case Files 5 graphic novel, “The Case of the Cyberbully.” NCSC staff facilitated the program and incorporated discussions about the Magna Carta and scenarios of bullying.

Left: (Below) During the civics education program, the students were assigned parts in the graphic novel to read out loud.

Below: (From left) Nebraska Chief Justice Michael Heavican, South Carolina Chief Justice Jean Toal (retired), NCSC President Mary McQueen, and Captain Benes Z. Aldana.

NCSC President Mary McQueen, with NCSC Board members and other court leaders, represented NCSC during a celebration of the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta held at Runnymede, England.
BY THE NUMBERS IN 2015

- **NCSC EMPLOYEES**
  - 141 Employees
  - AND -
  - 189 NCSC contract employees

- **CONNECTED COMMUNITY**
  - 40,451 Members
  - AND -
  - 292 Connected Communities Created

- **MILES FLOWN**
  - 74,270 miles flown by NCSC President in 2015

- **CALLS RECEIVED**
  - 4,597 calls received in Knowledge and Information Services

- **NCSC ONLINE**
  - 507+ Followers on Facebook
  - INCREASE IN FOLLOWERS ON TWITTER BY
  - 688 people in 2015

- **SOCIAL MEDIA**
  - 1152 Tweets Sent #NCSC2015
  - 2,408 Followers on Twitter
  - 2,456 Followers on Facebook
  - INCLUDING
  - 507 new followers in 2015

A YEAR IN REVIEW

NCSC PROVIDING EDUCATION and services to 50 STATE COURT SYSTEMS D.C. and 5 territories - SINCE - 1971
NCSC FACTS & FIGURES

INTERNATIONAL

29 Countries NCSC is working in to help improve their justice systems
- AND -
20 Countries sent International Visitors to NCSC

GRANTS RECEIVED

20 In Research, International & Technology

IN ATTENDENCE

1,494 Attendees at CTC
CTC 2015 features one of the largest court technology exhibit shows offered. More than 125 exhibitors showcased their software and products during the 1 ½ day exhibit show.
- AND -
54 Court Professionals from 49 states/territories attended the Violence Against Women workshop

COURT ASSOCIATIONS

16 Number of court associations that NCSC manages
- AND -
7,293 Combined number of members in all NCSC Associations

EDUCATION

2,969 Court professionals enrolled in ICM classes in 2015

IN THE NEWS

617 Times NCSC was mentioned in news articles

NCSC PROJECTS

RESEARCH & CONSULTING

NCSC conducted projects and technical assistance to 42 states and 2 territories.
- AND -
150 projects NCSC Court Consulting Services worked on in 2015

JURY POSTERS

10,760 Distributed

CIVICS EDUCATION

350 Essays received for Law Day Contest

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150 Corporations and law firms are represented on NCSC’s General Counsel & Lawyers Committees

SUPPORT

617 Times NCSC was mentioned in news articles
IMPROVING THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE WORLDWIDE

NCSC ALSO GOES BEYOND THE BORDERS of the United States to help improve the rule of law in other countries. This assistance extends to people from the Caribbean to Africa to central Europe to Asia.

NCSC worked to improve access to justice, court services, gender equity, and legal empowerment in Bangladesh as part of the United States Agency for International Development’s Justice for All Program. NCSC partnered with the government of Bangladesh and civil society both nationally and in 13 districts to promote access to justice for the poor and vulnerable by strengthening government-funded legal aid committees, supporting best practice exchanges for improved court services, and increasing citizen awareness of their rights. In addition, NCSC also worked to advance gender equity and empower legal professionals and law students through the Women in Justice Initiative. Court Excellence volunteers from six states and U.S. territories have also trained Bangladeshi judges and court staff on court excellence and modern case management techniques.

NCSC implemented the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative Justice Sector Assistance Program, a five-year program funded by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. The program offered a flexible mechanism to assist judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and law enforcement officials in the Caribbean region to:

1. Strengthen criminal justice legal frameworks and institutions
2. Develop model criminal justice approaches across the Caribbean region
3. Build capacity to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate complex criminal cases

The Judicial Reform and Government Accountability project (JRGA) is a five-year USAID initiative aimed at strengthening the rule of law, independence of the judiciary, and the administration of justice in the Republic of Serbia, as well as improving the capacities of government institutions, independent agencies, and civil society to detect and prevent corruption. During 2015, JRGA focused on implementing a case management system for Serbian misdemeanor courts—SIPRES. The software application was designed to optimize court business processes and now operates in 153 locations across Serbia, serving almost 2,500 users. There are 1.9 million cases in SIPRES to date. JRGA has trained almost 1,500 court staff in the use of the SIPRES application, which has improved efficiency, saved resources, and improved access to justice and service to citizens.
Three years ago, NCSC entered into a project with the Supreme Court of Nigeria to develop a Nigeria Case Management System to improve transparency, access to the courts, and efficiency. In 2015 the software was deployed in the supreme court and courts of appeal and was being tested in the trial courts.

The revolutionary aspect of this software is that it is open source and transferable without cost, saving nations potentially millions of dollars—and it has proven to be effective. Another contract has been established between NCSC, Nigeria, Trinidad and Tobago, the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, and Barbados to allow these Caribbean courts to use the software and to pool resources among these nations.
WILLIAM H. REHNQUIST AWARD RECIPIENT BRINGS TREATMENT OF THE MENTALLY ILL IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM TO THE FOREFRONT

The presentation of the William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence is the highlight of NCSC’s Fall Events held each November in Washington, D.C. The Events include a range of meetings among chief justices, judges, members of NCSC’s General Counsel and Lawyers committees, and court leaders from across the country. More than 250 court professionals gather to discuss issues affecting the state courts and to celebrate and honor major accomplishments.

Judge Steven Leifman, associate administrative judge of the Miami-Dade County Court – Criminal Division in Florida, received the 2015 William H. Rehnquist Award at a dinner hosted by Chief Justice of the United States John G. Roberts Jr. in the Great Hall of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Judge Leifman was recognized for his groundbreaking work helping people with mental illnesses who are either in the criminal justice system or at-risk of incarceration. “Judge Leifman recognized and identified problems within the justice system, and he was relentless in his efforts to change things. His work demonstrates the difference that judicial excellence, and action, can make in improving the administration of justice,” NCSC President Mary McQueen said.

Judge Leifman has done much to transform the way people in the criminal justice system with mental illnesses are treated. Several years ago, he realized that many of the same people who came before his court were reappearing repeatedly and frequently. These defendants were charged with minor offenses, such as loitering, and they exhibited signs of being distraught and disheveled. This revolving door from courthouse to jail to street and back was costly to taxpayers, placed large burdens on the correctional and judicial systems, and was devastating to defendants and their families.

In 2000, Judge Leifman created the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Criminal Mental Health Project, which diverts individuals with serious mental illnesses who do not pose a risk to the public away from criminal justice system and into community-based treatment and support services. This has resulted in fewer arrests and incarcerations of people with mental illness, reduced crime, reduced injuries to law enforcement officers, improved public safety, reduced cost to taxpayers, and improved the administration of justice.

Since this project’s inception, Judge Leifman also has developed the nation’s largest Crisis Intervention Team training program that teaches law enforcement offices to recognize signs of mental illness and to respond more effectively to individuals in psychiatric crisis.
This event is designed as an informal conversation among the chief justices and members of NCSC's General Counsel and Lawyers committees, allowing free-flowing discussion about vital issues that impact the bench, and the business and legal communities.

Bob Peck, former co-chair of NCSC Lawyers Committee, moderated the 2015 conversation that ranged from how judges and lawyers can more effectively work together to improve access to justice to what can be done to enhance the judicial selection process to should Internet-based legal services be regulated? Some 20 chief justices participated, along with more than 60 members of NCSC’s General Counsel, Lawyers, and Young Lawyers committees.

Two years ago, the Conference of Chief Justices created a Civil Justice Improvements (CJI) Committee to develop best practices for civil litigation based upon evidence derived from state pilot projects. The 2015 Justice Roundtable focused on this project, with chief justices, judges, members of NCSC’s General Counsel and Lawyers committees, and others representing the legal community, discussing civil case processing in state courts, and outlining recommendations for state courts to “right-size” their resources to match case needs. As a result of the Roundtable and other CJI proceedings, the recommendations are expected to include proposed pathways for different categories of cases; model rules to help make discovery faster, less expensive, and appropriate to the case; case and docket management techniques representing best practices from around the country; and examples of using technology to reduce expense in the civil justice system. The final recommendations will be presented at the annual meeting of the Conference of Chief Justices in July 2016.

Moderator: Chief Justice Thomas Balmer, Oregon
Panelists: Judge Jerome Abrams, Dakota County, Minnesota; Judge Jennifer Bailey, Dade County, Florida; Judge Gregory Mize, NCSC; and Thomas Clarke, NCSC Vice President of Research and Technology.

Civil Justice Improvements: Resolving Critical Issues of Cost and Delay

A CONVERSATION WITH THE CHIEF JUSTICES

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(Bottom from left) New Mexico Chief Justice Barbara Vigil, Nevada Chief Justice James Hardesty, Arizona Chief Justice Scott Bales, and North Carolina Chief Justice Mark Martin.
The National Center for State Courts partners with the volunteer leaders of the General Counsel Committee to heighten the visibility of NCSC’s mission and to develop and implement future programs. In addition to their financial support, members of the committee provide important outreach to the justice, legal, and business communities.
The Warren E. Burger Society was formed upon the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the National Center for State Courts to honor individuals who have volunteered their time, talent, and generosity to the National Center in an exceptional manner. Membership into the society is commemorated by the presentation of a limited-edition print of the final portrait of the late Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, who helped found NCSC in 1971.

Each print is signed and numbered by artist Fran Di Giacomo. The portraits are a gift from Texas attorney Charles M. Noteboom, who commissioned the original portrait that hangs in NCSC’s headquarters in Williamsburg, Virginia.

South Dakota Chief Justice David Gilbertson, chair of the NCSC Board of Directors and president of the Conference of Chief Justices, honored five individuals who have made extraordinary contributions of service and support to the NCSC by inducting them into the Warren E. Burger Society at the Annual Recognition Luncheon.

This year the NCSC was pleased to honor:

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Above: (Left to Right) George T. Patton Jr., Karl J. Sandstrom; David Boies, Chief Justice David Gilbertson, Theodore B. Olson; and Andrew D. Hendry.
The National Center for State Courts Lawyers Committee actively participates in the development and implementation of programs and initiatives that support NCSC’s mission and help build public understanding of the need for a strong and independent judiciary. The creation of comprehensive civic education for the public about courts and the Civil Justice Initiative led by the Conference of Chief Justices are recent areas of interest for this committee.

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Left: Lawyers Committee Co-Chairs Todd Smith and Donna Melby.
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Members of NCSC Young Lawyers Committee attend the annual Judicial Excellence Events each Fall.

From left: Gavrila Brotz; Nate Tawney and Meredith McKee; Gary Tulip.
The Friends of the Court program provides an opportunity for the many individuals who care about the quality of justice to make a personal financial contribution in support of the National Center for State Courts’ work and programs. These contributions enable the NCSC to provide quality training and education, independent research, and to promote awareness of issues surrounding the administration of justice. The National Center gratefully acknowledges the following individuals who made a gift in 2015.

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The NCSC gratefully acknowledges the following gifts made in honor and memoriam in 2015.

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Joan K. Cochet worked at NCSC for 10 years, during which time she touched the lives of so many with her gracious and generous spirit. In addition to her National Center for State Courts colleagues, Joan worked closely with court leaders, members of the nation’s court associations, and Fellows of the Institute for Court Management.

Her service represented the highest ideals of the Center. Joan was proud of her work and the mission of NCSC. The National Center for State Courts is honored to recognize Joan’s legacy with the naming of this scholarship, which will help deserving students achieve the status of ICM Fellow – the highest level of ICM’s certification program.

The National Center for State Courts would like to recognize the following individuals who made a gift in 2015 to the Joan K. Cochet Memorial Scholarship in her memory.

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Robert A. Zastany Sr.
NCSC AWARDS

Thomas Munsterman Award

Judge Frances Gull named 2015 Munsterman Award winner

Judge Frances C. Gull, Administrative Judge of the Criminal Division, Allen Superior Court, Indiana, was the 2015 recipient of NCSC’s Thomas Munsterman Award for Jury Innovation.

Judge Gull has dedicated the past 10 years to electronically upgrading Allen County’s Superior Court jury management system. She helped establish mjJuror, which allows the public to perform several juror-related tasks electronically, such as registering via their smart phone or email and completing a qualification questionnaire. Summoned jurors may use the app to request an excuse or deferral or set reminders by text or email before their appearances. In addition, jurors can view a map of the courthouse location or request a link to Google Maps, which would allow GPS navigation from their current location to their reporting location.

In addition, Judge Gull also has served on the Jury Management Committee of the Indiana Judicial Conference.

Above: NCSC Executive Vice President and General Counsel Robert Baldwin presents the Thomas Munsterman Award to Judge Frances Gull.

Sandra Day O’Connor Award

Colorado civics education program named recipient of Sandra Day O’Connor Award for Advancement of Civics Education

A Colorado civics program started by three judges, Judicially Speaking, was the 2015 recipient of NCSC’s Sandra Day O’Connor Award for the Advancement of Civics Education. Judicially Speaking was selected, in part, because of its proven track record of “teaching young people about the realities of living in a society that embraces the rule of law,” NCSC President Mary McQueen said. “One of its strengths is its philosophy of learning by doing – judges going to classrooms, youth correctional facilities, and alternative schools not to lecture, but to interact with students to teach a deeper understanding about the role courts play in everyday life,” she said.

Judicially Speaking stands apart from other programs because of its reach and its focus on teaching about the judiciary and the rule of law, and because it can be easily replicated in other states. Judicially Speaking was started in 2009 by three local Colorado judges: David Shakes, Theresa Cisneros, and David Prince. Since its inception, the program has spread statewide reaching thousands of middle- and high-school students and has been integrated into Colorado’s social studies curriculum. The program also is being used in Colorado juvenile correction facilities and the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind.

Judicially Speaking is a collaborative program made possible by 100-plus judges and educators who have dedicated their time and creativity to improving public education about what judges do.

Above: Colorado Judge David Prince accepted the Sandra Day O’Connor Award for the Advancement of Civics Education from NCSC President Mary C. McQueen during the 2015 CCJ/COSCA annual meeting in Omaha.

Harry L. Carrico Award

North Dakota Chief Justice Receives Harry L. Carrico Award for Judicial Innovation

North Dakota Chief Justice Gerald W. VandeWalle is the 2015 recipient of the Harry L. Carrico Award for Judicial Innovation. The award honors a state chief justice who has inspired, sponsored, promoted, or led an innovation or accomplishment of national significance in the field of judicial administration.

“If ever there was an individual who merits this special recognition, it is Chief Justice VandeWalle,” NCSC President Mary C. McQueen said. “He is devoted to the law and to continuous improvement of the legal profession. Chief Justice VandeWalle was one of the first court leaders in the country to raise the importance of elder issues, which has led to greater national awareness and protection of the elderly from physical abuse and financial exploitation.”

Chief Justice VandeWalle’s nomination is evidence of the respect his colleagues have for him. Nominations for this award are not normally solicited, but 16 state chief justices and 23 state court administrators, on their own initiative, nominated Chief Justice VandeWalle. “That is a testament to the regard in which he is held and respect shared for him by judicial leaders across the country,” McQueen said.

Chief Justice VandeWalle was appointed to the Supreme Court of North Dakota in 1978 and became Chief Justice in 1993. He has served as President of the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ), Chair of the NCSC Board of Directors, CCJ’s delegate to the American Bar Association’s House of Delegates, and he was appointed by Chief Justice of the United States William H. Rehnquist to the Federal-State Jurisdiction Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States.

Above: South Dakota Chief Justice and Chair of NCSC Board David Gilbertson presents the Harry Carrico Award to North Dakota Chief Justice Gerald VandeWalle.
2015 Staff Awards

Staff Excellence Award
Brenda Uekert
Principal Court Research Consultant

Jeannie A. Ito Award
Kathryn Holt
Court Research Analyst

Florence McConnell Award
Neil LaFountain
Senior Court Research Analyst

Katherine T. Wilke Memorial Scholarship
John Cipperly
Senior Program Manager, International

Dale A. Sipes Memorial President’s Award
Francisco Ciampolini
Program Manager, International

Robert W. Tobin Achievement Award
Development Team
Katherine Dabney
Development Director
Francie Teer
Development Officer

Distinguished Service Award Recipients for 2015

Chief Judge William B. Murphy
Michigan Court of Appeals
Detroit, Michigan

Judge Lora J. Livingston
261st District Court
Travis County, Texas

Carmel A. Capati
Manager of Court Interpreter Program
Wisconsin Supreme Court

Richard Moellmer
Trial Court Administrator
Washington County, Oregon

Caroline Cooper
Director of the Justice Programs Office for Dept. of Justice
Washington, D.C.

Enrique Ricardo Lewandowski
Chief Justice of the Federal Supreme Court of Brazil

ON THE FRONT COVER

Top row from left: North Dakota Chief Justice Gerald VandeWalle and Ohio Chief Justice Maureen O’Connor; Robin Laurence and Jeff Minear; Florida Justice Peggy Quince, Shelley Spacek-Miller, Nicole Waters, and Florida Judge Jeri Cohen; Minnesota Judge Jerome Abrams.


Fourth row from left: Russell R. Brown; Thomas Wilkie and NCSC President Mary McQueen; David Boies, South Dakota Chief Justice David Gilbertson, and Ted Olson; CTC 2015 attendees, Sen. Al Franken, Minnesota.

ON THE BACK COVER


Second row from left: Pamela Harris, Nebraska Chief Justice Michael Heavican, David Boyd; Mark Britton; David White and Sally White; Deborah Daniels, and Judge Stephen Baker.

Fourth row from left: Dr. Renee Binder; Mitch Brown, North Carolina Chief Justice Mark Martin, and Matt Bogan; Ohio Director of Court Services Stephanie Hess; Judge Darlene O’Brien, Tom O’Brien, Rosemarie McDermott and Jerry McDermott.

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