

SJI NEWSLETTER

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Statement on the Passing of Chief Justice Jim Hannah

Promoting Our Work

SJI not only uses [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to promote the work of its grantees, but also shares information of interest to the entire state court community. If your organization's work complements our work, let us know and we will share it.



SJI is sad to announce the passing of our Board Chairman, and former Chief Justice of Arkansas, Jim Hannah.

Jim Hannah served as the Chief Justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court from 2005 to 2015, and successfully ran statewide contested elections for Chief Justice (2004) and Associate Justice (2000). At the time of his retirement, he was the longest serving judge in the state of Arkansas. He was appointed by Chief Justice Roberts to the U.S. Supreme Court Judicial Conference Committee on Federal-State Jurisdiction, and by President Obama to SJI, where he served as Chairman from 2010 until his death. He also served as President of the Conference of Chief Justices; Chairman of the National Center for State Courts Board of Directors; and former President and Board Member, Arkansas Judicial Council.



ment, Legislative, and Retirement committees; Member, Arkansas Supreme Court Committees for Access to Justice, Client Security Fund, Technology, Child Support and District Court Resources Board; Chair, Drug Court Advisory Committee; Faculty Advisor, National Judicial College; Member, Arkansas Board of Pardons and Paroles, 1972-79; former legislative assistant to then-Governor Dale Bumpers; former Chairman and past member of the Arkansas Court Reporters Examiners Board; and Member, Arkansas Bar Association.

Chief Justice Hannah graduated from the University of Arkansas School of Law in 1968, and held a BSBA (Accounting) from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

Chief Justice Hannah served as a Juvenile Judge for White County, Arkansas from 1976-1978, and was elected as a Chancery/Probate Judge in the 17th Judicial District, 1979-2000. His previous work in the legal profession included serving as the Searcy City Attorney; Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for Woodruff County; City Judge for Kensett and Rosebud; City Attorney for Augusta, Bradford, Des Arc, Garner, Kensett and Rosebud; and Private Attorney, Lightle, Tedder, Hannah & Beebe Law Firm, Searcy, Arkansas.

His many accolades and accomplishments include the establishment of the White County Juvenile Court and Juvenile Probation Office; former Chair, Arkansas Judicial Council's Judicial Resources Assess-

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Council for Court Excellence Releases Report on Jury Service in D.C.

With assistance from SJI, the Council for Court Excellence (CCE) launched a new comprehensive study of issues relating to jury service in D.C. from the perspective of jurors, judges, and lawyers (SJI-14-T-086).

Working out of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia and the Superior Court of the District of Columbia over a 12-month period, a CCE Project Committee reexamined the jury system in the District of Columbia, as a follow up to CCE's initial study of jury service in 1998. The Committee was comprised of subject matter experts, staff, and local stakeholders. The results of their reexamination are available in the final report: [Jury Service Revisited: Upgrades for the 21st Century](#).

Included in the summary of recommendations are lists related to Juror Care; Jury Pool and Summoning; and Trial Structure. The report includes exhibits that feature items in use by the D.C. Courts including forms, pamphlets, and letters.

In addition to the collection of data and metrics provided by the Courts on jury trials and protocols used in selecting jurors, a total of 24 trials were observed; Voir Dire information evaluated in selected cases; and juror survey experiences analyzed.

The report provides updated information relative to the jury experience that did not exist as a concern in 1988, namely social media-related policies for jurors, greater real-time access to information, and technology advancements in court systems allowing for greater automation of the process.

The Committee acknowledged that their overall goal is to support citizens in their roles as jurors and improve the effective administration of justice through juries. Beyond assembling and analyzing the requisite data, as well as generating findings for this report, the Committee is exploring the following next steps:

- Encourage and support testing of proposed improvements through pilot projects in courtrooms of the D.C. Superior Court and the U.S. District Court for DC.
- Support implementation of recommendations contained in the D.C. Jury Project Report.



- Suggest educational programs for the bench, the bar, jurors, and the public concerning any prospective jury reforms.
- Establish methods to periodically examine the utilization of any newly adopted rules and procedures to determine their effects, and suggest modifications when necessary.

Ramsey County, Minnesota Completes Assessment of Caseflow

The 2nd Judicial District of Minnesota is a multi-site District Court, which handles criminal, civil, family, juvenile, probate, commitments, housing, and problem-solving court caseloads. With technical assistance provided by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) and the support of SJI, the District Court explored ways to improve case processing and calendaring (SJI-15-T-042).

The final report makes recommendations regarding the most effective use of judicial time. Other recommendations include:

1. Judicial education for new judges as a means to improve their transition to the bench, to include education on caseflow and calendaring practices;
2. Further examination of the pretrial hearing process in felony cases;
3. Incorporation of the District's Differentiated Case Management System (DCM) and Expedited Civil Litigation Track (ELT) Pilot Project to achieve desired disposition and cost-efficiencies;

4. Reorganization of the four problem-solving courts inclusive of a redesigned "global" triage process;
5. Development of a published case management plan providing details about caseflow management processes and techniques that will be employed in any new or altered calendaring and assignment system.

During the assessment, the NCSC conducted a formal review of operational processes, data, previous case studies, and completed observation in several court settings across caseloads. The NCSC team then presented the full report to the District and its stakeholders.

The full [report](#) is available online through the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) [Library](#) and [Digital Archive](#).



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The State Justice Institute is a federally-funded, non-profit corporation established by federal law in 1984 to improve the quality of justice in the state courts.

