



Volume 18, Issue 5 (Spring 2026)

President's Message

By Chief Justice Mark V. Green (ret.), Massachusetts Appeals Court

Happy spring! Though spring's arrival varies in form and pace in our respective areas, as you read this I am confident that you have seen the worst of winter pass and are beginning to enjoy the bursts of

color that characterize this time of renewal.

Among those places where spring has little to do with the passing of winter (but everything to do with those bursts of color) is the home of our upcoming fall conference: Scottsdale, Arizona. The Annual Conference Committee has been working hard since we last met and has lined up a terrific roster of programs and speakers to complement our wonderfully warm and sunny venue. Please see the more detailed description of what to expect in the article by Conference Committee chair Judge Karen Arnold Burger later in this Chief Brief.



Also, in this Chief Brief is some very exciting news about our newly redesigned website, in an article by Website Committee chair Judge Gary Lynch. The new site launched with some fanfare a couple of weeks ago, following enormous contributions by the Website Committee generally, and Judge Lynch in particular, over many months. I hope you have already had a chance to visit the new site and, in particular, to enjoy the return of the discussion groups – one of our most popular and helpful features, which had been out of service for quite some time. And I also hope you were able to join last week’s Chief Chat, on April 8, for an overview of the new site. Many thanks to Judge Tom Bower and the Communication Committee for organizing and hosting that gathering, the first in this year’s series. Stay tuned for future installments.

It has become a bittersweet standard of our quarterly Chief Brief to profile those of our members who are retiring, and this issue includes several of those. The transition from active service to retirement is a significant event for all of us, and I know all of you – retired or still active – join me in wishing our retiring members well-earned rest and satisfaction in the years to come, following their distinguished careers.

Indeed, the transition from active service to retirement has been very much front of mind for me during this time I have the honor of serving as your President. At CCJSCA we are fond of our governing motto: “once a Chief, always a Chief.” I will admit I was somewhat surprised – though delighted – to learn that that philosophy extended even to my eligibility to enter the “leadership ladder” as an officer in 2022, without indirectly obliging myself to continue in active service through to my mandatory retirement date in Massachusetts (which would have arrived this coming fall). And though we have had several Presidents in recent years who were former chiefs (Frankie Moore, Mark Pfeiffer and Morris Silberman come immediately to mind), all remained in active judicial service during their President year. It’s possible other previous Presidents were retired during their year of service, but I don’t recall any.

My circumstances as a recent retiree have affected my service as President in a variety of ways, both positively and negatively. Most obviously, I have fewer demands on my time, and therefore more bandwidth to devote to CCJSCA – though (as you’ve likely heard other retirees lament) not nearly as much as I had imagined I would! I have lost the administrative and technology support I enjoyed while serving on my Court, and am *still* learning – or trying to learn – how to knit together various systems that previously worked seamlessly. And it has been interesting to recover my First Amendment rights – to be able to speak or write publicly in various settings freed of the constraints we all operate within during our judicial service.

Most of all, though, it has been a personal pleasure to ease the otherwise abrupt transition into retirement with continuing purposeful engagement with all of you, in our shared enterprise. And it has been a pleasure to join so many of our retired members who remain active in service to CCJSCA in a wide variety of important roles, as both members and even chairs of key committees. It's more than just a motto – we model every day in multiple ways our belief that “once a Chief, always a Chief.”

Thanks to all of you for keeping that torch burning!

2026 CCJSCA Annual Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona

***By Karen Arnold-Burger, Former Presiding Judge, Kansas Court of Appeals;
Chair, CCJSCA Annual Conference Committee***

Without question, one of the most meaningful benefits of membership in the CCJSA is the opportunity to gather each year for an annual conference designed specifically for the unique responsibilities of intermediate appellate court leadership. Ask any member and they'll tell you — the annual conference is more than a CLE. It is a chance to step away from the day-to-day demands of leadership and reconnect with colleagues who understand, firsthand, the unique role of chief judge.

This year, November 10-13, 2026, CCJSCA will gather in the warmth of Scottsdale, Arizona, at the Scottsdale Resort and Spa, Curio Collection by Hilton for a conference that is both forward-looking and historically grounded. As the nation marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the conference theme — **“Spreading the Rule of Law”**— invites chief judges to reflect on the enduring role of appellate courts in safeguarding constitutional principles, institutional legitimacy, and public trust.

The Annual Conference Committee has an exceptional lineup of national experts, constitutional scholars, and appellate specialists planned, with programs focusing on leadership, jurisprudence, and the evolving challenges facing courts across the country. Our dear friend, Dean Erwin Chemerinsky of the UC Berkeley School of Law, will be joining us again to talk about recent updates in Constitutional Law from the United States Supreme Court. David O. Stewart, the author of *The Summer of 1787*, and commentator in Ken Burns' recent documentary, *The American Revolution*, will be our keynote speaker, as we celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. And for a bit of fun, we will have Mark Clague, Professor of Music at the University of Michigan, and the author of *O Say Can You HEAR: A Cultural Biography of "The Star-Spangled Banner,"* who will share his knowledge of the importance of anthems in a society and the history of our own national anthem. The session will close with a discussion with Hon. J. Michael Luttig (Ret.), Board member for the Society for the Rule of Law and Suzanne Spaulding senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). And this is just a taste. We have already lined up several other judicial and legal scholars on a variety of topics, that are equally impressive.

And don't forget your guests! We have guest opportunities that include docent-led tours and lunch at the world-renowned Musical Instrument Museum and the Heard Museum of Indigenous Culture. And

our final dinner will be at Taliesin West, Frank Lloyd Wright's winter home and desert laboratory, with a beautiful view high above the city.

We hope you will join us as we come together at a moment when the rule of law, and those entrusted to uphold it, matter more than ever.

Annual Conference Scholarships

***By Judge Christopher M. Murray; Michigan Court of Appeals;
Chair, CCJSCA Scholarship Committee***

In preparation for the Annual Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona, this coming November, the Scholarship Committee is meeting this month to establish internal dates and external deadlines for scholarship applications. Please be on the lookout for an email in the next month or so that contains a link to the application and indicates the relevant application deadline.

When reviewing complete and timely applications for scholarship awards, the committee works with established criteria and a budget approved by the Executive Committee. In recent years, those who were eligible received a scholarship award, as the committee hopes that some level of assistance will help ensure full attendance at this year's Annual Conference in warm and sunny Arizona.

A Legacy of Firsts: Chief Judge Maxine Aldridge White Retires

***By Administrative and Presiding Judge Jennifer M. Kinsley, First
District Court of Appeals, Ohio***

On April 3, 2026, Chief Judge Maxine White retired from the Wisconsin Court of Appeals. She leaves behind her a remarkable career characterized by historic firsts and an unwavering commitment to justice and public service.



Chief Judge White's pathway to leading the Wisconsin Court of Appeals began in rural Mississippi, where she was the eighth of eleven children born to her parents, James and Frankie White, who endured, survived and sacrificed for their family as sharecroppers during the Jim Crow era. She graduated with honors from Alcorn State University, the nation's oldest land-grant HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities).

Her career in public service began when she moved to Milwaukee and served as an Administrator for the Social Security Offices in southeastern Wisconsin. She later earned a master's degree from the University of Southern California and worked in various positions for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C. After returning to Milwaukee, she attended Marquette University Law School graduating with honors in 1985.

With her Law degree in hand, Chief Judge White became the first African American woman to serve as a federal prosecutor in the Eastern District of Wisconsin. In 1992, she was appointed to an open position on the Wisconsin Circuit Court, winning reelection to the seat five times, unopposed, and later becoming the court's chief judge. In 2020, she was selected to join the court of appeals, becoming the first African American woman to sit on that court. As testament to her fairness and integrity, Chief Judge White holds the distinct honor of being appointed to judicial positions by both Republican and Democratic governors. Chief Judge White acceded to the position of Chief Judge of the Wisconsin Court of Appeals in 2023. She is the first and only African American judge in Wisconsin's history to occupy that role.

Since graduating from law school more than forty years ago, Chief Judge White has devoted her entire career to public service. As an instructor for the Department of Justice's Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Georgia, a prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office, a trial court judge, and ultimately the Chief Judge of the Wisconsin Court of Appeals, she has served the community with consistent dedication and a deep commitment to the public good.

About her impactful career and impending retirement, Chief Judge White said that she has been guided and inspired by the works, words and vision of so many mentors dispensing hope such as Attorney Marian Wright Edelman, Founder and President Emerita of the Children's Defense Fund, who in the 1960s was the first and only Black woman lawyer in Mississippi.

Congratulations to Chief Judge White on a life well lived and a legacy well earned. CCJSCA wishes you a restful and rewarding retirement.

Chief Justice Brian Quinn Retires

By Chief Justice Tracy Christopher, Fourteenth Court of Appeals, Texas

Chief Justice Brian Quinn retired in December 2025. Brian graduated from Texas Tech Law School in 1981, magna cum laude and Order of the Coif. After practicing law for 13 years, he became a justice on the Seventh Court of Appeals based in Amarillo and became Chief Justice in 2005. Congratulations on 31 years of service as a judge!



It should come as no surprise to those of you who have worked with Brian in CCJSCA, that Brian was the chair or member of many committees in Texas, including those supporting the judiciary, and committees to revise the rules of procedure and jury charges, gathering accolades along the way.

Brian loved attending the CCJSCA conferences with his wife Abby and has been on the Education Committee for a number of years. They hope to see everyone at future conferences too.

Brian plans to continue as a visiting judge by assignment, pursue volunteer opportunities in local schools, tinker with his motorcycles, do more rock climbing, play with his grandchildren, travel, fish and whatever else Abby tells him to do!

Have fun, good luck and congratulations to Brian!

Judge David W. Gratton Retires

Idaho Court of Appeals Judge David W. Gratton retired on March 31, 2026.

In his resignation letter, Judge Gratton noted: “I am truly grateful for the opportunity to have served the people of the State of Idaho during my 17 years as a Court of Appeals judge. It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with each of the Court of Appeals Judges over the years,

together with all the Justices, district court and magistrate court judges and administrative branch personnel.”



Judge Gratton was born and raised in Emmett, Idaho. He attended Boise State University, graduating in 1982 with a B.A. in political science. Judge Gratton received a Juris Doctor from the University of Idaho College of Law in 1985. He served as an intern law clerk for Ninth Circuit Judge J. Blaine Anderson in 1984 and law clerk to United States District Court Judge Harold L. Ryan from 1985 to 1987. Judge Gratton joined the law firm of Evans Keane LLP in 1987, becoming a partner in 1993, until his appointment to the Idaho Court of Appeals in 2009.

Judge Gratton enjoys teaching as an adjunct professor at the University of Idaho College of Law and has served on the Law Advisory Council. He was Jurist in Residence at the Moscow campus in 2019. Community presentations include the Idaho Teacher's Institute, Pacific Northwest Political Science Association, Idaho Board of Tax Appeals, Conference of State Employees, Idaho Victim Assistance Academy, and the Idaho State Bar. Judge Gratton will continue to serve the Idaho courts as a senior judge.

Dave and his wife, Robin, have three children, John (deceased), Kevin and Breanne, and beloved grand dog Atticus.

Important CLE/CJE Request

By Senior Judge Margret Robb, Indiana Court of Appeals

I have a big ask for the Annual Conference Committee and the Education Committee. We are trying to collect a compendium of presentations, talks, and speeches (different from the speech bank) that you have given and that already have received CLE/CJE credit.

We are looking for these presentations that the other CCJSCA judges would want to hear. First, our hope is to have a few people on standby in case something happens and a speaker can't show up at the last minute. This will avoid a last-minute scramble. We have members who are fabulous, requested often by other groups, and would be perfect to help in a pinch. And the education committee is looking into possibly, like chiefs' chats, doing additional zoom CLE for our members throughout the year.

Let me know if you have any questions or you can [email me](#) your thoughts:

- Title
- A brief description

- State with CLE/CJE credit, how much and regular and/or ethics
- If you want to say: who you have given it to
- Length of speech
- Is this a speech that you only do alone or could another judge join with you
- Provide any evaluations
- Anything else you'd like to add

Discussion Groups— A powerful tool for Consultation and Education

***By Senior Judge Gary Lynch, Missouri Court of Appeals, Southern District;
Chair, CCJSCA Website Committee***

The CCJSCA mission includes “offering the Chief Judges of the intermediate appellate courts a body for consultation and education.” While we immediately think of our outstanding annual conferences addressing this part of our mission, our website now at www.ccjsca.net provides a powerful consultation and education tool available all day every day of the year — Discussion Groups. They may be accessed as the first item on the “Consultation” tab at the top of every web page or by clicking or tapping the “View All Groups” button under Discussion Groups on the home page.

Several discussion groups for different purposes, but they all work in the same way

Technically, there are 18 discussion groups on our website, but they all work the same way and access to each is restricted to only logged-in CCJSCA members granted access to that particular group. If you need any assistance with your log-in credentials, send an email to ccjsca@ncsc.org.

The first three and most prominent discussion groups — Professional, Council Business and Off the Bench — are open and accessible to all CCJSCA members. Your participation in each is welcomed and encouraged. The **Professional** discussion group is the most utilized discussion group because it is where all members are invited to start a discussion or join in discussions about all things related to the nuts and bolts of the Chief’s job. As you might guess, the **Council Business** discussion group is where all members may weigh in on matters related to CCJSCA business and operations. Third, the **Off the Bench** discussion group is where all members may discuss interesting topics that fall outside of the Chief’s job or the Council’s business. To ensure the discussions in these groups are inclusive, an email notification of every post, whether a new discussion, comment or reply, is sent automatically to all CCJSCA members.

In addition, each CCJSCA committee has its own discussion group for discussing and conducting that committee’s work that is accessible only to its current committee members. Email notifications of posts made in a committee’s discussion group are only sent automatically to members of that committee. While this is a quick, easy, and convenient way for a committee to communicate and carry on its work between meetings, it also gives current committee members access to committee discussions that occurred before they joined the committee. In other words, as a committee utilizes its discussion group, the website automatically creates a historical record of its work that will better inform future committee

members and work. This is particularly beneficial for an organization like the CCJSCA where committee membership changes on an annual basis or more often.

Starting or joining a discussion

To participate in any discussion group available to you, simply click on or tap its name. Once in the selected discussion group, you may either **start a new discussion topic** by clicking on or tapping the “Add New Discussion” button in the upper right corner of the page or **join an existing discussion** by clicking on or tapping either the discussion’s title or the “Read More” button under the title.

Once you join an existing discussion you may **comment** on the discussion topic by entering your comment in the text box toward the bottom of the page. Nothing is published in the discussion group on the website, however, until you click or tap the “Post” button just below the text box with your input. When you click or tap that button, your input is uploaded to and published in the discussion group and an email notification of your post is sent to all members who have access to that discussion group.

Tip: If you anticipate a longer post, compose it in your preferred word processing program and then copy and paste it into the text box of your post in the discussion group for final editing.

Additional features

There are many more features available such as posting a reply to a comment, searching groups, aids for formatting your posts, adding hyperlinks in your posts to materials outside our website, and uploading media, such as documents, pictures, or video, to our website and adding hyperlinks in your posts to those internal items. Thankfully for you, these additional features are beyond the scope of this article and are, nevertheless, easily learned as you engage in discussions.

Just jump in

Finally, get started and join the conversation. You cannot break anything! Feel free to click or tap around until you are generally comfortable with how discussion groups work and then jump in by starting a new discussion or posting a comment to an existing discussion. If you run into any problems or have any questions, drop me an email at gary.lynch@courts.mo.gov or give me a call at 417-777-1729. Better yet, simply navigate to the Council Business discussion group and add a new discussion posing that problem or asking that question. You may be surprised at how easy it is to post and how quickly you get a resolution to the problem or an answer to your question. At the same time and without any effort, you are making and leaving a record for others to benefit from now and in the future as we share and learn together how to use this powerful tool.

CCJSCA Spotlight: Chief Judge Marjorie K. Allard, Alaska Court of Appeals

Q. How and why did you become a court of appeals judge?

A. I was appointed by the governor in November 2012. Alaska follows the “Missouri plan” and uses a merit-based selection process that is designed to minimize partisan politics. The Alaska Judicial Council is chaired by the Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court and is comprised of three bar members (elected by the members of the Alaska Bar) and three public members (appointed by the

governor and confirmed by the legislature). The Council is responsible for selecting at least two candidates for each judicial vacancy. (There were seven candidates who were nominated by the Council the year that I applied.) The application process for the Council is very rigorous and includes a bar survey, public hearings, and an intensive qualifications and background check. The nominated candidates are then sent to the governor, who must make a final decision within 45 days.



I applied to the Alaska Court of Appeals because I had spent the majority of my career appearing before the Court and I had great respect for the judges that sat on the Court. The process was less stressful than it might otherwise have been because I had just made the decision to leave the Alaska Public Defender Agency and obtain employment at the Court as a staff attorney so I knew that no matter how the process turned out, I would be working for the Court. It's the intellectual rigor of the job that I like the most.

Q. How did you become chief judge?

A. I was appointed chief judge on January 2, 2019, by the Alaska Supreme Court following the retirement of the former chief judge. The appointment was for two years. I am currently serving my fourth term and am hoping that one of the newer judges might be interested in the position soon.

Q. What have you found most valuable about your affiliation with CCJSCA?

A. I have really enjoyed getting to meet chief judges from around the country and learning about the different policies and procedures that govern each court. We are still working on formalizing our internal procedures and I have found the differences in perspective extremely valuable. It has also been really nice to commiserate with other chief judges about the difficulties of the position.

Q. What are you most looking forward to crossing off your bucket list?

A. Traveling to Antarctica to see penguins.

Q. If you didn't have your current job, what would you most LIKE to be doing instead?

A. A primatologist in the field. (Jane Goodall was my childhood hero).

Important Notice

The members of CCJSCA are our most reliable resource for information about retirements, honors, and awards amongst our members. Whenever you have information about these significant events, or changes in the position of chief judge in your court, be sure to call the information to the attention of **Cassie Bradshaw, our association manager**. Please don't assume someone else will do it. We'd rather get the information two or three times than miss it altogether. Thank you!

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