



NAHO NEWS

*...benefitting hearing officials
and the individuals they serve...*

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HEARING OFFICIALS

SEPTEMBER 2019



NAHO IN NEW ORLEANS: *Laissez Le Bon Temps Rouler* While Learning

Toni Boone (OR), Vice-President

I admit it. I'm in love. I fell in love with New Orleans the first time I visited "The Big Easy." Of all the nicknames for New Orleans, and the town has many, "The Big Easy" is the name that suits it best. The origin of the nickname is in dispute and somewhat unclear but that doesn't matter. The nickname fits, regardless of its source. It refers to the gentler pace of life, the somewhat more relaxed rules for living, and the clear disdain for worry for which New Orleans is known.

I have a lot of nicknames, too, and I've heard most of them. I'm tightly wound. I'm anal-retentive. I'm a fussy budget. I'm obsessive. In other words, I worry...a lot. Not so much in New Orleans. Something about it makes you feel as if everything is going to be just fine. Put your feet

up. Have a cup of New Orleans' chicory coffee or perhaps a glass of sweet tea. Whatever it is will take care of itself and if it doesn't—well, it wasn't worth worrying about anyway.

Ideal Conference Venue

The conference will be held at the Renaissance New Orleans Pere Marquette French Quarter Area Hotel. Nestled in the heart of the French Quarter of New Orleans, this hotel features accommodations near world-famous landmarks and charming attractions like the Magazine Street shopping and dining district. Within the hotel you can indulge in delicious French and Southern cuisine at New Orleans Coffee and Beignet Company and sample delectable seafood specialties and cocktails at TackleBox, the

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NEWSLETTER CREDITS

Editor: Bonny M. Fetch (ND)

Layout / Design:

Wendy Moen, Design Dimension
www.DesignAZ.net
www.facebook.com/DesignDimension

THE PRESIDENT'S POST

WHAT I KNOW FOR SURE

Janice Deshais (CT), President

There are a few things of which I am certain. I know Monday always comes after Sunday; I know my unwritten decisions will be waiting for me on Monday; and I know I will need a cup of coffee and a bit of talking myself out of my procrastination habits before I tackle those decisions. On a happier note, I know that now that it is autumn, NAHO's annual training conference is coming!

This year, the Conference is being held a bit later in the season, starting with a welcome reception on Sunday evening November 3, and running three full days from the 4th to the 6th. The NAHO Board decided to try this new format to provide even more training this year, and our Vice President and Conference Planner Toni Boone (OR) has put together a spectacular curriculum. And, what can you say about New Orleans that has not already been said? A great location and a great hotel right in the French Quarter.

If you haven't already done so, read all about the courses and special events for this year's Conference in the Conference brochure that is posted at www.naho.org. I am sure you will see an abundance of classes that will spark your interest and comply with your CLE or other training needs. As usual, NAHO works very hard to make sure the Conference provides subjects that are both basic and more advanced, specialized topics for specific types of hearings, and timely topics that impact our work as administrative hearing officials. This year's speakers will include a fascinating story about the life of one of NAHO's Board members, and an interesting perspective on administra-



Janice Deshais (CT)

tive law from a chief magistrate judge for the U.S. District Court.

For me, the best part about attending a conference is the chance to see old friends, meet new ones, share experiences and insights, and enjoy the company and fellowship of like-minded people. At a conference, we never have to answer the question "What is it that you do?" Everyone at a conference knows what it is we do and why we do it. A conference helps provide the answers to how we do what we do.

As my term as NAHO President comes to a close at the end of this year, I know that a highlight of every year for me has been the annual conference. I know that the NAHO Board is pleased to be able to provide an annual opportunity for NAHO members and others to come together to learn new skills, refresh old ones, enjoy the support of our colleagues, and revive ourselves as we face our current and new challenges in our work as hearing officials.

I hope to see you in November! 🐾

Certification Update

Certified Hearing Official (CHO) and Certified Administrative Law Judge (CALJ) Certificates will be presented at the NAHO 2019 Annual Professional Development Conference to all those individuals who have completed renewal or initial applications for certification.

Certification lasts for three years and must be renewed through application. A full explanation of the process can be viewed at www.naho.org under Professional Development, Certification Program.

On Tuesday, November 5, at the Conference, the Certification Committee will present an information and question and answer session as an optional activity during the lunch period. At that time, the Committee will cover all of the requirements for certification and for renewal.

If you are working on certification or renewal for this year, please submit your application as soon as possible. Anyone submitting an application which is received after October 15 will not receive their certificate at the Annual Conference.

You are encouraged to become a part of the NAHO Certification program. Achieving certification provides a recognizable path to demonstrate your competency and training as a hearing official. If you have questions you may contact Chair Jimmy Stokes at 770-601-3798. 🐾



FROM THE EDITOR

CULTIVATING WELLNESS FOR SHARPER PERFORMANCE

Bonny Fetch (ND), Past-President, Editor

At the Conference in San Diego last year, Jan Deshais and Toni Boone asked me if I would design a wellness track for the upcoming Conference in New Orleans.

NAHO has always recognized that hearing officials need more than just skills training to function effectively in our jobs. In the past, classes in stress management and self-assessment have been offered. Two years ago a yoga class was added to the curriculum, and the response was so positive that last year we added classes in yoga and meditation.

These days there is a focus on the concept of

mindfulness. Although it is relatively new to Western civilization, the concepts behind the practice of mindfulness date back thousands of years. Mindfulness is a rather vague term, but may be best understood as an overall umbrella term for a range of contemplative practices that help one to become fully present in the moment, without judgment. When we practice mindfulness, we attune our thoughts to what we are sensing in the moment, rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future. There are various techniques or practices which one can use to induce mindfulness, such as deep breathing exercises, yoga, meditation, a contemplative walk in nature, or simply sitting still and quieting one's thoughts.

of Historic Places, New Orleans has a higher number of Historic Districts than any other city in the U.S. New Orleans boasts 20 different historic districts.

According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway is the longest continuous bridge in the world.

New Orleans is definitely the spookiest city in the U.S. for two reasons: (1) Voodoo was introduced to the U.S. in New Orleans; and (2) It is the preferred destination for paranormal investigators as it is believed to be the place with the highest spiritual activity in the U.S.

New Orleans has some of the best food in the world—from sweet beignets and King Cake to Creole and Cajun cuisine like Jambalaya, Gumbo and Etouffee.

The St. Louis Cathedral in Jackson Square is the oldest continuously used cathedral in the U.S.

New Orleans is the birthplace of jazz music and is said to have started with a drum, which some attribute to the fact that New Orleans was the only place where slaves were allowed to own drums. 🥁

Regular practice of mindfulness not only improves ability to cope with and enjoy everyday life, it can also have a direct influence over job performance.

As a hearing official, failure to be fully present in the moment may result in missing important information, failing to appreciate the issues in the hearing before us, and making mistakes due to lack of concentration. Daily practice of mindfulness promotes calmness and sharper mental focus, which often translates into better work performance.

I am reminded of the story of two woodsmen who chopped wood all day. At the end of the day, each had a sizable pile of logs, but one was considerably higher. The woodsman with the smaller pile shook his head as he asked the second woodsman, "I don't understand, I chopped wood all day and only took a 15-minute break to eat lunch, while you took a 30-minute break for lunch and two other breaks, and your pile is much higher than mine. How can that be?" The second woodsman answered, "Each time I took a break, I also sharpened my axe."

This is your invitation to get on the wellness track at the 2019 Conference in New Orleans and sharpen your performance. The wellness component consists of the following:

Wake Up to Yoga 6:45 am - 7:30 am daily, Monday, November 4 - Wednesday, November 6

Mindfulness for Hearing Officials Monday, November 4, 2:45 pm - 3:45 pm (Part 1); 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm (Part 2)

Beyond Mindfulness: Moonlight Yoga and Meditation Tuesday, November 5, 8:00 pm - 9:30 pm

I always look forward to seeing my NAHO colleagues at the Conference, and I am especially excited to have the opportunity to teach these classes and help you to "sharpen your axe." 🥁



Bonny Fetch (ND)

FUN FACTS ABOUT

New Orleans

Louisiana is the only state that does not have counties or boroughs. Instead, Louisiana is broken into political subdivisions called parishes.

The Mercedes-Benz Superdome in New Orleans is the largest enclosed arena in the world.

The next time you're in a casino, you should think of New Orleans. Both craps and poker were invented in New Orleans.

The first opera ever performed in the United States was performed in 1796—in New Orleans.

According to the National Register

MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS



KELLY A. VARGO

Senior Human Services Judge Minnesota Department of Human Services

Which agency do you work for, how long have you been a Hearing Officer/ALJ, and what sort of hearings do you conduct?

I currently am a Senior Human Services Judge for the Minnesota Department of Human Services and have

been employed by the State of Minnesota in various administrative judicial positions for over 10 years. In my current position I conduct administrative hearings when applicants or recipients of the various human services programs have appealed adverse actions taken by a local or state agency as well as other types of appeals under the Department's jurisdiction.

What part of your job do you find the most challenging?

I love my job. However, even

though I try to judge every day as well as possible, after a certain length of time, the position can become routine. It can be tempting to go on autopilot and to feel like it is just another day at the office.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever received, and how has it helped you in your profession?

The best piece of advice I received was to remind myself every day that a day at the office for me could possibly be the most important day of an individual's life. They

deserve to have justice, which means they must be heard. They deserve to know that the judge has heard their side and considered it seriously. Many times this may be the most difficult part of my job. To listen with patience and openness when a person is angry and yelling during the hearing can be difficult, but is necessary. As long as I continue to remind myself of this I believe I will find myself to be a good and competent administrator of justice. 📌



MARY LONG

Administrative Law Judge Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission

Which agency do you work for, how long have you been a Hearing Officer/ALJ, and what sort of hearings do you conduct?

I have served as an ALJ for the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission for nine years. I conduct hearings on consumer disputes with public utilities, including gas, electricity, water, telecommunications

and transportation. I also conduct hearings on enforcement actions commenced by the Commission's Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement and hearings on utility requests for rate changes, mergers and other affiliations, transmission line siting, etc.

What is your favorite part of your job?

There is always a new area for intellectual "stretching" and I am rarely bored. I love writing.

What part do you find the most challenging?

I find it challenging when ap-

plication of the existing law to the facts requires what seems to me to be an unfair outcome.

What do you know now that you wish you had known when you first began conducting hearings?

Sometimes, the less said from the bench the better, particularly when making evidentiary rulings.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever received, and how has it helped you in your profession?

You will make mistakes. Do your best to fix it or learn from it, but move on to the

next decision that you have to make. This has helped me to get better at making good decisions instead of letting the fear of making a mistake slow me down.

How long have you been a member of NAHO?

I am in my second year of membership of NAHO.

Is there anything else you wish to add?

I wish I had joined NAHO earlier in my ALJ career. It would definitely have shortened my learning curve. 📌

NAHO IN NEW ORLEANS

From page 1.

hotel's signature restaurant. Because this is a smaller, boutique hotel, most of the hotel's occupants will be NAHO's attendees. We have an ideal meeting space, big enough for our needs but compact enough to be convenient, at a special per diem rate for NAHO conference attendees. Near the hotel are Jazz clubs, lively Bourbon Street, and historic Jackson Square, all just steps away.

What Makes New Orleans Unique

- It's dripping with history. It was founded by the French in the spring of 1718. A pivotal battle of the war of 1812 was fought in New Orleans. Had it not been for Andrew Jackson and his troops defeating Major General Sir Edward Pakenham at the Battle of New Orleans, it is likely the fledgling U.S. would have become a colony of the British government once again. In addition, some of the best museums anywhere are in New Orleans.
- New Orleans is such a cosmopolitan city. Its legacy is a mixture of indigenous tribes (predominantly Chitimacha and Choctaw) French, Spanish, African, Haitian, Cuban, Italian, and Philippine and many of its occupants today claim Cajun, Acadian or Creole heritage.
- Because parts of New Orleans are below sea level, cemeteries have always consisted of above-ground crypts, often with elaborate and interesting epitaphs. The St. Louis Cemetery is the oldest with many crypts dating from the 1700s.
- Louisiana law, unlike the rest of the United States, is not based on British Common Law. The legal system in Louisiana drives from the Civil Code established by Napoleon in 1804. In terms of methodology, the law as it is practiced in Louisiana today is still derivative of the Napoleonic code.
- New Orleans is the birthplace of jazz. New Orleans had many very talented brass marching bands performing

dirges on the way to the cemetery and playing celebratory upbeat tunes (second line parades) on the way from the cemetery. When Sicilian and Cuban musicians emigrated, they brought syncopated rhythms with them. The talented musicians from the marching bands took what they heard and ran with it. The rest, as they say, is history. Rhythm and blues and rock and roll soon followed. You can hear all three, live, in the French Quarter year round. And I didn't even mention Zydeco.

- New Orleans food. Oh, my. Red beans and rice, gumbo, etouffee, jambalaya are the best known foods of New Orleans but the city brought the lowly sandwich to new heights with New Orleans Muffalettas and Po-Boys. Many world-renowned and award-winning chefs have restaurants here. Have you ever had a fresh, hot beignet (pronounced bin-YAY) smothered in powdered sugar with your morning coffee? You have to try Bananas Foster in the city in which it was invented!

But I digress. The purpose of our visit is NAHO's 2019 Professional Development Conference. The up-tight fussybudget in me has worked obsessively to try to create a curriculum that is worthy of New Orleans.

Conference Curriculum

- Process and Procedure: The best attended classes at NAHO conferences are those that focus on the "nuts and bolts" of conducting administrative hearings. This year's conference offers classes on due process, credibility assessment, decision writing, editing decisions, hearing control, managing hearings with self-represented litigants, development of the record and several different classes on evidence admissibility.
- Specialized Classes: We often receive requests from conference attendees for more specialized classes specific to one particular type of hearing. This year, we have classes specifically for school

discipline, DUI/implicit consent, and special education hearing officials as well as classes for managers of administrative adjudicators.

- Hearing Official Safety and Security: Each year, we receive requests for classes to address hearing official safety and security. This year, we are privileged to have a specialist in Protective Intelligence in the Judicial Security Division of the U.S. Marshals Service to provide three different hours of instruction on personal security measures to make us all safer in our hearings and elsewhere.
- Wellness Component: Research has revealed that one of the most stressful professions is that of an adjudicator. To address that stress, NAHO is offering a component on wellness. A yoga instructor, specifically for NAHO attendees, will provide yoga classes every morning before class. There will be a session on both yoga and meditation on Tuesday evening. In addition, the curriculum includes a class on mindfulness which is being recognized as an effective means for adjudicators to reduce stress and maintain focus during the workday.

With over 50 hours of instruction from which to choose, there's something for everyone at this year's conference. For more information on all aspects of our upcoming conference, please see https://naho.org/resources/Documents/Conference/NAHO_ConfBrochure_2019.pdf

We hope to see you in New Orleans in November! 🍷



REFLECTIONS FROM THE BENCH: I Am Trying To Be A Lighthouse

Hon. Don Ash

The following article is reprinted, with permission, from The Judicial Edge, the monthly online publication of The National Judicial College. Its author, Judge Don Ash, served as a circuit judge in Tennessee for 18 years, has been a senior judge for five years and has been a member of The National Judicial College faculty for 19 years.

This September I will have served on the bench for 25 years. I have presided over divorce trials, medical malpractice lawsuits, sat on appellate panels, and been involved in numerous murder trials, including two death penalty cases. I was honored to be elected president of the Tennessee Judicial Conference in 2001, and I have served as a faculty member of The National Judicial College for almost 20 years. Many would say I have had a pretty good career. We all have heard the saying “Old dogs can’t learn new tricks.” This old dog has learned some of my most valuable life lessons in the past two years that I sincerely wish I had learned decades ago.

About two years ago I was teaching for the NJC in Bar Harbor, Maine. Class dismissed early one day and a number of students wanted to take a ferry boat ride to see an old lighthouse. I love to see new sights and I tagged along with my fellow judges.

When we arrived at the lighthouse I was amazed by how many huge rocks surrounded the small island that was home for this beacon to travelers by sea. I was somewhat nervous as we bounced up and down on the waves as they crashed all around me. I was happy when we got back to Bar Harbor, but that night I took some time to reflect on what I had observed.

The lighthouse gets pounded by not only the waves but also terrible storms. I thought, “How does the lighthouse respond to its trials and tribulations?” It simply keeps shining its light to help others.

I thought about my time as a husband, a dad,

a friend and a judge. Many times I was a tank shooting my wisdom with a precise explosion – never yelling or being abusive but certainly not tolerating what I perceived as a failure in character or in presentation. I now keep a picture of the tank/lighthouse on my bench to remind me of my choices when I make decisions. I fall short regularly, but I want to strive to be a lighthouse.

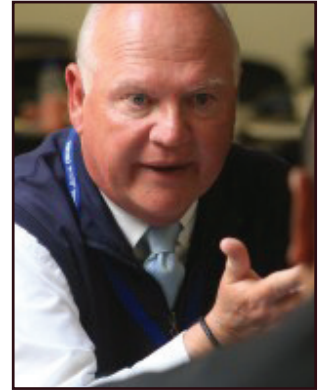
My mother and stepdad both were teachers and I have always loved having the opportunity to follow in their footsteps. I have spoken to numerous judicial conferences across the country as well as teaching civil procedure for the Nashville School of Law. In my presentations, I always try to play some video clips that relate to the subject matter.

Almost a year ago, I ran across basketball coach Jimmy Valvano’s ESPY award speech. He was dying of cancer. I had heard it before but simply had forgotten his powerful words. There are so many great messages in his speech, but my favorite is, “If you laugh, you think, and you cry, that’s a full day. You do that seven days a week; you’re going to have something special.”

If we are not careful, our service on the bench can desensitize us to life around us. We get caught up in dockets and trials, losing sight of the joys of life around us. On the day I wrote this article I had done some research on a fraud trial, laughed when I saw an inmate on a trash pickup crew meeting his obligation while riding a golf cart down the median of a four-lane highway, and silently wept when I watched a video about an adult son dealing with his mom and her Alzheimer’s disease. It was a full day!

In the last year, our Tennessee Judicial Conference has focused on mindfulness. When they first started this discussion I was not sure what this subject concerned. When the word “meditation” was mentioned, my mind raced to a picture of judges sitting cross-legged on the floor chanting. I was very skeptical.

I was impressed, however, when two judges whom I greatly respect told me they were trying to do this on a daily basis and had found it helpful. I resisted adding something else to



Hon. Don Ash

my already full plate but last month signed up for an app on my phone that helps one learn how to meditate. I don’t have to chant, and no incense is involved. For the last 25 days I have struggled to find just 10 minutes a day to simply be still and listen.

When I take advantage of my daily meditation I always learn something. A friend of mine told me last week I seemed calmer. I was shocked. Serving as judges, many of us see the worst of our society. I still have in my mind murder scenes and autopsy photographs. Many of us are Type A personalities who are constantly driven to achieve new goals. I would challenge each of you to sit still for just five minutes without your mind thinking about the next project or obligation.

Mike Papantonio, who wrote the book Clarence Darrow, The Journeyman, has one of my favorite quotes: “It is as if we were all traveling on a bus with all the shades pulled down. Most of the trip we spend squabbling with each other about who deserves the better seats. It rarely occurs to us to lift the shade and look at the landscape rushing past or even deciding where we are going.”

Through my efforts on being a lighthouse instead of a tank, enjoying the emotions of each day, and learning to be still, I am slowly learning to open the shades on my bus. I wish the same for each of you.

Don Ash served as a circuit judge in Tennessee’s 16th Judicial District for 18 years. He has served as a senior judge the past five years. He and his wife, Rita, have been married for 31 years and have four children and eight grandchildren. He is a past chair of the NJC Faculty Council and has been a member of the faculty for 19 years. 🏠

JUDICIAL PROFILE: HON. KAREN WELLS ROBY

U.S. Magistrate Judge, Eastern District of Louisiana

Shawna Castells

Judge Roby is the keynote speaker at this year's conference at the luncheon on Monday, November 4, 2019. This illuminating article on Judge Roby appeared in the October 2011 issue of "The Federal Lawyer".

One morning in 2006, a letter arrived unexpectedly in the chambers of Hon. Karen Wells Roby, U.S. magistrate judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana. The letter, written by a plaintiff's attorney, stated:

Now that the litigation is completed I feel compelled to write the Court about the work of Magistrate Karen Roby. ... I have been involved in countless mediation conferences with a variety of judges, professional mediators, and magistrates. Never in my experience have I seen a more professional, sensitive, and effective settlement assistance than given to the parties by Magistrate Karen Wells Roby. Magistrate Roby's sensitivity and forcefulness as well as good sense and patience settled one of the most acrimonious lawsuits in which I have ever been involved. She even went so far as to mediate the state visitation dispute involving the minor child.

Five years later, in 2011, Judge Roby received another letter about the same legal matter. This letter, however, was written by the former plaintiff, who wished to update Judge Roby on the status of the child whose life was affected by the federal dispute. The child's mother wrote, "I have wanted to write you for some time to send you a picture of my dear sweet son." The mother pointed out that, in addition to settling the federal claim, Judge Roby had settled an issue regarding the visitation calendar that was pending in state court. The mother wrote, "I wanted you to see how well he is doing now. I wanted to tell you, you are a wonderful person and I personally thank you from the bottom of my heart."

In another case, in 2000, a defense attorney

wrote the following to Judge Roby: "You played a key role in the settlement of this difficult litigation. Your willingness to take [the settlement request] at the last minute to keep the parties working toward a compromise long after regular office hours was critical." Judge Roby's effectiveness in settling cases has seemed to compel individuals to seek her out well after their legal matters pending before her have been resolved. It is important to note that, even though settlement conferences are but one of her many duties on the court, Judge Roby's effectiveness in this area has not gone unnoticed by the court, counsel, and the public.

Judge Roby is certainly a trailblazer, and not simply because she was the first African-American female to be appointed a U.S. magistrate judge in the state of Louisiana. She is a trailblazer in that she has rebuffed the stereotype that judges are above the public or are otherwise off limits. Judge Roby never lets the prestige of her position affect how she deals with people. Therefore, people find her approachable and knowledgeable on the law, and they are comfortable with having her resolve their conflicts.

Judge Roby became interested in the legal profession at a very young age. As a high school student, she spent the summer of her junior year studying law and philosophy in a program designed for minority high school students who were interested in the law. It was there that she met her mentor of over 20 years, Justice Bernette J. Johnson, who was a practicing attorney at the time and was later elected judge of the Civil District Court for the State of Louisiana. Upon graduating from law school, Judge Roby served as Justice Johnson's judicial law clerk. Her high school experience prepared Judge Roby to perform well at Xavier University in Louisiana during her college years and, thereafter, at

Tulane University Law School, from which she graduated in 1987.



Hon. Karen Wells Roby

Judge Roby's experience as Justice Johnson's law clerk helped her to realize that her passion was litigation, particularly in the area of products liability. After her clerkship, Judge Roby entered private practice. After a few months with a small plaintiff's firm, she joined Bernard Cassisa, a defense firm noted locally in Louisiana for its focus on products liability law.

Judge Roby remained with Bernard Cassisa for several years until she joined Deutsch Kerrigan Stiles, a mid-sized firm in New Orleans. Her diligence and superb performance allowed her to continue her practice in products liability until she was appointed by the Louisiana Supreme Court to serve as a judge pro tempore on the Civil District Court for the Parish of New Orleans in 1998. She served as a judge in this capacity for one year and then resumed her practice with Deutsch Kerrigan Stiles. Her practice also included legal malpractice and other insurance defense work. Later, Judge Roby served as a partner and head of the Product Liability Section at Vial, Hamilton, Koch & Knox's New Orleans office.

Judge Roby's experiences on each side of the legal system were noticed when she was appointed as a U.S. magistrate judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana in 1999. During her time on the bench, she has developed a reputation as a fair, even-tempered, prepared, and diligent judge with a unique ability to help parties resolve their disputes before trial. She is noted in the legal community as a judge who enjoys helping others resolve their disputes, regardless of how challenging the matter. Judge Roby

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JUDICIAL PROFILE *From page 7.*

has been characterized by a colleague as a “judge who gets it done.”

Judge Roby considers the courtroom as more than a venue where legal conflicts are resolved. She views the courtroom as a place that has the unique ability to educate both the local and legal communities. Judge Roby, who is passionate about children, has always sought to use her judicial position as a tool to teach children. She routinely teaches children about the judicial process by visiting classrooms and allowing children to conduct mock trials in her courtroom.

For example, she recently hosted a mock trial for fourth-graders from St. Paul’s Episcopal School in New Orleans. The case was entitled Snow White vs. The Wicked Witch, and the students dressed up in character as they tried the case before a jury of their peers. After the jury of students returned a verdict in this case, Judge Roby answered questions about the function of the courts in their lives and discussed the different branches of government.

Judge Roby also uses the courtroom to educate members of the legal community. She is a frequent participant in the Federal Bar Association’s “Lunch with the Court” program, which hosts local lawyers for a brown-bag style lunch. During these lunches, Judge Roby answers questions posed by young lawyers making their way in the legal profession. This is only one example of Judge Roby’s passion for helping the next generation of lawyers.

The judge has also helped struggling law students pass the bar by tutoring them. One of the students she has tutored, Courtney Courseault-Thornton, currently in-house counsel for the New Orleans Aviation Board, has said of Judge Roby’s efforts, “Judge Karen Wells Roby’s dedicated spirit and strong commitment to excellence are qualities which I admire. However, it is not uncommon that someone is committed to excellence in his or her personal quest for success.

What makes Judge Roby unique is her

congenial disposition and commitment to helping those around her achieve excellence. This has been particularly demonstrated by her tireless efforts to successfully mentor many, including myself, through the bar exam. I will be forever grateful for this experience.”

The judge also mentors young female lawyers on how to navigate the profession. Lauren B. McKnight of LMC Consulting Group, a young lawyer the judge has mentored, has the following to say about Judge Roby: Judge Roby is an amazing mentor and our relationship has developed into a friendship, which has been five years in the making. She has been a demanding mentor and challenged me to reach my fullest potential at all times. She set high standards for my legal practice and community involvement that have changed my approach to the law and volunteer efforts.

As a young lawyer, I focused most of my attention on my legal practice. Judge Roby reminded me that I have more to offer my community than mere legal services. She encouraged community activities outside the bar that utilized my talents and passion to help more people. As a result, I volunteered with at-risk youths, worked at several domestic violence shelters, and raised money for numerous charities. I am honored to call her my mentor and hope others are lucky enough to find a mentor like Judge Roby.

Judge Roby’s other educational efforts have included setting up outreach programs at local schools. Her commitment to education has spanned her professional career. She and her family have donated furniture and computers to a local school, and she even helped design a website to help a local public elementary school improve its ability to communicate with the public and its student population.

Currently, she is serving as the coordinating judge in Louisiana for the LSBA/JTBF Suit Up for the Summer: High School Summer Institute and Intern Program, which is a result of a partnership between the Just the Beginning Foundation and the Louisiana State Bar Association.

When speaking about the program, Justin DiChara, a senior at St. Paul’s School in Mandeville, La., said, “Out of all the years I have participated in programs throughout the state of Louisiana, this is the best I have seen yet. The [program] has changed my life. Not only did I make lifelong friends, but also I met some of the most successful attorneys in Louisiana, had a true taste of the everyday life of law, experienced the ins and outs of law school, and increased my knowledge, self-discipline, and ardor in the fields of law and academics in general.”

Throughout her career, Judge Roby has often been the first and only African-American hired by an employer, and, as a result, her life has demonstrated the importance of diversity in the legal profession. Mindful of her path to the bench and the mentors she has had during her career, in addition to other volunteer efforts, Judge Roby hosted two summer interns through the Summer Judicial Internship Program, which is an Internship Diversity Pilot Project created in 2011 by the Judicial Resources Committee (a committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States) and the Just the Beginning Foundation and designed to improve the pipeline to diversity in the courts.

Through this program, students were placed as interns in Judge Roby’s chambers and given the opportunity to experience the legal profession from the bench’s point of view, including drafting orders and opinions on procedural and substantive matters. Rudi Julius, an intern and student at Cornell University Law School had this to say about her summer experience: “The JRC-JTBF Joint Internship Diversity Project has been a truly enriching and rewarding experience. Judge Roby never treated me as if I were just an intern or a student in a diversity program; because she challenged me to work hard and maximize my potential, I was able to complete assignments that I never dreamed I would even get to see as a first year law student. I am forever grateful for the invaluable work and life experience I have gained and the relationships that I have built. I look forward

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JUDICIAL PROFILE *From page 8.*

to future involvement with this unique program.”

At least once during the intern’s experience, the judge, along with her staff, coordinated a potluck luncheon in which staff members celebrated their hard work and their various cultures. Just like her diverse staff, Judge Roby finds it important to experience the cuisine of other cultures as another part of her educational toolbox. When asked why she takes the time to host these luncheons, the judge responded, “We work hard every day and it is important to take the time to get to know the people you work with on a different level, and food always seems to cause people to relax.” The potluck luncheons held in Judge Roby’s chambers have celebrated a variety of cultures and cuisines, including Vietnamese, Lebanese, Indian, Cuban, Soul food, and American favorites.

In addition to her other efforts, for several years Judge Roby served on the Diversity Committee of the Federal Magistrate Judges Association (FMJA), working to enhance the pipeline of information available to minority bar associations regarding vacancies at the magistrate judge level.

Judge Roby currently serves on the governing board of the FMJA and was recently sworn in as the organization’s president-elect at its convention in Atlanta. She will assume the helm of this 500-plus member organization in summer 2012.

Judge Roby additionally was requested by the president of the FMJA, U.S. District Judge Royal Furgeson, to serve as the co-chair of the Federal Judges Association’s Civic-Education Task Force, which is a partnership between the Federal Judges

Association, the FMJA, the National Bankruptcy Judges Conference, and other entities for community civics education. The task force’s first project will be to produce a Civics Education Toolkit that can be used by federal judges to promote civics education.

Judge Roby’s life has many dimensions; she thoroughly enjoys her work and family and realizes that her efforts as a judge are complemented by her family. She has been married for more than 20 years to her spiritual partner and former law school classmate, Clarence M. Roby Jr., who is also an attorney in New Orleans, and she is the mother of two wonderful sons. She enjoys—and occasionally plays—golf.

Shawna Castells was a law clerk to Magistrate Judge Roby. 🐾

LET’S TRAVEL TO THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE IN 2020

Jo Murphy (TN)

NAHO will be heading to Philadelphia in the fall of 2020. Please join us from September 20th through 23rd at the newly constructed Element/W Hotel, 1441 Chestnut Street in downtown Philly. The hotel is currently under construction and is scheduled to open in January 2020. Each attendee will have a kitchenette in their room and complimentary breakfast each morning.

Philadelphia is the largest city in Pennsylvania, notable for its rich history on display at the Liberty Bell, and Independence Hall where the Declaration of Independence and Constitution were signed. Known as the “City of Brotherly Love”, Philly is not only full of National Historic sites, it has fascinating museums, vibrant parks and famous food. You’ll have to try eating a Philly Cheesesteak at least once. As the sixth largest city in the United States by population, you’ll never grow tired of exploring its many attractions. Explore Reading Terminal, City Hall, Penn’s Landing, and the Eastern State Penitentiary where Al Capone was imprisoned. As you explore museums, walk up the iconic steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art immortalized by Sylvester Stallone’s triumphant run in the film, “Rocky”.

Best of all, you’ll have another opportunity to experience top notch training and education for administrative hearing officials, practitioners, and others involved in the administrative hearing process. Save the date: September 20th through 23rd, 2020.

