

34th Annual District of Columbia Judicial Conference

The 34th Annual District of Columbia Judicial Conference will be held on Friday, June 19, 2009. The conference will be held at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. The theme of the conference is, “*The CSI Effect: Computers, Science and the Internet—Impact on the Administration of Justice.*” The Honorable Eric Holder, Attorney General of the United States, will be the luncheon speaker. The conference will follow a one-day format this year and will feature three plenary sessions.

The conference will explore and discuss the impact of the media on the public’s perception of judges, the courts and the administration justice. We will also examine current and emerging issues faced by practitioners and the courts regarding the use of the internet and electronic communications in judicial proceedings, and the ethical and practical issues lawyers and judges encounter with these technologies. Further, we will explore the issue of whether our courts and juries are equipped to handle highly technical and complex issues of evolving science and technology in civil and criminal cases.

The three plenary sessions are as follows:

- 1. Plenary Session I—**“*How the Media Shapes Public Perception of 21st Century Justice.*” This panel will discuss the impact of science, technology and the media on the public’s perception of judges, the courts and the administration of justice. The panel will also examine the media’s impact on high profile cases. Issues related to this topic include the 24 hour news cycle, the increase in internet sites and blogs that cover court proceedings, television shows that use judges and portray crime scene investigations, and guidelines for judges and lawyers to follow when involved with high profile cases. This panel will be moderated by Ricki Seidman, Senior Principal of TSD Communications, which provides strategic advice to a wide range of corporations and organizations including Google, XM Satellite Radio, and MySpace. The panelists are: Judge Reggie Walton, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia; Judge Judith Bartnoff, Superior Court of the District of Columbia; William (“Billy”) Martin, Esq., Sutherland Asbill & Brennan, LLP; Professor Patricia Worthy, Howard University School of Law; Lucy Dalglish, Esq., Executive Director, Reporters for Freedom of the Press; and Channing Phillips, Esq., United States Attorney’s Office.

- 2. Plenary Session II**—“*The Tangled Web (www.) That Has Been Weaved—A Look at Current and Emerging Issues Faced by Practitioners and the Courts Regarding the Use of the Internet and Electronic Communications in Judicial Proceedings.*” This panel will discuss the ethical and practice issues that often arise when lawyers and judges are involved with metadata, e-discovery, and inadvertent disclosure of confidential or privileged information. The panel will also touch upon issues related to use of the Internet by judges and lawyers during litigation. This panel will be moderated by Judge Herbert Dixon, Superior Court of the District of Columbia. The panelists are: Judge Marian Blank Horn, United States Court of Federal Claims; Magistrate Judge John Facciola, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia; Mark Cymrot, Esq., Baker Hostetler; and Saul Singer, Esq., Senior Legal Ethics Counsel, District of Columbia Bar.
- 3. Plenary Session III**—“*Are Our Courts and Juries Equipped to Handle 21st Century Issues? Are Science and Technology Evolving Too Fast?*” This panel will focus on whether judges and jurors are equipped to hear highly technical and complex issues involving science and technology in civil and criminal cases. The panelists will explore some of the practical limitations judges face in ruling on the admissibility of such evidence, as well as challenges faced by jurors in evaluating the evidence. The moderator of this panel will be Jake Stein, Esq., Stein, Mitchell & Muse, LLP. The panelists are: Timothy P. O’Toole, Esq., Miller & Chevalier; Susan Powell, Ph.D, Strategic Litigation Research; and Barry A. J. Fisher, Crime Lab Director for the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department.