



THE DOCKET

News of the National Conference of Appellate Court Clerks

The J.O. Sentell Award

By Marilyn May (AK)



Christie Cameron (NC)

The J.O. Sentell Award has been presented annually since 1979 to a member who has contributed substantially to the objectives of the Conference. The J.O. Sentell Award, named for a founding member and the first president of the NCACC, recognizes extraordinary devotion to the conference, support for the judicial system, and service to others. The 2010 recipient of our most prestigious honor is Christie Speir Cameron, Clerk of the North Carolina Supreme Court.

Christie's contributions to the NCACC are many and ongoing. In addition to serving as President in 2002-2003 and hosting the 2003 conference in Asheville, North Carolina, Christie also served as an executive committee member from 1996-1998, Program Chair in 1999, and has chaired or participated in numerous committees. Christie was the NCACC representative to the Advisory Council, Court Services Division, of the National Center for State Courts. In addition, Christie was instrumental in the creation of the Conference of Appellate Technology Officials (CATO) as well as the NCACC Educational Fund Committee.

Some of Christie's greatest contributions to the conference go beyond the positions that can be listed on a resume. She is a warm and welcoming mentor to new members and is always willing to help her many NCACC friends. Christie is a gracious good-will ambassador from our group to the world.

The list of past J.O. Sentell Award winners reads as a who's-who of our leaders. Christie Cameron's name is a fitting addition to the roster.

Inside This Edition

J.O. Sentell Award Marilyn May (AK)	Page 1
The President's Page Bill DeCicco (DC)	Page 3
Facts, Fiction, & Foolishness Les Steen (AR)	Page 4
2010 Trailblazer Award Karen Bramblett (PA)	Page 5
2011 Directory	Page 6
Award Nominations Request	Page 7
2010-2011 Committees	Page 9
Memorials	Page 11
The Conference and a Newbie Lillian Evans Richie (LA)	Page 12
Montana Memories Ed Smith (MT)	Page 13

THE DOCKET

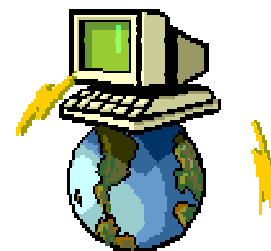
News of the
National Conference of Appellate Court Clerks

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HELP KEEP US INFORMED!!

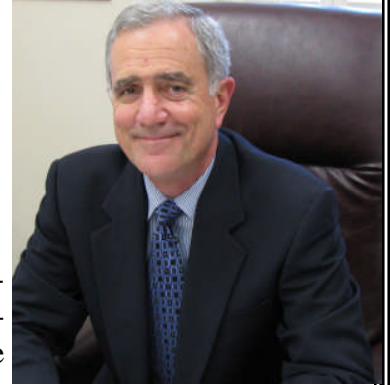


To Remit NCACC Membership Dues:

National Center of State Courts
300 Newport Avenue
Williamsburg, VA 23185

THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Bill DeCicco (DC)



One of the favorite pastimes of Washington pundits is to analyze and discuss *ad nauseam* what a new President accomplishes in the first 100 days in office. No, the major news networks have not called me to find out what the NCACC is doing (yet). But I have managed to complete the formation of this year's committees. These assignments are now available in this issue of *The Docket* and on the NCACC website. I would like to thank everyone who volunteered to serve, and I look forward to working with you and the Executive Committee in the coming year.

Some of the goals I would like to see us accomplish include streamlining our committee structure to reduce overlap, finding areas for greater participation opportunities for our retired members, expanding our membership criteria to allow appellate court clerks from tribal courts and possibly Canadian courts to join the NCACC, and setting and executing a balanced budget. Our decision in August to increase annual dues will greatly aid us to accomplish the last goal.

Wasn't that a spectacular annual meeting in Whitefish? We can't thank Ed Smith, Rex Renk and their staff of the Montana Supreme Court enough. Years of planning went into this event, and it showed, from the spectacular West and Lexis/Nexis events in the mountains down to the unique NCACC t-shirts and ball point pens! Some of us found that the hike to Hidden Lake in Glacier Park was a bit of a chore, especially at 7,000 feet above sea level, but well worth the effort. I would also like to thank Cynthia Rapp and the Program Committee for assembling an outstanding educational program and running it with punctuality and military precision (way to go Colonel Rapp!) and Mike Richie for his many hours of work in arranging an excellent vendor show. I'm sure that everyone who attended, especially our guests from the National Center for State Courts, would agree that of all of the organizations supported by the National Center, the NCACC truly has both the friendliest members and the best conferences. Remember to mark your calendars for next year's meeting in Annapolis, Maryland from July 31 – August 5, 2011.

I would also like to salute two special people. First, we owe a great deal of gratitude to Susan Clary for all she did the past year as President, including running this year's conference one-handed due to a broken wrist. It was amazing to watch her overcome the challenge with the class and aplomb only she could muster. Second, heartiest congratulations to Christie Cameron for being awarded the J. O. Sentell Award for all she has done for the NCACC for many years. These two NCACC stalwarts deserve our deep appreciation.

This year, all of our courts will continue to face fiscal issues, and the NCACC will as well. The Executive Committee is committed to a policy of fiscal austerity in making our spending decisions. In spite of this economic challenge, I'm convinced that your generosity, spirit of volunteerism, and enthusiasm for supporting the NCACC will keep it economically sound and vibrant throughout the current downturn and beyond.

On a very sad note, we recently learned of the passing of our dear friend and colleague Kenneth deBlanc. Kenneth was an NCACC institution. He served on the Executive Committee, numerous other committees, and he co-hosted the 2007 annual meeting in New Orleans. In 2005, he was awarded the J.O. Sentell Award. His generosity to others was perhaps his greatest attribute. At the annual meetings, he organized contributions of soap, shampoo and other items from members' hotel rooms to give to homeless shelters in the cities where the meetings were held. As a lasting testament, the NCACC Education Fund has been designated for memorial contributions in his memory. We will miss him greatly.

For me, it is a high honor to hold this office and proudly serve as the President of an organization of such top-notch professionals. With your help, we'll have a great year.



Facts, Fiction, & Foolishness

More from Les

And that is how the fight started.

One year, I decided to buy my mother-in-law a cemetery plot as a Christmas gift. . . . The next year, I didn't buy her a gift. When she asked me why, I replied, "Well, you still haven't used the gift I bought you last year!" And that's how the fight started

My wife and I were watching "Who Wants To Be a Millionaire?" while we were in bed. I turned to her and said, "Do you want to have sex?" "No," she answered. Then I said, "Is that your final answer?" She didn't even look at me this time, simply saying, "Yes." So, I said, "Then I'd like to phone a friend." And that's when the fight started

I took my wife to a restaurant. The waiter for some reason took my order first. "I'll have the New York strip steak, rare, please." The waiter said, "Aren't you worried about the mad cow?" So I said, "Nah, she can order for herself." And, that's when the fight started

My wife and I were sitting at a table at her high school class reunion, and she kept staring at a drunken man swigging his drink as he sat alone at a nearby table. I asked her, "Do you know him?" "Yes," she sighed, "He's my old boyfriend. . . I understand he took to drinking right after we split up those many years ago, and I hear he hasn't been sober since." "My god!" I said, "Who would think a person could go on celebrating that long?!" And then the fight started .

My wife sat down next to me as I was flipping channels. She asked, "What's on television?" I said, "Dust." And that's how the fight started

When my lawn mower broke and wouldn't run, my wife kept hinting to me that I should have it fixed. But somehow I always had something else to take care of first, the shed, the boat, making beer. Always something more important to me. Finally she thought of a clever way to make her point. When I arrived home one day, I found her seated in the tall grass busily snipping away with a tiny pair of sewing scissors. I watched silently for a short time and then went into the house. I was gone only a minute, and when I came out again, I handed her a toothbrush. I said, "When you finish cutting the grass, you might as well sweep the driveway." The doctors say I will walk again but I will always have a limp.

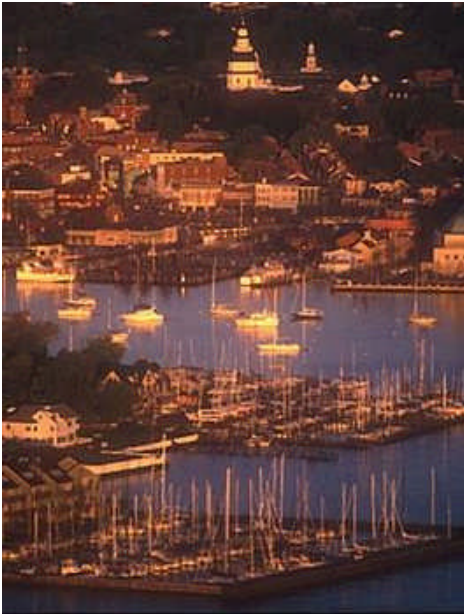
My wife was hinting about what she wanted for our upcoming anniversary. She said, "I want something shiny that goes from 0 to 150 in about three seconds." I bought her a bathroom scale. And that's when the fight started

After retiring, I went to the Social Security office to apply. The woman behind the counter asked to see my driver's license to verify my age. I searched my pockets and realized I had left my wallet at home. I told the woman I was sorry and I would go home and come back later. The woman said, "Unbutton your shirt." So I opened my shirt revealing my curly silver hair. She said, "The silver hair on your chest is proof enough for me," and she processed my application. When I got home, I excitedly told my wife about my experience, and she said, "You should have dropped your pants. You might have gotten disability, too." And that's how the fight started

My wife was standing nude looking in the bedroom mirror. She was not happy with what she saw and said to me, "I feel horrible. I look old, fat, and ugly. I really need you to pay me a compliment." I replied, "Your eyesight is damned near perfect." And then the fight started

We hope if any of you out there start a fight, you will let me know the specifics.





MARK YOUR CALENDARS !

Please mark your calendars now for next year's NCACC annual meeting to be held in Annapolis, Maryland. The dates of the Conference are: registration on Saturday, July 30, 2011 and continues through to the Critique Breakfast on Friday, August 5, 2011. We will be staying at The Loews Hotel which is located just a short walk from the downtown dock area with great restaurants and exciting activities. Only 30 minutes away from Baltimore and Washington, D.C.! Annapolis is so rich in history and tradition you will want to make every effort to attend this Conference. More details later.

Bessie, Cynthia, and Leslie
Co-hosts

The 2010 Trailblazer Award Karen Bramblett (PA)

Frank and I left home on Friday with plenty of time to make our 6:20 A.M. flight from Philadelphia to Great Falls, Montana, by way of a 50 minute stopover in Minneapolis. Traffic jams are a familiar condition of Philadelphia's "expressways" regardless of the time of day or day of the week; rush hour is a euphemism that means the expressway is a parking lot instead of a crawl. So we were only mildly surprised but not alarmed by the massive traffic jam that more than doubled the time for what should have been a 30 minute trip to the airport. We had planned to check two bags and carry on two bags, and were directed to a line outside for Delta's curbside check-in. Twenty minutes later we learned that it was the line for Southwest, and Delta had no curbside check-in. We still had plenty of time, so we went inside and got in another line to check our bags and get our boarding passes. When we finally made it to the agent, we handed her our driver licenses and tickets, and informed her we were checking two bags. She asked for our boarding passes and we said we needed her to print them.

Did you know that Delta agents do not, will not, print a boarding pass, at least not in the City of Brotherly Love? The agent directed us to another long line in front of a row of machines where we were to print our own boarding passes, and then get back in her line to check the bags with her. By now the plenty of time had been downgraded to enough time to make the flight. Depending on how fast the boarding pass line moved we were up against the one-hour-before-departure deadline for checking luggage. I got to a boarding pass machine with only minutes to spare and began furiously typing in the confirmation numbers as my husband read them to me. I almost made it, too. As I finished typing and hit Continue on the screen, I received the message that it was now too late to check bags, did I still want to continue. Well, of course I did; I needed those boarding passes. So I continued, pulled off the two boarding passes and we ran back to the same agent. We handed her the boarding passes, driver licenses and said we needed to check our two bags.

No, she told us, it is too late to check our bags. Thus began an impossibly complicated (economic) negotiation of how to get to Montana. For an additional \$300 we could take an 11 A.M. flight, but we would have to return in 3 hours to purchase the tickets. Okay, how many seats remained on that flight? There were only three seats, but for an additional \$800 we could book that flight now and be guaranteed the seats (more economics to consider). Okay, I don't have the time to ask why the price difference, but tell me when we would get to Montana if we booked the 11 A.M. flight: Around midnight if we made all connections. That would put us in Great Falls well after the rental car office closed which meant finding a hotel in Great Falls (economics), missing an already-paid-for room at Grouse Mountain Lodge in Whitefish, and missing the pre-paid Saddle and Paddle event Saturday morning (at \$244, lots more economics).

(Continued on page 14)

NCACC AWARDS COMMITTEE WANTS YOUR NOMINATIONS NOW

The 2010-2011 Awards Committee wants your nominations for the J.O. Sentell Award and the Morgan Thomas Award. These awards will be presented at the 2011 NCACC Annual Conference to be held in Annapolis, Maryland.

The past recipient of the J.O. Sentell Award is listed in this issue of *The Docket*. A survey made in 1995 of the past recipients of the J. O. Sentell Award indicated that past members felt that some of their best qualities were expressed in these words: love your work, set and achieve goals, be diligent, be committed, demonstrate patience, use sound judgment, be sensitive to your fellow men and women, and give your best. I know that many of the NCACC members I have met since joining the conference demonstrate these qualities, so please send your nomination for these two awards to the committee.

The J.O. Sentell Award is given to a member of the NCACC who has contributed substantially to the objectives of the conference, including improving skill and knowledge through conferences, seminars or other educational programs; promoting and improving the contribution of appellate court clerks' offices within the area of effective court administration; and collection and dissemination of information and ideas concerning the operation and improvement of the offices of appellate court clerks.

The Morgan Thomas Award recognizes an individual who is not a member of the NCACC and who has made distinguished contributions to enhancing professionalism and supporting the goals of the NCACC as a body and of its members individually.

The Awards Nomination Form should be sent by February 14, 2011 using email, fax or mail to:

Trish Harrington
NCACC Awards Committee Chair
Supreme Court of Virginia
100 N. 9th St., 5th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

E-Mail ► pharrington@courts.state.va.us

Fax ► 804-786-6249



Awards Committee 2010-2011

Trish Harrington, Chair
(VA)

Marilyn May (AK)

Ed Hosken (DC)

Mike Yerly (CA)

Joseph Lane (CA)

Laura Roy (MO) Executive
Committee liaison



Awards Committee Suggestions Form

J. O. SENTELL AWARD

Please make your recommendation below and give your reasons.
(If more space is needed, please attach additional page(s).)

I nominate: _____ No nomination

Reasons: _____

MORGAN THOMAS AWARD

Please make your recommendation below and give your reasons.
(If more space is needed, please attach additional page(s).)

I nominate: _____ No nomination

Reasons: _____

Please return this form by February 14, 2011
by E-MAIL pharrington@courts.state.va.us

by FAX ► Trish Harrington, Clerk
FAX: (804) 786-6249

by mail ► Trish Harrington, Clerk of Court
Supreme Court of Virginia
100 North Ninth Street, Fifth Floor
Richmond, VA 23219-2305

2010 - 2011 NCACC Committees



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All Past Presidents

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Jim Pelzer (NY)
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Ed Smith (MT)
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(Continued on page 10)

(Committees continued from page 9)

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Memorials

David Schanker

Wisconsin



David Schanker, Clerk of the Wisconsin Supreme Court and Court of Appeals, passed away in July, several weeks after a heart transplant.

David served as chair of the NCACC Public Relations Committee during 2009-2010. He was the primary author and editor of the White Paper on the status of appellate e-filing, published on the NCACC and the NCSC websites in February 2010, and to be excerpted in the NCSC's publication *Future Trends in State Courts 2010*. He is also the author of the Edgar-nominated novel *A Criminal Appeal*.

Memorials may be made in his memory to the Forward Theatre Company, P.O. Box 14574, Madison, WI 53708 or through their website www.forwardtheatre.com. The theater did a staged reading this spring of David's most recent creative endeavor, *Kiritsis*.

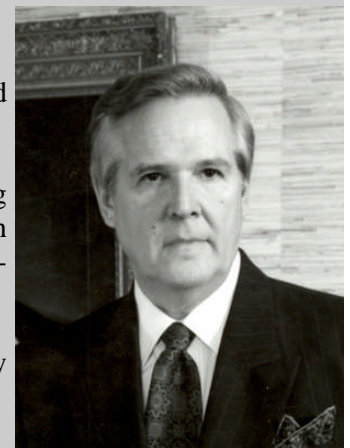
Kenneth deBlanc

Louisiana

Kenneth deBlanc, long time Clerk of Court for the Third Circuit Court of Appeal, passed away at the age of 76 on October 2, 2010.

Kenneth was an active member of the NCACC, serving on many committees and co-hosting the 2000 Savannah Conference and the 2006 Conference in New Orleans. In 2005, Kenneth was the recipient of the J.O. Sentell Award, recognizing his many extraordinary contributions to our organization.

Memorials may be made in his memory to the Education Fund of the NCACC, or a charity of one's choice.



THE CONFERENCE and a NEWBIE

Lillian Evans Richie (LA)

“I GOT IT!!!” read my email to my daughter and husband right after I had been selected as the new Clerk of the Second Circuit Court of Appeal in Louisiana in November of last year. Congratulatory hugs, phone calls, and emails followed, as well as a celebratory dinner with my husband. Questions from family and friends abounded, such as, “What is a Clerk of Court?”...and the inevitable, “Can you get a ticket fixed for me?” I gave the standard answers of being the “keeper of the records” to the first question, “no,” to the second, and rattled off the laundry list of the areas of my new administrative responsibilities. But the full depth of the position had yet to be revealed to me. As days passed, it became increasingly evident, to my embarrassment, that I didn’t even know enough *to ask the right questions!* Then, in steps the Conference – figuratively, of course. Calls from NCACC members welcomed me and offered advice like, “The only mistake that cannot be corrected is an execution.” Thanks, Les! I repeat that one to my staff on a regular basis. I was assured that this is the group which will be the most helpful to me because “they do exactly what you do.” How right those members were!

I so looked forward to attending my first Conference--the 37th annual meeting of the NCACC this past August at Grouse Mountain Lodge, in Whitefish, Montana. To smell the mountain air, experience the majesty of “Big Sky Country” and the breath-taking beauty of Glacier National Park during the celebration of its hundredth birthday, but most of all, to put faces and personalities with the names that come across the listserve in my email inbox.

Upon arrival and throughout the entire conference, I was overwhelmed with the warmth and gracious welcome extended by each and every member I met. The hospitality shown by our host, Ed Smith, and the special attention of my new mentor, the incredible “one-armed” President, Susan Clary was greatly appreciated. And, if I could have bottled-up all of that knowledge, experience, and wisdom and taken it home with me, I certainly would have a magic potion for sure success as an appellate court clerk.

During the education sessions, I discovered issues I didn’t know I had, and lessons that I never knew I needed to know – all invaluable to the newcomer, for sure.

The family atmosphere made my husband and I feel right at home. We have so many fond memories from the trip: the breezy gondola ride up Big Mountain, the invigorating Glacier Park Jammers Bus tour, and many evenings socializing and getting to know the fine members of the organization to which I am proud to now belong.



Annapolis, here we come!!!

MONTANA MEMORIES

Ed Smith (MT)

August turned out to be a spectacular time to be in Montana. And with the presence of 90 plus Clerks of Appellate Courts from around the United States, the Last Best Place was really shake, rattling and rolling!

The 37th annual meeting of the National Conference of Appellate Court Clerks was a huge success. The participation by a large group of our membership, an outstanding educational program with first rate speakers and our special activities made for a most constructive and memorable week.



As your host it was a real pleasure for me to welcome you to Montana and witness the excitement everyone had enjoying the Big Sky Country.

The social events were truly outstanding from the opening night buffet reception with the Bureau of National Affairs at the outdoor pavilion, to the awe inspiring Thomson/Reuters dinner and entertainment, high in the alpine splendor of the Whitefish Mountain Resort.

I always wanted to take you up to Glacier Park and show you the magnificence of this national crown jewel. Thanks to Lexis/Nexis my dream came true! It was an amazing day with the Jammers, the hike to the overlook of pristine Hidden Lake, the mountain goats, the big horn sheep and a bear or two for your special pleasure!

The best part of our annual meetings is the renewal of friendships. For our new members, we are so pleased that you could experience this special professional organization and look forward to your continued participation. The strength of the NCACC is the involvement and dedication of our membership.

It was an honor for me to host each of you. Till next summer in Annapolis - have a great day as it always is here in Montana! Tap 'er light friends!

(Trailblazer continued from page 5)

We simply had to make our original flight, so we asked the agent to check our bags on the later flight, so we could arrive on time in Great Falls, drive to Whitefish, go on the Saturday Saddle and Paddle, and my poor husband would then make the long, but undoubtedly scenic roundtrip back to Great Falls to get our checked bags on Sunday. Oh the many ramifications of 9/11: You must travel on the same plane as your checked bags. Suddenly trying to be helpful the agent told us that one of the bags we wanted to check was small enough for carry-on and we could abandon the other bag. Fortunately we had not stuffed any of our bags, leaving room for souvenirs (hopefully not the dreaded Trailblazer Award), so we stooped down and began cramming as much as we could from the largest bag into the other bags. Time was running short and we dashed upstairs, abandoning our almost new, monogrammed, black LL Bean rolling duffle.

Now we were down to barely enough time to make the flight when we were greeted by a long security line that snaked way past the ribbon maze, down the corridor, around a column and back up again. I pleaded with the TSA guard at the front that we would miss our flight if we had to get to the end of the line, but these guys are not hired for their empathy and we were coolly told to get to the end of the line. Time was getting very short and just as we got to the start of the ribbon maze another TSA guard motioned us to go to the head of the line and through security. I don't know what we stuffed in our carry-on luggage, but fortunately we sailed through and started running to our terminal.

By now I hardly need to describe that our gate was at the very end of a very long terminal. What made us keep running was the fact that we could see that the tiny dots at the end that were boarding our flight were growing fewer and fewer. My lungs were bursting and the way too heavy bags were banging against my side as I continued to run and watch the last dot enter the jet way. I screamed NOOOOOOO at the top of my lungs as the boarding agent closed the door, just a few yards in front of me. I am convinced he is first cousin to his Delta co-worker who had refused to check our bags. I was oblivious to the ramifications as I banged on the closed jet way door; after all, I had already abandoned luggage in a post 9/11 airport.

Drained and defeated I slumped to the floor, knowing that I would have to rebook the midnight flight to Montana after all. By luck or miracle the door opened and I grabbed it from the hands of a startled technician as he exited, and I sprinted down the jet way, Frank right behind me. The Delta flight attendant stared dumbfounded at us and yelled back up to the technician to close the door and not let anyone else board. Glancing down at our bags he informed us that there was no more room in the overhead and he would have to check our bags.

Epilogue: Everyone fortunate enough to attend the Montana Conference knows that it was spectacular. Montana's beauty defies words, the seminars were extraordinary and the events, including the Saddle and Paddle, were memorable. I did take home an extra souvenir, the Trailblazer trophy, which would not fit into our overcrowded remaining luggage so we mailed it back wrapped in souvenir tee shirts and such. I confess that the last two times I was in the Philadelphia International Airport I kept looking around for an almost new, monogrammed, black LL Bean rolling duffle. If you ever find yourself at that airport with plenty of time to spare, the monogram is a large white B.

