



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Court Initiatives Earn PA National Award
Judicial Security, Emergency Preparedness Programs Praised

HARRISBURG, January 3—Judicial automation, security initiatives, emergency preparedness, along with other court initiatives has earned Pennsylvania’s Court Administrator Zygmunt Pines the prestigious 2010 Warren E. Burger Award for Excellence in Court Administration—the highest award presented by the National Center for State Courts.

The [Burger Award](#) is named for the former chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and honors an individual who has made significant contributions to the improvement of court operations with application to courts nationwide.

State Supreme Court Chief [Justice Ronald D. Castille](#) said, “Zygmunt Pines recognizes that courts do not succeed without a commitment to principles of integrity and service. His national leadership in the areas of security and [preparedness](#) evolved from his work in Pennsylvania. During his tenure as state court administrator, Pennsylvania’s court system has been a leader in introducing numerous cost-effective solutions to problems facing the Commonwealth’s 67 trial courts and more than 500 district courts.”

Planning for the [security initiatives](#) in Pennsylvania’s court system was based on statewide facility assessments undertaken in collaboration with the county commissioners, sheriffs, and other court users. It included a statewide, automated security incident reporting system, installation of duress alarms and video surveillance technologies, metal detectors and x-ray equipment and a best-practices court security manual to guide county court.

Perhaps the most significant security measure is the installation of more than 300 video conferencing units in courts, which not only strengthens court security, but has the potential to save counties millions of dollars in prisoner transportation costs. A study by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency estimates annual savings of \$25,000 on average per video conference site.

Although the award is given to an individual, this year’s recipient, Court Administrator of Pennsylvania, Zygmunt Pines said, “The honor is fundamentally a recognition of the consistently excellent work done by the Pennsylvania judiciary as a whole. Our outstanding achievements reflect the collaborative efforts of our justices, judges and judicial employees.

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“For example, Pennsylvania has the most sophisticated [judicial computer system](#) in the country, which enables us to provide continually greater access and accountability to the public,” Pines added. “We also have created problem-solving courts, programs to help abused and neglected children and to provide court interpreters, enhanced judicial education and recently established a model code of conduct for all court employees.”

To date, Pennsylvania has created nearly 80 [problem-solving courts](#), such as veterans and drug courts. One national Drug Court Institute survey has indicated that for every dollar invested in Family Dependency Treatment Court, there was a \$4.74 cost savings or offset in child and adult costs to the criminal justice system and community.

“Zig Pines’ creative and innovative leadership, especially during this time of financial uncertainty for state courts, and his commitment to preserving the integrity of the court system has earned him the respect of the Pennsylvania judiciary,” said Mary C. McQueen, president of the [National Center](#). “His collaborative spirit and tireless work on behalf of the nation’s courts have earned him the respect of his peers. The judicial system is fortunate to have Zig as a dedicated advocate.”

The judiciary also has led efforts to reduce the number of children in [foster care](#) in Pennsylvania, saving counties and the state hundreds of millions of dollars. Additional efforts to improve court processes and cut costs include:

- the implementation of technology and automation to improve court collections and payment processing. Despite an economic downturn and fewer case filings, court collections and disbursements have increased. In 2009, \$461 million was disbursed by magisterial district courts and Common Pleas criminal courts to the Commonwealth, counties, municipalities and victims.
- the enhancement of electronic filing of traffic citations and criminal complaints to save police and courts both time and money. In January 2010, the Pennsylvania State Police began statewide traffic citation e-filing in collaboration with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC). The state police commissioner said the technology cuts in half the amount of time a trooper needs to issue a citation, allowing the officer to get back on the road more quickly and resume duties. Plus, this allows court staff to receive, print and file e-tickets in approximately one-fourth the time. The AOPC is working with local police departments plan to implement e-filing of traffic citations in the future and local courts are beginning to provide an e-filing option for criminal complaints.
- the development of a Web-based portal, making criminal court docket sheets available on the Internet at no charge, eliminating an untold amount of time for interested parties to travel to courthouses for paper copies of docket sheets and for court staff to make them. In 2009, 26 million docket sheets were accessed through the AOPC’s Web Portal at <http://ujportal.pacourts.us>.

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NOTE: State Supreme Court Chief Justice Ronald D. Castille’s nomination letter for Zygmunt Pines is attached.



THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA
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RONALD D. CASTILLE
CHIEF JUSTICE

September 15, 2010

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Ms. Stacey Smith
National Center for State Courts
300 Newport Avenue
Williamsburg, VA 23185-4147

Re: Warren E. Burger Award Nomination

Dear Ms. Smith:

Zygmunt Pines, Pennsylvania's state court administrator since 2000, has devoted his professional life to the Commonwealth's judicial system. I am pleased to nominate Mr. Pines for the 2010 Warren E. Burger Award for Excellence in Court Administration.

Mr. Pines, an attorney with law degrees from the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law and the University of Pennsylvania, is not a court administrator by training. Yet his leadership has been quietly effective, knitting disparate interests together to achieve constructive results.

Nationally, Mr. Pines has served as co-chair of the Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators Joint Committee on Court Security and Emergency Preparedness. In that role he has been instrumental in focusing courts' attention nationwide through COSCA and the National Center for State Courts on the critical issues they may face in the wake of natural disasters, security breaches from domestic or international threats, and the possible organizational effects of broad spectrum health threats, such as pandemics or other regional disasters.

Just recently, CCJ/COSCA published its national court security handbook, "Ten Essential Elements of Court Security and Emergency Preparedness," undertaken under the auspices of the late Ohio Chief Justice Thomas Moyer and Mr. Pines. Additionally, Mr. Pines testified earlier this year before the U.S. House Commerce, Justice, and Science Subcommittee on Appropriations about threats to court personnel on a national level.

Mr. Pines' national leadership in the areas of security and preparedness evolved from his work in Pennsylvania. During his tenure as state court administrator Pennsylvania's court system has been a leader in introducing cost-effective security solutions to the Commonwealth's 67 trial courts and more than 500 district courts, the

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majority of the latter having had no previous security systems. Planning for the security initiatives was based on state-wide facility assessments undertaken in collaboration with county commissioners, sheriffs, and other relevant parties. Peer task groups of diverse makeup inventoried security measures in each county, leading to programmatic recommendations. Additionally, a statewide, automated system, Pennsylvania Judicial Incident Reporting System (PAJIRS), was developed to gather for the first time data on court security incidents statewide.

As a result of this dual-pronged data collection, duress alarms and video surveillance technologies have been added in the district courts, while those features and metal detectors and x-ray equipment have been added in county courthouses. A best-practices court security manual was developed to guide county courts in their individual pursuit of safety and security. Consistent training has been a significant feature of all of Pennsylvania's court security efforts, including the mandated establishment of court security committees in each county and annual regional workshops led by state court staff. As well, continuity of operations planning has been mandated in all county courts.

From this description alone, I believe it is readily evident that undertaking the task of significantly enhancing judicial security in Pennsylvania's court system required both Mr. Pines' vision and his ability, which I earlier described, to gather diverse groups with sometimes disparate points of view and interests to forge consensus and a useful outcome.

Recognizing that courts are uniquely susceptible to the effects of public health emergencies, Mr. Pines has served on the federal Centers for Disease Control/U.S. Department of Justice Taskforce on Public Health Preparedness. He has been actively involved in the development and publication of the Pennsylvania Public Health Law Benchbook and the creation of a Continuity of Operations Toolkit for courts, both of which have been seen as national models. In 2009, he significantly participated in the Conference on Public Health Law and Science for the Pennsylvania Judiciary, in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh and the Centers for Disease Control. This program is now being emulated in other states.

Throughout these estimable activities, Mr. Pines' leadership style has been persuasively determined and insightful, yet those who have worked with him will readily acknowledge his collaborative spirit in pursuing each goal.

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In leading the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts Mr. Pines has shown no less commitment in pursuing necessary challenges.

One such endeavor is his leadership in the collaborative effort of Administrative Office senior staff to craft for the Supreme Court's consideration a first-ever Code of Conduct for the thousands of employees of Pennsylvania's Unified Judicial System. This effort had been engaged but set aside in past years. However, recognizing the value to employees and the public alike, Mr. Pines saw the wisdom in resurrecting the topic and guiding it to fruition.

I cite the employee Code of Conduct not just because of its value to the court system. Rather, I believe it is emblematic of Mr. Pines' personal commitment to the core values that we in courts hold essential to the success of the judicial institution. He recognizes that courts do not succeed without a commitment to principles of integrity and service. He exemplifies those principles in his life and his work with others within Pennsylvania or nationally.

During his past ten years' as Court Administrator of Pennsylvania, Mr. Pines has worked with four successive Chief Justices, including myself. I am confident that each would join me by "seconding" this nomination of "Zig" for the Warren E. Burger Award for Excellence in Court Administration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronald D. Castille". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

CHIEF JUSTICE RONALD D. CASTILLE

Enclosures