



Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts

PRESS RELEASE

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Pennsylvania Trial Judges Launch 'Pillar of Justice' Speakers Bureau

HARRISBURG, April 8, 2002 — The Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges today announced the start of a new "Pillar of Justice" Speakers Bureau program during a press conference in the Capitol Rotunda.

Presenters at the event included the Hon. Albert A. Stallone of Berks County and the Hon. Hiram G. Carpenter, Blair County. Stallone is the president of the group of elected and senior judges from Pennsylvania's Courts of Common Pleas. Carpenter is vice president. Martha Keller Masson, Elk County Court Administrator and Pennsylvania Association of Court Management president, also participated.

"Trial judges have a unique perspective on the courts whose role is frequent fodder for everything from television and radio talk shows to newspaper editorials," Stallone said. "Controversial cases bring controversial decisions. Therefore, it is important for all to understand what 'judicial independence' means and why it is a necessity. It simply means that your rights will be protected by the rule of law and not by what some might suggest would be the more popular thing for the courts to do."

The speakers bureau is part of the conference's ongoing desire to maintain public trust and confidence in the judiciary by providing trial court judges known by those who elected them to present an accurate overview of the ideals and practices that make our unique system of justice possible.

The Judicial Services Department of the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, along with the Pennsylvania Association of Court Management, will assist the conference in coordinating the program for civic, social, religious and fraternal groups across the state.

Each program will feature a participating trial judge showing an entertaining and informative 20-minute video called "Loitering in the 21st Century" followed by a question and answer period about the courts. The video features two actors portraying Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson and what they might say about their "experiment in democracy as written in the federal constitution" more than 200 years ago if they were transported to the 21st Century. More than 150 trial judges have volunteered to participate.

To request a trial judge speaker, please obtain a scheduling form from the Pennsylvania Conference of

State Trial Judges by calling (215) 560-6325 or from the Court Administrator in your county courthouse.
(Copies of the form also are available from the Pennsylvania Judiciary's web site at: www.courts.state.pa.us)