

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION 2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Striking the Right Chord: Safeguarding Justice in a Divided Nation

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Nashville Downtown
September 27-October 2
Nashville, TN

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

President: Judge Thomas Alevizos, Indiana
President-Elect: Judge Natalie Tyrrell, Nevada
Vice President: Justice Piper Griffin, Louisiana
Secretary: Judge Jessica Goodey, Nevada
Treasurer: Judge Rodney Adams, Texas
Immediate Past President: Judge Vincent Johnson,
Pennsylvania
Historian: Judge Russ Otter, Ontario, Canada
Parliamentarian: Judge Kern Reese, Louisiana

REGISTER

Questions?
aja@ncsc.org
757-259-1568



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Sunday, September 27, 2026

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM	AJA Budget Committee Meeting
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM	AJA Nominations Committee Meeting
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Registration
2:00 PM - 5:00 PM	AJA Executive Committee Meeting

Monday, September 28, 2026

7:00 AM - 7:30 AM	Optional Walk / Stretch with Judge Betty Thomas Moore
10:00 AM - 4:15 PM	Registration
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	American Judges Foundation Meeting
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Health and Wellness Session Judge Betty Thomas Moore
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	AJA Committee Meetings
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	<i>Optional Tour: Civil Rights Room and Votes for Women Room Exhibits - Downtown Nashville Library</i>
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Lunch on Your Own

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Monday, September 28, 2026

1:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Welcome: Mayor Freddie O’Connell Jonathan Cole , ABA Chair, House of Delegates Sherie Edwards, President, Nashville Bar Association Representative William Lamberth Majority Leader, Tennessee House of Representatives
1:30 PM - 3:00 PM	United States Supreme Court Case Review Speaker: Dean Erwin Chemerinsky Berkeley Law, University of California Moderator: Judge Aleta Trauger Dean Chemerinsky will review the major United States Supreme Court cases from the term that ended in June 2025. He will highlight the voting blocs by the Justices in each case and offer his analysis and commentary regarding the Court’s jurisprudence in various areas of the law. Participants will gain a better understanding of how the U.S. Supreme Court functions as a decision-making institution and be up-to-date.
3:00 PM - 3:15 PM	Break
3:15 PM - 3:30 PM	Sponsor Session
3:30 PM - 4:45 PM	“The Cathedral of Justice” Interview with Belmont Law School Dean Alberto Gonzales By Judge Woody Woodruff
4:45 PM - 5:00 PM	Sponsor Session

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Monday, September 28, 2026

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Exhibit Show
5:30 PM - 6:00 PM	New Member Reception (included with your registration) Hostess: Judge Melissa Blackburn
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Welcome Reception at Doubletree (included with your registration)

Tuesday, September 29, 2026

7:00 AM - 4:30 PM	Registration / Information Desk
7:00 AM - 7:30 AM	Optional Walk / Stretch with Judge Betty Thomas Moore
8:30 AM - 9:30 AM	<p>“An Independent Judiciary” Speaker: Jim Cooper, former Congressman and Vanderbilt adjunct professor Moderator: Judge Cindy Chappell</p> <p>In this session, Jim Cooper discusses deterioration of democracy and the current “Hit List” of Judges and the Legislators leading the attack.</p>
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM	Exhibit Show Opens
9:30 AM - 9:45 AM	Break

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9:45 AM - 10:45 AM	Judicial Leadership Speaker: Hon. Tara Osborn, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.) Moderator: Judge Anne Martin In this session Nationally Recognized Leadership expert identifies crucial points of leadership, discussing different techniques.
10:30 AM - 10:45 AM	Sponsor Session
10:45 AM - 11:45 AM	Notes on Restorative Justice Programs for Juvenile Crime - Moderator: Judge Shelia Calloway Panelist: Travis Claybrooks, Founder/CEO, Raphah Institute Judge Khadija Babb, Judge, Davidson County Criminal Court In this session former Police Officer Travis Claybrooks shares the success of restorative justice and Judge Babb discusses trauma-informed sentencing.
12:30 PM - 2:00 PM	Awards Lunch Keynote Speaker: Keel Hunt, Author Introduced by Court of Appeals Judge Neal McBrayer The annual AJA awards will be presented to the recipients during this time. The cost of the lunch is included in your registration fee.

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<p>2:15 PM - 3:15 PM</p>	<p>MythInformation: Fact or Fiction? Fine-Tuning your ear to recognize domestic abuse Moderator: TBD Speakers: Judge Rosemary Collins (Ret.), 17th Circuit Court, IL David Garvin, MSW, LMSW, Director of Abuse Intervention Services and Systems Response with the New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence</p> <p>In this session, nationally recognized domestic violence experts Hon. Judge Rosemary Collins (Ret.) and David Garvin, MSW, LMSW, Director of Abuse Intervention Services and Systems Response with the New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence, will discuss techniques used by abusers in the court systems, identify emerging trends, and assist judges in determining fact from fiction in DV cases.</p> <p><i>Optional: Athena Court site visit and recovery for women</i></p>
<p>3:30 PM - 3:45 PM</p>	<p>Sponsor Session</p>
<p>3:45 PM - 5:00 PM</p>	<p>Chief Justice Bob Torres will moderate a “fireside chat” format conversation with Tennessee Supreme Court Chief Justice Jeff Bivens focusing on current trends and directions of the law at the highest level.</p>
<p>5:30 PM - 8:00 PM</p>	<p>Broadway Reception</p>
<p>6:00 PM - 8:00 PM</p>	<p>Dinner on your own</p>
<p>8:00 PM - 11:00 PM</p>	<p>Hospitality Suite (Cash bar)</p>

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Wednesday, September 30, 2026

7:00 AM - 7:30 AM	Optional Walk / Stretch with Judge Betty Thomas Moore
7:30 AM - 4:00 PM	Registration/ Information Desk
7:30 AM - 8:30 AM	AJA Comittee Meetings <i>Optional: DUI Court site visit</i>
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Krav Maga Self Defense Instructor Myles Gomez
9:00 AM - 9:15 AM	Break
9:00 AM -11:30 AM	Exhibit Show Open
9:15 AM - 10:15 AM	General Assembly Meeting All AJA members should plan to attend this meeting as important topics will be discussed and elections will be held.
10:15 AM - 10:30 AM	Break
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	<i>Artificial Intelligence NCSI</i> Artificial Intelligence and the Courts: Judicial Readiness for Emerging Technologies Speakers: Judge Michael F. Pietruszka (Ret.), Vice President, NCSI Judge Rodney Adams (Ret.), City of Irving Municipal Court

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Data science and artificial intelligence are rapidly reshaping the legal landscape, influencing decisions in healthcare, employment, finance, criminal justice, and other areas long before disputes reach the courtroom. Judges are increasingly required to evaluate AI-generated evidence, algorithmic decision-making systems, and synthetic media while ensuring that these technologies are used in ways that are fair, reliable, transparent, and consistent with constitutional principles and established evidentiary standards. The session will provide an overview of NCSI’s final DS& AI Strategic Initiative report, highlighting major findings, judicial education priorities, practical tools, developed by participating jurisdictions, and emerging areas of concern that courts are likely to confront.

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Lunch on Your Own

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM

“The Relationship Between the Courts and the Legislature on the Topic of Cannabis”

Moderator: Judge Marcus Floyd

Speakers: Judge Mary A. Celeste (Ret.), Speaker, Educator and Consultant, Cannabis and the Law

Professor Rob Mikos, Vanderbilt University

This session examines the rapidly evolving constitutional and legal framework governing cannabis and hemp regulation in the United States. Drawing from recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings, appellate court trends, and pending litigation, the presentation explores critical intersections between federal authority, state sovereignty, civil liability, and commercial regulation.

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1:30 PM - 5:30 PM	Free Afternoon / Lunch on your own
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM	American Judges Foundation Fundraiser <i>*This is not included with conference registration and requires separate registration and payment.</i> Home of Michael and Angela Vogeli <i>(Address will be provided upon registration)</i>

Thursday, October 1, 2026

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM	Registration/Information Desk
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	“Building our Institution” Former Tennessee Attorney General Bob Cooper will moderate a discussion with current Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti.
9:00 AM	Domestic Violence Docket Invitation Judge Allegra Walker, Division IV, Davidson County General Sessions Court, Tennessee
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM	“What You Do Matters” Moderator: Judge David Briley Speaker: Adena Bernstein, Assistant Attorney General, Arizona

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	<p>The WYDM program is a 3-hour, highly interactive ethical leadership program created by Historians at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, D.C., in concert with career law enforcement practitioners. Museum historians provide all materials for accuracy. The program is focused on the slippery slope of leadership. It examines the nine years of 1933-1942 and how police and prosecutors changed from being protectors of their community to participating in the Holocaust over this short nine-year period. The course is POST and/or CLE-approved in many states for various credit hours, including leadership, ethics, and implicit bias, depending on the state.</p>
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Lunch on your own
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM	AJA Board of Governors Meeting
6:00 PM - 10:00 PM	<p>AJA President's Reception and Installation of President of AJA Banquet <i>Event included in registration and includes reception, dinner, and entertainment</i></p> <p>Join colleagues for a cocktail reception, dinner, and dancing.</p>

Friday, October 2, 2026

8:00 AM - 9:00 PM	<i>Optional: Mental Health Court Visit</i>
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Friday, October 2, 2026

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Information Desk
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	AJA Executive Committee Meeting
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM	<i>Optional Tour: Civil Rights Room and Votes for Women Room Exhibits - Downtown Nashville Library</i>