

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Issues that Cross Borders: Sharing Perspectives

The Sutton Place Hotel
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
October 11-16, 2025

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

President: Judge Vincent Johnson, Pennsylvania
President-Elect: Judge Thomas Alevizos, Indiana
Vice President: Judge Natalie Tyrrell, Nevada
Secretary: Justice Piper Griffin, Louisiana
Treasurer: Judge John Molaison, Louisiana
Immediate Past President: Judge Catherine Carlson,
Manitoba, Canada
Historian: Judge Charles Hayden, Pennsylvania
Parliamentarian: Judge Kern Reese, Louisiana

REGISTER

Questions?
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AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



October 11-16, 2025 Vancouver, BC

Saturday, October 11th

10:00AM – 12:00PM	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

Sunday, October 12th

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	American Judges Foundation Meeting
10:00 AM – 4:15 PM	Registration
9:00AM – 10:00AM	AJA Committee Meetings

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



October 11-16, 2025 Vancouver, BC

Sunday, October 12th

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

From Stress to Strength: Charting Your Course to Wellness

THIS TIME IT'S PERSONAL! Judging is stressful but it need not be destructive. This session will take address some of the challenges to our work. As judicial professionals, we encounter unique stressors that require practical strategies for maintaining mental and physical health on and off the Bench. Participants will identify stressors, acknowledge their impact on our professional and personal lives and learn techniques that can minimize the impact of these stressors. You will learn practical techniques related to the practice of Mindfulness, tips for physical wellness and strategies for achieving appropriate work-life balance. We will conclude with an interactive and engaging discussion to share experiences, resources, ideas and leave with a personalized action plan for healthier living.

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Lunch on Your Own

12:45 PM – 4:30 PM

Exhibit Show Open

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



October 11-16, 2025 Vancouver, BC

Sunday, October 12th (continued)

12:45 PM – 1:30 PM	<p>Opening Ceremonies</p> <p><i>Judge Vincent Johnson, AJA President, Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, Pennsylvania</i></p> <p>Welcome to the Territory</p> <p><i>Xwalacktun, O.B.C., of the Squamish Nation</i></p> <p>Opening Remarks</p> <p><i>Chief Justice Leonard Marchand, Chief Justice of British Columbia, Canada</i></p>
1:30 PM – 3:00 PM	<p>United States Supreme Court Case Review</p> <p><i>Dean Erwin Chemerinsky, University of California, Berkeley School of Law</i></p> <p><i>Moderator: Judge Elliot Zide (Ret.), Fitchburg District Court, Massachusetts</i></p> <p>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 with current trends of the Court.</p>
3:00 PM – 3:15 PM	Exhibitor Independent Education Session
3:15 PM - 3:30 PM	Break

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



October 11-16, 2025 Vancouver, BC

Sunday, October 12th (continued)

3:30 PM – 4:45 PM	<p>A Conversation Addressing Trends in the Highest Courts of Canada and the United States</p> <p><i>Justice Sheilah Martin , Supreme Court of Canada</i></p> <p><i>Judge J. Michelle Childs , U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit</i></p> <p><i>Moderator: Chief Justice Robert Torres, Supreme Court of Guam</i></p> <p>Chief Justice Torres will moderate a “fireside chat” format conversation with Justice Martin and Judge Childs, focusing on current trends and directions of the law at the highest levels.</p>
4:45 PM – 5:00 PM	Exhibitor Independent Education Session
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Exhibit Show
5:30 PM – 6:00 PM	New Member Reception <i>(included with your registration)</i>
6:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Welcome Reception <i>(included with your registration)</i>

Monday, October 13th

7:00 AM – 4:30 PM	Registration/Information Desk
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM	Exhibit Show Opens

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



October 11-16, 2025 Vancouver, BC

Monday, October 13th (continued)

8:00 AM - 9:30 AM	<p>Sharing Perspectives on Pre-Trial Release and Sentencing <i>Chief Judge Ryan Rolston, Provincial Court of Manitoba, Canada</i> <i>Judge Veronica Galvan, King's County Superior Court, Washington State</i> <i>Moderator: Judge Robin Finlayson, Provincial Court of Manitoba, Canada</i></p> <p>The presenters will compare and contrast the current and developing pre-trial practices, and the sentencing objectives and principles in their respective jurisdictions.</p>
9:30 AM - 9:45 AM	Break
9:45 AM - 10:45 AM	<p>Sharing Ideas for the Judiciary to Effectively Serve a Changing Society <i>Chief Justice Michael Tulloch, Ontario Court of Appeal, Canada</i> <i>Justice Piper Griffin, Louisiana Supreme Court, Louisiana</i></p> <p>Courts across North America are increasingly called upon to ensure that justice is administered fairly and is perceived as legitimate by all members of society. In this session, Chief Justice Tulloch and Justice Griffin will explore how courts are responding to evolving community needs, demographic shifts, and differing expectations of judicial institutions. Drawing from experiences in Canada and the United States, this conversation will highlight practical strategies and lessons learned to support public trust and confidence in the judiciary.</p>

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



October 11-16, 2025 Vancouver, BC

Monday, October 13th (continued)

10:45 AM - 11:00 AM	Exhibitor Independent Education Session
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM	<p>The Two “Systems” – Elected v. Appointed Judges and Prosecutors</p> <p><i>Justice Joshua Hawkes, Alberta Court of Appeal, Canada</i> <i>Chief Justice Rebeca Martinez, Texas Court of Appeals Fourth District, Texas</i> <i>Moderator: Judge Thomas Alevizos (ret.), LaPorte Circuit Court, Indiana</i></p> <p>A Canadian judge, an elected American judge and an American judge who runs for retention will discuss and debate the unique roles, responsibilities and duties of the prosecutor and the judge in their respective systems, addressing accountability, judicial independence and dealing with the media.</p>
12:30 PM - 2:00 PM	<p>Awards Lunch <i>(Included in your registration fee)</i></p> <p>The annual AJA awards will be presented to the recipients during this time.</p>
2:15 PM – 3:30 PM	<p>LAW & LITERATURE</p> <p><i>Author and Professor Michelle Good, University of British Columbia</i> <i>Moderator: Chief Judge Melissa Gillespie, Provincial Court of British Columbia, Canada</i></p> <p><i>Five Little Indians</i> is an award-winning book written by Michelle Good. The author is of Cree ancestry. The book provides a thoughtful and provocative look at the Indian Residential School system and its survivors.</p>

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



October 11-16, 2025 Vancouver, BC

Monday, October 13th (continued)

3:30 PM – 3:45 PM	Exhibitor Independent Education Session
3:45 PM – 5:00 PM	<p>Debating Judicial Ethics – Where is the Line? Is the Canadian Line Different than the American Line?</p> <p><i>Chief Judge Melissa Gillespie, Provincial Court of British Columbia, Canada</i></p> <p><i>Professor Keith R. Fisher, Distinguished Fellow, National Judicial College</i></p> <p><i>Moderator: Justice Thomas Crabtree, Chief Judicial Officer of the National Judicial Institute</i></p> <p>Social media, fundraising, interacting with the media – these are just a few issues that may be governed by different ethical rules in Canada than they are in the U.S. The presenters will summarize the most significant ethical rules for judges, and then debate some scenarios.</p>
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	Hosted Dinner (<i>pre-registration required- "pay your own"</i>)
8:00 PM – 11:00 PM	<p>Hospitality Suite</p> <p>Join your colleagues for some informal networking. There will be a cash bar available.</p>

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

October 11-16, 2025 Vancouver, BC



Tuesday, October 14th

7:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Registration/Information Desk

7:30 AM - 8:30 AM

AJA Committee Meetings

8:30 AM – 9:45 AM

The Judge in the Watershed: Adjudicating Water Conflicts Across Jurisdictions

Alf Brandt, Judicial Training Developer, National Judicial College

Moderator: Judge Benes Aldana

What happens when a water dispute enters your courtroom—but the source of the conflict lies hundreds of miles upstream, even across international borders?

Water cases are rarely simple. They may involve a single plaintiff and defendant, or affect entire communities, ecosystems, and sovereign nations. In the Pacific Northwest, for instance, Columbia River salmon rely on waters that originate as far away as British Columbia—raising questions of transboundary resource management, ecological sustainability, and intergovernmental cooperation.

In this timely and regionally relevant session, expert panelists will equip judges with the tools and insights to adjudicate water disputes that extend beyond traditional case boundaries. Whether the matter before you involves competing users, ecological impacts, or sovereign interests, understanding the full scope of the watershed—and your role within it—is essential.

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



October 11-16, 2025 Vancouver, BC

Tuesday, October 14th

9:45 AM – 10:45 AM

General Assembly Meeting

All AJA members should plan to attend this meeting as important topics will be discussed, and elections will be held.

10:45 AM – 11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Countering Disinformation in the Courts: A Threat to Judicial Independence and Democracy

Suzanne E. Spaulding, Senior Advisor for Homeland Security and Director of the Defending Democratic Institutions at the Center for Strategy and International Studies (CSIS) & Former Under Secretary at the Department of Homeland Security
Moderator: Judge Lynda Jones, Davidson County General Sessions Court, Div. IX, Nashville

The spread of disinformation by public and private entities on social media platforms has undermined faith in the courts, both in the United States and Canada. Not only have judges and other judicial officers encountered threats of violence; they have been targets of rising real-world violence driven by disinformation. This panel will explore how state and non-state actors are threatening judicial independence and democracy itself through social media and what can be done about it.

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



October 11-16, 2025 Vancouver, BC

Tuesday, October 14th (continued)

12:00 PM – 12:45 PM

The State of Courts: Public Trust and Confidence

Jesse Rutledge, Vice President of Public Affairs, National Center for State Courts (NCSC)

Moderator: Judge Catherine Carlson, Provincial Court of Manitoba, Canada

Hear about NCSC's newest public opinion survey—what the public thinks we are doing well, what it thinks we should be doing better, and what new approaches they would like the courts to take to improve the delivery of justice.

12:45 PM – 1:30 PM

Lunch on your own

1:30 PM – 5:30 PM

Optional tour or free afternoon

Optional Tour: Discover Vancouver Tour (pre-registration is required, and there is an additional cost of \$60 USD)

This half-day tour fulfills the ultimate downtown Vancouver bucket list. Picking up from your hotel at 1:30 PM to visit the must-see highlights to experience firsthand why Vancouver is frequently ranked among the world's best places to live! Start at Canada Place and Jack Poole Plaza, and continue with a sightseeing stop at Stanley Park, where you will have the option to join a guided walking tour through the collection of totem poles. Drive through English Bay and Gastown before visiting Granville Island and explore Vancouver's most famous food market. Experienced guides will offer live commentary and will point out some exciting hidden gems along the way, and drop you off back to your hotel at 5:30 PM.

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

October 11-16, 2025 Vancouver, BC



Tuesday, October 14th (continued)

6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

American Judges Foundation Fundraiser (*pre-registration is required, and there is an additional cost of \$125 per person or \$200 per couple USD*)

Join your colleagues for drinks and canapes at Mahoney's Tavern. This event will provide plenty of opportunities for socializing and networking with views of the North Shore mountains and the beauty of Stanley Park! This annual event supports AJF's mission of improving the Judiciary and Justice by providing financial and other support to projects and groups, including scholarships and donations to civic education organizations.

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



October 11-16, 2025 Vancouver, BC

Wednesday, October 15th

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM	Information Desk
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Board of Governors Meeting
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Lunch on your own
1:00 PM - 2:15 PM	<p>Understanding and Addressing Women’s Use of Force: What Judges Should Know</p> <p><i>Dr. Lisa Young Larance, Assistant Professor of Social Work, Bryn Mawr University</i></p> <p><i>Moderator: Judge Libby Hines (ret.), Fifteenth District Court, Michigan</i></p> <p>Renowned expert Dr. Lisa Young Larance will discuss the complex issues faced when presiding over cases involving women convicted of using non-fatal force who are themselves victims of abuse. Dr. Larance will discuss her book, <i>Broken</i>, which follows the journey of 33 women “broken” by the trauma they have endured and the harm they caused, and the institutional harm they encounter attempting to comply with traditional Probation, Child Protective Services, and antiviolence intervention programs. All too often, programs effective with male batterers fail to repair the breakage of women survivor-defendants, instead, inflicting further harm on the women and their families. Dr. Larance will give examples of some effective ways to hold the women accountable without causing further harm</p>

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



October 11-16, 2025 Vancouver, BC

Wednesday, October 15th (continued)

2:15 PM – 3:30 PM

Judicial Frontiers: Understanding Advances in Science and Technology

*Judge Michael Pietruszka (ret.), Erie County Court, New York
Chief Justice Robert J. Torres, Supreme Court of Guam, with a
panel of experts.*

Artificial intelligence, scientific and other technological advances are transforming the legal landscape. This session offers judges an opportunity to explore developments in neuroscience, genomics, and artificial intelligence that are increasingly relevant to courtrooms. The session will also provide context on how scientific advancements – including artificial intelligence, genome editing, brain research and more – are shaping legal questions around evidence, expert testimony, criminal behavior, and courtroom decision-making. Judges will leave with the foundational knowledge to navigate complex cases with confidence and clarity.

3:30 PM -3:45 PM

Emerging Issues Across Our Borders – Panel Discussion

As democracies with shared legal traditions, the United States and Canada are facing a range of emerging cross border challenges that will increasingly test judicial systems on both sides. This session will help us navigate those complex issues.

AMERICAN JUDGES ASSOCIATION 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



October 11-16, 2025 Vancouver, BC

Wednesday, October 15th (continued)

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

AJA President's Reception *(included with your registration)*

7:00 PM – 10:00 PM

AJA President's Installation Banquet *(Included with your registration)*

Thursday, October 16th

8:00 AM – 10:00 AM

AJA Executive Committee Meeting