



Transition from Bar to Bench

Presented by:

Senior Judge Don R. Ash

Circuit Judge Barry Tidwell

Chancellor Melissa Willis

Welcome to the Bench (You are Jake and the
Dragon is the Bench !!!!)





The Best and Toughest Job in Your Lifetime !

“ The Judges, therefore, should be men (and women) of **learning and experience in the laws, of exemplary morals, great patience, calmness, coolness and attention.** Their minds should not be distracted with jarring interest. They should not be dependent on any man or body of men.”

- Thomas Jefferson



Why Do We Wear Robes ?

“It is well judges should be clothed in robes, not only that they who witness the administration of justice should be properly advised the function performed is one different from, and higher than, that which a person discharges in the ordinary walks of life; but, also, in order to impress the judge individually with the constant consciousness that they serve as the high priest in the temple of justice and is surrounded with obligations of a sacred character that requires the utmost care, attention, and self-suppression.” – William Taft



Initiation and Resolution (First Five Years)

- ◆ **Initial adjustment –Must resolve role conflict (You are not the best or brightest legal mind in the community or State).**
- ◆ **Reality shock – Coping with isolation, decision making, and lack of unbiased feedback.**
- ◆ **Self-concept change and role definition – transition and decision to remain on the Bench.**

How to be Happy and Successful with the New Job !

- ◆ Relationships
- ◆ Judicial Conference
- ◆ Continuing Education
- ◆ Preparation
- ◆ Demeanor
- ◆ Financial Decisions
- ◆ Lifestyle Choices
- ◆ Role in the Community



Relationships



- ◆ **Build a judge to judge support system – make a point to meet at least weekly - Lunch !!)**
- ◆ **Share your stress – talk to someone.**
- ◆ **Work to have a positive relationship with the clerks, your local bar association, and other elected officials**
- ◆ **Never hesitate to call another judge for help on a difficult case or issue.**
- ◆ **TJC has a Judicial Mentoring Program - Find a Mentor. I can help !!**

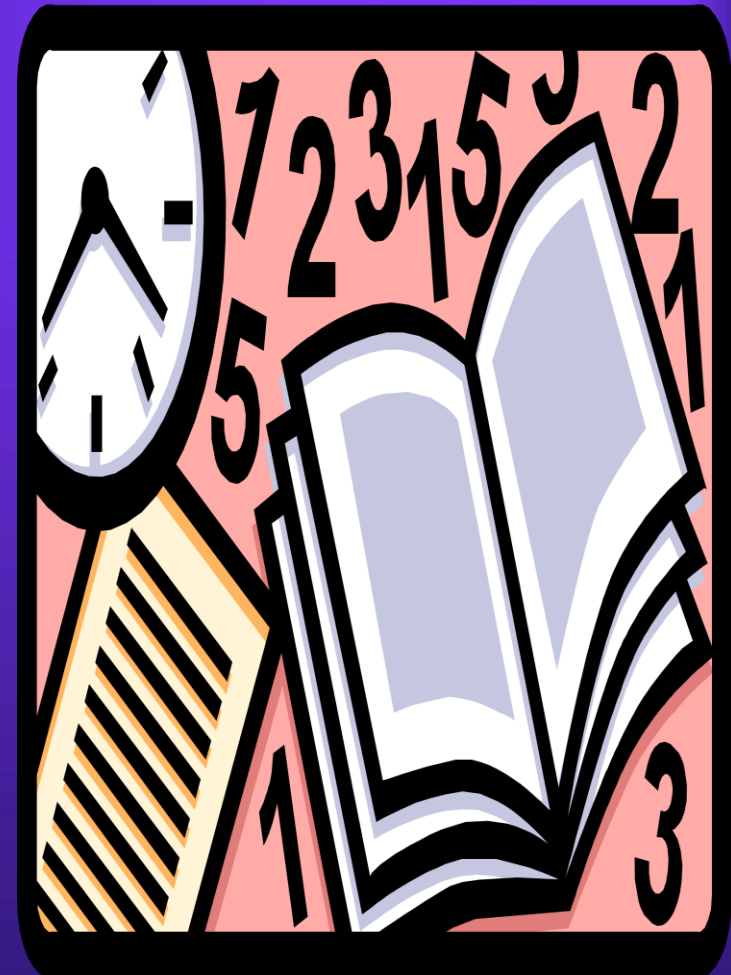
Tennessee Judicial Conference



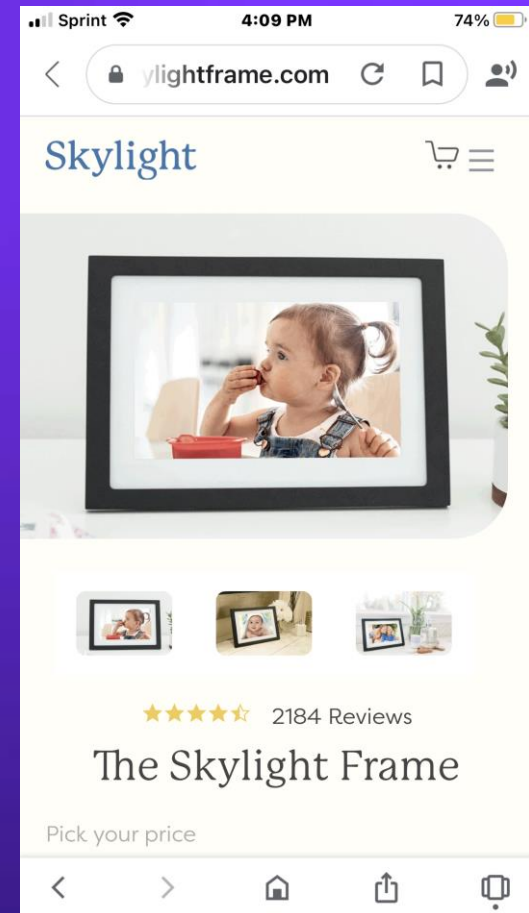
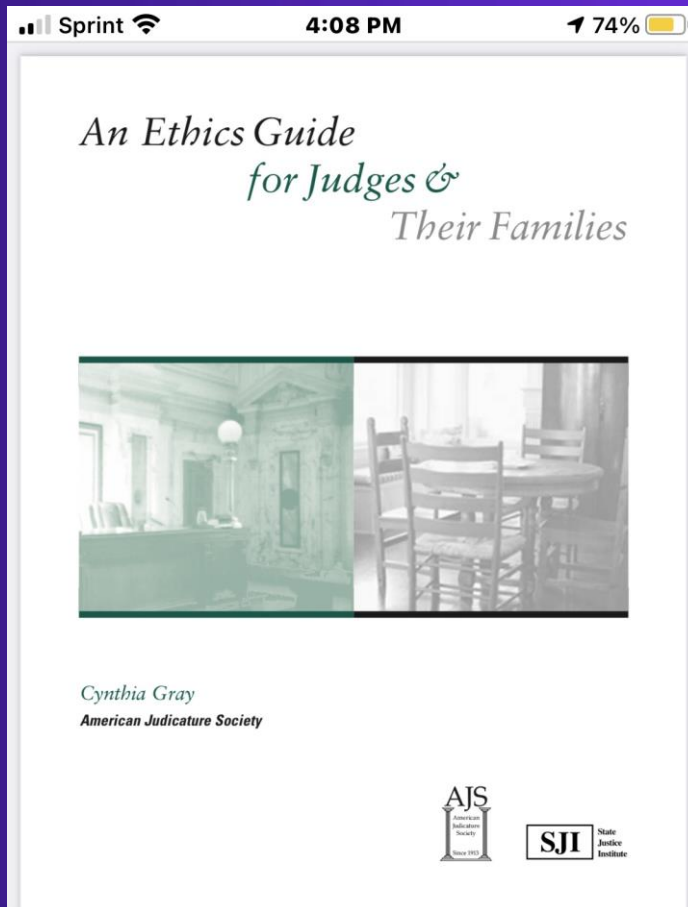
- ◆ Call the President of the Conference and get involved in a committee. (Tennessee Pattern Jury Instructions - Civil or Criminal)
- ◆ Attend every conference you can - June Mandatory !
- ◆ Join Tennessee Trial Judges Association
- ◆ Judicial Family Institute
- ◆ Contribute to the Lobbyist Funds - TTJA and Compensation/Retirement Committee
- ◆ Treat the staff at the AOC with respect. They will make life easier for you.

Continuing Education

- ◆ You are entering a new level of education.
- ◆ Read Canons of Judicial Conduct (become an expert), A.O.C. daily case updates, etc.
- ◆ Criminal Court Judges - Use Death Penalty Law Clerks
- ◆ Attend courses regularly at the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada.
A.O.C. will pay tuition and expenses every three years !



Secret Judicial Tips



Preparation, Preparation, Preparation !!!!!



- ◆ Study all the pleadings and briefs before court if possible.
- ◆ Try to do research on issues you are not knowledgeable with.
- ◆ This will help you avoid the pitfall of taking cases under advisement.

Work - Ethic

- ◆ A lazy judge is a poor one. (8:00 – 4:30).(minimum).
- ◆ There are no unimportant cases – just ask the parties.
- ◆ Don't be dismayed when reversed.
- ◆ The Public is watching you constantly.



Demeanor



- ◆ Be Kind and Patient
- ◆ Be Dignified
- ◆ Don't be seduced by the power of the Bench.
- ◆ Don't take yourself too seriously.
- ◆ Use your common sense.
- ◆ Humor is best left off the Bench.
- ◆ Take a recess if angry or just need time to think .
- ◆ Don't let those who anger you control you !



Do Not be the Star of the Show

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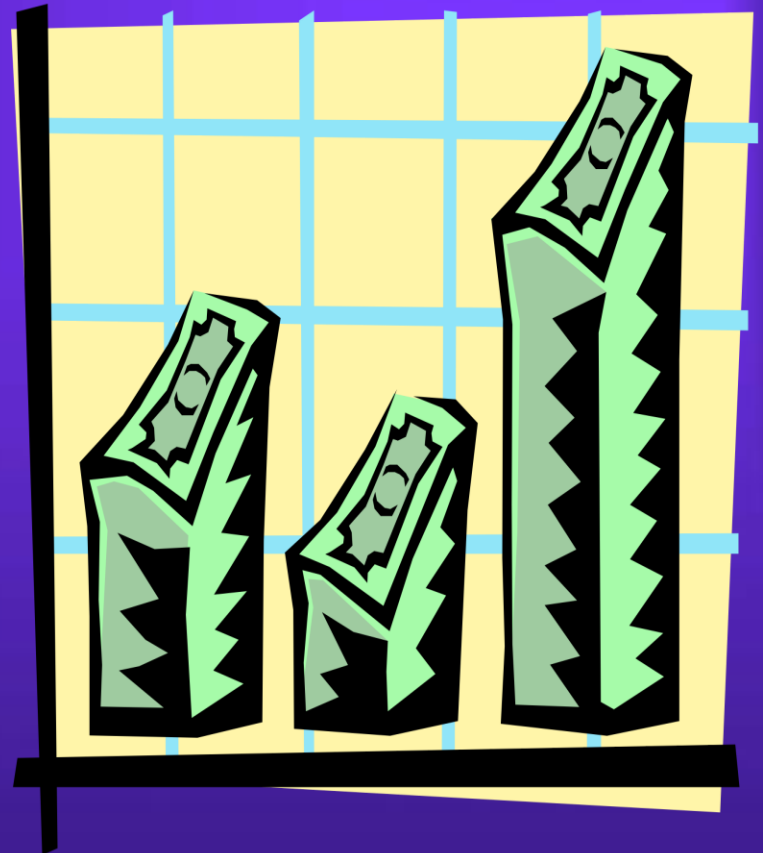


A
STAR
IS
BORN

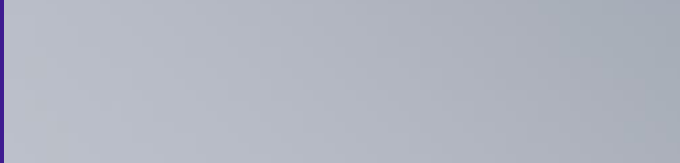
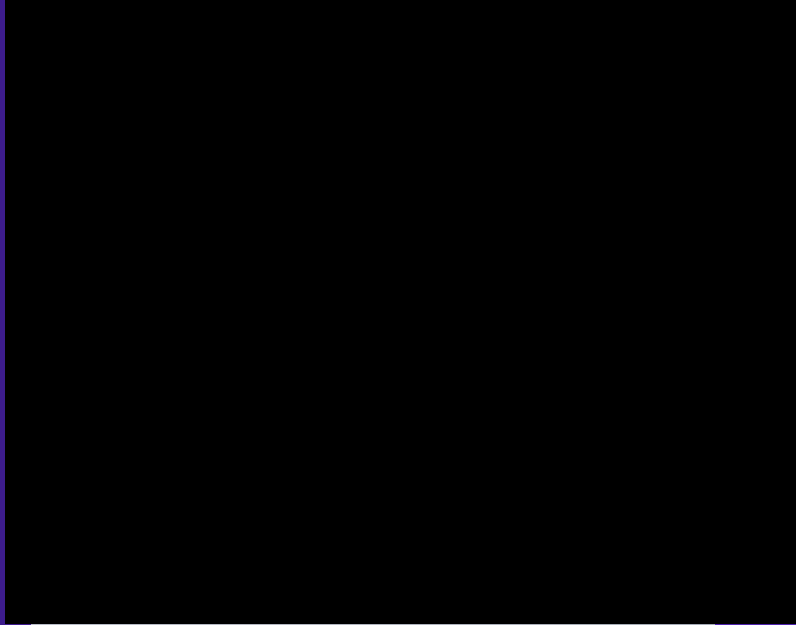
- ◆ If the case becomes a battle between you and a lawyer, you lose !
- ◆ Facts and the Law are the focus, not how smart you are or your contempt powers !
- ◆ Develop better listening skills

Financial Decisions

- ◆ Most judges who get in trouble have money problems.
- ◆ Live a conservative lifestyle.
- ◆ Contribute as much as you can to the state 401(k) and 457 plan (NOW!)
- ◆ Stephanie Holiday will explain your retirement plan
- ◆ Flexible Benefits - Health Insurance



Lifestyle Choices



- ◆ **Schedule a paperwork day (keep it to yourself)**
- ◆ **Exercise regularly (Walking)**
- ◆ **Keep your weekends and evenings for family**
- ◆ **Devote time each day to mediate (Calm) or pray and reflect**
- ◆ **Schedule at least two weeks vacation in addition to state holidays, etc.**

Addiction – I failed my friend !



- ◆ Odds are either you or a fellow judge will struggle with addiction, depression, or some other health issue
- ◆ Tennessee Lawyers Assistance Program – Judges division
- ◆ Ok to ask for help
!!!!

Role in the Community



- ◆ You are the legal voice for your community.
- ◆ Develop an idea which will improve the administration of justice.
- ◆ Have a relationship with lawmakers. (contribute to their campaigns)
- ◆ Speak regularly to civic groups, graduations, etc.

Priorities



- ◆ **Keep your Family First.**
- ◆ **This is only a job !**
- ◆ **Enjoy everyday !**
- ◆ **Accept this is a journey and there will be valleys and mountaintops.**



This is Your Opportunity !

- ◆ To be a better spouse, parent, friend, and person.
- ◆ To be the kind of judge people want to practice in front of.
- ◆ To be kind and respectful to those who have never been treated in such a manner.
- ◆ To improve the court system.
- ◆ To make a positive difference in a person's life.
- ◆ This is a great gift – take advantage of the opportunity.

Service above Self !!

GEORGE H.W. BUSH

◆ **SERVE
TO
HONOR**

MACHIAVELLI

- ◆ **IT IS NOT TITLES
THAT HONOR MEN
AND WOMEN, BUT
MEN AND WOMEN
THAT HONOR
TITLES !**

Power of Words





ARE YOU A TANK OR A
LIGHTHOUSE JUDGE?



24/7 – Call Anytime !!!!

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