

BUILDING A MORE *Just* SOCIETY

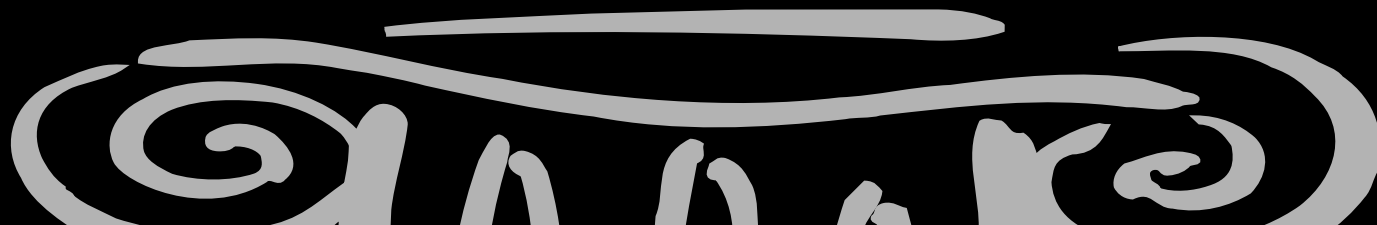


COUNCIL FOR COURT EXCELLENCE
2003 ANNUAL REPORT

**20TH ANNIVERSARY
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN
DONORS**

The Council for Court Excellence is grateful to all of these Donors who were so generous in the initial phase of the first ever Capital Campaign. The Council will continue its efforts to build the Harahan New Initiatives Fund to further increase the organization's capacity to take on new projects promptly.

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Letter from our Chairman and President

DEAR FELLOW BOARD MEMBERS

We are pleased to present this 2003 Annual Report of the Council for Court Excellence (CCE) that reflects a year of substantive accomplishments and organizational challenges. We hope you will review the many activities of the Council detailed in this annual report and share the material with colleagues and friends.

This 2003 Annual Report summarizes the year, with major projects ranging from the work of each of the four program committees — Children in the Courts, Court Improvements, Criminal Justice, and Public Service — to our seventh annual Justice Potter Stewart Awards Dinner, to a very successful initial phase of the first ever Capital Campaign led by the Council's very able Development Committee. Over the next year, the Council plans to continue its efforts to build the Harahan New Initiatives Fund, named for CCE founder and long-time Executive Director Sam Harahan who retired in 2002, to further increase the organization's capacity to take on new projects promptly.

The year also brought changes in the staff leadership of CCE. Executive Director Jeanne Milliken Bonds unexpectedly resigned in August, prompting a thorough and carefully crafted recruitment campaign, among CCE's Search Committee chaired by Rodney F. Page, to seek new leadership for the organization.

With June Kress, our Executive Director on board since January, and with many of CCE's priority projects started last year now nearing completion, we look forward to the future and to new possibilities. We have much to be proud of from our diverse and growing Board of Directors from the business, legal, judicial and civic communities, to CCE's organizational stature and leadership in the District of Columbia. Not enough can be said about our Board's willingness to provide financial support and invaluable contributions of time and talent. Indeed, the CCE Board is the lifeblood of the organization. The financial generosity of many also enables CCE to maintain a top notch staff to assist us in establishing and implementing our substantive priorities and focus.

This past year was a year of many challenges, but we have emerged from a period of transition even stronger and more committed to carrying on with our long-time mission of improving justice for the citizens of the District of Columbia in particular and building a more just society in general.

Timothy J. May

President

Elliott S. Hall

Chairman



Letter from the Executive Director

DEAR CCE BOARD MEMBERS

The following 2003 Annual Report of the Council for Court Excellence (CCE) describes the activities in which many of you have been involved over the past year.

Major accomplishments in 2003 have included:

- The completion in December of “Two Years Down the Road: A Status Report on the Roadmap to a Better DC Criminal Justice System,” a seminal study that followed up on research conducted by CCE in 2001. This project, supported by Congressional and foundation funding, examined how police, prosecutors, and the Superior Court are handling most misdemeanors more expeditiously than in the past, but that case processing of felonies, which account for 75% of police officer time in court-related matters, needs serious attention.
- The fourth year of CCE’s multi-year project to reform the DC child abuse and neglect system, including innovative research activities conducted throughout most of 2003 that formed the basis for two major reports to be published in 2004, the continuation of a comprehensive multi-agency training program in which CCE has played a key leadership role, and beginning work on two studies – the District of Columbia’s system for providing legal representation to children and indigent parents in Family Court proceedings and a rewrite of CCE’s Practice Manual for Child Abuse and Neglect Cases in DC – that will be published in 2004.
- The continuation of jury education in the schools, with the sponsoring of two programs in DC public high schools to inform a diverse group of DC students how the jury system works, what it is like to try and reach a unanimous verdict in a case, and why the jury system is so fundamental to our justice system.
- An acceleration of activities devoted to CCE “exporting the model” by sharing its expertise, experience, and lessons learned with delegations of visitors from other states and nations.
- The seventh annual Justice Potter Stewart Awards Dinner to honor the memory and public service of the late Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and to recognize individuals and organizations whose work on behalf of the administration of justice has made a significant contribution to the law, the legal system, the courts, or the administrative process in our nation’s capital.
- Increased visibility for CCE through testimony at DC Council hearings and in the US Congress on a variety of topics important to the administration of justice locally.

Although I followed the notable accomplishments of the Council for Court Excellence for many years, it was not until I took over the helm that I have really come to appreciate the many facets of CCE. Its substantive priorities are among the most interesting, complex, and satisfying that I have encountered in nearly 30 years of working on justice-related subjects. CCE’s staff, as well, is composed of smart, committed, and gifted people who believe in social justice and go the extra mile to achieve that goal with the highest standards of rigorous scholarship and administrative know-how. Finally, the Board of Directors comprises a unique mix of talent and dedication from members of the legal, business, judicial, and civic communities. It is an honor and a privilege to work with such a distinguished group of professionals who, on a voluntary basis, epitomize what it means to serve the public good.

I thank you for your vote of confidence following months of uncertainty and transition. Working together, we can look to many more years of progressive court reform and increased access to justice for the citizens of the District of Columbia and elsewhere who deserve nothing less.

June B. Kress
Executive Director



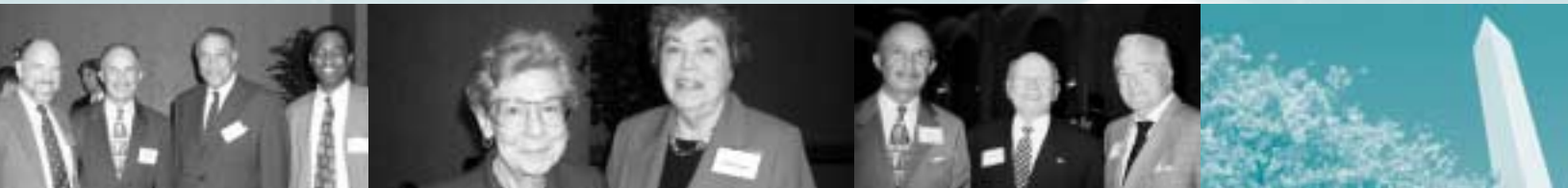
Projects

DC CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM REFORM

This Council for Court Excellence project was a follow-up to work CCE did in 2001. The earlier effort identified ways to improve the efficiency of criminal case processing from arrest through sentencing, especially to reduce unnecessary use of police officer time for court and prosecutorial proceedings. 2003's activity measured how much progress had been made since the earlier study, *Roadmap to a Better DC Criminal Justice System*. This project was done with funding received from Congress in March 2003 and from the Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, and the result was published December 30.

According to CCE's new report, *Two Years Down the Road: A Status Report on the Roadmap to a Better DC Criminal Justice System*, a fundamental re-engineering is occurring in the way the police, prosecutors, and the Superior Court handle most misdemeanors. Such cases are now handled much more expeditiously, and a range of options is now in place to divert low-level non-violent offenders to sanctions other than prison and services to address the causes of their criminal behavior. However, the system has yet to take the steps necessary in felony cases to significantly redesign case processing to decrease the unnecessary time and expense of adjudicating criminal cases, particularly for DC's Metropolitan Police Department overtime for court and prosecutorial proceedings. Such felony matters occupy 75% of the MPD officer time devoted to court-related matters.

The 2001 *Roadmap* report made twenty-seven recommendations. *The Two Years Down the Road* report tracks progress on each of the earlier recommendations and it also provides detailed statistical analysis of police officer time and expense for court-related matters. The Criminal Justice Committee project was guided by an ad hoc subcommittee



chaired by Martha Rogers and included Judge Mary Ellen Abrecht, Michael Hays, Daniel Margolis, and Kathleen Voelker. The portion of the 2003 study which tracked progress on the twenty-seven 2001 recommendations was performed by Harahan Associates, PLLC under contract to CCE.

DC FOSTER CARE SYSTEM REFORM

This Council for Court Excellence Children in the Courts Committee effort to support and track the city's efforts to bring its foster care system up to legal standards has been ongoing since mid-1999, and it continued and accelerated in 2003.

The major portion of CCE's work in 2003 was conducting a rigorous study of the city's compliance with the requirements of the federal and DC Adoption and Safe Families Acts and the DC Family Court Act of 2001. This study was done with funding received from

*Judges Wolf, Webber,
and Satterfield with
Elliott Hall*

*Susanne Richards and
Ellen Eager*

*Judge Webber,
Steve Harlan and
Tim May*

Congress in March 2003 and publication of the results is planned for May 2004. CCE reviewed and analyzed more than 1700 Family Court child neglect and abuse case files for children whose cases entered the DC Superior Court from 1998 through mid-2003. CCE also observed over 350 confidential child neglect and abuse court proceedings held in October and November 2003, conducted interviews, focus groups, written surveys, and site visits. CCE also reviewed research reports from other jurisdictions to identify trends and practices which might have value in the District. The major finding which CCE's report will document is that the city's executive and judicial branches have made substantial and accelerating progress over the past four years to improve the child protection system, though there are still some issues needing further attention and study.

CCE continued in 2003 to facilitate and staff the DC Child Welfare Leadership Team, which is comprised of the leaders of the DC Superior Court Family Court, the Child & Family Services Agency (CFSA), the Office of Corporation Counsel (OCC), and other DC public human services agencies. That is the entity which has worked together since 1999 to plan and implement the foster care system reforms and Family Court reforms which have resulted in the impressive results discussed above.

An additional ongoing activity was serving on the Family Court Interdisciplinary Training Committee and co-sponsoring and staffing the annual training institute and monthly short training sessions that the committee presented for more than 300 judges, lawyers, social workers, and other professionals from the Family Court, CFSA, OCC, private practice, DC Public Schools, Department of Mental Health, Department of Human Services, among others. The purpose of all such cross-training is to increase the knowledge and skills of all participants in the city's child protection system.

CCE also began a comprehensive study of the District of Columbia's system for providing legal representation to children and indigent parents in Family Court proceedings. The goals of the study are to identify what is working well with that system and what needs improvement, identify what recommendations from previous studies of this system have been implemented, cite lessons learned from other jurisdictions' systems, and make recommendations aimed at system reform which will result in attracting additional highly qualified attorneys to this field of practice. CCE expects to publish this study in 2004.

The final activity in this field was the start of a rewrite of CCE's Practice Manual for Child Abuse and Neglect Cases in DC. This is a comprehensive guide for attorneys and judges about legal requirements, practice standards, and advocacy strategies for handling cases of child abuse and neglect in the DC Family Court. The 1996 edition of the Practice Manual is being completely rewritten to reflect the many changes in federal and DC law and DC procedure that have occurred, especially since 2000. CCE expects to publish the new edition in late 2004.

CCE's work in this field was funded not only by Congress, but also by The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Freddie Mac Foundation, and Trellis Fund, who have each supported CCE's child welfare system work generously for four years or more.



JURY EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOLS

CCE sponsored two successful jury education programs in DC public high schools in spring 2003. These programs continued the project reported on in CCE's 2002 annual report. The purpose of such programs is to teach future jurors about how the jury system works, what it is like to try to reach a unanimous verdict in a case, and why the jury system is so fundamental to our justice system.

Each program featured a showing of CCE's 20-minute mock-trial video, after which the visiting judge selected a jury, which deliberated the case. One program was at Cardozo High School. It involved three social studies classes, with Superior Court Senior Judge Arthur Burnett presiding, and was co-sponsored by the CCE member law firm Covington & Burling. The second program brought together two social studies classes, with U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan presiding, and was co-sponsored by the CCE member law firm Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson. The students who were not selected to be on the jury observed the jury deliberations and then had their own opportunity to vote on the verdict. Judges Burnett and Sullivan kept the discussions lively by tossing out provocative questions to the jury and, after the jury verdict, to the audience which then participated in a general discussion of justice system issues. CCE provided each attending student with copies of our jury-education materials: Jury Duty Tips, A Citizen's Guide to the Courts, and A Jury of My Peers postcard. The co-sponsoring law firms each brought several participants and also provided refreshments for the students and teachers.

This CCE project, led by the Public Service Committee, has been funded by a generous grant from the United States District Court. It will continue in other schools in 2004.



EXPORTING THE CCE MODEL

CCE has always shared its expertise, experience, and lessons learned over the years with visitors from other states and nations who want to learn about the role a non-governmental civic organization can productively play in improving its local courts and justice system. Such activities accelerated in 2003 and are grouped under the project heading: Exporting the CCE Model. Among the activities on this front in 2003 were:

- Hosting a diverse selection of State Department-sponsored visiting delegations of judges, court staff members, attorneys, journalists, scholars, and other interested citizens from the Slovak Republic, Poland, Nigeria, Serbia, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Nepal. All wanted to know how to interest civil society in the workings of the courts, and the group from Slovakia wanted specifics on how to organize and run a court observation project similar to those CCE has completed.

*Tim May and Stewart
Award recipient Alan
Morrison*

*Judge Webber and
students from Browne
Junior High School*

*Jim Nathanson and
Judge Vanessa Ruiz*

- Having preliminary discussions with court leaders in the Atlanta, Georgia area about their interest in possibly forming a non-governmental organization like the Council for Court Excellence.
- Preparing a marketable Court Observation Manual and the curriculum for a Court Observation Institute to teach any interested group or jurisdiction step-by-step how to design, organize, manage, and report on a formal court observation project such as those done by CCE in 2001 and 2002, and planned for 2004.

JUSTICE POTTER STEWART AWARDS DINNER

The Council for Court Excellence presented its 2003 Justice Potter Stewart Awards on June 19 to Alan Morrison, co-founder and director of Public Citizen Litigation Group, and to Willie Cook, retired longtime executive director of DC's Neighborhood Legal Services Program. The awards were presented at an elegant dinner at the National Museum of Women in the Arts.

After dinner, U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan offered warm remarks in honor of Willie Cook and his impressive legal career spent helping poor people in Washington. Professor David Vladeck of Georgetown University Law Center then provided a tribute to Alan Morrison and his similar lifetime commitment to service in the public interest. After expressing gratitude to CCE for the award, both Cook and Morrison took the opportunity to issue challenges to the Council for Court Excellence and the city of Washington to improve the justice system.

The Stewart Award is given by CCE each year to individuals or organizations which have contributed over an extended period to improving the justice system in our community. CCE thanks Andy Stewart for continuing to support our giving this special award in honor of her late husband, Justice Potter Stewart. Thanks also go to all the financial contributors to the dinner, to Peter Kolker, chair of the award selection committee, to Bill Jeffress and Steve Roman, co-chairs of the dinner committee, and to all the members of those two committees.



THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL YEAR IN SUMMARY

	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	TOTAL
Total Support and Revenue	1,733,849	(112,366)	1,621,483
Expenses:			
Program	858,629		858,629
Administrative	252,542		252,542
Resource Development	164,692		164,692
Total Expenses	1,275,863		1,275,863
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	457,968	(112,366)	345,620

A copy of the 2003 audited financial statements for The Council for Court Excellence may be obtained from the Council's office.

2003 COUNCIL FOR COURT EXCELLENCE OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board members of the Council for Court Excellence provide support in several significant ways. Membership dues help support our office, its annual operations, and CCE's core programs. Members devote their service and time to CCE's various projects to ensure that we advance our goal of efficient and effective improvement to our judicial systems. Members also represent the Council in both official and informal settings and help to promote its values and vision for a more just and inclusive society. We are deeply grateful for all that our members do in support of our mission.

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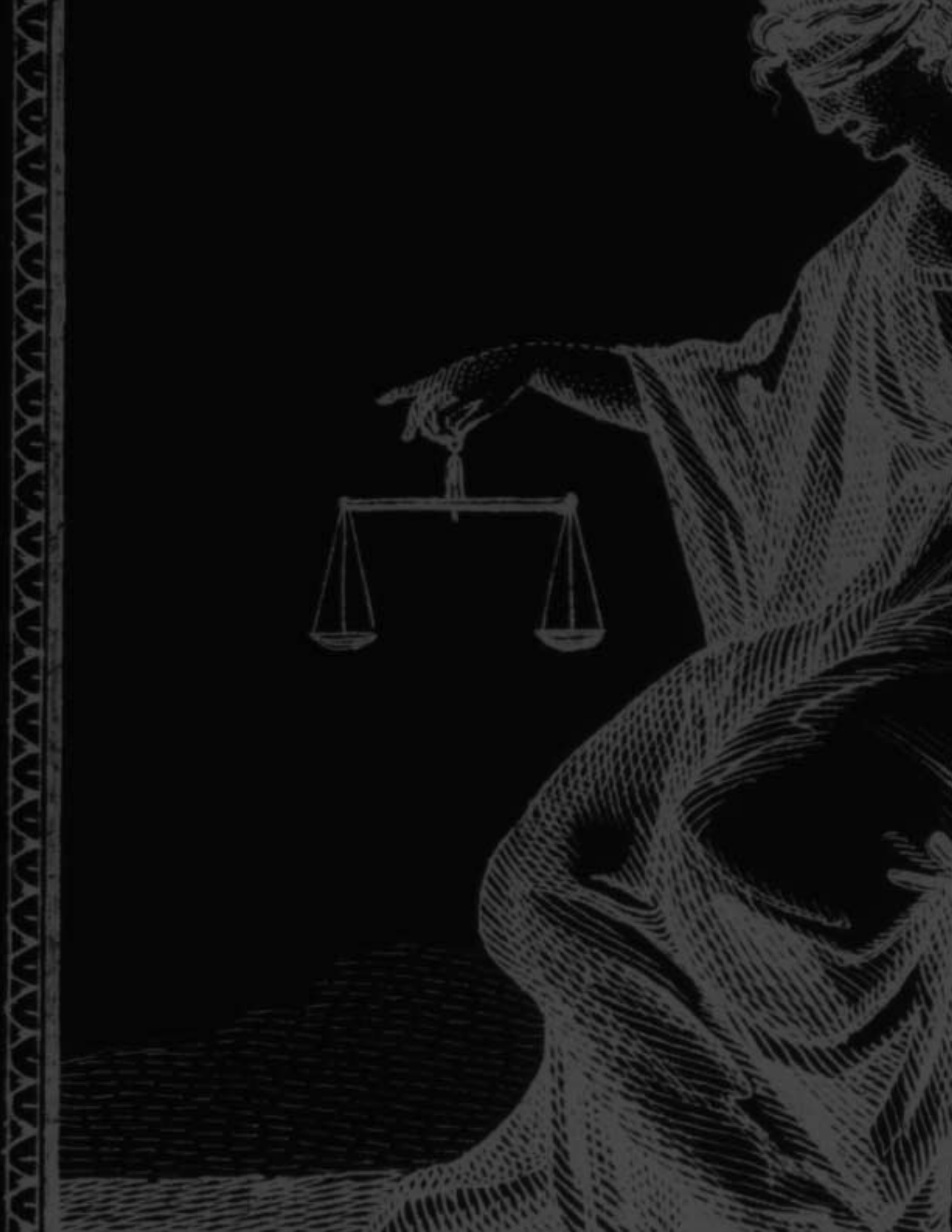
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