



Our Mission

The Council for Court Excellence works to improve the administration of justice in the local and federal courts and related agencies in the Washington metropolitan area.

The Council accomplishes this goal by:

- ✓ Identifying and promoting justice system reforms,
- ✓ Improving public access to justice, and
- ✓ Increasing public understanding and support of our justice system.

Our History

After the DC Bar released the groundbreaking "Horsky Report" in 1982 calling for improvements in the court system, community leaders identified the need for an independent group to advance this work.

To address these concerns, leaders of the city's civic, legal, and business sectors founded the Council for Court Excellence to help local and federal courts respond to increasing demands and escalating community expectations.

Under the leadership of founders Charles A. Horsky and Samuel F. Harahan, the Council set an ambitious agenda of identifying, developing and advocating needed reforms, and programs to improve understanding of and support for the justice system.

CCE has built a substantial record of success in the major justice system reform initiatives we have undertaken. CCE was the moving force behind the adoption of the one day/one trial jury system in the DC Superior Court, modernization of trial jury and grand jury systems, reform of the District of Columbia probate laws and procedures, reform of the DC administrative adjudication system, improvement in court handling of child neglect and abuse cases, expansion of crime victim rights, and proposed solutions to speed resolution of criminal and civil cases.

To improve the public's access to justice and increase understanding of our justice system, the Council over the years has published and distributed more than 360,000 copies of free, plain-language booklets and other materials explaining a wide variety of court systems and legal issues.



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From the Executive Director

This year's Annual Report is organized around three themes that reflect the central tenets of the Council for Court Excellence's work over the last 31 years: children, courts, and community. The combined efforts of CCE staff, our Board Directors, and justice stakeholders have made these efforts possible and allowed CCE to accomplish a great deal in 2013.

CCE has always focused on the plight of children in the justice system, from child welfare and abuse and neglect to unraveling the complexities of juvenile justice in DC. This year, we began delving into school discipline policies in both the traditional public and charter school systems.

Under the theme of the courts, CCE wrapped up its Pretrial Release Project, working with some of the most knowledgeable and committed justice system stakeholders in the City, with the publication of its May report and pending legislation before the Council of the District of Columbia.

Our organization-wide emphasis on improving public access to justice also provided numerous opportunities to work with and educate the community about issues of common interest and concern including notario fraud.

Finally, we had some fun and were inspired by our three exceptional Justice Potter Stewart Award honorees, all of whom exemplify what is so right about expanding access to justice, and the 2013 Horsky Award to longtime Treasurer and Board leader Marc Sherman.

None of these accomplishments would be possible without the generous financial support of CCE's Board and other sources of income mentioned throughout this Annual Report. But financial resources are only part of the story that includes a committed Board of Directors, insightful justice system stakeholders always at our table, and a gifted staff strengthened this year with the addition of Policy Analyst Hillary Evans and Development Director Renee Smith.

With sincere appreciation to all,

June B. Kress
Executive Director

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Children

The Council for Court Excellence has been working for more than 25 years to improve services and outcomes for the city's children who are touched by court processes. CCE has employed its full toolkit on behalf of DC children: training, community education, research, evaluation, and advocacy.

Fair School Discipline Systems

The Children in the Courts Committee has been primarily focused on its School Discipline Project. This project is examining school discipline policies and practices from a justice systems perspective to determine whether such policies and practices may be contributing to school push-out and leading disconnected youth down undesirable paths to enter the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

The District of Columbia has a longstanding problem of poor school attendance, high drop-out rates, and low levels of high school graduation. All of these impair both the future prospects for the city's children and the economic vitality of the city. Keeping youth in school is important not only to their education; it can also provide protection from involvement in the juvenile justice system.

The committee plans to produce a report that will comprehensively describe the complex bifurcated disciplinary systems in the District's traditional and charter public schools, explaining the legal and statutory frameworks and how the disciplinary systems work and are governed. In addition to this comprehensive overview of the District's school disciplinary systems, the committee will present data and analysis of DC discipline procedures and recommendations for reform. CCE plans to release its report at the end of 2014.

Thanks to Barbara Kagan for chairing the Children in the Courts Committee and to Magistrate Judge Diane Brenneman for chairing the School Discipline Project Committee. The project committee includes CCE Board Directors Bruce Berger, Dr. Ramona Edelin, Andy Glass, Tyrone Parker, Diana Savit, and John McNulty, as well as Allison Brown of Allison Brown Consulting; Hannah McElhinny of the DC Public Defender Service; Dave Rosenthal of the DC Office of the Attorney General; Oliver Sloman of Steptoe & Johnson LLP; and Professor Joe Tulman of UDC's David A. Clarke School of Law.



School Jury Education Project

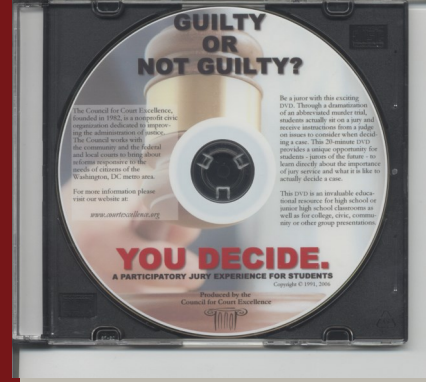
Preparing the Next Generation of District of Columbia Jurors

CCE continues its more than twenty year tradition of visiting high school classrooms across the District of Columbia to teach students about the important role jurors play in our justice system by having them actually participate as jurors after viewing CCE's mock-trial video. CCE's School Jury Education Project had a very busy and productive year in 2013, presenting our lesson to fourteen different DC high school classes. CCE always brings a judge or lawyer with us to the classes, to lead the students through the experience.

Participating Schools:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Anacostia High School | Luke Moore Academy |
| Ballou High School | Paul Public Charter School |
| Benjamin Banneker High School | School Without Walls |
| Bell Multicultural High School | Thurgood Marshall Academy |
| Capital City Charter School | Woodrow Wilson High School |
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| Eastern High School | |

Thanks to the following judges and lawyers for participating in one or more of 2013's fourteen programs: Judge Mary Ellen Abrecht; Judge Janet Albert; Clerk of the US District Court for the District of Columbia (USDCDC) Angela Caesar; Judge Anthony Epstein; Judge Karen Howze; Judge Craig Iscoe; USDCDC Jury Administrator Regina Larry; Judge Hiram Puig-Lugo; Judge Heidi Pasichow; Judge Neal Kravitz; Assistant US Attorney Addy Schmitt; Judge Emmet Sullivan and Judge Ricardo Urbina.



Courts

The Council for Court Excellence has been the moving force behind adoption of the one day/one trial jury system in the DC Superior Court, modernization of trial jury and grand jury systems, reform of the District of Columbia probate laws and procedures, reform of the DC administrative adjudication system, and proposing methods to speed resolution of civil cases by the DC trial and appellate courts.

Jury Service in the 21st Century

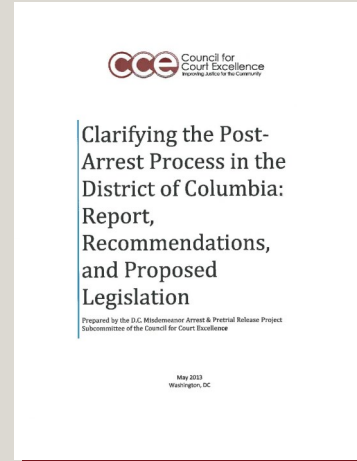
The Council for Court Excellence began planning efforts for the 2014 launch of the DC Jury Project, which will comprehensively address systemic issues relating to the perceived burden of jury service in the District of Columbia from the perspective of jurors, judges and lawyers. It will address new challenges to and opportunities for jury service, such as the potential of technology and social media; the changing demographics of DC and who is being summoned for jury service; and encouraging greater public understanding of, and appreciation for, jury service.

In the District of Columbia, over **40,000** District residents appear for jury service each year in both the US District Court for DC and the DC Superior Court. However, only about **6,000** residents a year actually serve on a jury.

Public Service Committee Chair Chief Judge Richard Roberts and Court Improvements Committee Chair James Hulme are leading the development of and identification of issues to be addressed by, the ad hoc CCE Jury Project Committee. Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson of the US District Court for DC has agreed to co-chair the project. The Jury Project Planning Committee held their first planning meeting in late December hosted by Arent Fox, LLP.

Codifying DC Pretrial Release Practices

CCE's DC Misdemeanor Arrest and Pretrial Release Project subcommittee completed its work with the publication in May of *Clarifying the Post-Arrest Process in the District of Columbia: Report, Recommendations, and Proposed Legislation*. The report, which for the first time describes the District's unique post-arrest release process and offers recommendations for its improvement, received positive attention in media outlets such as *The Washington Post* and the Blog of the *Legal Times*. The report includes a legislative proposal that more clearly articulates the criteria for certain types of pretrial release and "plain English" instructions about pretrial release options for the benefit of both the public and law enforcement.



On November 21, the DC Council Judiciary Committee held a public hearing on the "Post-Arrest Process Clarification Amendment Act of 2013," bill number 20-323. Cliff Keenan and June Kress testified on behalf of CCE and the project committee's work. There was no opposition to the proposed legislation, which is expected to be addressed by the Judiciary Committee in 2014.

Thanks to CCE Board Director Cliff Keenan for chairing this important, long-term project. The subcommittee included CCE Board Directors Cary Feldman, Mark Flanagan, Rich Gilbert, Judge Andrea Harnett, Michael Hays, and Earl Silbert, as well as Dan Cipullo, Tenisha Jiggetts and Kiger Sigh of the DC Superior Court; Patricia Riley and Renata Cooper of the US Attorney's Office for DC; Laura Hankins of the DC Public Defender Service; Kelly O'Meara of the DC Metropolitan Police Department; and Dave Rosenthal of the DC Office of the Attorney General.

Community

The Council for Court Excellence places a high priority on informing the community about how the justice system works in the District of Columbia. The Council publishes plain-language guides and distributes them widely and without cost through the public libraries, justice system agencies, community organizations, and service providers, and in response to individual requests.

Since 1982, the Council has published and distributed over 360,000 copies of plain-language booklets and other materials explaining a wide variety of court systems and legal issues to improve the public's access to justice and increase their understanding of our justice system.

Bench-Bar-Media Dialogue Project

Courts are experiencing pressure to adapt to new methods of courtroom coverage in the face of a public that is increasingly adopting visual and social network media as its primary sources of information. The rapidly changing business of journalism – reduced numbers of reporters, increasingly opinion-driven journalism – can result in more frequent tensions between the press and courts.

Thanks also to CCE Board Directors Laura Handman and Eric Lieberman for co-chairing this initiative and to their committee, including CCE Board Directors Patrick Carome, Barry Coburn, Andy Glass, Jay Hulme, Lee Levine, Jennifer O'Connor, Justin Shur, Hon. Arabella Teal, and Kurt Wimmer. Other committee members included Bruce Brown of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, Leah Gurowitz of the DC Courts, Ashley Messenger of National Public Radio, Jack Murphy of the Maryland-Delaware-District of Columbia Press Association, Sheldon Snook of the US District Court for DC, Jerianne Timmerman of the National Association of Broadcasters, Charles Tobin of Holland & Knight, Barbara Wall of Gannett Co., Inc., and Stephen Wermiel of American University.

Between July 2010 and December 2013, CCE has held ten discussions among the bench, bar and media in DC about cross-cutting and topical issues to promote a better understanding between those sectors.

The project, led by CCE Board Directors Laura Handman and James McLaughlin convened two programs in 2013:

Sharing Perspectives, a session designed to let judges, attorneys and journalists candidly discuss issues of common concern. Thank you to Patrick Carome, Jennifer O'Connor and Wilmer Hale for hosting this session.

Secret Courts, Secret Law, a public panel discussion at CCE's December Board meeting about litigating and judging in, as well as the public policy consequences of, "secret" courts such as military commissions and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act court. Topics included the circumstances that give rise to the creation of such courts, how "precedent" works in a system where rulings are not publicly available, the unique challenges of litigating and judging in such courts, and others. Thank you to Ron Abramson for sponsoring this event and to the NYU DC campus for hosting.



Stopping Legal Consultant Fraud

Since 2012, CCE has convened a working group to identify and enforce against Notario or legal consultant fraud, a priority identified in CCE's 2012-2016 Long-Range Plan. Notarios are those who falsely hold themselves out as qualified to represent the immigrant community, charge a fee, and then cannot provide the services because they are unauthorized to do so. These bad actors often prey upon immigrant communities who are vulnerable to such scams and lead to high-stakes consequences such as substantial economic loss, familial separation and deportation.



The working group, which has grown to include more than 50 participants, is chaired by CCE Board Director David Zetoony of Bryan Cave LLP. This group convenes bimonthly bringing together state, local and federal stakeholders from DC, Maryland and Virginia to identify new issues and opportunities for collaboration. Members include individuals from the District of Columbia and Montgomery County prosecutors' offices, DC Metropolitan Police Department, the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs, several federal agencies, Ayuda, and a variety of other legal services providers and advocacy organizations.

Compliments & Complaints Guide



The CCE Public Service Committee published a first-ever guide that gathers in one place information about how to submit compliments or complaints about professionals in the DC justice system. The guide features 16 courts and agencies and includes information about judges and magistrate judges, prosecutors, criminal defense attorneys, other lawyers, court employees, police officers, probation officers, and others.

Like other community guides that CCE had produced, this guide seeks to organize and clearly describe how to submit your compliments or complaints. The guide also explains what happens once you submit your complaint and the options that may be available if you are not satisfied with the outcome.

The guide has been widely distributed throughout the District of Columbia and has been well-received. One of the heads of the agencies featured in the guide shared, "This guide is excellent as we often get questions about where to file a complaint." We hope this guide will continue to serve the public because without community feedback, the justice system will not know what can be improved upon and what is working well.

Thanks to CCE Board Director Chief Judge Richard Roberts for chairing the Public Service Committee and leading this project and to the following CCE Public Service Committee members and Board Directors for their active participation: Brigida Benitez, Caryl Bernstein, Jim Berry, Prof. Susan Low Bloch, Linda Bostick, Carol Elder Bruce, Judge Arthur Burnett, Sr., Barry Coburn, Judge Anthony Epstein, Glenn Fine, Judge Andrea Harnett, Sam Harahan, John Hayes, Ron Jessamy, Judge Rufus King, Judge Richard Levie, Victor Long, Judge Gregory Mize, Jim Nathanson, Elissa Preheim, Charles Patrizia, Judge Vanessa Ruiz, Steven Schneebaum, Earl Silbert, Joan Wilbon, Cynthia Wright, and David Zetony.

The 17th Annual Justice Potter Stewart Dinner

The 17th Annual Justice Potter Stewart Dinner was a sold-out event held on Thursday, May 9th at the Organization of American States. The dinner began with a reception in the atrium and then moved upstairs to the grand ballroom for dinner and the awards ceremony.

Jack Strausman of Pepco led the event as the Dinner Chair. Dinner Committee members included: Bruce Berger, Jay Brozost, Alec Farr, Sam Harahan, Larry Hinton, Bill Jeffress, Mike Jones, and Earl Silbert.

This year's Award Selection Committee, chaired by Tom Mikula of Goodwin Proctor, included: Magistrate Judge Diane Brenneman, Avis Buchanan, Beverly Burke, Paulette Chapman, Steve Grafman, Victor Long, Fritz Mulhauser, and Mark Tuohey.



Jay Hulme & Jay Brozost



Barbara Wahl & Chief Judge Richard Roberts



Joe Rigby,
Dinner Chair, Jack Strausman
& Alec Farr



Avis Buchanan & Elissa Preheim



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Pat McGlone,
Marc & Phyllis Fleishaker



Kathy Patterson & June Kress

**2013
Justice Potter Stewart
Awardees**

William J. Garber

Jessica T. Rosenbaum

James J. Sandman



Jay Brozost, Earl Silbert, Jake Stein & Bill Garber



Kaya Henderson, along with Jim Sandman & his family



Eli Rosenbaum & Jess Rosenbaum



The Justice Potter Stewart Award, named to honor the memory and public service of the late Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, was established in 1997 by the Council for Court Excellence 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 Capitol.

The Council for Court Excellence is indebted to Andy Stewart, the Justice's widow, for permission to create the Justice Potter Stewart Award. With the March 4, 2013 passing of Mrs. Stewart, CCE has lost an active, generous, and spirited member of our Board of Directors.

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Justice Potter Stewart Dinner Sponsors**

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Financial Report

Unaudited Statement of Activities

For the Year Ended December 31	2012	2013
SUPPORT & REVENUE		
Grants & Contracts	\$105,500	\$97,000
Other Income	\$35,778	\$40,617
Event Income	\$225,900	\$199,601
Voluntary Board of Directors Dues	\$290,400	\$286,000
Donations	\$66,946	\$108,044
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE	\$724,524	\$715,162
EXPENSES		
Programs	\$612,528	\$559,855
Fundraising	\$74,750	\$68,275
Management & General	\$51,330	\$54,620
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$738,608	\$682,750
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	(14,084)	\$32,412

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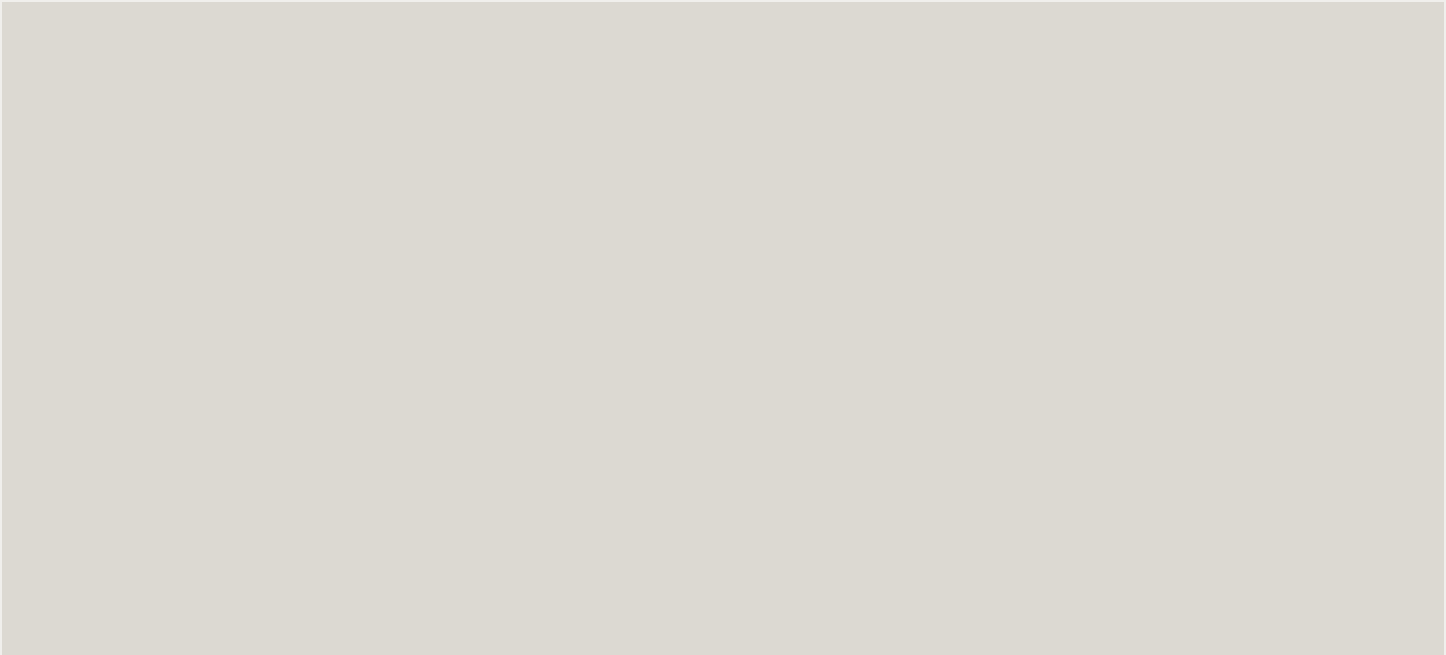
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