



## Award Given to Judge Herbert B. Dixon, Jr., at 2014 Annual Meeting

By Hon. Heather Welch, Indianapolis, IN

Judge Herbert B. Dixon, Jr., District of Columbia Superior Court, was the recipient of the National Conference of Specialized Court Judges' (NCSCJ) William R. McMahon Award for innovation and utilization of technology. This award was presented to Judge Dixon at the NCSCJ Annual Meeting Awards Dinner in Boston. Judge Dixon was nominated for the Award for his leadership role in implementation of technology not only in the DC Superior Court, which is a court of both specialized and general jurisdiction, but he has shared his expertise, skill and knowledge with the Judicial Division and with other Judges and institutions. Judge Dixon has not only used technology, he has also been a leader in designing and implementing technology to improve efficiency in the court systems. Judge Dixon has volunteered his time and expertise by authoring the standing Technology Column for the *The Judges' Journal* and frequently speaks for the ABA on technology. The National Conference of State Trial Judges is grateful for Judge Dixon's dedication to the ABA, the Conference and his work in the area of technology.

At the Annual Meeting, Judge Dixon was also elected by the ABA House of Delegates (HOD) to a 3-year term as District 4 (VA & DC) representative on the ABA Board of Governors (BOG). Judge Dixon attended orientation sessions for new board members during Annual. The BOG, consisting of

38 members, has the authority to act and speak for the ABA, consistent with previous action of the HOD, when the House is not in session. It oversees the general operation of the ABA and develops specific plans of action. Judge Dixon is a former chair of the National Conference of State Trial Judges (NCSTJ). He concluded a second 3-year term as the NCSTJ Delegate to the HOD and the Judicial Division Delegate to the HOD Nominating Committee. Judge William Carpenter, Jr., Delaware Superior Court will replace Judge Dixon as the NCSTJ Delegate to the HOD. We are very proud of the work of both Judges Dixon and Carpenter.



(L) Judge Herbert B. Dixon, Jr. receives the NCSCJ William R. McMahon Award from (R) 2014-15 JD Chair, Justice Mark Martin at the Awards Dinner in Boston.

## The Mindful Judge and Lawyer

By Hon. William J. Caprathe, Bay City, MI

As part of the "Health in the Profession ... Protecting Ability" theme at the 2014 ABA Annual Meeting in Boston, the National Conference of Administrative Law Judiciary presented "The Mindful Judge and Lawyer: Understanding and Managing Stress."

A team of Judge Chris Aliley, US District Court for the Southern District of Florida, and Professor Scott Rogers, University of Miami School of Law, introduced us to the concept of "mindfulness." We learned that mindfulness can be applied any time and is an excellent tool for dealing with stress from the highly tense moments in the lives of lawyers and judges. Mindfulness amounts to getting out of the way of the thoughts and actions that potentially provoke us. It is a simple but challenging process for prevent-

ing circumstances from pushing our buttons — a practice of paying attention to whatever outward circumstances or inner thoughts are taking place in the present moment, without reacting.

Research, including several scientific studies cited in the program material, supports the benefits to the brain and body resulting from mindfulness practices. During the program we were given the opportunity to experience mindfulness firsthand through a one-minute mindfulness exercise. The exercise began with us sitting upright with both feet flat on the floor. We were asked to either close or lower our eyes and then to concentrate on our breath as it enters and leaves our bodies. When thoughts arose, we gently and effortlessly brought our awareness back to our

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breathing. When more thoughts arose, we again gently returned our awareness to our breathing. At the end of this exercise, we brought our awareness back to our presence in the room, carrying a portion of the restful experience with us.

We can practice this mindfulness exercise by ourselves, preferably in a quiet place. We can also apply this process to our encounters with others. We do not need to close our eyes or look down, which would be a bad communication technique for lawyers and judges. We, as legal professionals, just need to be in the moment and allow whatever is happening to be. Listen with empathy, and withhold judgment until it is absolutely necessary.

To help us be in the moment, we remember breathing in and out. With practice, both in private and in public, it will become easier and easier for us to maintain our balance

and center, and be at our most effective best. The key is to continue having the goal of being in the moment and not being reactive in our daily activity. As an observer paying close attention to what is happening, we can develop clearer, nonjudgmental views of what is taking place.

On the way home from the Annual Meeting, I discovered a magazine titled *Mindful, Taking Time for What Matters*. I read it from cover to cover and found that it contained some good general information on the subject of mindfulness. ([www.mindful.org](http://www.mindful.org)). For more information about mindfulness as it relates to the legal profession, you may contact Professor Rogers at [mindfulness@law.miami.edu](mailto:mindfulness@law.miami.edu).

The mindfulness process can be a valuable tool for lawyers and judges to increase our openness, compassion, awareness, and procedural fairness.



NCSTJ Membership Chair Judge Leslie Miller and NCSTJ 2013-14 Chair, Judge Toni Clark accepts JD Membership Contest award for highest number of member increase from JD Co-Chairs Judge James Lockemy and Christopher Browning, Jr.



NCSTJ Members at the 2014 John Marshall Awards reception at the Top of the Hub in Boston.



(L-R) Marilyn Carpenter and her husband, Judge William Carpenter, along with Judge Jim Wynn enjoying the JD John Marshall Reception in Boston at the Annual Meeting.



(L-R) Judges Annette Scieszinski and Michael Shubatt from Iowa joined by Lauren Bennett of the Lawyers Conference at the JD Awards Reception.