



California Court Association, Inc.

The Minute Book

Spring 2017

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Spring Into
The Leader In
You



YOU MUST CULTIVATE VALUE
IN YOURSELF IN ORDER TO
MOVE FORWARD

-Bryant McGill



Tanya Rivero, President

The President's Message...

We all have a leader within us. Developing good leadership skills starts with drive and passion, wanting to step up your game and making a personal leadership development plan. You may not know that as a member of the California Court Association, you have already started your plan. Membership gives you access to educational articles and opportunities to attend low cost trainings offered by pristine trainers from different courts across the state. Taking a step towards your development plan is to enroll in our Leadership Certificate Program and taking a leadership module series class.

In Pasadena, you can enhance your professional written and verbal communication skills with Naomi Gaines or put your thinking cap on and discuss effective problem solving techniques with Curtis Germany. Leadership module classes will be offered throughout the year, check the website for updates.

It's never too early or late to develop good leadership skills. Whether you're an entry-level employee or a manager, becoming a better leader will benefit you at any stage of your career. With enough passion, practice, and initiative, you can build your leadership skills—and advance your career.

Best,

Tanya Rivero

Your CCA
President



CUL·TI·VATE

VERB

1. To nurture and help grow.
2. To develop or improve by education or training.

SYNONYMS: *tend, rear, sow, farm, enrich, wear*

CCA EXECUTIVE “BRANCH”



2016-2017



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Ventura County
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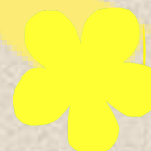
Secretary
Tina Dabbas
San Bernardino County
[Email Tina](#)



LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

ARE INDISPENSABLE TO EACH OTHER

John F. Kennedy



The graphic features a bright yellow sunburst background. At the top, a blue bird sits on a branch on the left, and a green bird sits on a branch on the right. A large yellow oval in the center contains the title. Below the oval, a green vine-like line winds through the page, connecting 15 circular portraits of committee chairs. The portraits are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some having placeholder icons. The bottom of the page is decorated with green grass.

CCA Committee Chairs 2016-2017



Budget & Finance
James Feenan, Santa Clara



Bylaws
Brenda Lussier
Riverside (Ret.)



Directory & Fee Schedule
Natalie Smith, San Diego



DMV Liaison
Jill Ramirez (Ret.), Solano



Education Liaison
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Judicial Council



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Civil-Small Claims
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Criminal
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Publication
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Training & Certification
Cynthia Maynard, Riverside



Membership
Tina Dabbas
San Bernardino

*Make the most out
of your membership—
join a committee!*

The Minute Book

Editor's Notes...

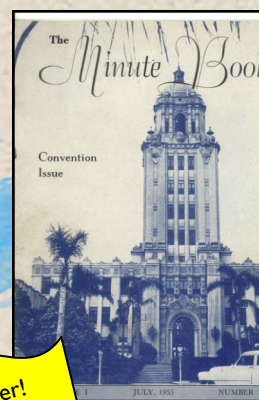
Pull Your Weeds, Plant Your Seeds...Tend to the Garden of Your Mind

By [Victoria Borjesson, Ventura County](#)

After the joy of the holidays, followed by post-holiday blues, spring is a time for change and renewal. It is proven that the human mind thinks thousands of thoughts a day. Instead of planting a mixed bag of thousands of various seeds (confused and unfocused thinking) that will require a full-time gardener to pull up the weeds, specialize in planting one or two types of seed. Plant thought-seeds about yourself and others that are rooted in reverence and loving-kindness. Plant seeds that focus on Infinite Presence at the center and circumference of all you say, think, and do at work, home, or play. Be mindful. Be skillful in the seeds you plant and how you nurture them. Your life is your garden; keep the weeds out because that is one way in which you can personally beautify our world. You owe that much to yourself and to those who receive the benefit of the seeds you drop along the way.



The **1st** member
who emails me
the correct answer
will win \$25 or
\$25 Courtique
Credit!



Dec. Trivia Winner!
[Claudia Zuniga](#)
Riverside County!



CORRECTION POLICY

We aim to get it right, but when we get it wrong, please let us know. We want to correct the record.



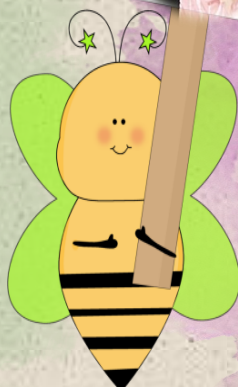
Contact Chair [Victoria Borjesson](#) to report any errors.

Trivia Question #3:

The Association of Municipal Court Clerks of California, Inc. held its Southern Regional Conference on March 12, 1955:

1. What famous landmark hotel and city was the conference held?
2. Who served as the Master of Ceremonies for this event?
3. Who provided the entertainment for the evening?

Click on the Minute Book icon above to search for the answer!





CCA New Laws Seminar Highlights

By Jay Widdows, Ventura County

On December 2, 2016, CCA held its New Laws Workshop in Sacramento.

The New Law Workshop covers all of the new and amended statutes affecting the courts for 2017. The information is prepared and presented by the CCA Legislation Committee, which is made up of 14 court staff from courts throughout California. The committee includes line staff, supervisors, managers, attorneys, and analysts.

In addition to discussing the bills, the presentation also focuses on implementation issues. This year, time was also devoted to discussing the impacts of ballot Propositions 57, 63, 64 and 66.

During the 2016 legislative year, the California Assembly and Senate introduced 2,331 bills. Of those, 1,320 were approved by both houses of the Legislature and sent to the Governor, who then signed 1,161 of them into law and vetoed the remaining 159. More than 140 of the bills signed into law impact the courts.



CCA President Tanya Rivero (Ventura)

To view materials,
click on this photo





The DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

Featuring Los Angeles County - Pasadena Branch

By Ailene Sanders,
Los Angeles
County



Welcome again!

As I shared with you in the December 2016 issue of the Minute Book, I just want to remind you all that the Los Angeles court staff are all looking forward to seeing you at the Pasadena CCA Training Day on March 11, 2017 in the beautiful and historical city of Pasadena. Planning continues to be underway so we can make sure that the Pasadena Training Day is both an educational and enjoyable experience for everyone who plans on attending !

Court Interpreters!

A special reminder to Court Interpreters: Court interpreters can benefit by attending Pasadena's Training Day too! The **Traffic Appeals*** and **Limited Civil Appeals*** classes are **CIMCE*** approved. Finally, if you have time during your visit, we encourage you to sample all that the city of Pasadena and surrounding areas has to offer. There's something for everyone!

Dine & Unwind

Food and relaxation. Enjoy a fabulous meal and total relaxation at Old Pasadena's unique establishments.

[SEE RESTAURANTS HERE](#)

Museum & Gallery Tour

Old Pasadena has many fantastic art galleries, museums and cultural institutions. Take some time to enjoy some Pasadena's culture!

[READ MORE HERE!](#)

To connect with other CCA Directors throughout California Courts, click "connect" below (You will need to have the CCA login username and password for access).



THE HUNTINGTON
Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens



need more Info?



LASC is on Twitter!

[@LASuperiorCourt](#)





Cynthia Maynard



Leadership Program Modules

The Leadership Certificate Program will take two to three years to complete by attending regularly scheduled CCA events. At each CCA event there will be a Leadership Certificate Program Class. The program includes the following classes (all classes are full day classes).

- **March 4 , 2017: Leadership Program Module 2 –**
Organizational Management
ARC Office, 950 Glenn Drive, Suite 150
Folsom, CA 95630
- **April 29 – Leadership Program**
Ethics Module 3 & Module 4 – Political Savvy
Riverside Self Help Center, 3535 10th Street
Riverside, CA
- **May 20 – Leadership Program Module 1 –**
Leadership Skills
ARC Office, 950 Glenn Drive, Suite 150



Upcoming Training Days



In Memoriam



Doris Rogers

December 22, 1922 to November 30, 2016



Sadly, CCA has lost its 29th president, Doris Rogers. Doris worked for the El Cajon Municipal Court and was the President of The Association of Municipal Court Clerks of California, Inc. in 1981. Doris was a very close and dear friend of 44 years to Lina Longmire (recently retired Chair of the Directory & Fee Schedule Committee). Please read the nice obituary below from the San Diego Union Tribune.

Doris Rogers, Municipal Court Administrator, dies at 93

Doris Rogers spent the greater part of 30 years keeping order in the court. The Fletcher Hills resident worked at the El Cajon Municipal Court from 1953 to 1983, starting as deputy clerk, and eventually moving up to oversee 70 employees as administrator of the court. During her tenure, Mrs. Rogers swore in 10 judges.

Mrs. Rogers also saw the court's move in the early 1980s from a small, one-story building at Magnolia and Lexington avenues to its current home at the East County Regional Center on Main Street. In a 1983 speech announcing her retirement, Mrs. Rogers said: "I have loved my job, enjoyed all the people I have had occasion to associate with, especially my 'innovative' judges who have made the job interesting and a never-ending challenge."

Mrs. Rogers passed away Nov. 30 from complications of Parkinson's disease at age 93. She was born on Christmas Day, 1922 in New Mexico to parents Roy and Alma Mae Rider. Raised on a farm in Arizona, she was the third of four children. Mrs. Rogers was married twice, first to Roy Whittle, with whom she had two children, and then to Joe Rogers.

Her daughter, Suni Sullivan, said her mother worked very hard to become a court clerk. "I'm so proud of how she rose up with no education, took every exam and studied after my brother Bruce and I were in bed," said Sullivan, 70, who lives in El Cajon. El Cajon was initially a Municipal Court, then became one of the first in the state to do Superior Court work. Mrs. Rogers started an investment club with colleagues at court, asking people to meet at lunch one day a week and put in \$1 each time. "It just kept rolling on over," her daughter said. "People came and left, mom did accounting. She let it go eventually, it got to be too much. But that was the beginning of her lifelong interest in stock market. She read the business page, and the full paper, every morning."

Mrs. Rogers graduated from high school in Yuma, Ariz., in 1941 and moved to California five years later. She studied architecture for a short time at San Jose State University and later became an architect and a brick mason. As part of her coursework, Mrs. Rogers designed and built a scale model of a modernistic house in Northern California. In the early 1950s, Mrs. Rogers started her own construction company with another woman and they called it "Powder Puff Builders." The company built seven homes on Mount Helix and Mrs. Rogers later designed and helped build her final home in Fletcher Hills.

Family friend Kit Goldman said Mrs. Rogers once appeared on the game show "What's My Line?" as a brick mason and stumped the panel. An athlete her entire life, Mrs. Rogers and her family were honored by the San Diego Union-Tribune in the late 1950s as "Outdoor Family of the Year."

In addition to her daughter, Mrs. Rogers leaves behind her son, Bruce of La Mesa, a firefighter for 30 years with the El Cajon Fire Department; two grandsons, Patrick, 32, and Ryan, 30; and a sister, Wilma Taylor of La Mesa.



INTERPRETERS CORNER

by Tracy Clark, Interpreting Services Manager, Ventura County



Mixteco Video

On November 11, 2016 on Veteran's Day, a group of volunteers met at the courthouse with a local production company, Cage Free Productions, to film a video for members of the Mixteco community who visit California courts. Entitled, "Welcome to the Courts," this video will provide an overview of the American Judicial System and tour of a courthouse, with a voice-over narrative in Mixteco Bajo and captions in English.

A special thanks to the following volunteers for making this happen:

- Ventura Judge Manuel J. Covarrubias, who guided us in content of the scenes and narration;
- Ventura Interpreter Catalina Navarette, Mixteco interpreter, who advised us on the topics, then both translated and recorded the narration in Mixteco Bajo;
- Nicolasa Rebolledo and Jesus Santillan Avila, who played the Mixteco court visitors;
- Ventura Deputy Public Defenders Daniel and Julie Taylor, who played the DA and PD in the court scenes;
- Joe Escoto of Allied Security, who played Security in the courthouse entrance scene;
- Deputy Spears, who played the bailiff in the courtroom scene;
- Ventura Interpreter Tracy Clark, who played the court clerk
- Ventura Interpreter Elizabeth Verdiny, who played the interpreter in the scenes and provided interpretation throughout the day between the English and Spanish/Mixteco-speaking participants.

The video should be edited and captioned by the early part of 2017 -



Video Remote Interpretation (VRI)

The Ventura Superior Court, along with the Sacramento and Merced Superior Courts, will be participating in a pilot study to determine the efficacy of VRI this next year. The pilot will last six months, evaluate two different companies' equipment, and assess how well a remote interpreter, who will be a California Court Interpreter hired by California Courts, can serve the court and LEP individuals. The Pilot will be evaluated by a neutral third party research team from San Diego State University. VRI is seen as one of many technological solutions for bringing language access to courts, especially with the hard-to-find languages. *Coming soon—a designated link on the Judicial Council's website which will provide the latest information on the pilot as it is rolled out.*



Arabic Interpreters Meeting

Interpreting Services recently hosted an introductory training for Arabic community interpreters who want to work in courts. Members of this group were especially prominent, and included a retired professor of Arabic from the Monterey Institute, a retired U.S. military interpreter/translator from the Middle East, and a retired attaché to a Middle-Eastern country's embassy. With only eight certified Arabic interpreters in the state,



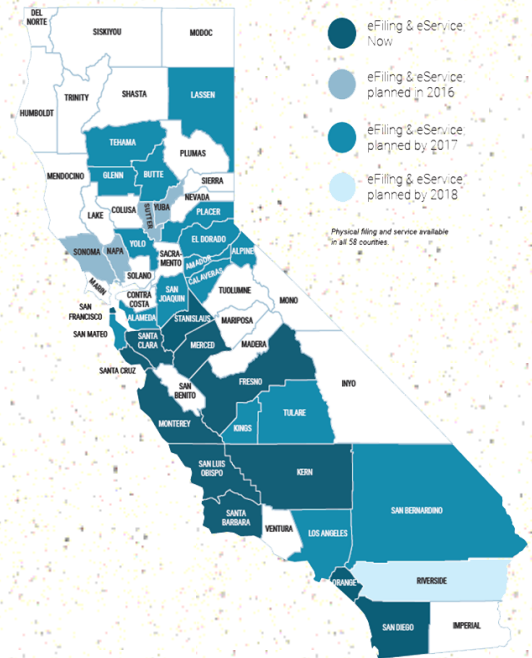
To learn more about the Language Access Plan (LAP), click [here](#)!



E-FILEING COMING TO A COURT NEAR YOU!

eFiling Updates

Welcome to Tulare County Superior Court eFiling



- Los Angeles Court to implement E-file in Probate: Effective June 5, 2017, the Superior Court of Los Angeles County will implement mandatory e-filing for probate cases with limited exceptions. E-filing instructions will be available on the court's website.
- Tulare Superior Court has a great example of "How to use its court's E-file system" on its website. Click on the photo above to view.

Confidential and Sealed Records

Recently added to the family law, civil, and probate staff toolkits, this [15-minute interactive tutorial](#) assists counter clerks in applying confidentiality requirements and processing requests to seal records.

Contact: cjerprograms@jud.ca.gov, 415-865-7745

Customer Service Tips - INMATE INFO

Q: How can I find someone who is in jail or prison?

A: For California State Prison:

Call the [California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation \(CDCR\) Inmate Locator](#). You must have either the inmate's CDC number or the inmate's full name and date of birth to get information. Click to find a [list of California adult correctional facilities](#).



For Federal Prison:

You can search the [Federal Bureau of Prisons' Inmate Locator database](#) using the inmate's first and last name or the inmate's Register Number, DCDC Number, FBI Number, or INS Number. Or find a [list of federal correctional facilities](#). Fill in whatever information you know (like the state or city you are looking for) and hit "submit."



For County Jail:

Call the jail. You can usually find the phone number and address for the jail by calling the county sheriff. Click to find the [address and telephone numbers of the county sheriffs](#)



CALIFORNIA COURTS ARE ON TWITTER! Click on logo...

MARIN COUNTY—ACTIVE SHOOTER TRAINING

ARE YOU PREPARED?

On Marin Superior Court's training day, October 10, 2016, Marin County's Sheriff's Office instructed staff in Active Shooter Training. Sgt. Tom Alipio defined an active shooter as one "actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people." He said that between May and October 2016, there were 218 mass and active shootings. He stated that such an event is "**no longer a question of if, but of when.**"



Norma Johnson, Marin

There has been a change in response by law enforcement. The response used to be to arrive and wait, but that allows too much time for the shooter to inflict damage. Presently, law enforcement's goal is whoever arrives on the scene first, grabs a rifle and enters the location. In addition, firefighters and paramedics are called upon.

Sgt. Alipio stated that the shooter is usually not angry at specific targets; he or she is just angry and ready to shoot anyone. As employees, our goal should be to lock down and remain in a secured area until any danger clears. He instructed us to:

- Lock all doors and do not open for anyone, even co-workers. If there are no locks, place large furniture at the doors.
- Turn off lights, turn off cell phones, lower window blinds. If there are no blinds, cover with paper. Sgt. Alipio said, "Out of sight, out of mind." The shooter will move on if there is resistance at the door or no evidence of people.
- Resist the instinct to run. Avoid large open parking lots or cafeterias; stay out of hallways. If you do have to run, run in the opposite direction of the majority of people. These directions apply whether at work or at a mall or in a movie theatre.
- When you enter any place for the first time, Sgt. Alipio advised that you know all the exits available. Everyone should have a Plan A and B.
- When reporting an incident, the caller should state how many shooters, what they are wearing, and where the caller is.

For staff who work in the courtroom, Deputy Sheriff Kyle Lorenz presented several news clips of incidents of attacks in the courtroom, including attacks on attorneys, parties, and relatives of parties. Objects that could be used as weapons should **not** be near parties:

- Computer
- Laptops
- Cords
- Water pitchers
- Staplers
- Hole punches



One of the videos showed that even though the defendant was chained at the wrists and feet, he was still able to injure his target. Deputy Lorenz stated that the bailiffs move around in the courtroom so that the party intending to do harm has to keep changing his plan of escape.

The Active Shooter and Courtroom Security trainings reminded staff to be ever vigilant in the workplace and everywhere else.

For more information, posters and materials on Active Shooter Training, click on the Department of Homeland Security icon above.



Marin's Mission Statement

To ensure fair and equal access to justice and serve the public with dignity and respect.

Marin Superior Court

SUPERHEROES

By Patty Okubo, Marin Court

Monday, October 10, 2016, Columbus Day, was a closed court training day at the Marin Superior Court. To kick the morning off, the Leadership Team, comprised of the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Information Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Division Managers, and Department Supervisors gathered in the front of the room to look out upon an audience of court staff decked out in "Superhero" wear.

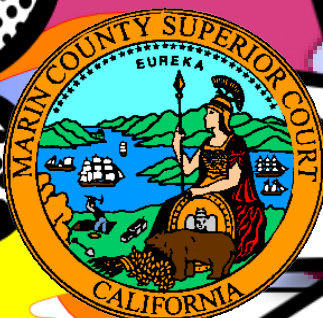
WOW!

SNAP!



BAM!

Supervisor Renee Flemmett instructed the Leadership Team to look out and acknowledge the "Superheroes" of the Court who day in and day out fight the good fight keeping up services to the public with less staff and other resources.



Renee further went on to quote Commissioner James Gordon of the Batman series, saying, "*You're going to make a difference. A lot of times it won't be huge, it won't be visible even. But it will matter just the same.*"

Proposition 64: The Adult Use of Marijuana Act



OVERVIEW

Effective November 9, 2016, Proposition 64 legalizes specified personal use and cultivation of marijuana for adults 21 years of age or older; reduces criminal penalties for specified marijuana-related offenses for adults and juveniles; and authorizes resentencing or dismissal and sealing of prior, eligible marijuana-related convictions. The proposition includes provisions on regulation, licensing, and taxation of legalized use. For more information, click [here](#) to visit the Judicial Council's Prop 64 Information Page on its website.

DMV Memo - Child Passenger Restraint System



COURT INFORMATION MEMO

MEMO: 16-07

SUBJECT: Child Passenger Restraint System

Memo Date: December 29, 2016

Purpose: To inform courts of the new child safety requirement for children under the age of two (2) years old.

Background: Assembly Bill 53 amends California Vehicle Code (CVC) §27360(b), establishing new provisions requiring rear-facing child safety seats for transporting children under the age of two.



New Information:

Effective January 1, 2017, CVC §27360(b) is amended to require a parent, legal guardian, or driver of a motor vehicle transporting a child under age two on a highway to properly secure the child in a rear-facing child passenger restraint system that meets applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards, unless the child weighs 40 or more pounds or is 40 or more inches tall. The child must be secured in a manner that complies with the height and weight limits specified by the manufacturer of the child passenger restraint system. If the child exceeds either or both of the weight/height parameters provided under CVC §27360(b), the child must be secured in accordance with the provisions established under CVC §27360(a). This section does not apply to a driver if the parent or legal guardian of the child is a passenger in the motor vehicle.

The court shall electronically report convictions under §27360(b) to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Upon receipt of the conviction, DMV will assess one negligent operator point on the person's driving record.

Questions regarding the information contained in this memo or changes to the e-mail distribution list may be directed to the Justice and Government Liaison Branch at (916) 657-7732 or via email at

jagcourt@dmv.ca.gov



[@CA_DMV](https://twitter.com/CA_DMV)

Krispy Kreme Sued For Berry Dishonest Donuts

Krispy Kreme's maple and berry filled donuts are actually full of junk, according to a new class action lawsuit.

Jason Saidian just filed the suit after getting an order of Glazed Raspberry Filled, Chocolate Iced Raspberry Filled, Maple Iced Glazed and Glazed Blueberry Cake donuts. Sounds like a party, what could go wrong?

In the docs, Saidian says his order was packed full of imitation ingredients, like "blueberry gumbits." He's upset because he thinks KK falsely advertised, Saidian's looking for \$5 million on behalf of all Krispy Kreme faithful who've had a berry filled, maple flavored lie pulled over their eyes...

Believe It or Not!



Believe it or Not!

Courtesy of: <http://www.nydailynews.com/>

The Word Search

Law and Order

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------|
| T | T | N | A | R | R | A | W | H | C | R | A | E | S | SPECIAL VICTIMS |
| R | N | T | J | R | D | I | N | D | I | T | E | R | A | CRIMINAL INTENT |
| S | P | E | C | I | A | L | V | I | C | T | I | M | S | COURT ORDER |
| L | C | U | T | R | G | R | A | N | D | J | U | R | Y | SEARCH WARRANT |
| I | T | O | N | N | J | U | D | G | E | R | T | A | P | GRAND JURY |
| E | P | E | U | U | I | A | D | R | C | N | I | N | L | INDITE |
| U | N | Y | R | R | I | L | L | A | A | R | H | O | A | DEFENDANT |
| T | R | S | A | R | T | N | A | D | A | E | T | E | N | LIEUTENANT |
| E | T | P | A | U | F | O | N | M | Y | Y | U | P | T | PLANTIFF |
| N | I | O | A | R | T | E | R | O | I | I | I | B | I | SUBPEONA |
| A | D | T | T | T | F | E | H | D | A | R | T | U | F | AUTOPSY |
| N | E | U | N | E | L | L | R | O | E | I | C | S | F | TRIAL |
| T | A | A | D | T | T | R | I | A | L | R | T | N | A | JUDGE |
| A | I | R | H | L | N | I | E | I | N | U | N | P | A | |



Debbe Dreher



Tracy Brown



Rachel Myers



Tammy Hitchcock

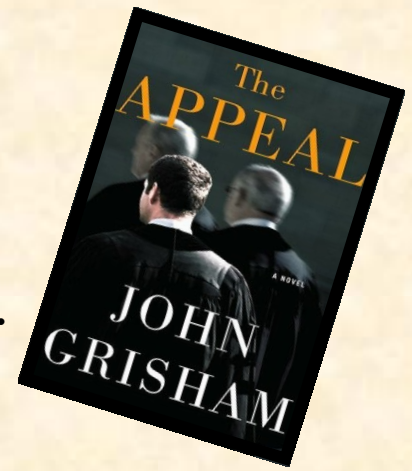
Happy Spring from Your CCA Business Team!

The Reading Room

Hosted and Authored by Bob Gutierrez, Santa Clara County

The APPEAL

A guilty verdict was just the beginning...



As a service to my fellow court employees, I have taken on the task of reading a John Grisham novel, deconstructing it and highlighting the only interesting parts of the book. By 'interesting' I mean all the parts of the book that mention Court staff. The rest of the book can easily be discarded without missing much. Though it entailed much suffering, I've read Grisham so you don't have to.

I had intended to perform this service with his newest book, "The Whistler", but I'm number 110 on my library's waiting list and wasn't about to shell out my hard earned cash unless Grisham himself tracked me down and made me pay up. As an attorney, it's the least he could do for a clerk who often has to chase down his brethren to collect per diem and jury fees. There was no library waiting list for his 2008 effort, "The Appeal", so I decided to read that instead.

The book starts off with great promise. The bailiff is mentioned on the first page and by the fourth paragraph the courtroom clerk is introduced. I eagerly anticipated a scintillating story as the deputy hands the clerk a jury's verdict. My hopes were dashed in the very next paragraph when Grisham writes, "The clerk tapped lightly on the judge's door, then took a step inside and proudly announced, 'We have a verdict,' as if she had personally labored through the negotiations and now was presenting the result as a gift." I couldn't believe it; he's just a page and a half into the novel and already he's insulting the clerk. It makes you wonder what kind of charm he showed toward court personnel when he was practicing law. The introduction of the clerk sets the tone for the rest of the book. By the following paragraph she is relegated to a voice on the phone of various attorneys who are being informed that the jury has arrived at a verdict.

I suppose I shouldn't be too angry since it's more action than a clerk usually sees in a Grisham novel, but the fact that he thinks a clerk would pretend she was responsible for the verdict makes me wish his publisher would disbar him from ever writing again. The clerk does grab the ver-

dict from the bailiff on page ten, but it bothered me that the judge is the one who reads it out loud. I suppose it would bother court reporters even more to know that the first, last, and only mention of a person of their profession is also on page ten. The reporter is only mentioned as a person the judge looks down at and nods to as he clears his throat. At least the clerk was allowed to do her job (except for reading the verdict). The deputy doesn't get much respect either. He is introduced by being rustled from his slumber by a knock on the door from the jury. Uncle Joe is described as 'ancient' and once personally replaced the jury deliberation room door with a flimsy pine door he could eavesdrop through. Bailiffs luck out after that point in the book because they are no longer mentioned.

After that, there's the usual Grisham: evil corporations, honest hardworking attorneys who are nearing sainthood as they try to save downtrodden and disadvantaged clients. According to Grisham, King Arthur wasn't nearly as heroic. Don't bother reading this section if you do pick up the book. If you've read any of his stuff before it's the same thing. Skip ahead to the next appearance of a clerk on page 118 where the action gets going again briefly. Paul is the chief clerk of Georgia Supreme Court justice, Sheila McCarthy. He is described as a ". . . strikingly handsome twenty-eight-year old single straight male . . ." which (other than the strikingly handsome twenty-eight-year single part) reminds me exactly of myself.

Paul seems to be a very capable clerk as he reminds the justice about a hearing. The justice, in turn, ogles Paul's posterior and once the clerk is out of the room asks her secretary what her chances are with him. My reaction to this was to shoot water out of my nose involuntarily. What does Grisham have against clerks anyway? If I were to see him in person, I would have to tell them that clerks aren't just eye candy and playthings. I'd tell him to get his facts straight and then I would shoot water out of my nose at him voluntarily.

Continued on page 17

The Reading Room (continued from page 16)

Thankfully, clerks are spared any more humiliation for thirty-six pages, which is not nearly long enough. Grisham breaks the peace with the sentence, "There was no weekend dress code at the supreme court because only the clerks showed up." I have two problems with that sentence. First of all, he has clerks working on a weekend. I realize that the job of a clerk in Georgia's supreme court is different than my job, but reading about a clerk working on a weekend almost made me fall out of my chair. The other problem I have with the sentence is that clerks don't matter when it comes to fashion. Justice Sheila McCarthy wouldn't dare wear jeans, sneakers, and a brown tweed riding jacket in front of other judges or lawyers, but she feels quite comfortable dressing the same way in front of the clerks as she would when shoveling manure in a stable or visiting a McDonald's.

There is a short reprieve for clerks until pages 172 through 176 when a man announces his candidacy for Justice McCarthy's seat on the steps of the courthouse. All courthouse personnel stop working when they hear the commotion outside and then Paul is sent outside by the justice to see what is going on. As he listens to the man's speech, Paul thinks about writing some of it down, but he is too petrified to move. Give me a break, preferably on Grisham's writing hand. A clerk is not so easily deterred from taking down notes. He's implying that clerks are easily scared. I don't know a single clerk who would be petrified by a speech. Now a reporter, on the other hand, may indeed be petrified by an incomprehensible speech conducted by a stutterer with an accent who also mumbles. Aside from that, courthouse employees are hardy souls with more grit than that.

There are some benign references to clerks in keeping with the feel of the book up to that point. Courthouse employees are mentioned on page 198 as being people whom an attorney running for the justice position is acquainted with. On page 203, clerks spend the day collecting press accounts about the candidate running against Justice McCarthy and, on page 262, Paul finds a relevant case and is told to shut up by his judge. Apparently Grisham thinks it's all right for judges to ogle their clerks and tell them to shut up. I was already numb by this point regarding the relationship of Paul and his judge, so it didn't bother me too much.

What did rattle me was a theme that is brought forth in various pages before the book ends. On page 274 Grisham writes, "The clerks in the Cary County Courthouse collected rumors, amended them, embellished some, and reduced some, then passed them along." On page 322 he writes that the supreme court justices "... lean on their clerks for useful gossip from down the hall." Finally when he last mentions clerks on page 345 (I wish he'd gotten us out of the book much sooner) he writes, "Ron had already learned that most of the court's gossip was created and spread by the network of clerks, all of them." And this is after he had clerks working another Saturday on the previous page.

If you ask me, Grisham is gossiping, passing rumors, amending them, and embellishing them when it comes to clerks. The public will read this stuff and say to themselves, "He was a lawyer, so that's how it really must be." He's probably bitter that clerks passed the rumor (undoubtedly true) that he tried to get out of paying his court fees.

So, let me summarize. In a nutshell (a place where Grisham belongs) "The Appeal" didn't appeal to me at all. Other than the "strikingly handsome" part, the entire book is an affront to court employees.

I felt sullied after reading "The Appeal" and I don't mean having my life saved by a great pilot making a spectacular landing on the Hudson River. Unless you want your blood pressure to rise, skip the book. After all, I told you about all the important stuff.

Don't thank me; I'm just performing a necessary service. I'm reading Grisham so you don't have to.



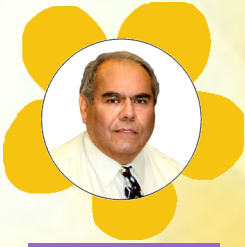
Bob Gutierrez is a Courtroom Clerk for the Hon. James L. Storker, [Santa Clara County](#), Department 13. Bob has worked at Santa Clara for 27 years. When Bob is not at work, he enjoys writing; creating humorous music videos for his YouTube channel, *The Music Moron*; playing guitar; running; hiking; and making his wife, Beverly, groan at his terrible jokes. His lap also serves as a bed for his two cats.



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