

The Judicial Council of California is the constitutionally created policymaking body of the California courts. The council meets at least six times a year for business meetings that are open to the public and videocast live via the California Courts website. What follows is a formatted and unedited transcript of the last meeting. The official record of each meeting, the meeting minutes, are usually approved by the council at the next business meeting. Much more information about this meeting, the work of the Judicial Council, and the role of the state court system is available on the California Courts website at *courts.ca.gov*.

>> Welcome to our Judicial Council members as well and all of our guests here today. Of course we all jointly extend our special welcome to the families and friends and loved ones of the award honorees who are here, and raise your hands if you are in that category. I know there's a lot of you.

>> You also deserve our tremendous thanks and gratitude for everything you have done to assist our honorees throughout their careers really and for making sacrifices to help them and enable them to be the dedicated public servants that they are. I know that they owe a little bit of their success or maybe a lot of it to each and every one of you, so thank you. It's really a pleasure to gather in celebration of our incredible leaders for all of their accomplishments. The council created the Distinguished Services Award I think about 31 years ago, and the Aranda Award 36 years ago. Since then, there has never been a shortage of people to recognize over the years. We probably celebrate our public servants for the breadth of their impact and the work they do, all of their contributions in addition to their day jobs for working tirelessly to promote fairness and access to the courts. Their stories are each uniquely inspiring and we also thank everyone who nominated him for the recognition today and those who are contributing or who have already contributed to the videos that we are going to see shortly. I have a fun fact for you. In terms of the number of years collectively at this group represents in terms of their service to the judicial branch, any guesses? 20. No. Way off. 130 years. Of course. Yes. of course, Justice Gilbert contributes 50 of those years. He's always been an overachiever but you'll learn that shortly. Thank you for your years of service and for enhancing the public's trust and confidence in the judiciary. Congratulations on this recognition by your friends and by your colleagues. Thank you.

>> Thank you so much, Chief. This is really one of the most exciting days that I participate in. It is really a wonderful day to be able to recognize judicial leaders in the state of California. These prestigious awards that we are going to be presenting today shine a spotlight on the trailblazers whose exceptional leadership, contributions, and commitment have advanced access to justice across our state. We are honoring today five exceptional individuals who have demonstrated unparalleled commitment to public service and have made us all look very good. The Aranda Access to Justice Award is cosponsored by the Judicial Council, the California Judges Association, the California Lawyers Association, and the Commission on Access to Justice. The award honors a judge who has demonstrated a long-term commitment to improving access to our courts and who has significantly improved access for low and moderate income Californians. We have two recipients who are being honored with this award this afternoon. Ask

them to step forward and we will proceed with those awards. Our first Aranda Award recipient is Judge Sam Jessner. I walked in with your mother, an accomplished lawyer, the first woman Bar Association president in Los Angeles I understand and I believe also as we were walking in, she noticed Bill's name above the board and said, I worked with Chief Justice Ron George and I believe she was on the council as well, so quite a legacy of service in your family that you are certainly carrying on. Judge Jessner, you were appointed back in 2007, served as the court's presiding judge from '23 to '24 and as a presiding judge, you focused on expanding access to court users in the public and improving court efficiency. Judge Jessner launched the pathway pilot program to streamline unlimited civil case processing to reduce backlogs. You created the remediation volunteer program to provide free or low-cost mediation for those unable to afford it. You partnered with public transit agencies to provide free transit for jurors, increasing civic engagement and diversity, and you've served as chair of the Judicial Council Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee, vice chair of the Information and Technology Advisory Committee and this impressive list goes on and on. What you have contributed to the branch could take, you know, obviously, hours for us to talk about in terms of not only what you've done for the Los Angeles Superior Court but what you've done for all of us. Let's watch a video at this time that celebrates Judge Jessner and the great impact she has made on advancing access to justice.

>> Both Judge Jessner and I serve on the Judicial Council's Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee. Judge Jessner was just elevated from vice chair to chair of that committee this year. That committee is responsible for reviewing changes in civil law, and updating forms and rules of court, and responding to changes in civil law. Judge Jessner any other committee members were very sensitive to making sure that when we are updating or creating new forms, that we make them in plain language and make them as understandable as we can. So she brings a unique perspective in that she can represent the views of a very large court system, but she also understands the perspective of users of the court.

>> She is now the vice chair of the Information Technology Advisory Committee, and she is the type of judge that just rolls up her sleeves and gets to work. She really is solution oriented. How can we use technology to meaningfully improve the experience of our public, who needs access to our court? She was the executive sponsor of the Video Remote Interpreting Workstream. That workstream was devoted to improving access to limited English proficient citizens of our state. Also, she has led the effort of advancing the hybrid courtroom. She recognizes the importance of ensuring that members of the public are able to access our courts.

>> Well, I believe to her core, she is all about access to justice. I knew this before she became the presiding judge. However, as presiding judge, it was very clear that she was not just going to talk about access to justice. She was a person of action. I think she recognized from the very beginning that there are obstacles within our system that we need to really address and breakdown. Something that was revolutionary and innovative was the decision to create a partnership with Stanford Law School. The court would open its doors to academic researchers to look under the hood and give us advice on what we could do better, how we could change the

actual court system. But I think what makes her a truly remarkable jurist and a transformative leader is that she cares about people. She cares about who they are. She cares about their struggles. She cares about their stories and more importantly, she sees the potential in everyone. This deep sense of empathy that drives her every single day leads to results that we have seen across our court and that have impacted individuals beyond Los Angeles County.

>> And now to present the award to Judge Jessner, please welcome Judge Jeffrey Kaufman and Mr. Terrance Evans, president of the California Lawyers Association.

>> Well, good afternoon, everyone. It is an honor to be here as president of California Lawyers Association to honor all of our winners but in particular to have the opportunity to recognize Judge Jessner and her incredible contributions as a judge and as a member of the legal community. Instead of covering information that's already in her bio, I wanted to share a few examples that I witnessed firsthand of her incredible service to the community. During the time that I was chair of the litigation section of California Lawyers Association, we reached out to Judge Jessner regarding our pathways to the bench program and it was our effort to try to open the doors of opportunity to folks who had been underrepresented as the judges here in California. Judge Jessner opened her courtroom and we hosted a pathways to the bench event in her courtroom there in Los Angeles. And we had hundreds of folks who were applying or thinking about applying, attended that wonderful event at Los Angeles Superior Court. As a result of that program, several folks not only applied, but they have now become judges of superior courts throughout California. That is a great example of her contribution and her service to the community. In addition to that, I see her work with California Association of Black Lawyers, which I am a vice president of, the Black Women Lawyers of Los Angeles, the Langston Bar Association, and other affinity bars throughout the state. She has worked tirelessly to make sure that women and other underrepresented groups have a seat at the table. Have a voice. In addition to that, I've seen the incredible work she has done to create pathways for law students, and through her efforts, we have been able to create scholarship programs and mentorship programs that had an incredible impact and made a difference in the lives of so many people, so as a result of what she has done, impacting lives throughout the great state of California. Not just in L.A. County, but throughout the state. I can think of no one more deserving at this moment of this incredible honor than our amazing jurors here, Judge Sam Jessner, so, Judge Jessner, we are so grateful to have this opportunity to honor you with this amazing award.

>> Let me begin by expressing my deep appreciation and gratitude to admittedly a long list of people, so bear with me. I know I only have nine minutes, so first, thank you to whoever decided the order of presentations today. More specifically, thank you for putting me first on the agenda so that I don't have to follow others who will no doubt give remarks that are far more eloquent and impressive than mine. Let me put a finer point on it. Thank you specifically for not asking me to speak after Justice Gilbert. Based on his witty and transient musings in the Daily Journal, the readability of his appellate opinions and his general knack with humor and storytelling, I sure am glad I don't have to go after him. Sorry, Judge Conklin, good luck. Thank

you to the Judicial Council, the California Lawyers Association, and the Commission on Access to Justice, the sponsors of this award, for selecting me, and Judge Chan to receive this award. And thank you, Mr. Evans, for your kind words. I want to take a minute to congratulate Judge Gilbert on this recognition. His career and his remarkable contributions to California jurisprudence. Congratulations to Judge Conklin who has so ably and firmly led the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee for so many years including through some very challenging budget years. It's been a pleasure for me to serve on TCBAC. Count how many of these abbreviations I talk about over the next couple of minutes, over the past year, and I've been so impressed by your court knowledge, your humility, and your signoff. Go Dodgers. Congratulations to Rebecca Fleming. I've been very fortunate to get to know her over the last several years. It does not take long to recognize her deep knowledge of court administration. I've been impressed by her work ethic, her dedication to not only her own court, but all courts in California. Her willingness to take on complicated subjects with lots of competing views, and her ability to change gears on a dime, and talk about what she plans to wear to a family wedding including whipping out her phone with photos of the options. We have all benefited from her leadership and her friendship. To say that I was very surprised when I learned that I had been selected to receive this award is an understatement. While I am honored and humbled to receive the award, I have spent the last several months feeling like a bit of a fraud, to be honest. I could not have accomplished any of the things I accomplished while serving as presiding judge at the Superior Court in Los Angeles and in connection with the Information Technology Advisory Committee, ITAC, and CCAC, that's three, without the dedicated and amazing people with whom I've had the honor and privilege to work. This award is truly a reflection of the work of many people. Certainly not just me. And I accept this award on their behalf. If you have spent any time with me, you know I tend to use the same eight or 10 phrases over and over. For example, I often say the lawyers when discussing the requirements to file joint trial council. Pretend there is no i in joint. When making difficult decisions as a leader when there was little to no consensus, I would ultimately say, well, this is not a democracy. And one that I often use especially when giving advice to young lawyers or judges is this. I am much more interested in who I get to do something with it than I am in what it is that we are going to do. Put differently, I very much value the opportunity to work with people who challenge me, who are smart, who are all in in terms of the goals of the particular project, who are professional, and if I'm really lucky, who have a good sense of humor. This award represents a perfect summation of having had the opportunity to work on challenging, interesting, sometimes hot button, often ambitious projects and committees with people who are dedicated, courageous, smart, hard-working, and generally wonderful to spend time with. It's a testament to the people who have supported me and unequivocally expanded access to justice for all Californians by guiding the Los Angeles Superior Court to promulgate a prearrestment release protocol for nonviolent nonserious offenders based on constitutional factors, rather than their access to money. Implementing a system in Los Angeles where every litigant can have access to a verbatim record of the proceedings, even if a court reporter is not available. Partnering with Stanford Law School and other academic and research institutions to think differently and more ambitiously about self-represented litigants. And how we can help them better understand court procedures. And as a result, to speak in court proceedings in a meaningful fashion. Creating an

in-house training program for Los Angeles Superior Court employees who want to learn to be court reporters, and Spanish interpreters. Two areas where there are chronic shortages. Providing an ability for litigants to upload documents electronically, refining case flow management and civil cases to more efficiently handle those cases. Training and certifying volunteer lawyers to conduct free mediations for civil litigants. Thinking deeply about remote access to the courts statewide so that litigants can have any full access to court proceedings in a post-pandemic world, thinking about whether a court user, often a self-represented litigants, can understand the form and if the answer is no, how we can work together to change that. These are some of the things I have had the pleasure of rolling up my sleeves along with many others of the past several years to think about, analyze, mobilize others to do and ultimately implement that will affect change. Not just any change, but change that has provided and will continue to provide equal and meaningful access to justice. Let me end by thanking some additional people by name. I was so fortunate to have a formidable team when I was presiding judge, including now Presiding Judge Sergio Tapia. And therefore know how lucky I was to start my term as presiding judge almost the same day he started his position at the court. I also want to thank our Assistant Presiding Judge Ricardo Ocampo, who was pivotal. I know there are members of ITAC and staff in-house. Including Judge Hanson. I always say that we should get the award for most fun advisory committee and the committee that gets things done. Ably led by Judge Sheila Hanson. Thank you for the kind words in the video. We have done a lot of great things in California, especially with regards to remote access long before anyone was familiar with something called COVID-19. Thank you to Commissioner Foster and the amazing Jenny Grantz who supports the work of that committee. We are always looking forward to reviewing yet another form about unlawful detainer's during the pandemic or relinquishing body armor. Right? Thank you to Chief Justice Guerrero. As always, for your support and in addition, thank you to Shelley, or Michelle, whatever you are calling yourself these days. Shelley Curran, Administrative Director of the Judicial Council. Shelley, there are very few conversations I have had with you during which I am not bent over laughing, but we do have serious conversations. I don't want people to get the wrong impression. But I appreciate your approach. And also, thank you to the other members of the Judicial Council, especially Justice Hill. How many steps do you think you logged marching through the basements and attics of our court houses in Los Angeles. Probably several marathons worth, and we so appreciate your support, and I look forward to seeing you at a ribbon cutting ceremony in the very near future. Thank you to the community of legal services providers and bar associations that provided seemingly unending support and expertise in connection with court reporter shortages. You exemplify what it means to be members of the legal profession in terms of civility and dedication to the cause of justice. I am fortunate to be joined today by the members of my family, and I have a big family. I am one of five kids, lucky for all of you, we only have a representative sample present. I have two nieces here. Alexis Black, as well as Megan Schmidt. My almost 92-year-old mother, Patricia Phillips, is here. Thank you for being here and for your contribution to this submission for this award. My children, Olivia Jessner, raise your hand, and Zachary Jessner. Zachary is in dead week for his senior year at Berkeley. I think that means there are no parties at the fraternity but I did find out at lunch that there is a date party at lunch so I should've excised that one. Zachary has dipped his toe into access to justice as he was a member of the

justice court last summer and worked at our Pasadena courthouse. Believe me. His job was much harder than my job as a judge, sitting in a complex civil court room and he had a much more interesting story. Olivia is a graduate student at Stanford and plans to head to law school in the fall. This isn't even a humble brag. This is a brag. She just heard that she was accepted into Stanford Law School. Yes. Only other person I know in this room that went to Stanford Law school is the Chief Justice, and things seem to be working out pretty well for her. Just saying. Finally, my husband. Greg Jessner who managed to make it here after handling not one but two matters in court this morning. That itself manifests his dedication to me. Let me say, there is no Aranda Award without his love and support. Thank you. My mom has mentioned this award and this ceremony, I don't know, maybe 100 times over the past couple of months. She has told me a number of times, whoa, I know Art Gilbert. She also said, I knew Ben Aranda. Well, Mom, you can tell me whether you think Ben would be proud. I sure hope the answer is yes. Thank you very much.

>> Thank you, Judge Jessner. So well deserved. Our next Aranda Award recipient is Judge Bruce Chan from the San Francisco Superior Court. Judge Chan was appointed as a judge in 2009. He is a founding judicial leader of the San Francisco young adult court established in 2015 as the very first court in the nation designed for young adults aged 18 to 25 facing felony charges. Over the past decade, he has developed a collaborative justice model that addresses the unique needs of low income young adults impacted by poverty, trauma, and systemic marginalization. The young adult court focuses on accountability and transformative opportunities, and his work has influenced similar programs nationwide and he is admired nationwide for all that he has done. Additionally, Judge Chan cofounded the Asian American Recovery Services and contributed to the creation of a juvenile drug treatment court here in San Francisco. Let's watch a video that celebrates Judge Chan and the tremendous impact he has made on advancing access to justice.

>> Judge Chan recognized that young adults have a very different need when it comes to life, when it comes to treatment or not treatment or challenges, and so, the idea of the young adult court was born. It's a way to increase public safety by meeting young people where they are at, seeing what they need to be successful. It could be education, safe housing. It could be trauma treatment. It could be addressing substance use. And the court seeks to find out what that is. Find the right tools to address it. Judge Chan and Celina Hennessy, who is the clinical director, they go all over the country speaking at conferences and we take calls almost every month from some estate or some county that is very, very interested in what it is we've created here, and he's a wonderful, wonderful advocate for that.

>> He was always interested in community-based issues. Objectives. He was one of the founding members of Asian American Recovery Services that was specifically set up to address youth in the Asian community that got addicted to drugs. It was natural for him once he established himself on the court to be interested in something like young adult court. He saw that there was a need for specialized attention in a specialized court for this particular age group. He saw that we were treating 18-, 19-, even 23-, 24-year-olds the way we treated 40-

year-olds. The way he deals with the 18- to 25-year-olds in his court is really remarkable. By virtue of himself and the court that he got going, has made all the judges more sensitive to, okay, what is the age of the defendant I have here? What would be the best outcome here? He knows how to talk to people. He knows how to encourage them, and I think that's something that I've always admired about him.

>> He'll really work with the person. What do you think would work for you? What's not working? How can we make this better? That kind of unselfish low ego approach I think just permeates everything Bruce does, but makes them particularly suited to this court. He's not looking for a title or anything else. He'll be embarrassed when he gets this award. He'll be embarrassed when he watches this video and he'll try to shift everything to being about Young Adult Court and staff and the lawyers and the other people who are involved and take the spotlight off himself, but I'm just glad that he's actually getting a little bit of spotlight for once.

>>> An unsung hero obviously that has done so much for San Francisco court and justice across our state. To present the award to Judge Chan, please welcome back Judge Conklin.

>>> Thank you, Justice Hill. Good afternoon. It is my distinct honor as president of the California Judges Association to present one of the Aranda Access to Justice Awards today. This recognizes judges whose work has fundamentally expended the promise of justice, fairness, and dignity for those who come to our courts. Our next honoree is the Honorable Bruce Chan of the Superior Court of San Francisco. Now, Judge Chan's career is a tapestry woven from a profound understanding of both law and the human condition. He's a Stanford graduate. Former trial lawyer with the San Francisco public defender's office but he's viewed our system from a number of different perspectives. From that perspective as a criminal defense lawyer. Also as chief of council to the assembly for Public Safety Committee. And for the last month and a half as a judge here in San Francisco but we honor him today with this pioneering vision he had which you hurt a little bit about. This vision bridges the gap between the bench and his court room and really, a modern neuroscience lab. About a decade ago, Judge Chan helped conceive and preside over this groundbreaking Young Adult Court here in San Francisco. This court, when you think about it, is built on a revolutionary and compassionate premise that the brains of 18- to 25-year-olds are developing, particularly in areas governing impulse control and risk assessment. Science suggests this neurological immaturity doesn't excuse crime but it does demand a different response and a different approach. One focus on rehabilitation rather than simply on punishing. Judge Chan's courtroom became physically a laboratory for second chances. He presided not with cold detachment but with a more engaged type of humanity. He asked those who appeared in front of him about things such as GED progress, being home with young kids and the sleep schedule that's impacted and about their prospects, job interviews. He and the team that he had wrapped around young adults, generally facing felony charges, with a coordinated web of support that included housing support, therapy, education, and employment. The results that were brought about speaks volumes. A more traditional path may lead to a lifetime of consequences, recidivism, Judge Chan's approach and the approach of his court has seen graduates be able to make cycles of trauma, addiction, and homelessness. His graduates

left this court not as hardened criminals but as employed parents, students, and contributing members of society. By their own report, graduates have said they simply aren't the same person. They were before they left young adult court. So this approach, Judge Chan's commitment to restorative justice is rated as you heard in a lifetime of service beyond the bench. He was a founding member of Asian American Recovery Services. He served on a number of boards including the Chinatown Youth Center and the Asian Law Caucus. It's clear that he understands that true justice requires investment in the community. So, Judge Chan, you have shown all of us that the law can be both smart and merciful. You've answered the call to build a more equitable system. In your case, it is one young adult at a time. You've given what could be a theoretical promise of access to justice a very unique, living, breathing, and in the end, profoundly successful form. So for your leadership and your unwavering compassion and your dedication to ensuring that our legal system provides young adults with access to a bespoke form of justice tailored to their particularized needs, it is my great privilege to present you with the Aranda Access to Justice Award.

>> Thanks. I'm a little overwhelmed to say the least because like most trial court judges until this started happening 10 years ago or so, my preference was always to toil in relative obscurity. You know, which is the ambition of most trial court judges. A special thank you to Judge Jessner who reminded me that no, it's not time for you to go up there just yet. Wait till they introduce you. I wish you were presiding judge in San Francisco at some point. You would've steered me right. One of the highlights of today was getting to meet Justice Gilbert in person. I've been reading his column for years. I went up to him. I said, I like your stuff. It's great. You know what happened. He said he's going to send me a book. So for those of you looking to save a little money, just tell Arthur Gilbert he is great. Thank you, Judge Kaufman, for the kind introduction and to all the members of the council for having me today and it's a great honor. As you heard, we started our court 10 years ago because 18- to 25-year-olds are overrepresented in the criminal justice system as a proportion of the percent of the total publishing at the same time, we know that transitional youth had this incredible capacity to learn and change. I know we have some trial court judges here in the room and some appellate court justices who are trying to forget what those days were like but when you are facing a young person who is committed a serious crime, how many times do you wish there was a treatment program where people understood their behavior, educational, vocational training provided by professionally trained support of adults where the young person was positively occupied during most of the day and if they were spending time with peers, those peers were doing the same thing. Well, we have programs like that and every one of our jurisdictions. It's called college. And for us, the real issue has always been, should how we respond to the inevitable missteps of young people depend on income and access to higher education? Judge Kaufman talked about the neuroscience and I'm not going to talk you through the dumbed down version of neuroscience, but I will ask you to consider this. If you are ever under the age of 25, were you ever able to rent a car from Avis or did they say, we can rent you a car but it's going to cost you an additional \$500. That bastion of neuroscience, the rental car business, they understand something about young adults, and they tend not to control their emotions really well and their decision-making can be somewhat flawed. I know we have parents of teenagers and young

adults here. We were all in that stage at one point but if you ask any parent of a teenager or young adult, they will tell you that while their son or daughter can cast a ballot, they can enlist in the armed forces, they can go get ink at a tattoo parlor, they still have an awful lot to learn. First, they had to continue their education. And they have to learn how to get up in the morning on time to get to work to figure out what to do when they get there and how to get along with others. They have to understand for themselves who should be their partner and hopefully a healthy relationship. While striving for that sense of self, they have to understand in their hearts and know that life is going to have a series of ups and downs. There's going to be a series of challenges. There's going to be hopefully a parent, a teacher, a coach, a relative, some responsible adult who is willing to listen and offer a helping hand at some point. I think the bottom line for us has always been, we want to develop resilient young people who understand that there will be challenges. It's not a question of will there be, but a question of when. We want them to have the emotional and practical skills to navigate those inevitable ups and downs. This work from the outset for me has always been deeply personal. You heard reference to my prior career, but as a young public defender in the early 1980s, I represented countless clients who were being prosecuted for possessing and selling small amounts of crack cocaine. Typically \$20. Many if not most sold to consume, to fuel their own addiction. Nevertheless, during that era, the demands of the never-ending war on drugs was to prosecute and imprison predominately Black men. This use of drugs by virtue of their economic disadvantage occurred on city streets or public houses and courtyards rather than upscale nightclubs, or bars within private homes. Certainly, when I was a lawyer in that era, there were fewer treatment options than today. There were no drug courts and moreover, the prevailing belief amongst judges and prosecutors was that if a person previously didn't seek help or was unsuccessful with treatment, he or she wouldn't be given another chance except in rare instances. We now know over the years that the first attempt at treatment is often unsuccessful. Depending on the duration and severity of one's addiction, it may take a while. Several tries at least couple enjoyed it by episodes of relapse before the person can achieve sobriety. And even back in the 1980s, the results were abundantly clear. Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters were cycling in and out of jail, prison, and addiction. Grandparents were doing their best to raise children instead of their incarcerated parents, and not only were the elderly fraying under the burden of being full-time parents, so were the institutions that find and bind together communities. As public defenders, we can do little to stop or slow a court system that seemed to us intent on punishing instead of treating addiction. The clients that you may have heard about at Young Adult Court, they are the children and grandchildren of people that it represented as a lawyer. Most if not all of them had been neglected. They witnessed extreme violence, persistent poverty. Critically, they have lacked the parental example and guidance that is the key to having someone transition successfully into adulthood. So in many ways, our court is an aftereffect substitute for something which should've happened years ago. 10 years on, 200 graduates later, we made one small step trying to right a wrong. We've started to straighten something out that's been crooked for far too long. At the dedication of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., President George W. Bush said, a great nation does not hide its history. It faces its flaws and corrects them. That's been the story of the judiciary in California. Our collaborative courts are dedicated to the proposition that we cannot arrest our

way out of complex problems. Beginning under the leadership of Chief Justice George and continuing with Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye and of course Chief Justice Guerrero, California has created and supported drug courts throughout the state, learning from our neglect of those men and women who served in Vietnam, there are veteran justice courts to address the myriad issues and needs of those who served in the Middle East and beyond, and now, relying on the neuroscience of the developing brain, not as an excuse but as an explanation, we have young adult courts and I see Judge Hernandez is here, a proud birth parent of the Orange County young adult court. If you ask any of the presiding judges in any of the 58 counties, I think they will tell you that their courts are like an emergency room in a busy public hospital. Every day, we confront these intractable difficult social problems, whether it be child abuse and neglect to name a few. We as judges have a real chance to make an impact on our communities by investing in young people. That is what has been the most satisfying thing about this. My children are here today along with my wife. They've been great teachers to me about the vagaries of being a transitional youth. I haven't used some of the counseling skills I used on them. It is more of an enlightened dictatorship as Judge Jessner referred to. I know I could talk another hour if I was given that. I'm coming up on my nine minutes. Let me tell you what we tell our participants from day one. You are going to come to court every week in the beginning. We are going to work together, not tell you, but we are going to work together to create a plan around the goals you want to achieve, and we are going to hold you accountable to those goals. We will respond to success and those occasions where you come up short. We are going to problem solve together, whether it is housing, food assistance, replacing your Social Security card, getting healthcare, taking the driving test, paying off those parking and moving violations you had when you were an unlicensed driver, finishing school and of course, trying to find suitable childcare but most important, most important of all, there are going to be honest and at times difficult conversations. In order to understand what brought you to us in the first place. What was the impact of your conduct upon others? What are the steps you can take to achieve some form of success in life as you define it? And it has been hands-down the most enjoyable thing I've ever done as a judge. It's been a privilege to be part of the journey of so many young people and for the 200 graduates, I feel like my family expended from two kids to 202. This award, I'm the recipient but in many ways, it's to be shared with all the members of the team, many of whom are here today, and your dedication to not giving up, not quitting on people is something that has inspired me. I close just by saying, one of our participants a long time ago, I told him, I said, you know, as a court, as a team, we don't quit on people easy. But I can't have you quit on yourself. And sure enough, a couple weeks later after he had been falling short on things, he talked to his case manager and said, you know something, I really feel like I was quitting on myself. It is those moments that have enriched me and I am so grateful to the Judicial Council for this award. And on behalf of the entire team, it's something we are going to cherish forever, so thank you very much. [Applause.]

>> Two absolutely wonderful honorees. Please join me in giving them both another round of applause. Our first Distinguished Service Award is Court Executive Officer Rebecca Fleming from the Santa Clara Superior Court. Ms. Fleming has dedicated her career to strengthening California's judicial system, serving over 18 years in senior management before becoming CEO

of the Santa Clara Superior Court in 2017. Rebecca has led technological innovations that have improved public access and streamlined the court operations such as online case filing, find payments and real-time updates. Ms. Fleming actively fosters collaboration between the court and county government promoting civic engagement through a number of outstanding outreach projects. Rebecca is a strong advocate for statewide funding equity, serving as vice chair of the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee and working with the Legislature on various budget solutions. She is a trusted and valued voice in the court CEO community and highly respected across the state. She's also championing all the time initiatives to enhance access to justice including improving interpretive services, addressing court reporter shortages and standardizing court data collection. Let's watch a short video that celebrates Ms. Fleming and the remarkable impact that she has had on advancing justice here in California.

>> Rebecca is driven by public service. She believes in the work of the court. She loves the court, and I think that she believes in justice. She believes in the court's position in ensuring democracy in our country, and I think that she is committed to public service all the time and all the things that she does. She helped us develop a strategic plan and part of that strategic plan was really focused on what will our court do to make sure that we have access to justice, we have fairness, that we do things without bias and impartially. She is also really been on the forefront of technological things like remote appearances and developing tools like the ability to pay tool for traffic tickets and that kind of thing. She has helped to bring us into the 21st century. She has done really great things for our court but she is also having an impact statewide with the other CEOs preventing she is highly respected around the state. This award is so appropriate for some with such reach and such impact across the whole state.

>> Rebecca is able to bring her knowledge and experience that she's gained in her years in Stanislaus and Santa Clara to a much broader statewide perspective when issues come up, from a policy standpoint, from an operational standpoint, technology, all those areas, she can bring her experience and knowledge to the table, work with other court executives, other judges, other branch leaders, members of the legislature. She's just got a track record and a history of really representing the interest of our branch, both internally and externally very, very well. She is concerned about others, and she is motivated to do the right thing for the public good. And I don't think you can top those qualities when you are looking at a court executive officer here in California.

>> I had the privilege of coming to know Rebecca when we came to the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee together. The Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee is a committee made up of presiding judges and court executive officers, whose role is to make decisions concerning funding for the trial courts. As soon as I was appointed chair, based upon working with Rebecca, I knew I needed somebody of her caliber to make this committee successful. The court executive officers are really the secret to the success of the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee because they make funding decisions and deal with funding issues almost every day, and she has such respect from CEOs statewide, they trust her. She is so skilled, in knowing what the courts need, and helping them to do their job. So as a statewide CEO, I think people

will look back at Rebecca and say, she was there for us. She got us what we needed to do our job and she should be thanked and appreciated for that.

>> On top of being so accomplished, just a joy to work with as anyone who has worked with you on any committee or any endeavor, and now to present the award to Ms. Fleming, please welcome court executive officer Kim Turner from the Mendocino Superior Court.

>> Good afternoon, Chief Justice Guerrero, council members, and all of the honored guests who are here today. When I'm asked about my job as a CEO, I often tell people it's like being a short order cook with really complicated recipes. The number of decisions on subjects ranging from personnel to budget to technology to facilities to community engagement to procedural fairness, and the consequences of those decisions are often daunting and far-reaching. The CEO wears many hats. Clerk of the court, jury commissioner, and chief of operations and administration. The larger the court, the higher the profile in the community and the greater the impact can be on justice partners and community members who rely on court services. Satisfying the needs of litigants, lawyers, jurors, the media, and justice partners, is a tall order and requires exceptional organizational skills and communication and planning. Then factor in the bifurcated PJ CEO leadership model in which the leadership team exchanges every two years. It's incumbent on the CEO to flex her style, to align with the new PJ style and priorities. These conditions must look seamless to the public, staff, and court partners and it falls primarily to the CEO to demonstrate the steady leadership that keeps the court moving forward to meet the public service mandate. The few, the brave, and Rebecca, I would say, a little bit crazy, CEOs then agreed to take on even more challenges by stepping up to the branch leadership, sharing the important committees that provide the information and policy recommendations to the council. This work requires diplomacy, strategic vision, and excellent interpersonal skills. While it's exhilarating to be engaged in this work, it's also exhausting as the day job of the CEO in the trial court remains a constant calling. My colleague, Rebecca Fleming, has checked every box on the list of tasks I just mentioned and has done so with poise, intelligence, and great humor. She is among those rare public servants whose embraced every aspect of her job as CEO and branch leader. As the current CEO of Santa Clara Superior Court, one of our largest trial courts, as the cochair of a Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee, one of the council's most influential committees, and is the former chair of the Court Executive Advisory Committee, the nerve center of trial implementation, Rebecca has distinguished herself time and again as a visionary leader. Rebecca's time on the council was persuaded by the myriad challenges of COVID pandemic, requiring exceptional creativity to make justice services available at a time of great uncertainty and logistical complexity. Rebecca was fully immersed in every major structural change in the branches since metal during this unprecedented time. She is an innovative, tireless, and ardent advocate for our justice system. I am immensely proud of her and truly honored to have the opportunity to introduce my friend Rebecca at the ceremony, to recognize her many achievements in strengthening our branch and advancing our mission of fair and equal justice for all Californians. Please join me in honoring her amazing contributions.

>>> I am overwhelmed and I am suffering from imposter syndrome right now. Chief Justice Guerrero, Administrative Director Shelley Curran, members of the Judicial Council, colleagues and friends, thank you. It's an honor to stand before you today. I am deeply humbled to be receiving this Distinguished Service Award. The work we do in the judicial branch is more than a job. It is a calling rooted in fairness, stability, and the service to the people who look to us in some of their hardest times. It requires long days, resilience, and an unwavering belief in the mission we share. This year, actually tomorrow, marks for me nine years with the Superior Court of Santa Clara County and 27 years in the judicial branch. When I began this journey, my children were babies. Today, they are grown adults, still on the payroll. Together with my husband, they weathered the unpredictable rhythms of a life dedicated to public service. The late nights, the weekend calls, and even the day the courthouse basement flooded when James and I were wading through the water in flip-flops, trying to find the shut off valve for the water. I am profoundly grateful for their humor, their patience, and their unwavering support. To our Chief Justice Guerrero, thank you for your extraordinary leadership, your clarity, compassion and steady vision challenged all of us to approach our work with integrity and courage. To Administrative Director Shelley Curran, your decisiveness, your empathy, your thoughtful leadership set the standard for how a branch built on public trust should be guided. It is a privilege to serve under your direction. Early in my career, I was directed one major direction. Learn trial court funding thoroughly. The guidance was simple. Read and commit to memory a paper written by Kim Turner. A newly recognized national Center for State courts fellow. That paper became my grounding in the work of the courts. And it still sits in my office today. Meeting Kim later and having her become both a mentor and a friend has been one that greatest gifts of this career. Her steadiness, brilliance, and generosity continues to shape how I lead and how I serve. As the years went on, I learned that our work is sustained by the structure of the deep network of court executive officers across the state. This remarkable community represents the best of collaborative public leadership. We rely on one another for honest guidance, perspective, and the kind of grounded support that can only come from peers who share this mission. That community has shaped me in countless ways and reflects the true strength of a shared purpose. I have worked with nine presiding judges, and I am fortunate enough to have seven of them in this room today. Raise your hand, please. Two my presiding judges, you are not simply colleagues, you are my trusted partners and friends in this work. You each embody what it means to steward justice. Principled, collaborative, and thoughtful and deeply committed to the people we serve, you have stood with me to every challenge and every success, and the trust we built has been essential to all of our accomplishments. To my executive team, the core of my court family, who is also here in the audience today. This award belongs to you as much as it belongs to me. Your dedication, creativity, and steady commitment make meaningful change possible. Every improvement and innovation has been a shared effort shaped by your belief in our mission. Into the nearly 600 extraordinary employees and judges of the Santa Clara Superior Court, you are the backbone of our institution. Every clerk courtroom assistant, judicial officer, analyst, IT professional, janitor, manager, you contribute to the ensuring of justice, you contribute to ensuring that justice is delivered with consistency, care, and integrity. I am proud to share this recognition with you. To Judge Conklin, it is such an honor to be on this panel of recognition with you. Thank you for your leadership and your

partnership in our advisory committee work. Your dedication to family, your grounded perspective and your deep humanity make you one of the best people I know. And I want to say this clearly. Whatever work is being recognized today is in many ways the direct result of my time under your leadership. Your guidance, your example and unwavering commitment to fairness have shaped my approach in profound and lasting ways. And finally, to my family and friends, thank you for your love, your patience, and your steadfast support through every unexpected crisis, usually power crisis [inaudible] and every moment when the work required more of me than any of us planned, and to my husband, your advice to just run it the way it should be run, has centered me time and time again. He gave me the steadfastness to remain true to what is right. When I consider this award, I do not see it as mine alone. I see the people who taught me, supported me, walked beside me, mentors, colleagues, judges, friends, and family. This honor reflects the collective strength of a branch built on integrity, connection, and a steadfast commitment to the work of justice. Thank you, truly, for this recognition, for your trust and for the privilege of serving alongside all of you.

>> [Applause.] How fortunate we are to be able to go work with people like this. Just amazing, as we sit here and reflect on the type of people that we get to work with day in, and day out. Our second Distinguished Service Awardee is Judge Conklin from the Fresno Superior Court. Judge Conklin is the gold standard. John has dedicated 40 years to public service including 20 years in the Fresno Superior Court and he is one of the most humble and kind individuals you would ever want to meet, as well as being one of the most accomplished and outstanding judges in the state of California. Judges go to him with the toughest of problems and John will drop absolutely everything as busy as he is, to help them out. As presiding judge and Executive Committee member for years, he guided the court through budget challenges, expanded access, promoted judicial education and youth programs. And being the point person for mock trial for years and years. And for the past decade, Judge Conklin has chaired the advisory committee where he has been instrumental in developing statewide conditions for managing and allocating judicial branch resources, a job that really requires a combination of Henry Kissinger and maybe Condoleezza Rice, and you put it all together so well. Under your outstanding leadership, the committee has explored new approaches to achieving greater trial court funding equity, and you guided the branch with a deft touch and even hand amid severe budget crises throughout, as well as the challenges of COVID-19, which added an extra dimension to all of it. You've ensured, John, the budgeting process remained fair, transparent, and grounded in the best interests of the judicial branch as a whole. Everyone trusted you because you are fair to your core, and now, let's watch a video that talks about John and how lucky we are to have him as a member of our branch.

>> Judge Conklin, after he joined the bench in Fresno Superior Court was on the Executive Committee for almost 15 years. Of those 15 years, one full term of being presiding judge, he not only worked through various challenges where we had to, for budget reasons, close down all of our outlying courts. He made sure that remote access was still available. He is committed to access to justice, fairness, impartiality, all of those things are embodied in him. He has served as an adjunct instructor at San Joaquin College of Law. He has served as mock trial director more

or less for the court side for probably all of the 20 years. It shows what a judicial officer should do to bring not just your own knowledge and limited corner, but to expand it, to give back beyond that which you are appointed to do.

>> I first met him on our Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee and he was a new presiding judge, and so he had been appointed to the committee. The advisory committee was a representation of all the courts through presiding judges and court executive officers. It reviews policy that is related to the distribution of the money that comes into the state budget. It is a very complex issue that has so many stops and goes and speed bumps and he was able to navigate all of these challenges that we've had and facilitate conversation among all of us. He has really facilitated some very, very significant changes over the years with the funding. He keeps it at a very high level, what is best for the branch, making sure that equity and fairness and every voice is included in he just really is invested in success for everybody.

>> I first met Judge Conklin when we were both assistant attorneys and I could tell from the first time I met him that he was someone I wanted to emulate. When I joined the Fresno Superior Court, a couple of years after he did, he was already so well respected on the bench, and that says a lot about his work ethic and just how exceptionally intelligent he is. With respect to the bench officers, he's chaired our Education Committee and he has served as supervising judge and he's done much of our programming and materials. I've had members of the community who have served as jurors in his department or have been in his department supporting family members tell me what an exceptional judge he is, and how they felt like they had a fair hearing and a fair process. Judge Conklin is the embodiment of a great public servant. The residents of the state of California are the beneficiaries of having an incredibly exceptional judicial officer and person.

>> Now, to present the award to Judge Conklin, Judge Kim Gaab from the Fresno Superior Court.

>> Thank you, Justice Hill, Chief Justice Guerrero, members of the council, and a very special welcome to Judge Conklin's family and friends. I know many of them are here today. And others are watching on video. It is an absolute honor to present this award to my dear, dear friend, Judge Conklin. As you saw in the video, I've known him for 20 years. He has been on my speed dial for the entire 17 years that I have been on the bench, and he has been on the speed dial of many, many, many of our colleagues, whether it is an issue with respect to court administration, or if it is a legal issue, he will drop everything to help you. Anyone that knows Judge Conklin knows he is the most timely and efficient bench officer that we had in the state. I'm quite confident in saying that. So when I was asked to make some remarks today, I remembered one of my colleagues tell me, when you are giving the marks, be interesting, be funny, but most of all, be brief. And the be brief is Judge Conklin's motto, along with go Dodgers. We got that in three times. So I will endeavor to be brief in my remarks, but that is exceedingly difficult in summarizing why Judge Conklin is so, so deserving of this award. Judge Conklin, from the time he was appointed to the Fresno Superior Court, was instantly

involved in court leadership both at the local level and at the state level. You saw from the video, he served 15 years on the court's executive committee. What was not in that video is that that required being elected every two years to that committee. And that says a lot about Judge Conklin that his colleagues, both of the experienced colleagues that he knew that he came on the bench with as well as new colleagues voted him into that position and that is because that is a true testament to his leadership and his skill and his intelligence level and his advice and his guidance that they would do that. He was a supervising judge with the court. He was the presiding judge with the court and at the time, he was the presiding judge. We were coming out of the most significant budget shortfall that we had on the bench at least since I've been a bench officer and what that entails for Fresno is we were required to close all of our outlying courts. Seven of them. And that was going to be quite a hit for access to justice and the fair administration of justice, but Judge Conklin took the initiative to institute remote proceedings. Remote proceedings, remote domestic violence services, electronic search warrants, interpreting, to make sure those communities were not going to lose access to justice. He spearheaded those efforts, and this was all well before the pandemic. We didn't have anything remote at the time. But that shows his commitment as a public servant and his commitment to the community. Judge Conklin also served for six years on the Judicial Council. He's been involved in many committees and worked with the Judicial Council but his most significant work as you've heard a little today from the prior recipients, was chairing the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee for 10 years. Many people in this room understand the work that's involved in that committee, but there are a lot of people particularly family of John that don't really understand what was involved in that. That is a full-time job in and of itself. And Judge Conklin at the time he's doing this is handling the most complicated and difficult criminal calendar, criminal trials that we have. The most significant cases, and still made time and dedicated time to do that. For those that are not familiar with the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee, that committee is tasked with making conditions to the Judicial Council on the funding for trial courts. And that committee proposes new methodologies for the allocation of equal funding among the trial courts without shifting funding among the trial courts and that's all done in a diverse, constantly changing dynamic environment that involves budget shortfalls, it involved the COVID-19 pandemic, just to name a few of the issues that is dealt with. I served on that committee with Judge Conklin and saw firsthand both as a colleague of his on superior court and on the committee the amount of work that went into that. There's also another longtime member who is here today, David Yamasaki, and he is for those of you that are not familiar with him, the court executive officer of Orange County Superior Court. And he submitted a letter of support of Judge Conklin's nomination for this award, and he summarized beautifully Judge Conklin's work and why he is so deserving of this award, and rather than paraphrase, I did want to read a very brief portion of that letter. Judge Conklin leads with compassion and unwavering resolve. He is a model of integrity, whether he is handling difficult budget choices or facilitating heated and contentious debates. He is ready to provide praise to others, particularly the diligent Judicial Council employees, and equally quick to accept responsibility when necessary. He consistently exemplifies that being a leader is about more than just making choices. It's about having integrity, humility, and service. I would just add to that that what makes Judge Conklin so deserving of this award is not just his personal

commitment to the fair administration of justice and equal access to the courts. It's because he elevates his colleagues on the Fresno Superior Court and throughout the state to do the same. And that is a true definition of an exceptional leader and a great public servant. It is my absolute privilege to present the Distinguished Service Award to Judge Jonathan Conklin.

>> Good afternoon, Chief, Justice Hill, and fellow council members, one and all, thank you. I'm way out of my league, so I'm going to try to keep my comments brief. I know you all want to hear from Justice Gilbert in any case, so I'm going to keep these very brief. I truly respect and appreciate this award, the comments from Judge Gaab and those on the video. But I didn't do any of this. But we sure did. This council, the members of TCBAC. We sure did. And I truly appreciate everything that they have done to help us achieve what we have. I described this, and Rebecca knows this, I'm going to keep my comments brief because if I talk about Rebecca too much, I would make it through it. But this is truly teamwork. I've been privileged to serve on this council for six years. I was privileged to serve on subcommittees before and now, and thanks to the Chief, and thanks to Justice Hill and Shelley, I look forward to being able to continue that as I transitioned through some career changes, but I want to stay busy. I'm gonna step away from my comments for a moment to acknowledge my wife and what she has done to allow me to do this. Because as Justice Gaab acknowledged and as Rebecca knows so well, this is about a 72 hour a day job. And my wife was more than patient. So I thank her for that. I looked up before I decided to speak today, the Distinguished Service Award of what it meant. It says the award recognizes exceptional contributions to the administration of justice. It celebrates leaders and partners who demonstrate extraordinary dedication to making the judicial branch more effective and more equitable. And that is what you folks do every day. That is what we as judges and court officials do every day, for those of you in this courtroom, pardon me, in this council chambers not a courtroom we try to do that everyday. Pardon me. And from my experience serving on this council and superior court for 20 years, we accomplish that goal. I was chatting with a fellow judge who commented that as individuals, as judges, we are not particularly important, but the work we do as judges every day is particularly significant. I would also like to acknowledge the work of the court executive officers and their staff that allow us as judges to do our job every day. There was a comment made on the video and I firmly believe that. And I do not mean any disrespect to my fellow judges, appellate justices, the Chief Justice or any other judicial officer in the room. We can't do this job without our CEOs. We can do this without the administrative officers that run our courtrooms and our branch and we should not forget that. I also mentioned that this award, pardon me, as I mentioned that this award acknowledges that it is not an individual work but teamwork that is performed with individual officers. [Inaudible.] I already acknowledged Justice Hill but I have to say actually I would not be wearing a robe today if it were not for Justice Hill. And I mean that. Zlatko Theodorovic and I are close friends. I came on to the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee thanks to Justice Hill's help as I matriculated through as a true novice. I've only been on the TCBAC for a few years, and I jumped in and there was Rebecca to catch me. But then there was Zlatko to help me understand how the budget process works. I appreciated the speeches from everybody else. By the way, Judge Jessner is right, why they put her first and me fourth in speaking, but the comments from all you folks about the work that we do and the work

that they do, and the work that Budget Services takes and the importance of the budget to this branch is sort of not acknowledged a lot. I don't mean that as a complaint or criticism, but I do mean that to say that the budget of the trial courts and the state court in particular is critical to the success of the court. And there might be other folks listening in on this today I don't mean this as a political message except to say, our budget is critical to our success and these folks, Rob and Zlatko and these people I work with every day, they take this little sliver of a budget, compared to the general fund of the state of California, and they work miracles. With this budget. And these council members know this. They keep our courtrooms open and accessible. And sure, do I enjoy serving as chair of TCBAC with Rebecca, sure, but none of it is possible without the budget and without what you folks do to make that budget successful. I do want to take just a moment to acknowledge my colleagues, Judge Gaab, I don't need to say anything more. She hasn't aged a day and I have aged about 40 years in that time. But I truly appreciate working with her as well. Our presiding judge Judge Sanderson and presiding judge elect Judge Jeff Hamilton made the drive from Fresno to be here. I truly appreciate that. And I want to take a moment to say how important all of you are in this room, but nowhere near as important as the eight people sitting in the back row today, my family members. My sister Kim and her husband Gary. My brother Dean, his wife Babs is taking care of their grandson today. My twin brother, Jeff. He's the one wearing the bright red vest that you probably all saw and his wife Joella. My son, Jason, who is a deputy DA in Fresno. My daughter Amy. She lives with her family in Tennessee and could not make the trip today. Mainly because she's in Tennessee and she is also home to go care of her two children and three foster children. I don't know how she does it, but I want to appreciate and acknowledge my family and without them, none of this would happen. I'm going to conclude my comments by acknowledging my mother and father. My dad had a saying, sorry. And my siblings know what I'm about to say. My dad used to say, to all of us, as we grew, find something good, and praise it. And we have tried to make that the cornerstone of our careers and that is so very applicable to what all of you do today. So I want to take just a moment and thank and praise all of you for the work you all do for our trial courts. It is magnificent and appreciated. And Chief, I can't help myself. I need to make one final comment. Go Dodgers.

>> Just over 50 years ago, our next honoree was appointed to the Los Angeles Municipal Court. But a career in the judiciary might never have happened given his many other considerable talents. Art Gilbert is a Renaissance man. Who could have been many things in life? Early in life, he was torn between being an author or jazz musician. And fortunately, his parents urged him to pursue something that might be slightly more practical profession. While in school, several of Art's buddies formed the Four Preps and wound up with 13 singles on the charts. The princes at the Hollywood Bowl, and your hit parade, and yet again, unfortunately, your parents talked you into staying on the sidelines, maybe helping them at rehearsals on the piano, but not following them to the bright lights. Art is fond of the following quote by Louis Pasteur. Chance or luck favors the prepared mind or as Art says, you see what comes up and you take a shot. Well, the California judiciary is so fortunate that he took a shot when when Governor Brown asked him to be municipal court judge in 1975. Seven years later, he was appointed to the Court of Appeal and then appointed to be justice of the division. At every stage of his judicial career,

he has made a real difference instituting reforms, and making it easier for people to understand and access the courts. Justice Gilbert has devoted 50 years to advancing the administration of justice in California. You have served on numerous Judicial Council committees, Art, and you have been deeply committed to judicial education and public understanding of the courts. Art has tirelessly mentored newer judges, teaching them both the practical nuts and bolts of judging, and the deeper questions of judicial responsibility and what it means to be a judge. And how to decide the really difficult cases. Art, you've taught widely, spoken at legal events, contributed more than 300 columns that we have all enjoyed, and we thank you for your wonderful service to your colleagues and to the state of California and now, a brief video to talk about how lucky we all are.

>> I was witness to his entire judicial career, and I saw how thoughtful and devoted he was to his public service. Judges in the municipal court were assigned to the traffic court. Eventually, he became the presiding judge of the traffic court and he was known as the king of the traffic court. He did a lot of innovative things and one was very impressive. He translated all the citations and information about the court into Spanish, which had never been done before. His DNA is to do the right thing on cases, a person that skilled in law could read his decisions and know what is happening and why he reached that decision. I think that's important. He is a model for which all of us try to achieve in doing our work.

>> Arthur Gilbert is considered the poet laureate of the California courts and for very good reason. He has taught generations of judges and lawyers how to write. There is something called a Gilbert opinion, and a Gilbert opinion often starts with one or two sentences that convey the entire case. He tells you what it's about, and then how it's resolved. And then he goes on to very concisely, very clearly give his reasoning. And then ask, does this make sense in the real world? That approach is utilized by so many judges, and will continue to be taught for generations to come.

>> Arthur has authored more than 3000 opinions and he has authored over 300 Daily Journal articles. He had a column. They can be very serious and profound, and they can be so funny that you are laughing out loud while you are reading them. The one I'm going to read is so much fun. It's his take on T.S. Eliot. So remember, this is a motion to set aside a default. 30 days to answer. It's the cruelest month. Dead, dying, decay. An apt description for my brain. Withered, not resplendent. A supplicant, having been thrust upon a table during the time to answer. I asked for relief. Not with a bang, but with a whimper. He has a tremendous breadth of knowledge, of literature, of philosophy, and a spattering of science, so, he can bring all of those to bear on his writing and his teaching. Arthur has a wonderful, nice way about embracing people, and they embrace him in return. Arthur, we all love you and forgive me if I haven't been brief and concise enough.

>> And now, to present the award to Justice Gilbert, Justice Elwood Lui from the Second District Court of Appeal.

>> Chief Justice Guerrero, Justice Hill, members of the council, good afternoon. I too am waiting to hear from Justice Gilbert. Maybe. You know, I listen to the tape. I listen to the comments. Some of these comments I had written were redundant, so bear with me. It is my pleasure to award you, Arthur, the 2025 Distinguished Service Award. You have been an exceptional judicial officer who has served the people of the state of California for more than five decades. But I'm the best witness you have here because I was appointed 10 minutes before Gilbert. I was there from the beginning and I can tell you everything he did, and he's lectured me countless, countless times. Sometimes I listened, sometimes I didn't. And during my hiatus from the bench, 28 years when I was in private practice, I was his lawyer. Can you think about me representing Gilbert in a celebrated case which I recommend you read, Gilbert versus Chang, where we did something brilliant. We reverse the course of the attorney [inaudible] time and time again of not permitting a judge who retired with 10 [inaudible] to serve in a public capacity. You couldn't teach at a public school. You couldn't return to the DA's office. I had one who wanted to be chief deputy DA but he had term remaining. The Attorney General said he would [inaudible] that, but Gilbert prevailed. So out of this came, me being Gilbert's lawyer, questions from colleagues, how did you handle this? Did you have client control? Absolutely not. He was the smartest guy on our team and a brilliant writer he is. He is a lifetime resident. He received his undergraduate degree at UCLA where he majored in English literature. He learned well because he didn't see Justice Rothchild's condition of his comments. Got his law degree from University of California Berkeley and became a deputy city attorney and became a private practitioner before embarking on his judicial career. He started his office in 1975. We went together on the first day we met. He was wonderful. We became bonded at that moment. He was recognized by the court leadership is someone that had the talent and people skills to be a leader and he was made supervising judge of the traffic court almost immediately. He was known as king of the traffic court but I advised him and he listened to me. Don't wear your crown on the bench, and he didn't. A simple but ingenious innovation to translate court documents into Spanish and other languages really helped non-native speaking litigants understand what they were faced with. In 1980, Justice Gilbert was elevated to the superior court. He was assigned to the juvenile court where I was the presiding judge and I supervised him. He was very able, and two years later, he went on to the court of appeal. At that time, Division Six had no place, no courtroom. So I invited him into my chambers. Because he had no place to dwell. And we became roommates. So what did Gilbert tell his former trial colleagues? When you get on the Court of Appeal, you lose your courtroom, but you get a roommate. And he complained about me making too much noise, taking all the space on the conference table. We got along. I saw him write his first opinion. I saw how he brilliantly took to his work and it was great fun. Governor Davis appointed him to the panel of Division Six, and he became a 43 year tenure on the court and he took the long commute almost daily at the beginning from Pacific Palisades. His career has been marked with many recognitions for his outstanding service. He has been given the outstanding jurist award by the Los Angeles County Bar Association. The Beacon of Justice Award by the Los Angeles County Law Library, the Judicial Council's Klep's Award for judicial outreach, named the appellate justice of the year from Los Angeles attorneys twice, received the Bernard Jefferson Award by the California Judges Association, and is a 2024 recipient of the Witkin Medal for the California Bar

Association. As you heard, he's lectured extensively and he's helped many of us become better at our craft especially writing. Now, about his book. Sorry. About his column under submission, it appears monthly in the Daily Journal. He has two volumes of this, and they have been published, and he has donated the proceeds of any sale to charitable causes. And I think that's tremendous. But one of these columns that is often written with humor, he was describing the use of words and he talked about a Laker named Shaq O'Neal, he is talking about the Lakers' upcoming contest with the Sacramento Kings, which Shaq referred to as the Queens and Gilbert writes, Shaq says, the only way the Kings can beat the Lakers is if it starts with a C and the second word ends with a T so what were these words? Cheat? Cheap shots? Chicken deposit? What were these words? And Gilbert says, well, Shaq never reads the Daily Journal otherwise he would dribble my head down the court. So some of you may know that one of Shaq's hobbies is he wants to be a policeman. And so Gilbert wrote I don't have to worry because he only reads the police gazette. He doesn't read anything like the Daily Journal. So I fortunately was a member of the L.A. Harbor commission. And guess what? Shaq was a reserve officer so I showed him this paper. He says, that's amusing, right? So he writes on the column, hey, Gilbert J, what makes you think I don't read the Daily Journal, and it was sent to him by his colleagues, and he almost collapsed. He couldn't believe this was happening. It was very funny. But it is with humor, and he received many awards for his uncommon insights and wisdom. He is known as our judicial court poet laureate but he is a really talented, humble, and simply delightful person. Words cannot describe him with true justice, so congratulations, Justice Gilbert, on receiving this well deserved award.

>> Thank you. Thank you, Chief. My comments are going to be very brief. Because Judge Jessner took up most of my time. You mentioned your mother, Patricia Phillips. And Patricia came in. We hadn't seen each other in a while and she said, hi, Arthur. Do you remember me? Do I remember you? I revere you, as does everyone in the bar. Your contribution to California and to the legal profession goes on forever and I want you to know, we all love you, and I want to acknowledge you. So, Elwood and I met on the first day. That is right when we were appointed. We were very young. Jerry Brown did a lot of things. He wanted to put very young people on the court and I remember when Elwood got the call, they took him out of the crib and got them onto the phone. He's younger than I and Elwood was, we had our practices and we had to close our practices, so it was August 18 when we received the call, but, Elwood, and it took a while to be sworn in, so, so he got sworn in the day before Labor Day and I got sworn in by Stanley Moss on Labor Day itself, so he had seniority over me. And he has tormented me with it forever, but then he left the court and came back, and I spoke at his hearing, and I spoke about his many accomplishments and begged the panel to absolutely lose no time in appointing him, so I would finally have seniority. And then he becomes the administrative presiding justice and I his assistant, so, you can't win. You just can't win. So when I saw all those encomiums about myself on the video and that was my name, I sort of feel like, is that really me? I feel like I'm here subbing for Arthur Gilbert because he couldn't make it. I've been a jurist now for 50, it's been over 50 years, and when you are doing something that you love, you don't realize it at the time. And now that I'm actually retiring, on second thought, maybe I'll change my mind and stay another year, but, no. You look back on it, and you realize how much I loved every minute

of it. Elwood and I, when we first met, we discovered we had a connection. My father had a delicatessen when I was a little kid, and Elwood and his parents would go to that delicatessen, and Barbara, my wife, who I will mention in a moment, in greater detail, went to high school with Crystal, your wife, and we had this connection, and we become the same family for 50 years and shared just about everything in the world together. And my dad, you know, our parents have an effect on our lives and my dad, I remember he told me when I was appointed to the court, that was the municipal court. My parents were always there for me. They never pushed me to do anything, though. They worried, my God, he's not going to become a musician, is he, and starve to death. But I remember my dad when I was appointed, he said, never forget who you are, and I kept that advice to heart all the way through. And my wife Barbara has been invaluable. When I start writing the column, she became sort of an editor in this respect. You can't say that. You are really not going to do that, are you? Maybe you should cut this out and so on. So she has been, she has been by my side all the time. She's a singer. I do play the piano and I played in a number of gigs, and some of the great jazz musicians that I knew, they said to me, you know, you've got it made because people know you as a judge and so, as a judge, they can say you are one hell of a piano player and the thing that worried me is that as a piano player, some people would say, you are one hell of a judge, or the other way around. That always worried me. I am grateful to my colleagues. You really can't do this job without other people. Bonnie Edwards has been with me forever. And she catches little things, mistakes that I made. My colleagues I love dearly. Justice Yegan, Justice Baltodano, and Justice Cody and all the predecessors before that. We've been very close. I remember sometimes, we had heated discussions in our conferences. I remember Justice Perren, we were just yelling at each other and he gets up in the middle of it and goes, I just love this, so we have these heated discussions, yet, we all love each other and we are all great friends, and I know the Chief Justice is really worried about my retiring because I'm going to continue the column. And no longer will I have the constraints and ends of judicial ethics. I actually do have a profound respect for the Supreme Court. I don't know that it's mutual, but I remember I was on the court and all the draconian legislation was passed. The three strikes law and at that time, I said, oh, my God, this is a mess and I was very much opposed to it, and I said, just think, and about 20, 30 years when they try to undo this mess, I won't be around. Boy, was I wrong about that. I know that the Supreme Court has some real difficulty. I don't always agree with their opinions or to be more precise, they don't always agree with mine. But I have tremendous respect for that court because they have a very difficult job, trying to deal with legislation that is difficult to understand. Difficult to draft because of the rather difficult legislation that was passed so many years ago and trying to undo some of the injustices that occurred because of that has been a real chore. I have to thank Jerry Brown, too. When Jerry Brown first became Governor, Elwood and I were on a number of committees to help him select judges and he was really interested in having women and people of diversity on the court, and to a large extent, it really started with Jerry, and Elwood and I worked with him to find really competent people that reflected the rich diversity of the state of California, and it was actually easy. Now, nobody things about women being judges. The best judges I think some of the finest judges are women. It doesn't matter. They are human beings and we have a very diverse court now. All the Governors are doing it, and that's one of the reasons why I think California is a leading jurisdiction that it is. When I

hear those things mentioned about me, I say to myself, is this really me? I think when you're doing your job and you love it so much, you don't think so much about yourself. You don't always think about the impact you may make. You think about, What is the right decision? And I think, because as the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court said, we call balls and strikes. Well, we do, but we do a lot more than that. We make reasoned decisions that cohere, and I'll just tell you, a quick story about when I first became appointed to the Court of Appeal, I said, we were a brand-new division, and I said to myself, you know, I didn't have any mentors, I didn't have anyone to talk to. You can tell I'm a people person. I like settling cases, and schmoozing with lawyers, and people said, gee, you're going to be on the Court of Appeal. You sure you want to do that job, and I thought about all the great jazz pianists that I admired, Art Tatum, I don't know if any of you know about Art Tatum but he was a certifiable genius and I was about 13 years old, 14. My dad took me to hear him at a club, Zardi's, and he said, go up to the piano. I was a little kid working my way up to the piano, and I'm sitting next to Art Tatum and it's like an entire orchestra is playing, and I couldn't quite form the words in my head but I knew, you better go to law school. Forget about the piano. But I thought of, who are the people I really admired? And it was, it was certainly Art Tatum, Bud Powell, it was Herbie Hancock. I could go on and name so many pianists. I look at what they did in you try to get ideas from the best. So I did the same thing with Court of Appeal opinions. Cardozo, Holmes, and Roger Traynor. And something just clicked in me, and I have this view. I don't mean to give a lecture but I'll just do this really quickly. Many times, I found myself doing this. Judges write, you right to understand. And you're writing and writing and you think, oh, I understand it, but then you have to rewrite to be understood because what is an opinion? An opinion is something telling somebody what they can do and can't do. It is telling a judge, you can do this, and you shouldn't do this, and it's telling the bar and the litigants how you decide the cases and what you can do and can't do so no matter how complex a case is, it's about somebody having to do something they don't want to do, or they do get to do what they want to do. No matter how complicated the case may be, if you think of it in those terms, sometimes I found you can sort of get to an answer, and then, you have to say, in an opening paragraph, what the case is about. Can you do that, and sometimes when you do that, you don't really know what the case is about, or, you are not clear about it, and so the idea is to try to make it clear so the public and litigants know what they can do and can't do. I wind up giving a talk on opinion writing. I didn't expect to do that. Anyway, I'm really overwhelmed by this, and deeply appreciative, and I think after 50 years, it's time to move on and let some new blood take over. It's been a glorious ride. You can't plan for something like this. It just happens. And while you are doing it, doing the job, I didn't ever think about being happy. I just was. Because it was such a wonderful experience to bring closure to a problem and to, in any way that I could, make society just a little bit better. So thank you. I'm deeply honored by this, and I'll miss you all. Thank you.

>> What a wonderful afternoon. Let's recognize again our outstanding Distinguished Service Award recipients. Again, congratulations to you all. Today, we have celebrated today five individuals whose dedication to justice has made a lasting impact on California's judicial system. I want to thank all of our award winners who are extraordinary people. I want to thank all of you who joined us today to celebrate with them their accomplishments, and hope you will

all join us for a reception downstairs at the Milton Marks lobby directly after this proceeding and Chief, that concludes our program for today. Thank you so much.