

RALPH N. KLEPS AWARDS
2010 –2011
COURT OF APPEAL, FIFTH APPELLATE DISTRICT
Electronic Writ Processing Program

SPEAKER: Hon. James Ardaiz (Ret.) – Admin. Presiding Justice, Fifth Appellate District
For a long time it has become evident to me that we waste a huge amount of resources just in paper and time alone. And in working on another project it occurred to me that we could create a digitized writ system and eliminate much of the paperwork and just the volume of materials moving around.

SPEAKER: Judy Evans – Asst. Deputy Clerk III, Fifth Appellate District
What we have done on a normal basis as clerks is actually provide the necessary copies to process it. And that means taking that normal writ, which average size could be about 200 pages, close to that, the average size of any petitions that are filed. And making copies; making 3 volumes for us, the court to use locally, and making an extra volume to be sent off to the Attorney General's office.

SPEAKER: Hon. James Ardaiz (Ret.) – Admin. Presiding Justice, Fifth Appellate District
Many of our writs of habeas corpus were several hundred pages long, in terms of the copies that had to be made. They would be moved into the writ conference on Thursday morning; we would vote. Orders would go out on Friday.

SPEAKER: Judy Evans – Asst. Deputy Clerk III, Fifth Appellate District
With the writ program, what we actually did was eliminate the copying of that, and actually scanning whatever petition has been filed, let it be seven pages, or let it be over 600 pages.

SPEAKER: Mary Berryman – Lead Judicial Secretary, Fifth Appellate District
It used to be all on a Thursday, I'd bring down average twenty to twenty-five writs, on a Thursday afternoon or a Friday morning. Now that's a constant flow, on a Friday I may have two; on a Monday I may have five writs to bring down, because they're done.

SPEAKER: Lynne Steele – Sr. Appellate Attorney, Fifth Appellate District
Being able to work anywhere, anytime, you know. I've had situations where I've had to be out of the court, and I am able to continue working as if I were here. I have access as long as I've got internet access, VPN access and a laptop. I'm good to go. I don't need to carry physical writs anymore, and if I finish one I can just move on to the next one and keep working. As soon as I close that document it is essentially transported and becomes part of the system.

SPEAKER: Mary Berryman – Lead Judicial Secretary, Fifth Appellate District
In the writ department we also process motions that come up from the Clerk's office. And with the attorney reviewing the motions, I prepare the orders. And that has freed up my time to be able to process the motions faster because I don't have piles of writs to distribute by Wednesday at noon. My time has been freed and I can do other projects as well now.

SPEAKER: Lynne Steele – Sr. Appellate Attorney, Fifth Appellate District
I don't have to spend a lot of time preparing for cases that are not going to be discussed. And that is true not just for me, but for the justices. If they have questions or concerns they can put that out in the shared comments section and I know up front that they have that kind of concern and I am not surprised when I go to conference. So I can either do more additional preparation. I can, if it's very involved, prepare a supplemental memo; kick the conference for a week perhaps. And the justices know that. I'll send them a little note in the shared comments, and everyone knows that we don't have to prepare for that case or this issue has been resolved. And we don't have to conference.

SPEAKER: Hon. James Ardaiz (Ret.) – Admin. Presiding Justice, Fifth Appellate District
Memo is prepared on the writ and the judges vote; they agree. A writ that is prepared on Monday now has an order that goes out Monday afternoon or Tuesday, as opposed to on Friday. We have eliminated all of the paper and significantly saved staff and judicial time.

SPEAKER: Lynne Steele – Sr. Appellate Attorney, Fifth Appellate District
As the writ attorney, I have a lot of interaction with the justices. They all enjoy the program. They recognize how more convenient it is for them. They can pick up and put down cases when they have a moment instead of being bombarded all at once. It really has worked well for them.

SPEAKER: Hon. James Ardaiz (Ret.) – Admin. Presiding Justice, Fifth Appellate District
We have eliminated copying time; we have eliminated transmittal time; we have eliminated time spent in conference that can be now spent doing other things. We have saved attorney time, administrative time, judicial time.