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Second Appellate District Self-Help Clinic Wins Top Award

Award to be presented tomorrow in Los Angeles

Los Angeles—The Appellate Self-Help Clinic for Indigent Civil Litigants, created by Public Counsel and the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, has been selected as a recipient of the 2008–2009 Ralph N. Kleps Award for Improvement in Administration of the Courts.

The Kleps Award is the highest award given to state courts each year by the Judicial Council, the policymaking body of state courts chaired by Chief Justice Ronald M. George.

The Kleps Award will be presented at a special gathering at 4:30 p.m., Friday, January 8, 2010, in the Courtroom of the Court of Appeal, Ronald Reagan State Office Building, Third Floor, 300 South Spring Street, Los Angeles. Members of the press are welcome to attend.

The free self-help center provides self-represented civil litigants a better understanding of Court of Appeal practices and procedures. It offers assistance in filling out court forms; an opportunity to review paperwork before filing; and information about procedures, filings, and deadlines in the appellate process. For more information on the center, please see <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courts/courtsofappeal/2ndDistrict/fresh.htm>

Created in 1991 in honor of Ralph N. Kleps, the first Administrative Director of the Courts in California, the Kleps Award recognizes innovation in California courts.

“This spirit of innovation is among our most treasured resources as we face unprecedented economic challenges,” stated Chief Justice Ronald M. George and Administrative Director of the Courts William C. Vickrey. “State court systems throughout the nation, including California’s, have been forced to make difficult decisions about court closures, furloughs,

(over)

layoffs, and reductions in services. Finding ways to minimize the impact of these and other reductions on the communities we serve is the challenge presented to each of us during this crisis.”

The Judicial Council selected 8 exemplary programs from a field of 17 statewide nominations. Summaries of all the awarded programs follow.

2008–2009 KLEPS AWARD RECIPIENTS

Online Procedural Manual: *Superior Court of California, County of Amador.* This Web-based collection of job aids outlines most court procedures and includes links to applicable rules and forms. It helps court staff share accurate and consistent information with the public and within the court and is particularly useful in a small court where clerks are called on regularly to work outside their assigned subject matter area.

Binational Justice Project: *Superior Court of California, County of Imperial.* This binational collaborative network with justice partners from Mexico provides free legal services to self-represented litigants, public education, community outreach, and an internship program for Mexican law school students.

Self-Help Online Workshop Registration: *Superior Court of California, County of Monterey.* This online module allows the public to register for self-help center workshops and make appointments for individual review of documents, eliminating a time-consuming trip to the courthouse for residents of this geographically large county. It also automates the process for court staff.

Multi-Option Alternative Dispute Resolution Project (MAP): *Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo.* This is a broad array of dispute resolution options and educational outreach sessions in family law, juvenile dependency and delinquency, small claims, probate, complex litigation, and civil calendars brought together under one roof and conducted in partnership with the local bar and community mediation center.

Online Probable Cause: *Superior Court of California, County of Contra Costa.* This computer application allows a judge on magistrate duty the ability to approve or deny probable cause declarations in real time from any Internet connection. It significantly improves communication with arresting officers, expedites probable cause responses, and improves the processing of judicial workload.

Online Juror Orientation: *Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles.* This fully customized and interactive online program offers the 10,000 people called to jury duty each day in this county an opportunity to complete jury orientation at their convenience and report later on their first day of service. It accommodates the schedules and personal

demands of prospective jurors and helps streamline the orientation process, increasing the effectiveness of court staff.

Giving Families a Chance: The Collaboration between Family Court Services and FIRST 5: *Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara.* Aimed at children under the age of six and their families, this program addresses the common underlying problems that create unnecessary litigation. Participating families are given priority access to an extensive network of county social services, community support, and pro bono legal services, with the court serving as the hub and entry point.

Appellate Self-Help Clinic: *Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District.* This free self-help center provides self-represented civil litigants a better understanding of Court of Appeal practices and procedures. It offers assistance in filling out court forms; an opportunity to review paperwork before filing; and information about procedures, filings, and deadlines in the appellate process.

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