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Memorial Service Planned for Paul M. Li, First Director of CJER

Judicial Education Leader Laid Foundation for California Courts' Statewide Education Program

San Francisco – A memorial service will be held on Saturday, July 26, for Mr. Paul M. Li, the first director of the Center for Judicial Education and Research (CJER), who died on July 12, after a brief battle with cancer. He was 70 years of age. The service will be held at 5 p.m. at Mr. Li's home in Tucson, Arizona.

“Paul Li was a giant in the early history of judicial administration and was a groundbreaking leader in judicial education,” stated Mr. William C. Vickrey, Administrative Director of the Courts. “As director of the Center for Judicial Education and Research, Paul laid the foundation not only for excellent judicial education in California—which became recognized as the best program of its kind in the nation—but also as a program that is emulated in other states and countries throughout the world.”

“Today, our judicial education program continues to respond to the needs of the courts, for example, in the new areas of science and technology, and also offers relevant judicial education programs for court managers and staff.” Mr. Vickery continued. “California's education program has also expanded to include new partnerships with other states and with institutions of higher learning.”

“Paul Li was a true pioneer and a visionary in the field of judicial education,” said Court of Appeal Justice Ronald B. Robie, of the Third Appellate District, who currently chairs the Governing Committee of CJER. “As the first director of CJER, he helped build a program that grew from the Judicial College and a couple of institutes to a comprehensive set of programs, publications, and other educational resources. CJER has long been seen as a model for judicial education in other states, and California judges are most grateful for his contributions.”

“In addition to his leadership in the California judicial branch as director

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of CJER, Paul Li was one of the founders of the National Association of State Judicial Educators, serving on the board of directors and as its president,” said Dr. Diane E. Cowdrey, who is the current director of what is now the AOC Education Division/CJER. “He was a guiding force behind the growth of judicial education throughout the United States and the evolution of judicial educators as a recognized profession. He generously supported other judicial educators around the country seeking assistance in developing their own state judicial education programs.”

In 1973, the Judicial Council of California and the California Judges Association created CJER, which later became the Education Division/CJER of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The creation of CJER was modeled after a 1971 agreement between the State Bar of California and the Board of Regents of the University of California to perpetuate the Continuing Education of the Bar (CEB) for attorney education.

Mr. Li served as the first director of CJER for almost 20 years, from July 1, 1973, until he retired in 1993. He played a key role, as a staff attorney at the AOC at the time, in planning and designing the structure of CJER, building support among members of the judiciary, and writing the final proposal that was approved by the Judicial Council. The CJER Governing Committee, which became an advisory committee to the Judicial Council in 1993, was charged with “improving the administration of justice through comprehensive and quality education and training for judicial officers and other judicial branch personnel.”

Under Mr. Li’s leadership, CJER became a model for judicial education programs in other states and countries. Due to his expertise in the field, Mr. Li served as a judicial education consultant for several states and more than 20 countries.

He was a founding member, in 1974, of the National Association of State Judicial Educators (NASJE), serving as a director (1974–1976), vice-president (1976–1978), and president (1978–1980). He was honored by the NASJE Board of Directors with the title of Judicial Educator Emeritus in 1993, the first so honored. In addition, he was a lecturer and principal consultant for the first (1985), second (1987), and third (1989) Conferences of Chief Justices of Asia and the Western Pacific, as well as for the first (1985), second (1986), and third (1988) Conferences of Court Administrators of Asia and the Western Pacific.

Mr. Li was a frequent speaker on judicial education, including at the International Conference of Chief Justices of Supreme Courts in 1990 and several conference programs of the National Association of State Judicial Educators and the Association of Continuing Legal Education Administrators. He also authored several articles on judicial education, including “Judges Schools in the Modern World,” published in *Judicature* in 1993.

Mr. Li was a member of the American Bar Association, the Asian-American Bar Association of the Greater Bay Area (vice-president, 1976–1977; board of directors, 1975–1978), the Benchbook Committee of the National Conference of State Trial Judges, the National Judicial College Board of Directors (1975–1978), the San Francisco Criminal

Justice Council (1971–1973), and the Diablo Valley Montessori School Board, Lafayette, California (president, 1969–1972).

Before he was appointed director of CJER, Mr. Li served as the first assistant legal director (1972–1973) and the first Asian-American staff attorney (1965–1972) at the AOC. He worked in private law practice in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (1964–1965), and received his LL.B. degree in 1964 from Duquesne University School of Law and his bachelor's degree from Maryknoll College. He also attended Golden Gate University's MBA program (1966–1967) and Maryknoll Novitiate (1960–1961).

Mr. Li was born in 1938 in Hong Kong. He is survived by his wife Shu-Ti, and by two daughters, Mary Theresa and Mary Pamela, and one son, Michael Edward, and by seven grandchildren.

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The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.