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Senator Joe Dunn Honored With First Stanley Mosk Defender of Justice Award

Chief Justice Presents Award for Senator's Work to Improve California Courts

San Francisco—Chief Justice Ronald M. George yesterday presented California Senator Joseph Dunn (D-Garden Grove) with the first annual Stanley Mosk Defender of Justice Award for his work to strengthen the independence of the California court system.

The award was presented at the Judicial Council of California's Summit of Judicial Leaders. The award is named after the late Justice Stanley Mosk, who spent almost six decades in public service as California attorney general, judge, and Supreme Court justice and was well-known for his unwavering support of individual liberties.

"Senator Dunn's commitment to ensuring that the courts' ability to meet their obligation to administer fair and consistent justice for all Californians has been unshakable, and his contributions immeasurable," stated Chief Justice George. "Our judicial branch is deeply grateful for his hard and thoughtful work on our behalf and for his staunch support of a strong and independent judiciary."

Senator Dunn was elected in November 1998 to represent the 34th Senate District that includes portions of the cities of Anaheim, Buena Park, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Santa Ana, Stanton, and Westminster. He was re-elected in 2002.

As chair of the Senate Committee on Judiciary for the past two years, Senator Dunn has been a champion of an independent judiciary. He has worked tirelessly with his colleagues in the Legislature, as well as bar and justice system organizations across the state to call attention to the critical importance of an independent and accountable judicial branch.

From 2003 to 2005, Senator Dunn served as chair of the Senate Budget

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and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 4 which has primary responsibility in the Senate on the judicial branch and trial court budgets. He played a vitally important role in crafting significant improvements to the judicial branch budget process.

Senator Dunn made a significant contribution to the judicial branch when he authored Senate Bill 56, signed into law this year, which authorized the creation of 50 new judgeships—the first in California since 2000. The senator also authored Senate Bill 10, an unprecedented agreement between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, and representatives of county governments, which will help accelerate the transfer of courthouses with seismic level V ratings from the counties to the state.

Senator Dunn has also shown outstanding leadership by authoring landmark legislation to improve the quality of law schools and the legal profession, defending California consumers against unlicensed persons who practice law, and ensuring that our law schools produce qualified attorneys. He has also authored legislation that improved complicated process and procedures to ensure that litigants' rights are protected.

As chair of the Senate Select Committee on Citizen Participation, Senator Dunn held statewide hearings in 2004 on the judicial branch budget. On numerous occasions before the Legislature, executive branch, and the public, he used information gained from the hearings to draw attention to the critical needs of judicial branch for adequate funding, safe facilities, and increased access to California courts.

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Hon. Stanley Mosk, Defender of Justice: In almost six decades of public service as California attorney general, judge, and supreme court justice, Stanley Mosk was unwavering in his defense of individual liberties and in his commitment to the greater good. In opinions touching on some of the most contentious such diverse topics as jury selection, racial discrimination, products liability, the rights of disabled parents and arbitration of health care issues, he brought his powers of analysis to bear and reached results that time and again have been echoed by the United States Supreme Court and the supreme courts of other states.