

March 11, 2002

Judge:

I hope that this letter finds you well. **PLEASE GET BACK TO ME ON REQUESTS AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE!**

- 1) **Senate Bill 376 Update** – The following are a portion of Judge Ginsberg’s (Chair of our Legislative Committee) comments following a meeting at the Capitol with representatives from various affected parties:

“On February 14th, the conference meeting with Senator Kemp [Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee] was held. We were successful in getting him to back off for this session. Prior to the meeting I met with leaders from Magistrate Court. I expressed our position of TOTAL opposition to any extension of misdemeanor jurisdiction to the Magistrates. We were joined in opposition by the Superior Courts, DA’s, Solicitor’s and others in the judicial system. In addition to the above, Chief Justice Fletcher was in attendance and set the tone by requesting an opportunity for the judicial branch to study the impact of any changes in court jurisdiction. It is dead for now. The Chief Justice will be setting up a group of all involved to sit down to discuss the problems and solutions to this and other problems facing the court system ...I was particularly pleased and proud of the efforts all of you made to effectively deal with the threat posed by SB 376. We reached Sen. Kemp at all levels and he clearly did not want a fight over this at this time. Again thanks for all of the hard work. Also remember that we have work to do on our legislative agenda relating to retirement, travel reimbursement, and the law library fund.”

- 2) The **State Court Conference schedule** has been changed. The locations have been flip-flopped. We will be going to Brasstown Valley in the spring and Jekyll Island in the fall. The following is the new schedule which the Institute of Continuing Education (ICJE) has recently finalized:

**FUTURE CONFERENCE DATES FOR PLANNING PURPOSES:**

SPRING 2002	May 15-17	Brasstown Valley	FALL 2002	Oct 9-11	Jekyll Island
SPRING 2003	May 14-16	Brasstown Valley	FALL 2003	Oct 15-17	Jekyll Island
SPRING 2004	May 12-14	Brasstown Valley	FALL 2004	Oct 13-15	Jekyll Island
SPRING 2005	May 11-13	Brasstown Valley	FALL 2005	Oct 12-14	Jekyll Island

You will receive more information on our May conference from ICJE in the near future. Brasstown Valley will be at the Brasstown Valley Resort and Jekyll Island will be at the Jekyll Island Club Hotel.

- 3) The State Auditor conducted a **Performance Audit of Court Fees** (a copy of which is enclosed – Executive Committee members have already received a copy). The County Officers’ Association of Georgia (COAG) has responded by forming a Fines and Forfeitures Committee and has extended an invitation to us to be involved. Judge Leon Braun, our President, will be representing us. If you have any input, please drop him a note c/o State Court of Liberty County, 105 N. Main Street, Hinesville, GA 31313 or contact him at [lbrown@clds.net](mailto:lbrown@clds.net) or at (912) 876-7101. Furthermore, Debra Nesbit, Assistant to the Director for Legislative and Governmental Affairs, from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) would be most grateful for your input as well, as the AOC is also studying the issue. She can be reached c/o Administrative Office of the Courts, 244 Washington Street, Suite 300, Atlanta, GA 30334, at [nesbitd@aoc.courts.state.ga.us](mailto:nesbitd@aoc.courts.state.ga.us) or at (404) 651-7616.
- 4) **REQUEST:** Separately and independently from above, it is important for us to show that we do indeed remit a lot of **\$\$\$ to the State**, not just the counties, for use in our legislative lobbying and Judicial Council efforts. If you are the Chief Judge of a multi-judge county or the judge in a single judge county, can you please have your clerk of court or other appropriate person compile a listing of court fees for the year 2001 which go to the State so that we can show necessary people, on an as needed basis, that the State, as well as the individual counties, benefits from the hard work that you all do. It would be best for everyone to report in the same format, so please go to page 1 on the enclosed Performance Audit of Court Fees and report in the same exact order as non-local programs are listed in the “Court Fee Beneficiaries” box and add a “Total” at the bottom. If you are not able to make a complete report, just do the best that you can, but please do not leave out the \$\$\$ that goes into the State General Fund.

- 5) **REQUEST:** Please let me know if you have any **senior judges or judges emeritus of the State Court** in your jurisdiction as well as contact information for them. These would be judges who have served on State Court, but have not gone on to Superior or Appellate Courts. Oversimplified, seniors have served over 10 years and have a commission from a governor while emeriti have served less than 10 years. If you are not sure, just let me know and I will research as to that person's status. As discussed at the Fall Conference, I wish to get these folks fully integrated into the Council, but I need to know who they are. So far, I have: 1) Carnes (Fulton); 2) Slaton (Richmond); 3) Carpenter (Toombs); 4) Smith (DeKalb); 5) Pace (Decatur); 6) Houston (Ware); and 7) Fryhofer (Burke); 8) Phillips (Bibb); and Hutcheson (Washington). **NOTE: I do not have any contact information for any of the above-mentioned judges except Carnes and Slaton. If you are the current judge in said county, please send me contact info as soon as possible.**
- 6) I recently received a copy of the 2001 State Court **Salary Survey** which is enclosed. The AOC has asked me to request full participation from the State Court in future surveys.
- 7) Enclosed is a copy of the Secretary of State's **Election Calendar of Events for 2002** for your convenience.
- 8) After researching some requests, I have found the "official guru" for **judicial retirement**. He works in the state office of the Employees Retirement System and handles the judicial retirement. His name is Cedric Williams, he can be reached at 404-352-6456 and he told me that he would be more than happy to speak with any judges who had any questions.
- 9) The **Georgia Indigent Defense Council** has chosen Friday, September 13, 2002 for their Third Annual Statewide Symposium.
- 10) Also enclosed for your convenience is an instruction sheet to help you in the creation of **jury charges** using Trial Court Desktop 2000, which you were sent in a previous mailing.
- 11) Cindy Myers has replaced Amy Emanuel as our **LEXIS** customer service representative. You will use the same # 1-800-227-9597, but will now use extension 5544.
- 12) **Internet Communication** Update – We are moving towards a web based communication system, which will obviate the need for much of the information that I update you with on paper. I will have more information for you at the Spring Conference. The Yahoo chat groups will still be an integral part of our communications, but will be used mostly for confidential communications.
- 13) **New Judge Orientation** will be held September 25-27<sup>th</sup> in Athens this year. This only applies to new judges as well as instructors and more detailed information will be sent from Institute for Continuing Judicial Education (ICJE) as the time approaches.

Respectfully Yours,

Stephan J. Frank

Enc. 1. Salary Survey (2 sheets/4 pages)  
2. Court Fees Performance Audit (28 sheets/28 pages)  
3. Election Calendar (1 sheet/1page)  
4. Jury Charge Creation Instructions using Trial Court Desktop 2000 (1 sheet/2 pages)

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: Talk is cheap - until you hire an attorney!