

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES COURTS IN THE EIGHTH CIRCUIT, 2002

President: **Honorable Richard G. Kopf**

In 2002, the Historical Society executive board defined its primary role as providing stimulus to the branches and began to meet quarterly to foster Society activity. In a letter to the board of directors, President Judge Kopf encouraged branch meetings and activities, attendance at the State and Federal Court Historical Societies Annual Conference, and additions to branch pages of the Society's website. At Judge Kopf's request, Chief Judge Hansen wrote Eighth Circuit federal judges a letter reminding them of the importance of preserving their chambers papers and donating them to an archival institution for historical purposes. As a result of these letters, some branches held meetings to plan projects, board members updated their contact information, and several judges inquired about the disposal of their chambers papers. Tom Boyd and Frances Ross attended the State and Federal Court Historical Societies Annual Conference in September, and Mr. Boyd presented a program during the conference.

The U.S. Courts Library has continued to expand its role in preserving court history. In February 2002, the title and duties of library staff member Joan Stevens were changed to archives/reference librarian. Ms. Stevens spends a significant part of her time on historical/archives duties, which includes providing staff support for the Historical Society.

The Society's website was substantially developed by the addition of annual reports for the parent Society and branches, minutes of executive board and board of directors' meetings, and board of directors contact information. The website also includes an incorporation section offering IRS documentation regarding the Society's status as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt corporation.

At the board of directors' September 4 annual conference call meeting, a motion was approved to undertake a review of the Society's parent/branch structure. As some branches have scarce funds and activities, the aim of the review will be to determine if some other structure better fits the needs of the Society. This review will begin in 2003.

### ***Court of Appeals***

The branch's primary project is publication of a history of the Eighth Circuit, for which Professor Jeffrey Morris was hired. The draft manuscript has been sent to the University of Missouri Press, though other publishers are also being pursued. A revised draft will be issued at a later date, and the publication process will take approximately two years. The branch's John F. Dillon 2001-2002 essay contest was awarded to Evan Simone.

### ***Arkansas Eastern and Western***

The Eastern and Western Districts of Arkansas have as an ongoing project the collection of biographical essays on Eastern and Western District judges from 1836-1960. When all essays have been received, they will be submitted for publication. In addition, both districts have cooperated on oral histories of recent district judges.

### ***Iowa Southern***

The branch held its annual meeting on June 21, 2002. Activities include display of the Polk County Bar Law Day poetry and art work in the Des Moines courthouse, retirement videos for District Judge Charles R. Wolle and Bankruptcy Judge Russell J. Hill, and a reception for Judge Hill. Branch funding possibilities are being explored. The branch has some old archival papers and heavy clerk's office vault doors bearing the Southern District of Iowa seal, and is considering displaying the doors.

### ***Minnesota***

The Minneapolis courthouse erected a window display honoring the professional career of Judge Robert G. Renner, who served as both a magistrate and district judge for the District of Minnesota. The History Committee is organizing a history room with materials previously located in obscure places in the courthouse. The Committee is also involved with restoration of the Fergus Falls courthouse.

### ***Missouri Eastern***

The Eastern District of Missouri is planning a learning center to be located on the first floor of the Thomas F. Eagleton U.S. Courthouse. Other branch activities have been placed on hold until the center is developed.

### ***Missouri Western***

The branch is planning a part interactive/part traditional museum to be established in a large ceremonial room on the second public floor of the courthouse. Several proposed architectural renderings have been completed, and the branch has formed two fund-raising committees. The branch hopes preliminary work can begin in early 2004, but it will depend on the success of fund-raising efforts.

### ***Nebraska***

A history of the district, 1863-1971, is being prepared by Professor John R. Wunder. The branch announced its new Judge Robert Van Pelt history prize and is arranging videotaped interviews of Nebraska federal judges who have recently retired or taken senior status. The branch also donated Judge Richard Robinson's papers to the Nebraska State Historical Society.

### ***North Dakota***

*Patronage: Histories and Biographies of North Dakota's Federal Judges*, authored by Ardell Tharaldson, former law clerk to District Judge Conmy, was published by Northern Lights ND Press, in cooperation with the North Dakota branch. Circuit Judge Richard S. Arnold wrote the foreword, and the cover has won a national award. The North Dakota branch has also been planning the restoration of Judge Davies' courtroom in Fargo in order to preserve the look of a 1960's courtroom. On August 12, the Minot courthouse was dedicated for Judge Bruce M. Van Sickle.

### ***South Dakota***

The branch is planning to videotape oral histories and is on its third year of Christmas luncheons featuring lawyers involved in historical cases. The attorneys are taped while discussing the cases.

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