

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

President: **Frances Ross**

In 2009 the Historical Society executive committee met four times via conference call. Historical Society Chair Judge Richard Kopf sent a letter to all Eighth Circuit judges encouraging them to preserve their judicial papers.

Judge Myron Bright made history in April when he became the longest-working judge on the Eighth Circuit's Court of Appeals. In honor of this achievement, the U.S. Courts Library prepared a biographical display exhibited at the 2009 Eighth Circuit Judges' Judicial Conference in Duluth.

## ***Court of Appeals***

In April 2009, Prometheus Books released the biography, *Judge Richard S. Arnold: A Legacy of Justice on the Federal Bench*, written by the Judge's former law clerk and Emory Law School Professor Polly Price. The branch collaborated with the Eighth Circuit Bar Association and the court to host a lecture by Professor Price in the St. Louis courthouse.

## ***Arkansas Eastern***

The branch continued to collect biographical sketches of judges to be displayed with their portraits in the courthouse. Work on publishing biographical essays of Arkansas' federal judges of the Eastern and Western Districts also continued.

## ***Arkansas Western***

The branch worked with the Eastern District of Arkansas branch on the biographical essays of Arkansas' federal judges.

## ***Iowa Northern***

After reactivating last year, the branch now has 19 active members and holds quarterly meetings. Committees were formed to focus on research into courthouse buildings previously used by the court, research into notable trials that occurred in the district, and interviews of senior district court judges and their former law clerks.

## ***Iowa Southern***

The branch hired an intern, Ms. Erin Lain, to work on updates for the district's history, *No One is Above the Law*, and replication of the seal of the District of Iowa. The branch continued to assist with a judicial timeline display for the Iowa State Bar Association's new building and to assist Friends of the Iowa Judiciary with videos of former Iowa Supreme Court justices. Work will continue on Judge Ronald Longstaff's oral history.

## ***Minnesota***

The branch commemorated the 150 year anniversary of the district by producing a brochure, "Celebrating 150 Years: 1858-2008." As a continuation of the Portraits of Justice project, Judge Joan Ericksen was interviewed by Dean Donald Lewis at Hamline University

Law School. The branch also arranged to videotape reflections by former District Judge Diana Murphy at a meeting of the Federal Bar Association. In June 2009, the branch participated in the dedication of the Judge Edward J. Devitt Courtroom in the St. Paul Courthouse. The branch completed an index of archival materials, and work continued on a collection of historic photographs and a display focusing on notable cases from the Depression era.

### ***Missouri Eastern***

The Eagleton Courthouse's Judicial Learning Center was dedicated in February 2009 with Justice Sandra Day O'Connor in attendance. Progress continued on the written history of the district, and Judge John Nangle's oral history was completed. After the branch finishes Judge Donald Stohr's oral history in the first quarter of 2010, work will begin on Judge William Webster's interview.

### ***Missouri Western***

Membership grew again this year, and the branch continued its successful luncheon lecture series. Assistant U.S. Attorney Tom Larson gave the series' highlight presentation, entitled "Milligan, Pendergast & Truman." The court contracted The Design Minds to create plans for an exhibition area depicting the history of the court, its judges, and important cases, and the branch researched for content. It is hoped to be completed by summer 2010. The branch held its September meeting in the newly-opened regional facility of the National Archives in Kansas City, Missouri, where the archives staff gave an overview of the facility's contents, including its extensive court-related files.

### ***Nebraska***

The branch held several meetings with Professors Mark Scherer and John Wunder, who are working on a written history of the district, and Professor Scherer was given permission to use branch funds to hire a research assistant. In May, the branch co-sponsored a celebration of the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chief Standing Bear trial. A permanent display erected in the Omaha courthouse and conveying Chief Standing Bear's story was dedicated, and actors performed a reenactment of the trial. Judge Laurie Smith Camp headed a group that created a "Judicial Archive" on the court's website featuring photos and biographies of the district's past and present judges, the Chief Standing Bear display, and a description of the project to produce a written history of the district.

### ***North Dakota***

The branch worked to display the presidential oaths of office for judges in their respective courthouses: Judge Bruce Van Sickle in Minot, Judge Ronald Davies in Grand Forks, and Judge John Kelly in Fargo. Courtroom and chambers artifacts continue to be collected, and the branch was provided a photograph of the Eighth Circuit judges from the early 1960s for display.

### ***South Dakota***

After Judge Andrew Bogue's death, copies of his portrait ceremony transcript were sent to the Eighth Circuit libraries in St. Louis and Fargo. The branch plans to interview Judge Charles Kornmann, who took senior status in 2008.

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