

MINUTES

Historical Society of the United States Courts in the Eighth Circuit

Executive Committee Conference Call

March 13, 2002

Officers present:

Hon. Richard G. Kopf, President
Frances Ross, Vice-President
Ann Fessenden, Secretary/Treasurer

Others present:

Thomas H. Boyd, Past-President
Hon. Richard W. Peterson, Past-President
Joan Stevens, Library Staff

President of the Historical Society Judge Kopf initiated the conference call, and once all were on board, he named those participating in the call. Judge Kopf thanked the past presidents for taking part in the call and lending their institutional memory. Ann Fessenden reported that library staff member Joan Stevens was also sitting in on the call. Ms. Fessenden announced that Ms. Stevens recently assumed the new library position of Archives/Reference Librarian and will spend approximately half of her time on archival duties and assisting the Historical Society.

Judge Kopf announced he had four items on the meeting agenda and those issues were discussed through the duration of the conference call.

Item 1. Judge Kopf posed the question as to whether the Executive Committee should conduct regular conference calls in an effort to sustain continued activity which tends to lapse when members don't maintain regular contact. He suggested quarterly or possibly less frequent calls. All agreed that this was an excellent idea, and after discussion as to frequency and time, Judge Kopf established Executive Committee conference calls would take place on the first Tuesday of each quarter for 30 minutes beginning at 1 p.m. The next conference call was scheduled for June 4. Ann Fessenden mentioned she will not be available that day and offered that Joan Stevens could instead take part in the call. Judge Kopf graciously stated that Ms. Stevens is welcome to sit in on any conference calls.

Item 2. Judge Kopf asked that each send him his/her contact information: email address, mailing address and phone number. He gave out his email address as Richard_Kopf@ned.uscourts.gov.

Item 3. The Historical Society annual report for 2001 was approved for submission to the Circuit Executive's Office for inclusion in the Eighth Circuit's annual report.

Item 4. Judge Kopf's final agenda item posed the question, "What should the Officers be doing?"

All thought this was a good question, and Tom Boyd was first to offer some thoughts. He said the Executive Committee should remind the Branches to contribute information for inclusion on the Historical Society's new web site. It was clarified that library staff maintain the web site as information becomes available.

Ann Fessenden mentioned that some Branches neglect to submit annual reports and asked that they also be reminded to have their reports in by July 1 each year.

Judge Kopf asked Tom Boyd about the status of the Eighth Circuit history. Mr. Boyd reported that the manuscript has been completed and submitted to the University of Missouri Press. The draft still needs editing, but they sent it for review rather than waiting for final editing. Mr. Boyd said the manuscript is very good.

Judge Peterson asked what the term of Officers is, and it was confirmed in the Society's bylaws that Officers serve a term of two years. Judge Kopf asked if the bylaws were on the Society's web site, and it was confirmed that they are not.

It was suggested that Judge Kopf send a letter to the Branches reminding them of their duties and encouraging them to pursue various historical projects:

- **Submit Branch annual reports by July 1.** It was clarified that Ms. Fessenden compiles Branch reports sent to her and then send copies to the Board of Directors. Judge Kopf commented that this should be a good source for ideas.
- **Attend the State and Federal Court Historical Societies' annual meetings.** The next meeting will be held in Portland, Oregon in conjunction with the American Association for State and Local History conference. [AASLH's web site is at <http://www.aaslh.org/>.]
- **Contribute information for Branch sections of web site.**
- **Sponsor essay competitions.** Judge Kopf mentioned that the Nebraska Branch is offering a \$500 prize for an essay competition on Nebraska legal history. Mr. Boyd mentioned that the Court of Appeals Branch co-sponsors an essay competition with the John F. Dillon Inn of Court which awards \$500 annually. He suggested that the Branches consider partnering with local bar associations or inns of court to sponsor essay competitions.
- **Appoint Branch court historians to assist with the preservation and celebration of their history.** Judge Peterson has been appointed court historian for the Southern District of Iowa, and Professor John R. Wunder is court historian for the District of Nebraska. Judge Peterson mentioned that when he was Historical Society President, he had drafted a list of responsibilities and activities for Branches.

- **Obtain display cases for each district court's headquarters.** Former Circuit Executive June Boadwine had been working toward this end, but to date, not all districts have display cases.

Judge Kopf asked Ann Fessenden about the status of the Eastern District of Missouri's Learning Center, and she said she expected an update soon from Circuit Executive Millie Adams who was meeting with Judge Filippine on this topic. The Center will occupy a good amount of space and be located on the first floor of the Thomas F. Eagleton U.S. Courthouse. Judge Kopf said Judge Filippine has been a real pillar, and the Eastern District of Missouri's Learning Center will be a prototype for other states around the country. Judge Kopf asked Ms. Fessenden to give him an update on the Center after she hears from Ms. Adams.

- **Develop oral/video histories of Eighth Circuit judges.** Ms. Fessenden suggested Branches be reminded to develop oral histories of their judges. Judge Kopf mentioned that Dr. Shugrue, Professor of Law at Creighton University, is currently working on some oral histories.

Frances Ross inquired what was being done with judges' papers in the Circuit. Judge Kopf stated that each judge may decide what to do with his/her papers. Judges have been nationally apprised of the need to preserve an historical record and to donate their papers to a manuscript repository. Each has been sent the FJC's 1996 publication, *A Guide to the Preservation of Federal Judges' Papers*. Another FJC title, *Directory of Manuscript Collections Related to Federal Judges, 1789-1997*, lists locations of judges' papers.

Some are donated to archival institutions, law school libraries, general university libraries, etc. Archives do not generally allow circulation of manuscripts, and converting them to microfiche is very costly. Conversion of one collection of papers was estimated at \$27,000.

It was suggested that Judge Kopf ask Chief Judge Hansen to send a letter to our Circuit's federal judges reminding them of the desirability of preserving their papers.

Ann Fessenden said she and Joan Stevens would write up minutes for the conference call, and Judge Peterson asked that thanks go to Judge Kopf, President of the Historical Society, for organizing this conference call.