

South Carolina Access to Justice Commission

Spring

into

Spring



Yellow Jessamine, South Carolina's state flower, and an early harbinger of spring, also found in every SC county.

A Word from the Director

A flower may seem an odd choice for a newsletter about justice and access within the civil legal system.

I chose it for three reasons. The first reason is that it signals spring to me. This spring SCATJ will be working on the public hearings and some training for judges and court staff about how to work with self represented litigants. And just as spring signals new growth, SCATJ hopes that the hearings and the training signal new growth for access to justice. Historically the Yellow Jessamine is an early harbinger of spring—"its perpetual return out of the dead Winter suggests the lesson of constancy in, loyalty to and patriotism in the service of the state." (General Assembly, February 1, 1924.)

The sentiment expressed by the General Assembly when choosing it as the state flower also serves as a reminder that we must remain constant and loyal to our mission of ensuring access to legal representation to all South Carolinians regardless of

ability to pay. And by bringing justice to all South Carolinians, we are performing a great patriotic service to our state. What a great show of patriotism for us—to enhance one of the foundations of our state—public courts open to everyone. (S.C. Const. art. 1, § 9)

Finally the Yellow Jessamine is found in every county of South Carolina; much like our goal to bring access to justice to all South Carolinians!

Second Meeting a Success

SCATJ held its second meeting at the SC Bar Convention in Charleston on Friday, January 27th. We were honored to have Texas Supreme Court Justice Harriet O'Neill not only as our guest speaker, but also as the Plenary Luncheon speaker at the SC Bar Convention.

Justice O'Neill spoke to the Commission about the Texas public hearing experi-



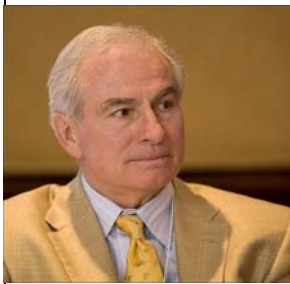
Chief Justice Toal discusses access to justice with Beaufort County Magistrate Simmons.

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(2ND MEETING cont'd)

ence, including lessons learned. She advised us to include a variety of speakers, if necessary to ask for speakers from specifically identified groups, while keeping open slots for the public.

SCATJ Commissioner
Jennie L. Stephens



SCATJ Commissioner
Terry Richardson.

After hearing from Justice O'Neill, the Commission participated in a preliminary priority setting activity, the Star Project. From the identified priorities, the Commission will divide into working committees.

SCATJ Commissioner
Andrea Loney



Steering for the Hearings

In order to conduct a needs assessment of the legal needs of individuals with low income or of modest means, SCATJ is holding public hearings around the state this spring. All hearings will held at the County Courthouses from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

SCATJ Commissioner
Judge John E. Waites



To sign up to speak at the hearings or you require accommodations, please call (803) 576-3808 or email rwheeler@scbar.org.

2008 SCATJ Public Hearing Dates:

- MARCH 13 CHARLESTON*
- MARCH 27 LEXINGTON**
- APRIL 10 COLLETON
- APRIL 17 ANDERSON***
- MAY 29 LANCASTER
- JUNE 5 FLORENCE
- JUNE 26 SPARTANBURG



SCATJ Vice Chair
Stuart Andrews

* Court reporting graciously provided by Mary Ann Ridenour of Carolina Reporting, (843) 832-0801.

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