



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Eleven California Courts Win Top Awards

### *Judicial Council Kleps Awards Honor Outstanding Court Programs*

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San Francisco—The Judicial Council of California today announced the recipients of the 2004-2005 Ralph N. Kleps Awards for Improvement in Administration of the Courts, an annual awards program recognizing innovation in the state's courts.

Selected from a field of 44 nominations, the council selected 11 exemplary programs for awards that will be presented on September 7, 2005, at the Statewide Judicial Branch Conference in San Diego.

Created in 1991 in honor of Ralph N. Kleps, the first administrative director of the California courts, the awards are given in five categories based on the numbers of authorized judicial positions (AJPs) in the courts. Programs nominated must be innovative, transferable to other courts, and in operation for at least one year. Summaries of the winning programs follow.

### **2004-2005 KLEPS AWARD WINNERS**

#### *2-10 AJPs*

**Legal Assistance Center:** *Superior Court of Calaveras County*

An extensive, community-wide legal assistance center staffed by a small claims advisor, superior court clerk, and family law facilitator, which provides litigants with public computers equipped with access to self-help Web sites and forms.

**Siskiyou/Modoc Joint Court:** *Superior Court of Siskiyou County*

An historic effort that increases court services for residents living in remote and isolated parts of Siskiyou and Modoc Counties. Legislation was required (SB 79) to allow court users from both counties to be served by one judge.

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## *11-39 AJPs*

### **Court Web Site for High-Profile Cases:** *Superior Court of Santa Barbara County*

A first ever special media and public Web site to manage the distribution of filed documents in a high-profile case, People v. Michael Jackson. It required a change in the California Rules of Court to be implemented.

### **Gaining Education through Determination (G.E.D.):** *Superior Court of Yolo County*

The Unified Family Court of Yolo County provides delinquent and dependent minors one-on-one tutoring, books, support, and encouragement to enable them to pass the GED exam, complete high school, and see themselves as valuable citizens.

## *40+ AJPs*

### **Elder Abuse Protection Court:** *Superior Court of Alameda County*

Helps prevent the reoccurrence of elder abuse by improving court access. Offered in four court locations, the program provides dedicated calendars and immediate access for protection orders to insure the safety and protection of abused elders.

### **New Judge Orientation:** *Superior Court of Los Angeles County*

An innovative educational tool, available as a CD-ROM or on the Web, that features one-on-one video discussions in which experienced judges share insights, practical information, and advice with newly elected or appointed colleagues to help them make a fluid transition from lawyer to judge.

### **Complex Civil Electronic Filing Pilot Project:** *Superior Court of Orange County*

A technological solution that allows litigants with cases in the court's complex litigation program to file and track documents via the Web.

### **Automated File Management:** *Superior Court of San Bernardino County*

A comprehensive, automated system that tracks more than 3 million files and records from 15 court locations under one roof. More than 70 percent of the inventory is active and immediately available for court hearings.

### **ACCESS—Assisting Court Customers with Education and Self-Help Services:**

*Superior Court of San Francisco County*

Multi-lingual information and assistance center that provides culturally appropriate services in English, Spanish, Chinese (Cantonese), Russian, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. The emphasis is placed on services for disenfranchised communities that have traditionally been denied access, such as immigrants, dependent adults, and gay and transgendered people.

*Special Category—Collaborative Projects*

**SHARP—Self-Help and Regional Assistance Program:** *Superior Courts of Butte, Glenn, and Tehama Counties*

A collaborative self-help center focusing on the needs of three rural counties, featuring extensive videoconferencing between counties to extend services to remote areas.

**Regional Education Consortium:** *Superior Courts of Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Benito and Santa Clara Counties*

A collaborative project among four counties to share and expand training resources for court staff. The results include more extensive workshops, materials, and course offerings than any of the courts could provide alone.

*The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.*

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