

Essay Contest on Judicial Independence

\$15,000
in prizes

Essays are due by **March 1, 2007**

submit by email:
essaycontest@actl.com

or send hard copy:

Dennis J. Maggi, *Executive Director*

American College of Trial Lawyers
National Headquarters

19900 MacArthur Boulevard, Suite 610
Irvine, California 92612

The first and second place awards are made possible
from a generous grant made by the
Foundation of the American College of Trial Lawyers.



Essay Contest



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS
19900 MACARTHUR BLVD., SUITE 610
IRVINE, CA 92612
WWW.ACTL.COM

IMPROVING AND ELEVATING THE STANDARDS
OF TRIAL PRACTICE, THE ADMINISTRATION OF
JUSTICE AND THE ETHICS OF THE PROFESSION.

The American College of Trial Lawyers is sponsoring an essay contest for law students on the topic of Judicial Independence and the Separation of Powers Doctrine.

First Place Winner will receive \$10,000

Second Place Winner will receive \$5,000

Criteria for Submission

Essays should be approximately 5,000 words in length. All students at U.S. law schools are eligible to compete (including those studying for J.D., LLM or other graduate degrees).

Panel of Judges

The winning essays will be selected by a panel of distinguished judges who are also Fellows of the American College of Trial Lawyers:

Hon. Nancy Gertner, United States District Court, District of Massachusetts

Hon. Sam Hanson, Minnesota Supreme Court

Hon. Robert F. Julian, New York State Supreme Court

Hon. Jackson L. Kiser, United States District Court, Western District of Virginia

Hon. John C. Major, Q.C., Supreme Court of Canada (*retired*)

Hon. William Jay Riley, United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit

Hon. Charles S. Vogel, California Court of Appeals (*retired*)

Threats to judicial independence are real and substantial. For example:

- ❖ In South Dakota, the organization J.A.I.L. 4 JUDGES obtained nearly 50,000 signatures to place on the November 2006 ballot a referendum that would strip judges of judicial immunity and submit them to the jurisdiction of a special grand jury and court which could impose civil and criminal penalties for such things as “deliberate disregard of material facts, judicial acts without jurisdiction, blocking of a lawful conclusion of a case” and “willful rendering of an unlawful or void judgment or order.”
- ❖ In 2005, after the Delaware Supreme Court issued a tentative decision that would have made a convicted rapist eligible for parole, the Delaware Legislature passed, and the Governor signed, an act declaring the decision “null and void” and directing the Court how to construe the state’s sentencing statute. Although it found the statute unconstitutional, the Delaware Supreme Court reversed its tentative decision, ostensibly on its own.
- ❖ Attacks on individual judges have become a staple of national, statewide, and local elections.



THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS IS COMPOSED OF THE BEST OF THE TRIAL BAR FROM THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA AND IS WIDELY CONSIDERED TO BE THE PREMIER PROFESSIONAL TRIAL ORGANIZATION IN AMERICA. FOUNDED IN 1950, THE COLLEGE IS DEDICATED TO MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING THE STANDARDS OF TRIAL PRACTICE, THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AND THE ETHICS OF THE PROFESSION. FELLOWSHIP IS EXTENDED ONLY BY INVITATION, AFTER CAREFUL INVESTIGATION, TO THOSE EXPERIENCED TRIAL LAWYERS WHO HAVE MASTERED THE ART OF ADVOCACY AND WHOSE PROFESSIONAL CAREERS HAVE BEEN MARKED BY THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT, PROFESSIONALISM, CIVILITY AND COLLEGIALLY.

