



The IAALS *Quality Judges Initiative* benefits from the insight and dedication of many distinguished experts in the field, including supreme court justices, state governors, and other leaders in the legal profession. For media inquiries, please contact:

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JUSTICE REBECCA LOVE KOURLIS

Executive Director, IAALS—the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System

Kourlis served Colorado’s judiciary for nearly two decades, first as a trial court judge and then as a justice of the Colorado Supreme Court. During her time on the bench, Kourlis witnessed a system increasingly under attack from outside forces—one that was failing to deliver the justice she swore to uphold. So, in January 2006, she resigned from the Supreme Court to do something about it. She established IAALS, where she serves as Executive Director.

Her work at the helm of IAALS is resolute in its focus of continuous improvement of the American legal system, and a logical off-shoot of her accomplishments on the bench where she spearheaded significant reforms in the judicial system relating to juries, family law, and attorney regulation.

Kourlis’ legal expertise is rich and diverse. She began her career with the law firm of Davis Graham & Stubbs, and then started a small practice in rural northwest Colorado where she worked in natural resources, water, public lands, oil and gas, and mineral law. In 1987, Kourlis was appointed as a trial court judge with a general jurisdiction docket. She served as Water Judge and later as Chief Judge of the District. In 1994, Kourlis returned to Denver and worked as an arbitrator and mediator for the Judicial Arbitrator Group. She was appointed to the Colorado Supreme Court in 1995.

Justice Kourlis accepted the 2007 Legal Reform Organization of the Year honor from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. She has also received numerous individual honors, including the American Bar Association (ABA) Justice Center’s 2012 John Marshall Award, the ABA Judicial Division’s 2009 Robert B. Yegge Award For Outstanding Contribution In The Field Of Judicial Administration, and the 2008 Regis College Civis Princeps citizenship award. Kourlis and her husband Tom were named the 2010 Citizens of the West by the National Western Stock Show.

Kourlis earned a B.A. in English from Stanford University and a J.D. from Stanford University Law School. She is a Colorado native and daughter of former Governor John A. Love.



INSTITUTE *for the* ADVANCEMENT
of the AMERICAN LEGAL SYSTEM



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DENVER



CHIEF JUSTICE RUTH V. MCGREGOR

Chair, O'Connor Advisory Committee

Chief Justice Ruth V. McGregor (Ret.) served on the Arizona Supreme Court from February 1998 until June 30, 2009. She was the Court's Chief Justice from June 2005 until her retirement. She was also a member of the Arizona Court of Appeals from 1989 until 1998, where she served as Chief Judge from 1995 to 1997. Before her appointment to the bench, Justice McGregor engaged in the private practice of law as a member of the Fennemore Craig law firm in Phoenix, Arizona. She served as law clerk to Justice Sandra Day O'Connor during Justice O'Connor's first term on the United States Supreme Court.

Justice McGregor received a Bachelor of Arts degree, summa cum laude, and a Master of Arts degree from the University of Iowa. She received her Doctor of Jurisprudence degree, summa cum laude, from Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, and a Master of Laws in the Judicial Process from the University of Virginia. Justice McGregor has participated extensively in professional activities, particularly those involving legal education and the discipline of lawyers and judges, and in organizations dedicated to assuring a fair and impartial judiciary.

Among other activities, she has served as an officer and a member of the Board of Trustees for the American Inns of Court Foundation, as an officer and Board member for the National Association of Women Judges, as a board member of the Conference of Chief Justices, and on the Legal Council of the American Bar Association Section of Legal Education and Admission to the Bar, which is the accrediting body for American law schools. Justice McGregor currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the Center for the Future of Arizona and of Justice at Stake; as section delegate for the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admission to the Bar.



MERYL CHERTOFF

Director, Justice and Society Program, The Aspen Institute

Meryl Justin Chertoff is Director of The Aspen Institute's Justice and Society Program. She is also an Adjunct Professor of Law at Georgetown Law School, where she teaches about state government, intergovernmental affairs, and state courts. From 2006-2009, Ms. Chertoff was Director of the Sandra Day O'Connor Project on the State of the Judiciary at Georgetown Law School, studying and educating the public about federal and state courts.

Ms. Chertoff served in the Office of Legislative Affairs at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), participating in the agency's transition into the Department of Homeland Security in 2003. She has also been a legislative relations professional, Director of New Jersey's Washington, D.C. Office under two governors, and legislative counsel to the Chair of the New Jersey State Assembly Appropriations Committee. She is a magna cum laude graduate of Harvard-Radcliffe College and earned her J.D. from Harvard Law School. She practiced law for a number of years in New York City and New Jersey, and served as law clerk to Honorable Myron H. Thompson (U.S. District Ct., M.D. Ala).



CHIEF JUSTICE WALLACE JEFFERSON

Partner, Alexander Dubose Jefferson & Townsend LLP

Chief Justice Wallace B. Jefferson (Ret.) served on the Texas Supreme Court from March 2001 until October 2013. He served as Chief Justice from September 2004 until his resignation. Jefferson made Texas judicial history as the first African-American justice and the first African-American Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court. Upon resigning from the Court, Jefferson joined Alexander Dubose Jefferson & Townsend LLP, an internationally recognized appellate boutique law firm, as a named partner.

Jefferson was appointed to the Court in 2001 by Gov. Rick Perry, succeeding former Chief Justice Thomas R. Phillips as the 26th Chief Justice of Texas. He was subsequently elected to the bench in 2002. His appointment as Chief Justice was confirmed unanimously by the Texas Senate on March 9, 2005. He was elected Chief justice in 2006 and reelected to a full term in 2008.

During his time on the bench, Jefferson served as president of the Conference of Chief Justices, an association of chief justices from the 50 states and U.S. territories.

Jefferson joined the Court from private practice in San Antonio. As a partner in the appellate specialty firm Crofts, Callaway & Jefferson, he successfully argued two cases before the United States Supreme Court. He is a graduate of the James Madison College at Michigan State University and the University of Texas School of Law.



H. THOMAS WELLS JR.

Partner and Founding Member, Maynard,
Cooper & Gale, PC

H. Thomas Wells Jr. is a partner and founding member at Maynard, Cooper & Gale, PC, in Birmingham, Alabama. Wells served as president of the American Bar Association in 2008-09. He has served on numerous committees and in leadership roles in the Alabama State Bar, the

Birmingham Bar Association, and the American Bar Association.

Wells has a litigation practice with emphasis on complex environmental, toxic tort law and products liability cases. He is a frequent speaker and participant in state and national programs dealing with trial and litigation issues. He is listed in the Best lawyers in America in the areas of Environmental Law, Mass Tort Litigation, Energy Law, Natural Resources Law, and Product Liability Litigation. Wells is a Fellow of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers and was named as one of the Top Ten Lawyers in Alabama for 2008 and 2009 by Super Lawyers.

Wells earned his bachelor's degree with honors from the University of Alabama, where he was president of the Student Government Association and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He earned his law degree, Order of the Coif, from the University of Alabama.



GOVERNOR CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN

New Jersey, 1994 – 2001

Christine Todd Whitman was the 50th Governor of the State of New Jersey, serving as its first woman governor from 1994 until 2001. Governor Whitman served in the cabinet of President George W. Bush as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from January of 2001 until June of 2003. As Governor, Whitman earned praise from both Republicans and Democrats for her commitment to preserve a record amount of New Jersey land as permanent green space. She was also recognized by the Natural Resources Defense Council for instituting the most comprehensive beach monitoring system in the nation. As EPA Administrator, she promoted common-sense environmental improvements such as watershed-based water protection policies. She championed regulations requiring non-road diesel engines to reduce sulfur emissions by more than 95 percent. She also established the first federal program to promote redevelopment and reuse of “brownfields,” that is, previously contaminated industrial sites.

Whitman now serves as President of The Whitman Strategy Group (WSG), a consulting firm that specializes in energy and environmental issues. She is also co-chair of the Republican Leadership Council (RLC). The RLC’s mission is to support fiscally conservative, socially tolerant candidates and to reclaim the word Republican. The RLC was created in March of 2007 by joining forces with Governor Whitman’s political action committee, It’s My Party Too. She is the author of a New York Times best seller by the same name, which was published in January of 2005 and released in paperback in March 2006.