

The Center Newsletter

## **Journalists at Loyola Law School hear about bail and other court reforms**

“It’s going to be 30 days in jail—unless you can pay \$500 right now.”

We would not accept this approach to sentencing persons convicted of crimes, observed Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice **Scott Bales** (pictured right) in talking to journalists who met in Los Angeles earlier this month for the annual Loyola Law School for Journalists, a program partially sponsored by the National Center for State Courts. Chief Justice Bales asked why would we take a similar approach to persons who have not yet been convicted, yet are being jailed before their cases are resolved merely because they cannot pay a cash bond. And he wanted the 44 journalists – from The Washington Post, National Public Radio, ABC News, among other news organizations – to know that [work is ongoing](#) to reform this practice.

**Laurie K. Dudgeon** (pictured left), Kentucky’s state court administrator, told the journalists that her state was the first in the country to abolish commercial bail bonding, in 1976, and other states are working to reform their bail system and minimize their reliance on money bail. Nationally, a growing number of judges, Dudgeon said, are trying to learn more about defendants’ ability to pay before they decide how much, if any, bail to impose. One of the risk assessment tools that courts use to make better decisions about that includes only nine questions. Fewer questions actually give you better data, Bales said. And Dudgeon noted that it brings consistency to the process and helps judges ask more relevant questions. “Why should we have a system where people make money from how (bail) decisions are made?” asked Bales in his critique of the commercial bail bond system.

The journalists also learned that courts are using technology to increase efficiency. Courts are using text messages to notify people that they are expected to come to court. These notification systems have already reduced failure-to-appear rates substantially—in Arizona, by 20 percent, according to Bales.

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Met News

## **Memorial Services Slated for Retired Judge Steven Ogden**

Two memorial services have been slated in Los Angeles County for retired Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Steven D. Ogden.

Both services will take place in the Antelope Valley where Ogden sat during the entirety of his 16-year judicial career, which started after his election to the Antelope Municipal Court in 1998. He was elevated to the Superior Court in 2000 through unification.

Ogden died June 14 at his home in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, of an apparent heart attack. He was 74.

A service will be held Saturday at 2 p.m. at the Antelope Valley Fairgrounds' Harley Davidson Building, 2551 W Avenue H, in Lancaster.

A memorial ceremony will also take place on Aug. 10 at noon in the Jury Assembly Room of the Antelope Valley Courthouse, 42011 4th St W, Lancaster.

He is survived by Mary Jane Ogden, his wife of 15 years, and by his children, Heather Ogden, Kourtney Layne, and Ethan Ogden, by three grandchildren, and his sister, Sally Laugesen.