

Speaker Resumes
NAPCO Webinar • Thursday, January 21, 2021; 3 PM (EST)
How will You Address COVID-caused Criminal Case Backlogs?
New Research and Best Practices may Help

Hon. Sedrick T. Walker

... is the Presiding Judge of the Harris County Texas Criminal Courts of Law serving the greater Houston metropolitan area. As a limited jurisdiction, statutorily-created court, it has 16 full-time judges. Judges are elected to four-year terms. The court has exclusive original jurisdiction of misdemeanors where the fine allowed exceeds \$500 or confinement in the county jail not to exceed one year. Decisions from other limited jurisdiction courts in Harris County, namely municipal and justice of the peace courts, may be appealed to this court.

During his judicial career, Judge Walker has served on the Harris County DWI Specialty Court and has been a member of the Texas Center for the Judiciary DWI Curriculum Committee. He was elected to the bench in 2018 and has served as a judge since January 1, 2019.

Previously, Judge Walker practiced for 6 years (2013 thru 2018) as a criminal defense attorney in his own firm, He represented citizens accused of misdemeanor and felony offenses in Harris and Fort Bend Counties, Texas. From July 2009 – December 2012, he was an Assistant District Attorney with the Harris County District Attorney's Office.

Judge Walker has a Juris Doctorate from the University of Texas Law School (2008) and a Bachelor of Science Degree with honors in Political Science from Texas A&M University.

Ed Wells

...is the Court Manager for the Harris County Office of Court Management. He was appointed to that position in 2011, having served as Assistant Court Manager during the three previous years.

Prior to his current position, Mr. Wells was Clerk of the Court at the Texas Fourteenth Court of Appeals from 2000-2008. Mr. Wells began his career in the courts in Galveston County as Court MIS Director and then as Director of the Office of Justice Administration.

He has a BBA from the University of Houston – Clear Lake. In May 2006, Mr. Wells completed the National Center for State Courts' Court Executive Development Program and is now a Fellow of the Institute for Court Management. Mr. Wells serves on the Texas Supreme Court's Judicial Committee on Information Technology. He currently serves as Chair of Professional Development for the Texas Association for Court Administration. Ed has received the Justice Charles W. Barrow Award for contributions to the profession of court administration in Texas and the Texas Center for the Judiciary's Outstanding Non-Judicial Faculty Award.

Hon. Patricia Costello

...is a part-time, special consultant with the National Center for State Courts in many subject matter areas including caseflow, calendaring, judicial administration, court leadership, operations efficiency, legal procedure, strategic planning and team-building. Her engagements as a consultant have encompassed a variety of court jurisdictions, sizes, and problems in such states as Ohio, Kansas, Arkansas, Kentucky, Illinois, New York, and the judicial system of Nigeria. She has also served as faculty for

numerous judicial and court management organizations including the National Center, National Judicial College (Reno, NV), National Association for Presiding Judges and Court Executive Officers (NAPCO), and National Association for Court Management (NACM).

Judge Costello retired in February 2015, as the Assignment Judge for the Superior Court of New Jersey in Essex Vicinage, home to the state's largest general jurisdiction trial court. The Assignment Judge position is similar to a chief or presiding judge in other states. Judge Costello was responsible for all trial courts within the vicinage, including municipal courts which are funded separately by city governments. Newark is headquarters for the Essex Vicinage (a French term meaning district or vicinity used in New Jersey to designate single or multi-county districts administered by an Assignment Judge). There are 15 vicinages and 21 counties in New Jersey. Essex is a single county district. The Superior Court consisted of 60 judges and 900 support staff handling more than 100,000 filings per year. The county's 22 municipal courts conducted their work through 38 judges and had annual filings in excess of 900,000 cases.

Following graduation from Rutgers University School of Law, Judge Costello established the law firm of *McAlevy & Costello PC* in 1986, noted for its criminal trial work. Judge Costello was appointed to the bench in 1989. She served four years in the Civil Division and as the Supervising Judge of the Special Civil Part while in that Division, responsible for the management of over 50,000 civil filings per year ranging from simple civil disputes to complicated medical malpractice, class action and intellectual property matters. She served five years in the Family Division as the Presiding Judge, overseeing eight judges, and six years in the Criminal Division, and as Presiding Judge of that Division, overseeing eight other judges where she tried numerous jury trials of indictable offenses, including homicides, armed robberies, and assaults.

Her interests in judicial education have been long-standing. She has served as coordinator of education for the New Jersey Family Division judges and has lectured many times in that state to judges and staff on various topics. Judge Costello also is on the Special Advisory Committee for Trial Court Leadership and Governance at the National Center for State Courts.

Aside from her work in the public sector, Judge Costello serves *Of Counsel* part-time at the New Jersey law firm of *Chiesa, Shahinian & Giantomasi PC*, a 130-attorney practice specializing in business and public policy law. Her specialties at the firm focus on mediation and arbitration in civil, chancery, and matrimonial matters including probate, commercial litigation, and labor and employment disputes.

Paula Hannaford-Agor

...is the Director of the Center for Jury Studies at the National Center for State Courts. In this capacity, she regularly conducts research and provides technical assistance and education to courts and court personnel on the topics of jury system management and trial procedure; civil litigation; and complex and mass tort litigation.

Ms. Hannaford-Agor's specific research efforts include:

- A pilot test of jury instructions intended to reduce the impact of implicit bias on juror decision-making;
- Development of a judicial curriculum on preventing and addressing Internet-related juror misconduct;
- A series of case studies of summary jury trial programs in six jurisdictions;
- A pilot study of juror and jury use of new media;
- A study of juror utilization in the Superior Courts of California;
- Development of the *Jury Managers' Toolbox*, an online diagnostic tool to help court administrators, administrative judges, and jury managers evaluate the effectiveness of their jury operations;
- A national survey of judges, lawyers, and jury managers on existing jury improvement efforts;

- A national study of civil bench and jury trials in 46 large, urban courts in 2001;
- A multi-site examination of the frequency and causes of hung juries in felony cases;
- An analysis of judicial removal of jurors for cause and attorney use of peremptory challenges in the Superior Courts of California;
- A compilation of innovations in jury management technology; and
- An evaluation of the impact of Arizona Civil Rule 39(f) permitting jurors in civil cases to discuss the evidence among themselves.

She has authored or contributed to numerous books and articles on the American jury including *Jury Trial Innovations* (2d ed. 2006), *The Promise and Challenges of Jury System Technology* (NCSC 2003) and *Managing Notorious Trials* (1998). She is faculty for the ICM courses *Jury System Management* and *Promise and Challenges of Jury System Technology*. She teaches a seminar on the American jury at William & Mary Law School.

She received her law degree from William & Mary Law School and a Master's Degree in Public Policy from the Thomas Jefferson Program in Public Policy of the College of William and Mary (1995) and her Bachelor of Arts in Government & Politics from George Mason University (with high distinction) (1991).

Brian J. Ostrom, Ph.D.

...is a Principal Research Consultant with the National Center for State Courts in Williamsburg, Virginia. In his 30 years at the NCSC, he has worked with courts throughout the US and internationally.

In recent years, he has pursued the idea of high-performance courts, with emphasis on how state court systems can improve their effectiveness through careful assessment of court management culture, court performance, and judicial workload and case management. An approach to assessing court culture is laid out in his book *Trial Courts as Organizations*.

In addition, he led the development of the *CourTools* performance measurement system. He currently directs the *Effective Criminal Case Management* project, the largest and most comprehensive study of criminal case processing ever undertaken, designed to empirically investigate and explore the ways in which courts can better manage criminal cases.

He has written widely in the area of court performance and management. He received his Ph.D. in economics from the University of Washington.

Gordon (Gordy) Griller

...is the Executive Director of the National Association for Presiding Judges and Court Executive Officers (NAPCO), a nonprofit corporation composed of state and local trial court top administrative judges, court executives, and leadership teams. He also works part-time with the National Center for State Courts' Court Consulting Services group, having retired in January 2020 as a Principal Court Management Consultant after 14 years with the Center. His consulting engagements are wide-ranging, including caseload management, operations, reengineering, facilities planning, efficiency studies, organizational development, as well as leadership programs for presiding judges, chief administrative officers, and program professionals in general, limited, and specialized courts.

Prior to his work with the Center, Mr. Griller held numerous private and public positions dedicated to trial court improvement and reform, including Vice President of Justice Practices for the State and Local Solutions Group at Affiliated Computer Systems (ACS), a division of the Xerox Corporation; the first

Administrator of Trial Courts for the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County (Greater Phoenix); Court Administrator for the Superior Court in Maricopa County; the first Judicial District Administrator of the Second Judicial District of Minnesota in Ramsey County (Greater St. Paul); and Court Administrator of the Municipal Court of Hennepin County, Minnesota (Greater Minneapolis) prior to the unification of Minnesota's state and local trial courts.

Additionally, Mr. Griller has served as President of the National Association of Trial Court Administrators where he co-chaired the Special Commission that created the National Association for Court Management (NACM), the largest professional association in the world dedicated to the improvement of trial court administration. He is a recipient of the National Center's *Warren E. Burger Award* for outstanding contributions to court administration, the National Conference of Metropolitan Courts' *Tom C. Clark Award*, NACM's *Award of Merit*, the Institute for Court Management's *Star Award*, and the Justice System Management Institute's *Ernest C. Friesen Award* for vision, leadership, and sustained commitment to excellence in the administration of justice.

Gordy holds a B.A. Degree in Political Science from the University of Minnesota, and a M.A. Degree in Public Administration from the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis).