

Speaker Resumes
NAPCO Webinar • Thursday, February 24, 2022; 3 PM (EDT)
Courts, Democracy and the Polarization of America...
Ways to Strengthen Public Trust in the Rule of Law

Hon. Scott Bales (ret.)

... served on the Arizona Supreme Court for fourteen years, including as Chief Justice from July 2014 until July 2019. After retiring from the Court, he was the Executive Director of the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System at the University of Denver through July 2020. He now consults on appellate matters and internal investigations and serves as a neutral.

He is the immediate past Chair of the Council of the ABA's Section on Legal Education and serves on the Council of the American Law Institute and the Board of Trustees for the National Conference of Bar Examiners. He previously chaired the Appellate Judges Conference of the ABA's Judicial Division. Justice Bales has often taught courses at the law schools at Arizona State University and the University of Arizona.

Before his appointment to the Court, he had practiced law in Arizona for nearly 20 years as a private and public lawyer. He was a partner in Phoenix firms that later became Osborn Maledon P.A. and Lewis Roca Rothgerber Christie. He also served as Arizona's Solicitor General from 1999-2001 and as a Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Policy Development from 1998-1999, a Special Investigative Counsel for the Justice Department's Inspector General from 1995-97, and as a federal prosecutor.

He clerked for Justice Sandra Day O'Connor on the U.S. Supreme Court and Judge Joseph T. Sneed III on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. After graduating from Michigan State University with degrees in history and economics, he received a master's degree in economics and his law degree from Harvard.

Sherri R. Carter

... is the Executive Officer and Clerk of Court for the Los Angeles Superior Court. She has been in that position since September 2013. Ms. Carter previously served as the Court Executive Officer and Clerk of Court for the Riverside County Superior Court from 2008 to 2013.

Before joining the California state court system, she served as the District Court Executive and Clerk of Court for the United States District Court, Central District of California. Prior to her work in California, Ms. Carter served as Trial Court Executive and Clerk of Court for the Eighth Circuit Court in the State of Utah.

Ms. Carter currently serves on numerous California state court committees and working groups related to budget and finance, legislation review and implementation, staff workload assessment

and funding, and various issues related to technology. In 2017, she served as a member of the Conference of Chief Justices Civil Justice Improvements Committee. Ms. Carter received the Distinguished Service Award from the National Center for State Courts in 2016

While serving in the federal court system, Ms. Carter was involved in several national committees related to budget and finance, staff workload and funding, interpreters, and technology. She also traveled to the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Russia, Philippines, Guam, and Palau to assist their judicial systems with budget formation, jury development, management reviews, and court administration. In 2002, she received the Director's Award for Outstanding Leadership from the Administrative Office of the United States Courts.

Ms. Carter graduated summa cum laude with a degree in business administration from the University of California at Riverside. Additionally, she is a former member of the Board of Advisors of the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (IAALS) and is currently on the Board of Directors of the National Association for Presiding Judges and Court Executive Officers (NAPCO).

Hon. Julio L. Mendez

... is the Assignment Judge for the Superior Court of New Jersey in Vicinage 1, Atlantic and Cape May Counties. In this capacity he oversees the efficient operation of the Courts for both counties. Judge Mendez was appointed Assignment Judge by Chief Justice Stuart Rabner effective November 1, 2011.

Prior to his current assignment, Judge Mendez served as a Superior Court Judge for Vicinage 15, including the counties of Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem. He first served two years in the Criminal Division, then seven years in the Family Division. In June of 2005, Judge Mendez was named Presiding Judge of the Family Part for Vicinage 15, serving in that capacity until he was named Assignment Judge.

Judge Mendez has served as chairman for the Children in Court Committee of the Conference of Family Presiding Judges. Additionally, he has served as a member of the New Jersey Supreme Court Family Practice Committee and various other state-wide conferences and committees. He is also a member the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Judge Mendez has also served as an instructor at Judicial College. He is a member of the Board of NAPCO - National Association for Presiding Judges and Court Executive Officers.

In his capacity as Assignment Judge, Judge Mendez is a member of the New Jersey Judiciary Judicial Council and a member of the Judiciary's Management and Operations Committee. He previously served as Chair of the Supreme Court Committee on Municipal Court Operations, Fines, and Fees, and served as Chair of the NJ Municipal Court Regionalization Subcommittee of the Supreme Court Municipal Court Reform Working Group. Judge Mendez is the Chair of the Drug Court Working Group.

In 1981, Judge Mendez received his J.D. from Rutgers School of Law-Camden and in 1978, obtained his B.A. in Political Science from Glassboro State College (now Rowan University).

Jesse Rutledge

... is Vice President for External Affairs at the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). In that role, he oversees Association and Conference Services, Communications and Online Media, and Knowledge and Information Services.

He serves as project director for NCSC's *State of the State Courts* public opinion work and as staff to two committees of the Conference of Chief Justices: Judicial Politics and Compensation and Public Engagement, Trust and Confidence. He plays a leadership role in shaping NCSC's signature conferences and collaborates with many of NCSC's association partners to advance shared goals.

Rutledge's commentary has appeared in a wide variety of media, including the *ABA Journal*, *NPR* and *BBC Radio*. His original research was cited in Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's 2015 concurring opinion in *Williams-Yulee v. The Florida Bar*.

Before joining NCSC, he served as Deputy Director of the Justice at Stake Campaign in Washington, D.C. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science and government from McGill University (Montreal, Canada), and a master's degree in political science from Dalhousie University (Nova Scotia, Canada).

Darren Toms

... is the Public Information Officer and Community Outreach Coordinator for the Common Pleas Court of Ohio in Cuyahoga County (Greater Cleveland). In this role, he has introduced a number of programs including a court podcast, a monthly in-house newsletter, a variety of employee outreach programs, including *Court In The Classroom* where actual cases are heard in middle schools around the county.

Prior to joining the Court in November 2013, Darren spent 25 years working as a journalist. He spent seven years as an evening news anchor in southern Ohio, while also teaching Ohio University journalism students broadcast journalism skills. In 1997, Darren moved to Cleveland to become the overnight news anchor for Newsradio WTAM 1100. By the time he left the station in 2013, he was news director and managed the newscasts for seven iHeart Radio markets.

Currently, Darren is the president of the Conference of Court Public Information Officers. A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he is a graduate of Ohio University.