



Press Release

From: Alaska Court System
Alaska Department of Administration
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COURT AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES HOST FIRST STATEWIDE JOINT CONFERENCE **Program for 500 is Largest Legal Gathering in State History**

Anchorage, Alaska. October 7, 2010. Over 500 judges, attorneys and other professionals involved in the state's criminal justice and child welfare systems made history yesterday at the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center in Anchorage. The first Joint Bench-Bar Alaska Criminal Law Conference was the largest gathering of legal professionals in the state's history, bringing judges of the Alaska Court System together with attorneys from the Department of Law, Office of Public Advocacy and Public Defender Agency. The conference also represented the first time that both prosecutors and defense attorneys—groups on opposite sides in court—have joined with judges for a day of mutual learning opportunities as part of their annual fall conferences. Workshops featured presentations by Professor Edward Imwinkelried, a renowned evidence expert, and "Evidence Cranium," a competition between teams that each included representatives from the prosecution, defense, and judiciary.

Chief Justice Walter L. Carpeneti conceived of the joint conference as a way to share limited educational resources and avoid the inevitable court delays that separate fall conferences have caused in the past. But he admits that the main reason he has encouraged the court and agencies to come together is "to learn from each other" on topics of mutual concern in an environment of collegiality and mutual respect. Attorney General Dan Sullivan and Rachael Petro, Deputy Commissioner of Administration, echoed these goals in their welcoming remarks to the conference. Chief Justice Carpeneti commended fellow conference organizers Rick Svobodny, DOL Criminal Division Chief; Public Advocate Rachel Levitt and Public Defender Quinlan Steiner for their efforts to create what he hopes is a new tradition. Relationships with colleagues—even those on the opposite side—have enriched his life, he told the crowd, "and I hope they can enrich yours as well." ###
