

NEWS RELEASE



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Press Inquiries Contact:
American Judicature Society
Beth Tigges
(515) 271-2283
btigges@ajs.org

New York Chief Judge to Receive National Award

Des Moines, Iowa – Judith S. Kaye, chief judge of the New York Court of Appeals, has been selected as the recipient of the Fifth Annual Dwight D. Opperman Award for Judicial Excellence. Chief Judge Kaye was chosen by a three-member panel: Judge Ellen Rosenblum, Oregon Court of Appeals; Judge Lorenzo Arredondo, Lake Circuit Court for Indiana; and Chief Justice Pascal Calogero, Jr., Louisiana Supreme Court. The award will be presented later this year.

The American Judicature Society (AJS) is a national nonpartisan organization which works to improve the administration of justice and public confidence in the American justice system. AJS created the Opperman Award to honor a sitting state judge of a trial or appellate court who has had a career of distinguished judicial service.

Chief Justice Calogero, chair of the selection panel and last year's Opperman Award recipient, said, "Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye is most deserving of the 2008 Dwight D. Opperman Award for Judicial Excellence. Her career has been an example of judicial excellence, including her appointment in 1983 as the first woman to serve on the New York Court of Appeals and her appointment in 1993 as the first woman to serve as Chief Judge of New York's highest court. She has been an effective leader on both the national and local levels. Through her work on the Court as well as with the Conference of Chief Justices and the National Center for State Courts, Chief Judge Kaye has demonstrated a passionate commitment to the improvement of our judicial system, and has served as a role model for judges throughout the country."

In her nomination letter, Fern Schair, Senior Vice President for the American Arbitration Association, said: "Providing extraordinary service to the bench, bar and the public, above and beyond the call of duty, has been the norm for her from the very beginning of her tenure. The literally millions of New Yorkers that come to their courts seeking justice are better served because of the creativity, integrity, intelligence, and deep sense of service of New York's Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye."

Judge Kaye became the first woman to serve on the New York Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, when she was appointed to the bench in 1983. She was appointed as chief judge in 1993. Chief Judge Kaye is the first chief judge to complete a full 14-year term in state history, and was reappointed for a second term in 2007.

Chief Judge Kaye is a graduate of New York University School of Law, and practiced privately in New York until her appointment to the Court of Appeals. Kaye was President of the Conference of Chief Justices and served as Chair of the Board of Directors of the National Center for State Courts from 2002-2003. Chief Judge Kaye currently serves as Chair of the Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children. Kaye is also a member of the Advisory Committee for AJS National Jury Center and serves on the board for the Dwight D. Opperman Institute for Judicial Administration at NYU Law School.

The award is named for Dwight D. Opperman, former chairman and CEO of West Publishing Company. Opperman is a former AJS vice president, director, and executive committee member. In 2004, Opperman was honored by the National Center for State Courts with its Distinguished Service Award. He currently serves on the AJS Board of Directors as a Distinguished Lifetime Director.

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Founded in 1913, AJS is a leader in improving our nation's courts. The AJS mission is to ensure a fair, impartial, independent judiciary; improve the criminal justice process; educate the public; and build confidence in the justice system. For more information on AJS, visit our Web site at www.ajs.org.