



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Utah's Chief Justice to Lead National Court Organizations

**Williamsburg, Va.** (Aug. 12, 2009) —Utah Chief Justice Christine M. Durham recently was elected chair of the Board of Directors of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). At the same time, Chief Justice Durham also was named president of the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ), a national organization that represents the top judges of the 50 states and U.S. territories, and of which the NCSC serves as executive staff. Both positions are one-year terms. The appointments were made during the NCSC's Board meeting and CCJ's annual conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

"Since her appointment to Utah's highest bench in 1982, Chief Justice Durham has been an effective ambassador for the judiciary," said Mary C. McQueen, NCSC president. "She has championed the cause of judicial education and worked to improve the administration of justice for nearly 30 years. She will bring that knowledge and passion to her leadership roles with NCSC and CCJ."

Durham became Chief Justice of Utah in April 2002. Prior to joining Utah's Supreme Court, she was a trial court judge for four years, one of which she spent as the presiding judge of the Third Judicial District Court. In the 1980s, Durham helped draft a rule of judicial education for Utah's courts that remains one of the most progressive and comprehensive approaches to judicial branch education. She leads the Coalition for Civic, Character, and Service Learning, a partnership between civic organizations, public education, the judicial branch, and the legal profession to improve education about the justice system in Utah's public schools.

Durham has served as president of the National Association of Women Judges, on the Board of Directors of the American Judicature Society and on the Council of the American Law Institute. She received her undergraduate degree from Wellesley College and her juris doctorate from Duke University. In 2007, Chief Justice Durham received the William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence, one of the highest awards given to a sitting state court judge by the National Center for State Courts.

Founded in 1949 and comprised of the top judicial officers of each state, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories, the Conference of Chief Justices promotes the interests and effectiveness of state judicial systems by developing policies and educational programs designed to improve court operations. CCJ also acts as the primary representative of the state courts before Congress and federal executive agencies.

The National Center for State Courts, headquartered in Williamsburg, Va., is a nonprofit court reform organization dedicated to improving the administration of justice by providing leadership and service to the state courts. Founded in 1971 by the Conference of Chief Justices and Chief Justice of the United States Warren E. Burger, NCSC provides education, training, technology, management, and research services to the nation's state courts.

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