

Remarks of former California Chief Justice Ronald George in presenting Ray LeBov with the 2002 Distinguished Service Award for Judicial Administration

With the signing of the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002, the courts secured the third in a series of great reforms that have restructured the judicial branch and our role in state government. What California's judicial system has achieved in the last several years is truly revolutionary, and a result of the efforts of many, many individuals working together around the state. And somewhere near the center of all of this activity has been its champion and superb advocate — the AOC's Director of Governmental Affairs, Ray LeBov.

Ray was Bill Vickrey's first executive appointment upon becoming the AOC's director, and for the past 12 years, Ray has masterfully directed the Judicial Council's legislative agenda, both as the lead advocate on the council's numerous sponsored bills, and in heading up the council's advocacy efforts relating to the 1,000 or so court-related bills that are introduced during each legislative session.

Ray has served as the council's representative in complex collaborations with the legislative and executive branches that have resulted in fundamental reforms in the court system. He joined the AOC in 1991 after having served in various staff counsel positions in the Legislature since 1975.

Ray's many credits include essential negotiations on such historic bills as state trial court funding, trial court unification, and, most recently, state assumption of ownership and management responsibility for court facilities. He has been a critical component in the success of several landmark jury reforms, such as the juror pay increase and the one-day-or-one-trial law. And he deserves recognition for his fine work on legislation that increased the number of new judgeships and that produced an 8.5 percent judicial pay increase that was critical to ensuring the continuing quality of the state's judiciary. Gene Wong, Chief Counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee, quite accurately pointed out: "That level of raise is not easy to get out of the Legislature."

Just as critical as helping to get legislation enacted is "neutralizing" — through amendment or defeat — numerous bills inimical to the administration of justice. In shaping legislation, Ray works very effectively with representatives from our sister branches and has established mutually beneficial relationships with our justice partners, various civil and criminal bar associations, the Attorney General, the California District Attorneys Association, and the California State Association of Counties, among others. Not only does he annually schedule liaison meetings for these groups to meet with me in my chambers, but he manages to fill up my calendar on at least 3

days early each year with 12 to 14 one-on-one separate meetings in a single day with individual legislators in their Capitol offices.

Ray is highly respected in the Legislature. Senate President Pro Tempore John Burton, for example, observed that: "Ray LeBov has been as great an asset to the Judicial Council as he was to the Legislature when he worked for us. I have always relied on Ray's good advice and sound judgment. He is very deserving of this honor."

Assembly Member Darrell Steinberg, Chair of the Assembly Appropriations Committee, describes Ray as "an outstanding negotiator and a tireless and effective advocate for the courts." And Drew Liebert, Chief Counsel to the Assembly Judiciary Committee calls him "a true institution in Sacramento," and says "we often marvel at how well he does his job."

Ray's ability to maintain the goodwill of our sister branches and sustain effective relationships and skillful communication through years of dealing with many complex issues and difficult budget times is an immeasurable asset for the courts. Burt Pines, Judicial Appointments Secretary and Senior Advisor to the Governor notes, "Mr. LeBov is very well regarded in the Capitol by both the legislative and the executive branches. He is straightforward, credible, friendly, and always on top of the issues."

Ray serves as lead staff to the council's Policy Coordination and Liaison Committee. My colleague, Justice Marvin Baxter, declares: "As chair of the policy committee, I have benefited from Ray's exceptional leadership over the Office of Governmental Affairs. The success of the Judicial Council's legislative program is due in large part to his untiring efforts and the respect that he enjoys in the Capitol."

Under Ray's leadership, the Office of Governmental Affairs has been staffed by a remarkable and talented group of individuals. It has established many outreach programs to help with and inform its advocacy efforts. These include the Executive Legislative Action Network, comprised of 84 appellate and trial court judges and court administrators statewide, who study court-related legislation and make recommendations to the Council's policy committee.

The statewide Bench-Bar Coalition helps coordinate activities between the judicial community and the state, local, and specialty bars on issues of common interest. And the day-on-the-bench program, launched by Ray, has been a creative and effective tool. This program enables legislators to visit a court in their own district and have a chance to observe court proceedings, meet with judges and staff, and talk about issues of common concern. In this way, legislators are able to observe and hopefully appreciate the complexity and variety of daily court activities and the key role the courts play in the

daily lives of Californians.

Ray is the consummate professional. He works effectively with groups inside and outside the judicial branch. Where our positions on issues concur with the positions of others, Ray helps us form alliances to enhance our mutual advocacy efforts. When our positions on particular issues differ, Ray helps us negotiate to reach agreement whenever possible.

Our branch is indeed very fortunate to have Ray on our side, and we would have much to worry about if he were not. I have the pleasure of working with Ray on almost a daily basis. His wise counsel and in-depth experience, steady temperament, and good humor have been invaluable to me time and again. So thank you, Ray, on behalf of the entire judicial branch and personally, for so many jobs well done. Congratulations.