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## Judicial Council Announces 2011 Winners of Distinguished Service Awards

San Francisco—The Judicial Council of California has announced the winners of its 2011 Distinguished Service Awards. The highest honors given by the council, the awards are presented to those who demonstrate extraordinary leadership and make significant contributions to the administration of justice in California. The program is now in its 18th year, and the awards will be presented later this year. The recipients follow.

### **William C. Vickrey Leadership in Judicial Administration Award**

*This award honors individuals in judicial administration for significant contributions to and leadership in their profession.*

**Michael D. Planet**, Court Executive Officer of the Superior Court of Ventura County, was selected for his outstanding service to the Judicial Council and for improving the administration of justice statewide and in Ventura County.

Before he took office as Court Executive Officer in Ventura in May 2001, Mr. Planet was court administrator for the King County Superior Court in Seattle, Washington. Previously, he had been deputy court administrator and judicial administrator for the Superior Court of Arizona for Maricopa County.

Mr. Planet's activities at the statewide and local level have supported the goals of the Judicial Council by providing access to justice to members of the community. His participation as a member of the Court Case Management System (CCMS) Steering Committee demonstrates his

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long-term commitment to modernizing court management and administration through the development of a unified case management system that will improve judicial administration and create efficiencies for courts, justice partners, and members of the public.

The Ventura court has successfully implemented the civil, small claims, probate, and mental health version of CCMS and is one of the three early adopter courts for implementation of the final product.

Mr. Planet also served on the Collaborative Court-County Working Group on Enhanced Collections and was instrumental in providing technical assistance to other courts seeking to improve their court collections. The Superior Court of Ventura County is conducting collections for the Superior Court of Imperial County, which was responsible for collecting approximately \$100,000 per month as of February 2009.

Local programs developed under Mr. Planet's leadership include an elder abuse court and elder law projects, which have helped other courts establish similar programs. "Workshops on the Web" presents video programs from the court's *Family Law Self-Help Workshops* series through the court's website, available to anyone with access to the Internet. This program received a 2009 Granicus Digital Governance Award, which recognizes government agencies for excellence, innovation, creativity, and leadership in using digital technology to improve transparency, public participation, and efficiency.

Mr. Planet also established the Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Community Outreach Program, which added community liaison duties to its American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter positions. Another program, the Quickstart Assessment Center, enables judges to refer defendants for immediate mental health or substance abuse assessments and services, allowing judges to make better-informed decisions. Both programs received honorable mentions from the Kleps Award Committee.

Through partnership with Interface and the United Way of Ventura County, Mr. Planet helped establish a 2-1-1 program. This program includes phones that are installed at key court locations that can be used to find services, including employment resources, information on child care, where to get a meal, where to get shelter, help with care for aging parents, and help for a substance abuse problem. Finally, he established the LEAD program, which provides continuous professional and personal development for court staff, is designed to develop future court leaders.

Mr. Planet was an advisory member of the Judicial Council from 2007 to 2010 and served on four internal committees during that time, including the Commission for Impartial Courts Task Force on Judicial Campaign Finance (2007–2009), Trial Court Budget Working Group (2007–present), Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee (2005–present), Kleps

Award Committee (vice-chair, 2002–present), and Court Executives Advisory Committee (2002–present.)