



# Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

## News

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### **Two circuit judges honored for novel scientific training** **For immediate release Tuesday, October 13, 2009**

DANIELS, W.Va. – Supreme Court Chief Justice Brent D. Benjamin today honored Circuit Judges Russell M. Clawges, Jr., and James J. Rowe for their election as ASTAR Science and Technology Fellows.

Judge Clawges is Chief Judge of the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit in Monongalia County. Judge Rowe is Chief Judge of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit in Greenbrier and Pocahontas Counties.

ASTAR, The Advanced Science & Technology Adjudication Resource Center, is based in Washington, D.C. In January 2007, ASTAR began operation of a Congressionally mandated project administered by the U. S. Department of Justice to improve science and technology training of judges in the United States. The program seeks to identify, recruit, train, and deploy science and technology resource judges. Resource judges are able to preside in complex cases featuring novel scientific evidence and issues, are skilled in mediation and other procedures that may save litigants from the financial and emotional costs of lengthy trials, and they can provide background and procedural information to their colleagues.

Judge Clawges and Judge Rowe were among 190 judicial officers from across the country who each completed a 120-hour case-related science and technology curriculum beginning in 2007 and concluding earlier this year. As part of the National Resource Judge Program, they now can serve as resources to other judges in the state.

The curriculum included reviews of criminal and civil cases involving complex and novel scientific and technical evidence in forensics, addiction science and treatment technologies, genetic science and technologies, neuroscience, computer science and Internet technologies. The program consisted of sixty hours of ASTAR-accredited “boot camp” and advanced program attendance, twenty hours of a neuroscience-related case conference in which judges had to write a memorandum of law in a complex case, thirty hours to download an archival science and technology desk book, and ten hours to prepare a judges’ science and technology education program for fellow judges.

Judge Clawges and Judge Rowe participated in the program under scholarships from the U.S. Department of Justice, funded in a cooperative agreement between the Department and ASTAR.

Chief Justice Benjamin presented them with plaques signifying their achievement during the first day of the fall Circuit Judges Education Conference at The Resort at Glade Springs.



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