



WISCONSIN SUPREME COURT
P.O. BOX 1688
MADISON, WISCONSIN 53701-1688

John Voelker
Director of State Courts

16 East State Capitol
Telephone 608-264-6256
Fax 608-267-0980

Amanda K. Todd
Court Information Officer

CONTACT:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Amanda K. Todd
Court Information Officer
(608) 264-6256

Chief Justice Abrahamson leads nation's chief justices

Madison, Wis. (Aug. 2, 2004) – Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson, who has served on the Wisconsin Supreme Court since 1976 and has been chief justice of the seven-member court since 1996, assumed the presidency of the national Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) effective August 1. The term is one year. She is only the second chief justice from Wisconsin to lead CCJ; the first was Chief Justice John E. Martin, a Green Bay native who served on the Court from 1948-62 and was president of CCJ in 1960-61.

“I am delighted that my fellow chief justices selected me to serve as their leader,” Abrahamson said. “The Wisconsin court system is, in many ways, a model for the nation and this honor recognizes the commitment of all the judges and court staff around the state who work on innovative solutions to the challenges that we face in providing justice for all people.”

CCJ is a national organization that represents the top judicial officers of the 50 states and U.S. territories. Through the conference, the nation's chief justices share information and ideas, develop educational programs, and address issues such as improving services to people who choose to represent themselves in court. As part of her role as CCJ president, Abrahamson also will chair the National Center for State Courts, an organization that collects and interprets court data and acts as a clearinghouse for court information. Abrahamson's election will raise the profile of some of Wisconsin's successful programs, including its initiatives to train and certify courtroom interpreters, improve access to court for people without attorneys, and enhance court-related education in high schools.

Abrahamson is well established as a national judicial leader. The recipient of 14 honorary doctor of laws degrees, she recently was selected as the first-ever recipient of the American Judicature Society's Dwight D. Opperman Award for Judicial Excellence. That award is reserved for long-serving judges whose written opinions are of extraordinary quality. Abrahamson also is a fellow of the Wisconsin Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and an elected member of the American Philosophical Society.

###