

January 15, 2008

Dear Fellow Members of the United States District Court Bar:

Happy New Year and many thanks to all those who have given generously of their time and energy as part of the Federal Court Bench/Bar Committee over the past year.

We would like to invite those of you who are not current members of the Federal Court Bench/Bar Committee, or who have not been active in the Committee, to join us in the exciting year ahead.

Chief Judge Lisi has expressed the Court's strong commitment to public outreach and education, which is reflected in the programs and activities scheduled in 2008.

Our Federal Courthouse celebrates its centennial this year. In honor of the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Courthouse, the Court, in conjunction with the Federal Court Bench/Bar Committee, is offering a series of symposia entitled "Access to Justice." The symposia will cover a wide variety of topics and will be free and open to the public. A full listing of topics, dates and times is available on the United States District Court's website (<http://www.rid.uscourts.gov/100Years.asp>) and the Rhode Island Bar Association website under "current news" (<http://www.ribar.com>). Other programs, speakers and celebrations are also being planned throughout the year.

The Federal Court Bench/Bar Committee is very active in a variety of ongoing activities. In 2007, Chief Judge Lisi initiated a high school outreach program to inform students about the court system. Federal judges and attorneys paired up and spoke to students at seven different schools around the state. The High School Outreach Subcommittee reports that this initiative was so successful it has received more requests that it is able to honor!

The Federal Court Bench/Bar Committee collaborates with the Court to improve facilities, practices, procedures, rules and any other matters of benefit to the bench, bar, and public. As part of this ongoing commitment, the Federal Court Bench/Bar Committee offers programs at the Rhode Island Bar Association Annual Meeting, develops periodic CLE programs, monitors and proposes changes to our Local Rules, and develops attorney best-practice guidelines. We welcome your participation and suggestions and hope you will join us in providing these valuable services to the Court, the bar, and the community.

You may enroll in the Federal Court Bench/Bar Committee at any time through the Rhode Island Bar Association website. We look forward to seeing you in the coming year!

Sincerely,

Rebecca McSweeney
Chair, Membership Development