

*The 2017 NFJE Symposium***Judging Emerging Issues in the Twenty-first Century**

A strong, independent, responsive judiciary adhering to the rule of law is one of the hallmarks of a democratic society. Given the complexity of rapidly changing technology and the new issues it presents for the judicial system, the word “fully informed” must be added as another characterization.

For 13 years, the National Foundation for Judicial Excellence (NFJE) has successfully produced a first-rate symposium, hosting more than 1,400 appellate court judges from 44 states. The responses of judges to the programs have been universally enthusiastic, and many have expressed appreciation for the high caliber and balanced nature of the program.

It is with this history and the demonstrated need for and value of the program that 179 attendees, including six chief justices, were welcomed to the 2017 symposium by NFJE President J. Michael Weston and Program Chair Steven M. Puiszis at the Loew’s Hotel in Chicago on Friday, July 14. Thirty-one states were represented.

Technology is forcing all stakeholders in our justice system to learn and adapt. While the law has always had to change with the times, technology is forcing



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change at a more rapid pace than in the past. Those seeking redress in the courts are calling on judges to address issues that require an entirely new and fresh approach. Entire fields of the law are now being disrupted by the effects of technology. How should courts deal with subsequent technological innovation not contemplated by the legislature at the time a relevant statute was passed?

The 2017 NFJE Symposium helped jurists address the challenges raised by technology. The symposium helped conceptualize the various approaches to these emerging issues and the dangers they present. Through panels blending the views of judges, academics, and lawyers, the symposium delved into technology’s effect on the development of the law, including the future of privacy and free speech and evolving notions of personal jurisdiction.



The symposium also included discussions of the latest Restatements being developed and land use issues in the twenty-first century. There was also a lively debate on judicial ethics and social media.

Attendees had plenty of time to socialize and confer with colleagues at two receptions and a luncheon. As in years past, many of the judges, looking forward, expressed an interest in the program for the 2018 symposium.

