

Special Benjamin Aranda III

Access to Justice Award

Presented on behalf of the Judicial Council of California, the State Bar of California, and the California Judges Association in collaboration with the California Commission on Access to Justice



William C. Vickrey has worked tirelessly on behalf of the judicial branch and the public, significantly expanding the availability of self-help assistance and court interpreters, increasing legal services funding, and otherwise improving access to the judicial branch for millions of vulnerable Californians.

Mr. Vickrey has had a long, distinguished career beginning in the state of Utah as Director of the State Division of Youth Corrections, 1980-1983; Executive Director of the Department of Corrections, 1983-1985; and State Court Administrator, 1985-1992. In 1992 he became California Administrative Director of the Courts and has held that position for nearly two decades. During that time, he has served under three Chief Justices.

Under the direction of the Chief Justice and the Judicial Council, Mr. Vickrey has been responsible for administering the largest court system in the nation, with over 2,000 judicial officers and 21,000 court employees serving over 37 million California residents. He has been an effective advocate for the judicial branch with the legislative and executive branches of government on major legislative and policy areas, and was a leading figure in several major reforms to California's judicial branch. Most important, he advocated for state funding for trial courts, providing greater stability and accountability for the use of public funds, and he helped implement trial court unification, transitioning 220 municipal and superior county courts into 58 single countywide superior court systems, providing a more comprehensive infrastructure and improved fiscal accountability.

His commitment and leadership have increased access to justice significantly, benefitting the courts and the public by improving and expanding training for judicial officers, simplifying plain English civil and criminal instructions, and providing for more qualified court interpreters.

Mr. Vickrey's efforts also resulted in the following improvements:

- Increased assistance for unrepresented litigants, particularly in family law matters, with self-help centers in every county serving 500,000 people a year in 101 locations
- A court self-help web site providing information in several languages on court proceedings, on-line legal forms, filings, and legal information
- Creation of a \$10 million per year fund (now expanded to over \$16 million) to help legal assistance programs
- Expanded alternative dispute resolution programs
- A statewide protective order registry for domestic violence
- Designated domestic violence, drug, homeless, and mental health courts to better address causes, decrease repeat offenses, and save the state millions of dollars each year
- Streamlined, uniform court rules and procedures
- More than \$70 million in grants from non-general funds to local courts and court-connected programs

These are significant accomplishments, and none of this would have been possible without Bill Vickrey's executive leadership. He has demonstrated a true commitment to improving access to the judicial system, and we cannot think of a better way to show our gratitude than to present him with a special Benjamin Aranda III Access to Justice Award.