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Arizona judge honored with national jury innovation award

Williamsburg, Va. (Oct. 19) – Maricopa County (Ariz.) Superior Court Judge Pamela Gates has been named the recipient of the 2023 G. Thomas Munsterman Award for Jury Innovation from the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) for her efforts to change jury service by improving the juror experience and alleviating financial obstacles.

Named for the founder and former director of NCSC's Center for Jury Studies, G. Thomas Munsterman, the award recognizes states, local courts, organizations and individuals that have made significant improvements or innovations in jury procedures, operations and practices.

Judge Gates will be presented with the award during a judicial meeting later this month.

The judge was honored for her work on Arizona's "Plan B" Workgroup, which provided guidance to the state's trial courts for resuming jury trials during the pandemic, and for chairing Arizona's Task Force on Jury Data Collection, Policies, and Procedures. Her efforts with the task force included working with judges, lawyers, court staff, and researchers to modify jury selection practices following the elimination of peremptory challenges in Arizona courts.

"Judge Gates's work reflects her deep commitment to fostering innovation, equity, and excellence with the justice system and advancing equality through effective leadership and thoughtful, informed decision-making," said Center for Jury Studies Director Paula Hannaford-Agor.

Nominators recognized Judge Gates's thoughtful leadership style, especially during contentious policy discussions while chairing workgroups, and her commitment to bringing together diverse viewpoints.

Judge Gates was appointed to the Superior Court of Maricopa County bench in 2009 and currently serves as the associate presiding judge. She previously served as the

presiding judge in the civil department and the associate criminal judge. Before becoming a judge, she was in private practice for 12 years.

The National Center for State Courts, headquartered in Williamsburg, Va., is a nonprofit court organization dedicated to improving the administration of justice by providing leadership and service to the state courts. Founded in 1971 by the Conference of Chief Justices and Chief Justice of the United States Warren E. Burger, NCSC provides education, training, technology, management, and research services to the nation's state courts.