NEWS RELEASE

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Santa Clara County Judge Named William H. Rehnquist Award Recipient

Williamsburg, VA (Aug. 26, 2004) – Santa Clara Country Superior Court Judge Leonard Perry Edwards II has been named recipient of the 2004 William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence by the National Center for State Courts. One of the most prestigious judicial honors in the country, the Rehnquist Award is presented annually to a state court judge who exemplifies the highest level of judicial excellence, integrity, fairness, and professional ethics. Chief Justice of the United States William H. Rehnquist will present the award to Judge Edwards at a ceremony Nov. 18 in the Great Hall of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C.

"Judge Edwards is one of the most effective and progressive trial judges in America, especially in the area of juvenile and family courts," said Mary Campbell McQueen, president of the National Center. "Judge Edwards stands out, not only for his numerous achievements, but also for his leadership style, which has positively influenced courts in California, the nation, and the world."

Santa Clara County Superior Court Presiding Judge Richard Turrone, who nominated Judge Edwards, describes him as "an extraordinary judge and an innovative thinker." During Judge Edwards' nearly 25 years on the bench, "his contributions to the judicial branch have been multidimensional – as a judge, a teacher, a trainer, a writer, an organizer, and a leader," Judge Turrone wrote in his nominating letter. "He has had a broad impact on the judiciary, primarily in juvenile and family courts, domestic violence prevention and intervention, judicial leadership, court coordination, and children in courts."

In Santa Clara County, Judge Edwards' efforts resulted in the juvenile dependency court being designated a national model by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. This court is one of the most visited courts in the country, with hundreds of legal professions traveling there to observe and learn the model practices Judge Edwards implemented, such as dependency court mediation, family group conferencing, direct calendaring, and court coordination. In 1999, Judge Edwards established one of the country's first dependency drug treatment court, which has been named a Mentor Court by the National Institute of Drug Court Professionals.

Internationally, Judge Edwards worked with Rotary International in efforts to provide permanent homes for street children in Latin America. Most notably, in Brazil he worked to persuade judges to consider placing homeless children with families instead of institutions.

Two other California judges have received the William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence: Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court Ronald M. George in 2002; and Judge Veronica S. McBeth of Los Angeles Municipal Court in 1998.

The National Center for State Courts is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the administration of justice by providing leadership and service to the state courts. The National Center, founded in 1971 with the encouragement of Chief Justice of the United States Warren E. Burger, provides leadership, research, technology, education, and training to the state courts. The National Center headquarters are in Williamsburg, Va., and has offices in Arlington, Va., and Denver, Co.