

CHIEF JUDGE LAWRENCE H. COOKE
SIXTH ANNUAL STATE CONSTITUTIONAL
COMMENTARY SYMPOSIUM

THE STATE OF STATE COURTS

ALBANY LAW SCHOOL
Dean Alexander Moot Courtroom
Thursday, March 8, 2012, 1 p.m.

WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

*Patrick Arthur Woods**

Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Patrick Woods, the Editor-in-Chief of the *Albany Law Review*. I'd like to welcome you to the Sixth Annual Chief Judge Lawrence H. Cooke State Constitutional Commentary Symposium. This is our spring symposium in our seventy-fifth anniversary year and I could not be more thrilled with the panel of four judges and justices that we have here today. I would like to just start off thanking our fantastic panelists; Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman of New York; Chief Justice Chase Rogers of Connecticut; Utah Chief Justice Christine Durham; and Wisconsin Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson. It's great that they came all the way here for us. This is the sixth State Constitutional Commentary Symposium, and not since our first one in 2007 have we had four chief judges and justices here at Albany Law School, blessing us with their presence. I'd also like to personally thank Chief Justices Durham and Abrahamson, as they were also part of that original panel back in 2007.

I'd also like to take a moment also to thank those who are introducing our panel today. Professor Michael Hutter, Professor Dorothy Hill, our mentor and faculty advisor at the *Albany Law*

* Editor-in-Chief, *Albany Law Review*, J.D., Albany Law School.

Review, Professor Vincent Bonventre, and our incredibly supportive and wonderful Interim Dean and President, Connie Mayer. We at the Albany Law Review are very blessed to have the support of the faculty and staff at this school behind us to the extent that it is. Without the help of our faculty, without the help of everyone in this school, including those who are not up front—like Christina Sebastian and Vice-President Helen Adams-Keane—events like today simply wouldn't be possible. Finally, before I turn it over to people you actually want to listen to, I need to thank the person whose dedication, hard work, and brilliance made today's symposium, and the truly tremendous book in which it will be transcribed, possible. Nikki Nielson is *Albany Law Review's* Executive Editor for the State Constitutional Commentary. She has been an inspiration to all of us, someone I am very proud to have worked with, and consider a friend.

*Nicole C. Nielson***

Thank you, Patrick. I echo the appreciation expressed. Welcome, Chief Justice Rogers, Chief Judge Lippman, Chief Justice Durham, and Chief Justice Abrahamson. Welcome to our symposium, a unique opportunity to connect with the Chief Justices and Judges of four states, as they discuss something that they know quite a bit about, the State of our State Courts. These Justices, who have so graciously joined us today, possess acutely critical legal minds and skillful administrative capabilities. What they share with us will inform our framework for practice, and advise us as observers, consumers, and members of the Bar. Our Justices here today preside over their state's highest courts, giving effect and meaning to the law. They are individuals who have taken on the important responsibility of interpreting the law and analyzing its impact. It is a responsibility that they carry out very, very well, despite the formidable challenges. Our state courts offer critical forums for justice. State courts handle a voluminous caseload that grows larger by the year. State

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Judiciaries interpret and analyze state constitutions, consider federal laws, and resolve criminal and civil conflict. In addition to making difficult decisions about law and fact, these four chiefs also administer their respective court systems. They ensure access for citizens, and address administrative and procedural issues. In their capable hands, justice is delivered. Budgets, judicial selection and retention, technology, legal debate, and so many other issues, all effect when, where, and how quickly a judicial inquiry and subsequent decisions will be available. Our chiefs today will discuss the fundamental challenges they face, providing the context and consideration that influence the legitimate delivery of justice. The chiefs today will talk about these challenges, and how they are creating solutions. Again, thank you for joining us. The list of those responsible for today's symposium is long. Thank you all for your incredible contributions. It is now my pleasure to introduce Professor Michael Hutter from our faculty, who will be introducing our moderator, Chief Judge Lippman, from the New York Court of Appeals. Located right here in Albany, the Court of Appeals is where Professor Hutter began his legal career, as a clerk for Judge Jasen.