



NEWS

Judicial Council of California
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS
Public Information Office
(415) 865-7740
Lynn Holton, Public Information Officer

Release Date: February 26, 2004

Release Number: 11

Justice Earl Johnson, Jr., Wins Access To Justice Award

Jurist Honored Today for Assisting Disadvantaged Californians

San Francisco—Chief Justice Ronald M. George today presented the 2004 Benjamin Aranda III Access to Justice Award to Justice Earl Johnson, Jr., in recognition of a career devoted to opening the courthouse doors to the disadvantaged. Justice Johnson's contributions throughout his legal career have placed him in the forefront of efforts to improve access to justice. Justice Johnson serves on the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, Division Seven (Los Angeles).

The award was presented today at a luncheon at the California Judicial Administration Conference, a statewide meeting of court leaders.

Now in its sixth year, the Aranda Access to Justice Award honors a trial judge or an appellate justice whose activities demonstrate a long-term commitment to improving access to the courts for low- and moderate-income Californians. The Judicial Council, the State Bar, and the California Judges Association, in association with the California Commission on Access to Justice, co-sponsor the award. Judge Aranda, the award's namesake, was the founding chair of the Judicial Council's Access and Fairness Advisory Committee.

Nominated for the award by the Los Angeles County Bar Association, Justice Johnson is a prolific writer and speaker on the subject of equal access to justice. His books and articles on legal services and international comparative law, together with his worldwide lectures, have significantly contributed to increased understanding among the judiciary, the legal profession, and political leaders of the barriers faced by the poor in seeking justice.

In addition to his articles and lectures, Justice Johnson has been active in bench-bar efforts to promote access to justice. Since his appointment to the Court of Appeal in 1982, Justice Johnson has chaired the State Bar Access to Justice Working Group that produced the comprehensive report *And Justice For All—Fulfilling the Promise of Access to Civil Justice in California*.

This effort led to the formation of the State Bar's Commission on Access to Justice, of which he was a founding member and the 2002 co-chair. Justice Johnson also co-chaired the committee that produced a five-year update of the original report, titled *The Path to Equal Justice—A Five-*

Year Status Report on Access to Justice in California. Published in 2002, the update documents progress made during the past five years toward achieving equal access to justice in California as well as what remains to be done.

Justice Johnson was the founder of the National Equal Justice Library, housed at American University. He was appointed the first deputy director and later the director of the National Legal Services Program of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). He drafted the first proposal, and was active in the legislative effort, to establish the Legal Services Corporation in 1974. Before joining the Court of Appeal, he was a professor of law at the University of Southern California.

He served as the Judicial Council's representative on the State Bar's Legal Services Trust Fund Commission, which provides financial support for civil legal services to the poor, and he also played a key role in devising and securing passage of California's IOLTA program.

Past recipients of the Aranda award are Justice Judith McConnell (1999), Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District; Judge Veronica McBeth (2000), Superior Court of Los Angeles County; Judge Charles W. Campbell, Jr. (2001), Superior Court of Ventura County; Judge Donna J. Hitchens (2002), Superior Court of San Francisco County, and Judge Kenneth M. Kawaichi (2003), Superior Court of Alameda County.