



For Immediate Release

HARRIS COUNTY COURTS ADMINISTRATOR RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD FOR LEADERSHIP, COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE

Aug. 24, 2022 — The Court Manager for Harris County Courts at Law has been awarded the 2022 [Ernest C. Friesen Award of Excellence](#) for his leadership and achievements in enhancing and improving the administration of justice.

The award was presented this week to Court Manager Ed Wells, who leads the Harris County Courts Office of Court Management. The administrative office provides support and guidance for the 20 Harris County Criminal and Civil Courts at Law, 16 Harris County Justice of the Peace courts, and 12 Harris County magistrates.

Wells received the award from [The Justice Management Institute](#), a non-profit organization that provides training, technical assistance, and applied research to courts and other justice agencies. He is just the 21st person to receive the national award since its inception in 1995.

"I am honored to receive this award because it affirms that our courts are doing the right things to provide justice in our communities," Wells said. "To be mentioned with Ernie Friesen and included among the list of past recipients is a professional recognition I never could have imagined."

The Friesen Award is given to individuals who demonstrate vision, leadership, and a sustained commitment to the achievement of excellence in the administration of justice, according to The Justice Management Institute. Recipients are teachers, innovators and leaders who are passionate about the work, set high expectations, and have the courage to take risks.

The inaugural award went to Friesen, himself. According to The Justice Management Institute, Friesen "epitomized a passion for justice combined with keen observation and analytic ability, extraordinary skills as a teacher, and a sustained commitment to improving the leadership and management of courts."

Friesen was the first executive director of the Institute for Court Management, first dean of The National Judicial College, director of the United States Administrative Office of the Courts, and co-author of the first major text on court administration.

In presenting the award to Wells, The Justice Management Institute noted that Wells had demonstrated "exemplary leadership" in court management throughout his career — as court manager in Harris County and previously as Clerk of Court for the Texas Fourteenth Court of Appeals, director of the Galveston County Office of Justice Administration, and court administrator for Galveston County.

"During his tenure in Harris County, Mr. Wells' leadership has been central to the modernization of the courts capacity to manage cases on the court dockets and to ensure excellence in court performance. He helped create one of the first and most comprehensive data dashboards for judges, which have been held up as models for courts around the country," The Justice Management Institute said in a press release, adding that Wells' focus on data had led to court performance standards.

The institute noted Wells' commitment to the fair and effective administration of justice and his leadership during unprecedented events like Hurricane Harvey and COVID-19. They also pointed to Wells' efforts to train court managers across the country in the effective management of cases on dockets and data-driven decision-making.

“Justice is the mission of courts. It can mean different things to different people in different circumstances. For me, it means ensuring fairness, equity, access, and consistency under the law — for both those who come before the court and for the public we serve,” Wells said. “Courts lead the pursuit and realization of justice, and I’m proud to work alongside them in that effort.”

The award was presented during the 2022 Court Leadership Academy & Conference hosted by the National Association for Presiding Judges & Court Executive Officers.

MEDIA CONTACT

Holly Huffman, Communications Director, Office of Court Management
Email: Holly_Huffman@ccl.hctx.net

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