

CGJA Central Region Candidates

Barbara Sommer



I would very much like to continue my service as a director and as secretary to the board.

I am a native Californian, educated in the state, retired from UC Davis (Lecturer in Psychology); and have lived in southern California, the bay area, and currently reside in the central valley. These factors contribute to my knowledge and appreciation of the needs and challenges of our state and of our region.

With regard to CGJA, I became active following two terms on the Yolo County Grand Jury (2008-10, foreperson the second term). I have been the chair of the Awards Committee and continue to chair its Excellence in Reporting subcommittee. I am a member of the Public Relations Committee and edit CGJA's bimonthly *Grand Jurors' Journal*.

I have been very impressed by the corona virus response group's laying out a roadmap with the various routes open to the courts with regard to continuing grand jury function without a serious pause. In my role as director, I would continue to actively encourage this type of endeavor. Our role as a protector of impartial democratic institutions seems particularly important at this time.

Robert Finlayson



With the vast new concerns arising out of the Covid 19 situation, and a time of extreme partisanship, the Grand Jury system will become of increasing importance as the unbiased watchdog of local government. The goals of attracting the best possible candidates and training them on how to investigate and make practical, well researched and objectively reasoned recommendations will become even more critical.

Assisting in the orientation of prospective jurors for the last three years, provided me with a current insight as to their concerns and perceptions about Grand Juries, and ideas on how we could attract more diverse and qualified candidates. Also having attended meetings with other chapters from neighboring counties, have seen the benefits of combining experiences and talent from several counties to improve the effectiveness of the Grand Jury system.

Working with state CGJA, I would like to explore ways in which an external organization, such as the University of California, could assist in gathering, analyzing and reporting out on the trends and accepted recommendations from all the annual published Grand Jury reports, and determine if this concept is feasible, worthwhile and sustainable.

My four years' experience as a trainer for the CGJA has shown me how varied are the approaches each county takes. I would strive, as the Director for the Central Region, to use the Best Practices approach to help all counties constantly improve their work product, as well as vigorously following up on prior reports to ensure the actions agreed upon have been implemented.