



PACIFIC JUDICIAL COUNCIL 2026 BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

**Venues: West Plaza Lebuu (Day 1 and Day 2)
Palau Supreme Court (Day 3)**

September 13-16, 2026

PROGRAM AGENDA

v. 17 (8/14/2026)

SUNDAY, September 13 BUSINESS MEETINGS WEST PLAZA LEBUU

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Education Committee Meeting (Members Only)(Antelope Room)
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Executive Committee Meeting (Members Only)(Antelope Room)
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Welcome Dinner Hosted by Palau Judiciary

MONDAY, September 14 DAY 1 WEST PLAZA LEBUU

8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Registration/General Assembly
9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	Mistress of Ceremony The Honorable Kathleen M. Salii, <i>Presiding Justice,</i> <i>Palau Supreme Court and Conference Co-Chair</i>
	Welcoming Remarks The Honorable Oldiais Ngiraikelau, <i>Chief Justice</i> <i>Palau Supreme Court</i>
	Opening Remarks and Introduction of Keynote Speaker The Honorable Robert J. Torres, <i>Associate Justice,</i> <i>Supreme Court of Guam and President, Pacific Judicial Council</i>

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Keynote Speaker The Honorable Angel A. Demapan <i>Deputy Assistant Secretary for Insular, International and Ocean Affairs</i>
10:30 p.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	<i>Procedural Fairness: A Framework to Achieving Excellence</i> The Honorable Kevin S. Burke This session will start by examining the public perception of courts and judges. From there, we will explore what procedural fairness is, its components, what social science tells us about procedural fairness in the courtroom, and its role as a framework for running a court
12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Group Photo and Lunch
1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	<i>Procedural Fairness and the Mental Aspects of Judging</i> The Honorable Kevin S. Burke This session will explore the mental aspects of being a judge. How good are judges at determining who is telling the truth? What steps can my court and I take to improve procedural fairness?
2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Break
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	<i>Ethics Challenges in the Digital World—New Horizons or Tweaking Traditional Solutions?</i> The Honorable M. Margaret McKeown
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	<i>Wrap Up on Procedural Fairness and Access to Justice</i> The Honorable Kevin S. Burke This closing session brings together the core themes of procedural fairness with a forward-looking focus on access to justice. We will reflect on how courts can ensure that every person—regardless of background, resources, or representation—experiences meaningful participation in the legal process. Drawing on practical examples and judicial experience, the session will highlight strategies to reduce barriers, improve public trust, and strengthen the judiciary’s role as a truly accessible forum for all.
5:00 p.m.	Announcements and Adjourn Dinner on your own

Please do not forget to complete your evaluations!



TUESDAY, September 15 DAY 2 WEST PLAZA LEBUU

8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.	Registration/General Assembly
8:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.	Mistress of Ceremony The Honorable Dana A. Gutierrez, Judge <i>Superior Court of Guam and Conference Co-Chair</i>
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	<i>Narrative Precision: Writing Facts and Mastering Conciseness</i> Professor Michael A. Blasie Participants will learn that effective opinions rely on a disciplined approach to storytelling that strips away irrelevant detail while sharpening the logical flow.
10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	<i>The Clarity Mandate: Plain Language Foundations of Modern Judicial Design</i> Professor Michael A. Blasie This session establishes clarity as a functional requirement of the rule of law rather than a mere stylistic preference. Judges will explore the cognitive science of how readers process complex information and learn to prioritize understandable language.
12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch and PJC Reports <i>A Brief History of the Pacific Judicial Council</i> The Honorable Alberto C. Lamorena Presiding Judge, Superior Court of Guam Presiding Judge Alberto C. Lamorena III will provide a concise overview of the Pacific Judicial Council’s origins, noting its formation in 1991 to support judicial education and collaboration among Northern Pacific jurisdictions after earlier regional training efforts fell short. He will highlight the Council’s mission to strengthen judicial cooperation and address shared challenges across Pacific island courts, and briefly acknowledge his own foundational role as the PJC’s first President—reelected three times—and his continuing service as an officer of the Council.
12:30 p.m.	
12:45 p.m.	Pacific Judicial Council: Chief Justice/Chief Judge Reports (approx. 5 minutes per court)

- 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. ***Persuasive Logic: Preserving Legal Reasoning Without Compromising Clear Explanation***
Professor Michael A. Blasie
This session examines how to balance giving compelling reasoning while maintaining transparency and clarity through organization and word choice.
- 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. ***Beyond the Opinion: Plain Language in Global Court Communications***
Professor Michael A. Blasie
Justice extends beyond the bench to the forms, rules, and public notices that serve as the gateway to the legal system. This session provides a roadmap for redesigning courthouse communications and administrative documents to make them accessible, intuitive, and navigable for the general public, and how courts around the world are using technology and innovation to do so.
- 3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. **Break**
- 3:45 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. ***Checklists and Editing Protocols for High-Impact Results***
Professor Michael A. Blasie
Quality drafting is the result of a rigorous, repeatable process rather than inspiration alone. Participants will learn how to craft specialized judicial checklists designed to catch common errors, ensure consistency, and streamline the transition from a rough draft to a polished final order.
- 4:45 p.m. **Announcements and Adjourn**
- 6:00 p.m. PJC Dinner: Venue (TBA)

Please do not forget to complete your evaluations!



WEDNESDAY, September 16

DAY 3

**Palau Supreme Court,
Ngerulmud, Melekeok**

8:00 a.m.	Transportation to Melekeok for Sponsored Participants
8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.	Registration/General Assembly
8:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Mistress of Ceremony The Honorable Maria T. Cenzone, Judge <i>Superior Court of Guam and PJC Education Committee Chair</i>
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	<i>Judicial Security Best Practices to Secure the Judge, Courthouse, Courtrooms and Chambers</i> Chief Marshal Leo Diaz and Sgt. Cameron Mantanona Judiciary of Guam Participants will learn about evolving threats to judicial personnel, covering both physical and non-physical targeting. The session discusses common motives for attacks and reviews how threat incidents typically occur, emphasizing rapid decision-making and specific courtroom challenges like limited mobility and public exposure.
11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Lunch
12:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	<i>Security Outside the Courthouse</i> Chief Marshal Leo Diaz and Sgt. Cameron Mantanona Participants will learn to create awareness plans, communication protocols, and emergency procedures for situations outside the courthouse. The session highlights maintaining a survival mindset through awareness, distance management, and decisive action, and provides strategies for improving family safety, reducing personal risk, and conducting residential security assessments.
2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	Break
2:45 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	<i>Scenario-Based Courthouse Exercise</i> Chief Marshal Leo Diaz, Sgt. Cameron Mantanona, and Sgt. Ryan Balajadia, Judiciary of Guam Participants will take part in an active-threat exercise, followed by a review to highlight strengths, weaknesses, and lessons learned.

4:30 p.m.	Announcements and Adjourn Transportation to West Plaza Lebuu
5:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Bench and Bar Reception
6:00 p.m.	Farewell Dinner: Palau Bar (Tentative)

Thank you for your attendance! Please do not forget to complete your evaluations!



Deputy Assistant Secretary for Insular, International and Ocean Affairs

Angel A. Demapan

Angel A. Demapan is a seasoned public policy and government affairs professional from Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, with a distinguished career in public service, legislative affairs, and intergovernmental relations.

He currently serves as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs at the U.S. Department of the Interior, where he works to strengthen federal partnerships with the U.S. territories, the Freely Associated States and international partners across the Pacific. In addition to his role, Angel also serves as Co-Chair of the Interagency Group on Freely Associated States; Chairman of the Joint Economic Management Committee (JEMCO) for the Federated States of Micronesia; Chairman of the Joint Economic Management and Financial Assistance Committee (JEMFAC) for the Republic of the Marshall Islands; Co-Chair of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Committee; and Co-Chair of the Ocean Resource Management Subcommittee.

Angel's public service career spans over 19 years and includes senior leadership roles at both the federal and state levels. Prior to his current role, he served as Legislative Director to Representative Kimberlyn King-Hinds in the U.S. House of Representatives. He also founded Leverage Solutions, LLC, where he provided consulting services in policy strategy and organizational development to the CNMI Judiciary's Drug Court and members of the CNMI Legislature.

From 2015 to 2019, and 2021 to 2023, Angel was elected to the Northern Mariana Islands House of Representatives, where he held influential roles including Chairman of the Committee on Ways & Means, Chairman of the Committee on Federal & Foreign Affairs, Floor Leader for the Saipan & Northern Islands Legislative Delegation (SNILD), and as House

Minority Leader. His earlier government service includes serving as Chief of Staff and Press Secretary to three Governors of the CNMI, as well as over a decade of combined military service in the Hawaii Army National Guard.

His professional development includes participation in high-level leadership programs such as the Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP), the Pacific Executive Leaders Program (PELP), and was an inaugural fellow of the Pacific Century Fellows – Marianas Chapter. He has also served as a CNMI panel member for the 2016 and 2019 Section 902 Consultations with the White House and now serves as a U.S. panel member for the 2025 Section 902 Consultations with the CNMI.

Angel brings a unique blend of legislative experience, executive leadership, and regional advocacy to his work, firmly rooted in a lifelong commitment to the people of the Northern Mariana Islands and the progress of the insular areas. He is married to TaAnn Kabua-Demapan and together, are the proud parents of four children and the grandparents of a beautiful granddaughter.



Honorable Judge M. Margaret McKeown

Judge M. Margaret McKeown is a Senior Judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Prior to joining the court in 1998, she was the first female partner at Perkins Coie in Seattle and Washington, DC, where her practice focused on intellectual property, antitrust, and complex litigation.

Judge McKeown is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and served as a Japan Society Fellow and a White House Fellow. Chief Justice Roberts appointed her as chair of the Judicial Conference Codes of Conduct Committee (ethics) and as a member of the Judicial Conduct and Disability Committee. She is on the boards of the World Justice Project and the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (Chair and Vice Chair), the Council of the American Law Institute, and the Judicial Advisory Board of the American Society of International Law.

Judge McKeown has published and lectured widely on intellectual property, constitutional law, and rule of law issues. She is the recipient of the American Inns of Court Lewis F. Powell, Jr. Ethics and Professionalism Award, the ABA Margaret Brent Women of Achievement Award, the California Bar IP Vanguard Award, the California Bar Warren Christopher Award for International Law, and the William H. Webster Profiles in Leadership Award, among others. Judge McKeown is an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center and Instituto de Empresa (IE) in Madrid and is Jurist-in-Residence at the University of San Diego School of Law. She holds a JD and honorary doctorate from Georgetown University Law Center.

Judge McKeown is the author of *Citizen Justice: The Environmental Legacy of William O. Douglas—Public Advocate and Conservation Champion* (2022).



Honorable Judge Kevin Burke (Ret.)

Judge Kevin Burke (Ret.) was a Senior Judge in Minnesota. He has served as a trial judge since 1984. He is one of the most recognized leaders within the American judiciary. Judge Burke was elected for four terms as Chief Judge and three terms as Assistant Chief Judge. During this time he instituted social science studies – and reforms improving – procedural fairness. From 1991 – 1996 he served as the Chair of the Conference of Chief Judges. He chaired the State Board of Public Defense, and was a leader in the effort to improve and expand the state’s public defender system.

Judge Burke established the first drug court in the State of Minnesota and he was named one of the 100 most influential lawyers in the history of Minnesota by Law & Politics magazine. In 1996 he was named a Toll Fellow. The Toll Fellowship identifies emerging state leaders from all three branches of government. In 1997 he received the Director’s Community Leadership Award from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In 2002 the National Center for State Courts awarded him the Distinguished Service Award. In 2003 he was selected as the William H. Rehnquist Award recipient by the National Center for State Courts. The Rehnquist Award is presented annually to a state judge who exemplifies the highest level of judicial excellence, integrity, fairness and professional ethics. He was awarded Public Official of the Year by Governing Magazine in 2004. In 2005 the Minnesota Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates named him Trial Judge of the Year. The American Bar Association named him Judicial Educator of the year in 2010.

Judge Kevin Burke teaches at the University of Minnesota and University of St. Thomas law schools. For many years he served on the faculty of the University of Minnesota Humphrey Institute’s Reflective Leadership Program. He has been a speaker in 38 states as well as Abu Dhabi, Canada, Egypt, Mexico, China, India and Ireland regarding improvement in judicial administration and court leadership.

Judge Kevin Burke has authored numerous articles, and is the co-author of two American Judges Association White Papers, “Procedural Fairness: A Key Ingredient in Public Satisfaction” and “Minding the Court: Enhancing the Decision-Making Process.” He presently serves on the Board of the Institute for the Reform of the American Legal System. He is a past Board member of the National Center for State Courts and the American Judicature Society.



Professor Michael Blasie

Michael Blasie is the nation's foremost expert on plain language laws. He focuses on laws that regulate legal document design. His research is at the forefront of the plain language and legal design movements. Professor Blasie complements this research with extensive international experience including serving as the former dean of KIMEP University School of Law and a Fulbright Specialist Scholar in Turkey. He has presented dozens of times internationally in eight countries, including serving as a keynote speaker at the 2023 Plain Language Association International Conference in Argentina.

Professor Blasie authored the first comprehensive analysis of United States plain language laws. His research appears in the *Columbia Business Law Review*, *Wisconsin Law Review*, and *NYU Annual Survey of American Law*. Westlaw and Wolters Kluwer have published his work. Professor Blasie serves as a writing instructor for the National Judicial College, where he teaches state and federal court judges from across the United States and the world how to improve judicial opinion writing. He also teaches lawyers how to draft more persuasive briefs.

Prior to joining the faculty at Seattle University, Professor Blasie was an Assistant Professor of Law at Penn State Dickinson Law School. Earlier he spent ten years serving as a civil and criminal litigator in New York City and Denver. He also had the privilege of working as a law clerk to the Honorable David Richman.

Professor Blasie earned his doctoral degree in law at New York University School of Law where he was a Robert McKay Scholar, editor of the *Annual Survey of American Law*, research assistant to Professor Arthur R. Miller, and teaching assistant to President John Sexton. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Hamilton College where he was a four-time winner in the annual public speaking competitions.

Selected Publications

- Salvation or Threat: How Artificial Intelligence Affects Plain Language Legal Documents (chapter) *Law in the Age of Artificial Intelligence* (Yetkin Yayinlary, Turkey)
- *The Duty to Make Contracts Understandable*, 2024 *Columbia Bus. L. Rev.* 101 (2024)
- *Regulating Plain Language*, 2023 *Wisc. L. Rev.* 6887 (2023)
- *Plain Language Laws in the United States* (Wolters Kluwer, 2023)
- *The Rise of Plain Language Laws*, 76 *U. Miami L. Rev.* 447 (2022)
- *The Uncertain Foundation of Work Product*, 67 *DePaul L. Rev.* 35 (2017)



Marshal of the Court Leo S. Diaz

Leo Diaz has over 33 years of law enforcement experience, both with the judicial and executive branches of Guam. After graduating from high school in 1985, he continued his education at the University of Guam, where he majored in Criminal Justice and obtained his Bachelor's degree in 1992. First hired at the Judiciary of Guam as a Deputy Marshal I in September 1993, he transferred to the Judiciary of Guam's Probation Office in 1996, where he worked through the ranks to Senior Probation Officer. In September 2017, Probation Officer Diaz returned to the Marshals Division as a Deputy Marshal Supervisor prior to being promoted to his current position of Marshal of the Courts in November 2024. He was previously responsible for the Warrant Intel Section (WIS), a highly regarded tactical team comprised of Deputy Marshals tasked with executing criminal warrants throughout the island. In 1995, Deputy Marshal Diaz completed Guam Police Department's 36th Academy. In 1998, he attended the Guam Police Department's 2nd Special Weapons and Tactics (S.W.A.T.) cycle, and continues to serve as an active member of the S.W.A.T. team and an active Reservist with GPD. In addition to his local law enforcement career, in September 2000, Deputy Marshal Supervisor Diaz graduated from the United States Basic Air Force Academy, where he served for 22 years before retiring from the Guam Air National Guard in June 2023.

Deputy Marshal Supervisor Diaz possesses Instructor Certification in Active Shooter/High Risk Response T-T-T (ANSER) and TASER Instructor (GPD), amongst others.

He was previously assigned as the Supervisor of the Marshal's Training and Staff Development Section, where he coordinated and provided training on various specialty instruction such as Active Shooter, Basic and Advanced Close Quarters Battle (CQB), Spontaneous Knife Defense, notably. He has served as an Assistant Cadre with the Guam Community College Criminal Justice Academies, the Judiciary of Guam's Criminal Justice Academy, and the Judiciary of Guam's Special Enforcement Tactics (SET). He has also provided training to the Yapese Police Department and other law enforcement entities within the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

Throughout his law enforcement career, he attained numerous commendations and awards. Additionally, he received two Legislative Resolutions which recognized his service in providing instruction for the respective Criminal Justice Academies.



Deputy Marshal III Cameron Mantanona

Deputy Marshal III Cameron Mantanona has served with the Judiciary of Guam Marshals Division since 2015 and is currently assigned to the Training & Staff Development Section. Throughout his career, he has been assigned to the Security Section, Civil & Small Claims Section, Child Support Section, Warrant & Intel Section, and now develops training programs for Marshals and partner agencies.

Deputy Marshal Mantanona is a certified Firearms Instructor, Defensive Tactics Instructor, Armorer, Process Server Instructor, and Occupant Emergency Plan Instructor. He develops and instructs courses in officer safety, courtroom and facility security, use of force, emergency preparedness, process serving, and other law enforcement skills.

In addition to training personnel within the Judiciary of Guam, Deputy Marshal Mantanona has assisted in providing instruction to law enforcement officers and judicial personnel from Saipan, Palau, Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and other Pacific jurisdictions. He remains committed to advancing professional standards through practical, legally sound, and instructor-led training that enhances officer safety, operational readiness, and public service throughout the region.



Deputy Marshal III Ryan T. Balajadia

Deputy Marshal III Ryan T. Balajadia has been a member of the Judiciary of Guam for nearly three decades, beginning his career as a Deputy Clerk in 1996 before joining the Marshals Division in 2014. He was promoted to Deputy Marshal III in 2023 and has been entrusted with providing executive protection to the Chief Justice on numerous occasions since 2014, most recently throughout Chief Justice Robert J. Torres' term from 2023–2026. His assignments have included the Security and Criminal Sections, and he currently provides executive protection, judicial security, and dignitary protection while coordinating with local and federal law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety of the Judiciary and its officials.

Throughout his career, Deputy Marshal Balajadia has developed extensive experience in courtroom and facility security, warrant execution, protective services, prisoner transport, and court operations. He has completed specialized training in judicial dignitary protection, court security, tactical operations, firearms, officer survival, and use of force, and remains committed to upholding the highest standards of professionalism, safety, and service in support of the Judiciary of Guam.