

CHANGE CAN BE an arduous process, and it is not always appreciated by a hidebound profession. With a legacy of progress and advancement that spans more than 200 years, why would lawyers find alteration appealing? Why should they?

Because, argue some, centuries of trial practice have not made perfect. To hear some judges and reform advocates tell it, removing powdered wigs has been virtually our only advancement since the days of the earliest U.S. juries.

The state of Arizona, however, has leap-frogged ahead of the nation in its jury reform efforts. It has instituted changes in the way judges and lawyers interact with jurors. In doing so, it has turned the focus of the courtroom—and the nation—back to that group of citizens, nonexperts all, and asked them to do their job with new tools.

Have those tools worked? To examine that question, *Arizona Attorney* spoke with Michael Dann, former presiding judge of the Maricopa County Superior Court. Dann was present in Arizona when those tools were forged, and his insights provided the impetus to reform. In his own far-ranging way, Judge Dann now works at a multitude of tasks, all to improve the jury trial system. Wrestling daily with the paradox of a system that is traditional but marked by transformative ideas, Dann and others help to create an ongoing revolution in U.S. courtrooms. Their work demonstrates the stakes involved in altering the jury trial and the frequent resistance to institutional change.

Many readers, I'm sure, have advocated in the well of Arizona courtrooms before and after many of these changes, and your insights may vary from those of reform advocates. Have the practice of law and the administration of justice been improved? Are these Arizona changes ready to be used coast-to-coast, or do they need an overhaul? Is Arizona's reputation as a trial practice leader well founded?

Let me know what you think of the trial practice revolution. For it is certain that as citizens are asked to think—and deliberate—out of the (jury) box, lawyers will have to shift their own trial strategies. Whether they are shifts for the better is a debate that is ongoing. 🗣️

—TIM EIGO