



For Immediate Release

**Civil Justice Award Conferred on
U.S. District Judge Charles Breyer,
New York Supreme Court Justice Shirley Werner, and
Hon. Fern Smith, Retired United States District Judge**

Court-Appointed Masters Confer Award on Three Judges

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., February 2, 2009—The [Academy of Court-Appointed Masters](#) (ACAM) presented its **Civil Justice Award** to Hon. Charles Breyer, United States District Judge for the Northern District of California, Hon. Shirley Werner, Justice on the New York Supreme Court in New York City, and Hon. Fern Smith, former United States District Judge for the Northern District of San Francisco. These Awards were announced at [the Academy's Annual Meeting](#) in Phoenix, Arizona, on January 30, 2009. The Academy presents the Civil Justice Award annually to a judge or other person involved in the administration of civil justice who exhibits "Excellence in Civil Justice and Promoting Special Master Service."

Judges Breyer, Kornreich, and Smith, were recognized for their use of a joint Special Master to manage common case management issues in complex litigation pending in federal and state courts. Judge Breyer appointed Fern Smith as Special Master after being assigned all the product liability cases involving the drugs Celebrex and Bextra pending in federal courts around the country by the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation in Washington. New York State Court Justice Shirley Kornreich then also appointed Judge Smith in a similar role for all the New York cases which had been assigned to her. These two appointments allowed the cases to be managed in a coordinated, efficient way and resulted in the vast majority of the cases being resolved in a much shorter time than would happen without this creative case coordination effort.

Academy President David Herr of Minneapolis, Minnesota, presented the award on behalf of the Academy, and expressed the Academy's admiration and appreciation of each judge's tireless and exemplary service as judges and for their creative and effective approach to solving the problems presented by mass tort litigation pending in both federal and state courts.

The Academy of Court-Appointed Masters (ACAM) is an independent, national organization of over 75 experienced masters who serve in both federal and state courts. ACAM's mission is to provide judges, lawyers, parties, and other masters with helpful information regarding the use of masters. ACAM membership is open to any master who has been appointed by a federal or state court judge. Additional information, and the *ACAM Bench Book*, is available at the Academy of Court-Appointed Masters website at www.courtappointedmasters.org.

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