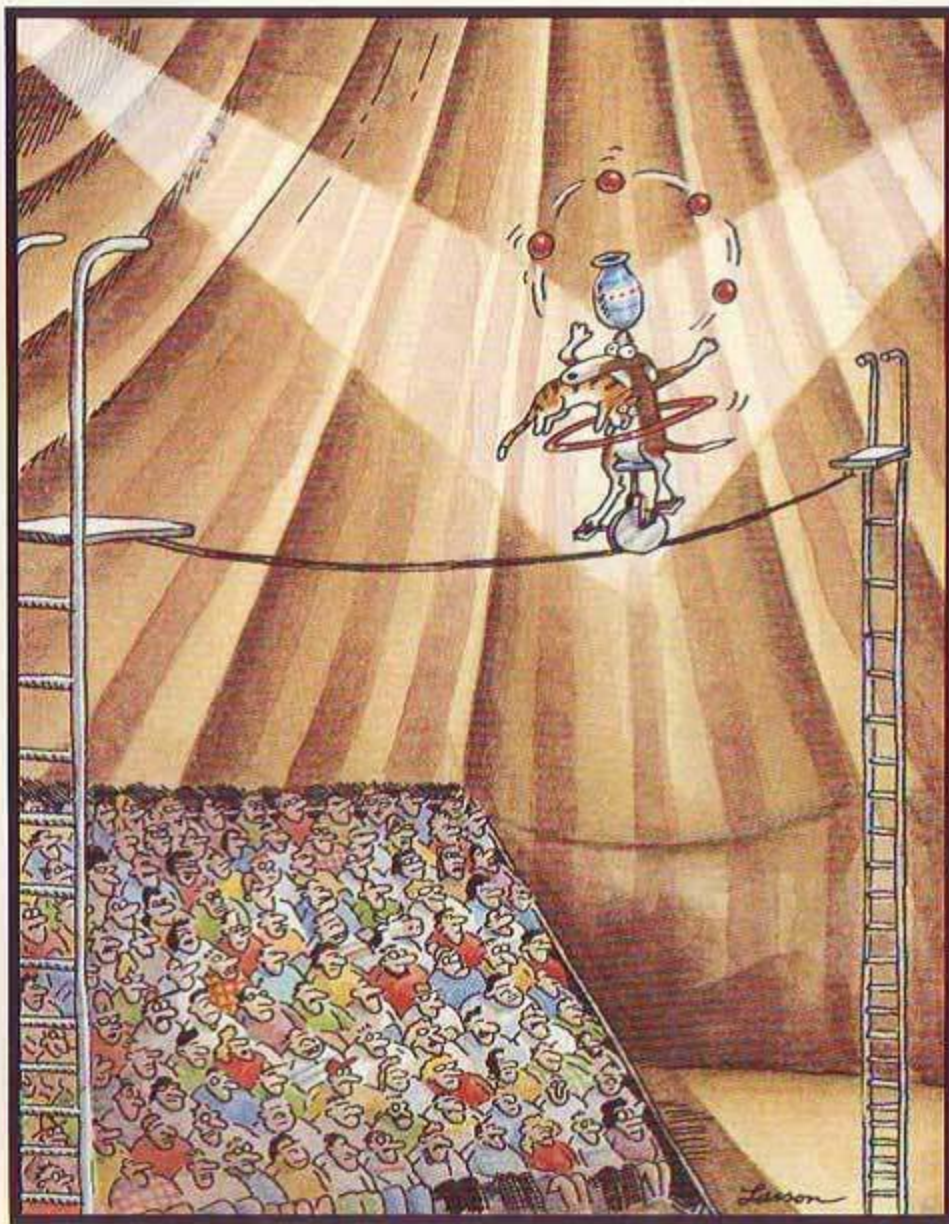


# Judicial Best Practices in Veterans Court

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High above the hushed crowd, Rex tried to remain focused. Still, he couldn't shake one nagging thought: He was an old dog and this was a new trick.

# Length of Term

- Preside for no less than 2 years = 3xs cost savings and significantly lower recidivism rates
- Voluntary and indefinite assignment resulted in greater crime reduction
- Learning curve ascends rapidly
- Institutional memory is otherwise lost
- Annual rotation is counterproductive

# Consistent Docket

- Participants should see the same judge throughout their tenure in Veteran's court
- Consistency and structure are important to participants
- Feel closer connection to the judge

# Frequent Status Hearings

- High risk offenders do better before the judge
- Holds for urban vs. rural; misdemeanors vs. felony
- Gradually reduce frequency
- No less than every four weeks

# Length of Court Interactions

- Judge should spend at least 3 minutes per participant (70 site study)
- Sufficient time to review progress with participant and give individual attention
- Show their efforts are significant and valued

# Judicial Demeanor

- Supportive comments
- Stress importance of commitment to treatment
- Completion of other program requirements
- Express optimism about their ability to improve health and behavior

**Interaction with judge most influential factor for success**

# Judicial Demeanor, cont.

- Do no harm like humiliation, shame, stigma, or abusive language
- Allow input by the participant/representative
- Judge who is “respectful”, “fair”, “attentive”, “enthusiastic”, “consistent”, and “caring” gets better outcomes
- Provide Procedural Justice