

To AV and AV Not

Hon. A.C. McKay Chauvin (ret.)

My kids just love what they call my “when I was a boy” stories. Classics like, “When I was a boy, this was *all* farmland,” or “When I was a boy, you could buy a sixteen-ounce coke for a quarter and *then* get a nickel *back* when you returned the bottle.” I can tell how much they love being dragged down memory lane by the way they roll their eyes and groan.

Anyway, when I was boy, or at least a young lawyer, we used to try cases using nothing more than our words, wits and *maybe* a flip chart and a couple of magic markers. While I can get wistful thinking about rolling fields of dark brown, 25-cent cokes in green bottles, and the smell of a jumbo black magic marker, I know full well that the good old days were *not* the better old days for trial lawyers. The tools of the lawyer trade have improved over the years to a degree that was unimaginable back in the day. No modern-day trial lawyer would trade their laptop for a fountain pen any more than a modern-day farmer would trade their tractor for a mule. One of the best courtroom examples of what was then and what is now, and the reason I am writing this missive, is the JCUP trial presentation system.

Sometime back in 2010 it became clear to a critical mass of lawyers and judges that

because a steadily increasing percentage of our jurors had come of age in a world of *multi-multi-multi* visual media, we had to learn to speak in the way those jurors learned to listen. If you wanted someone who grew up Snapchatting to hear what you were saying, we realized, then you had to *show* them what you were talking about. Unfortunately, our courtrooms were neither built nor equipped to facilitate that kind of communication. Fortunately, the Jefferson County Court Upgrade Project changed all that by designing, raising the private funds needed to pay for, and installing the aforementioned JCUP system — a state of the art, user-friendly audio-visual trial presentation system — in nine of our 13 Circuit Court courtrooms. The JCUP system was ahead of its time, has stood the test of time and, like the Voyager space probes, continues working beyond the time period (i.e. 12 years) fixed by the folks who launched it to complete its primary mission. And now its time has come to an end.

Do *not* panic! All is well! Inspired by the JCUP motto, mission and mantra (“building the courtrooms of the future today”), the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) has stepped up to take on the responsibility of equipping our courtrooms with the audio-

visual infrastructure judges and lawyers want, and jurors need. *Not* just every JCUP courtroom, or every Circuit Court courtroom in Jefferson County, but *every* courtroom in Kentucky! The good people at Justice AV Solutions (also known as “JAVS” — the home-grown company that created the official record-keeping hardware and software Kentucky Courts have been using since 1978) have started rolling out “JAVS 8.” This excellent AV system has much to recommend it. It is very well-designed. It is easy to use. It is technologically and mechanically robust. It is maintained by JAVS technicians with offices in the courthouse and, better yet if not best of all, it’s *free*. “Free” matters because that makes the system, as it should be, available to everyone.

I am grateful for and to all of the people who put in all of the thought, time, hard work and money to make JCUP a reality. I am grateful for and to all of the people from AOC and JAVS who will be putting in all of the thought, time, hard work and money necessary to carry on and extend the JCUP

legacy all across Kentucky from now until whenever we are all replaced by holograms and AI-robots. When that fateful day comes, there will no doubt be some old codgers somewhere telling their exasperated children about how when they were kids, or at least young lawyers, “We used to try cases with nothing but a laptop computer, an iPad, an iPhone, two projectors, two high-definition television monitors, a document camera, audio-video playback, power-point, the internet, a laser pointer and *maybe* a foamcore board or two.” I probably won’t be here to hear that, but if I was, I wouldn’t dare roll my eyes and groan because I would recall that those good old days (and these are those good old days) were pretty darn good.

Judge A.C. McKay Chauvin, retired Jefferson Circuit Court judge, is the Chief Court Administrator for Jefferson County. ■



NOTE: All of the Jefferson District Courts have already been outfitted with the JAVS-8 system. The Jefferson Circuit and Family Court roll outs will begin in March and should be completed by September of 2024. The JCUP system will remain in place and available in the nine JCUP courtrooms until they are replaced by the JAVS-8 system.

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