

# World Congress on Adult Guardianship

Seoul, Korea / October 23-26, 2018



## California Judicial Branch Gains Attention at Global Forum

Thomas F. Coleman spoke at a plenary session of the World Congress on Adult Guardianship attended by more than 400 delegates from five continents. Presenters included judges, administrators, professors, and advocates from 20 nations. The forum was hosted by the Supreme Court of Korea, the Korean Ministry of Justice, and the International Guardianship Network.

Coleman focused on serious deficiencies in the conservatorship system in California and the need for the judiciary to support significant reforms to protect the rights of people with cognitive disabilities. So far, the Supreme Court and the Judicial Council have declined requests to create a task force to review deficiencies in the conservatorship system and to conduct a statewide survey of probate court practices in conservatorships.

Coleman highlighted the pending case of Theresa Jankowski, an 84 year-old woman whose rights are being violated by a judge and a court-appointed attorney in Los Angeles. With approval of the judge, the attorney is arguing in favor of a conservatorship, ignoring

Theresa's wishes, and actively promoting the denial of her rights. Coleman also focused on the refusal of the Sacramento court to appoint attorneys for many conservatorship respondents, thus requiring people with significant cognitive and communication disabilities to represent themselves in these complicated proceedings.

Coleman informed the delegates that a complaint against the Los Angeles court for violating the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is pending with the United States Department of Justice. He also advised them that a separate ADA complaint is in the process of being filed against the Sacramento court with the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing – the state civil rights agency with jurisdiction to investigate, conciliate, and prosecute alleged ADA violations by public entities, including state courts.

*Pursuit of Justice*, a documentary film by Spectrum Institute, was also shown at the World Congress.

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