



Judge Christopher Collier

**Judge Collier Bridges the Gap Between Science & the Law,**  
**by Kate Feeks, Courthouse Reporter for CZ Court Reporter at**  
**[www.czcourtreporter.com](http://www.czcourtreporter.com)**

Judge Collier was recently recognized as an Advanced Science and Technology Adjudication Resource Fellow at the Ohio Judicial Conference. After completing 120 hours of coursework on a specific area of science and technology issues Collier and 34 other Ohio judges graduated and obtained fellowship status.

This two year course involved several visits to Ohio State University, National Institutes of Health and the National Institute of Drug Abuse and Alcoholism in Bethesda, Md., as well as John Hopkins University in Baltimore. These visits included lectures focused on genetics, epigenetic, DNA, Genes and alcohol and drug addiction.

Many of Colliers 120 hours were focused on Advanced Treatment Technology of Drug and Alcohol. "85% of my cases are drug and alcohol cases. Obviously I am crazy about learning all I can about this topic because a large number of the people involved in my cases are addicts" explains Collier.

ASTAR is a program organized to educate and prepare judges and the courts. When science and technology issues come before their courts, they are trained to understand them and react to them in the courtroom setting. These ASTAR Fellows are resource judges to other judges who may have science and technology questions arise in their own cases.

After being a judge for nine years, Judge Collier became motivated to learn more about science because he notices that scientific discoveries were over taking judicial ability to handle these issues.

"I wanted to be sure I was up to speed with this knowledge when it came

into my court” said Collier. The most valuable piece of information was learning the ability to evaluate new scientific pieces of evidence in order to help juries understand that evidence and make a decision. “I can provide them the tools to evaluate what makes sense and what doesn’t make sense” said Collier.

Interestingly, when asked what Collier thought would improve the ASTAR program he felt it could have been longer. “I could see myself doing twice as much work as I did and have gotten twice as much out of it. I left hungry every time after a weekend of learning. I left starving for more information.”

The rate of scientific knowledge is happening so quickly and our ability to keep up with it is getting harder and harder. Judge Collier plans to keep moving forward in closing the gap between science and the law. He plans on doing this by educating other judges and teaching classes on these scientific issues. With the desire to learn and incorporate what he learns in his courtroom, Judge Collier is in a unique position to help his fellow judges use science in Ohio's courtrooms.