

## The Selection Process

### **Juror Oath**

At some point during the jury selection process, prospective jurors are given an oath by which they swear or affirm to tell the truth when answering questions about their qualifications as jurors.

### **Juror Selection**

Receiving a summons for jury duty does not mean that you will actually serve on a jury. However, if you are qualified to serve and you do not ask to be excused or exempted, you will be able to participate in the jury selection process which may take only a day or a fraction of a day to complete. The process begins as groups of prospective jurors, usually numbering fifty to sixty in district courts, are assembled in a courtroom with the judge, the lawyers, and usually the parties of a particular case. Lawyers then conduct what is called voir dire (which means to speak the truth), which allows the lawyers and the judge to have the opportunity to ask each prospective juror a series of questions. While the lawyers are aware of your answers to the questionnaire that you filled out earlier, the lawyers and the judge may still ask you some of the same questions and some additional questions to ensure that you are indeed qualified to serve, and that you are indeed able to perform your civic duty in a fair and impartial manner.

After questioning the prospective jurors, the lawyers and the parties they represent will be given the opportunity to make any challenges for cause and peremptory challenges to individual prospective jurors (see definitions). After all challenges are utilized, a jury with one to four alternates is impaneled to hear the evidence in the case.

### **Length of Duty**

The length of jury service will vary considerably for summoned jurors. While the jury selection process may require your attendance for a day or a fraction of a day, jury duty generally lasts about one week. However, the majority, usually more than two-thirds, of all summoned jurors are NOT actually selected for service, therefore, their duty ends after a short time with the completion of the jury selection process. For those jurors who are selected to serve in a jury panel, the judge and the attorneys may be able to estimate how long that particular trial will last.

### **Delay**

Unfortunately, prospective jurors who appear and participate in the jury selection process will spend a great deal of time waiting. Although the courts make *every* effort to avoid delays, they sometimes will occur. If a delay occurs while you are present for jury service, please try to be patient with the court staff. Rest assured that there is usually a valid reason for any delays and the judge is aware that you are waiting. Also, try to keep an open mind about your jury service and remember that you are playing an essential role in our justice system.