

**National Institute of Justice**

**Jeremy Travis**  
Director

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## Director's Message

As the body of solid, empirically based research and innovative practice grows quantitatively and qualitatively, forums for presenting it need to grow accordingly. Thus, with our first issue of the *NIJ Journal* for the year 2000, we begin presenting more full-length, indepth feature articles.

NIJ has been pleased for the past several years to sponsor Cathy Spatz Widom's notable research on the implications of child abuse for criminal behavior later in life. Her most recent work, profiled here, indicates that this type of crime can also adversely affect the victim's long-term cognitive and psychological development. Bureau of Justice Statistics Director Jan Chaiken looks at some recent major trends in crime and the justice system response, suggesting that researchers set themselves to the task of exploring what lies behind these phenomena, the better to sustain the decline in crime and, as the case may be, to find out if the decline is real.

The new century is likely to see globalization continue apace in every aspect of human endeavor, crime included. Jan Van Dijk's and Kristiina Kangaspunta's comparison of crime in different parts of the world shows the progress being made in understanding cross-national trends. But as the authors note, we are still far from solving the mystery of country-by-country variation.

If the innovations in dealing with on-the-job stress in policing and in bringing a community focus to "lawyering" are any indication, the years ahead hold great promise for effective intervention. Many observers see stress as a quintessentially 20th century affliction. The review of what police departments are doing to reduce and prevent stress suggests there is hope that the 21st century will be the time when solutions are found. As a member of the "lawyering" profession, I can attest that it is sometimes a tradition-bound specialty. NIJ visiting fellow Roger Conner shows how, following the lead of community policing, the profession is shifting from a case-specific to a problem-solving approach, the better to ensure outcomes that communities value.

I think these articles make it abundantly clear that even if crime continues its welcome decline, there will be no surcease in the century ahead in the challenges to researchers and to those who devise interventions based on their findings.

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