

### **1. Rosalie E. Wahl Judicial Award of Excellence**

This award is named for former Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Wahl whose work as a Justice encompassed the attributes of the award. Justice Wahl was highly regarded, not only for her work as a judge but also for her dedication to and tireless efforts on projects improving the justice system.

The PLS seeks to honor appellate, federal court, state district court, or administrative law judges in Minnesota who not only have high ideals, personal character and judicial competence, but also have gone beyond the ordinary call of duty, participating in projects focused on improving the quality of justice or the justice system. Nominated judges must have been on the bench for at least five years.

The following requirements apply to the next three awards:

Persons nominated for the Julius E. Gernes, the William E. McGee, or Public Attorney Awards of Excellence must have at least 5 years of experience as a public attorney. They must have engaged in activities that show dedication and commitment to public service and the public practice of law. Nominees may also distinguish themselves by making significant contributions that aid in the operation of government or the practice of law and/or by demonstrating extraordinary leadership, initiative, or innovation in the performance of their duties.

### **2. Julius E. Gernes Prosecutor Award of Excellence**

This award is intended to recognize the work and dedication of an outstanding public attorney working in the State of Minnesota as a County/City Attorney and/or as a criminal prosecutor at the federal, state, or local level. The award is named in memory of the late Julius E. Gernes, former Winona County Attorney and Chief Prosecutor who was well known and highly regarded by county attorneys throughout Minnesota and whose professional achievements as a public attorney encompass the attributes of this award. For example, Mr. Gernes was active in the Minnesota County Attorneys Association, taught and mentored other prosecutors and was a skilled trial attorney. Nominees should demonstrate some of these same attributes.

### **3. William E. McGee Public Defender Award of Excellence**

The William E. McGee Public Defender Award of Excellence is intended to recognize the work and dedication of an outstanding public attorney working in the State of Minnesota as a public defender at the federal, state, or local level. The award is named in memory of the late William E. McGee, former public defender, to recognize his contributions and commitment to the fair, nondiscriminatory administration of justice and representation of citizens of limited means. The award would also recognize his extraordinary leadership, initiative and innovation in the performance of his duties as Hennepin County's Chief Public Defender.

### **4. Public Attorney Awards of Excellence**

There are two Public Attorney Awards of Excellence. These awards are the primary method of recognizing the work and dedication of outstanding public sector attorneys. Awards are given annually with the goal of including award recipients from diverse areas of public practice. Recipients are selected from the following areas:

-Civil Law: Public Law Office Counsel: This award is given to attorneys practicing civil law in the State of Minnesota in a public law office at the federal, state or local level;

-In-house Agency Counsel: This award is given to public attorneys practicing in the State of Minnesota in a variety of public settings including lawyers with such titles as hearing officials, staff attorneys, legal analysts, law clerks, or holding nonlegal government leadership positions such as commissioners, managers and council members.

Nominations should indicate which award should be considered.

#### **5. Douglas K. Amdahl Public Attorney Career Achievement Award**

This award is intended to recognize retired or retiring public attorneys who have had distinguished careers as public attorneys, have made many significant contributions to public service and are recognized as models of the dedication and commitment of public attorneys. This award may be given to more than one recipient per year.

#### **6. P. Kenneth Kohnstamm Pro Bono Attorney Award of Excellence**

This award is intended to recognize an outstanding public attorney (or public law office) who has engaged in activities that show dedication and commitment to provide volunteer services to underserved communities. The award is named after P. Kenneth Kohnstamm, the first recipient of the award in 2006. Mr. Kohnstamm exemplified the principles set out in professional responsibility Rule 6.1 by providing legal services without fee to those unable to pay and voluntarily contributing financial support to organizations that provide legal services to persons of limited means. PLS's own model pro bono policy for public lawyers is based on the work Mr. Kohnstamm spearheaded at the Attorney General's Office. With the Pro Bono Attorney Award of Excellence, we seek to honor attorneys who exemplify the principles of professional conduct rule 6.1:

*Rule 6.1 of the Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct provides in part that:*

*Every lawyer has a professional responsibility to provide legal services to those unable to pay. A lawyer should aspire to render at least 50 hours of pro bono publico legal services per year. In fulfilling this responsibility, the lawyer should:*

*(a) provide a substantial majority of the 50 hours of legal services without fee or expectation of fee . . . .*

*In addition, a lawyer should voluntarily contribute financial support to organizations that provide legal services to persons of limited means.*

In addition, the Minnesota State Bar Association has adopted Professional Aspiration standards which encourage attorneys to provide at least fifty (50) hours of pro bono legal services per year. The American Bar Association has adopted a similar standard.

#### **7. PUBLIC LAWYER DIVERSITY AWARD**

This award recognizes outstanding effort and dedication by a public lawyer or office or organization of

public lawyers in Minnesota who has had a demonstrated impact on (i) improving the employment opportunities for lawyers from groups historically under-represented because of race, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental disability or sexual orientation or (ii) eliminating bias based on race, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental disability and sexual orientation in employment of lawyers. Nominees must have achieved success by influencing individuals from groups described in the preceding sentence to pursue careers as lawyers; by increasing advancement opportunities for lawyers from those groups; by improving the cultural competence and climate of public law offices; and/or by other effort tangibly promoting diversity in the legal profession.