



Public Information Office
United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

Office of the Circuit Executive · 95 7th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 · (415) 355-8800 · (415) 355-8901 Fax

NEWS RELEASE

July 10, 2017

Contact: David Madden, (415) 355-8800

Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference to Honor Oregon Judge, Spokane Attorney

SAN FRANCISCO – Judges and lawyers gathering here next week for the 2017 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference will honor colleagues present and past with awards recognizing professional accomplishment and exemplary contributions to the work of the federal courts.



District Judge Anna J. Brown and the late Leslie R. Weatherhead, Esq.

The honorees are District Judge Anna J. Brown of the United States District Court for the District of Oregon, the 2017 recipient of the American Inns of Court's Ninth Circuit Professionalism Award, and the late Leslie R. Weatherhead, a respected Spokane attorney with a long history of exemplary service to the federal courts, who will posthumously receive the Ninth Circuit's 2017 John Frank Award.

Both prestigious awards will be presented on July 17, 2017, during the opening session of the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference at the Marriott Marquis hotel.

A trial judge in the federal and state courts of Oregon for more than 25 years, Judge Brown is highly respected both by her fellow judges and the lawyers who have practiced in her court. She was nominated by current and former judicial colleagues, who pointed to her consummate case management skills, willingness to share her knowledge and experience, and mentorship of women entering the legal profession.

Nominated by President Clinton, Judge Brown came onto the federal bench in 1999 and maintains chambers in Portland. She was previously a judge of the Multnomah County (Oregon) Circuit Court, from 1994 to 1999, and District Court, from 1992 to 1994. During her judicial career, she has presided over the full range of civil and criminal matters. Those include Oregon's first tobacco product liability lawsuit, a 1999 case involving millions in punitive damages that was eventually heard by the U.S. Supreme Court.

– more –

More recently in federal court, Judge Brown presided over two complex, multi-defendant criminal jury trials arising from the 2016 occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in southeastern Oregon. The high-profile cases posed legal, logistical and security problems, including concerns for her personal safety in the face of credible threats. Most dramatically, while dealing with a potential disruption of jury deliberations, Judge Brown learned her husband had fallen gravely ill and been hospitalized. She worked resolutely to resolve the jury issue, then rushed to her husband's bedside.

"Judge Brown understood that the call of duty demanded her very best effort in one of the most difficult moments in her life," wrote Multnomah County Circuit Judge Cheryl A. Albrecht, who described the episode in her letter of nomination.

A Portland native born to immigrant parents, Judge Brown worked full-time as a police 9-1-1 operator while earning a B.S. at Portland State University in 1975. She obtained her J.D. in 1980, taking night classes at the Northwestern School of Law of Lewis and Clark College while also law clerking for Multnomah County Circuit Court Judge John C. Beatty, Jr. She began her career with the Portland law firm of Bullivant Houser Bailey and later became one of the first two women to be admitted as a partners of the firm.

The American Inns of Court professionalism award is given annually in all of the federal circuits to "a lawyer or judge whose life and practice display sterling character and unquestioned integrity, coupled with ongoing dedication to the highest standards of the legal profession and the rule of law."

Senior Circuit Judge Mary M. Schroeder of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, a former member of the Board of Trustees of the American Inns of Court, will present the award.

Mr. Weatherhead, who died of cancer in 2016, had been a practicing attorney in Spokane for more than three decades. At the time of his death at age 59, he had been a partner at Lee & Hayes, an intellectual property law firm, since 2013. For 30 years prior, he was a partner at Witherspoon Kelley Davenport & Toole, where his practice focused on litigation of complex commercial and regulatory disputes, white-collar defense, and pro-bono work.

Mr. Weatherhead practiced extensively in the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington, and argued before the U.S. Supreme Court. He also practiced in several state courts and was a member of the state bar associations of Washington, Idaho, Oregon and Hawaii.

From 2001 to 2004, Mr. Weatherhead served on the Ninth Circuit Advisory Board, which advises the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit on the case management and other matters. He chaired the group from 2004 to 2005. He also served as a lawyer representative to the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference, from 1990-1995, and chaired the Lawyer Representative Coordinating Committee from 1994-1995.

Mr. Weatherhead served on the board of trustees of the Federal Bar Association for the Eastern District of Washington, from 1991-1997, and was the chapter president from 1996-1997. He was also a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, and served on the Washington State Bar Disciplinary Board from 1996-1999 and as a member pro tem from 2000 to 2002.

A native of Eugene, Oregon, Mr. Weatherhead received his B.A. from the University of Oregon Honors College in 1977 and his J.D. from the University of Washington in 1980. From 1980-1983 he served as deputy prosecutor and special assistant U.S. Attorney in the U.S. Territory of Guam. He had been an adjunct professor at Gonzaga University Law School.

Attorney Peg Carew Toledo, chair of the Advisory Board, will present the award. Accepting on behalf of the Weatherhead family will be attorney Geana M. Van Dessel, a member of the Lawyer Representatives Coordinating Committee from the Eastern District of Washington.

The John Frank Award, established in 2003 by the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit, honors an outstanding lawyer practicing in the federal courts of the western United States. Mr. Weatherhead was nominated by judges of the Eastern District of Washington in recognition of his contributions to the federal courts and his community.

The Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference, scheduled for July 17-20, 2017, in San Francisco, meets pursuant to Section 333 of Title 28 of the United States Code for “the purpose of considering the business of the courts and advising means of improving the administration of justice within such circuit.” Some 600 judges, lawyers and court staff are expected to attend the conference.

The Ninth Circuit consists of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and the federal district and bankruptcy courts and their related court units in nine western states and two Pacific Island jurisdictions.

###