



United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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Ninth Circuit Judge William Fletcher Receives Excellence in Ethics Award

SAN FRANCISCO – Senior Circuit Judge William A. Fletcher, of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, received the first ever Award for Excellence in Ethics in Complex Litigation for a jurist from the Center for Litigation and Courts, University of California, Hastings College of the Law. The award recognizes Judge Fletcher’s contributions to ethics in class actions and complex litigation. Parallel plaintiff and defendant attorney awards were also presented.

“In developing this program, we wanted not only to educate litigators and stimulate discussion on the important and evolving ethical aspects of this practice, but also to honor those who have demonstrated leadership, scholarship, and dedication in promoting ethical behavior and professionalism and to whom others look for inspiration,” said program co-chair Joshua Davis. “In writing about and ruling in complex litigation, Judge Fletcher combines the best qualities of a scholar, a teacher and a judge: he is knowledgeable, he is clear, he is respectful and he is pragmatic. We were delighted to present him with the award for ethics in complex litigation for those reasons and, above all else, for his unflagging integrity.”

“Judge Fletcher, (and attorney recipients) are exactly the kinds of individuals and representatives of the profession we had in mind when we developed these awards” said co-chair and center founder Scott Dodson. “I cannot think of a more worthy selection from the bench for the inaugural award. Judge Fletcher represents the best of what ethics in complex litigation entails: a keen intellect, an appreciation for the real people affected by mass litigation, and an unwavering fidelity to honor and ethics.”

Both Dodson and Davis are professors at UC Hastings. The awards were presented at the inaugural Complex Litigation Ethics Conference on Oct. 22, 2022.

Judge Fletcher, a jurist, scholar and teacher, was a professor at Berkeley Law for decades before his appointment to the federal bench. He is the co-author of an authoritative textbook on civil procedure which addresses complex litigation and class actions. Judge Fletcher has demonstrated his respect for ensuring that parties have the “practical capacity to protect their legal rights in court.”

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A former Rhodes scholar, Judge Fletcher clerked for Judge Stanley Weigel of the U.S. District Court in San Francisco and for Justice William J. Brennan, Jr., of the U.S. Supreme Court, before joining the Berkeley Law faculty in 1977. He has been a visiting professor at Stanford, Michigan and the University of Cologne, and he has taught at the Salzburg Global Seminar on American legal institutions. Judge Fletcher received the UC Berkeley Distinguished Teaching Award in 1993. He was confirmed by the Senate to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in October 1998.

Raised in the Pacific Northwest, Judge Fletcher received his Bachelor of Arts from Harvard College in 1968; a B.A. from Oxford University in 1970; and his Juris Doctor from Yale Law School in 1975. He served in the U.S. Navy as lieutenant from 1970 to 1972.

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