



United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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Judge M. Margaret McKeown to Receive the 2024 American Inns of Court Lewis F. Powell Jr. Award

SAN FRANCISCO – Senior Circuit Judge M. Margaret McKeown of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit will receive the prestigious 2024 American Inns of Court Lewis F. Powell Jr. Award for Professionalism and Ethics. The award will be presented on October 26 at the 2024 American Inns of Court Celebration of Excellence at the U.S. Supreme Court. The award recognizes attorneys, judges, government officials, journalists or others who have rendered exemplary service in the areas of professionalism, ethics, civility and excellence.

Writing in support of Judge McKeown’s nomination, 9th Circuit Chief Judge Mary H. Murguia said, “Simply put, Judge McKeown is a force of nature. Her dedication to justice to the rule of law and to the administration of justice is truly remarkable. She is the go-to person for difficult issues involving professionalism and the integrity of the judiciary.”

“Throughout her life, Judge McKeown has worked to advance equal rights for women,” said Victoria Fuller, president of the San Diego Appellate American Inn of Court, who nominated Judge McKeown on behalf of the Inn, which Judge McKeown helped launch. “In one of her memorable speeches, she advises that the mantra should not be ‘lean in,’ which is internally focused, but instead should be ‘lean down and lift up.’”

Judge McKeown has been a model for advancing ethics and professional standards at the circuit, national and global levels. She has served as president of the Federal Judges Association, where she advocated for pay equity for federal judges. As a nationally recognized expert on judicial ethics, Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. appointed her chair of the Codes of Conduct Committee of the Judicial Conference of the U.S. and as a member of the national Judicial Conduct and Disability Committee.

Judge McKeown has also worked to advance the rule of law internationally. She serves on the board of the World Justice Project and was the chair of the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative, where she now serves as special advisor. Judge McKeown is also a U.S. delegate to the International Association of Judges. She has worked with judiciaries around the world on ethics, transitional justice, equal rights, human trafficking and intellectual property.

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Judge McKeown is the chair of the Ninth Circuit Pacific Islands Committee, which provides judicial education to U.S. territories and former trust territories. In 2022, Judge McKeown received the American Inns of Court Professionalism Award for the Ninth Circuit.

Before joining the 9th Circuit in 1998, Judge McKeown was the first woman partner at Perkins Coie LLP in Seattle and Washington, D.C. She also served as the first woman president of the Federal Bar Association in Seattle and cofounded Washington Women Lawyers. In response to the #MeToo movement, she led a working group for the 9th Circuit that pioneered innovations, such as a revised employment dispute resolution policy and a first-ever director of workplace relations, that became models at the national level.

A native of Wyoming, Judge McKeown received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Wyoming in 1972 and her Juris Doctor from the Georgetown University Law Center in 1975. She serves on the Board of the Teton Science Schools in Jackson, Wyoming. Her work there was the inspiration for her recently published book, “Citizen Justice: The Environmental Legacy of William O. Douglas—Public Advocate and Conservation Champion.”

The American Inns of Court, headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, inspires the legal community to advance the rule of law by achieving the highest level of professionalism through example, education, and mentoring. The organization’s membership includes nearly 30,000 federal, state, and local judges; lawyers; law professors; and law students in more than 360 chapters nationwide.

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