

2017 GWYNETH B. DAVIS PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS:

☞ District Court Judge Lori Christian, Tenth Judicial District, Family Court

Judge Lori Christian has been a practicing attorney since 1994 and has always been a leader within our community and within the law. She is known as the "children's judge" and is not afraid to take an unpopular position when she knows that the rights of children are on the line. Prior to becoming a District Court Judge she worked as a Juvenile Court Advocate, as an Attorney Advocate for the Guardian Ad Litem Program, as a Parenting Coordinator for high conflict families, an arbitrator, and as Assistant County Attorney for the Abuse, Neglect and Dependency Court. She has served as Clerk on the NC Supreme Court and has run for Court of Appeals while managing her own caseload. She became a District Court Judge in 2007 and has been serving the people of Wake County for over ten years. It is sometimes forgotten that judges are servants but they serve day in and day out for minimum pay for what they do. They are threatened and put their lives at risk to protect the rights of others. Judge Christian has been serving on the family court bench for over ten years, where you see the most treacherous of cases and usually deal with a very difficult and very disturbed segment of the population.

Judge Christian became very sick in 2016 and had to take a leave of absence to undergo painful and unpleasant medical treatments. However, she persevered and has returned to the bench. Despite how tired she is or how sick she feels, Judge Christian forged ahead and will continue to serve the children and families of Wake County. We honor her.

☞ Kate Woomer-Deters, Staff Attorney, Immigration Rights Project

Kate is a staff attorney at North Carolina Justice Center ("NCJC") who has led a statewide effort to respond to the fear in the immigrant community after the November 2016 elections. Kate has created materials to train attorneys from all backgrounds on powers of attorney ("POA") and other issues specific to "deportation preparedness." She has been an invaluable resource to community members living in fear of deportation and attorneys seeking to serve the community. She has organized and led POA clinics for the NCJC and collaborates with private attorneys and organizations running similar clinics across the state, including DOWA (Durham-Orange Women Attorneys) and NCAWA (NC Association of Women Attorneys). Kate has led similar initiatives in previous presidential administrations and brings a tremendous amount of calm to the North Carolina community when times can seem unsettling.

Kate joined the North Carolina Justice Center in 2007, where she primarily litigates employment, consumer, and housing cases on behalf of low-income immigrants. Some of her cases have included class actions for unpaid workers or for victims of immigration service's fraud. She also conducts trainings across the state on immigrant eligibility for public benefits, and advocates for language access rights for limited-English proficient North Carolinians. Previously, she was an attorney with Legal Aid of North Carolina, the Farm worker Unit, where she litigated employment and human trafficking cases for farm workers, and practiced immigration law. Kate is a 2005 graduate of the University of Minnesota Law School where she was a founding member of the school's Workers' Rights Clinic.

PRIOR GWYNETH B. DAVIS WINNERS:

2016 Beth Posner, Chris Brook and Julie Klipp Nicholson
2015 Suzanne Chester
2014 Justice Cherie Beasley and Leah Broker
2013 Harriett Smalls
2012 Lisa Grafstein
2011 Susan M. (Smitty) Dotson-Smith
2010 Barbara (Bonnie) B. Weyher
2008 Justice Robin E. Hudson
2007 Stella Boswell, Judge Joyce Hamilton, Sally H. Scherer
2006 Justice Patricia Timmons-Goodson
2005 Robin L. Ames, Michelle Frances Robertson
2004 Sorien K. Schmidt
2003 Anne R. Slifkin
2002 Senator Ellie Kinnaird, Anne Winner
2001 Elizabeth F. Kuniholm
2000 Hon. Catherine C. Eagles
1999 E. Ann Christian
1998 Bertha (Bea) Holt
1997 Melinda Lawrence, Senator William Nelson Martin, Jennie Leake Hemrick
1996 Rep. Eva Clayton, Hon. Linda McGee, Elaine Marshall, Suzanne Reynolds
1995 Marcia H. Armstrong, Lynn Burleson, Allyson Duncan
1994 Hon. Janice McKenzie Cole, Jane Madden, Ellen Gelbin
1993 Dorothy Bernholz, Sharon Parker, Kathryn Jones-Cooper
1992 Hon. Patricia Love, Hon. Jacqueline Morris-Goodson
1991 Brenda Campbell, Mary Wright
1990 Ann C. Barnes, Charlotte Brody, Anne Mackie
1989 Russell Walker, Judith Wegner
1988 Mary Margaret Flynn, Pamela Gann, James B. McMillan
1987 Hon. Jane Harper, Pam Silberman, Sharon Thompson
1986 Gwyneth B. Davis, Annie Brown Kennedy, Hon. Sarah Parker
1985 Brenda McGhee, Sue Perry, Leslie Winner
1984 J. Ray Elinburg, James B. Hunt, Carol Spruill, Wilma Woodard
1983 Katharine Robinson Everett, Elreta Alexander Ralston, Carolyn McAllaster
1982 Ruth Easterling, Karen Galloway, Rachel Gray, Jane Patterson, Ellen Gerber
1981 Meyressa Schoonmaker, Carolyn McAllaster

PRIOR OUTSTANDING JUDGE OF THE YEAR AWARDS:

2016 – Judge Marcia Morey (Durham)

2014 – Judge Wanda Bryant (Court of Appeals)

2008 - Judge Kimberly Taylor (22nd Judicial District)

2007 - Judge Shelly Holt (Wilmington, NC)

2006 - Judge Allyson K. Duncan (4th Circuit Court of Appeals)

2005 - Judge Jane V. Harper (Mecklenburg, County)

2004 - Judge Joyce (Joy) Hamilton (Wake County)

2000 - Judge A. Elizabeth Keever (Cumberland County)

2000 - Justice Sarah Parker (NC Supreme Court)

1999 - Judge Linda M. McGee (Court of Appeals)

1998 - Judge Shirley Fulton (Charlotte, NC)