



Washington State Bar Association

1325 Fourth Avenue, Suite 600
Seattle, WA 98101-2539

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 23, 2011

Contact

Stephanie Perry

Communications Specialist/Publications Editor

206-733-5932; stephaniep@wsba.org

Judge Mary I. Yu Receives 2011 Outstanding Judge of the Year Award

(SEATTLE) — The Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) announces that Judge **Mary I. Yu**, of King County Superior Court, has been presented with the 2011 Outstanding Judge of the Year Award, along with Judge **Steven C. González**. This award is presented for outstanding service to the bench and for special contribution to the legal profession at any level of the court. WSBA President **Steven G. Toole** presented the award at the WSBA Annual Awards Dinner on September 22, 2011, at the Hyatt at Olive 8 in Seattle.

In October 2010, remarks reportedly made by two members of the Washington State Supreme Court regarding race and the criminal justice system caused significant concern among members of the community, particularly in communities of color. Judge Yu joined Judge González and Professor **Robert Chang**, of the Seattle University School of Law's Korematsu Center, in their effort to convene a forum to address the issue. Subsequently, the Race and Criminal Justice Task Force was created, which includes a wide group of stakeholders such as community leaders, prosecutors and defense attorneys, bar association leaders, law schools, law enforcement, and other members of the community. At a gathering at the Temple of Justice in Olympia in March 2011, Judges Yu and González — along with other leaders from around the state, including researchers and professors from Gonzaga University, the University of Washington, and Seattle University, and their schools of law — presented compelling data on disparate treatment effects of criminal justice system practices on communities of color, resulting in disproportionality of arrests, severity of penalties imposed, and rates of incarceration and recommendations for action by the Supreme Court. The Task Force's presentation revealed both the need to make far-ranging changes in the justice system and the energy that exists to do the work.

- more -

Working Together to Champion Justice

Judge Yu is well known for her extensive community service. She served as co-chair of the WSBA Leadership Institute Advisory Board and continues to serve on the Board; serves on the Board of Directors for FareStart, an organization dedicated to assisting homeless individuals develop job skills in the culinary industry; serves as president of the Board of Trustees for the Public Law Library of King County; serves as co-chair of the State of Washington Minority and Justice Commission; and is on the board of directors for the Future of the Law Institute of the King County Bar Association. She was also the 2009 dean for the Washington State Judicial College and is jurist in residence at Seattle University School of Law.

Judge Yu has been recognized with a number of awards, including the 2009 WSBA/Access to Justice Board Norm Maleng Award; the 2008 Asian Bar Association of Washington Judge of the Year Award; the 2008 Washington Women Lawyers President's Award; the 2005 Judge of the Year Award from the Washington chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates; and the 2005 Reah Whitehead Public Leadership Award from the Seattle University School of Law.

“As judges who happen to be persons of color, Judge Mary Yu and Judge Steven González are often called upon to shoulder a much heavier burden than their counterparts, as they are called upon over and over again to speak out and to serve as sources of encouragement, empowerment, and inspiration to communities of color and to groups and organizations serving communities of color, whether in the community at large or the legal community,” said King County Superior Court Judge **Deborah D. Fleck**. “They unfailingly embrace these as educational opportunities, and deliver their message with grace, intelligence, energy, and passion.”

Judge Yu was appointed to the bench by then-governor **Gary Locke** in 2000. Prior to her appointment, she served as deputy chief of staff to King County Prosecutor **Norm Maleng**, and director of the Peace and Social Justice Office for the Archdiocese of Chicago. She earned her undergraduate degree in theology from Dominican University in Illinois; a master's degree in religious studies from Mundelein of Loyola University in Chicago; and her law degree from the University of Notre Dame School of Law.

- more -

Working Together to Champion Justice

About the Washington State Bar Association

The WSBA is part of the judicial branch, exercising a governmental function authorized by the Washington State Supreme Court to license the state's 34,470 lawyers. The WSBA both regulates lawyers under the authority of the Court and serves its members as a professional association — all without public funding. As a regulatory agency, the WSBA administers the bar admission process, including the bar exam; provides record-keeping and licensing functions; and administers the lawyer-discipline system. As a professional association, the WSBA provides continuing legal education for attorneys, in addition to numerous other educational and member-service activities.

The governance of the WSBA is vested in its Board of Governors. There are three governors from the seventh congressional district; one from each of the other eight districts; and three at-large, one of whom represents the Young Lawyers Division. The president is **Steven G. Toole**, of Bellevue. The 2010–2011 president-elect is **Stephen R. Crossland**, of Cashmere; the 2011–2012 president-elect is **Michele G. Radosevich**, of Seattle; and the immediate past-president is **Salvador A. Mungia**, of Tacoma. The Board meets regularly (every six weeks) at various locations around the state, and its meetings are open to the public. Much of the work of the Bar is carried out through its numerous standing committees, 27 sections, and a Young Lawyers Division with its many committees.

The Washington State Bar Association's mission is to serve the public and the members of the Bar, ensure the integrity of the legal profession, and to champion justice.

###

Working Together to Champion Justice