

Washington State Bar Association

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Hon. M. Brett Buckley Receives Outstanding Judge Award

Thurston County Judge Lauded for Improving the Lives of Veterans and People with Mental Illnesses

SEATTLE, WA [Sept. 27, 2019] — The Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) presented Hon. M. Brett Buckley the 2019 APEX Outstanding Judge Award. 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 William D. Pickett presented the award at the WSBA Annual APEX (Acknowledging Professional Excellence) Awards Dinner on Sept. 26 at the Sheraton Seattle.

Buckley, presiding judge for Thurston County District Court, continuously demonstrates professionalism, intelligence, and leadership that has earned the praise of his peers and those who come through his courtroom. He created the Thurston County Veterans Court and presides over both that and the Mental Health Court, lending his insightful and innovative ideas to enable therapeutic courts that literally change lives.

Watch of video of Buckley's life and contributions here: <https://bit.ly/2IBDGBA>

"My life would have been completely different if I wasn't in Veterans Court," said Cory Knight, a graduate of Thurston County Veterans Court. "I would have been in jail, I wouldn't have the fantastic job that I have or the friends. I wouldn't even be able to talk to my kids, and I get to do that. Judge Buckley has a genuine caring and compassion for the Veterans Court participants."

Buckley has been a boon for the court and his community, despite his own personal setbacks. In only a matter of years, he lost his beloved wife to cancer, overcame his own medical issues, and was attacked by a former defendant who threw acid in his face.

In 2017, Buckley self-initiated a site visit and report by the National Council of Family and Juvenile Court Judges' Center for Court Innovation to assess his court's degree of procedural justice and implicit bias, for which the council in its report commended his dedication to improvement.

After law school, Buckley served as senior defense counsel in the U.S. Army, later becoming a Commander's List graduate of the Judge Advocate General's School. He was a two-term member of the District and Municipal Court Judges' Association (DMCJA) Board and chair of its Legislative Committee. He also served as a member of the Board for Judicial Administration Court Security Committee, a member of the Thurston County Domestic Violence Judicial Task Force, and co-chair of the Thurston County Court Committee. In 2008, he was selected as Judge of the Year by the Misdemeanant Corrections Association and received the DMCJA President's Award in 2009.

"He is one of the most disciplined, ethical, caring human beings I have ever met," Thurston County District and Municipal Court Judge Pro Tem Lori Preuss said.

About the Washington State Bar Association

The WSBA operates under the delegated authority of the Washington Supreme Court to license the state's nearly 40,000 lawyers and other legal professionals. In furtherance of its obligation to protect and serve the public, the WSBA both regulates lawyers and other legal professionals and serves its members as a professional association — all without public funding. The WSBA's mission is to serve the public and the members of the Bar, to ensure the integrity of the legal profession, and to champion justice. For more information, visit www.wsba.org.