

## Washington State Bar Association

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### **Emily Nelson Receives Washington State Bar Association Local Hero Award**

*Prolific volunteer praised for extensive dedication to public service*

OLYMPIA, WA, MARCH 18, 2021 — The Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) presented Emily Nelson with the Local Hero Award to recognize her extensive volunteerism and community service.

The Local Hero Award is given to those who have made noteworthy contributions to their communities. **WSBA President Kyle Sciuchetti will present the award during the virtual Board of Governors meeting on March 18.** Nelson was nominated by the Government Lawyers Bar Association.

Nelson was already engaged in human rights advocacy before she entered the legal profession, serving with Peace Brigades International's Colombia Project both in Bogotá, Colombia and in Washington, D.C. Nelson has been a vital asset to the Washington Office of the Attorney General, which she joined in 2016. She is known by colleagues for devoting extensive time to help those in need, recently volunteering to assist tenants who are being evicted during the COVID-19 crisis and mentoring attorneys who are starting in the tenant assistance program. Nelson also volunteers on the office's committees to develop and implement diversity, equity and inclusion goals. Such service earned her a Tanner award for outstanding attorneys with less than seven years experience, STAR award for her pro bono work, and the employee excellence award.

"I am grateful for Emily's work ethic, service heart, and sense of humor," said Civil Rights Division Chief Colleen Melody. "She sets an example for all of us for what it means to serve the public as a government attorney."

Nelson's volunteerism is both extensive and varied. She has donated her time and expertise to Thurston County Volunteer Legal Services both as a pro bono attorney and board member; for Kids in Need of Defense; Washington Women Lawyers Judicial Evaluation Committee; Spokane County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Program (for which she received the Women's Health Advice Clinic Attorney of the Year award); Chelan Douglas County Volunteer Attorney Services in 2013; and the WSBA Pro Bono Public Service Committee.

Outside of volunteering, in her professional capacity Nelson is the lead attorney for the state fighting against rollbacks of environmental regulations. She has represented the Washington State Department of Ecology in litigation before state environmental hearings boards, in superior court, and in federal court and advised on rulemaking and legislation related to combating climate change.

Nelson earned her B.A., magna cum laude, from Bradley University and a J.D. at the University of Washington School of Law. As a law student, she clerked at Columbia Legal Services where she worked on farmworker employment rights, and as a student law clerk at the University of Washington Workers Rights Clinic. In 2014, the university recognized her tireless work by presenting her with the Charles Z. Smith Award for Public Service.

#### **About the Washington State Bar Association**

The WSBA operates under the delegated authority of the Washington Supreme Court to license the state's more than 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](http://www.wsba.org).