

**Washington State Bar Association**

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**Spokane Community Court Receives Award of Merit, State Bar's Highest Honor**

*Innovative program for nonviolent offenders acknowledged for reducing offenses in downtown Spokane*

**SEATTLE, WA [Sept. 28, 2018]** – The Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) presented the Spokane Community Court the 2018 APEX Award of Merit. This award is the bar's highest honor and is given for a recent, singular achievement. The singular achievement may involve a display of exceptional courage in the face of adversity, thus bringing credit to the legal profession. WSBA President William D. Pickett presented the award at the WSBA Annual APEX (Acknowledging Professional Excellence) Awards Dinner on Sept. 27 at the Sheraton Seattle.

Founded in 2013, the Spokane Community Court uses a collaborative, problem-solving approach to crime that connects people with social service providers and faith-based institutions, creating a community network to address interrelated issues. It is an innovative approach for chronic nonviolent offenders that has so far graduated more than 330 people from the program; provided access to housing and job training, treatment for addiction, and medical assistance; and enabled more than 280 homeless and indigent people in Spokane to access housing services. The Court is based within the community, at the Spokane Public Library.

“Spokane’s Community Court is really a pioneer in what we call here in Spokane ‘smart justice,’” said Spokane City Council Member Breean Beggs, “where they really get to the bottom of what’s causing crime and what solves it. ... So I just want to tell all the people that make community court happen, thanks for your commitment and your vision, and for hanging in there when there were doubters. We are now the leading program in the nation for misdemeanor rehabilitation, and we couldn’t have done it without you.”

**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.

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