

NEWS RELEASE

Arizona Supreme Court
Administrative Office of the Courts



Contact: Aaron Nash
Phone: 602-452-3656
Email: anash@courts.az.gov

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Judge Diane M. Johnsen (ret.) Named James A. Walsh Outstanding Jurist

PHOENIX – The Board of Governors of the State Bar of Arizona named retired Judge Diane M. Johnsen of the Arizona Court of Appeals, Division One, as the 2020 recipient of the James A. Walsh Outstanding Jurist Award.

The award recognizes “that judge whose career exemplifies the highest standards of judicial conduct for integrity and independence; who is knowledgeable of the law and faithful to it; who is unswayed by partisan interests, public clamor or fear of criticism; who is patient, dignified and courteous to all who appear before that judge; and who endeavors to improve the administration of justice and public understanding of, and respect for, the role of law in our society.”



The award recognition notes Judge Johnsen’s early career as a political reporter and editor at the Arizona Daily Star in Tucson. Judge Johnsen clerked for Judge Ben Duniway on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals before entering private practice in the areas of complex commercial litigation, environmental law, insurance coverage, commercial torts, and media law. Judge Johnsen was appointed to Division One of the Arizona Court of Appeals in 2006 and served as Chief Judge from 2014 to 2016. Judge Johnsen retired from the bench in February 2020 and works part-time as a Special Projects Attorney for the court. In semiretirement, Judge Johnsen is training to become a Court Appointed Special Advocate in Maricopa County.

The James A. Walsh Outstanding Jurist Award is named in honor of James Augustine Walsh (1906-1991), who was a Maricopa County judge and was nominated by President Harry S.

Truman to a seat on the United States District Court for the District of Arizona. Walsh served as chief judge of that court from 1961 to 1972. After many years of service, Walsh assumed senior status and continued in semiretirement until his death in 1991.

For a complete list of the 2020 State Bar Annual Awards recipients, see <https://azbar.org/about-us/board-of-governors/state-bar-annual-awards/>.

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