

NEWS RELEASE

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

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State Bar Awards Judicial Excellence Award to Supreme Court's Presiding Disciplinary Judge

PHOENIX –The Arizona Supreme Court Presiding Disciplinary Judge, William J. O'Neil of Casa Grande, earned the Justice Michael D. Ryan Award for Judicial Excellence, presented by the State Bar of Arizona's Public Lawyers Section in recognition of his dedication and commitment to improving Arizona's justice system.

The award was established in 1999. In the call for nominations, the criteria says:

"Nominees should have high ideals, personal character and judicial competence. Nominees may be distinguished by: participation in projects focused on improving the quality of justice or the justice system; demonstrating innovation in the performance of their duties; and/or demonstrating an ability to effectively handle complex or unusual trials or appeals."

Supreme Court Justice Michael D. Ryan earned the award in 2001. The Award for Judicial Excellence took on Justice Michael D. Ryan name in 2012 after his death. Justice Ryan's distinguished judicial career spanned more than two decades.

Presiding Disciplinary Judge O'Neil said: "Awards always make me wish I had done more and motivate me to do more. Not for the sake of the reward, but for the reminder such awards are of the positive difference we can each make in the lives of others. Awards turn to rust, but the memory of difference makers, for those they touched, never gather dust. Justice Ryan was a difference maker and a judicial hero of mine. To be honored as the recipient of an award bearing his name causes me to reflect on the many people who have helped guide me over my lifetime by the kindness of their investment in me. These include my parents, teachers, coaches, community

leaders, friends, fellow judicial officers, and my wife and family. This award is more a recognition of those superb difference makers, such as Justice Ryan, than anything I have done personally. I remain deeply grateful to them and for the opportunity to serve this state I love.”

Past winners of the Michael D. Ryan Award for Judicial Excellence include:

- 2010: The Honorable Roxanne Song Ong, Presiding Judge of the City of Phoenix Court. Judge Song Ong has since entered retirement.
- 2011: The Honorable Ronald S. Reinstein, Retired Judge from the Superior Court in Maricopa County.
- 2012: The Honorable Norman J. Davis, Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in Maricopa County. Judge Davis has since retired from the bench.
- 2013: The Honorable Elizabeth Finn, Presiding Judge of the City of Glendale Municipal Court
- 2014: The Honorable David B. Gass, Superior Court Judge in Maricopa County.

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