

NEWS RELEASE

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

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Three Earn Distinguished Service Awards from Arizona Supreme Court

PHOENIX – Three members of Arizona’s judicial branch earned awards from the Arizona Supreme Court at the 2018 Judicial Conference. **David Withey** earned the Administration of Justice Award presented by Arizona Courts Director Dave Byers. Withey is General Counsel for the Arizona Supreme Court and Administrative Office of the Courts.

“Without question, David Withey has earned this award for his tireless work providing legal support to the entire judicial branch,” Byers said during the presentation.

During his time as our General Counsel, David Withey has been instrumental in crafting some of the policies and practices that the courts rely upon, such as:

- Policies on public records of the judicial branch,
- Public meeting policies,
- The Arizona Code of Judicial Administration,
- The Presiding Judges’ Manual, and,
- The Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees.

For more than 25 years, Withey has staffed the State, Tribal, and Federal Court Forum, which serves all of Arizona by enhancing coordination and cooperation across all three jurisdictions.

Vice Chief Justice Robert Brutinel presented the Judge of the Year Award to **Judge Joseph Olcavage** of the Scottsdale Municipal Court.

“Judge Joseph Olcavage systematically embraced and adopted the reforms outlined by the Task Force on Fair Justice for All,” Justice Brutinel said. “He conducted a thorough examination of

existing court procedures and modified them to better serve the public when it comes to court-ordered fines, penalties, fees, and pretrial release procedures.”

Defendants can reestablish a payment plan and have their license suspension lifted. Indigent individuals can participate in a community restitution program in lieu of fines. Advisory counsel is available for the DUI arraignment calendar, and Monday through Friday in jail court to argue conditions of release for defendants who cannot post bond.

Scottsdale Courts also launched a text messaging reminder service for court dates and payments. Scottsdale Courts delay issuing warrants and defaults for 14 days so the defendant can to appear in court to resolve the matter.

Judge Olcavage has served as a judge for 27 years and as the Presiding Judge of the Scottsdale Municipal Court for the last six years.

Chief Justice Scott Bales presented the Outstanding Contributions to the Courts Award to **Judge Elizabeth “Ellie” Finn**, Presiding Judge of the Glendale Municipal Court.

Judge Ellie Finn is Arizona’s longest serving judge, having been a judge for 39 years. For her entire career, she has been at the forefront of issues that affect the citizens of her court. She is among the state’s leading experts on domestic violence law and practices. She has also been a leader at finding ways to improve the handling of DUI cases. Most recently, Judge Finn has helped develop best practices for the handling of mental health competency cases.

“Few people have done more than Judge Finn to advance justice for two special populations: victims of domestic violence and those suffering from mental health conditions. In 2016, her court became one of only two courts designated to conduct their own competency hearings,” Chief Justice Scott Bales explained. “Right away, her court saw dramatic improvements in the time it took to resolve cases involving competency issues.”

Chief Justice Bales said Judge Finn has never met a leadership role that she didn’t fully embrace with passion. She was a founding member and the first Chair of the Supreme Court Committee on the Impact of Domestic Violence and the Courts. Judge Finn chaired the Governor's Office of Highway Safety DUI Conference for judges for twenty years. Judge Finn is the recipient of numerous state and national awards for her leadership.

More information and photos of the Distinguished Service Award Winners can be found at <http://www.azcourts.gov/awards/Distinguished-Service-Awards/Programs-and-Photos>

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