



Washington State Bar Association

1325 Fourth Avenue, Suite 600
Seattle, WA 98101-2539

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Contact

Stephanie Perry
Communications Specialist/Publications Editor
206-733-5932; stephaniep@wsba.org
Facebook: [facebook.com/WaStateBar.main](https://www.facebook.com/WaStateBar.main)
Twitter: twitter.com/WaStateBar

William L.E. Dussault Receives 2012 Award of Merit

(SEATTLE) — The Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) has presented Seattle attorney **William L.E. Dussault** with its 2012 Award of Merit. The Award of Merit is the WSBA's highest honor, most often given for long-term service to the Bar or the public. It is awarded to individuals only — both lawyers and non-lawyers. The award is in recognition of Dussault's work on state and federal legislation to better the lives of individuals with disabilities. WSBA President Stephen Crossland presented the award at the WSBA Annual Awards Dinner on Sept. 20, 2012, at the Hyatt at Olive 8 in Seattle.

Dussault was a co-author of Washington state's Mandatory "Education for All" Law requiring free, appropriate public education for all children with disabilities; the nation's first special education law, it became the model for federal legislation. He was also an originator of the "special needs trust," now a standard in the field of disability law, and helped to write the federal law on special needs trusts. A frequent speaker on disability law, he has also written many articles, book chapters, and seminar materials on topics such as special needs settlement trusts, guardianships, protective services for the disabled and the elderly, special education, wills and trusts for individuals with disability and their families, and advocacy for individuals with disabilities.

"Bill has worked tirelessly over many decades to assure that the rights and privileges of people with developmental disability are not only honored but assured through his legal and voluntary work in the community," said **Sylvia N. Fuerstenberg**, executive director of The Arc – King County. "Bill contributes his time, talent, and treasure to numerous organizations that support people with disabilities and their families."

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Working Together to Champion Justice

Dussault received his undergraduate degree in political science and history from the University of Washington, and his law degree from the University of Washington School of Law. From 1986–94, he was an adjunct professor of disability law at the University of Washington School of Law and an adjunct professor of nursing law and ethics at its School of Nursing; he was also an adjunct professor in the Department of Special Education at Central Washington University. He served as a judge pro tem for Seattle Municipal Court from 1977–90. Dussault is the founder and senior shareholder of Dussault Law Group, established in 1984.

Dussault has been dedicated in his service to the legal community. He served on the WSBA Rules of Professional Conduct Committee from 2003–2004. He was vice-chair of the American Bar Association Family Law Committee on Mental Disability. He is a member of the Professional Advisory Board of the Autism Society of America and is the founding president of the Washington Chapter of the National Association of Elder Law Attorneys. He has served as a legal advisor or board committee chair for the National ARC, the Epilepsy Foundation of America, and numerous state advocacy organizations, including those representing seniors with Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases.

About the Washington State Bar Association

The WSBA is part of the judicial branch, exercising a governmental function authorized by the Washington State Supreme Court to license the state’s 34,800 lawyers. The WSBA both regulates lawyers under the authority of the Court 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, ensure the integrity of the legal profession, and to champion justice.

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