



Kristin Houser Receives WSBA Award of Merit

Joint award honors recipients' work resulting in the United States Supreme Court upholding the Affordable Care Act in June 2012

SEATTLE, WA [Sept. 27, 2013] — The Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) honored Seattle attorney **Kristin Houser** with the 2013 Award of Merit, along with **Adam Berger**, **Rebecca Roe**, and **Bill Rutzick**. The award is in recognition of their joint efforts contributing to the United States Supreme Court upholding the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in June 2012. WSBA President **Michele Radosevich** presented the award at the WSBA Annual Awards Dinner on Sept. 26, 2013, at the Grand Hyatt Seattle.

Former Washington attorney general **Rob McKenna** joined seven other attorneys general in filing a lawsuit against the ACA. Then-Governor **Christine Gregoire**, along with the governors of Michigan, Colorado, and Pennsylvania, opposed the position of the attorneys general and supported implementation of the ACA. Roe, Berger, Houser, and Rutzick spent two years and hundreds of pro bono hours representing the governors pro bono in the litigation. They submitted eight briefs in six courts, including an *amicus curiae* brief to the United States Supreme Court, addressing the constitutionality of the individual mandate; the history of insurance reform in Washington; the human and economic costs of caring for the uninsured under the present system; the constitutionality of the ACA's Medicaid expansion provisions; and whether the Florida district court's decision ruling the ACA unconstitutional should result in a nationwide injunction of implementation of the ACA. In her concurrence upholding the ACA, United States Supreme Court Justice **Ruth Bader Ginsburg** quoted the attorneys' argument.

Since 1983, Houser has been a litigator with Schroeter Goldmark & Bender, where her practice focuses on cases involving defective products and medical malpractice cases. She began her legal career working in legal services programs representing low-income residents of Oregon and Washington. In the 1980s, she successfully litigated several statewide class actions challenging cuts in disability benefits and food stamps. Houser received her undergraduate degree from Yale University and her law degree from the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Houser is a member of the Washington State Association of Justice, the King County Mental Health Advisory Board, and the Martin Luther King Scholarship Committee of Mount Baker Community Center. Houser is a co-founder of the Legal Clinic at El Centro de la Raza and serves on the board of the University of Washington Neighborhood Clinics. She was also a trustee on the Harborview Medical Center Board of Trustees from 1998–2010, serving as president in 2004 and 2005.

About the Award of Merit

This award is the WSBA's highest honor and is given for a recent, singular achievement. It is awarded to individuals only — both lawyers and non-lawyers.

About the Washington State Bar Association

The WSBA is part of the judicial branch and is authorized by the Washington State Supreme Court to license the state's 35,400 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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