



## Washington State Bar Association

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ***Seattle Times* Reporter Ken Armstrong Receives Washington State Bar Association's Excellence in Legal Journalism Award**



*Seattle Washington, September 21, 2004* — The Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) announces that *Seattle Times* reporter Ken Armstrong received its 2004 Excellence in Legal Journalism Award. The Excellence in Legal Journalism Award recognizes that describing the context, facts, and players involved in the legal system with fairness and sensitivity requires intelligence, knowledge, dedication, and skill. The award is given to the journalist and his or her organization that has set the standard for relevance, clarity, accuracy, and understanding in reporting. Former WSBA Governor

Jon Ostlund presented the award to Mr. Armstrong September 16 at the WSBA Annual Awards Dinner at the Seattle Marriott Waterfront Hotel.

Mr. Armstrong, a three-time Pulitzer Prize finalist, is an investigative reporter at *The Seattle Times*. Prior to *The Seattle Times*, he was an investigative reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*, where he co-wrote six series on criminal justice issues, “including one,” he explained, “that helped prompt the governor of Illinois to declare a moratorium on executions and, later, to empty Death Row.” In 1999, while at the *Chicago Tribune*, Mr. Armstrong won the George Polk Award for Criminal Justice Reporting. His work at the *Tribune*, with fellow reporter Steve Mills, is featured in a recently published book, *Shaking the Foundations: 200 years of Investigative Journalism in America*, by Bruce Shapiro. Mr. Armstrong has been a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University and a visiting professor at Princeton University.

On April 4, 5, and 6, *The Seattle Times* ran a three-part series written by Mr. Armstrong, Florangela Davila, and Justin Mayo, called “The Empty Promise of an Equal Defense,” which brought to the public’s attention some of the serious problems in Washington’s indigent-defense system. Jon Ostund, who nominated Mr. Armstrong, Ms. Davila, and Mr. Mayo for the award, said that he believes the report was “clearly the most important and powerful piece of legal journalism published in the State of Washington this

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year. I think and hope that it may be one of the cornerstones in bringing about positive change in our fragmented system of providing defense to the poor in this state. It has certainly brought this issue to the forefront of public awareness and shined a spotlight on it that neither our courts, the Washington State Bar Association, nor public officials at the state and local levels can ignore.”

### **About the WSBA**

The Washington State Bar Association is a private, nonprofit organization authorized by the Washington State Supreme Court to license the state's 28,400 lawyers. The WSBA both regulates lawyers under the authority of the Court and serves its members as a professional association—all without public funding.

As a regulatory agency, it administers the bar exam, provides record-keeping and licensing functions, and administers the lawyer discipline program. As a professional association, the WSBA provides continuing legal education for attorneys, in addition to numerous other educational and member-service activities.

The governance of the WSBA is vested in its 14-person Board of Governors. There are three governors from the seventh congressional district; one from each of the other eight districts; and three at-large members, one of whom represents the Young Lawyers Division. The president is Ronald R. Ward of Seattle. The board meets every six weeks at various locations around the state, and its meetings are open to the public. Much of the work of the WSBA is carried out through its 23 standing committees, 23 sections, and a Young Lawyers Division.

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