



Todd Gruenhagen, Carl Luer, and Stacey MacDonald Receive WSBA Courageous Award

Seattle public defense attorneys honored for their work in State v. Christopher Monfort

SEATTLE, WA [Sept. 30, 2016] — The Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) presented Seattle attorneys **Todd Gruenhagen, Carl Luer, and Stacey MacDonald** with its 2016 Courageous Award. The award is in recognition of their work as public defenders at the King County Department of Public Defense (DPD) in *State v. Christopher Monfort*, a capital case. WSBA President **Bill Hyslop** presented the award at the WSBA Annual Awards Dinner on Sept. 29, 2016, at the Sheraton Seattle. Also presented with the 2016 Courageous Award were two other teams of attorneys at DPD handling capital cases: **Leo Hamaji, William Prestia, and Kathryn Ross**; and **Colleen O'Connor and David Sorenson**. The three teams work for three different divisions within the department: O'Connor and Sorenson for the Society of Counsel Representing Accused Persons Division; Hamaji, Prestia, and Ross for The Defender Association Division; and Gruenhagen, Luer, and MacDonald for the Associated Counsel for the Accused Division.

Christopher Monfort had planned a series of bombings and attacks against Seattle police officers. On Oct. 31, 2009, Monfort fired an assault rifle at Officer Timothy Brenton and Trainee Officer Britt Kelly, who were parked in Seattle's Central District; Brenton was fatally wounded and Kelly was injured. Monfort escaped, but was shot a week later while being arrested outside his apartment in Tukwila.

In a statement, King County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Satterberg said he initially sought the death penalty because the "intentional, premeditated and random slaying of a police officer is deserving of the full measure of punishment under the law." After an insanity defense was rejected, Monfort's defense team urged jurors to spare him from the death penalty and consider his mental health, along with his rough childhood, when deciding his fate. In 2015, Monfort was convicted of aggravated first-degree murder, two counts of attempted murder, and one count of arson by a King County Jury. He has been sentenced to life in prison.

"These three teams of King County public defenders took on difficult cases with heartbreaking facts and the ultimate potential consequence of the death penalty," said WSBA Governor **Ann Danieli**. "Two of these cases lasted for eight-plus years, including several appeals up to the Washington Supreme Court. It is an enormous undertaking to bring to life the dream of *Gideon v. Wainwright* — the dream of a vast, diverse country in which every person charged with a crime will be capably defended, no matter what his economic circumstances, and in which the lawyer representing them will do so proudly, without resentment at an unfair burden, sure of the support needed to make an adequate defense. These attorneys all lived up to that standard at the expense of their own well-being. The enormous stress of representing someone facing the death penalty is unfathomable. No matter what side of the death penalty controversy you are on, these attorneys deserve our admiration and recognition."

About the Washington State Bar Association

The WSBA is part of the judicial branch and is authorized by the Washington Supreme Court to license the state's 36,089 lawyers and over 1,000 other legal professionals. In furtherance of its obligation to protect and serve the public, the WSBA both regulates lawyers and other legal professionals 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, to ensure the integrity of the legal profession, and to champion justice.

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