



Leo Hamaji, William Prestia, and Kathryn Ross Receive WSBA Courageous Award

Seattle public defense attorneys honored for their work in State v. Joseph McEnroe

SEATTLE, WA [Sept. 30, 2016] — The Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) presented Seattle attorneys **Leo Hamaji**, **William Prestia**, and **Kathryn Ross** 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. Joseph McEnroe*, 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: **Colleen O'Connor** and **David Sorenson**; and **Todd Gruenhagen**, **Carl Luer**, and **Stacey MacDonald**. 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.

Joseph McEnroe was convicted of joining his then-girlfriend Michele Anderson in the killing of six members of Anderson's family on Christmas Eve 2007 in rural Carnation. McEnroe and Anderson admitted to the killings shortly after being arrested at the crime scene the day the bodies were discovered.

After King County Prosecutor Dan Satterberg announced he would seek execution in the case in October 2008, defense attorneys for Anderson and McEnroe fought vigorously to have capital punishment removed as an option. McEnroe was convicted of participating in the killings and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole after the jury could not agree on the death penalty.

"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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