



Contact: Jennifer Olegario, WSBA Communications and Outreach Manager
206-727-8212; jennifero@wsba.org

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A Staunch Community Advocate, Francis Adewale Now Begins Term as WSBA President

SEATTLE — Francis Adewale is a leader who always has his eye on the interests and needs of his community. Adewale built his career through his advocacy for the rights of all—the type of person who lives and breathes grassroots advocacy whether he is in the courtroom or out in public. Now, as the newest president of the Washington State Bar Association, Adewale seeks to bring his brand of leadership and care to the wider WSBA membership and the public we serve.

“As president, I want every legal practitioner in Washington to know that I see you—the WSBA sees you—and we’ve got your back,” Adewale said. “Together we will—in the immortal words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.—continue to bend the arc of justice.”

Adewale’s presidential term will run through September 2026.

Adewale’s commitment to his community is evidenced by his history of movement lawyering across Eastern Washington. Adewale is a Fellow of the Washington Leadership Institute (WLI) and ATJ Equal Justice Leadership Academy, roles that helped instruct him to build coalitions and make a difference beyond the courtroom. He has served in leadership and non-leadership roles on the Refugee Connections Spokane, Spokane Homeless Coalition, Spokane County Regional Law & Justice Council’s Racial Equity Disparity Committee, Spokane County Bar Association, the Volunteer Lawyers Program, Washington State Access to Justice Board, Washington State Supreme Court’s Interpreters Commission, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, and much more.

Adewale says he is “a living example of a concerted investment in leadership programs,” which helped guide him toward a leadership role with the WSBA. As president, he recognizes the many challenges facing legal professionals and wants WSBA members to know that he will work to support them on issues ranging from legal technology to waning trust in public institutions to the health and wellness of lawyers.

“We are so lucky to have such a committed advocate and salt-of-the-Earth human being like Francis lead our organization over the next year,” said WSBA Executive Director Terra Nevitt. “In this pivotal moment for our profession, I can think of few people better suited to guide the WSBA toward being a more dedicated and responsive organization for our members and the communities in which we live.”

Adewale is a recipient of City of Spokane Human Rights Award, Washington Criminal Defense Lawyers’ President Award and Spokane County Bar Association Smithmoore P. Myers Professionalism Award. Along with his colleagues who founded the Spokane Community Court, Adewale received the 2018 WSBA APEX Award of Merit. He is also the 2021 recipient of the Washington Defenders Association’s President Award.

Adewale is H. George Frederickson Honors Graduate of Eastern Washington University as well as an Honors graduate of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. He was admitted to the WSBA in 2000 and began working for the City of Spokane Public Defender's Office, where he has been ever since. He is adjunct faculty at Whitworth University as well as Gonzaga Law School. Adewale is executive president of the AHANA Multi-Ethnic Business Association of Spokane, treasurer of Spokane City Credit Union, and a two-time WSBA treasurer. He and his wife own and run a small business in Spokane.

About the Washington State Bar Association

The WSBA operates under the delegated authority of the Washington Supreme Court to license the state’s more than 40,000 lawyers and other legal professionals. In furtherance of its obligation to protect and serve the public, the WSBA both regulates lawyers and other legal professionals 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. For more information, visit www.wsba.org.

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