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SUPREME COURT



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NEWS RELEASE

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Judges Perry and Watson Receive Top Judicial Honors

(Boise) – An Idaho Court of Appeals Judge and a Kootenai County Magistrate have been selected to receive the Idaho Judiciary’s most prestigious awards.

Idaho Court of Appeals Judge Darrel Perry was named the recipient of the 2009 Kramer Award and Kootenai County Magistrate Judge Barry Watson was selected as the 2009 Granata Award recipient. The recipients are chosen annually by virtue of their significant contributions to the Idaho judicial system.

Both awards were presented by Court of Appeals Judge David Gratton at a September 21 ceremony.

The Kramer Award, named in honor of the late District Judge Douglas C. Kramer, is awarded to the person who best exemplifies excellence in judicial administration, by character and action. The Granata Award, named in honor of the late District Judge George G. Granata, Jr., is awarded to the trial judge who best exemplifies the professionalism evidenced by Judge Granata during his more than twenty years of judicial service.

Judge Perry, who announced his retirement earlier this year, currently serves on the Idaho Supreme Court’s Judicial Education and Media and the Courts Committees. In a letter signed by Law Clerks Tyler Rands and Chris Christensen and Judicial Assistant Sue Stover, Judge Perry was nominated for his longstanding service as mentor to many law clerks and newly appointed judges and his considerable contributions to the improvement of the Court of Appeals. “Judge Perry has sought to instill within his staff a heightened sense of citizenship,” stated the letter. “He maintains a philosophy that his work on the bench, and the work accomplished by those within his employ, is not just a job, but part of the legal process.”

After receiving his J.D. from the University of Idaho in 1979, Judge Perry began his legal career handling civil matters and serving as a public defender in Nez Perce County. At the age of 27, he was appointed by the Second Judicial District Magistrate Commission to serve as a Magistrate Judge. In 1993 he was appointed to the Court of Appeals and was elected for additional six-year terms in 1994, 2000, and 2006.

In his 27 years of service, Judge Perry has authorized more than 2,000 opinions. His recommendation letter read, "His work and influence have been widely felt and will continue to leave an impression on the state for years to come."

Judge Watson has served as a Magistrate in Kootenai County since 1992, presiding exclusively over juvenile and child protection matters for the past 18 months. In a nomination letter to the Granata awards committee, First District Trail Court Administrator Karlene Behringer wrote, "Not only has Judge Watson's leadership enhanced the juvenile and child protection court, his professionalism and diligence has been appreciated and recognized by children and their families."

Behringer's letter continues, "Judge Watson give each child the opportunity to be a part of the proceedings and he ensures that their thoughts and ideas are heard. This promotes confidence in children that are often lost, confused and troubled about their life circumstances."

Judge Watson earned his J.D. in 1977 from the University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, after which time moved to Idaho to represent the indigent in criminal proceedings in Shoshone County. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Watson was in private practice in Wallace, Idaho with the firm Watson & McGee. His career encompasses many significant accomplishments, including serving as President of the Idaho Magistrate Judges Association.

Magistrate Judge Penny Friedlander also submitted a Granata nomination letter for Judge Watson. In it she wrote, "All of us have been struck by the compassion, understanding, respect, morality and concern Judge Watson shows to all persons who come into his courtroom. He exemplifies what an Idaho Judge should be."

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