

# Law Alumni Awards

## *Recognizing the Achievements of Our Graduates*

On Oct. 13, 2023, Washburn University School of Law alumni gathered to celebrate and honor this year's Alumni Award recipients. Awards were presented by **Lucky DeFries, '78**, past chair of the board of governors. Honorees were joined by family and friends to accept their awards, recognizing their service, dedication, and support to Washburn and their communities. The following is a highlight of our award winners and a brief bio of each recipient.

### *Graduate of the Last Decade Award*



**Angel Romero, '13**, was awarded the Graduate of the Last Decade award. This award honors recent Washburn Law graduates whose performance and commitment has set an example of professionalism and demonstrated leadership in their legal field, in their community, or to the School of Law.

Starting his post-secondary education at Washburn, Romero earned his bachelor of arts in political science and leadership studies certificate from Washburn University in 2010, continuing straight into law school, he completed his juris doctor in 2013. While at Washburn, Romero was a member of the Washburn Student Government Association, Mortar Board, Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society, Sagamore Honor Society, and College Republicans. He was a student ambassador, resident assistant, and AmeriCorps Bonner Leader.

After graduating from law school, Romero worked as a data analyst for the Kansas Board of Regents. In 2015, he joined the United Way of Greater Topeka, now known as United Way of Kaw Valley where he works as the vice president of resource development. Romero is the chair of the Topeka Association of Fundraising Professionals board of directors, and serves on the boards of the Kansas Association for Youth Alumni Network, Northeast Kansas Amateur Astronomy League, and the Washburn University board of regents. He has previously served on the boards of Forge Young Professionals, Shawnee County Crime Stoppers, Topeka Civic Theatre, and Momentum 2022.

In 2022, Romero was named to the Leadership Kansas class of 2022. In 2018, he received the Topeka Emerging Leader Award, the Outstanding Young Professional in Fundraising Award, and the Outstanding Commitment to the Students of the Washburn Leadership Institute Award. In 2017, he was

named the Washburn University Graduate of the Last Decade. He is a 2011 honoree of Greater Topeka's 20 Under 40, and a member of the 2010 class of Leadership Greater Topeka.

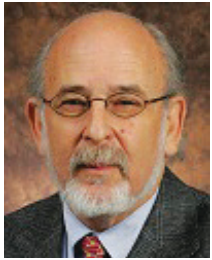


**Julie Covell, '13**, was also presented with the GOLD award. Covell is a graduate of the University of Kansas, Kansas State University, and Washburn University School of Law. Prior to attending law school, Covell worked as a high school teacher first in Manhattan, Kansas, and then in Puyallup, Washington. While

in law school, she served as editor-in-chief of the Washburn Law Journal and worked as a research assistant and a teaching assistant. She also clerked for the U.S. Attorney's Office in Topeka and interned for the Honorable David J. Waxse at the U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas.

During the summer before her 3L year, Covell interned with the National Labor Relations Board. Following graduation, she joined the Board as an honors attorney. After completing a year of rotations through offices at the Board's headquarters in Washington, D.C., she returned to Kansas and the Board's Overland Park subregional office. As a senior field attorney in Region 14, she regularly handles the investigation and litigation of complex charges filed in the region. Covell has served as Region 14's bankruptcy coordinator and outreach coordinator. In addition to conducting several presentations about the National Labor Relations Act for external groups and members of the bar, she has led internal training for Board employees on legal writing and investigatory techniques. As an alumna, Covell has enjoyed meeting with prospective and current law school students to talk about why she chose to attend Washburn University School of Law, why she would make that same choice again if given the opportunity, and why they should consider a career in public service.

## Honorary Lifetime Membership



**Professor Michael Kaye** was awarded the Honorary Lifetime Membership award. The recipient of this honor is someone who has provided exemplary service to his or her profession, community, and Washburn Law. Kaye received his bachelor of arts degree from Case Western Reserve University in 1963. He later earned his

juris doctor from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law in 1966. He was the former director of the Center for Excellence in Advocacy at Washburn Law, Trial Advocacy and Criminal Procedure and was the coach of the Trial Advocacy Team. He began his teaching career at Washburn Law in 1979 and retired from the School of Law in 2016.

A long serving educator, his experience extends far beyond the classroom as well. He was a longtime NITA advocacy teacher and taught at NITA's Teacher Training Program in Harvard School of Law. He has also served as the NITA program director.

Kaye is an experienced public defender, was in private practice in California, and studied at the Comparative Law Institute in Grenoble, France. He was a visiting professor of law at Whittier College School of Law in 1990-91. He was elected as president for the 3rd Judicial District Criminal Defense Bar during the 2001-02 year.



**The Hon. Sarah Warner** was also awarded the Honorary Lifetime Membership award. A native of Kansas, Warner grew up in Pittsburg and would go on to earn her undergraduate degrees from the University of Kansas and later attend law school in Michigan, graduating magna cum laude. After serving as the sole

chambers attorney of the chief justice of the Kansas Supreme Court, she became a partner with Thompson Warner PA in Lawrence, Kansas, where she worked until her appointment to the Court of Appeals in 2019. She is a past president of the Kansas Association of Defense Counsel and Douglas County Bar Association, and a member of the Kansas Board for Discipline of Attorneys, and Kansas Women's Attorneys Association. She served the Kansas Bar Association as president of the Young Lawyers Section in 2014-15, was on the board of governors from 2015-2018, and as president in 2018-19. Warner has taught classes at Washburn since 2009, including a course in appellate practice she designed, and was named Washburn Law's Adjunct Professor of the Year in May 2018.

## Legacy Family



The McEntire Family was honored with the Washburn School of Law Legacy Family Award. This award honors the families who have carried the Washburn Law tradition across generations. It is bestowed on a family in which two or more members of the family – generational or through marriage – are law school graduates, and who as a group have distinguished themselves through service to Washburn School of Law, the legal profession, their communities, or public service. **Richard McEntire, '31, JD '34, James McEntire, BA '73, JD '77, Joann Corpstein, '88, and Helen "Lizzy" McEntire, '22,** were the members of the family receiving this award.

Richard McEntire, '31, JD '34, (deceased, 1958), remaining in Topeka his entire life, graduated from Washburn Law in 1934. After law school, he became a partner in the firm of Claussen and McEntire in Topeka, specializing in motor carrier work before the Kansas Corporation Commission. McEntire was named a United States commissioner for the District of Kansas in 1935. He was later appointed a special attorney by the KCC, where he presided over the proration of the vast Hugoton, Kansas, gas fields.

McEntire also served on the executive committee and on the special gas committee of the National Association of Railroad and Utilities Commissioners. He was secretary to the Kansas Day Club from 1939-45 and later served as an adviser to United States Treasury Secretary John Snyder at the World Bank and Monetary Fund Conference in Paris. His work was instrumental in the implementation of a Canadian extradition treaty, which ended fraudulent securities offers by promoters of Canadian mining ventures. He became vice chair of the SEC in 1950. He resigned from the SEC in 1953 to pursue the private practice of law. He passed away in 1958.

James McEntire, BA '73, JD '77, is currently a member of the firm of Sloan, Eisenbarth, Glassman, McEntire & Jarboe, L.L.C., with more than four decades of experience practicing law. He graduated from Washburn in 1973 and Washburn Law receiving his juris doctor in 1976. His practice primarily focuses on the areas of divorce, child custody and support, and related family law matters. He is a member of the American, Kansas, and Topeka Bar Associations, and the Family Law Committee of the Topeka Bar Association. He clerked for the Hon. John Rees of the Kansas Court of Appeals before joining the Sloan Law Firm in 1978 where he has remained ever since. He is an adjunct professor in the criminal justice department at Washburn University. He is a past president of the Topeka Kiwanis Club and past president of the Topeka Kiwanis Foundation. Jim served as a TBA director for four years and currently serves as the secretary.

Joann Corpstein's, '88, first career was in nursing. After graduating from the University of Saint Mary, she worked as a critical care nurse and a traveling nurse. In 1988, Corpstein graduated from Washburn Law and began her legal career in regulatory banking, as in-house counsel for the Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka, then the United States Treasury's Office of Thrift Supervision.

Corpstein transitioned her legal career to focus on issues facing the elderly and long-term care. She served as general counsel for the Kansas Department on Aging for nine years. Currently, she is the director of compliance for Midland Care Connection. Among other things, she is responsible for the corporate compliance and risk management programs. Corpstein has been asked to present at numerous state and national conferences on health care law topics. Corpstein is a member of the American Health Law Association and the American Health Information Management Association.

Helen "Lizzy" McEntire, '22, is a third-generation Washburn Law graduate and is committed to practicing law in Kansas. During her time as a student, she received countless scholarships including the Justice Alex M. Fromme Memorial Scholarship Award, intended for a student who is committed to practicing law in Kansas. As an editor for the Washburn Journal, she was also honored with a GNIP-GNOP Award for Best Note for her article, "A Proposed Solution to the Kansas Wage Gap: Why Salary History Inquiries Perpetuate Disparate Pay Along Racial and Gender Lines." Following graduation, she joined Husch Blackwell in Kansas City where she is currently practicing.

## *Lifetime Achievement Award*

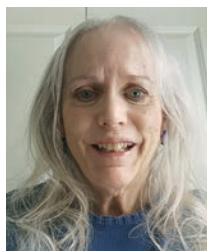


**The Hon. Steven Hornbaker, BA '70, JD '73**, received the Lifetime Achievement Award. This award is bestowed on graduates whose careers have been highly distinguished, and whose achievements and contributions are widely recognized as significant and outstanding in their field of endeavor,

whether it be in the practice of law, the judiciary, business, public service, education, or otherwise.

Hornbaker was a lawyer for 27 years for the firm Harper, Hornbaker, Abbott, Opat, and Altenhofen in Junction City, Kan. Hornbaker was appointed district judge serving in Geary County in 2000. The 8th Judicial District is composed of Dickinson, Geary, Marion, and Morris counties. In 2018, he was appointed by the Kansas Supreme Court of the Judicial Education Advisory Committee. The committee recommends and organizes education and training for Kansas appellate judges, district judges and district magistrate judges. Hornbaker retired in 2021 after more than 21 years of service.

Hornbaker served leadership roles in many organizations including Kansas Trial Lawyers (president, 1985), American Board of Trial Advocates (president, Kansas chapter, 1993), ABOTA Advocate (lead counsel on over 75 jury trials), Martindell-Hubble, AV Rating, Kansas Bar Association Member (1973-present) American Bar Association, Washburn School of Law board of governors, and was admitted to the US Supreme Court in 1985. He has one son, Andy, and has been happily married to Sue (Swanson) Hornbaker for 46 years.



**Marcia (Harley) Johnston, BA '71, JD '74**, also received the Lifetime Achievement Award. During the years Johnston attended law school, few women were pursuing their juris doctor. There were only four women in her class and she became the first woman to represent the school in the National Moot

Court Competition and was a member of the team that won the regional Jessup competition.

Following graduation, Johnston began a practice with fellow classmate Jane Werholtz where they practiced together until 1977. Gravitating toward areas of business and corporate law, particularly tax law, led to her becoming senior tax counsel in-house at a major natural gas and pipeline company in Houston. Marriage and a subsequent move to Calgary, Alberta, followed in 1981. Upon her completion and passing of the exam, she became the first American admitted to the Canadian

Bar. She switched her practice to corporate and securities law as well as oil and gas. In 1985, she became a sole practitioner and started a boutique securities practice which grew to nine lawyers by 2000 and merged with Gowling Lafleur Henderson, one of Canada's largest national law firms with over 700 lawyers in 2000. Johnston has served as president of the Association of Women Lawyers of Calgary and currently is interim director at MT>Align, a division of McCarthy Tetrault LLP Cochrane, Alberta, Canada.

## *Distinguished Service Award*



**The Hon. J. Thomas Marten, BA '73, JD '76, H '18**, received the Distinguished Service Award. This award is given to graduates of the School of Law who have particularly distinguished themselves and brought recognition to the school through their service to Washburn Law, the legal profession, their community, or public service.

A native Kansan, Marten received his bachelor of arts and his juris doctor from Washburn University. After graduating, he served as law clerk to retired Associate Justice Tom C. Clark of the United States Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. He then spent 19 years practicing law, with an emphasis in litigation, in Nebraska, Minnesota, and Kansas, including 14 years as a member of Bremyer & Wise, P.A. in McPherson, Kansas. Marten was appointed United States district judge for the District of Kansas by President Bill Clinton in 1996 – the judgeship was once held by his great uncle the late Judge Delmas Hill. Marten hung his uncle's photo, along with those

who held that post after him, on the wall next to where his black robe hung to remind him of those who came before him. He served as chief judge of the District of Kansas from April 2014 until May 2017. Judge Marten took senior status May 2017. He has been involved in a wide range of civil and criminal litigation.

Marten has served on the advisory board of the Sedona Conference and has completed terms on the Information Technology Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States and the board of directors of the Federal Judges Association. He has taught trial advocacy at various programs and workshops throughout the United States for more than 30 years and at Harvard Law for more than 25 years. Marten taught at Wichita State University and the Department of Justice Trial Advocacy Center, has lectured at National University of Ireland, Galway, and has been a frequent speaker at conferences and seminars throughout the country, including the American Law Institute-American Bar Association Antitrust and Employment Law Litigation and Antitrust. He served on the Judicial Conference of the United States Advisory Committee for the Federal Rules of Evidence for six years during the last few years of his judgeship. Marten, also a musician, has composed numerous songs and his three-piece string band, The Shoes, performed at the 2007 inauguration of then Gov. Kathleen Sebelius. He is a founding member of the Wesley E. Brown American Inn of Court in Wichita. He served on the School of Law board of governors, received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the law school's Alumni Association, and was awarded an honorary doctor of law by Washburn.

