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Awards Honor Judges, Administrator for Devotion to Public Service

Three well-known figures in Idaho's court system were honored this week for their work benefitting the public.

Fourth District Magistrate Judge Christopher Bieter received the George C. Granata Jr. Professionalism Award, which honors outstanding professionalism by a magistrate, district or senior judge.

Fourth Judicial District Trial Court Administrator Sandra Barrios received the Douglas D. Kramer Award, which recognizes excellence in judicial administration through demonstrated character and action.

Both annual awards are named after former judges who were highly regarded for their approach to judicial service.

Power County Magistrate Judge Paul Laggis received the Magistrate Judges Association's Legacy Award, created to recognize a judge's dedicated and noteworthy leadership and service to their community, colleagues and citizens.

Judge Bieter was appointed as an Ada County magistrate judge in 1998. He currently handles a calendar including civil cases under \$10,000, small claims appeals, probates, guardianship, minor's compromise and conservatorships. His work in the latter areas has drawn particular attention, as Judge Bieter was the driving force behind modernizing Idaho's guardianship and conservatorship laws and ensuring they are applied equally statewide. Those who nominated him praised his focus on the needs of the community and his mentorship of others: "He has made, and continues to make, a positive impact on the citizens of this state, as well as the judiciary, practitioners and lawmakers." Judge Bieter continues to chair the Idaho Supreme Court's Guardianship and Conservatorship Committee.

Barrios has worked for and within Idaho's courts for the better part of 20 years. She served as a master-level court interpreter and worked in language access services and court administration before being appointed the Fourth District's trial court administrator in 2019. Her current role supervises court operations in Idaho's judicial district with the largest population and the highest number of case filings. Those who nominated her for the award lauded her efforts that kept courts open during the pandemic, and the ease with which she gives of her time to others — including

recently serving as interim head of the statewide language access office. “Hers was an example of sacrifice and devotion to the mission of the courts and to keep them open and accessible,” the nomination letter states.

Judge Laggis was appointed as a Power County magistrate judge in 2008 after working 14 years as a county prosecutor. Among other duties, he oversees a treatment court in Power County and is an active member of Idaho Supreme Court committees on child protection and misdemeanor sentencing, chairing the latter committee. Judge Laggis received the Legacy Award in part for his efforts to educate lawmakers about the work of magistrate judges and to support fellow magistrate judges during the pandemic. He is also recognized within the Judicial Branch for his care and interest in those who come before his court. “Their compassion for others is much of who they are,” one acquaintance told the Magistrate Judges Association.

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