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Four Honored for Diligence, Duty Toward Idaho's Courts

Several people who work within Idaho's court system were honored this month for their dedication to fair and timely justice for Idahoans.

Seventh District Judge Darren Simpson received the **George C. Granata Jr. Professionalism Award**, which honors a magistrate, district or senior judge who has gone above and beyond to ensure all Idahoans have access to fair and efficient justice.

Tammie Whyte, trial court administrator for the Seventh District, received the **Douglas D. Kramer Award**, which recognizes excellence in judicial administration through demonstrated character and action.

The state Magistrate Judges Association presented **Ada County Magistrate Judge Andrew Ellis** with its **Legacy Award**, created to recognize a judge's dedicated and noteworthy leadership and service to their community, colleagues and citizens.

And the Idaho State Bar presented **Justice Cynthia Meyer** with its **Distinguished Jurist Award**. This award recognizes excellence, integrity and independence by a member of the judiciary. Individuals are selected for their competence, fairness, goodwill and professionalism.

Judge Simpson has been a district judge in eastern Idaho for more than 18 years. He was selected for the award to recognize his unwavering commitment to fairness, integrity, diligence and judicial excellence within his courtroom and beyond. During his time as a judge he has overseen two different drug courts, helped implement a statewide mentor judge program still used today, and led his judicial district for a time as its administrative judge. One of the people who nominated him commented, "He is the kind of judge whose presence in the courtroom commands respect not by demand, but rather by example."

"I think we're as good as the people around us," Judge Simpson said when accepting the award.

Whyte's job focuses on keeping courts across much of eastern Idaho running smoothly. She was recognized for her calm and steady leadership through the state's transition to electronic records, the pandemic, and amid intense interest in various high-profile court cases. The award also recognized her ability to work with the counties in her district to improve how they support court programs and services.

After seven years as trial court administrator, Whyte plans to retire Oct. 17. "To be a part of the organization and mission of the Judicial Branch has been the greatest honor of my life," she said.

Judge Ellis followed in one parent's footsteps in becoming a judge, taking the bench 12 years ago. He has since become the state judiciary's "guru of child protection" – educating others, meeting regularly with those who play a role in the child protection world and chairing the Idaho Supreme Court's committee on the topic. The award recognized his ongoing focus on children, the families involved, and finding permanent solutions to such cases that are in everyone's best interest.

"I believe it to be one of the most important things we can do as judges," Judge Ellis said of his work.

Justice Meyer was appointed to the Idaho Supreme Court two years ago after a long career of public service and of dedication to the law. An attorney and, later, judge who also worked in the tourism industry, she played leadership roles in her north Idaho judicial district and statewide. As a justice, her work includes a focus on judicial and civic education.

"I have only ever endeavored to do the right thing, to do my best, to make the right decisions for the right reasons," Justice Meyer said.

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