



United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

# Public Information Office

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## NEWS RELEASE

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## **Ninth Circuit, Inns of Court to Honor Washington Supreme Court Chief Justice**

SAN FRANCISCO – Chief Justice Gerry L. Alexander of the Washington Supreme Court will be recognized for a lifetime of service to the law during next month's Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference in Huntington Beach, Calif.

Chief Justice Alexander will receive the 2006 American Inns of Court Ninth Circuit Professionalism Award, which recognizes "a senior practicing lawyer or judge whose life and practice display sterling character and unquestioned integrity, coupled with ongoing dedication to the highest standards of the legal profession and the rule of law."

The award will be presented on July 10, 2006, during the opening session of the conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Chief Justice Ruth V. McGregor of the Arizona Supreme Court, a trustee of the American Inns of Court, will make the presentation.

Justice Alexander has given more than three decades of service to the state courts of Washington. He was a judge of the superior court for Thurston and Mason counties from 1973 through 1984, and a judge of the Washington Court of Appeals, Division Two, from 1985 through 1994. Voters elected him to the Washington Supreme Court in 1994. Following his re-election in 2000, his colleagues on the Supreme Court voted him to a four-year position as chief justice, effective January 8, 2001. Re-elected chief justice in November 2004, he is the longest serving chief justice in the state's history.

Justice Alexander currently chairs the Advisory Commission on Washington Law Reports, the Bench-Bar-Press Committee of the State of Washington, and the Board for

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Judicial Administration. He is a co-founder and board member of the Washington Courts Historical Society and an emeritus member of the Board of Visitors of the Seattle University School of Law.

Prior to commencing his lengthy judicial career, Justice Alexander practiced law privately in Olympia for nine years with the firm of Parr, Baker, Alexander and Cordes. During his years in private practice, Justice Alexander was involved in a number of bar efforts to improve the legal profession and served a term as president of the Thurston-Mason County Bar Association.

A Washington native who was born in Aberdeen and raised in Olympia, Justice Alexander received an undergraduate degree in history from the University of Washington. After serving as a lieutenant in the Army infantry, he returned to his alma mater to earn his J.D. in 1964. He was president of the Phi Delta Phi Legal Fraternity during his final year of law school. Justice Alexander has been named a distinguished alumnus of the University of Washington Law School and was recently awarded a Doctor of Laws from Gonzaga University.

The American Inns of Court, a national organization with 340 inns and 75,000 active and alumni members, is dedicated to excellence, civility, professionalism, and ethics in the practice of law. An American Inn of Court is an amalgam of judges, lawyers, and in some cases, law professors and law students. The inns are intended to improve the skills, professionalism and ethics of the bench and bar.

Previous Ninth Circuit recipients of the award include Senior District Judge Rudi M. Brewster of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California; Sacramento attorney Ann Taylor-Schwing; Senior District Judge Thelton Henderson of the United States District Court for the Northern District of California; Senior District Judge William B. Enright of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California, Shirley Hufstedler, the first woman to sit on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and a former education secretary under President Carter, and the late Senior District Judge William A. Ingram, also of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.

As a circuit honoree, Justice Alexander also will be considered for the Lewis F. Powell, Jr. Award for Professionalism and Ethics, a national honor bestowed by the American Inns of Court.

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