



July 18, 2016

Idaho State Bar Honors Judge Karen Lansing as Distinguished Jurist

BOISE - Judge Karen Lansing of Boise was selected as the Distinguished Jurist based on her extensive service in the name of justice. She was appointed to the Appeals Court in 1993 by Gov. Cecil Andrus, and retired on June 30, 2016. She will continue part time as a senior judge. Her career has left a legacy of fairness and justice.

Born and raised near Orofino, Karen earned a political science degree from the University of Idaho. For law school, she attended and graduated from the University of Washington's School of Law. She started her law career as an assistant city attorney at the City of Boise, and soon joined the firm of Hawley Troxell Ennis & Hawley. Six years later she became a partner.

She sat on about 9,000 cases and authored more than 2,600 appellate decisions. She serves on the Idaho Supreme Court's Advisory Committee on the Idaho Rules of Evidence, co-chaired the Judicial Recruitment Committee and served on the Appellate Rules Committee and the Fairness and Equality Committee.

She served on the Idaho Volunteer Lawyers Policy Council from 1985 to 1996, and on the Idaho Law Foundation Long Range Planning Committee from 1999 to 2001. She has also received the Idaho State Bar Pro Bono Award in 1993.

Judge Lansing was appointed to the Idaho Court of Appeals in 1993. She said although she thought opinion-writing would be a snap, she said it was an invigorating challenge.

"The thoroughness of research and the precision that are required for a precedent-setting, publishable opinion makes crafting an opinion quite different from writing a brief. My goal was to prepare opinions that would not only accurately apply the law to resolve the issues on appeal, but would also explain our decision in a way that would demonstrate that the result in the case was fair and just. Crafting opinions that approached that goal proved to be much more challenging and time-consuming than I expected. The result was that in my early years as a judge, I developed quite a long backlog of cases that were assigned to me to author."

Judge Lansing said that while some aspects of the job can be isolating, she enjoys hearing oral arguments and the "give and take" between lawyers and judges.

"It was such a pleasure to hear the truly skilled oral advocates elegantly deliver their arguments, with ready answers to the questions from the bench. It made me proud of the profession."

Board of Commissioners

Trudy H. Fouser
President
PO Box 2837
Boise, ID 83701

Tim Gresback
Immediate Past President
210 E. 7th Street
Moscow, ID 83843

Michelle R. Points
Commissioner
910 W. Main Street, Ste. 222
Boise, ID 83702

Dennis S. Voorhees
Commissioner
PO Box Z
Twin Falls, ID 83303

Kent A. Higgins
Commissioner
PO Box 991
Pocatello, ID 83204

Diane K. Minnich
Executive Director

She added that although appeals courts do not sentence convicts, she has long been interested in alternatives. She offered this overview:

“I am pleased that in the past several years, under the Supreme Court's leadership the Idaho courts are moving toward ‘evidence-based sentencing.’ That means utilizing sentencing alternatives and methods that have been shown to be effective in rehabilitating offenders and reducing recidivism. Evidence-based sentencing can lead to better outcomes for both offenders and society, while reducing costs for the corrections system. I believe it also enhances the appearance of fairness and parity in sentencing.”

- 30 -

For more information, contact Mahmood Sheikh at (208) 334-4500