



Ben Ysursa Honored with Liberty Bell Award

May 2, 2014

BOISE - Every year the Fourth District Bar Association selects an outstanding community member who exemplifies the national theme for Law Day. This year the theme is “American Democracy and the Rule of Law: Why Every Vote Matters.”

This year’s Liberty Bell Award Recipient is Idaho Secretary of State, Ben Ysursa, who accepted the award Thursday evening at a Law Day celebration in downtown Boise. Mr. Ysursa has worked in the Secretary of State’s Office since 1974 and is currently serving his third term as the state’s chief elections officer. Earlier this year he announced his retirement. He was lauded for his impartial and fair handling of Idaho elections by Idaho Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger Burdick, who served as emcee for the Law Day celebration. Ysursa said that the right to vote is under attack around the world and that he is proud that Idaho is one of the least restrictive states for voting, noting that residents can register and vote on election day.

The Law Day Celebration also included awards for the “6.1 Challenge,” a friendly competition between lawyers to log the most pro bono service helping those who cannot afford an attorney. Overall, lawyers reported approximately 5,000 hours of free legal services and 2,000 hours of public service. The categories and award winners are as follows:

Large Firm: Holland & Hart, LLP, which had 100 percent participation rate from the firm’s attorneys.

Corporate Law Office: Office Depot, which had both high participation and high hours.

Small Firm: Finch O’Neil Law Office, which gave tremendous amount of time especially in family law and guardianship cases.

Solo Practitioner: Kathy Railsback, an immigration attorney, trained several other volunteer attorneys and law students to assist refugees study and apply for naturalization. She also helped individuals apply for immigration benefits and disability waivers.

CUTLINE: Idaho Supreme Court Justice Roger Burdick, left, congratulates his longtime friend Secretary of State Ben Ysursa. The two have known each other since high school.

CUTLINE: Kathy Railsback accepts the 6.1 Challenge award in the solo practitioner category. Kathy helped train other attorneys and law students to help refugees with their legal hurdles to become American citizens.

(Photos courtesy of the Idaho State Bar)

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