

Colleagues,

It is my honor to stand before you today as we gather to celebrate and acknowledge excellence in our Iowa judicial system by naming the 2024 Chief Justice Mark Cady Award of Merit recipient. This is the most prestigious award given by the Iowa Judges Association. We are here to recognize a remarkable individual who has exemplified unwavering dedication, skill, distinguished service and extraordinary efforts for the betterment of the Iowa Judiciary. This judge has left an indelible mark on the lives of many, shaping the very fabric of our legal landscape.

This judge possesses a rare blend of wisdom, compassion, and a keen sense of justice. They have shown great empathy, ensuring that each person who enters their courtroom is treated with respect, dignity, and fairness. Their commitment to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all participants in the legal process is truly commendable. These attributes have been recognized by the numerous awards received.

This judge is a role model for us all showing by example how commitment to public service, hard work and humility can lead to great things.

This judge was in private practice and served as a county attorney and for the past 25 years as an Associate Juvenile Judge (of which there can only be a handful in this room). This judge has been a member of countless boards and committees and the recipient of many awards, and among them the Harold E Hughes Exceptional Rural Professional – Award of Excellence (at the time was 1 of only 2 Iowa ones to be so honored. This judge also received the Hon. David W Soukup Judge of the Year Award during the 2022 annual meeting of the National Court Appointed Special Advocates/GAL's in Seattle Washington.

This judge has chaired the Wapello County Family Treatment Court for years. This court received the Harold E Hughes Exceptional Rural Program – Award of Excellence given annually to a rural program that “exemplifies outstanding contribution to the rural alcohol and drug abuse field by establishing exceptional services in the field that help to improve the lives of those who suffer the effects of alcohol and drug abuse”. In 2015, the Wapello County Family Treatment Court was selected as a National Peer Learning Court by Children and Family Futures, Inc., and the United States Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The Wapello County Family Treatment Court was a repeat recipient of this award in 2018.

This judge in 2018 was appointed by Gov. Kim Reynolds to serve on the Iowa Child Advocacy Board which oversees CASA and foster care review boards in Iowa. This judge was reappointed by Gov. Reynolds in 2022 and served as chair. In 2018 this judge was appointed to the National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Judicial Leadership Council. These appointments highlight an ongoing dedication to advocating for the welfare of children across the state.

This Judge's nomination was by many judicial officers of the 8th Judicial District. This judge serves as a football and basketball referee and has competed in 9 marathons.

Today, as we present this award, we recognize the extraordinary contributions of this remarkable Iowa Judge. His unwavering pursuit of justice, commitment to fairness, and dedication to the principles that uphold our society have made a profound and lasting impact on Iowa Judges and the citizens of Iowa. He is a shining example for all Iowa Judges.

Please join me in congratulating Senior Judge and former Associate Juvenile Judge William S. Owens with the 2024 Iowa Judges Association – Chief Justice Mark Cady Award of Merit.

Thank you.