

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 2025 Chief Justice Mark Cady Award of Merit recipient. This is the most prestigious award given by the Iowa Judges Association. Today, we bestow one of the judiciary's highest honors upon an individual who has not only served with great distinction, but who has elevated the standard of what it means to be a judge in our time.

This year's honoree has devoted more than four decades to the legal profession—an extraordinary journey marked by service, leadership, and integrity. This individual began their legal career after earning a Juris Doctorate from Drake University School of Law and for the next twenty plus years, served the people of their community in private practice, becoming a trusted advocate and respected legal mind.

In the early 2000's, this individual was appointed to the bench as a district judge, where they earned a reputation for fairness, preparedness, and a deep understanding of the law.

It is especially merit worthy when an individual does something benefiting judges, county attorneys, defense attorneys and members of the bar to improve their job performance. This individual has done so and has institutionalized this contribution for the benefit of future judges and practitioners.

Our honoree created a tool early in their career that I suspect is used by most of the judges in this room on a weekly if not daily basis. It soon became a must-have for the judges. It provided a quick and up-to-date summary for judges to utilize in their sentencing orders. It continues to be a valuable tool for county attorneys, defense attorneys and judicial officers. This benefit continues to exist and makes judicial sentencing orders more accurate and appeals less likely for error in the sentencing consequences.

Our honoree reached a new level of service when appointed to the Iowa Court of Appeals by Governor Terry Branstad.

During his tenure on the appellate bench, our honoree authored hundreds of opinions that shaped Iowa law.

In addition to his work on the bench, this year's honoree has played an integral role in judicial education and is a frequent speaker at legal conferences. They are a former member of the Judicial Technology Committee and the Business Advisory Committee for the Electronic Document Management System.

Today, we honor not only a judicial career of distinction, but a life dedicated to public service and the enduring promise of justice under the law.

Most will immediately recognize our honoree by 2 words – sentencing chart. It is now known as The Criminal Statutes Summary Chart and is available on the judicial branch website and others. The Criminal Statutes Summary Chart is a one stop shop for ascertaining penalties for a particular crime. Judges who use the chart are less susceptible to being reversed or remanded for omitting sentencing information or including inaccurate information.

Beyond his professional achievements, he has been a devoted husband to his wife Regina, father, grandfather, craft beer maker and professed expert fisherman. He also recently admitted his stories are getting longer! Yes, they are!

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my great honor to present this award to the 2025 recipient... the Honorable Judge Michael R. Mullins.

Thank you.

After Award of Merit plaque presented remind Mike to introduce any family members present!