



American College of Trial Lawyers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hon. Barry G. Williams Receives Sandra Day O'Connor Jurist Award from The American College of Trial Lawyers

Baltimore Circuit Court Associate Judge is Fourth Recipient of Award

NEWPORT BEACH, CA, March 11, 2022 -- The American College of Trial Lawyers has presented its Sandra Day O'Connor Jurist Award to Baltimore Circuit Court Associate Judge the **Honorable Barry G. Williams**. The award recognizes a judge for his or her exemplary judicial independence in the performance of his or her duties. Judge Williams is only the fourth recipient of the award.

The American College of Trial Lawyers is composed of Fellows who represent the best of the trial bar in the United States and Canada. There are more than 5,800 Fellows of the College, including Judicial Fellows elected before ascending to the bench, and Honorary Fellows, who have attained eminence in the highest ranks of the legal profession, the judiciary, or public service.

Noted in the award committee's nomination: "Judge Williams was nominated for this award for the exemplary judicial independence he demonstrated while presiding over the trials of the officers involved in the arrest of Freddie Gray, an unarmed black man who tragically passed away while in police custody. After Mr. Gray's death, many groups immediately called for the officers involved in his arrest to be convicted for murder and assault, even though the facts and evidence were still being developed. The integrity of our criminal justice system relies upon judges to examine the facts and evidence in a thoughtful, unbiased and unrushed manner... Judge Williams did exactly this when he presided over the trials of the officers involved in Mr. Gray's arrest even though he was faced with immense pressure from the media and groups of the public (manifesting itself in numerous protests that occasionally devolved into riots) to hold the officers accountable for their alleged crimes."

College **President Michael L. O'Donnell** said, "Judicial independence is vital to the strength of our judicial system. As part of our mission, the College seeks to maintain the administration of justice and respect for the rule of law and the courts. Facing grave personal peril, Judge Williams performed his duties as a consummate officer of the court. We are honored to confer the Sandra Day O'Connor Jurist Award on Judge Williams."

The **Hon. Michael J. McAuliffe** said in his introduction of Judge Williams, "This judge, who had prosecuted police brutality cases in the past, had the courage to stand up for the principles of our constitution and our courts, even when those principles were unpopular. The defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. That is a principle we all stand for."

Judge Williams has served the City of Baltimore as an Associate Judge on the Circuit Court for Baltimore City since December 2005. During his 16 years of service, Judge Williams has presided over matters in the civil, family and criminal dockets. From 2012 through 2014, he served as Judge-in-Charge of the Criminal docket, while also chairing the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for Baltimore City. Immediately prior to his appointment to the bench, in his role as a Special Litigation Counsel in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, Judge Williams reviewed, investigated and prosecuted hate crimes and law enforcement misconduct matters nationwide, while

supervising and mentoring junior attorneys in the Division. Judge Williams earned his Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree from the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law in 1987; he was admitted to the Maryland Bar the same year. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in History from the University of Virginia, where he serves as a Trustee of the College Foundation. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Robert C. Heeney Award from the Criminal Law and Practice Section of Maryland State Bar Association and the Mary Ellen Barbera Judicial Excellence Award from the University of Maryland Francis King Carey University of Maryland School of Law.

The Sandra Day O'Connor Jurist Award was established in 2007 by the College. The Award is given from time to time to a judge in the United States or Canada, whether or not a Fellow of the College, who has demonstrated exemplary judicial independence in the performance of his or her duties, sometimes in especially difficult or even dangerous circumstances. The Award is not conferred every year and Judge Williams will only be the fourth recipient, following Hon. George Greer in 2008, Hon. Sam Sparks in 2010 and Hon. Barbara J. Pariente in 2018.

About The American College of Trial Lawyers

The American College of Trial Lawyers is composed of preeminent members of the Trial Bar from the United States and Canada and is recognized as the leading trial lawyers organization in both countries. The College is dedicated to maintaining and seeking to improve the standards of trial practice, professionalism, ethics, and the administration of justice. The College strongly supports the independence of the Judiciary and respect for the courts in the United States and Canada; that independence is fundamental to our democratic societies. For more information about the College, visit its website at www.actl.com.

Photo Available:

photo of Judge Williams with Hon. Michael J. McAuliffe on the occasion of receiving the Sandra Day O'Connor Jurist Award is available from the American College of Trial Lawyers. Please contact Sarah Stokes.

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