
Awards Selection Criteria

Dorothy Beatty Memorial Award

Significant contribution to the advancement of women's legal rights

Rosalyn B. Bell Award

Outstanding achievement in the field of family law

Access to Justice Award

Outstanding efforts to achieve access to justice

General Criteria:

- Supports the mission and agenda of the Women's Law Center
- Stature in the legal and general community
- Expertise and accomplishments are well recognized and respected
- Demonstrated leadership and effort to improve the legal system in ways that protect women's legal rights
- Demonstrated leadership and effort to address policy issues that affect women's legal rights
- Demonstrated record of successful representation of women in family law or employment law cases or other areas that impact women, especially if representation is pro bono or through legal services
- Serves as a role model for women
- Courage and willingness to take risks to protect and promote women's legal rights
- Contribution to the success of the event – support attendance and sponsorships, positive exposure for the Women's Law Center, good speaker
- Represents diversity of Maryland's community

Dorothy Beatty

Dorothy Beatty entered the University of Maryland Law School in 1972. Only 5% of her class was women. She graduated in 1976 and began her legal career at Piper & Marbury. After several years she moved to the Attorney General's Office where she served as Principal Counsel for the civil trial litigation division. She returned to Piper & Marbury where she developed an expertise in business litigation. Throughout her career, Dorothy developed a reputation as an effective trial advocate. She also taught at the University of Maryland School of Law as an adjunct professor. Dorothy was a long-time member and supporter of the Women's Law Center and served on the Board for several years.

In January 1985, Dorothy died unexpectedly from a heart attack. In her honor, the Women's Law Center created the Dorothy Beatty Memorial Award in 1986. Dorothy's family also established the Dorothy Ann Beatty Scholarship fund to support women who could not financially attend the University of Maryland Law School.

Stories about Dorothy's sense of humor, zest for life and commitment to the law abound. Her colleagues remember her intelligence, her commanding presence and dedication to public service. Throughout her career she was deeply committed to protecting the legal rights of women by challenging the status quo and facilitating positive change. This commitment was demonstrated by her active participation with the Women's Law Center's Board and activities.

Judge Rosalyn B. Bell

Judge Rosalyn B. Bell served on the Court of Special Appeals from 1983 to 1993. She was only the second woman to serve on this Court. She also served on the District Court (1978-1980) and Circuit Court of Montgomery County (1980-1983).

Judge Bell made many significant contributions to women's legal rights, particularly in the area of family law. As a member of the Court of Appeals Select Committee on Gender Bias, she helped to identify the ways in which the Court's application of its laws on alimony, custody and child support disadvantage women. In 1988 she conducted a study of alimony in Montgomery County. She was a leading advocate for the inclusion of family law among the subjects to be tested on the Maryland bar examination, encouraging interest and training in this field. Judge Bell also served as a member of the Governor's Task Force on Family Law, chairing its Economic Consequences of Divorce Committee.

The Women's Law Center created the Judge Rosalyn B. Bell Award in 1993 and Judge Bell was the first recipient of that award.