

Women's Law Center of Maryland Awards Selection Criteria

Dorothy Beatty Memorial Award

Significant contribution to the advancement of women's legal rights in Maryland

Rosalyn B. Bell Award

Outstanding achievement impacting the field of family law in Maryland

Access to Justice Award

Outstanding efforts to achieve access to justice for Marylanders

General Criteria:

- Supports the mission of the Women's Law Center of Maryland*
- Demonstrated leadership and effort to improve the legal system in ways that protect and/or expand women's legal rights
- Demonstrated leadership and effort to address policy issues that affect women's legal rights
- For attorneys, demonstrated record of successful representation of women in family law, employment law, human rights, civil rights or other areas of the law 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
- The awardees, their organizations, and the constituencies served should represent the diversity of Maryland's community. The Women's Law Center considers diversity to be vital to our organization's success in meeting its mission. We strongly encourage nominees and awardees from all cultures, races, ethnicities, life experiences, socio-economic classes, sexual orientations, age, gender, and physical abilities.

Dorothy Beatty

Dorothy Beatty entered the University of Maryland Carey School of Law in 1972. Only 5% of her class were women. She graduated in 1976 and began her legal career at the law firm 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 Maryland Law School as an adjunct professor. Dorothy was a long-time member and supporter of the Women's Law Center of Maryland and served on its Board of Directors 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 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 her 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.

The Honorable Rosalyn B. Bell

Judge Rosalyn B. Bell served on the Maryland 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.

Access to Justice Award

The Access to Justice Award was first given in 1997, and is only awarded when decided upon by the Women's Law Center's Board of Directors. The Access to Justice Award recognizes an individual who has made significant improvements and/or expansion in access to legal information, public services, and justice for low-income Marylanders.

*The Women's Law Center of Maryland's mission is to ensure the physical safety, economic security, and autonomy of women throughout the State. We work towards this goal by providing direct legal representation, information and referral services, and legislative advocacy.