

J. Professionalism Awards

Several commissions sponsor annual professionalism awards that are given to lawyers who best exemplify the standards of professionalism articulated by the commissions. The awards, and the ceremonies at which they are presented, have been found to be successful in highlighting the importance of professionalism within the legal community.

For example, in Texas, the Center for Legal Ethics, in conjunction with various local bar associations, bestows an annual series of professionalism awards that are presented jointly by the Center and local bars at local bar events. The recipients are lawyers admired by the local bar and believed to be exemplars of professionalism. The award symbolizes the purpose of the Texas Center, which is to enhance civility, professionalism and ethics among the state's lawyers.

In addition, the Center created a new award in 2009 called the Chief Justice Jack Pope Professionalism Award, which is awarded each year to an appellate judge and an appellate lawyer who epitomize the highest standards of ethics and professionalism. The Awards honor the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas, Jack Pope, who was licensed to practice law in 1937 and whose long career exemplified these high standards. Chief Justice Pope, an extremely popular judge during his many years on the bench, recently turned 98 years old and still attends the presentation of this award in his honor.

In New Jersey, the Commission holds an annual award program. Lawyers selected by the state and local bar associations as outstanding examples of professionalism are presented with Professional Lawyer of the Year Awards, and the Commission presents its major award to a senior member of the bar whose career is marked not only by achievement, but consistent commitment to the highest standards of the profession.

In North Carolina, the Chief Justice presents an annual award to an outstanding lawyer, judge or program that exhibits the principles of professionalism in all aspects of his or her career. In addition, the North Carolina Commission established the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism Award for Meritorious and Extraordinary Service, an honor bestowed on members of the legal profession, on an as nominated or recommended basis.

The Georgia Commission presents Annual Statewide Community Service Awards.