Sixth Annual
Mark Hardin Award for Child Welfare Legal Scholarship and Systems Change

The Mark Hardin Award for Child Welfare Legal Scholarship and Systems Change, created by the ABA Center on Children and the Law in 2011 with approval from the ABA Board of Governors, honors the work of Mark Hardin. Before his retirement, Mark served for almost 30 years on the staff of the ABA Center on Children and the Law as director of child welfare. Mark has long been recognized by those who work in this area of law as an early innovator in the child welfare legal field. He is recipient of the "Adoption Excellence Award" bestowed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; an award for "extraordinary contributions to children" from the administrators of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children; the prestigious "Outstanding Legal Advocacy Award" from the National Association of Counsel for Children; and an award for interdisciplinary collaboration between law and social work.

Mark's research and scholarship on child welfare and the law, and his work on legislative, regulatory, and court rule reform affecting abused and neglected children was remarkable. Child welfare law and practice changed greatly across the country because of Mark's consistent and humble leadership over three decades. He was a key participant in meetings to develop consensus documents that significantly advanced this unique legal practice, often giving others credit for what was largely his own ideas and work. At the beginning of his ABA tenure, he played a major role in helping lawyers and courts effectively implement the federal Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, which brought about the country's most significant system law and policy reforms up to that time.

Perhaps Mark's most important achievement was his conceptualizing a federal law [42 U.S.C. 629h], ***"****Entitlement Funding For State Courts To Assess and Improve Handling of Proceedings Relating to Foster Care and Adoption," (the Court Improvement Project)* that for decades has provided millions of dollars to state court systems in every state for improving the ways in which courts handle child protection cases. Because of his dozens of books (including his production of the first American book on foster care law), scholarly articles and other publications, his vast experience providing training and technical assistance to judges, lawyers, and child welfare professionals across the country, and his tireless advocacy for the field, his achievements in this field are unparalleled.

Previous recipients of this award include:

Diane Nunn, California Judicial Council Center for Families, Children & the Courts
Angela Adams, JBS International Consultant from New Mexico
Frank Cervone, Support Center for Child Advocates, Philadelphia, PA
Bob Schwartz, Juvenile Law Center (ret.), Philadelphia, PA
Debra Alsaker-Burke, Court Improvement Director, Idaho

Eligibility

Nominee must be a practicing or retired attorney, current or retired law professor, a sitting or retired judge, or a current or former federal or state legislator. The award is given based

on an individual's personal achievement and commitment. It is not given to groups of people, organizations, or posthumously. Nominees must have a record of significant accomplishments in one, or ideally both, of these areas:

Legal Scholarship: The nominee will have shown significant accomplishment in:

- Authoring books, book chapters, published articles, or other materials that have been influential in significant child welfare law, policy, or practice changes; and/or
- Using personal knowledge of the law and exemplary legal practice to do considerable training or technical assistance at the national, regional, or state levels that has been influential in bringing about law, policy, and practice changes.

Systems Change: The nominee will have shown significant accomplishment in:

- Authoring important federal or state child welfare legislation;
- Advising on the development or helping influence passage of important federal or state legislation;
- Leading a federal or state child welfare agency through major system change focused on improvements in child safety, permanency, and well-being;
- Having had a key role in developing appellate case law or doing significant litigation on behalf of families and children that resulted in major system change; and/or
- Having been intensively involved in a state's Court Improvement Program which led to demonstrably significant and lasting reform.

The nominee should embody Mark's leadership style, characterized by humility, a "willingness to serve," and a deep driving compassion for children and families. Mark was a mentor to many, a willing collaborator, and great influencer of change. He kept focused on the end results he sought and continually pushed his colleagues, in his understated manner, towards reaching these results. He remained steadfast to effecting positive change for children and families over his long career. The winning nominee will be someone who shares many of these qualities.

Nomination Process

A nomination packet must be submitted by February 23, 2017 and should include:

- Nomination Form
- Nomination letter explaining the qualifications of the nominee and setting forth the reasons why the nominee should receive this award. The letter must include a description of the nominee's legal work on behalf of families and children, and their employment and professional history. The more details the letter contains, the better the committee can get insight into the nominee's impact on child welfare.
- Up to three letters of recommendation may be included. Examples could include letters from the nominee's clients, individuals familiar with the nominee's work on behalf of families and children, the nominee's current or former employers, fellow practitioners, or any other individual who can explain why the nominee should receive the award. The letters should be written by individuals who have diverse perspectives about the nominee.

Nomination letters, and letters of recommendation, should explain how the nominee reflects the qualities and values (such as humility, willingness to mentor others, ability to collaborate to effect change, etc.) that Mark represents.

Nomination letters, and letters of recommendation, **must not exceed 10 pages in total** and must be received by February 23, 2017. A decision on the recipient of the award will be made no later than March 15, 2017. The award will be presented during the ABA Center on Children and the Law Spring Conferences in Washington, DC, April 25-28, 2017.

Questions

If you have questions contact Mimi Laver, mimi.laver@americanbar.org

Mark Hardin Award for Child Welfare Legal Scholarship and Systems Change

Nomination Form

Deadline: February 23, 2017

Nominator Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Relationship to the nominee, if applicable:_____

Nominee Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Nomination Materials Checklist (letters must not exceed 10 pages in total)

- Nomination Form
- Nomination Letter
- Letters of Recommendation (up to 3)

Nominations and supporting documentation should be submitted electronically to:

Mimi.Laver@americanbar.org

Or mailed to:

ABA Center on Children and the Law
Mark Hardin Award
c/o Mimi Laver
1050 Connecticut Ave., NW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20036