The Honorable Christine M. Durham is the 2019 Robert J. Kutak Award Recipient

Christine M. Durham
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Justice Christine Durham retired from the Utah Supreme Court in 2017, after serving as a Justice for 35 years and as Chief Justice and Chair of the Utah Judicial Council for 10 of those years. She currently serves as co-chair for Utah’s Coordinating Committee on Access to Justice and the Utah Center for Legal Inclusion. Prior to joining the Utah Supreme Court, she served on the state trial court after several years in private practice. She received her A.B. with honors from Wellesley College and a J.D. from Duke University.

Justice Durham is past president of the Conference of Chief Justices of the United States and also past chair (2010-2011) of the American Bar Association’s Council on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. She is an emeritus member of Duke University’s Board of Trustees, the Council of the American Law Institute, and the Board of Overseers for the Rand Corporation’s Institute for Civil Justice. She is a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation and served on the governing boards of the American Inns of Court Foundation, the Appellate Judges Conference of the ABA, the ABA’s Commission on Women in the Profession, the Federal Judicial Conference’s Advisory Committee on the Rules of Civil Procedure and is past president of the National Association of Women Judges.

Justice Durham has been active in judicial education. She was a founder of the Leadership Institute in Judicial Education and served on the ABA’s President’s Task Force on the Future of Legal Education, as well as the Advisory Board for the Educating Tomorrow’s Lawyers Project of the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System at Denver University. She currently serves on the Board of Trustees of University of the People, an accredited tuition-free online institution (www.UoPeople.edu). She helped create and lead the Utah Coalition for Civic Character and Service Education and served on the Utah Commission on Civic Education. She taught state constitutional law for many years at the S.J. Quinney College of Law, University of Utah, and served for twelve years on the Utah Constitutional Revision Commission. She has received honorary degrees from five Utah universities and has been recognized nationally for her work in judicial education and efforts to improve the administration of justice.

In nominating Justice Durham for the award, Jeffrey Lewis, Council Chair stated: “The Honorable Christine Durham has a record of unparalleled and distinguished service to the legal profession and the public which it services. She served for thirty-five years as a justice of the Supreme Court of Utah, including ten years as Chief Justice and a term as President of the Conference of Chief Justices. She served as Chair of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. She is an exemplar of Robert J. Kutak’s vision of one deserving of this award which carries his name.”

Justice Durham will be honored at a reception on Friday, August 23 in Chicago at the Park Hyatt in conjunction with the Section’s Council Meeting. The Kulak Award is presented annually to honor an individual who has made significant contributions to the collaboration of the legal academy, the bench, and the bar. The award was established in memory of Mr. Kutak, a respected Omaha lawyer, who was committed to legal reform and a strong advocate for legal education.