The Honorable Ruth V. McGregor is the 2020 Robert J. Kutak Award Recipient

Ruth V. McGregor  
Chief Justice (Ret.)  
Arizona Supreme Court  
Phoenix, AZ

Chief Justice Ruth McGregor served on the Arizona Supreme Court from February 1998 until June 30, 2009. She was the Court’s Chief Justice from June 2005 until her retirement. She was also a member of the Arizona Court of Appeals from 1989 until 1998, where she served as Chief Judge from 1995 to 1997. Before her appointment to the bench, Justice McGregor engaged in the private practice of law as a member of the Fennemore Craig law firm in Phoenix, Arizona. She served as law clerk to Justice Sandra Day O’Connor during Justice O’Connor’s first term on the United States Supreme Court.

Justice McGregor received a Bachelor of Arts degree, summa cum laude, and a Master of Arts degree from the University of Iowa. She received her Doctor of Jurisprudence degree, summa cum laude, from Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, and a Master of Laws in the Judicial Process from the University of Virginia.

Justice McGregor has participated extensively in professional activities, particularly in those organizations dedicated to assuring a fair and impartial judiciary. Among other activities, she has served as an officer and a member of the Board of Trustees for the American Inns of Court Foundation, the National Association of Women Judges, and Justice at Stake; as a board member of the Conference of Chief Justices and the American Judicature Society; and as a member of the Council of the American Bar Association Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, including a term as Chair.

Current Chair of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, Diane F. Bosse remarked, “Justice McGregor, through her career as a lawyer and a judge, and through her years of service to the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, has nurtured and strengthened the bonds among legal education, the judiciary, and the practicing bar. It is most fitting that she be honored with this prestigious award, in recognition of her accomplishments, her dedication to the profession, and her significant contributions to the work of the Section.”

Justice McGregor currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the Center for the Future of Arizona and of the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System. Since her retirement, in addition to chairing several commissions for the Arizona Supreme Court, she has completed a number of investigations for public entities and acted as a special master for the United States District Court for the District of Arizona, as mediator for the City of Phoenix in public transit disputes, and as special administrator for the Arizona Supreme Court.

Justice McGregor has received several state and national awards for her work in the judicial system, including the Dwight D. Opperman Award from the American Judicature Society; the A. Sherman Christensen Award from the American Inns of Court Foundation; the James A. Walsh Award from the Arizona State Bar; the Marilyn R. Seymann Award from the Arizona Foundation for Women; the Sarah Herring Sorin Award from the Arizona Women Lawyers Association; and outstanding alumna awards from Arizona State University and the University of Iowa.

In nominating Justice McGregor for the award, Dean Tony García Padilla, Section Nominating Committee Chair stated: “This recognition to Ruth McGregor is an applause to the many leaders of the legal community — judges, practicing attorneys, legislators, executive functionaries — working for the betterment of legal education.”

Justice McGregor will be honored at a reception in November in conjunction with the Section’s Council Meeting. The Kutak 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.