



# MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Nominations sought for Daniel J. Wright Lifetime Achievement Award; honor recognizes outstanding work in support of Michigan families, children**

LANSING, MI, August 16, 2017 – Nominations are now open for the Daniel J. Wright Lifetime Achievement Award to honor exceptional service to Michigan’s children. Jointly sponsored by the Michigan Supreme Court and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the award is presented each year in conjunction with efforts to encourage and celebrate adoption. As part of its November Adoption Month initiative, the Supreme Court is urging courts statewide to raise awareness of the need for loving parents to adopt children from foster care.

The award was established in honor of the late Daniel J. Wright of Grand Ledge, an attorney and longtime leader in child support and child welfare reform. He was credited with the “Michigan Miracle” in 2002 when, as special assistant to then-Chief Justice Maura D. Corrigan, he led the state’s efforts to upgrade Michigan’s child support enforcement system by federally-mandated deadlines.

By meeting the deadlines, Wright saved the state \$142 million in federal fines and earned the state a \$36 million refund for fines it had already paid. Later, as director of the Friend of the Court Bureau and Child Welfare Services divisions of the State Court Administrative Office, Wright helped create the state’s “Adoption Forums” to deal with adoption barriers that were keeping children in foster care.

“Dan worked tirelessly on behalf of legislation to afford foster children a greater voice in decisions affecting their own lives,” said Chief Justice Stephen J. Markman. “He dedicated himself to connecting foster children with adoptive ‘forever families.’ ”

Nominations are open to attorneys, judges, caseworkers, court employees, employees of public and private agencies, employees and members of nonprofits, and others who have a significant record of helping Michigan families and children. To be eligible, a nominee must have 10 years or more experience in his or her field and a record of achievements with demonstrable impact.

Previous recipients include the late Daniel J. Wright; former director of the Office of Child Support within the Michigan Department of Human Services Marilyn Stephen; Crawford County Court Administrator Thomas Haskel; Midland County Probate Judge Dorene Allen; former director of the Michigan Department of Human Services and former Supreme Court Chief Justice Maura Corrigan; Calhoun County Friend of the Court Jeffrey Albaugh; former executive director of the Children’s Services Agency within the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Steve Yager; and Genesee County Circuit Judge Duncan Beagle.

To nominate a candidate for the Wright Award, complete the attached form and return it by October 6, 2017. The Wright Award recipient will be honored with a special presentation at the 2017 Michigan Adoption Day event at the Michigan Hall of Justice on November 21.

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## **Daniel J. Wright Lifetime Achievement Award**

### **2017 Nomination Form**

**Nominee's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominee's position or job title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of nominee's organization or employer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State, Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail address:** \_\_\_\_\_

Why is your nominee a worthy candidate for the Wright Award? Please be as complete as possible; use a separate sheet if necessary.

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**Nominator's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**All nominations are due by October 6, 2017.**

Submit this form by e-mail to [WrightAwardNominations@courts.mi.gov](mailto:WrightAwardNominations@courts.mi.gov) or fax to 517-373-9831.

Direct questions should be sent to Lynn Seaks at [SeaksL@courts.mi.gov](mailto:SeaksL@courts.mi.gov) or at 517-373-1067 or Elizabeth Henderson at [HendersonE@courts.mi.gov](mailto:HendersonE@courts.mi.gov) or 517-373-2621.