



# 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, September 16, 2019 – Nominations are now open for the Daniel J. Wright Lifetime Achievement Award to honor exceptional service to Michigan’s children. 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, a 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 stranding children in foster care.

“Dan’s legacy and devotion to give foster children a greater voice in decisions affecting their own lives, continues to this day and guides the Court in its work,” said Chief Justice Bridget McCormack. “He was dedicated to connecting foster children with adoptive ‘forever families.’ ”

Nominations are open to attorneys, judges, caseworkers, court staff, 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 the field and a record of achievements with demonstrable impact.

Previous recipients include the late Daniel J. Wright; former MDHHS Director Marilyn Stephen; Crawford County Court Administrator Thomas Haskel; Midland County Probate Judge Dorene Allen; former Supreme Court Chief Justice Maura Corrigan; Calhoun County Friend of the Court Jeffrey Albaugh; Executive Director Children’s Services Agency Steve Yager; Genesee County Circuit Judge Duncan Beagle, Wexford County Probate Judge Kenneth Tacoma, and Cheboygan County Probate Judge Robert Butts.

To nominate a candidate, complete the [Nomination form](#) and return it by **Friday, October 25, 2019**. The Wright Award recipient will be honored with a special presentation at the 2018 Michigan Adoption Day event at the Michigan Hall of Justice on November 26.

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