

Connecticut Bar Association Awards

2025-2026 Bar Year



Celebrate with the Stars, the CBA's annual awards event, will be held on Thursday, March 12, 2026. Nominations for the 2026 awards are closed. The Awards Committee will review all nominations and present their selection to the Board of Governor for approval. The Pro Bono Committees, Professionalism Committee and Young Lawyers Section will also select a recipient for their respective awards. All award recipients will be notified of their selection and invited to attend the event for free.

Awards Committee Awards

Legal Professionals

Charles J. Parker Legal Services Award

The Charles J. Parker Legal Services Award is presented to members of the Connecticut Bar who have a deep and abiding interest in and dedication to the delivery of legal services to the disadvantaged in Connecticut.

Criteria

- Member of the Connecticut Bar Association
- Should have deep and abiding interest and dedication to delivery of legal services to the disadvantaged in Connecticut
- Given selflessly of themselves in advancing goal of providing legal services to Connecticut residents. This service should cover a period of years and not be a single or isolated activity
- Recognizes all practitioners in Connecticut, including legal service attorneys
- Not necessarily an annual award

Citizen of the Law Award

The Citizen of the Law Award is presented to a judge, attorney, or paralegal who has made a significant contribution to a charitable or public service cause that does not involve professional legal skills, but provides inspiration and contributes to the needy, the good of society, the environment, or our way of life. These activities have been undertaken on a non-professional, charitable basis with little or no personal economic reward, and some personal sacrifice.

Criteria

- Judge, attorney, or paralegal who is a member of the Connecticut Bar Association
- Significant contribution to a charitable or public service cause that does not involve professional legal skills, but provides inspiration, and contributes to the needy, the good of society, the environment, or our way of life
- Activities undertaken on a non-professional, charitable basis with little or no personal economic reward, and some personal sacrifice
- Not necessarily an annual award

Henry J. Naruk Judiciary Award

Established in honor of past CBA president Henry J. Naruk, who served as a superior court judge from 1969 to 1980 and was the first president of the Connecticut Judges Association, the Henry J. Naruk Judiciary Award is presented to members of the state and federal judiciary who have made substantial contributions to the administration of justice in Connecticut.

Criteria

- Member of Connecticut Judiciary — Federal or State Court
- Epitomizes long-term, dedicated, conscientious service to the community in a judicial role
- Displays traits of integrity
- Hard-working judge who labors long at duties
- Selfless in approach to demand of position
- Legal ability of highest quality
- Not necessarily an annual award

John Eldred Shields Distinguished Professional Service Award

Established in 1981 in honor of past CBA President John Eldred Shields, the award is presented each year to a CBA member who has performed outstanding service through or on behalf of the CBA, for the benefit of the legal community and the community at large.

Criteria

- Member of the Connecticut Bar Association
- Performed outstanding service through or on behalf of the Connecticut Bar Association
- Such service to have benefited members of the Connecticut Bar Association, the legal profession or the community at large. This service should cover a period of years and not be a single or isolated activity
- Service as Past President of the Connecticut Bar Association shall not be considered in evaluating the candidates for this award
- Not necessarily an annual award

Tapping Reeve Legal Educator Award

Established in 2012, the Tapping Reeve Legal Educator Award is presented to a member of the Connecticut Bar Association who is a member of the faculty, a clinical instructor, or an adjunct instructor at UConn Law School, Quinnipiac Law School, Yale Law School, or Western New England Law School or a member of the CBA who has contributed greatly to the legal education of his or her colleagues. The recipient must have demonstrated sustained commitment and made significant contributions to the cause of legal education in the state and have distinguished himself or herself as a legal educator of the highest quality as a teacher, scholarly writer, or both.

Criteria

- Member of the CBA who has contributed greatly to the legal education of his or her colleagues, as a member of the faculty, a clinical instructor, or an adjunct instructor at UConn Law School, Quinnipiac Law School, Yale Law School or Western New England Law School
- May be posthumous, but only if a recipient passes away after being nominated, but before the award is bestowed by the CBA
- Must have a minimum of ten years teaching experience at one or more of the four schools listed, or at least ten years as an attorney admitted to the Connecticut Bar
- Must have demonstrated a sustained commitment and made significant contributions to the cause of legal education over a period of years and not be a single or isolated activity

- Distinguished himself or herself as a legal educator of the highest quality through experience as a teacher, scholarly writer, or both
- Not necessarily an annual award

Members of the Public

Citizen for the Award

The Citizen for the Law Award is presented to a person who is not employed in the legal area but has made a significant contribution to the institution of justice and the law on a voluntary basis. These activities have been undertaken to advance the law for purely beneficial reasons, with little or no personal reward, and some personal sacrifice.

Criteria

- A person who is not employed in the legal area
- Significant contribution to the institution of justice and the law on a voluntary basis
- Activities undertaken to advance the law for purely beneficial reasons, with little or no personal reward, and some personal sacrifice
- Not necessarily an annual award

Distinguished Public Service Award

The CBA Distinguished Public Service Award is given to a Connecticut resident, or a person with a meaningful relationship to Connecticut, who has made a significant contribution to society and is distinguished in his or her profession.

Criteria

- Current or former Connecticut resident or other significant and meaningful relationship to Connecticut
- Usually non-lawyer
- Distinguished self in his or her profession
- Made significant contribution to society. This contribution should be in addition to or outside of a candidate's area of endeavor
- Mandatory that recipient attends the Annual Dinner of Connecticut Bar Association to accept award.
- Not necessarily an annual award

Pro Bono Committee Award

The Honorable Anthony V. DeMayo Pro Bono Award

The award is named in honor of The Honorable Anthony V. DeMayo, who tirelessly fought for fundamental fairness and championed the legal rights of the poor and accused. The award recognizes CBA members who are not salaried employees of a legal aid or similar nonprofit organization. The recipients are selected based on their demonstrated dedication to the provision of legal services without expectation of payment to those in need.

Criteria

- Handles matters of significant quantity, complexity, or duration
- Willing to accept unpopular, unusual, or difficult matters
- Consistently goes beyond the “call of duty” and inspires others to do the same
- Has achieved an outcome which made either a significant difference in a client’s life or had a major positive impact beyond the individual matter

- Displays extraordinary devotion to clinics, projects, or programming which serves the legal needs of the poor
- Fosters pro bono work by others through mentoring, advocacy, support, or example
- Otherwise demonstrates outstanding effort, commitment, sacrifice, or accomplishment

Professionalism Committee Award

Edward F. Hennessey Professionalism Award

The objective of the Edward F. Hennessey Professionalism Award is to recognize and honor a member of the bar of this state whose career has manifested a dedication to the highest ideals and standards of the legal profession, so as to provide inspiration to other members of the bar and to honor the memory of Edward F. Hennessey, whose 41 years at the bar exemplified the criteria of this award. The recipient must be a lawyer who has demonstrated such integrity, character, competence, ethics, civility, and mentoring over the course of his or her career as to inspire greater professionalism among lawyers and pride in their profession and who has enhanced the public's perception of the legal profession.

Criteria

- Career has shown dedication to the highest ideals and standards of the legal profession
- Inspired other members of the bar and to honor the memory of Edward F. Hennessey
- Demonstrated integrity, character, competence, ethics, civility, and mentoring over the course of his or her career
- Enhanced the public's perception of the legal profession
- Practiced at least 20 years and is a member of the Connecticut Bar Association

Young Lawyers Section Award

Young Lawyers Section Vanguard Award

The Young Lawyers Section Vanguard Award is presented to a current or recent alum (up to three years back) of the CBA-YLS executive committee who has made outstanding and significant contributions to the YLS and the Bar Association in general over a prolonged time period. The recipient is an individual who, despite not pursuing an officer position, assumed a leadership role in the YLS and whose progressive and forward thinking ideas have benefited all CBA members.