

Chief Justice Paul Newby Presents 2023 Chief Justice's Professionalism Awards



From NCAOC Communications Office <NCAOCCommunicationsOffice@info.nccourts.org>
To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <NCAOCCommunicationsOffice@info.nccourts.org>
Date 2024-01-24 15:16

[Chief Justice Paul Newby Presents 2023 Chief Justice's Professionalism Awards](#)



COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
MEDIA@NCCOURTS.ORG
PO BOX 2448, RALEIGH, NC 27602

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 24, 2024

Chief Justice Paul Newby Presents 2023 Chief Justice's Professionalism Awards

The recipients were presented with this annual award for their dedication and commitment to the principles of professionalism and public service in North Carolina.



From left to right: Richard Vinroot, Hon. Ashleigh Parker, Chief Justice Paul Newby, Marcia Armstrong, Hon. James Ammons.

RALEIGH — On Wednesday, January 17, at the joint dinner of the N.C. State Bar and the N.C. Bar Association at the Marriott Crabtree Valley Hotel in Raleigh, Chief Justice Paul Newby presented the 2023 Chief Justice's Professionalism Award to the following recipients: Hon. James Ammons, Marci Armstrong, Hon. Ashleigh Parker and Richard Vinroot. These recipients were presented with this [annual award](#) for their dedication and commitment to the principles of professionalism and public service in North Carolina.

Judge James (Jim) Floyd Ammons, Jr. was born in Portsmouth, Virginia. His father was a lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps and his mother was a teacher.

Ammons graduated from Reid Ross High School in 1973. He received an A.A. from Louisburg Junior College in 1975, a B.A. from UNC Chapel Hill in 1977 and a J.D. from UNC School of Law in 1980. Ammons practiced law with his father, J. Floyd Ammons, from 1981 to 1982. He served as an assistant district attorney from 1982 to 1988. From 1988 to 1998 he served as a district court judge.

In November of 1998 he was elected to the Superior Court and elected to the District Court which made him the first North Carolinian to win a District Court Seat and a Superior Court Seat in the same election on the same day. Although this procedure was legal at the time, the legislature made it illegal in February 1999. Ammons is told that he is the reason for that law. He has ran in eight elections over the last 35 years. On January 1, 2013, he became the senior resident superior court judge for Judicial District 14 (Cumberland County).

Judge Ammons and his wife Sandy have two children. They enjoy volunteering with various nonprofits in their community and traveling with family and friends.

Marcia Armstrong ("Marci") is a partner in The Armstrong Law Firm, P.A., in Smithfield, North Carolina. She was admitted to practice in 1983 after receiving her B.A. in 1980 from Salem College and her J.D. from Wake Forest University in 1983. She has also served as an adjunct professor of law for the UNC School of Law.

Armstrong's practice is limited to family law. In 1989, she was certified by the North Carolina State Bar as a specialist in Family Law. She has been a Fellow in the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers since 1993 and is a past president of the North Carolina Chapter. Armstrong has appeared in trial courts throughout eastern North Carolina.

"My desire is always to model professionalism and in doing so to hopefully have a positive influence on all attorneys, especially young attorneys," said Armstrong. "I believe that you can be an effective lawyer and at the same time a kind person and that our justice system works best when the parties, counsel, judge, and court staff are treated with respect and dignity."

On Sunday, February 12, 2023, Armstrong was the first lawyer in North Carolina to file using the court's new eFiling system. The next day she sent a statewide message of encouragement to the members of the Bar urging them to "embrace eCourts with patience, grace and resilience" and reminding the Bar to "personally thank the clerks and their staff for their tireless efforts."

During her term as State Bar President, Armstrong was instrumental in establishing the Access to Justice Committee tasked with studying the lack of lawyers in small rural communities. On August 31, 2023, the North Carolina State Bar and the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism hosted a Legal Desert Summit at the State Bar building in Raleigh led by Chief Justice Newby and herself. The summit brought interested parties to the table to share their experiences, concerns, frustrations, success stories, and ideas on this prevalent topic.

Armstrong loves being a mother to her three children and "Marla" to her seven grandchildren.

Judge Ashleigh Parker is a district court judge in Judicial District 10, which encompasses Wake County. Prior to her appointment by Governor Roy Cooper in 2017, Judge Parker served as an assistant attorney general at the North Carolina Department of Justice and as an assistant district attorney at the Wake County District Attorney's Office.

Judge Parker graduated with a B.A. in Psychology from Wake Forest University and *cum laude* from North Carolina Central University School of Law. She has been practicing law since she was 24 years old. At age 30, Judge Parker was only the 3rd and youngest African American female to hold this position in Wake County since the District Courts were established over 50 years ago.

Judge Parker serves as the lead child support judge in Wake County and one of two abuse, neglect, and dependency judges. She is the co-founder of the Capital City Lawyer's Association Law Day Program. Since its inception in 2014, this program has afforded over 1,000 minority middle and high school students the opportunity to engage in a mock trial, interact with minority officers and attorneys, and take a tour of the local jail.

Most recently, Judge Parker is the co-founder of the Wake County Legal Support Center which opened on January 9, 2023. The Center is a collaboration among Wake County, the Wake County Bar Association, the N.C. Administrative Office of the Courts, and the N.C. Equal Access to Justice Commission and is funded by Wake County, N.C. IOLTA, and the Wake County Bar Foundation. The Center was created to address the 2021 Civil Legal Needs Assessment that determined that there are not enough Legal Aid attorneys to represent the underserved, leading people with no choice but to navigate the court system alone. In just one year, the Center has helped over 5,600 people and local attorneys have provided over 100 pro bono hours. Judge Parker's goal is to have a similar version of the Center in all 100 counties in North Carolina, specifically in rural areas where the need is greatest.

Judge Parker's proudest accomplishment is being the mother to her two sons.

Richard Vinroot is the son of a Swedish immigrant, who was born in Charlotte. He and his younger brother and sister were raised by their parents in Charlotte and attended Charlotte's public schools. In 1955, he became an Eagle Scout. Vinroot graduated from Charlotte's East Mecklenburg High School in 1959. At graduation, Vinroot was named Charlotte-Mecklenburg's "Outstanding Teenager of the Year" and awarded a Morehead Scholarship to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he earned a B.A. in 1963 and J.D. in 1966. At Carolina, Richard served as class president in his junior and senior years, and (at 6'7") played varsity basketball for the North Carolina Tar Heels under legendary coach Dean Smith.

In January, 1967, Vinroot volunteered for the military draft and, following basic and AIT training, was deployed to Vietnam where he served from November 1967 until November 1968. He was awarded the Bronze Star at the conclusion of his tour of duty in Vietnam.

In 1969, after returning to Charlotte from Vietnam, Vinroot joined a 6-person law firm (then called Fleming, Robinson & Bradshaw) which is now an almost 200-person firm, called Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson.

Vinroot and Judy, his wife of almost 60 years, have raised 3 grown children and they are blessed to have 4 grandchildren. Through more than 5 decades in Charlotte, the Vinroots have been engaged extensively in their church and many other community activities.

ABOUT

For information about the Chief Justice's Professionalism Award or the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism, please contact the Commission office at 919 890-1455.

The primary charge of the [Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism \(CJCP\)](#), chaired by Chief Justice Paul Newby, is to enhance professionalism among North Carolina judges, lawyers, and law students. In carrying out this charge, the CJCP is responsible for providing ongoing attention and assistance through a variety of programs, projects and publications, in order to ensure that the practice of law remains a high calling, dedicated to the service of clients and the public good.

###

About North Carolina Judicial Branch

The [North Carolina Judicial Branch](#) is an equal and distinctively separate branch and core function of government. More than 7,000 Judicial Branch employees statewide administer justice in courthouses in North Carolina's 100 counties. The [Judicial Branch budget for FY 2021–22](#) was \$672.4M, 86.2% of which is used to pay salaries and the remaining 13.8% is used for operations. The Judicial Branch receives only 2.59% of the overall State budget.

About North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) is the administrative agency for the [North Carolina Judicial Branch](#), providing administrative services to help the North Carolina court system operate more efficiently and effectively, taking into account each courthouse's diverse needs, caseloads, and available resources.

Media Contact

[Charles Keller](#)



North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts
901 Corporate Center Drive, Raleigh, NC 27607
919-890-1000 | www.NCCourts.gov

This email was sent to sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org as a North Carolina media member, or you have indicated you wish to receive these messages.

[Unsubscribe](#) to be removed from future messages. For media questions, please contact CommunicationsOffice@nccourts.org.

