

Chief Justice Paul Newby Presents 2024 Professionalism Awards



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Left to right: Judge Angelica Chavis McIntyre, Elizabeth Star, Ben David, Chief Justice Paul Newby, Judge Regina Parker, and Andrew Heath.

RALEIGH — The Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism presented its 2024 Awards to five recipients during its annual awards dinner Wednesday, April 23, 2025. [This award](#) is presented annually to an individual or individuals whose contributions have demonstrated the highest commitment to genuine professionalism and the highest standards of legal ethics. The award is presented in cooperation with the N.C. State Bar and N.C. Bar Association.



The recipients are:

Benjamin David

Ben David began his legal career at the law firm of Kilpatrick Stockton in Winston-Salem after graduating from Wake Forest Law School in 1995. In 1999, he became a prosecutor in Wilmington, North Carolina. After serving five years in the violent crime division, Ben was elected as district attorney for New Hanover and Pender County in 2004. He ran unopposed in the next five elections and retired in 2024. Ben is the past president of the North Carolina Conference of District Attorneys and has served on numerous statewide commissions, including serving as co-chairman of the Chief Justice's Task Force on ACEs-Informed Courts. Ben is now the CEO of the community justice center, a one-stop shop for hope healing and justice. He works daily with court officials and law-enforcement officers and nonprofit heads to make the courts more trauma informed. Ben is an adjunct faculty member at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and is the published author of several article articles and a book, *Crime and Community in the Cape Fear: A Prosecutor's Guide to a Healthier Hometown*.

Andrew T. Heath

Andrew T. Heath grew up in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where his mother was a schoolteacher, and his father was a lawyer and later a superior court judge. He attended the University of North Carolina Asheville on an athletic scholarship and met his wife, Kristen, there. They both graduated from Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law. During law school, Heath worked for Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels in the office of general counsel. Heath practiced law in his wife's hometown of Wilmington, North Carolina, at an insurance defense law firm before moving to Raleigh to work for Governor Pat McCrory. In the McCrory administration, Heath served as the chairman of the North Carolina Industrial Commission and later the Governor's senior leadership team as State Budget Director and head of the Office of State Budget and Management. Following his time in the Governor's office, Heath served for six years as a superior court judge. The last two years of that term he spent working for Chief Justice Paul Newby as the Director of the N.C. Administrative Office of the Courts overseeing the operations of the North Carolina Judicial Branch. After 10 years of state service, Heath joined Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP as a partner in the Raleigh office where he currently works, focusing on government relations in North Carolina and Washington, D.C.

Judge Angelica McIntyre

Angelica Chavis McIntyre is a native of Pembroke and currently resides in Lumberton. She earned her law degree from Campbell University. In 2018, Judge

McIntyre was elected by the people of Robeson County to serve on the district court bench. In 2021, she was appointed Robeson's chief district court judge by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, becoming the first Native American female chief judge in North Carolina's history.

Judge McIntyre serves on several advisory committees, including the Chief Justice's Task Force to address adverse child experiences, the Robeson County Domestic Violence Task Force, and the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council. She presides over all juvenile delinquency cases in Robeson County and collaborates closely with community and faith-based organizations to address the needs of our youth.

In 2023, Judge McIntyre partnered with the North Carolina Youth Violence Prevention Council to establish a trauma-informed juvenile delinquency court. This initiative involves implementing a diversion protocol for youth with serious offenses. These youth undergo intensive evaluations that assess their trauma history. A Participant Support Plan is then developed to coordinate services for each youth. If necessary, trauma-focused mental health therapy is provided. Additionally, these youth receive intensive mentoring from Violence Interrupters for up to 12 months. Judge McIntyre is immensely proud of the program's impact, as well as the recent implementation of trauma-informed court spaces. She actively engages in school presentations to address common issues facing today's children, including, for example, the negative effects of social media and cyber bullying.

As part of her ongoing efforts beyond the courtroom, Judge McIntyre collaborates with higher education programs to assist justice-involved youth in pursuing their educational or career goals to move away from crime, and into progress.

Judge Regina Parker

Judge Regina Parker graduated from Williamston High School in 1985 and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice from East Carolina University in 1989. She received her Juris Doctor from North Carolina Central University School of Law in 1992.

Her legal career began as a clerk for the Honorable Clifton Johnson on the North Carolina Court of Appeals. She became a trial attorney at Smallwood, Rodgers, and Hayes in 1993 and joined the law firm of Earl T. Brown in 1998, focusing on juvenile and real estate law. In 2001, Governor James B. Hunt appointed her to the district court bench in the Second Judicial District, where she became the first woman and African American in this role. Shortly after her appointment, she founded Teen Court, a restorative justice program for juvenile offenders and formed a mentorship program, connecting community leaders with at-risk youth in her home community of Williamston.

In 2018, Chief Justice Mark Martin appointed her chief district court judge, another historic first. She addressed the opioid crisis and mental health challenges by forming the Second Judicial District Opioid and Mental Health Coalitions. Judge Parker established the Adult Drug Treatment Court, Family-Centered Treatment Court, and, in 2024, the Holistic Hope Mental Health Diversion Program, focusing on rehabilitation over prosecution. Following a tragic shooting in 2024, Judge Parker collaborated with community leaders to launch the Max Factor Leadership Institute, providing mentorship and resources to at-risk boys in grades 3 through 8. Through the School to Justice Partnership Initiative, she continues to develop strategies to keep students in school and out of court in Beaufort, Hyde, Martin, Tyrrell, and Washington counties.

Judge Parker has served on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Committees, North Carolina Courts Commission, and as president of the Conference of Chief District Court Judges (2023-2024). She has been a Board of Governors member for the North Carolina District Court Judges Association since 2014.

Elizabeth Star

Chief Justice Paul Newby presented the Friend of the Court Award to Elizabeth Star of the HopeStar Foundation. The HopeStar Foundation focuses on delivering successful family outcomes. Liz is honored to serve as a member of the Chief Justice's Task Force on ACEs-Informed Courts. Liz continues to advocate for increased investment in judicial training and impactful system change within the N.C. court system. Liz proudly serves as an advisory board member with the Bolch Judicial Institute; Duke University Law School, co-founder of N.C. Early Childhood Funders Collaborative (Invest Early NC), board member of the North Carolina Partnership for Children and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library Foundation.

About the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism

The [Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism \(CJCP\)](#) was established on September 22, 1998, by order of the Supreme Court of North Carolina. The order established the Commission's membership and major responsibilities. It serves to enhance professionalism among North Carolina lawyers, judges, and law

students.

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About North Carolina Judicial Branch

The [North Carolina Judicial Branch](#) is an equal and distinctively separate branch and core function of government. The 7,600 Judicial Branch employees statewide administer justice in courthouses in North Carolina's 100 counties. The [Judicial Branch budget for FY 2023–24](#) was \$750.7M, 90.9% of which is used to pay salaries and 9.1% is used for operations. The Judicial Branch receives 2.53% 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.

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