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## Ohio Bar honors Judge Stephen McIntosh and Montgomery County Probate Resource Center led by Judge David Brannon with awards for excellence and innovation at Ohio Judicial Conference Annual Meeting

**COLUMBUS, Ohio (Sept. 14, 2023)** – In recognition of judicial excellence and innovation, Ohio State Bar Association 2023-2024 President Michelle Kranz today presented the **2023 Thomas J. Moyer Award for Judicial Excellence** to **Franklin County Court of Common Pleas Judge Stephen McIntosh** and the **2023 Innovative Court Programs and Practices Award** to the **Probate Resource Center at the Montgomery County Probate Court led by Judge David Brannon**. Both awards were presented as part of the Ohio Judicial Conference annual meeting at the Hilton Easton Columbus.

### Thomas J. Moyer Award for Judicial Excellence



*Ohio Bar 2023-24 President Michelle Kranz (left) and Judge McIntosh. [\\*Download photo](#)*

The Moyer award was established in 2010 by the Ohio Bar in honor of the late Chief Justice, who was posthumously given the inaugural award. It seeks to recognize a current or former Ohio state or federal judge in the Moyer mold who displays outstanding qualities of judicial excellence including integrity,

fairness, open-mindedness, knowledge of the law, professionalism, ethics, creativity, sound judgment, courage and decisiveness.

Each of those qualities are on full display when **Judge Stephen McIntosh** takes his seat on the bench of the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, the post he has held for the last 16 years.

After pursuing his undergraduate studies at South Carolina State University, Stephen McIntosh earned his J.D. from The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law where he served in student government, as president of the Black Law Students Association and earned the coveted Judge Joseph Harter Trial Advocacy Award. After passing the bar, he joined the Columbus city attorney's office as an assistant city prosecutor. And following a stint in private practice and as a deputy director in the Ohio Secretary of State's office, he returned to the city attorney's office, this time as chief city prosecutor. He ran for and was elected judge in 2006.

In addition to navigating a busy docket, including criminal and civil matters, he serves as administrative judge for the court and supervises the Treatment Is Essential to Success (TIES) Program, a specialty docket designed to help rehabilitate defendants impacted by drug addiction.

"Judge McIntosh has always understood that whether the case is large or small, it is important to those involved. He has worked throughout his career to ensure that, win or lose, all parties leave his courtroom feeling they were heard and that the system worked," President Kranz said.

This approach has earned him great respect and esteem. Judge McIntosh has not only been re-elected twice by voters in Franklin County, but is consistently among the most highly rated judges as scored by Franklin County attorneys in the Columbus Bar Association's Judicial Performance Poll.

Judge McIntosh is a former member of the Ohio State Bar Association Board of Governors and currently serves as a member of the Council of Delegates. He is a past president of the Columbus Bar Association, a board member of the Ohio Judicial College, corresponding secretary of the Ohio Black Judges Association and a member of the Criminal Sentencing Commission. And over the years he has been sought out by these organizations, the Supreme Court and others to serve on task forces and committees dedicated to improving and advancing various aspects of our justice system including the grand jury system, legal ethics, the use of dispute resolution and the future of the death penalty among many other topics.

"In sum, Judge McIntosh is a judge wholly committed to advancing the rule of law and serving the greater good both in and out of his courtroom," Kranz said. "For that we thank him and are honored to present him with this year's Moyer Award for Judicial Excellence."

## Innovative Court Programs and Practices Award



*From left to right: Probate Resource Attorney V. Gayle Miller, Judge David Brannon, Court Administrator Lynn Cooper, Deputy Public Defender Kelli R. Howard and Montgomery County Public Defender's Office Child and Family Law Division Manager Nikole Xarhoulacos. \*[Download photo](#)*

The Innovative Court Programs and Practices Award, sponsored by the Ohio Bar Judicial Administration and Innovation Committee, seeks to highlight and bring greater visibility to exemplary programs in Ohio's courts and to facilitate the transfer of those programs to other jurisdictions. Award submissions are evaluated on criteria including creativity, the newness of the program, its effectiveness and whether the program addresses significant issues that are regional in scope.

This year's honoree, the **Probate Resource Center at the Montgomery County Common Pleas Court – Probate Division**, led by Judge David Brannon, seeks to address the challenge of serving pro se litigants (parties without an attorney) and help bring resolution to their cases.

A collaborative partnership between Judge Brannon's court and the Montgomery County Public Defender's office, the Probate Resource Center offers these filers the services of a full-time attorney from the public defender's office to answer questions and provide support as they work their cases.

Under the rules of ethics, court personnel are not permitted to give legal advice or assist clients in preparing or filing documents with the court, which often leads to great frustration for those who have matters before the court.

"This program does well to serve many individuals who have lost a loved one and are trying to navigate an unfamiliar and complex legal process," Kranz noted. "By connecting them with competent legal counsel, not only is justice better served, but the court runs more smoothly."

The Probate Resource Center opened its doors in October of 2022 and has since served more than 250 in-person patrons and many more through phone calls, emails and virtual meetings.

Kranz continued: "We commend the court and public defender's office for their commitment to holistic justice for county residents as well as for working together to creatively address a real challenge many other courts across the state are facing."

**About the Ohio State Bar Association**

*Founded in 1880, the Ohio Bar is the state's largest legal network, representing attorneys, judges, legal professionals and law students who are committed to the highest standards in the practice of law. The Ohio Bar proudly serves its members and the public through its continued work to promote justice and advance the legal profession.*