

Washington State Bar Association

1325 Fourth Avenue, Suite 600
Seattle, WA 98101-2539



Contact: Jennifer Olegario, WSBA Communications and Outreach Manager
206-727-8212; jennifero@wsba.org

Diane Clarkson Receives Washington State Bar Association Local Hero Award

From music to law, beloved Pierce County prosecutor lauded for compassion

Tacoma, WA, July 21, 2022 — The Washington State Bar Association presented Diane Clarkson with the Local Hero Award to recognize her selfless service to the legal profession and her community.

The Local Hero Award is given to those who have made noteworthy contributions to their communities. **WSBA President Brian Tollefson presented the award during the Board of Governors meeting on July 21, 2022.** Clarkson was nominated by the Tacoma-Pierce County Bar Association (TPCBA).

Born in Washington, D.C., and raised by a single mother in the segregated South in the 60s, Clarkson originally intended to follow her first passion: music. However, she found a new calling in the law.

“We are all the better for knowing her,” her colleagues wrote in a 2019 issue of *Pierce County Lawyer*. “She reminds us to appreciate our own story, and be thankful for those who are a part of our journey.”

Clarkson grew up in a musical family, but a professor at Berea College encouraged her to attend law school. She attended Howard University School of Law, thinking that it would help her music career, but soon found a new passion as a prosecutor. She soon took a job with the Pierce County Prosecutor’s Office and “fell in love with prosecution,” as she explained in a *Pierce County Lawyer* profile.

As a prosecutor, Clarkson has worked within the misdemeanor unit, drug unit, special assaults unit, robbery/assault unit, general crimes, and as domestic violence misdemeanor supervisor. Today, Clarkson is division lead for the misdemeanor unit at the Pierce County Prosecutor’s Office. In 2016, she was elected as TPCBA president. In 2019, she received the Bertha Snell Award for displaying qualities of tenacity in overcoming adversity and obstacles in her quest to become a lawyer. In 2022, she was given the TPCBA Community Service Award for her exceptional work as co-chair of the TPCBA Judicial Qualifications Committee.

Clarkson has also served as a member of the Minority Attorneys Bar Association, Phi Delta Phi Law Fraternity International, and National Political Congress of Black Women. She has sat on the Pierce County Arts Commission, Tacoma Arts Cultural Plan, Tacoma Urban League, Puget Sound Kiwanis, Safe Street Board of Directors, and the UW Legal Pathways Community Advisory Board. She has volunteered with PUSH/EXCEL, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Role Models Unlimited, and Black Collectives.

About the Washington State Bar Association

The WSBA operates under the delegated authority of the Washington Supreme Court to license the state’s more than 40,000 lawyers and other legal professionals. In furtherance of its obligation to protect and serve the public, the WSBA both regulates lawyers and other legal professionals and serves its members as a professional association — all without public funding. The WSBA’s mission is to serve the public and the members of the Bar, to ensure the integrity of the legal profession and to champion justice. For more information, visit www.wsba.org.

###