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[American Judicature Society](http://www.americajudicaturesociety.org)
Seth S. Andersen
(800) 626-4089
sandersen@ajs.org

Judge D. Brock Hornby of U.S. District Court in Maine to Receive Devitt Award

Des Moines, Iowa – D. Brock Hornby, Judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Maine, has been selected as the recipient of the 27th Annual Edward J. Devitt Distinguished Service to Justice Award. Hornby was chosen by a three-member panel chaired by Associate Justice Anthony M. Kennedy of the U.S. Supreme Court; other members of the panel are Judge Diarmuid F. O’Scannlain, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit; and Chief Judge Donetta W. Ambrose, U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

In making the announcement, Justice Kennedy noted that the selection panel gave “special consideration” this year to federal trial judges who had been nominated, in keeping with the tradition of alternating between Circuit Court and District Court judges in the selection of award recipients. The panel, he observed, “was fortunate to have nominations from across the federal judiciary of many outstanding federal appellate and trial court judges to consider.”

Justice Kennedy went on to praise Judge Hornby in the following statement:

“From the early days of the Republic, the Courts have been one of our most important instruments for teaching respect for the law and the Constitution. Courts succeed in this mission only if their judges exemplify the law’s ideals. One of the federal judges who does this in a splendid way is Judge Brock Hornby. By his life and his work, by his scholarship and dedication, by a splendid judicial demeanor that demonstrates devotion to the law and confirms his own dignity and decency, Judge Brock Hornby is a model for all judges. He was fortunate to work with Judges John Wisdom, Edward Gignoux, and Frank Coffin, all of them distinguished judges—and all recipients of the Devitt Award. They would be immensely proud, but not surprised, that Judge Hornby learned from their example, fulfilled their expectations, and honored this Nation’s best traditions.”

Judge O’Scannlain noted that “In addition to the accomplishments noted by Justice Kennedy, Judge Brock Hornby has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the administration of justice and advancement of the rule of law. He is an articulate and respected spokesman for the United States Judiciary on the national level. And, while maintaining active status with a full trial docket, he has found time to educate judges in foreign countries as well. Judge Brock Hornby is a worthy exemplar of the ideal United States District Judge.”

Chief Judge Ambrose observed that “Judge Hornby’s reputation within the federal judiciary is stellar. He is widely known and recognized for his integrity, legal ability, experience and commitment to the rule of law.”

In their letter of nomination, Chief Judge John A. Woodcock, Jr. and Judge George Z. Singal, both of the U.S. District Court for the District of Maine, lauded Judge Hornby as “a man of extraordinary brilliance, whose insightful grasp of the complex is immediately apparent to all who meet him or appear before him.”

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President George H.W. Bush appointed Judge Hornby to the U.S. District Court in 1990. From 1996 to 2003, he served as Chief Judge of the District. Prior to his service on the U.S. District Court, Judge Hornby served on the Maine Supreme Judicial Court for two years and as a U.S. magistrate judge for six years. He practiced law in Maine and was a professor at the University of Virginia School of Law earlier in his career. He earned his J.D. cum laude from Harvard Law School in 1969.

The Devitt Distinguished Service to Justice Award is named for the late Edward J. Devitt, longtime chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota. The award, made annually, honors Article III judges whose careers have been exemplary, measured by their significant contributions to the administration of justice, the advancement of the rule of law, and the improvement of society as a whole. It is administered by the American Judicature Society with funding provided by the Dwight D. Opperman Foundation, Minneapolis. The honor includes a \$15,000 honorarium and is symbolized by an inscribed crystal obelisk. The 27th Annual Devitt Award will be presented to Judge Hornby at a ceremony later this year.

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