

*Iowa Lawyer Story**

2009 Arabella Mansfield and Gertrude Rush Award Recipients.

The Iowa Organization of Women Attorneys and Iowa National Bar Association are proud to announce this year's recipients of the Arabella Mansfield and Gertrude Rush Award.

Judge Rosemary Sackett

Rosemary Sackett, Chief Judge of the Iowa Court of Appeals, received the Arabella Mansfield award for her legal contributions to Iowa and her dedication to promoting and nurturing women in the legal profession.

Judge Sackett was the only woman and the youngest graduate of the Drake University Law School class of 1963 and the only woman admitted to the bar in June of that year. For the next twenty years, she practiced law in northwest Iowa, appearing in many courtrooms where women lawyers had never stepped. She tried over 250 cases to completion until 1983 when she was appointed to the Iowa Court of Appeals.

For 13 years Judge Sackett was the youngest and only woman member of the court. She has now served on the court for over 25 years and has authored over 2400 majority opinions. Judge Sackett obtained an L.L.M. in the Judicial Process from the University of Virginia in 1990. She has been the Chief Judge of the court of appeals since 1996.

Throughout her career, Judge Sackett has encouraged a number of young women to enter the legal profession and has mentored many law clerks. She coached various junior high and high school mock trial teams for over 20 years, inspiring numerous students to become attorneys.

Judge Sackett is committed to encouraging women to stay and advance in the legal profession, while maintaining a family life. She has raised five children of her own and helped form the Dickinson County Women's bar association which meets monthly for support and mentoring. In 1986 Judge Sackett spoke out about the need to diversify the judiciary and increase the number of female judges. She worked with women legislators to make changes to promote gender balance on the Judicial Nominating Commission. She also helped form the Iowa Association of Women Judges to encourage women to apply for judicial opportunities.

Roxanne Conlin

Roxanne Conlin of Roxanne Conlin & Associates, P.C., received the Gertrude Rush Award for her professional leadership and her commitment to human and civil rights issues throughout her career.

Roxanne Conlin probably needs no introduction to most Iowa women (and men) attorneys. Her pioneering spirit as a woman lawyer, political candidate, and active advocate for a variety of causes is legendary. She promoted and nurtured countless woman attorneys who worked under her tutelage and with her in bar association and other volunteer activities. She inspired many attorneys with her courtroom skills and her sage advice. She advises that an effective lawyer need not be large and loud. A well-prepared argument delivered by a petite woman with command of the courtroom can win over many a jury or judge. She's also stressed the importance of balancing personal and work life, long before that concept gained popularity.

Roxanne entered Drake University in 1961 at the age of 16 and graduated with a law degree 5 years later at the age of 21. She was an Assistant Attorney General for Iowa from 1969 to 1976, heading the Iowa Civil Rights section. She then became a consultant to the United States Department of State for International Women's Year. In 1977, Roxanne was appointed by then President Jimmie Carter as the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Iowa, being only the second woman to ever hold that position. In June of 1982 Roxanne won a three-way primary to become the Democratic nominee for Governor of Iowa. Roxanne now has her own law firm in Des Moines and her practice is committed to pursuing justice on behalf of individuals who have suffered a legal wrong, be it whether by discrimination, products, doctors or vehicles.

Her tenacity and effectiveness with numerous employment discrimination cases and, more recently, Microsoft, paved the way for others to follow. She inspires women attorneys by her excellent example. She has fought against other big entities such as Eastman Kodak, Mid-American Energy, and Honda, as well as municipalities, school districts, and doctors. She has fought for and given a voice to many women, minorities and those who were disadvantaged. Her impact on women attorneys is hard to measure, but is surely significant over her many years in practice.

Roxanne's concern for human and civil rights is also well-known. She represented plaintiffs in many ground-breaking civil rights cases over the years. She also relocated her offices in the building in downtown Des Moines where the infamous Katz drug store was located. She appropriately renamed the building as the Edna Griffin Building to remind us and future generations of this civil rights pioneer, fondly known as "the Rosa Parks of Des Moines." The many firsts and numerous honors and awards demonstrate Roxanne Conlin's leadership in the legal profession and the community.

Roxanne has received Special Commendation from both the Director of Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Postal Inspection Service. Other acknowledgments, to name a few, include: Induction in the Iowa Legal Aid Hall of Fame and Iowa Women's Hall of Fame; recipient of the 2008 Louise Noun Visionary women Award, Iowa Trial Lawyer's Public Justice Award (named the Roxanne Conlin Public Justice Award), American Association of Justice Leonard M. Ring Champion of Justice Award, Ruth Bader Ginsburg Award from NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, Mary Louise Smith Award for Racial Justice from the YMCA; named Woman of the Year by the Metro Women's Network, 1 of 100 Most Influential Lawyers in the Nation by *National Law Journal*, and One of the Fifty Most Influential Iowans of the 20th Century by the Des Moines Register; and numerous Who's Who.

Roxanne has stated that she was a feminist activist since birth. She continues to make a stand, have her voice heard and be the voice for others. Roxanne is admired because she realizes that although we have come a long way, we still have a long way to go. A recent example of this is Roxanne's reaction to a panel addressing pioneering women in business that had broken the glass ceiling. The panel of women lacked any women of color. Instead of being silent and not addressing the elephant in the room, Roxanne voiced her concerns by stating we still are most comfortable around those who look like us, but the panel also needed to address the double glass ceiling for women of color.

Both Judge Rosemary Sackett and Roxanne Conlin are remarkable individuals who have helped pave the way for women attorneys in Iowa. We hope the Iowa bar will join us in recognizing their contributions to our profession.

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