



# Kansas Courts News Release

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## *Office of Judicial Administration*

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*District Judge Nancy Parrish*

### **Shawnee County judge receives honor from state judges association**

TOPEKA—The Kansas District Judges Association presented its Award for Judicial Excellence to District Judge Nancy Parrish of Topeka.

Parrish received the award during KDJA's recent annual meeting in Overland Park.

"I was totally surprised. It very much touched me, and I am humbled by it," she said.

Her colleague, District Judge Cheryl Rios of the 3rd Judicial District, nominated her for the award.

"She is very professional and a compassionate human being, not only in the way she approaches her work but with the people she is working with," Rios said.

Rios has known Parrish for several years, first as a litigant appearing before her in court and the last 10 years as a judge.

"Kansas is fortunate to have someone like her on the bench," Rios said, and deserves to be honored by her peers statewide.

Parrish is in her 24th year as a district judge in the 3rd Judicial District, composed of Shawnee County. From 2005 to 2013, she was chief judge of the district.

Parrish's appointment as a district judge in 1994 made her résumé fairly unique: experience in all three branches of Kansas government. She served in the Kansas Senate for 12 years and was secretary of the Kansas Department of Revenue for two years.

Before her entry into government service, she taught in Topeka for 11 years and, after earning a law degree from Washburn University School of Law, was in private practice in Topeka for seven years.

"It's been an interesting experience seeing government from three different perspectives," Parrish said.

The KDJA Award for Judicial Excellence is presented to a district judge who has served with integrity, dignity, and honor and has conscientiously promoted and elevated confidence and trust in the judicial branch. The award previously was called the Community Outreach and Education Award.

Additionally, nominees for the award should be knowledgeable of the law and apply it appropriately; show considerate and mindful treatment of attorneys, litigants, witnesses, and the public; and have garnered respect from peers and those involved in the judicial process.

Parrish "embodies the traits and qualities towards which all judges should strive," said Judge David Kaufman, co-chair of KDJA's Awards and Memorials Committee. Kaufman is a district judge in the 18th Judicial District, composed of Sedgwick County.

Parrish said that in addition to her role as judge, she considers community involvement to be important.

"Serving on various committees and boards gives you a perspective of issues in the community, so I think it's important to be involved," she said. "You hope to be an active member of a board. I want to be more than a name on a letterhead."

She said she was particularly pleased to be involved in a current project spearheaded by the Topeka Bar Association: a simplified program to help people have their criminal convictions cleaned from their records. Those convictions often can be a barrier to employment.

Parrish said she spent the day at the event on April 20 offering assistance.

"My judicial assignment is criminal cases, and you don't make a lot of people happy. Here, these people were very appreciative," she said.

She and other 3rd Judicial District judges will volunteer their time June 25 and 26 to determine whether people's expungement applications should be granted.

Parrish currently serves on the board of Valeo Community Residence Program in Topeka. The agency provides care for adults with mental illness. She also is a member of the advisory boards for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) and Kansas Legal Services.

She previously has served on boards for the Mental Health Association, Family Service and Guidance Center, American Red Cross, Boys' and Girls' Club of Topeka, and Kansas Action for Children.

As a judge, she chaired the Kansas Supreme Court's Child Support Guidelines Advisory Committee from 2001 to 2009. Judges and hearing officers follow the guidelines to decide how much child support each parent pays. She also is a member of the Kansas Judicial Council's Pattern Instruction Advisory Committee, which drafts and keeps current jury instructions for civil and criminal proceedings.

Parrish also is a past president of KDJA.

As a lawmaker, Parrish chaired the Senate's Advisory Commission on Juvenile Offender Programs for 10 years.

She earned a bachelor's degree from Kansas State University in 1970 and a master's degree in special education from the University of Kansas in 1974. She graduated in 1984 from the Washburn University School of Law, where she has served as an adjunct professor.

Parrish and her husband, Jim, live in Tecumseh. They have four sons, 14 grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

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