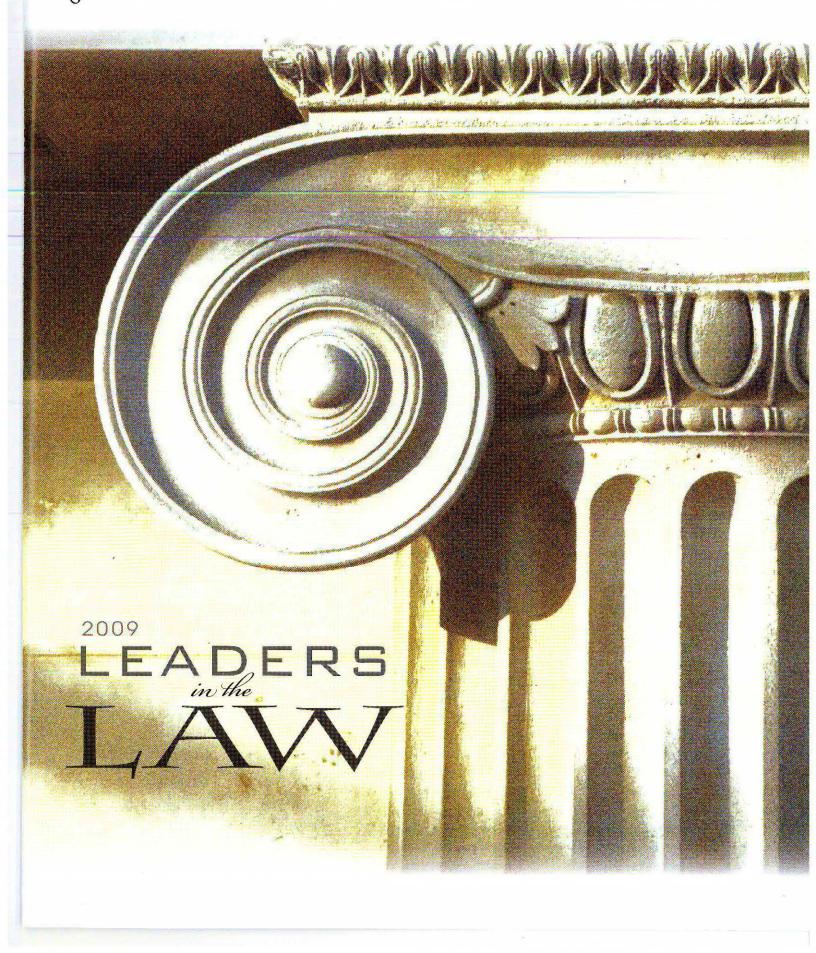
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Publisher's Note:

2009 leaders reflect varied contributions

isconsin Law Journal's 2009 Leaders in the Law come from very diverse backgrounds, representing the myriad ways lawyers and judges contribute to our legal system and to their communities.



For the seventh year, we are excited to turn the spotlight on individuals who consistently give their best to their clients, to the administration of justice, and to the organizations they enrich through their outside efforts.

They come from a variety of firms, courts, businesses, and nonprofit groups. Two of our leaders take time away from their practices to touch the lives of Special Olympians. Others offer legal assistance pro bono or through groups meeting the needs of low-income clients.

ANN RICHMOND Editor and Publisher

The 2009 class of Leaders in the Law also reflects attorneys handling the intricate details of multi-million-dollar transactions, as well as litigators representing plaintiffs and defendants in high-stakes cases. Our leaders also include criminal defense attorneys who strive to ensure that the justice system treats their clients fairly and a federal prosecutor handling public corruption and human trafficking cases.

No matter what our 2009 Leaders in the Law have done, one thing is constant — each one has had a lasting impact on our state's legal community and the community at large. Each one of them reflects the great things that attorneys around the state do every day.

I hope you enjoy getting to know them through the stories on these pages as much as we have.

Sincerely,

Ann Richmond, Editor & Publisher, Wisconsin Law Journal

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WLJ PHOTO/RAY GUANSING

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ELLEN HENAK OFFICE OF THE STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER

Education: Michigan State University, B.A, 1978; New York University Law School, J.D., 1983 Current Employment: Assistant state public defender, Office of the State Public Defender Affiliations: Board member, Mapledale-Indian Hills School Board; organizer and teacher, Judicial Teaching Institute; teacher Beth Israel School

ELLEN HENAK

Henak brings special ed. skills to SPD

ssistant State Public Defender Ellen Henak started out as a special education teacher. During her 18 years with the SPD Appellate Division, Henak has used the skills she learned in her prior profession to help clients.

Her unique training has given her insight into the different characteristics of some of her clients and their needs. It also has helped her communicate with clients.

"One of the things you become aware of with a special education background is that a significant portion of the client population for the SPD office has special education needs," Henak observed.

That background has helped her when reviewing clients' school records or psychological reports. It also comes in handy when trying to explain the complex legal process in terms a client can relate to.

As a result, she is able to adapt her explanations and offer meaningful examples.

"It's amazing how many people can go through the system and not really understand what happened," she said.

Throughout her 18 years, she has represented indigent clients in criminal, juvenile, sexual violence, protective placement, termination of parental rights, and mental health commitment cases.

She has handled cases resulting in more than two dozen published appellate decisions, including more than 10 oral arguments before the state Supreme Court.

One of the cases that stands out for Henak is *State v. Anthony D.B.*, 237 Wis.2d 1 (2000), dealing with the court's authority to authorize involuntary medication of a person who was committed as a sexually violent person.

Henak said her special education background came in very handy as she dealt with a client who was mentally ill and she reviewed the medications that were involved, understanding their effects and side effects.

Although the justices found that the trial court could order involuntary medication of her client, Henak still considers it a victory because the Supreme Court wrote in "all the safeguards that really needed to be there."

She said her ability to represent an unpopular group of people comes from a religious conviction about "the importance of treating all people as people."

"It's easy to love the loveable. Why should you be judged by that standard? ... It's can you take somebody who has done something horrible and, without justifying what they've done, recognize that they are still a person?"

TONY ANDERSON