

## 2006 OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

### CHIEF JUSTICE WALLACE P. CARSON, JR.



Justice Wallace P. Carson, Jr., graduated from Stanford University with a B.A. and from Willamette University College of Law with a J.D. Justice Carson has served the public with energy and distinction for decades. He was a majority leader of the Oregon House of Representatives (after being recruited to run for the seat by then Representative Bob Packwood) and minority floor leader in the Oregon Senate. After fifteen years in private practice in his family's Salem, Oregon, law firm, which was founded by his grandfather in 1889, and five years as a Marion County Circuit Court judge, he was elevated to the Oregon Supreme Court in 1982. He led Oregon's judiciary as Chief Justice from 1991 to 2005.

Under his leadership, approximately 94 percent of the cases decided by the court were unanimous decisions. "I see the usefulness of dissents or concurrences from the Court of Appeals because they showcase a split or turn of events," said Justice Carson, "but unanimous decisions by the Supreme Court provide Oregon with consistent law, and therefore, the law becomes more stable."

As if his legal accomplishments were not enough, Justice Carson served in the Air Force as a jet fighter pilot and judge advocate. He retired as a brigadier general after over 34 years of service in the active-duty Air Force, Air Force Reserve and Oregon Air National Guard.

Justice Carson is a tireless advocate for the legal profession and dedicated to helping society. Despite all the stresses and strains of his professional duties, Justice Carson is unfailingly optimistic, friendly and courteous to all.

As a lawyer and a judge, Justice Carson championed professionalism, improvement of the judicial system, diversity and children's rights. He embodies the highest standards of legal expertise, dedication to public service, professionalism, respect for others and ethical behavior.

Justice Carson was actively involved in family law reform during his tenure as Chief Justice. He implemented recommendations of the Oregon Task Force on Family Law and the Oregon Family Law Legal Services Commission, including introducing mandatory mediation and parent education in family law custody disputes, and urging courts to adopt a one judge-one family approach to family law cases. In 1998, he appointed members of the first State Family Law Advisory Committee, and he attended all of the SFLAC Family Law Conferences until his retirement in 2005. He also encouraged the creation of Local Family Law Advisory Committees in all Oregon judicial districts.