



Administrative Office of the Courts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 25, 2020

Contact: Beth Wojahn, communications officer

bwojahn@nmcourts.gov

505-827-4805

505-469-5415

New Mexico Judiciary’s Deborah Dungan honored with Judge Sarah M. Singleton Distinguished Service Award

SANTA FE – Deborah Dungan, the only attorney administrative assistant to serve four New Mexico Supreme Court Chief Justices consecutively, was honored as the first recipient of the Sarah M. Singleton Distinguished Bar Service Award at the New Mexico Bar’s annual meeting held virtually today.

The award recognizes attorneys who have “provided valuable service and contributions to the legal profession, the State Bar of New Mexico and the public over an extended period of time”. The award is named in honor of Sarah M. Singleton, a district court judge in the First Judicial District and a champion of equal access to justice for all New Mexicans. Judge Singleton died in 2019.

Members of the New Mexico Supreme Court nominated Ms. Dungan for the prestigious award.

“For me, Deborah was not just the person who ensured everyone else followed through on their assigned tasks, but she was my trusted advisor, my brainstormer-in-chief and implementer,” said former Chief Justice Judith K. Nakamura. “Her ideas are forever a part of every recent innovation in the Judiciary, from Online Dispute Resolution to an expansion of behavior health education, to improving the administrative functioning of the courts.”

Ms. Dungan joined the New Mexico Bar in 1986 after graduating from the University of Arizona School of Law. Sarah Singleton mentored Ms. Dungan who was a new associate at a law firm in Santa Fe. “Sarah was an excellent teacher and I learned a great deal from her, but the most important lessons I learned came from watching her work,” said Ms. Dungan.

Dungan began working for the Administrative Office of the Courts as the first child welfare and juvenile justice staff attorney responsible for the initial implementation of the Mediation in Abuse and Neglect Cases project in 2008. In addition to her Juris Doctorate and Master of Arts in counseling, Ms. Dungan holds an undergraduate degree in child development and family relations and a master's degree in family and human relations. Ms. Dungan also is a certified meditation teacher and retired from the Judiciary last month.

“I am deeply honored to have been selected to receive the Judge Sarah M. Singleton Distinguished Service Award,” Ms. Dungan said. “The truth is that any success or accomplishment which has been attributed to me is the direct result of the efforts, hard work and support of countless others – family, friends and colleagues who made it possible for me to do my part of our work together. This award is shared with each of you and I am pleased to accept it on our behalf.”

###



Deborah Dungan