



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Eastern Panhandle Woman Named Probation Officer of the Year

For immediate release

EMBARGOED until 4 p.m. Friday, October 16, 2020

MARTINSBURG, W.Va. – Twenty-Third Judicial Circuit (Berkeley, Jefferson and Morgan Counties) Adult Drug Court Probation Officer Crystal Gumbel will receive the award for West Virginia Probation Officer of the Year at a ceremony at 4 p.m. Friday, October 16, in the Berkeley County Judicial Center in Martinsburg.

Media are invited to attend, but the **award will be a SURPRISE to Officer Gumbel. Do not contact her before the ceremony or release a story about the award before the ceremony.**

The award is given each year by the West Virginia Association of Probation Officers. Officer Gumbel was nominated by Twenty-Third Circuit Senior Probation Officer Danielle Hofe. The other nominees were Jennifer Call, Second Judicial Circuit (Marshall, Tyler and Wetzel Counties); Sean Bryner and Carolyn Williams, 23rd Judicial Circuit; and Joseph Roman, 17th Judicial Circuit (Monongalia County).

Chief Justice Tim Armstead said, “Probation officers provide such a crucial service throughout our state. Crystal Gumbel’s dedication and compassion are symbolic of the type of service we see provided throughout West Virginia each day. Officer Gumbel and her fellow probation officers truly change lives, and we appreciate her passion and devotion to serving others.”

“Jefferson County Treatment Court participants know that if they truly seek to overcome their substance use disorder, Crystal will meet them more than half way; day or night, weekend or holiday, Crystal will help them on their path to sobriety,” said Twenty-Third Judicial Circuit Judge David Hammer. “She is an invaluable member of our Treatment Court and I am so grateful for her dedication to our community’s well-being and congratulate her on this well-deserved award.”

“Crystal’s compassion and understanding seem inexhaustible,” said Twenty-Third Judicial Circuit Judge Michael Lorensen. “She’s the key ingredient to the success of our adult drug court treatment program.”

“Crystal Gumbel being selected for this prestigious award has been a long time coming,” said Nick Leftwich, state Drug Court Coordinator. “Crystal is a wonderful person who pours her heart and soul in everything she does. It has been a real honor to get to know and work with her. Crystal’s passionate

dedication to the Judges she serves, her Adult Drug Court participants, and the communities alike is tantamount to her amazing character both on and off the field. I am proud to say that Crystal, and her Juvenile Drug Court Probation Officer counterpart Airaka Riner, serve the Twenty-Third Circuit exceedingly well.”

Officer Hofe’s nomination said of Officer Gumbel:

West Virginia probation officers are hard-working dedicated public servants who wear many hats; we are investigators, we are social workers, we are case managers, and we are motivators. Most importantly, however, we are caring, compassionate human beings who work diligently to serve our judges, our communities and our offenders.

Although each of us plays an integral role in promoting the better good, sometimes we see a particular officer who goes above and beyond. One who not only dedicates his/her professional time to helping others but lives his/her personal life with the same fervor. The Probation Officer of the Year distinction goes to that one person who stands out; who offers a bit more; whose compassion and dedication achieves a level beyond our highest bar. I believe that Crystal Gumble has successfully achieved, and surpassed, this bar.

Crystal Gumbel is an adult drug court probation officer who carries a caseload of over two times that of the recommended caseload levels. Coordinating and managing two independent drug courts within her circuit, Crystal travels regularly between the two counties, attending meetings and attending court all while literally answering her constant ringing phone. She is never too busy nor too burdened to help one in need. She is empathic yet firm, direct but not inconsiderate, supportive but not enabling. She effectively balances her compassion with a healthy dose of reality, thus promoting appropriate and effective behavioral changes in her offenders.

Dedicated to the concept that offenders must be held accountable, Crystal is also cognizant and understanding of the offenders’ respective family members as well as the victims associated with their respective cases. Often acting as a mediator to ensure that the offender understands the expectations associated with drug court, she assists in mitigating her offender’s personal goals to ensure that each offender identifies, and internalizes, their own path.

When praised for her efforts, Crystal suggests that she is simply doing her job; that she is working as hard as everyone else around her. However, it is not simply what Crystal does in her employment as a drug court officer, it is what she does *beyond* her work responsibilities that never ceases to amaze her colleagues, the judges she serves, and members of our community.

Crystal works part time as a social worker for our local hospice program. Remaining on call for several days in a row, Crystal offers a sympathetic ear and emotional support while simultaneously utilizing her professional skills to ensure that her clients’ family members may focus on their failing loved one; that they may spend quality time, during those last moments, with their loved one. Never complaining, Crystal embraces her responsibilities without hesitation, offering a warm embrace, and a shoulder to lean on, during those difficult times.

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