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John H. Pickering To Receive ABA Medal For Conspicuous Service To American Jurisprudence *A Leader In Making Legal Counsel Available To Poor And Elderly*

CHICAGO, May 24, 1999 - John H. Pickering, a founding partner of the Washington, D.C., law firm of Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering, will receive the highest honor bestowed by the [American Bar Association](#), the ABA Medal.

The medal will be presented in August at a session of the ABA [House of Delegates](#) during the 1999 ABA Annual Meeting in Atlanta. The award is presented only in years in which a candidate is identified who has demonstrated exceptionally distinguished service to the cause of American jurisprudence. Among the many contributions cited in nominations of Pickering for the award were his absolute commitment to lawyers' volunteer service to the poor.

From the time Pickering helped found his firm in 1962, he has maintained for himself and other lawyers in the firm a standard of donating 10 percent of lawyer time to public service and free legal service for poor persons, known as pro bono service.

"The ABA has viewed service to the poor as a fundamental responsibility of lawyers, and in the last decade has issued what we call the Pro Bono Challenge, urging law firms to commit to donating a percentage of their professional service to the poor. John Pickering was ahead of his time, both in recognizing that responsibility and in steadfastly fulfilling it. He also made sure that others in his firm were equally committed to that goal," said ABA President Philip S. Anderson of Little Rock, Ark.

"John's leadership has inspired lawyers of several generations to serve in their communities. He is a national treasure," said Anderson.

Pickering began his practice in Washington, D.C., after returning from active duty with the U.S. Naval Reserve from 1943 to 1946. Before his wartime military service he practiced with the New York law firm of Cravath, de Gersdorff, Swaine & Wood (now Cravath, Swaine & Moore), and was a law clerk for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Frank Murphy.

Over the course of practicing law, Pickering has frequently been recognized for his lifetime commitment to improving the quality of life for all citizens through use of his legal skills. Frequently, his honors have focused on his activities for advancing civil rights, supporting and developing pro bono service to the poor and articulating and protecting the legal needs and rights of elderly persons. He also has been cited for leadership in combating gender bias in the legal profession, and for thoughtful contributions to legal education.

In the ABA, Pickering was chair of the Commission on Legal Problems of the Elderly for about 10 years, and subsequently chaired the Senior Lawyers Division. He has been a

member of the ABA House of Delegates, the association's policy-making body, since 1984, and in that capacity has represented the interests of older persons on a wide range of issues, including physician-assisted suicide, access to legal aid, grandparent rights, pension rights and rights to affordable health and long-term care.

Pickering is a past president of the District of Columbia Bar, and served the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit as a member of its Committee on the Administration of Justice, first chair of its Advisory Committee on Procedures, and chair of its Appellate Mediation Project. He has served on the board of the National Center for State Courts and chaired the Lawyers' Support Committee for the center. He is a life member of the American Law Institute and a Life Fellow of the American Bar Foundation. An active alumnus of the University of Michigan Law School, he has been a member of its Committee of Visitors from its inception in 1962. He has chaired fund-raising efforts for several law school projects and was a DeRoy Fellow at the Law School in 1984. He was the law school's commencement speaker in 1992, and he gave the university's Winkelman Lecture on the topic of death and the law in 1989. He was a distinguished lawyer in residence at the University of Utah College of Law in 1986.

Numerous organizations have recognized Pickering's volunteer work with awards and honors, including his alma mater, the University of Michigan; the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund; the National Center for State Courts; the National Women's Law Center; the Council for Court Excellence; the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia and the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association.

In 1996, he received the first annual Outstanding Older American Award from the National Council on the Aging "for a lifetime commitment and enlightened leadership in bettering the quality of life for all our nation's citizens," and in 1993 he received the 50 Year Award of The Fellows of the American Bar Foundation, recognizing lawyers who adhere to the highest principles and traditions of the legal profession.

Last year, Pickering received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Maryland Gerontological Association, and the William J. Brennan Jr. Award from the District of Columbia Bar "in recognition of his exemplary legal career dedicated to service in the public interest which has made a significant difference in the quality of American justice." The Bar Association of the District of Columbia named him Lawyer of the Year in 1996.

The American Bar Association is the largest voluntary professional organization in the world. With more than 400,000 members, the ABA provides law school accreditation, continuing legal education, information about the law, programs to assist lawyers and judges in their work, and initiatives to improve the legal system for the public.