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***** Laura Shaver to Receive WACDL's 2019 Anthony Savage Award*****



Laura Shaver (Everett) is the recipient of WACDL's 2019 Anthony Savage Award. The award recognizes an outstanding trial performance or result achieved by an attorney in practice for less than ten years. The award will be presented at WACDL's holiday party and auction on December 6 in Seattle.

Laura achieved a number of important victories over the last year. Notably, she started a major uproar in Snohomish County after the November 2018 *Lundstrom* decision, which bars unnecessary shackling during pre-trial hearings. She first litigated the issue on a murder case where her client had a prior escape conviction, and despite pushback from the prosecutor and the jail, she prevailed. Her victory pushed the local public defender's office to fight the jail's unnecessary shackling practice on every case, and now in-custody defendants appear unrestrained during their pre-trial hearings.

Laura also received a unanimous recommendation from the Clemency and Pardons Board to release her client serving a LWOP sentence for a murder he committed when he was 18-years old. The recommendation came after she spent three years locating and contacting witnesses and the victim's family. Not only did the victim's family ultimately support her client's release, but the now retired lead detective flew in from sunny San Diego to appear at the clemency hearing to speak on her client's behalf. She also gained the support of the prosecutor who spoke at her client's hearing and sent a strongly worded letter to Governor Inslee after he denied her client's release. She hasn't given up and continues to fight for her client's release.

Also noteworthy is Laura's recent trial victories that resulted in not guilty verdicts for defendants facing serious charges. A stranger rape case resulted in a not guilty verdict with a jury deliberating for a mere 20 minutes and a second-Degree Assault strangulation case resulted in a quick not guilty verdict. In a recent first-degree murder trial, the prosecutor offered her client second-degree manslaughter on the second day of trial, after Laura convinced the court her incentivized witness (snitch) testimony expert was an essential component of her client's defense. This win saved her client from spending the rest of his life in prison if convicted.

In another first-degree murder case, Laura is working with the Washington Innocence Project to free her client who has served 24-years in prison for a murder he did not commit. Her client was 15-years old when he was convicted and last year his case was featured in the Starz's documentary series *Wrong Man*. The series' team of lawyers and investigators uncovered new evidence of actual innocence and Laura built on that investigation finding more exonerating evidence. A hearing for a new trial is pending.

Laura began her legal career in the San Diego Public Defender's Office where she worked closely on several homicide and third-strike cases before transferring to the juvenile division. Her time working in the juvenile courts included litigating delinquency cases and mentoring foster children through Voices for Children. Laura dedicated her free time to the California Innocence Project where she assisted staff attorneys in proving factual innocence for the wrongfully convicted. After graduating law school in 2011, Laura returned home, to the Pacific Northwest. She worked as a public defender in Yakima County and in private practice in Western Washington before opening her firm in June 2017. Laura's office is in Everett where she works with clients accused of violent felonies, and those seeking post-conviction relief.

The Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers was formed to improve the quality and administration of justice. WACDL has nearly 800 members — private criminal defense lawyers, public defenders, and related professionals — committed to preserving fairness and promoting a rational and humane criminal justice system. For more information about WACDL contact Fred Rice, WACDL Program Coordinator, 206-623-1302, fred.rice@wacdl.org.