

AMBA Event: Justice (is still) at Stake

By Troy E. Larkin



Photo by Vince Lacsamana. Arizona Vice Chief Justice A. John Pelander, AMBA President Suzanne Diaz, Hon. (ret.) Ruth V. McGregor, & Troy Larkin, PCBA Board Member.

The 2015 Arizona Minority Bar Association (AMBA) Community Service Award Scholarship Dinner took place Friday, April 17th at the JW Marriott Starr Pass Resort. As the sun set on a beautiful spring evening, attendees mixed, mingled, and readied themselves to celebrate the night's honorees: Hon. (ret.) Ruth V. McGregor and Justice at Stake.

Current AMBA President Suzanne Diaz welcomed and thanked everyone for their continuing support. The first guest speaker was Louis Hollingsworth. He stepped to the stage and paid tribute to a dearly-departed champion of justice, the late Gov. Raul Castro. Hollingsworth spoke about a man whose internal drive was fueled by not asking himself "why he should do something?" Instead, he forced himself to answer "Why not?" He ran for Pima County Attorney only four years after law school, he eventually became Arizona's first and only Hispanic Governor, and then a United States Ambassador. Emboldened by the courage to break through the then-existing barriers and pave a new path, his answer to his internal question always lead to the next challenge to overcome.

Following a toast to Raul, Arizona Vice Chief Justice A. John Pelander stepped to the stage to present the guest of honor. He was asked to introduce Justice McGregor, which, in and of itself, was no small feat. Justice McGregor lived her life as a series of firsts. She was first in her class at Iowa, first in her class at Arizona State University's law school, was Fennemore & Craig P.C.'s first female hiring partner, and the first woman to serve on its management committee. She also took a leave from private practice to become a law clerk for the first female U.S. Supreme Court Justice- Hon. Sandra Day O'Connor.

Arizona's merit selection played a pivotal role in Justice McGregor's judicial career. In 1989, Governor Rose Mofford, a Democrat, appointed Justice McGregor to the Arizona Court of Appeals, Division One. She served as its Chief Judge from 1995 to 1997. During this time, she developed one of the nation's first mediation programs for appellate courts and reinvigorated the court's expedited appeal procedure. In 1998, Governor Jane Dee Hull, a Republican, appointed Justice McGregor to the Arizona Supreme Court. At that time, no woman had served on the court in

over two decades. In June 2005, Justice McGregor became Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice after serving three years as Vice Chief Justice. She retired in 2009.

Justice McGregor accepted her honor, and in true fashion spoke to the work that still needs to be done. She urged everyone to give a little more so we can ensure a fair and impartial justice system serves us.

After receiving her award, she graciously accepted the award on behalf of Justice at Stake (a nonprofit, of which she currently serves on the Board of Directors). In so doing, she endearingly spoke about the great work they do (see www.justicestake.org). Justice at Stake is the only national organization focused exclusively on keeping courts fair and impartial. They lead a nonpartisan national partnership that protects our justice system through public education, litigation, and reform. But, they need our help. Without greater charitable giving and support, the "crown jewel" of American democracy (an independent judiciary) may be eroded by threats and intimidation of judges, decreased diversity, and campaign cash controlling the courts.

AMBA President Suzanne Diaz closed the evening by echoing Justice McGregor's sentiments. She encouraged greater giving, support, and greater outreach for AMBA, its members, its student scholarship recipients, and the community-at-large. Together, we can continue to make the difference.

For more information about AMBA and to see how you can become involved and make a difference, please visit the AMBA website at: www.azminoritybar.org.



Memo From Toni Hellon, Clerk of Superior Court, Pima County

This is a reminder that the Clerk of Superior Court's downtown office will close at 5:00 p.m., beginning **Monday, June 29, 2015**.

At that time we will provide an outside drop box with time stamp, at the East (Church Ave.) entrance, to the Superior Court. By June 29, all Civil filings will be mandated for e-filing. Based on that order by the Arizona Supreme Court, we will NOT be able to process Civil filings that may be left in the drop box. They will be returned to you UNFILED the following day. Filings other than Civil, will be accepted and filed with the date they were dropped off.

Since the drop box is outside the building, we cannot be responsible if they are damaged before we pick them up the next morning. There will be a notice on the box as a reminder.

We now have an "Attorney Only" window in our newly remodeled Civil area and we will do everything we can to serve you expeditiously.

The newest change in the office is that Passports will no longer be processed at either of our offices, Superior Court and Juvenile Court, after May 15, 2015. As of Monday May 18, Passports will be processed at the spacious new Consolidated Justice Court, 240 N. Stone. We will staff two of the windows on the second floor of that building only for Passports. This should clear the congestion that we have daily at our office in the Superior Court, and provide more efficient and expeditious service for everyone there.