

**PUBLIC JUSTICE AWARD**

**(DOUG WON THE AWARD IN 2011,  
GIVEN TO ONE ATTORNEY OR FIRM PER  
YEAR IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON)**

Edward A. Dawson

**VIA FACSIMILE TO 1-206-464-0703**

February 28, 2011

WSAJ  
1809 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 1500  
Seattle, WA 98101-1328

Attention: Ms. Rebecca Berry

**Re: Douglas Spruance  
Public Justice 2011 Award Nominations**

Dear Ms. Berry:

I understand you are the person to whom this nomination letter should be addressed.

I am nominating Doug Spruance for the WSAJ Public Justice Award for 2011. I understand Blaine Tamaki and his associates join in this nomination.

Doug comes from a family with generations of history of public service, and throughout his life, Doug has volunteered in projects helping the poor and working with the environment.

As a Boy Scout, Doug worked on environmental projects at the local forest preserve in his home town of Palatine, Illinois. In college in 1970 he did an early film project contrasting urban decay with pristine environments. This won an award at a Chicago area amateur film festival.

In 1970, as an undergraduate student at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, he was one of the “Miami 176” who peacefully demonstrated against the raciest policies of Miami University and its support of the Vietnam War. This resulted in his arrest with the other 175 students at a non-violent sit-in, refusing to leave the school’s ROTC building. This was very difficult for Doug who comes from a military family, but he had a strong opposition to America’s policies in Vietnam and the raciest policies of the University and the military draft at that time.

Doug volunteered at a legal services clinic in Washington, D.C. while in law school, trying cases in the “Law Students in Court” program. As a young lawyer in Washington, D.C., in the mid-1970’s, he practiced environmental law. He carried with him the knowledge and understanding of the process of legislation for the Clear Air Act, the Clean Water Act and the Solid Waste Management Act, being implemented then.

As a young lawyer in Los Angeles, Doug was a member of LATLA and CTLA. He was the pro-bono incorporator and co-founder of the non-profit major environmental group, “Heal the Bay.” This was before any of the River Keeper type groups had yet been founded. Doug and a number of the group’s other co-founders had discovered that Los Angeles County had made an arrangement with the US EPA to allow the County to dump raw sewage into the Santa Monica Bay from their sewage treatment plant. The group publicized the situation and demanded supplemental EPA hearings. They packed the supplemental hearings with bus loads of high school students. The testimony Doug and others gave at those hearings, combined with the public outcry succeeded. Doug then worked on the volunteer Heal the Bay legal team for the next 10 years or so. The organization prided itself in being proactive in assisting local governments in identifying environmental problems, and finding solutions. The organization grew to have a full-time staff scientist, a museum, and many public education events to involve the citizens of Los Angeles County.

In Los Angeles, Doug also worked with Ruth Lansford in an organization called, “Save the Ballona Wetlands.” They successfully defeated Howard Hughes’ Summa Corporation in their efforts at developing the last significant wetlands in Los Angeles County. Ballona Wetlands exists pristine today, ringed by mega-buildings.

Doug moved to Spokane in 1992, and he joined WSTLA on the day he was sworn in to the Washington Bar.

Thereafter, Doug was immediately active in the local WSTLA meetings and activities. He served as Roundtable luncheon chair for a number of years. He served on the WSTLA Board of Governors from 1998 to 2004. As Michelle Moran will attest, Doug has always been very active in supporting local WSTLA\WSAJ activities and efforts, and always willing to “jump in” when needed. He has prepared materials and spoken for a number of WSTLA\WSAJ CLEs. He “taught” at the WSTLA People’s Law School sessions. This year, because of a trial, he was unable to attend the, “Lobby Day” for the first time in many years. He recently again served as Roundtable speaker chair.

During these years in Spokane, Doug has also done a lot of community service and pro-bono work outside of WSTLA\WSAJ.

In the 1990’s he was the incorporator and co-founder of “Cup of Cool Water.” This is a non-profit corporation which assists street teens and runaways in Spokane.

Doug also was the only plaintiff’s attorney in the case of Moran Prairie Neighborhood Association v Spokane County, et al. in which a citizens’ group appealed the Spokane County’s approval of the developers’ re-zone application of a parcel of land which contained wetlands. Doug successfully worked on a pro-bono basis, against paid developers’ counsel and against the Spokane County Counsel’s office, for hundreds of billable hours of litigation for over three years. The citizens initially lost at the hearing level, but Doug successfully appealed and tried the case to the Spokane County Commissioners. (It was the first time in memory that a citizens group prevailed on the developers’ re-zone application appeal.) Thereafter, the case was again appealed by the developers and the County to the Spokane Superior Court. After Doug prevailed against their collective Summary Judgment Motion, the County Counsel was required to side with the citizens’ group to oppose the developers in a trial de novo before Judge Eitzen. This trial was also won, the developers’ Court of Appeals efforts were defeated, and the State Supreme Court denied review. This was a huge amount of work on Doug’s part for what he considered to be a very important cause for the community.

Throughout his time in Spokane, Doug has also anecdotally represented indigents and the poor on a pro-bono basis. In more recent years, he has often done this through the Spokane Center for Justice. As their budget has been diminished, Doug has taken a more active role in assisting people who come to the Center for help.

In the last couple of years, Doug has chaired his Episcopal Church Outreach Committee handling charity works in the community and the adoption of a Haiti school with a food for children plan. The children are currently getting at least two good meals a day.

Doug has also represented a young adult learning impaired man (IQ 65) in a number of critical situations. John's (not his real name) father was murdered or hung himself in the County Jail. His mother evicted him at age 16. When John was beaten badly and his leg broken by ex-convicts on parole at public housing, Doug worked with the Center for Justice to obtain a protective order, and move John to a safer location. He and a Center for Justice assistant actually moved John into his new residence and got him set up. Doug helped get John job training and life skills training and items like a cell phone and bus pass.

When John and his learning-impaired girlfriend were about to have a child, they planned to have the girl's mother assist primarily in the parenting and care for the baby. Tragically, the mother was killed by a drunk driver the week the baby was born, and John and the girl were then sued by the State for custody of their child. The State provided counsel for the mother and baby, and Doug represented John spending many hours successfully working for John in Court and in negotiation with State Attorneys, social workers and counsel for the mother and child. Doug also obtained classes for John in parenting, anger management, and more job training.

In the last couple of months, Doug has helped a couple of indigent referrals in collection matters for the Center for Justice. One is a woman with serious cancer and trying to keep her in her house and avoid "foreclosure."

Doug's public service has not come without sacrifice by him and his family of time and money. He believes this is the example he should set as a member of the legal community and the example he should be for his children.

I know Doug would be very honored to be considered for the Public Justice Award. He has my whole hearted and unequivocal support in this nomination.

Attached to this letter is my Nomination Form also.

If you have any questions, please call.

Regards.

Very truly yours,

EDWARD A. DAWSON