

Hon. Brooke C. Wells

Lifetime Service Award

Judge Brooke C. Wells served as a Magistrate Judge for the United States District Court for the District of Utah from 2003 until her retirement, June 3, 2019. Judge Wells received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Political Science from the University of Utah and then continued on to receive her Juris Doctorate degree, also from the University of Utah. Following graduation, she spent three years as a legal services lawyer in San Antonio, Texas. She then returned to Utah and worked for the Salt Lake Legal Defenders Association for fifteen years where she tried over 100 felony jury trials and rose to become the chief capital-qualified defense attorney in the state, responsible for handling the most difficult cases in the criminal justice system. During much of that time, Judge Wells was also an Adjunct Professor and Trial Advocacy Course Coordinator for the University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law. Before taking the bench, Judge Wells worked as an Assistant United States Attorney for over eight years during which time she prosecuted violent crimes and civil rights cases and became Chief of the Violent Crimes Section. In 2003, Judge Wells was appointed as the first woman United States Magistrate Judge for the District of Utah. She served as Chief United States Magistrate Judge from 2013 through 2017.



In addition to her other judicial duties, she presides over Utah's RISE (Reentry Independence thru Sustainable Efforts) reentry courts, among the first federal Drug Court programs in the country and the first federal Behavioral Health Court with a mental health specialized docket. She co-chairs ARC (Assisted Reentry to the Community), the District's pioneering reentry effort established in 2012.

Judge Wells also has extensive community service and professional involvements, including serving as the past chair of the Advisory Board of UDOWD (Utah Defendant/Offender Workforce Development Task Force), a state/federal collaborative charged with eliminating barriers to employment and creating employment opportunities. She is the past president of the David K. Watkiss-Sutherland II Inn of Court, and former member of the Board of Trustees for the Disability Law Center, Legal Aid Society of Salt Lake, and Community Counseling Center. Judge Wells has served as a Mentor for the Utah State Bar's New Lawyer Training Program.

Women Lawyers of Utah named Judge Wells as the 1988 Woman Lawyer of the Year. Judge Wells became the first Utah woman inducted into the American Board of Criminal Lawyers in 1992. Also in 1992, Governor Mike Leavitt's Commission for Women and Families named her one of their ten "Remarkable Utah Women." In 1993, she became the first Utah woman inducted into the American College of Trial Lawyers. While a federal prosecutor, she was twice recognized by the Department of Justice for Outstanding Achievement as an Assistant United States Attorney. In 2013 Judge Wells was the recipient of the Utah Women Lawyers Mentoring Award. In 2015, the Utah Minority Bar Association awarded Judge Wells its Distinguished Service Award. The National Alliance on Mental Illness, NAMI Utah, awarded her its Distinguished Service Award in 2017. She was named Alumna of the Year by the University of Utah J.S. Quinney College of Law in 2018.

In retirement she hopes to serve as a recall United States Magistrate Judge and serve as a board member for non-profit organizations.

UTAH STATE BAR®

2019 Summer Convention Awards