

Susan Harmon-Scott Receiving Citizen Lawyer Award

The Citizen Lawyer Committee of the NCBA Young Lawyers Division, in conjunction with the NCBA Local Bar Outreach Committee, provides expanded coverage of the 2017 Citizen Lawyer Awards in recognition of their volunteer service and leadership in their communities and beyond. The following article is submitted for your consideration by the North Carolina Bar Association. The 2017 Citizen Lawyer Awards will be presented on Friday, June 23, at the NCBA Annual Meeting in Asheville, but the recipients have been notified of their selection and there is no embargo on this information. A photo of the recipient is attached.

By Agnes Gambill

MANTEO – Transporting an injured great horned owl in the back of her car from Hatteras Island to the Carolina Raptor Center in Charlotte is just another day for Citizen Lawyer Susan Harman-Scott. After meeting Harman-Scott, there is no question that the desire to rehabilitate and restore burns brightly at the core of her passions and purpose.

Upon graduating from Wake Forest University Law School, Harman-Scott started practicing law in coastal Dare County, a place where the rustic, unspoiled seashore and colorful resort villas often overshadow the critical needs and poverty of the surrounding rural communities. Yet, Harman-Scott regularly steps up to meet the needs of the less fortunate by dedicating time to pro bono representation. When she compelled Cardinal Innovations to restore health care services for the disabled children of Eman Ali, an Egyptian-born U.S. citizen who works in the cafeteria of a Mecklenburg County public school, Ali described Harman-Scott as “very patient and respectful. Susan is one of those rare people who is so compassionate that I can call her an angel. Even if we hadn’t won, I would consider it a blessing to have met her.”

Harman-Scott was also involved in providing mental health services to rural stretches of northeastern North Carolina. During her tenure on the board of the Albemarle Mental Health Center, the board LME (local management entity) founded a 23-hour crisis observation unit at a hospital in Elizabeth City, pioneered a mobile crisis team to intervene in home-based emergencies, and installed telemedicine technology in emergency departments in rural hospitals where the nearest psychiatrist was in Greenville.

Harman-Scott also serves on the board of the Dare County Boat Builders Foundation where she helped raise over \$70,000 to be awarded in 2017 for college scholarships for Dare County students whose families are engaged in the boatbuilding, fishing or other marine industries. She also was part of an initiative at her church, Outer Banks Presbyterian, that started a scholarship awarded to every college-bound member. Additionally, she is an attorney and officer for the Dare County Democratic Party and Democratic Women of Dare County, where she advocates for the preservation of local beaches and marine life by supporting efforts to prevent seismic blasting for oil exploration and construction oil rigs off the Outer Banks.

Secretary of State Elaine Marshall calls Harman-Scott’s commitment to public service “inspiring,” adding that her willingness to work hard and persevere makes her worthy of this nomination. When asked what drives Harman-Scott to be a citizen lawyer, she says “It’s satisfying to stand up for people. When you’re a lawyer, you see people in the worst stage of

their life and you have an opportunity to help. You have the power to solve a problem, and you're going to do it. In this way the legal system functions to improve our society.”

END

Agnes Gambill is a 2017 graduate of the University of North Carolina School of Law.