

Daniel F. Hedges

2003 Recipient Vern Countryman Award



"Of the many outstanding advocates I have known, Dan has perhaps the greatest standing and influence within his state and much of his work has great impact on the rest of the country as well. Dan brings honor to this award." Willard P. Ogburn, Executive Director, NCLC

In considering a recipient for this year's Vern Countryman Award, we received outstanding letters of support on Dan Hedges' behalf, including many from the powerbrokers in his state and others from advocates who have who have worked closely with him and admire his abilities and achievements. We share with you a few of their comments.

"Dan is one of the most gifted and most committed lawyers I've ever met ."
– F. Paul Bland, Jr., Trial Lawyers for Public Justice

..."Dan has gone on to an extraordinary career in advancing the rights of ordinary citizens, and particularly low-income citizens, in a wide variety of cases with statewide and national impact. Dan was the key drafter of our State's consumer statutes, that are among the most progressive in the nation...more than any other individual whom I have ever know, Dan Hedges has (using both courts and legislation) used the legal system to advance the interests of the less fortunate of our society – in lasting and substantial ways

– particularly in the areas of consumer law and consumers’ rights.” - Larry V. Starcher, Justice, West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals

“State supreme court justices, federal district judges, and state trial judges have stated to me that Dan is responsible for more law being made in West Virginia than any other lawyer in the State’s history. Dan has been able to do this through an uncanny understanding of the court systems and a magnificent ability to put together cases for the greatest impact...This formula – pushing cases with great facts to make law that benefits a wide range of individuals – has resulted in unmatched success...” - Bren J. Pomponio, Mountain State Justice

“Dan is one of the nation’s premier consumer attorneys and one of the truly great Legal Services attorneys that have graced our movement. His creativity, his courage, and the massive size and scope of his accomplishments are legendary. He is a genius at turning complicated cases into easily understood stories of right and wrong...Probably no Legal Services attorney alive has done more jury trials, and probably no trial attorney in West Virginia is more effective than he is. ... He’s like Superman: wherever injustice appears, Dan is there to save the day...he is an extraordinary human being...He is that unusual charismatic figure who prefers the solitude of a solo canoe over the ego-tripping and selfpromotion that ordinarily infects those with so much talent. Dan does our profession proud...” – Irv Ackelsberg

“One is left to marvel at his ingenuity, dedication, stamina and versatility that somehow permits him to keep these many and varied items of complex litigation moving forward simultaneously... “Dan Hedges’ accomplishments in the broad field of consumer law have been outstanding and his stellar contributions to the well being of the vulnerable and those of low income are truly exceptional.” – John T. Copenhaver, Jr., United States District Judge

“I am not exaggerating when I tell you that Dan Hedges has done more for social reform through the legal system than any other private practitioner in the history of this state. No issue is too small or too large for Dan to take on when he believes there is an injustice and a legal underpinning for its challenge...While many people associate Dan’s career with high impact consumer litigation, he has also brought about important reforms in the areas of public education, welfare and mental health, prison conditions, labor issues including mine safety, housing, and family law...West Virginia is lucky that Dan Hedges lives and practice law in this State.” – Darrell V. McGraw, Jr., West Virginia Attorney General

“...Virtually anything that affects the lives of West Virginia’s low-income population, Dan has been more than willing to take on for more than 30 years. – Kathleen E. Keest, former Countryman Award winner