



Appellate Advocacy Award

Criteria

Overview

Consistent with NCJI's mission, the Institute will make an Appellate Advocacy Award, annually, if possible, to attorneys who have been instrumental in securing a final state or federal appellate court decision with significant impact on the right to trial by jury, public health and safety, consumer rights, civil rights, environmental justice, access to justice in civil cases, or other issues relevant to the work of the Institute.

Award Criteria

1. The award may be made to any lawyer, whether or not an NCJI Fellow, and whether or not currently practicing if all other criteria are met.
2. The awardee(s) must have been the principal counsel responsible for the substantive content of the brief on appeal and/or arguing the successful appeal.
3. The decision may come from any state or federal appellate court, and must be a final decision, not subject to further appeal. A denial of certiorari or comparable action will determine whether the decision is final, and its date will determine whether the decision has aged out of competition. If the nomination is based on a successful opposition to a petition for certiorari, the written opposition must be included in the supporting materials submitted.
4. The decision must have been issued within 3 years prior to the award nomination submission deadline.

Award Process

1. Nominations must be received by NCJI by March 23, 2026.
 2. The award will be presented at the NCJI Fellows Reception on July 26, 2026 in Chicago, IL.
 3. Nominations are to be made online at <https://ncji.org/appellate-advocacy-award-nomination/>.
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4. Nominations must be accompanied by nominating statement (describing, in 750 words or less of your own words, how this decision comports with the Award description), a copy of the brief(s) for the case being nominated, and a copy of the final court decision. Suggested supporting materials include law review or news articles that reference the decision.
5. The nominating statement should address the following matters, as applicable:
 - a. The impact of the decision per the goals supported by the Institute (right to trial by jury, public health and safety, consumer rights, civil rights, environmental justice, access to justice in civil cases, or other issues relevant to the work of the Institute);
 - b. whether and how (with page references to the brief if possible) the nominee employed innovative legal or policy arguments, and whether and how the appellate court adopted innovative arguments of the nominee (with specific references in the decision if possible);
 - c. how the decision overruled old, regressive precedent or established new progressive precedent;
 - d. the nominee's specific role in the case (as trial counsel, brief writer, appellate oral arguer, etc.); and
 - e. the relationship between the nominator and the nominee, if any.

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