



MassNAELA Honors State Representative John Lawn and Other Civic Leaders at Annual Meeting

Awards State, Community and Chapter Leaders For Their Advocacy For Seniors; Presents Representative Lawn with the Legislator of the Year Award

BOSTON – December 17, 2024 – At its annual meeting held on December 12, 2024, the [Massachusetts Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys](#) (MassNAELA) honored several individuals for their advocacy efforts and their commitment to raising awareness of legal issues affecting older adults. Massachusetts State Representative John Lawn was named the Legislator of the Year for going above and beyond in supporting legislation that protects the rights and improves the lives of seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Mary Freeley, Director of the Attorney General’s Elder Justice Unit, received the Arthur Stavisky Award, an honor MassNAELA bestows each year to a person in the community who has dedicated themselves to advocating for seniors and promoting elder causes.

Four organizations were presented the Deborah H. Thomson Advocacy Award, which recognizes efforts in advocating for elder issues in state government: Berkshire Arc, Guardian Community Trust, Planned Lifetime Assistance Network (PLAN) of MA and RI, and The Arc of Bristol County. These organizations were instrumental in driving legislation to preserve pooled special needs trusts for individuals 65 and older, which allows people who need a nursing home level of care to set aside funds for expenses not covered by MassHealth.

The John J. Ford Litigation Advocacy Award, which honors a member’s litigation efforts on behalf of seniors and MassNAELA, was bestowed on Jamie Knudsen, Lynnfield, MA.

MassNAELA also recognizes chapter members each year for their commitment of time and energy to the chapter. The award for Outstanding Chapter Member of the Year was presented to Hy Darling, Springfield, MA, for his dedication to multiple chapter events, workgroups, and committees and for going above and beyond to advance the organization's mission.

The President’s Award was bestowed to Abigail Poole, Dedham, MA, for her service to and support of the chapter and its president. Michael Couture, Somerville, MA, was awarded for his service and dedication as the 2024 chapter president.

The MassNAELA annual meeting also included the election of chapter officers for the New Year, and two new directors. The 2025 officers include president Erin McBee, Harvard, MA; president-elect Gina Barry, Springfield, MA; vice president Faith Delaney, Haverhill, MA;

treasurer Steven Mann, Waltham, MA; clerk Ashley Aubuchon, Newton, MA; and immediate past president, Michael Couture. The two new directors are Angelina Stafford, Springfield, MA, and Shani Collymore, Quincy, MA.

About MassNAELA

The National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA), the premier organization of elder and special needs law attorneys in the country, is dedicated to developing awareness of issues concerning the elderly and those with special needs. Over 400 attorneys are members of the Massachusetts Chapter. Members work directly with the elderly and those with special needs in areas as diverse as planning for catastrophic care costs, disability planning, age discrimination in employment and housing, benefits planning, estate planning, veterans' benefits, and more.

For more information about MassNAELA, visit www.massnaela.com.

Contact:

Beth Bryant
bbryant@bbwrites.com
508-786-3013

###