



PRESS RELEASE

October 16, 2020

The United States District Court for the Southern District of California is pleased to announce the selection of Charles Halligan Adair as the 2020 recipient of the Hon. David H. Bartick Award for Civility and Professionalism. The Court also honors attorneys Bruce C. Smith and Peter J. Mazza as posthumous recipients of the Bartick Award.

Mr. Adair has practiced law in San Diego since 1972, specializing in criminal defense. He represents clients in both state and federal court. Charlie Adair has been described as “the consummate gentleman,” someone who is “unfailingly polite and unassuming,” and “Chesterfieldian” in his manner and dealings. At the same time, he is credited for his devotion to his clients and his tireless effort to preserve the rights guaranteed under the Sixth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Over nearly 50 years in active practice, Charlie has been recognized for his courtesy, civility, and implicit goodness. He epitomizes the important traits that the Bartick Award represents.

This year carries a regrettable distinction – marking the passing of two exemplary attorneys who were revered by their colleagues, their opponents, and the judges in front of whom they practiced. Their untimely deaths shocked the federal legal community, and they are deeply missed. Each was a dedicated public servant who over his career demonstrated the utmost civility and professionalism. The Court finds it fitting to honor them posthumously this year with the Bartick Award.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce C. Smith was a master of tact and grace and is most remembered for his humor and style. He was jointly nominated by his long-time colleagues in the U.S. Attorney’s Office and by the counsel he most frequently

opposed in court – a tribute to the universal respect and admiration Bruce enjoyed. He was a truly authentic individual, meticulously organized and genuine in his passion for the law. While Bruce often opposed his opponents’ legal arguments and positions, he never let legal disagreements become personal or spill over into his attitude or conduct toward his opposing counsel. His reputation and his legacy is one of fairness, honesty, and civility.

Peter J. Mazza most recently served as First Assistant United States Attorney, and was well known for his unparalleled work ethic, humility, and kindness. One of his founding principles was community. He loved to practice in federal court because he believed that we are all part of a rich tapestry. While as practitioners we may oppose each other, and represent competing interests, at bottom we are unified by our common purpose to seek justice and uphold the law. Peter lived his beliefs and was a leader of the federal community. He is remembered for always pushing himself and everyone around him to do and be the best.

The U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California will install a permanent display in the lobby of the Carter/Keep Courthouse. The display will include a remembrance of the Hon. David H. Bartick, and list the names of the recipients of the award given in his memory. It will bear this inscription:

Long before he became a beloved U.S. Magistrate Judge, David Bartick epitomized civility and professionalism. As a prominent criminal-defense attorney, he captivated juries and judges alike with his courtroom skill. But what really set him apart was his courtesy, warmth, and integrity. He was a lawyer that made us proud of lawyers. And he was the kind of judge that all judges aspire to be.

With this award, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California honors Judge Bartick’s legacy. Each of these recipients followed in his footsteps, exemplifying civility and professionalism in the practice of law.

The Hon. David H. Bartick Award for Civility and Professionalism will be presented to Charles H. Adair, and the families of Peter J. Mazza and Bruce C. Smith, at the Federal Bar Association, San Diego Chapter, State of the District event on November 12, 2020.