

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD CITATION

Anjela A. Shutts '93

The outstanding lawyer, Anthony Kronman writes, is a devoted citizen who is “not simply an accomplished technician but a person of... practical wisdom” and great character. Although he has in mind the great lawyer statesmen of the 19th century, those words could as easily apply to Anjie Shutts.

Only the second person in her family to graduate from college—her brother was the first the day before—Anjie played softball for Betty Hoff, majored in political science, and served as president of the APO service organization. Because she consistently demonstrated the commitment to service she learned from her parents growing up in Grinnell, Iowa, it was no surprise her fellow seniors selected her as the first recipient of the Jenson Medal, given to the senior who best demonstrates the ideals of the college through service to students and the college community.

And then it was off to Drake where she earned her law degree, met her husband Peter, and began her vocation at Whitfield & Eddy in Des Moines. Anjie was the first lawyer in the firm to focus exclusively on family law, which means she has represented many persons caught in the middle of contentious dissolution and custody disputes. Although she is a diligent, skilled litigator, her wisdom and compassion increasingly have led her to find ways to replace the courtroom with the conference room. There her negotiating skills and practical wisdom enable her to seek resolutions that are fair to all parties, including the children whose voices too often have been ignored and those who struggle with language barriers. Perhaps it was that focus on the law’s human dimension, which led Anjie, always the learner, to expand her legal practice to include mediation and alternative dispute resolution. Her leadership in finding ways law can serve both the common good and guarantee individualized justice has resulted in many accolades, including the 2018 Iowa Supreme Court’s Voice of Justice Award.

Using the law to resolve disputes is not the only area where Anjie has excelled. In a time when institutions increasingly are under attack, Anjie has demonstrated a deep understanding of the

role institutions play in both our private and public lives. Whether serving her firm, the local bar, or the Supreme Court of Iowa, where she currently is vice-chair of the Access to Justice Commission, Anjie, in the words of a colleague, has “used her skills, life experience, and legal talents to make . . . [each of the communities of which she is a member] a better place.” As of this month one can add Luther College to the list of organizations and institutions that benefit from her talents and wisdom as she joins the Board of Regents.

Like the lawyer-statespersons of the past, Anjie has served the common good with distinction both as an excellent and caring advocate and as a devoted citizen. Luther College is honored and delighted to present Anjela Shutts with the Distinguished Service Award.

John Moeller
Professor Emeritus of Political Science
Presented at Luther College
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