

Bill Bowman
President

Teresa Mathis
Executive Director

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For more information, contact:
Fred Rice, 206-623-1302 or fred@wacdl.org

Seattle Attorneys Receive Top Award for Distinguished Careers in Criminal Defense

Peter Camiel and Jim Lobsenz of Seattle are each recipients of the 2009 William O. Douglas Award, to be presented by the Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers on Friday, June 12 at the association's annual conference at Campbell's Resort in Chelan, Washington. The William O. Douglas Award is WACDL's most prestigious award, given in recognition of extraordinary courage and dedication to the practice of criminal law.

Since 1982, attorney Jim Lobsenz has handled countless criminal cases – including some of Washington's most controversial criminal trials, appeals and post-conviction cases. He has also defended those in the armed services.

Some of his notable clients include: Charles Campbell, Kwan Fai (Willie) Mak, Blake Pirtle, Dayva Cross, Mary K. Letourneau, Major Margaret Witt, Rep. Jim West, Darrell Cloud, Steven Farmer, and Washington State Militia leader John Pitner.

"He hasn't done all of this for fame or fortune. Rather, he is a true believer and a tireless advocate for those who are most in need of counsel," says Todd Maybrown, a Seattle defense attorney and colleague of Jim.

Jim has defended many members of the military who faced sanctions due to their conduct. He successfully ended the Army's efforts to initiate a second court martial proceeding for Lt. Ehren Watada, the first commissioned officer who refused to deploy to Iraq when he announced to a 2006 Veterans for Peace convention that he would refuse orders.

Jim has handled some of Washington State's most challenging death penalty appeals and post-convictions cases, perhaps best known for his defense of Charles Campbell in *Campbell v. Wood*, the seminal case where the Ninth Circuit decided by a 6-5 vote that lethal injection is not cruel and unusual punishment.

Although Mr. Campbell's claim did not garner a majority in that case, it was Jim's legal claims that ultimately helped to pave the way for all sorts of future claims under the Eighth Amendment – including the challenges to the electric chair, gas chamber, and lethal injection methods.

In 25 years of practicing law, Peter Camiel has had well over 100 jury trials involving charges including homicide, felony and misdemeanor assaults, fraud, drug crimes, sex offenses, RICO, financial crimes and more. Most notably, Peter has challenged the convictions for several serious crimes and successfully proven his clients' innocence.

He has worked relentlessly with Centurion Ministries, an organization that has freed more than 40 wrongfully convicted men and women from prison and death row without DNA evidence to buttress their cases. March 2008 saw the release of Peter's and Centurion's client Willie Green, who had already served more than 25 years of a life sentence for murder.

Centurion's founder Jim McCloskey and Peter were featured on an April 4, 2008 broadcast of Dateline on NBC. The story detailed their efforts to prove the innocence of Barry Beach to Montana's parole board, who had been convicted of a murder almost 30 years ago. The parole board's decision is currently on appeal with the Montana Supreme Court.

Peter has won dismissals and acquittals in many other serious cases in state and federal courts, including the 2007 dismissal of the most serious charges against the Hell's Angels president in a RICO/murder trial, the 2005 dismissal of a 12-count indictment alleging various dealing and manufacturing of firearms charges, the 2005 commutation of a client's sentence who had been wrongly convicted of child rape and a 2004 murder case in Everett, Washington in which his client was acquitted of first degree murder, second degree murder, felony murder, attempted second degree murder and manslaughter in the first and second degrees. The jury in that case also awarded self-defense reimbursement of costs and attorney fees to his client.

He served as co-counsel with appellate attorney Sheryl Gordon McCloud in post conviction proceedings on two death penalty cases – both sentences were vacated.

According to McCloud, "Peter has a long history of unsung heroism."

Jim Lobsenz attended Philips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts (class of 1971), received a B.A. from Stanford University (1974), an M.A. from Stanford (1975) and a law degree from UC Berkley (1978). He worked as a staff attorney for the Washington Appellate Defender Association (1983-1985). Thereafter, he entered a partnership with attorney John Wolfe (1985-1989) and has since worked in the firm of Carney Badley Spellman. Jim also serves as an Adjunct Professor of Law at the Seattle University School of Law, where he teaches the First Amendment class.

Peter Camiel received a B.A. from Washington State University. He received his J.D. from the University of Puget Sound School of Law (1982, now Seattle University School of Law). Following law school, he joined Peter Mair to form a practice of criminal defense in federal and state courts.