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Charity Kenyon
2007 Professionalism Award Recipient, Ninth Circuit

The world during the '60s was turbulent, much as it might be described today. Yet the '60s inspired a generation to become involved. The '60s sparked the War on Poverty, the civil rights movement, Freedom Summer, women's liberation, protests against the Vietnam War. That same spirit shaped Charity Kenyon, the 2007 Professionalism Award winner for the Ninth Circuit.

Describing her upbringing in Orinda, California, Ms. Kenyon recalled her "mother walking door to door to defeat a ballot initiative that would have protected discrimination in housing. I was inspired by courageous practitioners of civil disobedience including Dr. Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi." Growing up in California, she had an inbred passion for environmental protection. At an early age, she was involved in efforts to protect the seacoast from overdevelopment and to encourage recycling. With this pedigree, it is no surprise that she would devote her life to worthy causes.

Ms. Kenyon obtained a degree in community studies from UC Santa Cruz and her law degree from University of California at Davis' King Hall School of Law—where she was managing editor of the Law Review. When she graduated in 1977, jobs were scarce, legal aid jobs were scarcer, and women were not sought after by law firms. She landed with *Diepenbrock, Wulff, Plant & Hannegan* in Sacramento, where she practiced for 22 years. Among her mentors, she credits David Riegels and Dennis Campos, with whom she practiced 30 years in all, founding the firm of *Riegels Campos & Kenyon* in 1999.

This past year, she established the firm *KenyonYeates LLP*, which emphasizes First Amendment, appellate, environmental, and land use law. Ms. Kenyon has been the lead appellate attorney on innumerable noteworthy published decisions, concerning issues as diverse as sovereign immunity of Indian tribes, contractors licensing law, defamation, insurance, public contracts disputes, and the reporters' shield law. It is in media and First Amendment law that she has made a national reputation. Well known to journalists, Ms. Kenyon has been representing national, regional and local media clients for close to thirty years. She has a string of published news media decisions involving access to court records and proceedings, reporter shield laws, and libel and defamation claims. Among her newsworthy cases was a 1999 appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit on behalf of the media seeking access to information in the "Unabomber" trial of serial bomber Theodore Kaczynski.

Elected to the California Academy of Appellate Lawyers in 1997, she is now its First Vice-President. She has served as faculty for appellate practice education programs sponsored by the academy, the Judicial Council of California and the State Bar of California. Previous professional accolades include her selection as a Northern California "Super Lawyer" 2004-2007; the Sacramento County Bar Association's Distinguished Lawyer Award in 2003; the UC-Davis School of Law's Distinguished Alumnus Award and the Women Lawyers of Sacramento's Frances Newell Carr Achievement Award in 1997; and the Central Valley Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists' Freedom of Information Award in 1995. She has been listed among the "Best Lawyers in America" for First Amendment law since 1991.

While raising their own son, an Honors grad from Cal Tech in mathematics and computer science, Ms. Kenyon and her husband, Mike Eaton, were "parents" to six exchange students from around the world. She and Mike remain active in protecting the environment and, leaders in Sacramento's Slow Food Convivium, they grow much of the family's food in the backyard.

Ms. Kenyon is a founding member of Sacramento's Milton L. Schwartz American Inn of Court and served on its executive committee for four years. Her innovative and imaginative programs are invariably big draws. But her willingness to help younger attorneys has been what distinguished her efforts and earned her this recognition. "Charity is an outstanding lawyer who has championed the First Amendment for many years. But it is her willingness to share her knowledge with colleagues, particularly young lawyers, and to volunteer her time to assist the bench and bar that make her so deserving of this award," said Ninth Circuit Chief Judge Mary M. Schroeder, an American Inns of Court trustee.

About Ms. Kenyon, one supporter wrote, "Charity is well known throughout the county as a generous, caring, passionate attorney with a heart as big as all outdoors." In her own humble way, Ms. Kenyon says that throughout her life, she was fortunate to encounter "people who believed that individual action, honesty, integrity, political involvement, compassion, and volunteerism make a difference in the health of a community and are not only worthwhile but essential aspects of good citizenship." It is probably more accurate to say that people were privileged to encounter those very qualities and that philosophy in Charity Kenyon.★