

Wisconsin Association for Justice: Abrahamson blazed a path toward justice

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By standing up for equality, she invited others to follow in her footsteps (Madison) The Wisconsin Association for Justice (WAJ) joins those celebrating the life of former Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Shirley Abrahamson. We are saddened to learn of her passing, but we find hope and inspiration in the fact that her legacy of accomplishment will continue inspiring lawyers and laypersons alike to continue striving for a better and more just world.

Chief Justice Abrahamson recognized that achieving a more equal world through the law meant that she could never be content to rest on her trailblazing status. As the only woman in her class at Indiana Law School, and its valedictorian, she was always likely to make a mark on the profession. She knew, however, that she could make a bigger mark on the world and our state by shaping the law to embody the concepts of justice, fairness, and equality that we all learn, as she once put, [as children](#). She did that as a lawyer, a professor, and a Justice for over 60 years.

“Chief Justice Abrahamson stood out, because she represented so many important things to the legal profession and the interpretation of the law in Wisconsin,” said WAJ President Jay A. Urban. “At the beginning of her incredible career, she stood up for the idea that ‘just because those practicing law do not look like you, it doesn’t mean you can’t.’ Her career embodied the same spirit, proving just because the law once left certain rights underappreciated and sometimes forgotten, the solution was to recognize and protect those rights with vigor and passion going forward. The independence and courage she showed in never deviating from this path, even when it earned her enmity and admiration, is a model for every lawyer and citizen in our state,” continued Urban.

WAJ’s charitable arm, the Wisconsin Civil Justice Education Foundation, proudly supported the dedication of the Wisconsin Historical Society Library Reading Room

in the Chief Justice's honor. The effort to cement her legacy for students and scholars of this state culminated with the Governor [issuing Executive Order 83 in August of this year](#). Former WAJ Presidents Christine Bremer Muggli and Benjamin Wagner served on the Committee spearheading the effort.

“Being the first woman to serve on the Court would have made her a trailblazer and a role model for so many women entering the law, but she was never content to let that be her only legacy,” said former WAJ President Christine Bremer Muggli. “She will live on for her fierce independence, incredible intellect, and her unwavering commitment to expanding the range of citizens to whom our Constitution provides fairness, recognition, and protection.”