



ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

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**The Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University.**

*Represented Guantanamo detainee*

**Phoenix attorney Howard Cabot to receive top pro bono award  
from Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law**  
(Optional byline: By Janie Magruder)

A successful Phoenix trial attorney and longtime adjunct professor at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law will receive the 2011 Justice for All Award for Outstanding Commitment to Pro Bono Service.

Howard R. Cabot will be honored by the law school and the legal community at the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Justice for All Night, to be held from 5-8 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 3, at the Hyatt Regency Phoenix, 122 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. Tickets for the event, which will include a wine and cheese reception and silent auction to raise money for the College of Law's Public-Interest Fellowship Program, are available at [law.asu.edu/justiceforallnight](http://law.asu.edu/justiceforallnight).

Cabot, a partner in the law firm of Perkins Coie, was selected for the award because of his longstanding dedication to pro bono work. Most recently, he and a team of military attorneys represented a Sudanese detainee who was incarcerated at Guantanamo Bay and charged with aiding 9/11 terrorists.

"I'm particularly honored to be recognized by the law school as it seeks not only to educate young lawyers, but to instill in them the sense of privilege that impels me and an understanding of the responsibilities being a member of the legal profession implies," he said.

Interim Dean Douglas Sylvester of the College of Law said, "We are extremely proud that Howard is the recipient of this major honor. His dedication to pro bono service and his courage in taking on politically sensitive representation make him a model for all attorneys."

Cabot grew up a scrappy, blue-collar kid in New Jersey, where he ignored naysayers and made all-state as a linebacker on his high school's football team, despite weighing only 150 pounds. At Rutgers University, he blocked his way from fourth team to starter, but eventually, he realized that professional football wasn't in the cards. He instead enrolled in law school at Rutgers and worked two jobs to feed his growing family. One of those jobs, at a legal services organization, opened Cabot's eyes to volunteer work, and he dug in on behalf of conscientious objectors and ripped-off tenants alike during the heady 1960s.

“That ignited a desire in me to do this kind of public interest work,” he said. “It got me into the courtroom and gave a feeling you can’t describe. Let’s just say, whenever I have given my time or money, I feel like I’ve received much, much more than I’ve given.”

By the time he was 30, Cabot had begun to pursue a more lucrative career as a trial attorney to support his wife and four children, but he was fortunate to become affiliated with law firms that supported pro bono work. One of those firms was Brown & Bain, predecessor to Perkins Coie, which Cabot joined in 1981 and developed his litigation skills in a variety of complex cases, class actions, securities, intellectual property and business litigation.

Throughout the 1990s, he worked closely with Larry Hammond, another prominent Phoenix attorney and co-founder of the Arizona Justice Project, on several notable public-interest cases. One of those cases was on behalf of an Army veteran, George Peterson, from whom the police obtained a false confession to the murder of a secretary at a campground north of Phoenix. Cabot and his team negotiated a favorable settlement on Peterson’s behalf.

In 2009, Cabot met Noor Uthman Muhammed, a Sudanese Muslim who was accused of training Al Qaeda militants in Afghanistan from the mid-1990s to 2000. Noor was brought to Guantanamo Bay in 2002 and held for nine years before a plea deal was negotiated by Cabot and others. The deal provided for Noor’s release in 34 months against charges carrying the potential of a life sentence.

Cabot, who belongs to numerous Jewish organizations and has received the Jewish National Fund’s Tree of Life Award for his work in support of Israel, did not hesitate to represent a Muslim allegedly tied to 9/11 terrorists. Some may have questioned his decision, but as Cabot pointed out, justice applies to all.

“We have in America certain fundamental rights that make this country special, and the enforcement of these rights transcends the popularity of the clients,” he said. “Sometimes, the public, your family, your friends mistake what you are doing to uphold the rule of law and due process for the sense that you actually believe in the cause of the client you are representing. And – some of my pugnaciousness comes out here – you have to have a tough skin, and you have to have confidence that what you are seeking to protect is worth the criticism that may come your way because these rights are important enough.”

Although attorneys often have too little time outside their practices for family and friends, Cabot wants law students to know that it is both their privilege and responsibility to carve out time to do public-interest work.

“And you can’t look for tangible rewards – people aren’t going to give you a pile of money – but it’s more valuable than that. Pro bono service endures. It’s not an expendable item. It becomes part of you, and you want to do more.”

Cabot is a board member of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Phoenix, and is a member of the Dean’s Council at the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law, where he teaches evidence and trial advocacy. He also is a Judge Pro Tem on the Maricopa County Superior Court.

Justice for All Night celebrates the pro bono and public interest community and, through the Pro Bono Board’s Summer Public-Interest Fellowship Program at the College of Law, helps law students provide legal services to people who otherwise could not afford them. Proceeds from Justice for All Night fund fellowships in which students perform pro bono legal work for a variety of local and national agencies and organizations, including the Federation of Women

Lawyers – Kenya, National Whistleblowers Center, Humane Society of the United States, Disability Rights Legal Center, Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest and others.

The Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, renamed for the retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice in 2006, is pursuing a bold and transformative model for public legal education and is dedicated to making the law school a valuable resource for addressing major regional, national and international problems of law and public policy. The College is the leading law school in the Phoenix area, and it boasts an Indian Legal Program that is arguably the best in the nation. The College also houses three Centers, the Center for Law, Science & Innovation, the oldest, largest and by far the most comprehensive law and science center in the country; the Center for Law and Global Affairs, which supports and inspires research, education and practice in new forms of transnational public-private governance, and the Diane Halle Center for Family Justice, which promotes the well-being and protects the human rights of children and families through multidisciplinary initiatives in education, advocacy and scholarship. Beyond the traditional J.D., the College offers several concurrent degrees, including a J.D./M.D. program with the Mayo Medical School, a J.D./M.B.A. with the W. P. Carey School of Business at ASU, a J.D./Ph.D. in Law and Psychology with the ASU Department of Psychology, and a J.D./Ph.D. in Justice Studies with the ASU School of Social Transformation's Justice and Social Inquiry Program. It also offers graduate degrees in Biotechnology and Genomics, in Tribal Policy, Law and Government and in Global Legal Studies, as well as a Customized LL.M. program. A Master of Legal Studies program gives non-lawyers an opportunity to develop needed legal skills to help students advance in their professional careers. For more information, visit [law.asu.edu](http://law.asu.edu).