This year’s Professionalism Award recipients have devoted their careers to the practice of law in a way that upholds the highest standards of civility and professionalism. Each of these individuals embodies a reputation of mutual respect and camaraderie with their colleagues. In addition to submitting biographical information, each recipient was asked to respond to the following questions:

First, what advice would you give your younger self as you entered your law practice? And, what ideals or values do you let guide your professional life?

“Do the right thing, not the easy thing.”

– Amy Cunningham

Amy Cunningham, Pocatello

Advice: “Find a cause and fight for it. As an attorney you are in a unique position to provide a voice for those who have none. Do the right thing, not the easy thing.”

Values: “Honesty, communication, and service. When I began practicing criminal law, my mentor advised me that as a criminal defense attorney the most important thing to maintain is your credibility. This advice has served me well. My approach to the practice of law is honest and open, my cards are always on the table. Over the years many people have shared their stories, many of which have been tragic, to make changes to individual circumstances and large systems. I am honored, blessed and humbled to have served as a voice for their change.”

Amy Cunningham graduated cum laude from Thomas M. Cooley Law School. She was admitted to the Colorado State Bar in 1994 and the Idaho State Bar in 1997. Amy was a Deputy Public Defender for the Colorado Public Defender system. For the past 24 years she has worked at DisAbility Rights Idaho (DRI), a non-profit serving Idahoans with disabilities. Amy started as a staff attorney and in 2014 became the Legal Director. She is currently serving as the Acting Executive Director.

Amy was lead counsel in groundbreaking litigation involving videophones in the prison system for deaf inmates. She was lead counsel in federal nationwide impact litigation that gave the Protection and Advocacy system access to coroner’s reports in death investigations. She serves on the Idaho Supreme Court Guardianship and Conservatorship Committee and the Supported Decision-Making subcommittee. Amy co-authored a public report on abuse and neglect in a public institution for which DRI received the 2019 National Disability Rights Network Disability Advocacy Award.

She has been a member of the Diversity Section of the Idaho State Bar, an Idaho State Bar Annual Meeting presenter, and CLE presenter for the Idaho Volunteer Lawyers Program. She is a graduate of the NDRN Leadership Academy. She also served on the Board of Director’s for Health West. Amy and her husband have two children and she loves hiking the numerous trails and floating the numerous rivers in Idaho.