

John Palmer Receives Susanne C. Adams Award

By Linda Gibson



TAM celebrated the 20th anniversary of The Susanne C. Adams Award by presenting the award to John P. Palmer, a highly respected attorney, mediator, and arbitrator who is richly deserving of the accolade. The award was created in 1997 to honor its first recipient, Susanne Adams, and to recognize exceptional and outstanding efforts in promoting and furthering the use of mediation in Texas.

Susanne Adams was active in the Texas mediation community as early as 1982. She was a pioneer in the mediation movement in Texas, and was a founding member of TAM. She was also a founding member of both the Greater Houston Mediation Network and the Dallas Mediation Council. Susanne was a member of one of the first TAM Boards of Directors and served as TAM President from 1988 to 1990.

Susanne began mediating in the 1970's, first in California, and then in Texas. She firmly believed that mediation was far superior to litigation, and fiercely held to her principles concerning mediation and its role in our litigious society. As her good friend Suzanne Duvall says, "The trail upon which you Texas mediators now walk was blazed by Susanne C. Adams."

In the past 20 years, TAM has recognized 23 pioneers who have been blazing that mediation trail. All those recognized over the years have made their marks in establishing mediation as not just an acceptable way, but often a preferable way to resolve disputes in Texas.

Our 2017 recipient, John P. Palmer, is a TMCA Credentialed Distinguished Mediator. He received his basic mediation training from the Attorney Mediators Institute in 1992 and his Family Mediation Training from Sam Houston State University in 1998. He was an ADR Fellow at the University of Texas School of Law Center for Public Policy Dispute Resolution in 2002.

John has been working quietly to improve and strengthen the mediation community in Texas for many years. He served as TAM's President in 2002, Chair of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Section of the State Bar of Texas in 1997-1998, Chair of the Federal Court Committee on ADR since 1997, and Chair of the Texas Mediator Credentialing Association from 2014-2016.

John has helped make things happen for mediation in Texas. He was on the initial board of TMCA, helping to bring about an organization in which mediators – not the Supreme Court – set the standards for mediators in Texas. He is a charter member, past president, and current board member of the McLennan County Dispute Resolution Center. As its Inaugural Chair in 1996-97, he was instrumental in making the Waco DRC a reality. He was the recipient of the Jerry Burks Peacemaker of the Year Award from the Waco Peacemaker's Alliance in 1998, and received the Justice Frank G. Evans Award from the ADR Section of the State Bar of Texas in 2001.

John's professional and community recognitions include: Outstanding Young Lawyer, McLennan County – 1993-94; President, Waco-McLennan County Young Lawyers Association – 1995-96; President, Waco-McLennan County Bar Association – 2015-16; nine years as Board of Trustees President of the China Spring School District; and Super Lawyer – 2015-2017.

Colleagues describe him as well-deserving of this award; a gentleman's gentleman (a gentleman who is also a gentle man), and a dedicated family man. Whether he is coaching his daughter's softball team, serving as school board president, white water rafting with his brothers, enjoying family time, or promoting mediation in Texas, award recipient John P. Palmer does everything professionally, efficiently, whole-heartedly, and incredibly well.