

## **Becker Receives Distinguished Service Award from NOSSCR “An irritatingly persistent irresistible force for Good”**

MADISON - Don Becker, founder of Becker Law Office. S.C., received the 2007 Eileen P. Sweeney Distinguished Service Award from the National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives (NOSSCR). This award is given to a person whose outstanding service has resulted in a significant improvement in the quality of advocacy for Social Security claimants, increased availability of advocacy for Social Security claimants, or a significant improvement in the Social Security adjudicatory process.

For the last decade, Becker has focused on helping Social Security claimants get their benefits. He began to see the need in this area of law to help individuals who are disabled at work. “I was helping a needy group of individuals. We appeal initial determinations adverse to our client; if they're denied, we help the client get the benefits to which they are entitled.” He has owned his practice since 1993.

Becker's practice involves three attorneys. They are in geographically separate areas – Madison, Dodgeville and Wausau – but operate seamlessly as one practice. Each attorney has a different background and perspective. “The depth of experience helps us help clients,” says Becker. Charles W. Kreimendahl of Becker's office originated the lengthy nomination process. Kreimendahl nominated him because “we do the second half of the game.” The first half is the legal work, and the second half is helping the community. What Becker likes best about his work is that second half of the game: “I like understanding the depth of need in this community and being able to contribute to the community.”

Nominating letters for Becker came not only from his own office, but also from Safe Harbor Child Advocacy Center; Porchlight, Inc.; the Governor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities; Access Community Health Centers; The Center for Patient Partnerships at UW Madison; and a now deceased friend, John Sandner, who referred to Becker as “an irritatingly persistent irresistible force for Good.” Becker's generosity with his time, legal expertise, and financial contributions is well known through the non-profit community. Martha Gaines, director of The Center for Patient Partnerships, referred to him as “a modern day Johnny Appleseed of philanthropy.”

Becker has been previously recognized with numerous awards for his significant volunteer work as well as contributions to various agencies. He is particularly proud of the 2005 Community Service Award from Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, which he received for helping agencies that work with abused children. He's also received recognition awards from such groups as Dane County Bar, AIDS Network, Porchlight Shelter, and Safe Harbor Child Advocacy Center. He has served on numerous agency boards that assist disabled people, youth, or families.

Becker donates to several organizations. Some are non-profit agencies, some are youth sports or education. He donates to such varied causes as Capitol Square Sprint (a ski run

around the downtown square), American Birkie, Fishing Has No Boundaries (helping disabled people fish), Old World Wisconsin, and many others that are family friendly and youth oriented. He likes to support groups that help individuals who need assistance. "I don't support agencies that aren't effective with money, or those who worry more about flash than substance," says Becker. This year he is sponsoring three women's hockey games as he feels they are representative of what college sports should be. His latest idea is to develop an accessible sit ski for disabled cross country skiers; he is helping a group who hopes to have a prototype by next winter.

Becker lives in Madison with Joanne, his wife of 32 years, Elisa (a freshman at Cornell University in New York) and Michael, who is a junior at Memorial High, and two dogs. He has lived in Madison since 1971.

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