

Press Release



STATE BAR OF WISCONSIN
Leaders in the Law. Advocates for Justice.®

Mary Ferwerda honored with 2025 State Bar Young Lawyers Division Outstanding Mentor Award

MADISON, Wis. (April 23, 2024) -- Mary Ferwerda is more than a leader in Wisconsin's legal system—she is a mentor who empowers others to serve. Through her work developing access-to-justice programs like the Mobile Legal Clinic and AmeriCorps Courthouse Navigator initiative, Ferwerda has guided young lawyers, law students, and volunteers toward meaningful public service.

For her lasting impact on the next generation of legal professionals, Ferwerda, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Milwaukee County Circuit Court, is the recipient of the 2025 [State Bar of Wisconsin](#) Young Lawyers Division Outstanding Mentor Award.

This award honors Wisconsin attorneys with six or more years of practice who have made significant contributions to the professional development of young lawyers. Ferwerda exemplifies this mission through her mentorship style—one rooted in empathy, collaboration, and real-world learning.

Before becoming Chief Deputy Clerk, Ferwerda served as the Executive Director of the Milwaukee Justice Center (MJC), a courthouse-based self-help center aimed at increasing access to legal resources. Under her leadership, the MJC launched the [Mobile Legal Clinic](#) to reach underserved communities across Milwaukee County, and introduced the [Courthouse Navigator program](#), which placed AmeriCorps members on-site to assist self-represented litigants.

Colleagues describe Ferwerda's mentorship as deeply personal and far-reaching. She takes time to connect with individuals from all backgrounds—law students, volunteer attorneys, and clients—offering guidance that extends well beyond legal training. Her efforts have helped shape a culture of service within the legal profession.

Ferwerda's commitment to innovation and access to justice has earned her two State Bar Legal Innovator Awards, first in 2014 for her work with the Mobile Legal Clinic and in 2019 for creating *Lost in the Law: Navigating Civil Legal Issues in Wisconsin*, an interactive educational program.



Mary Ferwerda, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Milwaukee County Circuit Court, is the recipient of the 2025 Outstanding Mentor Award from the State Bar of Wisconsin's Young Lawyers Division, honoring her leadership in access-to-justice initiatives and dedication to mentoring the next generation of legal professionals. (Photo courtesy of the State Bar of Wisconsin)

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ABOUT THE STATE BAR OF WISCONSIN

The State Bar of Wisconsin is the integrated professional association, created by the Wisconsin Supreme Court, for attorneys who hold a Wisconsin law license. With more than 25,000 members, the State Bar aids the courts in improving the administration of justice, provides continuing legal education for its members to help them maintain their expertise, and assists Wisconsin lawyers in carrying out community service initiatives to educate the public about the legal system and the value of lawyers. For more information, visit www.wisbar.org.

Photo attached: Mary Ferwerda, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Milwaukee County Circuit Court, is the recipient of the 2025 Outstanding Mentor Award from the State Bar of Wisconsin Young Lawyers Division.

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