

PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES. WDA's Issue Spotting – What Are You Going to Do?

EILEEN M. MURPHY is the Director of the Kittitas County Department of Public Defense – a new County Department created in 2022. Eileen started her career as a Deputy Prosecutor in Kittitas County in 1999, then became the main public defense contractor for the County and Judge Pro Tem in 2002.

Eileen received her Bachelors Degree in Psychology from Central Washington University and after working in the community mental health field received her J.D. from Seattle University in 1999. Eileen moved back to the beautiful Kittitas Valley after receiving her law degree to take advantage of all outdoor activities available in the community.

While creating the Department of Public Defense Office from the ground up, Eileen still represents clients in felonies, misdemeanors and juvenile cases. She has been the defense representative for the Kittitas County Superior Court Drug Court for 10 years and was a founding member of the new Kittitas County Behavioral Health Court for individuals with cases in the district court who are struggling with mental health issues.

When not advocating for her clients, Eileen advocates for animals as a Board Member and volunteer for several animal rescues both local and international. She lives in the mountains outside Cle Elum with her family and several rescue dogs.

SHERI OERTEL obtained her law degree from the University of Idaho College of Law. She was a prosecutor for over 5 years, gaining significant insight and training skills. In addition to handling criminal cases, Sheri presented trainings for law enforcement and trained other criminal attorneys. Most recently, prior to coming to work for Washington Defender Association, Sheri has been doing criminal public defense work. Sheri has regularly presented CLE trainings in the past two years. She enjoys sharing information with attorneys that has changed, is difficult to find but extremely useful for defense of a client's rights, and authority supporting defendant's rights. Pretext stops are at the heart of these issues, not only violating general defendant rights but constitutional and human rights, most often related to race, gender, ethnicity, and poverty.

NATE POSTON has worked the entirety of his legal career in public defense beginning with Jefferson Associated Counsel in 2010 before relocating to the Spokane County Public Defender's Office in 2013. Since 2019, he has worked for Counsel for Defense primarily handling adult felony conflicts for Spokane County. When not at work he enjoys spending time with his family, hiking, and golfing horribly.

ERIC SCOTT'S legal career began in 2007 as a law clerk to the late Justice Warren Jones at the Idaho Supreme Court. After a brief stint as a prosecutor, Eric transitioned into criminal defense and has remained a criminal defense attorney ever since. In 2015, the Idaho Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers awarded him its "Gargoyle Award" for triumphing over "unrelenting and at times unfair pressure from government actors." He has obtained reversals on RALJ appeals in dozens of cases, including cases involving statutory constitutional challenges, speedy trial violations, insufficiency of the evidence, prosecutorial misconduct, and many other issues. In his spare time, he plays golf poorly, always losing to his daughter who could legitimately beat him when she was 10 years old.

KATHRYN RUSSELL SELK is an appellate public defender practicing in all three divisions of the Court of Appeals and the state Supreme Court. After growing up in the Seattle area and going to law school in New York, she returned in 1994 to work at the then-new Washington Appellate Project for a year before opening her own firm. Since then, she has handled more than 500 appeals and occasionally taught criminal procedure at the University of Washington School of Law. Current projects include working with WDA's support on an effort to get the Supreme Court to take direct review on the widespread failures to provide counsel pretrial.