



Administrative Office of the Courts

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Judicial employees receive leadership award

SANTA FE – Two long-serving judicial employees received awards today in honor of their public service and dedication to excellence in the administration of justice in New Mexico.

Phyllis Russo and Dimple Tafoya received the Arthur W. Pepin Outstanding Judicial Service Award during a ceremony in Santa Fe.

Russo serves as an appellate technical legal editor for the state Supreme Court and has worked 18 years for the Judiciary.

Tafoya retired last year from the Administrative Office of the Court (AOC) where she served as the chief financial officer. She worked for more than 26 years for the Judiciary.

“Dimple and Phyllis embody the spirit of public service,” said Chief Justice Julie J. Vargas. “They have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to enhancing the ability of the Judiciary to provide fair and effective justice for the people of New Mexico.”

The award is named after former AOC Director Arthur “Artie” Pepin, who retired in 2024 after 18 years leading the judicial agency that supports courts across New Mexico. The award recognizes judicial employees or officers for their exemplary work on behalf of the state court system.

Tafoya served as chief financial officer at the Second Judicial District before moving to the AOC. During her career, she strengthened court financial systems to foster efficiency, accountability and transparency in the operation of the Judiciary.

Russo is known for her masterful editing to ensure the clarity and accuracy of Supreme Court written opinions. After retiring from the Los Alamos National Laboratory, she became a paralegal and worked at the state Court of Appeals and First Judicial District Court before moving to the Supreme Court.

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Arthur W. Pepin Outstanding Judicial Service Award winners Dimple Tafoya, fourth from left, and Phyllis Russo, sixth from left. Also pictured, left to right, are Justice David K. Thomson; Tafoya’s son, Arjan, and husband, Shawn Tafoya; Chief Justice Julie J. Vargas; and Justices C. Shannon Bacon, Briana H. Zamora and Michael E. Vigil.
(Photo courtesy of the Administrative Office of the Courts.)



Chief Justice Julie J. Vargas and Arthur W. Pepin Outstanding Judicial Service Award winner Phyllis Russo (L-R)



Chief Justice Julie J. Vargas and Arthur W. Pepin Outstanding Judicial Service Award winner Dimple Tafoya (L-R)