



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
**EXECUTIVE BRANCH ETHICS COMMISSION**

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FRANKFORT, KY – At its meeting today the Executive Branch Ethics Commission presented the Kentucky Department of Parks, with its prestigious Livingston Taylor Ethics Award for the 2017-2019 biennium. The Commission established this biennial award program to recognize individuals, programs, or agencies within the executive branch of state government for their outstanding achievement and contributions in promoting the ethical conduct of executive branch employees.

Over the last two years, under the guidance of the Tourism, Arts, & Heritage Cabinet's Ethics Officer, Misty Dugger Judy, who will also be awarded the Outstanding Ethics Officer for 2019, the Department of Parks has dealt with many serious issues, some of which have been referred to the Executive Branch Ethics Commission for further investigation. The Ethics Commission staff recommended that the Executive Branch Ethics Commission issue this award to the Department of Parks for its dedication to pursuing those matters to be referred to the Ethics Commission. The Department of Parks has demonstrated perseverance for the ethical values that underpin the Executive Branch Code of Ethics.

Those at the Department involved in the investigation and referral process include Shawn Estep, Acting Division, Director Division of Human Resources, who acts as a liaison between the Department and the Ethics Commission. Mr. Estep is responsible for making recommendations to Commissioner Donnie Holland and Ms. Judy to refer matters to the Ethics Commission. Deputy Commissioner Rob Richards and Special Assistant to the Commissioner John Kington are involved in this process as well and provide guidance and support to Mr. Estep on institutional knowledge. Notably, this process involves the assistance and guidance of the Office of Legal Affairs at the Cabinet level, including General Counsel Leigh Powers, and attorneys in Legal Affairs Jean Bird, Evan Jones, and Will Adams. Becky Cottongim and Cindy Brown provide litigation support and general assistance in investigations to the Department of Parks. Auditors Debra Barlow and Wayne Stover make up part of Mr. Estep's team and conduct investigative audits, gather and review evidence, compose audit reports, and draft disciplinary letters. Another part of the team, Program Investigative Officers Laurie Spalding and Kevin Shipp conduct investigations, interviews, gather evidence and documents,

compose reports, and draft disciplinary actions. Acting Assistant Director Teresa Miner assists in interviews, drafts letters and actions, conducts research, and assists in investigations. Acting HR Branch Manager John Shouse assists with research and drafting reports. HR Administrators Freda Harris, Tanya Bradshaw, and Milea Butler assist in conducting interviews, drafting, researching, gathering documentation, and conducting investigations. Finally, Executive Assistant Dale Clemons conducts interviews with Mr. Estep and assists in investigations. All of these individuals have worked together to warrant the Department of Parks to receive this recognition by the Executive Branch Ethics Commission.

Previous recipients of the award include: John Steffen, Executive Director of the Kentucky Registry of Election Finance in 2017; Rep. Tanya Pullin, former sponsor of legislation related to ethics in 2015; Robert D. Vance, former Secretary of the Public Protection Cabinet in 2013; Crit Luallen, former Auditor of Public Accounts in 2011; Jill LeMaster, retired Executive Director of the Executive Branch Ethics Commission, in 2009; and the Transportation Cabinet's Office of Inspector General in 2007.

The award is named in honor of Livingston Taylor, a former investigative reporter for the Courier-Journal, who wrote many articles on state government throughout his 26-year tenure, and who, upon his retirement, served as the Commission's first chair from 1992 -1995. Mr. Taylor was responsible for the early direction of the Commission and donated a considerable amount of time and effort in leading the Commission. He set the tone for the Commission with his concern that the Commission be politically independent and show no favoritism. His dedication to promoting the ethical conduct of executive branch employees will long be remembered.