



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
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FRANKFORT, KY – At its meeting today the Executive Branch Ethics Commission presented Judge Kathryn Holland Gabhart, 14th Judicial Circuit, Division 2, the “Livingston Taylor Ethics Award” for the 2021-2023 biennium. The Commission established this biennial award program in 2009 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.

Judge Gabhart was awarded for her efforts to enforce the Executive Branch Code of Ethics while serving as the Executive Director of the Executive Branch Ethics Commission, in August 2015-2022, after serving as its General Counsel from 2011-2015. She has represented the Commission in 532 investigations and approximately 204 administrative proceedings. She worked closely with other law enforcement agencies, including the U.S. Attorney’s Offices, the Attorney General’s Office, the Auditor of Public Accounts, various Offices of Inspector General, and the Personnel Board on matters that the Commission received from and referred to these agencies. Ms. Gabhart is a certified hearing officer and has served as an ethics officer in three state agencies and as a Federal Civil Rights Act Compliance Coordinator.

Judge Gabhart currently serves as Circuit Court Judge for Bourbon, Scott and Woodford Counties, 14th Judicial Circuit, Division 2. Prior to her election to the bench in November 2022, Judge Gabhart was appointed in May 2022 by Governor Andy Beshear to replace Judge Brian Privett who resigned. Circuit Judge Jeremy Mattox, of the 1st Division, swore Judge Gabhart into Office Wednesday, May 18th, 2022, making her the first female to hold the position of general circuit judge in the 14th Circuit. She previously represented the Kentucky State Board of Elections as General Counsel for six years. Ms. Gabhart also served as interim counsel for the Secretary of State in litigation concerning candidate-filing matters. Ms. Gabhart served as the counsel for the Kentucky Occupational Safety & Health Review Commission and began her legal career in the Criminal Appellate Division of the Office of the Attorney General in 1999. Ms. Gabhart also worked in private practice for the law firm Golden & Walters, focusing on

insurance defense. Ms. Gabhart served as the President, Vice President, and on the Board of Directors for the Kentucky Association of Administrative Adjudicators (KAAA) since 2017. She has presented continuing legal education on various ethics issues for the KAAA Annual Conference, Kentucky Bar Association Annual Convention, Equal Employment Opportunity Annual Conference, and the Legislative Research Commission's Annual Update.

Ms. Gabhart is a graduate of Louis D. Brandeis School of Law, University of Louisville, and the University of Kentucky. Ms. Gabhart lives with her husband, five children, four dogs, and two cats in the woodlands of Scott County. She and her husband coach the Scott County Special Olympics Track and Field Team. She is a 2nd degree brown belt in Shaolin Kempo.

Previous recipients of the award include: Edgar "Ed" Ross, the Office of the Controller, Finance and Administration Cabinet (2021); the Kentucky Department of Parks (2019); John Steffen, Executive Director of the Kentucky Registry of Election Finance (2017); Rep. Tanya Pullin, former sponsor of legislation related to ethics (2015); Robert D. Vance, former Secretary of the Public Protection Cabinet (2013); Crit Luallen, former Auditor of Public Accounts (2011); Jill LeMaster, retired Executive Director of the Executive Branch Ethics Commission (2009); and the Transportation Cabinet's Office of Inspector General (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.

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