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**2024 Teresa G. Phelps Award Recipient**

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**Susan McMahon**

**University of California, Irvine School of Law**

The Board of Directors of the Legal Writing Institute is delighted to announce that **Susan McMahon** is the recipient of the 2024 Teresa Godwin Phelps Award for Scholarship in Legal Communication.

Professor Susan McMahon joined the faculty of **Arizona State University’s Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law** in 2021 after teaching at the Georgetown University Law Center for ten years. Her scholarly work aims to unearth and critique law's biases, with a particular focus on individuals with mental health conditions in the criminal justice system. Her articles have appeared in journals such as the Georgetown Law Journal, the American Criminal Law Review, and the Arizona State Law Journal Online.

Professor McMahon earned her J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center magna cum laude. She then joined Debevoise & Plimpton, where she represented clients in securities litigation, intellectual property disputes, and federal criminal cases. She also represented, pro bono, several Guantanamo Bay detainees in their habeas corpus petitions before federal courts. From 2008 to 2009, she clerked for the Honorable Richard J. Leon of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

Professor McMahon will join the faculty at **UC Irvine School of Law** later this year.

The Phelps Award honors and draws attention to individual works of outstanding scholarship specific to the legal writing discipline that are published in any given calendar year. The award is meant to set aspirational standards for others writing in the field. In selecting recipients, the Selection Committee and the LWI Board focus solely on whether an individual work is specific to the discipline of legal writing and on whether it makes an outstanding contribution to the discipline.

The Selection Committee recommended Professor McMahon for her article titled, “What We Teach When We Teach Legal Analysis.” The article was published in *Minnesota Law Review*.

The Selection Committee commended McMahon’s article not only for introducing our discipline to a broad range of readers but also for challenging legal writing professors to “disrupt students’ sense that law is neutral and objective.” The Committee also noted that McMahon’s article goes beyond pointing out a problem, it also provides examples of how to use the traditional tools of legal reasoning to achieve change.

The LWI Board is grateful for the work of the Selection Committee in identifying nominees and making recommendations to the Board. The Selection Committee includes Chair, Christine M. Venter, Robert Anderson, Susan Chesler, Karen Sneddon, and Helena Whalen-Bridge.

The recipient of the Phelps Award will be recognized at the business meeting at the LWI Biennial Conference at Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law in Indianapolis in July. You can join us in congratulating Susan directly by emailing her at [Susan.A.McMahon@asu.edu](mailto:Susan.A.McMahon@asu.edu).