



PRESS RELEASE

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ATTORNEY GENERAL COFFMAN CONGRATULATES ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL JOHN T. LEE ON RECEIVING PRESTIGIOUS GOV. RALPH CARR AWARD

DENVER—[Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman](#) congratulated Assistant Attorney General John T. Lee on receiving the prestigious Governor Ralph Carr Award from the Asian Pacific American Bar Association. The APABA presented Lee with the award at its 25th Anniversary Celebration last week, in recognition of his service as a public-sector attorney.

The award is presented to an APABA attorney who has exhibited a commitment to public service through public sector work or a substantial commitment to community service. It is accompanied by a stipend intended to go toward CLE or repaying law school loans.

“John is an extremely bright and hard-working attorney from my office’s Criminal Appeals Section,” Coffman said. “As we celebrate Law Day today, it is fitting to recognize his accomplishments in many high-profile cases, as well as the ways in which he has protected our communities and preserved our freedoms. John's recent work defending Colorado's law that outlaws human smuggling not only preserved our state's law, but the basic human dignity that Governor Carr challenged Coloradans to embrace.”

Since graduating from Georgetown Law in 2006, Lee has spent nearly his entire career at the Colorado Attorney General’s Office. In that time, he has successfully defended hundreds of convictions in a broad array of cases, including murder, sex assault, child

abuse, and financial fraud. Indeed, his almost-40 published opinions reflect the significant and wide-ranging impact of his work.

In addition to his successful defense of a constitutional challenge to Colorado's human smuggling ban in *People v. Fuentes-Espinoza*, 2013 COA 1, he also prevailed in the Colorado Supreme Court in *People v. Alfaro*, 320 P.3d 1191 (Colo. 2014), reinstating the convictions of a dangerous murderer in 2014. And, this past year, he successfully defended the direct appeal of death row inmate Robert Ray's murder convictions.

The Governor Ralph Carr Award is named for Colorado's 29th Governor who denounced popular anti-Japanese sentiment and urged Coloradans to welcome resettled Japanese-Americans that the Government relocated from the West Coast to a camp at Amache near Granada, Colorado. In a speech defending the rights of the displaced Japanese-Americans, Carr said:

"If you harm them, you must harm me. I was brought up in a small town where I knew the shame and dishonor of race hatred. I grew to despise it because it threatened the happiness of you and you and you."

Carr's urgings for racial tolerance and for protection of the basic rights of the Japanese-Americans generally are thought to have cost him his political career, including his ambition for election to the United States Senate. The Ralph L. Carr Colorado Judicial Center, which houses the state appellate courts and many government offices, is named in his honor.

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