

Rhoda Billings and Dick Roose Honored for 11 Years of Service on the Commission on Indigent Defense Services

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PRESS RELEASE: After more than a decade of service on the Commission on Indigent Defense Services, former Chief Justice and Retired Law Professor Rhoda Billings and Asheboro attorney Dick Roose attended their last meeting as Commissioners on September 16, 2011. Billings and Roose are the last of the founding members of the IDS Commission. Billings has served as Vice Chair of the Commission since November 2004. At the end of the September meeting, Commissioner Burton Craige was elected to serve as Vice Chair for the remaining year of Billings' term.

At the close of their last meeting, Joseph B. Cheshire, V, former IDS Commission Chair and founding member of the Commission, presented a plaque to Roose in honor of his service on the Commission. According to Cheshire, "many of the original IDS Commissioners were not active criminal defense attorneys, and few understood the culture of practicing criminal defense in smaller North Carolina towns." Cheshire described Roose as "the essence of a small town North Carolina criminal lawyer who believes in justice." Cheshire said Roose "brought that unique perspective to the table and, over the course of 10 years, was always here fighting or in trial." Cheshire added that Roose "worked to keep the Commission grounded in the experience of real North Carolina defense attorneys who fight every day to protect the interests of poor people." In late 2000, Roose was appointed to the IDS Commission by the North Carolina State Bar to serve a three-year term as a founding member of the Commission. He was subsequently reappointed by the State Bar for two additional four-year terms. The State Bar will appoint a successor at its quarterly meeting in October.

After Cheshire honored Roose, he presented a plaque to Billings in honor of her service on the Commission. According to Cheshire, Billings has been "the backbone of the Commission and its greatest supporter," and has always "contributed incredible and consistent substance to the Commission's work" and "approached that work with amazingly thoughtful preparation." Cheshire described Billings as "the most important person who has ever served on the Commission," and said "everyone owes an enormous debt of gratitude for the time, passion, understanding, and brilliance that Billings brought to IDS, for the credibility that she brought to the Commission, and for her willingness to stand and fight with us." Cheshire said it made him "enormously proud" to honor Billings for her service. In late 2000, Billings was appointed by the IDS Commission itself to serve a three-year term as a founding member of the Commission. She was subsequently reappointed for two additional four-year terms. After Cheshire's remarks, Billings thanked him and the other Commissioners for the opportunity to serve with them. Billings said, when she joined the Commission in 2000, she "found an extraordinary assemblage of people whose dedication and passion have enriched her life in ways that she will always appreciate." Billings' seat on the Commission is being filled by Shallotte attorney W. James Payne.