

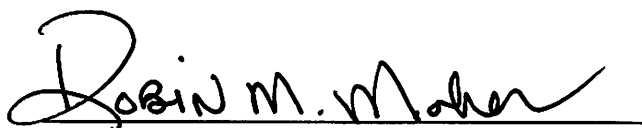
April 2, 2021

The best lawyers fight not for themselves, but to preserve the rule of law. They believe in fairness and justice for everyone. That's why I'm dismayed to see the recent attacks on Wisconsin Court of Appeals Judge Jeffrey O. Davis for his pro bono work. While in private practice, Judge Davis and his law firm responded to an urgent appeal from the American Bar Association to represent an indigent death-sentenced prisoner who was without a lawyer for his appeals. In doing so, Judge Davis exemplified the very best of the legal profession.

Judge Davis is in esteemed company as a former pro bono death penalty lawyer. His fellow advocates include many other judges, state and national lawmakers, business leaders, civil attorneys, industry leaders, and law professors from across the political spectrum. U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, former U.S. Solicitors General Kenneth Starr and Donald Verrilli, and U.S. Senators Ted Cruz and Tim Kaine are just a few of the scores of attorneys who have represented death-sentenced prisoners on a pro bono basis and speak proudly of their service. This diverse group of volunteers is united by the belief, enshrined in our Constitution, that every person facing a possible loss of life or liberty is entitled to zealous advocacy from skilled counsel. That is, after all, what each of us would want for ourselves and anyone we loved.

For more than two decades, Judge Davis and his team defended the constitutional rights of their client. The fact that this client was accused of a terrible crime does not diminish the value of Judge Davis' service; to the contrary, lawyers who represent the most marginalized members of society are upholding the very foundation of a criminal justice system that is measured by how we treat the least among us. Judge Davis and his colleagues from Quarles & Brady received the prestigious Exceptional Service Award from the American Bar Association in 2014, in recognition of their outstanding commitment to upholding the integrity of the criminal justice system through exemplary pro bono service.

The work of pro bono death penalty attorneys such as Judge Davis sets an example for the entire legal profession. He should be resoundingly commended for his service.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin M. Maher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Robin M. Maher, Esq.

Former Director of the American Bar Association Death Penalty Representation Project (2001 – 2014)