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Donna C. Pettus honored with Gayle Pettus Pontz Award

The University of Arkansas School of Law Women's Law Student Association will award Donna C. Pettus of Fayetteville with the Gayle Pettus Pontz Award on November 19, 2009. Chancellor G. David Gearhart will present the award to Pettus at 6:00 p.m. at the Soul Restaurant and Lounge located at 3878 Crossover Road in Fayetteville. The award is given to an outstanding woman attorney who has made a positive difference for her community and state.

Pettus has devoted her career to advancing the legal profession. In her current role as Arkansas Bar Association president, she is making strides in developing strong leadership in the Association and the community. "Being a good lawyer is more than just practicing law. It is also about helping maintain a good government and the freedoms we hold so dear." Pettus said.

Pettus is currently working on a new project known as the Leadership Academy. "The Academy is an opportunity for attorneys to learn what it means to be a leader – a citizen lawyer – and to improve their leadership skills," she said. "The participants will develop more effective communication and motivational skills that will lead to greater success in their professional and personal lives. They will have the chance to meet and interact with prominent leaders in the legal field and the community."

Pettus is the first woman president of the Association who graduated from the University of Arkansas Law School at Fayetteville. The Association honored her with a Golden Gavel award in 2006 for her work as chair of the Judicial Nominations Committee, a committee she chaired for several years. She was instrumental in planning the design of the new Arkansas Bar Center, while serving as the chair of the Interior Design Subcommittee. She is a former Governor of the Board of Governors and a former member of the House of Delegates. She has served as chair of the Disability Law Committee and served on the Legislation Committee. She is a Sustaining Fellow of the Arkansas Bar Foundation and the Association. She has twice served as a special justice to the Arkansas Supreme Court. She has served one term on the Fayetteville City Council. She earned an undergraduate degree in English and Journalism from the University of Arkansas and a Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Arkansas School of Law. Pettus is married to past president Lamar Pettus and they are the first lawyer couple in Arkansas to both serve as president of the Association.

The Arkansas Bar Association is a voluntary, statewide organization with 5,000 members. Among its purposes are the advancement of the administration of justice and the fostering among its members of high ideals of integrity, learning and public service.