

Keynote Speaker



Montana Supreme Court Justice Beth Baker

Justice Baker was raised in Spokane, Washington, and graduated magna cum laude from the University of Washington in 1982 with a bachelor's degree in Speech Communication. In 1985, she graduated with high honors from the University of Montana School of Law.

Following graduation from law school, Justice Baker served four years as a law clerk for the Hon. Charles C. Lovell, U.S. District Judge for the District of Montana. From 1989 through 2000, she worked as an Assistant Attorney General for the Montana Department of Justice, including four years as Assistant Chief Deputy Attorney General and four years as Chief Deputy Attorney General. Justice Baker spent the next ten years in the private practice of law with the firm of Hughes, Kellner,

Sullivan and Alke.

Justice Baker served ten years on the State Bar of Montana's Access to Justice Committee and currently serves as an ex officio director of the Montana Justice Foundation. Justice Baker now serves as the Montana Supreme Court's representative on the Court's Access to Justice Commission.

Justice Baker was elected to the Montana Supreme Court on November 2, 2010, and was sworn into office January 3, 2011, to fill the position of retiring Justice W. William Leaphart.

Justice Baker is a passionate advocate for access to justice for all Montanans and sees the vital role of libraries in fulfilling that access.

Joining Justice Baker for the Keynote address, we are exceedingly lucky to hear from judges at all court levels in Montana. In addition to Justice Baker, we will be addressed by 18th Judicial District Judge Holly Brown as well as Bozeman Municipal Judge Colleen Herrington. Librarians will learn important points of access to the Montana justice system from judges at all levels in our state.

Hon. Holly B. Brown was appointed to the 18th Judicial District Court (Gallatin County) by Governor Judy Martz in March 2004 and was then elected in November 2004 to complete the remaining term for Judge Mark Guenther. She was re-elected in November 2006 and 2012. Judge Brown earned her law degree from Vanderbilt University and practiced in Wyoming before moving to Bozeman in 1986. Judge Brown is a Trustee for the Montana Judges' Association. She served on the State Bar Fee Arbitration Committee from 1995 until November 2012, and is now serving on the Judicial Relations Committee. As part of her responsibilities for the 18th Judicial District, Judge Brown appoints the water commissioners and actively works with the irrigators and other water users in Gallatin County. Prior to her judicial appointment,

Judge Brown was in private practice in Bozeman with emphasis in the areas of business, commercial, and real estate law, and related litigation.

Judge J. Colleen Herrington has been the Bozeman Part-Time Municipal Court Judge since January 2012. Prior to the bench, Judge Herrington was commissioned into the Montana Army National Guard as a JAG Officer. She is currently a Captain and has been serving since 2010. Last year, Judge Herrington applied for and received a BJA Grant to start a Veterans Treatment Court in Bozeman Municipal Court. The Bozeman V.E.T.S. Court accepted the first participants this past February and serves Veterans involved in the Criminal Justice System.

Author Brunch Speaker



Leslie Budewitz blends her passion for food, great mysteries, and the Northwest in two light-hearted mystery series: the Spice Shop Mysteries, set in Seattle, and the Food Lovers' Village Mysteries, set in northwest Montana. Her books focus on strong women who share her passions, and have a talent for finding trouble!

Leslie is the first author to win Agatha Awards for both fiction and nonfiction. *Death al Dente*, first in the Food Lovers' Village Mysteries, won the 2013 Agatha Award for Best First Novel. Her guide for writers, *Books, Crooks & Counselors: How to Write Accurately About Criminal Law and Courtroom Procedure*, won the 2011 Agatha Award for Best Nonfiction.

A Montana native, Leslie graduated from Seattle University and Notre Dame Law School. After practicing in Seattle for several years—and shopping and eating her way through the Pike Place Market regularly—she returned to Montana, where she still practices law part-time. Killing people—on the page—is more fun.

A true believer in the power of writers helping other writers, Leslie served as president of [Sisters in Crime](#) (SinC) in 2015-16, and a founding member of the [Guppies](#), the SinC chapter for new and unpublished writers. She is the Montana representative to the board of the [Rocky Mountain chapter](#) of [Mystery Writers of America](#), and is also a member of the [Authors of the Flathead](#) and [Montana Women Writers](#).

Leslie loves to cook, eat, hike, travel, garden, and paint—not necessarily in that order. She lives in northwest Montana with her husband, Don Beans, a singer-songwriter and doctor of natural medicine, and their gray Tuxedo, named Squirt but usually called Mr. Kitten. Because what else would you call a 12-year-old, 17-pound killer and cuddler who always dresses in formal attire.

2013 Agatha Best First winner Leslie Budewitz
(photo by Deborah Lacy)

