

2015 Madeleine Thomas Award

A plaque on Madeleine Thomas' desk read:

'Give what you have. To someone, it may be better than you dare to think'.

~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The Grand Traverse-Leelanau-Antrim Bar Association presented Dan O'Neil and Maura Brennan the esteemed Madeleine Thomas Award at the Annual Fall Dinner, held at Black Star Farms.

The Grand Traverse-Leelanau-Antrim Bar Association annually presents the Madeleine Thomas Award in recognition of a recipient's exemplary contributions to the cultural, economic and social betterment of the local community. The Award honors Madeleine Thomas, a local attorney who worked tirelessly for various social service agencies including the Women's Resource Center, United Way, American Cancer Society and the Crooked Tree Girl Scouts Council. Ms. Thomas died in a tragic rafting accident in 1999, attempting to save another. She distinguished herself through her devotion to public service and as an advocate for women and children. The Award serves as a reminder that the practice of law and the pursuit of justice often require more than mere advocacy.

Mr. O'Neil, of Thompson O'Neil Law Firm, was nominated for his legal skill, as well as his work with the Third Level Legal Clinic, and his work on environmental issues, election reform, and the City of Traverse City.

Ms. Brennan, who previously worked in family and collaborative law, now works with Indian Legal Services. She was nominated for her compassion and competency, including her work on environmental issues, the Michigan Pipeline Workshop, the Sierra Club, and Marion Kromkowski's Judicial Campaign.

Mr. O'Neil and Ms. Brennan are married, have three children: Mary, Riley and John.

Past recipients of the Madeleine Thomas Award include: Jerry A. Colligan (2004), Patrick E. Heintz (2005), Jo L. Bullis (2006), Ronald W. Sondee (2007), Stephen C. Chambers (2008), Patrick J. Wilson (2009), The Honorable Thomas J. Phillips (2010), Charles Judson (2011), Charles H. Koop (2013), and George R. Thompson (2014).