



Lathrop GPM's Bernie Rhodes Presented with the Above and Beyond Award from Kansas Sunshine Coalition for Open Government

November 20, 2023

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (November 20, 2023) — Lathrop GPM LLP Partner Bernie Rhodes was presented with the 2023 Above and Beyond Award by the Kansas Coalition for Open Government. The award was presented to Rhodes along with Eric Meyer, Publisher of the Marion County Record, in a ceremony at a recent luncheon hosted by the Kansas Press Association. Rhodes received the award due to his work defending the Marion County Record against the unprecedented assault on the freedom of the press at the hands of the Marion Police Department.

Rhodes serves as counsel for the Marion County Record - and on Aug. 11, 2023, police raided the Record's office and the home of one its owners, one of whom, ninety-eight-year-old Joan Meyer, died the day following the raid of a sudden cardiac arrest. Rhodes argued that the police department's actions ran afoul of constitutional law designed to protect freedom of the press.

Rhodes' work on this case was in defense of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and a condemnation of the abuse of power tactics used in the police raid. Rhodes was instrumental in the declaration that there was insufficient evidence to justify the raids, resulting in the withdrawal of the search warrant causing all seized materials to be returned to the Marion County Record.

"Negotiating the withdrawal of the search warrant and return of seized items have demonstrated extraordinary courage, determination, and skill," said Maxwell E. Kautsch, President, Kansas Coalition for Open Government.

The Sunshine Coalition is a statewide organization of journalism and law professors, members of the news media and other private citizens committed to promoting open government in Kansas. It was founded in 2000 at Wichita State University.

Bernie Rhodes is a proven litigator with more than 40 years of experience, appearing as counsel in more than 100 reported decisions. He also leads a national team of attorneys who represent a variety of print, film, television and online media companies in First Amendment, intellectual property, and other matters. Rhodes received his B.A., *with honors*, from the University of Missouri-Kansas and earned his J.D. from



Fordham University School of Law.