

# Distinguished Alumnus Award

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## Mr. Terry Abeyta

The Yakima Valley College Alumni Association is pleased to announce Mr. Terry Abeyta as this year's recipient of the *Distinguished Alumnus Award*. Abeyta has been a personal injury lawyer in the Yakima Valley since 1978.

Born and raised in Yakima, Abeyta attended Yakima Valley College from 1969-1971 where he says he received some of the best instruction of his educational career. He benefitted from outstanding teachers like Delma Thayer, Inga Wiehl, and Mary Lou Schmidt, Gordon Howard, Jim Newbill, Bill Scofield, Paul Anderson, Robert McCutcheon, Millie Stenehjem, and the late Herb Blisard. He graduated at the top of his class with a 3.98 GPA and was a member of Phi Theta Kappa honor society.

Terry says the great start he received from YVC prepared him well for transferring to Whitman College. At Whitman, he graduated at the top of his class with a 4.0 GPA, summa cum laude, was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, and received honors in political science. He later attended the University of Washington Law School, winning the moot court competition and graduating in 1976 in the top 15% of his class. Terry worked his way through college and law school as a reporter with the Yakima Herald-Republic, Walla Walla Union-Bulletin, and the

Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

After law school, he worked for two years for a law firm in the Seattle area, where he was drawn to litigation. Terry moved back to his hometown in 1978 to practice law and raise a family. He practiced two years with a firm before going into solo practice in 1981. He hired Rod Nelson a year later. They recently celebrated 36 years of practice together. Terry has limited his practice to personal injury cases since 1985.

Terry has earned a reputation as one of best personal injury lawyers in Washington. He has been honored as a Super Lawyer every year since 1999, and has been named to The Best Lawyers in America every year since 2009. In addition, he is the only lawyer in Central Washington chosen for the Damage Attorney Round Table. He has been selected for the American Board of Trial Advocates, Million Dollar Advocates, and Law Dragon's Leading Plaintiff Lawyers in America. He has also served in many leadership positions for the Washington State Association for Justice, and is a past president of the Yakima County Bar Association. Terry has the highest personal injury settlement, arbitration award, and jury verdict for a neck injury case in the history of Yakima County.

Abeyta Nelson Injury Law was recently designated by readers of the Yakima Herald-Republic as Best Law Firm and Best Personal Injury Law Firm and by readers of the Yakima Valley Business Times as Best Attorney. US News & World Report has named it a Best Law Firm.

He is active in the community, serving on the board of trustees for La Salle High School and Catholic Charities of Central Washington, and is active in St. Paul Cathedral Parish. He has served in leadership for United Way, the Yakima Valley Community Foundation, YVC Foundation, and Whitman College.

Terry's son, David, is a lawyer and daughter, Julie, is a legal assistant at his firm. His daughter, Meagan, is a teacher at Apple Valley School. His life partner, Denielle Beaulaurier, manages his law firm.