**Ellen O’Neill-Stephens, JD**

Ellen O’Neill-Stephens retired in 2011 as a senior deputy prosecuting attorney from the King County Prosecutor’s Office in Seattle, Washington after 26 years of service. In 2003, she pioneered the use of facility dogs that are graduates of assistance dog organizations to provide emotional support to everyone in the legal justice system.

Ellen graduated from the University of Oklahoma School of Law in 1983.

Ellen is the founder of the Courthouse Dogs Foundation, a non-profit organization that educates legal professionals and promotes best practices for the use of these dogs during the investigation and prosecution of crimes. Ellen’s son Sean and his service dog Jeeter were the inspiration for her efforts to make the criminal justice system more humane.

In 2013 Ellen received recognition from the Hague Institute for the Internationalization of the Law for a successful innovation in their competition for the Innovating Justice Award.