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Longtime Trenton defense lawyer up for statewide legal honor

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Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media

Defense attorney Robin Lord argues a point in Mercer County Superior Court in this 2013 file photo.

By [Kevin Shea | For NJ.com](#)

Robin Kay Lord was at home, sick, in early April when a friend sent her a text congratulating her on being nominated for “Attorney of the Year.”

“Yeah right, very funny,” she responded. She thought it was an April Fool’s joke.

It wasn't.

The Trenton-based criminal defense attorney is one of [three finalists](#) for the New Jersey Law Journal honor, which will be awarded Wednesday evening, June 12.

"I was so humbled," Lord said Tuesday, during the lunch break of a trial.

In trial is where one will likely find Lord during weekdays. She's tried some of the highest profile and newsiest cases in Mercer County and beyond for the past three decades.

She does not know who nominated her; the nomination is confidential, she said. And she's not even sure who's been interviewed for a video chronicling her career the Law Journal produced, which will be played at the awards dinner.

"I don't do it for the recognition, I do it for the rights of my clients," Lord said of her work.

The self-described workaholic said she has "no life," outside of her practice. Years ago, she asked her young son if he wanted to be a lawyer when he grew up. "Heck no ma, you work too hard," he replied.

The irony is that he's currently in law school, at Hofstra University, his mother's law school alma mater, a proud Lord said.

"At the very least, I did not make that sacrifice for nothing," she said of the honor of being a finalist.

The Law Journal, when writing of Lord's nomination, described her legal defense work, the bulk of her practice, but also how she works in civil cases too.

It noted the [appellate case last year when Lord successfully](#)

[argued](#) that the non-biological ‘mom’ to a young girl killed in a traffic accident in Trenton should be allowed to re-join the case. A lower-court judge had ruled the woman – who the girl called mom, and is now married to the dead child’s biological mother – was not an intimate family member.

The case was a landmark win for LGBTQ rights in New Jersey.

Lord is up against some heady competition for the honor: [Edward Barocas](#), who retired last year after [17 years as legal director](#) of the American Civil Liberties Union’s New Jersey chapter, and former federal judge [Stephen Orlofsky](#), who is now in private practice.

Lord has been in Trenton since the 1980s, working as a public defender before launching her own practice in 1996.

“I was fortunate enough to land in Trenton in the 80s,” when newspaper competition was particularly intense and she made a name for herself appearing in the news, [Lord told the Law Journal](#). “When something horrific happens, I’m one of the people they call.”

Kevin Shea may be reached at kshea@njadvancemedia.com.

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