



25th
ANNIVERSARY

18th Annual

Charles L. Weltner Freedom of Information Banquet

Oct. 10, 2019 | Emory Conference Center | Atlanta

posthumously honoring

Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice P. Harris Hines



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Tonight's Agenda

Welcome and Recognition of Special Guests

Richard T. Griffiths, President, Georgia First Amendment Foundation

Dinner

Remarks and Presentation of Founder's Award

Richard T. Griffiths

Remarks

Hyde Post, Co-Founder, Georgia First Amendment Foundation

Introduction of Keynote Speaker

Richard T. Griffiths

Keynote Speech

Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice Harold Melton

Presentation of 2019 Weltner Freedom of Information Award to Helen Hines, wife of late Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice P. Harris Hines

Susan Yow, representing the Weltner Family

Closing

Richard T. Griffiths

Acknowledgements

The Georgia First Amendment Foundation thanks the following sponsors for their support of the 2019 Weltner Freedom of Information Banquet and the foundation's mission:

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Special thanks to WSB-TV, Peter Canfield, Hyde Post, David Hudson and Shawn McIntosh for generous financial support. Thank you to Dale Russell for creating tonight's tribute video. Thanks, also, to Lenora Kopkin, Mike Luckovich, John McCosh, Shawn McIntosh, Silvia Eaddy and Nydia Tisdale for their contributions to the success of our banquet. Our board members contribute to the foundation's success and advancement of our mission year round; meet them at gfaf.org/about/leadership.

About the Weltner Freedom of Information Award

Our award is named for Charles L. Weltner, a former chief justice of the Georgia Supreme Court who championed freedom of information and ethics in state government. Our annual Weltner Banquet provides financial support for the foundation's focused and essential mission: fighting for free speech, government transparency and access to public meetings, proceedings and records in Georgia. Learn more and meet past honorees at gfaf.org/events/weltner-awards.

Meet our speakers



Richard T. Griffiths, president of the foundation, lectures and consults internationally on journalism ethics, editorial quality control and free speech. He is Stembler Distinguished Visiting Professional at the University of North Carolina School of Media and Journalism. In 2017, he was named Distinguished Industry Fellow for the Cox Institute for Journalism Innovation, Management and Leadership at UGA's Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication. Griffiths worked 43 years as a journalist, including at CNN, where he oversaw global editorial quality control for more than 20 years.



Hyde Post is a co-founder and past president of the Georgia First Amendment Foundation. He was also a board member and former president of the nonprofit National Freedom of Information Coalition. He was inducted into the NFOIC Open Government Hall of Fame in 2019. Previously, he directed media strategy for News Distribution Network. During a long career at the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, he launched ajc.com and, as digital vice president, grew it to annual revenues over \$25 million. He also was a reporter, projects editor and assistant managing editor at the AJC. Projects he edited and directed earned major awards, including Pulitzer Prizes for investigative and explanatory reporting.



Chief Justice Harold D. Melton was appointed to the Supreme Court of Georgia in 2005 and became chief justice in 2018. Before joining the Court, he served as executive counsel to Gov. Sonny Perdue. He spent 11 years in the Georgia Department of Law under two attorneys general. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Auburn University a Juris Doctor from the University of Georgia. Chief Justice Melton serves on a local Young Life Ministries board and on the national board. He is a board member of Atlanta Youth Academies. A native of Washington, D.C., he grew up in East Point and Marietta and lives in Atlanta with his wife, Kimberly, and their three children.



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of the late Georgia Supreme Court Chief
Justice P. Harris Hines and celebrate the
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Weltner Freedom of Information Award recipient: **Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice P. Harris Hines**

Former Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice P. Harris Hines, who died last fall, was praised for his judicial acumen, fairness and kindness. The Georgia First Amendment Foundation remembers him as a friend of our organization and our open government cause.

Hines, who retired from the bench in August 2018 at the age of 75, was a regular at our annual Weltner banquets. Last year, Hines appeared in a video tribute to our 2018 honoree, Cobb Superior Court Senior Judge James Bodiford, whom we recognized for protecting the public's right to courtroom access.

Setting a precedent for openness

Hines himself was a Cobb County Superior Court judge in the early 1990s when the Marietta Daily Journal filed a lawsuit against Promina Health System and Northwest Georgia Health System seeking an injunction requiring the defendants to comply with Georgia's Sunshine Laws. Hines ruled in favor of the Journal, setting a precedent of public access to records of a private, nonprofit hospital doing work on behalf of a governmental hospital authority. The Georgia Court of Appeals affirmed his ruling in 1995.

Then-Justice Hines also wrote the Court's unanimous opinion in *Howard v. Sumter Free Press* in 2000, which compelled the Sumter County Sheriff's Office to comply with the state Open Records Act. The opinion rejected an allegation that the newspaper's records requests were not bona fide because they were made verbally. As recently as early 2018, in *Tucker v. Atwater*, Chief Justice Hines joined justices Keith Blackwell and Nels Peterson in questioning whether Tift County school officials had gone too far in punishing a teacher for comments made on her private Facebook account.

Inspirational legacy of service

Chief Justice Hines was killed in a Nov. 4 car accident on I-85. He was en route to his home in Marietta from Newnan, where he had heard his granddaughter sing in a church choir. The day after his death, Georgia Supreme Court Presiding Justice David E. Nahmias gave a heartfelt statement about how much Hines would be missed.

GFAF President Richard T. Griffiths said, "Chief Justice Hines' legacy of service is an inspiration to all of us who strive to make a difference in the lives of Georgians. We are grateful for his many years of support for the Georgia First Amendment Foundation and look forward to welcoming his family and friends to celebrate of his life and legacy at our 2019 Weltner Banquet."

Helen Hines, wife of the late chief justice, will accept tonight's Weltner Award.

It's worth knowing.

As journalists, we fight for free speech,
government transparency and access
to public information — because
it is worth knowing what's really going on.

It's worth celebrating.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
applauds the work of the
Georgia First Amendment Foundation and
salutes the work and legacy
of Georgia Supreme Court Justice Harris Hines.

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Founder's Award recipient: **Hyde Post**

As we celebrate the Georgia First Amendment Foundation's 25th anniversary, we're presenting our Founder's Award to Hyde Post, co-founder, board member and past president of the foundation.

Strengthening public access

As GFAF co-founder, Post established the foundation's pattern of collaborating with public officials to publish guides to open government and transparency in law enforcement. (See and share our 2019 edition of GFAF's Red Book at gfaf.org/resources/the-red-book.) He also led the organization's efforts to educate lawmakers about the importance of preserving and strengthening public access to government meetings, proceedings and records.

Post's passion for public access to government emerged through his work as a journalist. Projects he directly oversaw for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* won two Pulitzer prizes. He used his platform at the AJC to advocate for openness and transparency in the halls of government and in the courts. His résumé gave credibility to the Georgia First Amendment Foundation in its early days, and his leadership ensured the organization's influence for more than two decades.

Thoughtful advocacy

Post also furthered the open government cause nationally, serving as president of the National Freedom of Information Coalition from 2009 to 2012. He was instrumental in bringing together state open government organizations to strengthen their collective impact. Post was inducted into the NFOIC's Open Government Hall of Fame in April. That honor reflects his long and steady effort to protect the free flow of public information that is vital to democracy.

"The generally positive climate in Georgia toward open and transparent government reflects Hyde's tireless work," said GFAF President Richard T. Griffiths. "Georgia's public officials simply would not have the same respect for open government if it had not been for Hyde's thoughtful advocacy."



Caplan Cobb is proud to support
the Georgia First Amendment
Foundation and joins in honoring
the legacy of the late Georgia
Supreme Court Chief Justice
P. Harris Hines.

We congratulate the Foundation on twenty-five years of advocating for open courts.

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Jones Day salutes the legacy of
Justice P. Harris Hines and the
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A Legacy of Justice

“A democracy requires accountability, and accountability requires transparency.” – unknown

Kilpatrick Townsend is proud to join the Georgia First Amendment Foundation in honoring the legacy of the late Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice P. Harris Hines as this year’s Charles L. Weltner Freedom of Information Award winner, in recognition of his legacy of service to others as a judge for more than 40 years. His commitment to our laws and Constitution is truly commendable and his years of service will never be forgotten.

On the foundation’s 25th anniversary, we also applaud Hyde Post’s induction into the national Open Government Hall of Fame. Hyde’s commitment to preserving and protecting the free flow of public information has never wavered.