

Honorable Elizabeth G. Crnkovich

Judge Crnkovich's career in juvenile court began in 1985 prosecuting youth delinquency and child welfare cases for the state of Nebraska as a **Deputy Douglas County Attorney**. In 1994, Crnkovich's growing reputation as a sharp, fair and forward-thinking lawyer inspired Governor Ben Nelson to appoint her to the bench in **Douglas County's Separate Juvenile Court**. Governor Nelson described Crnkovich as "at the forefront of efforts to solve the growing problem of juvenile crime in Douglas County" involving abuse, neglect, drugs, truancy and other crimes.

"Safe-guarding the public trust by respecting all who come before the court while deciding cases with fairness, impartiality and diligence based on evidence and applicable law" remains a steadfast commitment of Crnkovich.



Judge Elizabeth Crnkovich

Credit: WCA, formerly YWCA

Problem-Solving Drug Courts

Judge Crnkovich's dedication to dealing with troubled youth inspired her to create both the **Douglas County Juvenile Delinquency Drug Court** (2000-2011) and the problem-solving family **S.T.A.R Court**, an acronym for **Specialized Treatment and Recovery**, a shift in focus to address parental chemical dependency treatment, mental health counseling, and court monitoring of child welfare cases (2007-2016).

Established School Absentee Diversion Programs

In 2010, to deal with an "emergency" high number of unexcused school absence court cases, Crnkovich spearheaded the creation of the voluntary **Douglas County Truancy Diversion Court Program** "to keep kids out of the court system and in the classroom." In 2013, the International Association for Truancy and Dropout Prevention awarded Douglas County's truancy program Program of the Year, in which Crnkovich played a pivotal role in creating a plan-of-action that offers children up to age 18 and their family support, resources and "compassionate coercion" to resolve excess absences.

Exploring a remedy to absentee problems in Douglas and Sarpy Counties, Crnkovich collaborated with Learning Community Superintendents to establish **GOALS, The Greater Omaha Attendance and Learning Services Center**. Lauding the center's achievements to ensure children attend school and receive an education, the U.S. Department of Education invited Crnkovich and others to speak about GOALS during a 2016 national Washington, D.C. conference.

Kids & Judges Day Involvement

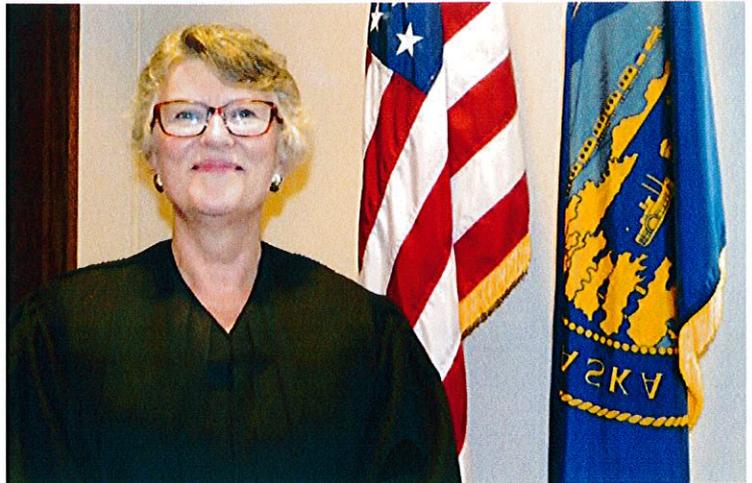
Judges, lawyers, psychiatrists and the like can intimidate a youth thrust into the foster care system. Since 2010, Crnkovich participates in "Kids and Judges Day," a special day in July each year at the Douglas County Courthouse designed to make it more comfortable for young ones. "Children involved in the court system, by no fault of their own, benefit from this positive meet and greet interaction." notes Crnkovich.

Adoption Day Participation

Crnkovich commits her time on a Saturday in November each year for National Adoption Day to raise awareness about the need for more foster and adoptive homes for children propelled into the Douglas County child welfare system.

Education

Judge Crnkovich received a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Nebraska Omaha in 1980, before earning a Juris Doctorate at Creighton University Law School in 1983.



Judge Elizabeth G. Crnkovich | Douglas County Separate Juvenile Court

Judicial/Law Related Affiliation

Nebraska Bar Association
Omaha Bar Association
National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges
Nebraska Separate Juvenile Court Judges Association
Robert M. Spire Inns of Court

Committees

Special Committee to Review Juvenile Code (1993 – 1995)
Special Committee to create the Intermediate Court of Appeals

Nebraska Supreme Court Committees

Judicial Qualifications Committee (1995 – 2000)

Honors

- Nebraska Bar Association Fellow
- Mid America Council/Boys Scouts of Merit Award recipient
- Metropolitan Child Abuse Coalition Board recognition for “Efforts on behalf of children in the state of Nebraska”
- Nebraska Legislative Task Force commendation for creating multi-agency team to review child neglect/abuse cases, ascertain system failures & provide treatment recommendations for individual cases

Philanthropy

Crnkovich volunteers on numerous boards “close to my heart,” tapping into her formal work expertise. She took a leadership role with Operation Youth Success (OYS), a non-profit that brings together community stakeholders who carefully develop strategies on how to improve Douglas County’s juvenile justice and child welfare systems, and decrease out-of-school student suspensions and expulsions – programming developed and endorsed by the Washington, D.C.-based National Center for Juvenile Justice Reform.

Non-profit Community Involvement

- Midwest Council Boy Scouts of America – Board of Trustees
- Downtown Omaha Rotary
- Omaha Community Partnership
- Metropolitan Child Abuse Coalition
- Nebraska Adolescent Perpetrators Network
- Omaha World Affairs Council
- Connections – Business Women’s Networking Association

Seminar & Speaking Presentations at Hospitals

- **Immanuel Medical Center** - Presented seminar entitled “Child Abuse - What Now?” - Educating medical professionals how to identify abuse, reporting laws & procedures - May 1989
- **Children’s Hospital Midwest Conference on Child Abuse** - For legal counsel, conducted Q & A panel discussion & participated in a mock trial - October 1991

Speeches at Schools & University

- **Omaha Public Schools** - Frequently-called upon speaker sharing how to detect child abuse/neglect, mandatory reporting and truancy laws. Audience: teachers, administrators, counselors & other staff - 1995 - present
- **Conference on Domestic Violence, University of Nebraska at Kearney** – Presentation - April 1996

Governmental Speeches

- **Omaha Police Department &/or Douglas County Sheriff** - Seminar presenter: “Recruit Officer Training: Juvenile Law & Procedure” - 1988-1994
- **Nebraska Department of Social Services** - Speech presentation covering juvenile justice and child welfare procedure – 1995 - present

Non-Profit Organization Speeches

- **Midwest Childcare Association** - Presentation to daycare workers, entitled “Identifying Child Abuse & Neglect. The Duty to Report” - April 1991
- **Nebraska Correctional Association Spring Conference** - Featured speaker. Topic entitled “Youth Violence” - 1998
- **Nebraska Association of Legal Assistants** - Presented “Philosophy of Juvenile Justice System, Adults vs. Juvenile” - September 1989
- **Foster Parent Leadership Conference** - Keynote Speaker - January 1997 – Shared ABC’s of foster parenting, legal rights & responsibilities.
- **Archdiocese of Omaha Social Ministry Commission** - Presentation of “The County’s Role in Juvenile Detention - March 1993
- **The Consortium Inc.** - Provided continuing education course to therapists: “Practical Realities: Abuse Cases & the Legal System” - February 1993
- **Omaha Chamber of Commerce Youth Leadership Program** - Assisted youth law-enthusiasts who conducted a mock courtroom trial - 1995 to 2000
- **Coordinated Nebraska Bar Association Mock Trial Competitions for Douglas County** - 2007 & 2008
- **League of Women Voters** - Spoke to members about “Juvenile Detection”, the system and how it works - November & July 1992

Government Agency Participation

- Douglas County Inter-agency Collaboration Team
- Douglas County Youth Center Advisory Board
- Douglas County Juvenile Detention Task Force
- Douglas County Multi-disciplinary Treatment Team