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Striking before the fire's hot

MARGRIT LENT PARKER'S FORETHOUGHT BENEFITED WILDFIRE VICTIMS



Margrit Lent Parker, attorney at Childs McCune, with her horse, Daiquiri, at her home in Firestone.

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During the summer of 2012, Colorado caught fire. Literally. Blazes burned out of control from Colorado Springs to Boulder and many places in between.

People lost their homes and possessions, and needed legal assistance to help them navigate the myriad red tape that comes with trying to put the broken pieces of their lives back together.

Luckily, 18 months before the fires, Colorado's policy for helping people receive legal assistance had been updated, with a big assist from Margrit Lent Parker.

The 35-year-old attorney for Denver-based law firm Childs McCune formed and headed a committee to renew Colorado's protocols for providing volunteer legal assistance to disaster victims, and helped implement the protocols during the 2012 wildfires and 2013 floods.

The disaster plan was very old, and most people didn't remember it, Parker said.

Parker said the 2012 wildfires gave her a chance to test out the new policy and make necessary tweaks, which would come in handy a year later when half of the Front Range seemed

MARGRIT LENT PARKER

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Education: Colorado State University, BS, 2002, University of Colorado Boulder, JD, 2008

Favorite time of the year: "When the days are long enough that I get to enjoy the beautiful Colorado sunrises while I feed my horses and do barn chores, grounding me before I head into the office for the day."

to be under flood waters.

For her work during the 2013 floods, Parker was rewarded with a trip to Boston, where she accepted the American Bar Association's Harrison Tweed Award recognizing success in distributing legal aid to the poor on behalf of the Colorado Bar Association.

Despite the award, Parker would rather disasters like the floods not happen in the first place.

"Hopefully we don't have to do that very often," Parker said. "It's an unfortunate circumstance."

Parker also recently received the Denver Bar Association's award for Young Lawyer of the Year.

A California native, Parker moved to Colorado to attend Colorado State University, with the intention of becoming a veterinarian. She completed a double-major in zoology and equine science in 2002, before moving to Kentucky for jobs at a stud farm and an equine medical institute.

"The plan was always that I would go [to Kentucky] for a year and come back to Colorado," Parker said.

But during her year in Kentucky, Parker decided that veterinary medicine wasn't for her and started looking for a new career track. Friends in law school eventually got her thinking about becoming an attorney and so she decided to go to law school when she returned to Colorado from her stint in Kentucky.

Parker said being able to help people solve problems drew her to the law in the same way veterinary medicine allows people to solve problems for animals.

She attended law school at the University of Colorado Boulder, graduating in 2008. She interned with Colorado Supreme Court Justice Allison Eid, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Denver and the Denver city attorney's litigation section.

And after law school, Parker clerked for Colorado Supreme Court Chief Justice Mary Mullarkey and for Wyoming Federal Magistrate Judge William Beaman. Parker clerked for Mullarkey during her final months as a justice.

Colorado Supreme Court Chief Justice Michael Bender recently appointed Parker to the Chief Justice Commission on the Legal Profession. In this capacity she has played a big role in the Colorado Attorney Mentoring Program. Colorado is one of just a few states with such a program.

Parker was one of 20 young attorneys selected for the 2013 Colorado Bar Association Leadership Training Program, which helps young attorneys build leadership skills and partake in different leadership experiences.

Parker has served as the Colorado and Wyoming district representative to the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division.

When she looks back on her career so far, Parker said she is most proud of the ways in which she has been able to help people.

"We're problem-solvers for our clients. I love being able to do that," Parker said.



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Margrit Lent Parker had planned to be a veterinarian before going into law.