

2013 Cristine Wilson Medal for Equality and Justice

Sharon Malheiro

Sharon Malheiro has worked tirelessly for civil rights in Iowa, leading the campaign for marriage equality in the state. As a senior shareholder at the Davis Brown Law Firm, she practices in the areas of employment law, including employment discrimination, litigation and corporate employment policies and practices, as well as media and communication law. In 1991, Malheiro was appointed by the Iowa Supreme Court to serve as a member of the Task Force on Gender and Racial Bias in the Judicial System. After the completion of the Task Force's report, she was asked to serve as a member of the Iowa Supreme Court's Monitoring Committee, which was charged with ensuring that the recommendations made by the Task Force were implemented. In 2003, Malheiro acted as co-counsel for *Alons v. Woodbury County*, which upheld a district court decision dissolving the Vermont civil union of a same-sex couple. In 2009, she served as an expert witness in *Varnum v. Brien*, a landmark case that declared the Iowa Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional. Additionally, Malheiro served as co-counsel in *Gartner v. Iowa Department of Public Health*, which ruled Iowa parents in same-sex marriages must be allowed to have both of their names listed on their child's birth certificate, consistent with Iowa's spousal presumption of parentage. Malheiro founded One Iowa in 2005, a statewide organization seeking full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Iowans, and currently chairs the One Iowa board. She also provides pro bono legal counsel for Aids Project of Central Iowa and is one of the cooperating attorneys for Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.