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Published on *The Estonian Supreme Court* (<https://www.riigikohus.ee>)

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### **Badges of Honour of the Courts bestowed on Madis Kägu, Andrus Miilaste and Eerik Kergandberg**

9 February 2017

The first Badges of Honour of the Courts were issued at the judicial plenary of this year. The recipients were the Tartu County Court Judges, Madis Kägu and Andrus Miilaste; and Justice of the Supreme Court, Eerik Kergandberg.

Madis Kägu, who received the Badge of Honour for his impeccable work as a judge, graduated from the School of Law at the University of Tartu in 1976. In the same year, he started working as a lay judge. In 1993, he became a Judge of Tartu City Court; and later on the Chairman of Tartu City Court and Tartu County Court. Madis Kägu is the longest-serving judge in Estonia: by May, he will have worked as a judge for 41 years.

Judge Andrus Miilaste and Justice of the Supreme Court Eerik Kergandberg were both recognised for their special services in promoting the judicial profession and the Estonian justice system. Both Andrus Miilaste and Eerik Kergandberg graduated from the School of Law at the University of Tartu and were appointed as judges in 1993. Andrus Miilaste began working in Tartu County Court and Eerik Kergandberg joined the Supreme Court. Eerik Kergandberg obtained a Candidate's degree in Law in 1985, and he is currently a visiting professor at the School of Law of the University of Tartu in the subject of Criminal Procedural Law.

This year, President Kersti Kaljulaid decided that the Tartu County Court Judge, Andrus Miilaste, shall also be awarded the 4th Class Order of the White Star.

The purpose of issuing the Badge of Honour of the Courts is to recognise the high level of the professional work of judges and their contribution to the development of the Estonian legal and justice system. The Council for Administration of Courts decided to establish the Badge of Honour of the Courts for the purpose of recognising judges at the session of 2-3 June 2016. The current year is the first time that this Badge of Honour has been issued. According to the statute, all of the judges and professional associations of lawyers may propose candidates for this honour. A dedicated statute-based committee, chaired by Indrek Koolmeister, Justice of the Supreme Court, will evaluate the proposals and make a decision about the award recipients. Every Estonian judge is eligible to receive the Badge of Honour.

The Badges of Honour of the Courts are made of gold and are handcrafted in cooperation with the goldsmiths from the company Roman Tavast.

In addition, the traditional award of the Training Provider of the Year was bestowed on Julia Laffranque, a judge at the European Court of Human Rights, for her traditional work in ECHR traineeships.

"It is remarkable that Julia Laffranque manages to prepare such comprehensive training materials, regardless

of her tight work schedule. Her training classes are consistently well-structured and interesting, and always receive the highest praise from the participants," said Margit Jõgeva, Chairwoman of the Judicial Training Council.

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**Source URL:** <https://www.riigikohus.ee/en/news-archive/badges-honour-courts-bestowed-madis-kagu-andrus-miilaste-and-eerik-kergandberg>