Council of Accountability Court Judges

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PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

The Council of Accountability Court Judges Announce Winner of the Judge Stephen S. Goss Award at Annual Conference

Athens, GA --- The Council of Accountability Court Judges (CACJ) announced the 2021 recipient of the prestigious Judge Stephen S. Goss Award at the awards ceremony at the annual training conference on Monday, September 27, 2021.

In memory of the late Judge Stephen S. Goss, the Council of Accountability Court Judges created an award to honor his life and legacy as a nationally recognized expert on mental health. In 2002, Judge Goss founded the Dougherty Superior Court Mental Health & Substance Abuse Treatment Program. It served as one of four learning sites for mental health courts as designated by the United States Bureau of Justice Assistance and was the first mental health court created in the state of Georgia. His contribution to the field of mental health courts is felt nationwide, as well as in Georgia.

Recognized for his outstanding contributions in the field of mental health courts, Judge Winston Bethel of the Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit is the recipient of the 2021 Judge Stephen S. Goss Award.

Judge Bethel has worked with mental health courts over 20 years and is responsible for establishing the first mental health diversion court program of its kind in 2001. Known as the DeKalb Diversion Treatment Court, the program became the misdemeanor mental health court. He retired from the bench in 2010 but continues to serve as a Senior Judge to the misdemeanor mental health court and DeKalb Magistrate, State, and Superior Courts. At the 2019 Mental Health Court Refresher training, Judge Goss was facilitating. He paid homage to Judge Bethel's achievements in mental health and acknowledged his continuous work in the field.

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