



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 Award Recipients at Annual Training Conference

Athens, GA --- The Council of Accountability Court Judges (CACJ) announced the 2021 recipients of the prestigious Star Awards, Judge Tommy Day Wilcox Leadership Award, Data Driven Award, and Model Court Recognition at the awards ceremony at the annual training conference on Monday, September 27, 2021.

Star Awards

CACJ distinguishes accountability court professionals across the state for their hard work and dedication to the programs they serve. Award recipients are nominated by their fellow team members, and CACJ selects and recognizes one person from each team role to receive the Star Award.

This year's Star Award recipients are:

- *Judge – Chief Judge Russell Smith, Mountain Mental Health Court
- *Coordinator – Anita Grainger, Douglas County State DUI/Drug Court
- *Case Manager – Sandra Moore, Athens-Clarke County Family Treatment Court
- *Treatment Provider – Cordele Golden, Savannah-Chatham County Mental Health Court
- *Probation Officer – Tommy Robertson, Cherokee Judicial Circuit Drug Court
- *Law Enforcement Officer – Deputy Lee Martin, Douglas County Family Treatment Court
- *Defense Attorney – Tanya Jeffords, Augusta Judicial Circuit Drug Court
- *Special Assistant Attorney General – Rachele Gibson, Athens-Clarke County Family Treatment Court
- *Peer Support Specialist – Walter Nunnally, Rockdale County Drug Court
- *Veterans Mentor Coordinator - Ernie Hines, Cobb County Veterans Treatment and Accountability Court
- *CASA Advocate – Christie Ledlow-Hodges, Hall County Family Treatment Court

Judge Tommy Day Wilcox Leadership Award

Judge Tommy Day Wilcox was the first accountability court judge in Georgia, and he presided over the Macon Drug Court. In his honor, the Judge Tommy Day Wilcox Award goes to the STAR Award nominee that received the highest overall score.

This year's winner is Danny Stevens, Coordinator of the Athens-Clarke County Family Treatment Court. Serving the court program since its inception, Mr. Stevens accepted the FTC Coordinator position after retiring from DFCS. According to those who nominated him, "he holds hope for the clients he serves, even when they are facing multiple barriers, which attests to his belief that recovery is possible. He is a source of strength for individuals who are going through a difficult time in their lives and is a source of support and encouragement for those who do not have anyone to lean on."

Data Driven Award

CACJ's Metrics and Measures Subcommittee created the Data Driven Award to reward programs who fully utilize data and their case management systems to improve program and participant outcomes. Since data is instrumental to self-evaluation and for sharing program outcomes with community partners, stakeholders, and legislators, the Data Driven Award reinforces the importance of strong data collection. The Data Driven Award provides both recognition and up to \$15,000 of financial support for continued program evaluation.

The winner of the 2021 Data Driven Award is Cobb County Family Treatment Court (FTC). Judge Jeffrey Hamby presides over Family Treatment Court, and Coordinator Jennifer Tillery accepted the award on the program's behalf. CACJ recognized Cobb County Family Treatment Court for fully utilizing its case management system to enter data, meeting as a team twice a year to review program data and evaluate the efficacy of the program to make changes as needed, and for sharing the data with community partners and stakeholders that results in financial support for the program. According to Ms. Tillery, "The Cobb County FTC enjoys incredible support from the Cobb County Board of Commissioners, Court Administration, and the judiciary due to the impressive data that can be provided through these reports." She added that data is one of the most important reasons why Cobb FTC has a record of success both within the court and the community.

Model Court Recognition

The goal of Georgia's Accountability Court Model Court program, supported by CACJ, is to recognize the great work of accountability courts across the state, as well as identify strong programs that may serve as mentors for other courts. Programs identified as Model Courts are those that have met and exceeded adherence to Georgia's Standards as dictated by strong performance on certification and peer review processes.

CACJ is proud to recognize the 2022-2025 Model Courts:

Family Treatment Courts

- *Chatham County Family Treatment Court, Judge Tom Cole
- *Cobb County Family Treatment Court, Judge Jeffrey Hamby
- *Enotah Family Treatment Court, Judge Jeremy Clough
- *Hall County Family Treatment Court, Judge Alison Toller

- *Muscogee County Family Treatment Court, Judge Andrew Dodgen
- *Tallapoosa Family Treatment Court, Judge Laura Wheale

Veterans Treatment Courts

- *Appalachian Circuit Veterans Court, Chief Judge Brenda Weaver
- *Atlantic Judicial Circuit Veterans Court, Judge Robert L. Russell, III
- *Cobb County Veterans Accountability & Treatment Court, Judge LaTain Kell
- *Coweta Veterans Treatment Court, Judge John Simpson

As of July 1, 2021, there are 170 certified accountability court programs in Georgia, and the mission of the CACJ is to provide a unified framework that promotes and improves the quality, accessibility, and administration of accountability courts with a vision to make accountability courts work for all Georgians. Established in 2015, the CACJ fulfills this mission through certification, standards, peer review, data collection, training, treatment fidelity monitoring, and grants.

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