



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 2022 recipient of the prestigious Judge Stephen S. Goss Award at the awards ceremony at the annual training conference on Monday, October 10, 2022.

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, Chris Van Rossem of the Hall County Mental Health Court is the recipient of the 2022 Judge Stephen S. Goss Award.

Mr. Van Rossem has worked with the Hall County HELP Court for the past eight years. He's been known to treat each participant with respect, remembers all details about participants and their cases, and provides compassionate, thoughtful advice to participants on how they can improve their lives. He's also played a huge role in policy development and frequently updates the enrollment contract when he sees participants struggling to understand the program in the beginning. Recently, he paid for a golf team to enter a fundraiser benefitting accountability courts and then played with three male participants. They all commented on that experience as one of the best in their time in the program. One of the participants stated that Mr. Van Rossem "singlehandedly restored my faith in the criminal justice system". According to those who

nominated him for the award, the team would not be as successful a program without Mr. Van Rossem's heart and exceptional intelligence.

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