



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 2022 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, October 10, 2022.

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 – Honorable James Blanchard, Columbia Judicial Circuit Accountability Court
- *Director/Coordinator – Jennifer Fabbri, Southern Judicial Circuit Accountability Court
- *Case Manager – Suzanne Eberhardt, Hall County Drug Court
- *Treatment Provider – Yolanda Parker, Chatham County Family Treatment Court
- *Probation Officer – Josh Gordon, Hall County HELP Program
- *Law Enforcement Officer – Diane Watts, Cobb County Accountability Courts
- *Prosecutor – Blair Mahaffey, South Enotah Drug Court
- *Defense Attorney – Adam Hebbard, Western Judicial Circuit Family Treatment Court
- *FTC Attorney – Leo Beckmann, Chatham County Family Treatment Court
- *Peer Support Specialist – Deena Davis, Douglas County Family Treatment Court
- *CASA Advocate – Susan Ryncavage, Chatham County Family Treatment Court
- *DFCS Case Manager – Nekesha Larkin, Chatham 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 Judge Alison Toller, who presides over the Hall County and Dawson County Family Treatment Court programs. Judge Toller became the presiding judge of Hall County Family Treatment Court seven years ago and then implemented the Dawson County Family Treatment Court three years ago. Both court programs have been recognized as model Family Treatment Courts in Georgia. According to those who nominated her for the award, "Judge Toller is dedicated, compassionate, and brings great strength and tenderness to the bench. She uses trauma informed best practices in her courtroom, and she genuinely cares about each and every family that comes before her." Judge Toller's investment in the participants' success shows in her interactions with them as indicated by one participant who said, "She gave me the strength, courage, and accountability to move forward in my recovery."

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. This year, there were eight courts submitted for consideration of the Data Driven Award.

The winner of the 2022 Data Driven Award is Henry County Accountability Courts. Judge Holly Veal presides over the Henry County Drug Court, and Judge Veal, along with Director Craig Ogilvie and Case Manager Britni Stephens, accepted the award for the program. CACJ recognized Henry County Accountability Courts for fully utilizing their case management system for budget requests and identifying the need for parenting, marriage, and family groups. They provided the most thorough report of changes resulting from data analysis from adding mentoring to removing geographical considerations in staffing and looking for ways to increase referrals. Henry County's clinicians are making direct entries which reduces the likelihood of errors and misunderstandings. Henry County Accountability Courts show good team effort regarding data collection, conduct a good self-evaluation for process changes related to referrals and behavioral modification tools, and use the results of their data for program public relations, as well as certification to modify the program.

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 Model Courts:

Felony Drug Courts

- *Appalachian Judicial Circuit Drug Court, Chief Judge Brenda Weaver
- *Atlantic Judicial Circuit Drug Court, Judge D. Jay Stewart
- *Cherokee Judicial Circuit Drug Court, Chief Judge D. Scott Smith
- *Clayton County Drug Court, Judge Aaron Mason
- *Colquitt County Accountability Court, Judge Brian McDaniel
- *Forsyth County Drug Court, Chief Judge Jeffrey Bagley
- *Newton County Drug Court, Judge W. Kendall Wynne, Jr.
- *Northeastern Judicial Circuit Drug Courts, Judge Jason Deal
- *Piedmont Judicial Circuit, Judge Currie Mingledorff
- *Savannah-Chatham County Drug Court, Judge James Bass

As of July 1, 2022, there are 183 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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