



## Council of Accountability Court Judges

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### PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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

Athens, GA --- The Council of Accountability Court Judges (CACJ) announced the 2023 recipient of the prestigious Judge Stephen S. Goss Award at the awards ceremony at the annual training conference on Tuesday, September 12, 2023.

In memory of the late Honorable Stephen S. Goss, the CACJ 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 her outstanding contributions in the field of mental health courts, the Honorable Rhathelia Stroud of the DeKalb County Misdemeanor Mental Health Court is the recipient of the 2023 Judge Stephen S. Goss Award.

Judge Stroud presides over and implemented the DeKalb County Misdemeanor Mental Health Court 13 years ago. She serves as a member of the CACJ Training Committee and is committed to mental health education and awareness and to those suffering with serious mental illness.

In July 2023, Judge Stroud was invited to Washington, D.C. to the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs and Bureau of Justice Assistance to participate in the "Courts Leading Change Through Justice Mental Health Collaboration Program National Forecasting Group Meeting". Recently appointed to a second term, Judge Stroud is the only judge and one of 14 non-federal members appointed to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Interdepartmental Serious Mental Illness Coordinating Committee, who provides guidance and expertise to advance national behavioral health strides and improve the lives of those with serious mental illnesses. Through this avenue, she presented a webinar titled "NOT JAIL:

Alternatives to Incarceration” for the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) GAINS Center and published an article on mental health accountability courts in SAMHSA’s newsletter.

Judge Stroud received the 2022 Luminary Award from the Decatur Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. for her gallant work in the field of physical and mental health. Additionally, she introduces each DeKalb County Police Academy class to the misdemeanor mental health court and Crisis Intervention Training and facilitated a “Mental Health Resource” segment for the Institute of Continuing Judicial Education.

The Council is pleased to present the Judge Stephen S. Goss Award to Judge Stroud as she continues to serve, educate, and train in mental health awareness at the local, state, and national level.

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