



# 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 Award Recipients at Annual Training Conference**

Athens, GA --- The Council of Accountability Court Judges (CACJ) announced the 2023 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 Tuesday, September 12, 2023.

#### **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 Brian McDaniel, Colquitt County Accountability Court

\*Coordinator: Dayna Solomon, Muscogee County Accountability Courts

\*Case Manager: Nilsa Martin, Douglas County DUI Court

\*Prosecutor: Laurel Spainhour, DeKalb County DUI Court

\*Defense Attorney: Fraser Klein, Savannah-Chatham County Mental Health Court

\*Probation Officer: Kenneth Williams, Chatham County Juvenile Mental Health Accountability Court

\*Treatment Provider: Lanie Mathis, Western Judicial Circuit Family Treatment Court

\*Family Treatment Court Attorney: Michael Love, Savannah-Chatham County Family Treatment Court

\*DFCS Case Manager: Kyle Lambert, Hall County Family Treatment Court

\*CASA Advocate: Emily Ciavarrro, Barrow County Family Treatment Court

\*Peer Support Specialist: Laura McCoy, Athens-Clarke County DUI Court

\*Law Enforcement Officer: Brandon Gillam, Tallapoosa Judicial Circuit Drug 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 Katelyn Parker, Coordinator for the Cobb County Veterans Treatment Court, where she has served for six years. During that time, she has collaborated with community agencies and organizations which provide multiple services to the VTC participants and partnered with the Chattahoochee Technical College to implement Occupational Therapy with the veterans in the program. Those who nominated Ms. Parker consider her a leader and trailblazer with "a dedicated balance of fairness and grace". Throughout the nominations, it was often repeated that the successes of the Cobb County Veterans Treatment Court are due, in large part, to the diligence, preparation, compassion, and persistence of Ms. Parker.

### **Data Driven Award**

CACJ's Data and Research Committee, formerly the Metrics & 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 2023 Data Driven Award is Judge Joy Parks and the Enotah STAR (Stabilize, Treat, Accept, Restore) Court. The mental health court's submission provided the Committee with lots of detail about their policy for data collection and indicated they are fully utilizing their case management system for self-evaluation. With CaseWorX, they are staffing and reviewing referrals, setting regular meetings to review data and make policy decisions, providing quarterly reports to prompt policy discussions, and using surveys to result in necessary changes to drug testing and case management. The Enotah STAR Court reviewed LS/CMI scores for all participants for the past three years and used the information to develop a court specific risk/need score range. They are an example of how to effectively utilize the data gleaned from their case management system and make it work for their 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 2023 Model Courts:

#### Mental Health Courts

\*Appalachian Circuit HELP Court, The Late Judge John Worcester

\*Conasauga Judicial Circuit Mental Health Court, Judge B. Scott Minter

- \*Dougherty Superior Court Substance Abuse/Mental Health Treatment Program, Judge Victoria Darrisaw
- \*Gwinnett County Mental Health Court, Judge Karen Beyers
- \*Hall County HELP Court, Judge Kathlene Gosselin
- \*Henry County Resource Court, Judge William Bartles
- \*Houston County Mental Health Court, Judge Katherine Lumsden
- \*Piedmont Circuit Wellness Court, Judge Currie Mingledorff
- \*Savannah-Chatham County Mental Health Court, Judge Penny Haas Freeseemann
- \*Western Judicial Circuit Treatment Accountability Court, Judge Eric Norris

#### DUI Courts

- \*Cherokee County DUI Court, Judge W. Alan Jordan
- \*Cobb County DUI Court, Judge Eric Brewton
- \*Coweta County DUI Court, Judge Seay VanPatton Poulakas
- \*Douglas County DUI Court, Chief Judge Eddie Barker and Judge Brian Fortner
- \*Gwinnett County DUI Court, Judge Shawn Bratton and Judge Ronda Colvin
- \*Hall County DUI Court, Judge Larry Baldwin
- \*Liberty County DUI Court, Judge Jeff Osteen
- \*Tift County DUI Court, Judge Herbert Benson

As of July 1, 2023, there are 185 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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