



News Release

FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge
19th Judicial Circuit
Lake County
Waukegan, Illinois 60085-4359

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Waukegan, Illinois

LIBERTY BELL AWARD WINNERS HONORED

On Thursday, April 25th, Deputy Chief Judge Diane E. Winter, Judge Michael J. Fusz and Judge John J. Scully, retired, presented the Liberty Bell Awards during the Lake County Bar Association luncheon meeting held at the Waukegan City Hall. Each year, the 19th Judicial Circuit presents Liberty Bell Awards to an individual and an organization for their outstanding service and dedication to further the administration of justice. In Lake County, the Liberty Bell Award is presented in memory of Judge Thomas R. Smoker, a Lake County judge who passed away in 2004.

The 2019 Liberty Bell Individual Award recipient is Bruce Johnson, a Marine Corps veteran, deployed to Afghanistan from 2010-2011 as a justice advisor. Bruce has led NICASA since 2005, a not-for-profit behavioral health services organization that is building brighter futures for vulnerable and at-risk children, adults, and families in Lake County and northern Illinois. He is the Founder of the Mano a Mano Family Resource Center in Round Lake Park and has served as President of their Board of Directors. He is the founding member of several area coalitions and advisory boards including the Lake County YES (Youth Empowerment for Success) Coalition, the Lake County Opiate Initiative, the Round Lake Area BEST (Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together) Coalition, and the Lake County Underage Drinking and Drug Prevention Task Force. Mr. Johnson is also a Judge Advocate for the Tri-County Leatherneck Detachment #1395 of the United States Marine Corps League, the recipient of the 2019 Liberty Bell Organizational Award.

Members of the Marine Corps League join together in camaraderie and fellowship for the purpose of preserving the traditions and promoting the interests of the United States Marine Corps. Marines who are now actively serving and those who have been honorably discharged, volunteer, aid and render assistance to all Marines and to their widows and orphans, and perpetuate the history of the United States Marine Corps. and perform fitting acts to observe the anniversaries of historical occasions of particular interests to the Marines.

Mr. Johnson and the members of the United States Marine Corps League, including the Young Marines, have selflessly and tirelessly supported the 19th Judicial Circuit's Annual Veterans History Project since 2013. The mission of the Veteran's History Project is to collect, preserve, and make accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war.

"On behalf of the entire 19th Judicial Circuit, I thank Mr. Bruce Johnson and the United States Marine Corps League, Tri-County Leathernecks Detachment #1395 for their exemplary service, and generous and enthusiastic support of our Veteran's History Project. They have been invaluable in making the project a memorable event and wonderful experience for the nearly 200 veterans and their families over the last 6 years," said Chief Judge Ukena.

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