



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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19TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT'S ANNUAL EMPLOYEES' RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Each year an employee of the 19th Judicial Circuit is selected by co-workers as the employee of the year. This week Chief Judge James Booras had the pleasure of announcing that Brenda Chibucos had been chosen as the 2008 Employee of the Year of the 19th Judicial Circuit. "She is a highly respected probation officer who goes above and beyond to work with and assist her clients, and she is very supportive of her fellow officers," said Booras. "We are proud to have Brenda as a member of our staff."

Brenda is currently a Principal Probation Officer and Unit Coordinator in the Adult Sex Offender Unit. She joined the 19th Judicial Circuit on January 3, 1983, after having received her Bachelor of Science degree from Western Illinois University.

The Employee of the Year is selected from all of the employees of the month of a calendar year and is chosen by the Employee Recognition Committee based on the quality of service demonstrated to the public and the court system, competency, and efficiency of overall performance.

Brenda Chibucos was nominated and chosen as the October employee of the month for 2008. Others chosen as employees of the month for 2008 included: Tania Murillo for January; Maria Cisneros for February; Jamie Shatkus for March; Sara Dicrischio for April; Cheryl Sersen for May; Angela Seballos for June; Brian Burns for July; Deborah Norman for August; Colleen Gavin-Obenauf for September; Lorenzo Bess for November; and Candace Dodd for December.

Other presentations included:

The Lawrence (Larry) Bonds Officer of the Year Award. This award is named in honor of Lawrence Bonds who was a Principal Adult Probation Officer with the 19th Circuit from May 15, 1984 until his death on April 6, 1997. The employee nominated for this award is a sworn probation officer or juvenile counselor who demonstrates a high degree of professionalism and competence and is recognized for these qualities by the

Court, co-workers, the community and clientele. In addition, the person contributes to the organization's culture; goes beyond the boundaries of the job in program development; service delivery; has a positive approach to duties; participates in professional and community organizations; and is a role model. The 2008 award was presented to Margaret K. Fontana.

Margaret Fontana is a Principal Probation Officer and Unit Coordinator in the Adult Domestic Violence Unit. She has a BS in Social Work from Illinois State University-Normal and was hired by the 19th Circuit on June 9, 1986. Margaret provides training throughout the state on fundamentals of supervising domestic violence offenders and victims along with three presentations at CLC as part of the Safe Place training program for law enforcement. She recently completed the "Becoming Agents of Change Batters Training" to provide after care groups to offenders and has also co-facilitated Motivational Interviewing to new probation officers. Margaret is the Interstate Specialist for domestic violence cases and is regularly called on to assist officers in the division.

The Kay S. Finn and Sarah G. Anderson Exceptional Employee Award. This award was presented to Janice Byers who is an Executive Secretary in the Adult DUI and Domestic Violence Unit. The award, named after Ms. Finn and Ms. Anderson, is given to a non-sworn employee who strives to provide legendary service and believes that improvement is a way of life. This person demonstrates high achievement and positive commitment and is recognized as a valuable resource.

Janice joined the 19th Circuit in 1982 in a temporary position at juvenile probation. She became a full-time secretary in 1984 and transferred to adult probation in 2001. Janice is usually the first person a new probationer will see at adult probation. Her respect and sensitivity to probationers' questions and needs go a long way to control the most problematic individual. She is detail oriented and considered a valuable resource. Her dependability and enthusiasm are noteworthy, and she is well respected by her co-workers.

The Leadership and Excellence Award for 2008 was presented by Chief Judge Booras to Deborah Hoem, a Principal Probation Officer serving as Community Resources Liaison Officer in the Psychological Services Division. This award is presented annually to a judicial employee who best illustrates and promotes the mission of the 19th Judicial Circuit to the citizens of Lake County, the judiciary, and fellow employees by setting the standard in leadership and excellence.

Deborah distinguishes herself by serving as a mentor and leader who inspires others with her talents and expertise. She is admired for her extraordinary poise and style in contributing her best to all of her undertakings that creates an environment that draws the very best from her colleagues. Deb's performance ranks in the top 10% and she consistently enhances her skills by participating in training and keeping herself informed of current developments in probation.

Deb developed or assisted, and is active in, the following major efforts of the organization: TIM Court; YouthBuild, a Lake County Community Coalition; psychological services contract management; the Repatriate Project; and a number of community organizations such as NICASA's Women of Worth; a grassroots committee called SUSTAIN; and serves on the CLC Human Services Advisory Committee.

She exemplifies the qualities of a highly accomplished and dedicated leader and is an outstanding ambassador for the 19th Judicial Circuit.

Deborah received a BS degree in Criminal Justice from Illinois State University and has been with the 19th Circuit since November 5, 1981.

In conclusion, Judge Booras thanked all the employees of the 19th Circuit for a job well done and asked for their continued valuable support and commitment to the organization.

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