



News Release

FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge
 19th Judicial Circuit
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19TH Judicial Circuit Employees Honored

“Good afternoon and welcome to everyone here as well as to those who are joining us via video simulcast at the Juvenile Complex in Vernon Hills,” began Chief Judge Jorge Ortiz. “As you know, we are here to recognize members of the 19th Judicial Circuit’s staff who have been nominated and selected by their peers for their exceptional services during 2016 in the following areas: Environmental Sustainability; Kay S. Finn and Sarah G. Anderson Exceptional Employee; Lawrence Bonds Officer of the Year; Leadership and Excellence; the Employee of the Year; and the Golden Gavel Award.”

And the winners are—

We have a new award for 2016 entitled the “**Golden Gavel Award**.” This award is presented to an individual or team of the judicial branch who supports the mission of the 19th Judicial Circuit “. . . to serve the public.” The honorees demonstrate commitment to quality service, model professionalism, promote customer satisfaction and present a positive image on behalf of the Court.

The first staff member to receive this award is Mary Marsolek, Community Resource Liaison of Juvenile Probation. Mary has been a central presence at Juvenile Probation Detention Services since 1976 and is sometimes referred to by her co-workers as a “walking encyclopedia” because of her knowledge of past and current operational information. She is involved in countless community organizations to help maintain an open dialog between the juvenile facility and several organizations. She is considered a very valuable staff member and a role model who exemplifies the organization’s values internally and externally.

The **Golden Gavel Award** was also presented to the 3-member staff of the Jury Commission; namely, Jodi Luka, Cassandra Smith and Jennifer Kane. These ladies are the first official greeters who welcome the 100+ jurors who are summoned to appear for jury service each and every Monday of the month (or Tuesday if Monday is a holiday). They answer all questions about jury service and try to make jurors as comfortable as they can. “They love what they do and their ratings as far as being courteous, knowledgeable and helpful are off the chart,” said Judge Ortiz.

Christine Morgan was presented with the “**Environmental Sustainability Award.**” This award is presented to an employee or organization for their dedication to green practices both in the workplace and in the community that promotes recycling, waste reduction and energy conservation. Chris has been planting and harvesting an organic garden for many years and has maintained the best practice of clean produce. Her organic garden is a model for those who wish to partake in clean eating of organic foods. Chris is a Principal Probation Officer in Adult Probation.

Colleen Gavin-Obenauf received the “**Lawrence Bonds Officer of the Year Award.**” This award is presented to a sworn officer who represents the values of the 19th Circuit in terms of ethics, dedication and passion. The annual award is named in honor of Lawrence (Larry) Bonds, Principal Adult Probation Officer, who was employed with the Circuit from May 15, 1984 to his death on April 6, 1997. This year we were honored to have members of Larry Bonds family present during the awards ceremony.

Colleen is a Principal Probation Officer in Adult Probation. Colleen’s professionalism is exemplified in her personal ethics and her integrity toward the work place. She is very passionate about her job and her work with high-risk offenders. She has been with the Circuit for nearly 30 years and has worked in many different areas – the Public Service Unit; Domestic Violence Unit; General Field; DUI; and the Gender Specific Unit. Colleen has previously been nominated Employee of the Month on three occasions – in 2004, 2008 and 2014 and was named Cognitive Outreach Groups (COG) Officer of the Year by her colleagues in 2015.

The “**Kay S. Finn and Sarah G. Anderson Exceptional Employee Award**” is given to a non-sworn administrative employee who best demonstrates the highest effort in support of the Circuit’s mission. The recipient of this year’s award is Olivia Puplava. Olivia illustrates high standards of service and effective communication skills with the public, as well as with other county departments and the people she works with. She has earned the respect of her peers and is recognized as a valuable resource. She is known to go the extra mile to support the needs of others and always delivers her service with a smile. Olivia is a Laboratory Clerk in Adult Probation/Administration.

Robert J. Cesar was named the recipient of the “**Leadership and Excellence Award.**” Bob is the Director of Juvenile Probation and Detention Services and has been with the 19th Judicial Circuit for over 35 years. He has held positions in many areas of the Juvenile Division before being appointed to the directorship in 2006. Bob has been recognized for his resourcefulness, commitment and dedication in his work with juveniles and has contributed to the improvement and quality of services to the youth and families in Lake County as well as the state. Bob plans to retire as Director on March 31st.

Each year an employee of the 19th Judicial Circuit is selected by co-workers as the “**Employee of the Year.**” This award is looked upon as the highest honor bestowed on any employee. The successful contender is selected from the employees who were recognized as Employees of the Month. Nominations are made by fellow employees, with the winners selected by a committee of peers representing the divisions of the Circuit.

“On behalf of the judges and staff of the 19th Judicial Circuit, I am very pleased to announce that the Employee of the Year for 2016 is Sharon Klapperich” announced Judge Ortiz.

Sharon is a Principal Probation Officer in Adult Probation. Sharon is being honored by her co-workers for her willingness to assist anyone who needs help in getting the job done, regardless of what the task entails. She assisted in the development of a new Interstate Client System, and her knowledge of the system and its processes are invaluable to fellow probation officers within the division. Sharon is the Interstate/Intrastate Committee Chair for the Illinois Probation and Court Services Association (IPCSA), and is an integral part of relating information between the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC) and IPCSA and other probation departments throughout Illinois. IPCSA presented Sharon with the Distinguished Service Award in 2013.

In closing, Judge Ortiz thanked the employees for their continued support and dedication and for their commitment to the organization's values to provide the community with the highest quality service.

The annual event took place on Friday, February 3rd, in the Jury Assembly Room at the main courthouse in Waukegan.

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