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NEWS RELEASE

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OJJ Presents Fourth Annual Champion of Louisiana Juvenile Justice Award



Baton Rouge, LA – Rapides Parish Ninth Judicial District Judge Patricia Evans Koch, left, accepts the fourth annual Champion of Louisiana Juvenile Justice Award from Deputy Secretary Dr. Mary L. Livers, head of the Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ), at a Celebration of Change held Oct. 4 at Jetson Center for Youth in Baker (near Baton Rouge).

The award was created in 2010 to recognize people who have championed the cause of juvenile justice reform, and whose dedication and hard work have resulted in the overhaul of

Louisiana’s juvenile justice system, which today provides better conditions and services for Louisiana’s at-risk youth.

The first annual Champion of Louisiana Juvenile Justice Award was presented in 2010 to Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Catherine “Kitty” Kimball. In 2011 the recipient was Beauregard Parish District Attorney David Burton, and physician Dr. Debra K. DePrato was the 2012 winner.

Judge Koch is a native of Mansfield, in DeSoto Parish. Judge Koch graduated from Mansfield High School, and received her Bachelor of Arts in history from the University of Louisiana at Monroe in 1985. After working for several law firms, she pursued a law degree, and received her Juris Doctor degree from Loyola University School of Law in New Orleans in 1991.

As a child, Judge Koch would accompany her mother on nursing visits to patient’s homes. She observed her mother tending to people. She witnessed the care that her mother provided to her

patients, and those experiences shaped her thinking and provided her motivation to want the best for all people.

“I recognize that substance abuse and mental health issues may be present whether people have many advantages or few,” Judge Koch said. “There is no divide by socio-economic status on these issues.”

Early in her career, she served as a hearing officer for the Ninth Judicial District Court, presiding over child support and domestic violence cases, and also served as an administrative law judge and mediator for the Office of Workers' Compensation.

Judge Koch was elected judge in the Ninth Judicial District Court in Rapides Parish in 2005. Judge Koch initially served as the Juvenile Court Judge for the Ninth JDC, including a juvenile drug court, for six years. Newly elected, she was asked to take the juvenile bench. She viewed the assignment as a great way to serve – as a gift and a blessing.

Judge Koch said it helped her to learn about many things that we need to do differently in terms of juvenile justice and the social fabric of our society. She believes that often the social problems in Louisiana are overwhelming to some and that others must step in to help.

“Judge Koch should be applauded for her ability to bring people together around a common cause,” said OJJ Deputy Secretary Dr. Mary L. Livers. “This quality is essential in getting needed assistance to the at-risk youth and families of Louisiana.”

Judge Koch was integral in the development of the Rapides Parish Children and Youth Planning Board, and is a past president of the board. Her office served as a resource for recruitment of planning board members, participation in meetings, ongoing consultation and board development initiatives. She now provides training and consultation to other planning boards around the state.

Judge Koch was the Project Director of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation’s Models for Change initiative for juvenile justice reform in Rapides Parish. In 2009, she was honored as MacArthur’s national Champion for Change in juvenile justice reform for her work to improve the lives of court-involved children, their families and communities. She has assisted in development and work on two consecutive Louisiana Models for Change grants for the parish.

Among her professional affiliations, Judge Koch serves as treasurer of the Louisiana Judicial College. This year she was appointed to the Louisiana Children’s Cabinet and she serves on the Louisiana Supreme Court’s Courthouse Security committee. She serves in an advisory capacity to the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges membership committee and she is a former member of the juvenile delinquency committee. Judge Koch serves in an advisory capacity to the Vera Institute of Justice status offender project, she is a member of the Judicial Leadership Group to Reform the Care of Non-Delinquent Youth for the Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ), and has been a member of the Louisiana Protective Order Task Force since 2003. She is a member of the education committee for Domestic Violence; is a past president and current member of the legislative committee for the Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and she is a member of the Louisiana State and Alexandria Bar Associations.

Judge Koch trains new recruits at the Alexandria Police Academy on mental health and domestic violence issues.

She is a member of Horseshoe Drive United Methodist Church and St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Church; the Professional Women's Network and she serves in a leadership capacity to increase educational opportunities through the Parent-Teacher Organizations at her sons' public schools.

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