



**THE SUPREME COURT OF MISSOURI
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Photos will be available upon request

**SUPREME COURT RECOGNIZES 16th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
FOR THEIR EFFORTS TO REFORM THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – On behalf of the 16th Judicial Circuit, Presiding Judge Charles E. Atwell, Judge Justine Del Muro, Juvenile Officer Mary Marquez and former Director of Assessment and Development Services Denny Atherton, accepted the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) award, presented by Supreme Court of Missouri Judge Laura Denvir Stith along with State Courts Administrator Greg Linhares and Delinquency Coordinator Jay Rodieck during a special ceremony this morning at the Family Justice Center in Kansas City. The award was created this year to honor deserving circuits for their efforts to reform juvenile detention practices in their circuit. The 16th circuit includes Jackson County.

“The Supreme Court of Missouri is happy to recognize the efforts of dedicated courts such as the 16th Circuit.” Stith said. “We hope to see a permanent statewide effect on both the juvenile court system as well as those juveniles affected by the system as a result of the new initiatives.”

The JDAI award was inspired by the vision of the Annie E. Casey Foundation that all young people involved in the juvenile justice system have the opportunity to develop into healthy and productive adults. The foundation is a private charitable organization, dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States through fostering public policies, human-service reforms and community supports. The Supreme Court is giving the award to honor the first four Missouri judicial circuits that agreed to work with the JDAI project, which was initiated in this state by the Missouri Juvenile Justice Association. The remaining circuits – the 31st (Greene County), 21st (St. Louis County) and 22nd (St. Louis city) – will be honored before the end of the year.

The JDAI strives to reduce detention of juveniles in the system because of the long-lasting negative consequences of such extended detainment to public safety and the

juvenile's development. The courts being honored have worked in conjunction with the national JDAI to develop new methods of preventing prolonged detention such as evening reporting centers, delinquency-hearing time standards, self-assessment of detention centers, community collaboration teams, graduated sanctions grids, peer-to-peer training, additional attention paid to disparities, detention funding and a validated detention-assessment instrument for objective decision making.

Since its inception in 2006, nine additional circuit courts and two counties have joined the project, and two more circuits are scheduled to join next year. A JDAI workgroup made up of representatives from various Missouri youth agencies is working toward statewide adoption of the project. Additionally, the Casey Foundation is reviewing Missouri as a potential model court program to showcase improvements in juvenile justice reform.

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