

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2013 Child Welfare Award winners announced Foster Care Review Board recognizes honorees for helping children in foster care

DETROIT, MI, November 12, 2013 – The Foster Care Review Board has announced the recipients of its 2013 Child Welfare Awards, which recognize exceptional service to children and families in the state’s child welfare system.

Michigan Department of Human Services Director Maura D. Corrigan presented the awards at the FCRB’s annual awards ceremony last week in Bay City.

FCRB Program Manager Jim Novell explained that the awards “are presented annually to recognize exceptional work that is done in our state on behalf of abused and neglected children and their families.”

Holly Anderton of Bethany Christian Services, Grand Rapids, was named **Foster Care Worker of the Year**. Nominated by coworker Jessica Conway and attorney Ginny Mikita, Anderton is described by Conway as an “incredible advocate for the families that she serves.... She has an amazing way of gaining the respect and trust of her clients, including biological parents, which many times see their case manager as the enemy.”

The **Parent Attorney of the Year Award** was presented to Muskegon County attorney **Chad D. Catalino**, who was nominated by attorney Manda Mitteer. Catalino was described by Mitteer as “an outstanding attorney who leaves no stone unturned when it comes to understanding law and policy so that his clients get the services that they need and are entitled to.”

Marikaye Long of St. Joseph County received the **Lawyer-Guardian of the Year Award**. Judge Thomas E. Nelson in Berrien County, who nominated Long, observed, “The public is also admirably served by Ms. Long’s work as L-GAL and more. If there is a more worthy nominee for L-GAL of the year in Michigan, I would like to meet him or her....”

Judge John A. Hohman, Jr., who was recently named **State Court Administrator**, received the **Jurist of the Year Award** for his work as a probate court judge in Monroe County. Hohman was nominated by Judge Susan Dobrich of Cass County, attorney Vivek Sankaran of the University of Michigan Law School, and 38th Circuit Court Referee Jack Penwarden. Sankaran, described Hohman as “... one of the best judges I have ever seen” and praised the judge for finding innovative solutions to child welfare problems.

Dan and Helen Miller of Calhoun County received the **Foster Parents of the Year Award**. The Millers were nominated by attorneys Elizabeth Warner and Paula Aylward and by two of the Millers' children, TaLeekia Bennett and ShaNeekia Miller. The Millers, who have fostered over 100 children in 25 years, as were described as having earned the respect of the child welfare community they have served. Nominators said children in the Miller home have learned love, responsibility, respect for others, and self-control, ultimately finding value and dignity in their lives.

The FCRB, which was created by the Michigan legislature in 1981, serves as a statewide system of third-party review of the foster care system. The program is administered by the State Court Administrative Office, the administrative agency of the Michigan Supreme Court. Citizen volunteers serve on the FCRB's 27 local review boards throughout the state. Local boards review randomly chosen child abuse and neglect cases; the boards assess how these cases are being handled by courts, the Department of Human Services, and private child welfare agencies.

For more information about the FCRB, and for information about volunteering, visit <http://courts.michigan.gov/Administration/SCAO/OfficesPrograms/fcrbp/Pages/default.aspx>.

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