



## Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

# News

Administrative Office  
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East  
Bldg. 1, Room E-316  
Charleston, West Virginia 25305  
(304) 340-2305 Jennifer Bundy  
(304) 340-2306 April Harless  
(304) 558-4219 / TTY  
(304) 558-1212 / FAX  
Web Site: [www.courtswv.gov](http://www.courtswv.gov)  
Twitter: [WVCourts](https://twitter.com/WVCourts)  
Flickr: [www.flickr.com/photos/courtswv/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/courtswv/)  
Email: [Jennifer.Bundy@courtswv.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Bundy@courtswv.gov)  
Email: [April.Harless@courtswv.gov](mailto:April.Harless@courtswv.gov)

### **Judge, Senator receive awards for work with children**

For immediate release Wednesday, October 23, 2013

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Twenty-Eighth Judicial Circuit (Nicholas County) Judge Gary Johnson and state Sen. Donald Cookman, a retired Judge in the Twenty-Second Judicial Circuit (Hardy, Hampshire, and Pendleton Counties), received awards this month from the West Virginia Child Care Association for their sustained, forceful leadership for the protection of children. They were surprised in front of their families and peers at the “Superheroes Unite for West Virginia's Kids at Risk” event October 2 at the Blessed John XXII Pastoral Center in Charleston.

Judge Johnson received the Steward of Unity Award, an honor the association gives only every few years, for his unique ability to bring people together to improve the lives of children. Judge Johnson is the longtime chairman of the Court Improvement Program and participates in local and statewide initiatives to improve children’s safety, permanency, education, and overall wellbeing. He previously has received an Angel in Adoption Award from the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Policy Institute, an Extra Mile Award from the West Virginia Children’s Justice Task Force, a Commissioner’s Award from the Administration for Children and Families, and other accolades.

The West Virginia Child Care Association gave Senator Cookman the Champion of Children Award for his outstanding work as a judge and state senator to improve the lives of children. Kathy Szafran, President and CEO of Crittenton Services in Wheeling, presented the award to Senator Cookman.

The WVCCA, established in 1979, represents companies throughout West Virginia that operate behavioral health and welfare programs for children who have experienced abuse, neglect, emotional and behavior disabilities, substance abuse and/or delinquency. WVCCA advocates for children and families by sharing member knowledge and resources, providing quality training, embracing partnerships, and influencing public policy.

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