



## Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

# News

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### **Senator Rockefeller honors Nikki Tennis as an *Angel in Adoption*<sup>™</sup>**

For immediate release Friday, September 13, 2013

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Senator Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., has selected Nikki Tennis, Director of the Division of Children’s Services in the Supreme Court Administrative Office, as a 2013 *Angels in Adoption*<sup>™</sup> awardee for her outstanding advocacy of adoption and foster care issues.

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI), which orchestrates the *Angels in Adoption*<sup>™</sup> program, will honor Director Tennis at an awards ceremony on October 8 and gala on October 9 in Washington, DC.

“In 2005, I worked with Senator Mike DeWine of Ohio to author the Working to Enhance Courts for At-Risk and Endangered Kids Act (WE CARE Kids), which was incorporated into the Deficit Reduction Act of 2006 to become law,” Senator Rockefeller said in his nomination letter.

“This law provided federal funding to help courts improve the data and information system for children and train judges and court personnel serving abused and neglected children. In West Virginia, Nikki oversaw our state’s Court Improvement Program. These efforts helped create, identify, and promote initiatives that make the Court system more responsible and efficient in achieving safety, permanence, well-being, due process, and timely outcomes for children and families in the child welfare system”.

Currently, Director Tennis is implementing the New View Project in West Virginia. Seven lawyer “viewers” are reviewing the cases of fifty children lingering in out-of-home care. They will make specific recommendations for finding them permanent homes. The project will breathe new life into difficult cases with positive energy and a fresh perspective in the quest for permanently placing these children with good families.

“Unfortunately, in every state there are youth in the foster care system stuck in a slide toward aging out of the foster system and into potential homelessness or prison, with no connection with any family, and facing a general lack of success,” Senator Rockefeller’s nomination letter said. “All of these outcomes are correlated with a child’s lack of permanency. The Project aims to change the outcomes for foster youth who are facing a lack of permanency by identifying youth who have been in care for long periods of time (“cold cases”) and matching them with adoptive families.”

“Nikki is a member of the hard-working staff overseen by Steven Canterbury that helps West Virginia judges promote the best outcomes for vulnerable children. The judges have the respect of their communities, and it is important to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of support staff,” Senator Rockefeller wrote.

The *Angels in Adoption*<sup>™</sup> program is CCAI’s signature public awareness campaign and provides an opportunity for all members of the U.S. Congress to honor the good work of their constituents who have enriched the lives of foster children and orphans in the United States and abroad. Each year, more than 140 Angels are honored through the *Angels in Adoption*<sup>™</sup> program.

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) is a 501(c)3 nonpartisan organization dedicated to raising awareness about the tens of thousands of orphans and foster children in the United States and the millions of orphans around the world in need of permanent, safe, and loving homes through adoption. CCAI’s goal is the elimination of the barriers that hinder these children from realizing their basic right of a family.

CCAI was created in 2001 by the active co-chairs of the bicameral, bipartisan Congressional Coalition on Adoption to more effectively raise Congressional and public awareness about adoption.

The *Angels in Adoption*<sup>™</sup> program was established in 1999 as a Congressional press conference to honor outstanding individuals. Since then, the program has developed into a yearlong public awareness campaign culminating in an extraordinary awards gala and celebration in Washington, DC.

CCAI does not receive any government funding and relies on the support of foundations, corporations, and individuals to accomplish their mission. For more information, visit [www.ccainstitute.org](http://www.ccainstitute.org) or [www.angelsinadoption.org](http://www.angelsinadoption.org).

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