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Wilmington juvenile court judge honored for work on behalf of local children

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON | March 21, 2018 – The Honorable JH Corpening II, chief judge in the 5th Judicial District, based in Wilmington, North Carolina, was recently honored with the Honorable David W. Soukup Judge of the Year Award at the annual conference of The [National Court Appointed Special Advocates \(CASA\) Association](#). Together with its state and local member programs, National CASA supports and promotes court-appointed volunteer advocacy so every child who has experienced abuse or neglect in the United States can be safe and thrive in a permanent home.

Judge Corpening received the award for being a champion of North Carolina's Guardian ad Litem (GAL) program over the past 35 years. Currently the sole juvenile court judge in the county, Judge Corpening served as the first GAL attorney advocate, and today, thanks to his leadership, there are 171 volunteers advocating for children. He attends and speaks at nearly all trainings and events for GAL volunteers in his judicial district. He initiated the design of the Intensive Reunification Program, which supports children affected by parental opioid use. The innovative program, now in its third year, enables weekly counseling and intensive support for parents, more frequent visits between children and parents, and an infusion of social services.

"I'm grateful for the honor, but I just feel blessed to be at a time and place in my life, after 27 years on the bench, where I can work in a court that I love and try to make things better for our children and their families," said Judge Corpening. "This is important because all of our children are all of our children. And all of our children need all of us to do our very best."

Judge Corpening also serves as the chair of the local Community Child Protection Team, working with a cross section of community leaders. He has worked as a change agent and leader at the local, state, and national level to support advocacy for children in foster care.

National CASA is a network of nearly 1,000 programs that recruit, train and support volunteers to advocate in courtrooms and communities for the best interests of children who have been abused and neglected. These volunteers see their assigned children regularly, staying with them until they are placed in a loving, permanent home. They provide judges the critical information they need to make decisions in the best interest of each child. For many abused children, their CASA volunteer is the only constant adult presence in their lives. More information about National CASA Association is available at www.casaforchildren.org.

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