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**MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF CENTRAL CAROLINAS  
HONORS JUDGE LOU TROSCH WITH H. KEITH BRUNNEMER, JR AWARD**

(February 12, 2019)—At its annual Chocolate Therapy event on February 11, Mental Health America of Central Carolinas (MHA) honored Judge Louis “Lou” A. Trosch, Jr. and others who have worked to promote mental health in the community.

Judge Trosch, District Court Judge in the NC 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of Mecklenburg County, was honored with the agency’s highest award, which is named after local businessman H. Keith Brunnemer, Jr. who has made a significant investment in MHA and its mission. Trosch was recognized for the outstanding contributions he has made in the area of mental health, particularly in his work with children and families.

Several colleagues provided input into why Trosch should be the recipient of the Brunnemer award. Assistant Public Defender Bob Ward said, “He has been a strong voice and a passionate advocate for just and proper treatment for people experiencing and living with mental illness.” Court Psychologist Rebecca Smith stated, “Judge Lou Trosch has remained a steadfast advocate for mental health issues within the juvenile court system. He has often required parents to have their own mental health needs addressed so that family systems can begin to heal, and he has offered guidance and direction to others to ensure that a child’s mental health needs are never forgotten.”

Trosch was co-chair for Race Matters for Juvenile Justice, which examines the explicit and implicit biases and the role these play in our individual lives. He has also worked to create a community collaborative among various agencies and organizations to develop a plan to ensure the successful transition of children and youth from confinement in mental health facilities and other forms of detention into the community with proper services and placement.

Mental Health Social Worker, Heather Johnson, Council for Children’s Rights, said of Trosch, “It has been an honor to witness the impact his compassion and decisions have made on so many children, often changing the trajectory of a child’s life for the positive and giving them the opportunity for a better life.”

In presenting the award, MHA Executive Director Kathy Rogers remarked, "I hope you get the sense of this man who has worked so tirelessly for so many years on behalf of children and families in our community and particularly around mental health."

Also honored at the event were:

Kadijah Holder, who was presented with the Belle Dusseault Hambacher Award. Established in honor of the late Belle Hambacher, a strong advocate for mental health and long-time volunteer with MHA, this award goes to a young professional who has worked to advance the goals of MHA. Holder, who will earn her degree in Public Health and Communications from UNC-C, has been a volunteer and intern for MHA and has recently earned her instructor certification in QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Prevention and hopes to teach high school and college students in this lifesaving curriculum.

Cecelia McKoy-Graves, 2018 MHA ParentVOICE Program Volunteer of the Year. McKoy-Graves was recognized for her support of families, particularly in Cabarrus County. She was a part of MHA's Family Partner Training in 2017, completed the curriculum and earned the NC Family Partner Certification in April 2018. She has been a frequent volunteer at ParentVOICE support groups, and is now a Family Support Specialist in Rowan County.

Elizabeth "Betsy" Anderson, 2018 Compeer Volunteer of the Year. MHA's Compeer Program is designed to reduce isolation and loneliness among those who are living with a chronic mental illness by matching them with a compassionate friend. Anderson has been involved as a volunteer in the program since 2017 and is described as "caring, detail oriented, committed, compassionate, dedicated and most importantly, she is willing to take a chance to make someone else happy."

Rachel Rosenfeld, 2018 Advocacy Award. Rosenfeld has demonstrated a passion around systemic, individual and self-advocacy, and around educating others in Mecklenburg and/or Cabarrus County to promote mental wellness and reduce stigma. She is a past MHA Board member and currently serves on the Advocacy and Public Policy Committee. She is a lead psychologist with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, a certified instructor in QPR and Mental Health First Aid. "She is a strong advocate for mental wellness and social justice."

Mental Health America of Central Carolinas is a non-profit organization established in 1933, promoting mental wellness through advocacy, prevention and education in Mecklenburg and Cabarrus Counties. Learn more about MHA's free mental health education and supportive programming at [www.mhacentralcarolinas.org](http://www.mhacentralcarolinas.org).

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