

AG Fitch Hosts 2021 Outstanding Service to Crime Victims Awards Ceremony

Attorney General Lynn Fitch joined the Mississippi Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Mississippi Coalition Against Sexual Assault, and Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi to honor those who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to serving victims of crime in Mississippi. The awards ceremony is one of the many ways the Attorney General's Office is observing the 40th anniversary of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, emphasizing the importance of leveraging community partners statewide to help care for and support Mississippi victims of crime.

Mississippi Attorney General's Office Awardee: Madison County Deputy Sheriff Brad Sullivan

The Attorney General's Office partners with organizations statewide to show crime victims they are not alone, to acknowledge the pain and trauma they experience, and to help victims and their families receive the care and services they need, empowering them to find their way to recovery with dignity and hope.

"Mississippi's law enforcement officers provide critical support to our State's crime victims, often serving as the first line of response. Madison County Deputy Sheriff Brad Sullivan showed great courage and resilience when he responded to a 911 call to rescue a victim of kidnapping," **said Attorney General Lynn Fitch.** "Deputy Sullivan bravely responded to save a victim's life, and he nearly lost his as a result. To our law enforcement officers, like Deputy Sullivan, who put their life on the line every time they put on their uniform, thank you. I am grateful for your partnership in protecting crime victims and their families."

For a photo of Deputy Sullivan, his family, and Attorney General Lynn Fitch, [click here.](#)

Mississippi Coalition Against Domestic Violence Awardee: Krystal Hamlin, Haven House Family Shelter

The Mississippi Coalition Against Domestic Violence is committed to an enhanced service delivery system for victims and survivors in our State. This is accomplished by continuing to build partnerships; assisting shelter programs in building capacity; conducting trainings and educational opportunities; bringing awareness; conducting local, State, and National systemic advocacy; and highlighting the shelter services as well as the advocates who support victims and survivors.

"Krystal Hamlin has served at Haven House Family Shelter for the past four-and-a-half years. She has assisted many victims of domestic violence in obtaining protection orders, filed charges against abusers, and most importantly, advocated on the local and State level for victims," **said Mississippi Coalition Against Domestic Violence Executive Director Wendy Mahoney.** "She facilitates the Coordinated Community Response Team in Warren County to bring key service providers together to make sure that the resources and system responses to domestic violence are implemented within the community. Her dedication and passion is far reaching as she is a dedicated advocate for those who need empowerment, support, refuge, and resources."

For a photo of Executive Director Wendy Mahoney, Krystal Hamlin, and Attorney General Lynn Fitch, [click here.](#)

Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi Awardee: Judge Joel Smith

Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi is celebrating 20 years of protecting and providing healing and prosecution services to abused and neglected children. Through the past two decades, Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi has implemented Multidisciplinary Teams, established 12 local Child Advocacy Centers across the State, opened the first Child Advocacy Training Institute in Mississippi, and helped save 44,320 children.

"For 21 years in the District Attorney's Office, first as a prosecutor and then as the District Attorney, Judge Joel Smith gave a voice to children who had lost their lives at the hands of their caretakers; he gave justice to children who were permanently scarred from abuse by those who were supposed to love them; and he gave hope to those children who will walk through life with the memories of those who have taken their innocence," **said Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi Executive Director Karla Tye.** "Judge Smith diligently held individuals accountable so that children were able to move forward with their lives and become happy, healthy kids again. Judge Smith is extremely deserving of the 2021 Outstanding Service to Crime Victims Award."

For a photo of Executive Director Karla Tye, Attorney General Lynn Fitch, and Judge Joel Smith, [click here.](#)

Mississippi Coalition Against Sexual Assault Awardee: Stephanie Piper, Gulf Coast Center for Nonviolence

Mississippi Coalition Against Sexual Assault has partnered with the Office of the Attorney General for more than 25 years to provide training to criminal justice professionals, healthcare providers, and advocates to improve systems and response to crime victims.

"During these uncertain times of COVID-19, as the State was shut down to shelter at home, the crime of sexual assault did not cease. Hospitals were overwhelmed attending to COVID patients. Most hospitals were not allowing sexual assault victim advocates to come to the hospital to assist victims due to the pandemic," **said Mississippi Coalition Against Sexual Assault Executive Director Levette Kelly Johnson.** "On the Mississippi Gulf Coast, hospitals did allow victim advocates to assist victims. Stephanie Piper, Sexual Assault Program Manager at the Gulf Coast Center for Nonviolence, did just that. When a victim needed help, she didn't think of herself, only meeting the needs of victims during this traumatic experience of sexual assault. Stephanie has a servant's heart. While most of us were safe at home, Stephanie was on the front lines to be that beacon of hope."

For a photo of Mississippi Coalition Against Sexual Assault's Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Advocate Coordinator, Melanie Barton, who presented the award on behalf of MCASA, and Attorney General Lynn Fitch, [click here.](#)

The Outstanding Service to Crime Victim Awards Ceremony was established to honor and celebrate individuals who go above and beyond to respond to crime in their communities and help victims find support, recovery, justice, and a sense of hope and security.

Governor Tate Reeves signed a proclamation on Monday naming the week of April 18 to 24, 2021, Crime Victims' Rights Week in Mississippi. As noted in the Proclamation, this week "provides an opportunity for all to recommit to ensuring that accessible, appropriate, and trauma-informed services are offered to all victims of crime to help them heal on every level: physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, and to help them rebuild their lives so they can re-enter society as a whole person with restored dignity."

★ ★ ★ ★

MEDIA CONTACT
Colby Jordan
Director of Communications
Colby.Jordan@ago.ms.gov
Office: 601-359-2002
Cell: 601-201-8428