

Judge Alfonso receives Public Citizen of the Year Award

April 2, 2012

The National Association of Social Workers Mississippi Chapter recently honored Harrison County Court Judge Margaret Alfonso with its Public Citizen of the Year Award. The award was presented March 22 during the Social Work Matters Conference in Natchez.

Judge Alfonso, who presides over the Harrison County Youth Court, was recognized “for her outstanding advocacy for families and children of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.”

Judge Alfonso said that in dealing with abused and neglected children who come under the jurisdiction of the Youth Court, she relies upon professional social workers of the Department of Human Services, schools and hospitals and in private practice.

“I’ve learned so much from the profession of social work,” Judge Alfonso said. “Removing a child from an abusive situation is just the first step of the healing process. They need treatment. I’ve learned from and been guided by social workers.”

Judge Alfonso is in her second year as Harrison County Court and Youth Court Judge. She previously served for 12 years as Chancery Judge of the 8th Chancery District, which includes Harrison, Hancock and Stone counties. She sought election to the Youth Court to be able to devote all of her time to working for the best interests of children.

“Working in the Youth Court, you really have such an opportunity to make a difference in a child’s life,” Judge Alfonso said.

She previously served four years as 2nd Circuit assistant district attorney, five years as assistant prosecuting attorney for Harrison County, three years as prosecuting attorney for Harrison County Family Court, and three years as a Cook County, Ill., assistant state’s attorney.

Judge Alfonso is a founding member of Professionals Advocating for Children Together, PACT. She serves on the Access to Justice Commission. She previously served on the Commission for Study of Domestic Abuse Proceedings and on the Media and the Courts Study Committee.

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