



National Council For Adoption

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Babineaux Award Honors Outstanding Service to Children in Foster Care

May 5, 2017 – Alexandria, VA – In recognition of their extraordinary commitment to creating positive change in the lives of children in foster care who need permanent families, National Council For Adoption (NCFA) is proud to present the annual Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award to Dr. David Chandler and Barbara Harrison.

The Babineaux Award honors powerful voices in the adoption community during May, National Foster Care Month, as NCFA seeks to raise awareness of the continuing needs of 112,000 U.S. children in foster care awaiting adoption.

Dr. David Chandler was an associate justice on the Mississippi Supreme Court from 2009 to 2015, and left that esteemed position when he was appointed in December 2015 by Governor Phil Bryant to become the Executive Director of the Division of Family and Children's Services. Mississippi's decades-long struggle to provide adequate care for all children in its foster care system—and ongoing struggle to increase adoptions of waiting children—has drawn public attention and legal concerns. Dr. Chandler is tasked with identifying and correcting weaknesses in the current system over the course of his four-year commitment. Underscoring his commitment to improve Mississippi's public child welfare system, Dr. Chandler has made it a priority to better understand Mississippi's progress on its statewide programs and services, and where more progress is needed, by conducting research into the state's foster care system in partnership with NCFA. The research that NCFA will conduct will not only provide Mississippi independent analysis of progress being made, but will also be used to identify a national set of best practices regarding the recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families.

Dr. Chandler has worked in education, with a private law firm, as a municipal judge, and on the Mississippi Court of Appeals. He also serves as an adjunct professor at Mississippi College School of Law. He holds a LL.M. in judicial process from the University of Virginia and a J.D. from the University of Mississippi School of Law. He also has doctorate, master's, and bachelor's degrees in education from the University of Mississippi.

National Council For Adoption is proud to present Dr. David Chandler with the Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award in recognition of his commitment to improving outcomes for Mississippi youth in foster care. NCFa president and CEO Chuck Johnson will present the award to Dr. Chandler on Monday, May 8th at 3:30pm in the Governor's Ceremonial Office in the Mississippi State Capitol.

Barbara Harrison is an NBC4 journalist who has covered everything from politics to performing arts and from crime to the plight of abused and abandoned children over the past 35 years. Perhaps Harrison's most enduring legacy is a program she created to help children in foster care. The franchise, known as *Wednesday's Child*, is credited with helping find permanent homes for more than a thousand children in the Washington, DC, area. It has been the model for similar programs in major cities across the nation. *Wednesday's Child*, produced and hosted by Harrison, has run every week for more than 25 years.

Barbara has been honored with many local and national awards, including more than a dozen EMMYs for reporting, the Ted Yates Award for outstanding community service, and, from American Women in Radio and Television, it's prestigious Tufty Award for outstanding journalism. It was recently announced that Harrison will be honored on June 24th as the winner of the 2017 National Association of Television Arts and Science's Board of Governor's Award for outstanding achievement in the field of journalism, serving the community in a profound, unique and impactful way.

National Council For Adoption is honored to present the Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award to Barbara Harrison in honor of her pioneering vision to destigmatize foster care and give a voice to hundreds of children in foster care waiting for families.

About Foster Care

According to the most recent report from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, there are currently 427,910 children in U.S. foster care. Of these children, 111,820 are waiting to be adopted. Over the past three years, the number of children waiting for a family has increased by about 7%. This is a national tragedy that must be addressed, as the outcomes for foster youth who age out of care are bleak. With no stable support system, these young adults are at high risk of homelessness, substance abuse, pregnancy, and incarceration. Approximately 21,000 youth age out every year and must navigate adulthood without the financial, educational, social, and psychological support they need to thrive. For information on how to get involved, visit AdoptionCouncil.org.

About The Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award

The Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award honors individuals and organizations that have gone to extraordinary lengths to ensure children experience the love and stability that come with a forever family. This award is given to those who have demonstrated the most selfless commitment to providing resources, education, and leadership to address the many challenges including parent recruitment, training, and support services necessary to give children safe, stable, and loving adoptive families. The Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux Award acknowledges the dedicated efforts of those who have generously given their time, talents, and resources to ensure that all children can "come home" to a loving, forever family. The award is named for Adoption Hall of Fame

recipients Warren and Mary Alice Babineaux who cared for more than 100 children in foster care during their decades-long tenure as foster and adoptive parents in Louisiana.

Past recipients of the Babineaux Award include Governor John Hickenlooper of Colorado and Governor John Kasich of Ohio (2015) and former foster youth Sixto Cancel and Nicole Marchman (2016).

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ABOUT NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION

Founded in 1980, National Council For Adoption (NCFA) is a global adoption advocacy nonprofit that promotes a culture of adoption through education, research, legislative action, and collaboration. As the authoritative voice for adoption, NCFA's areas of focus include domestic infant adoption, adoption and permanency outcomes for youth in foster care, and intercountry adoption. Passionately committed to the belief that every child deserves to thrive in a nurturing, permanent family, NCFA serves children, birth parents, adopted individuals, adoptive families, and adoption professionals. In addition, we work tirelessly to educate U.S. and foreign government officials and policymakers, members of the media, and all those in the general public with an interest in adoption.

For more information, visit www.AdoptionCouncil.org.