

17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF
FLORIDA
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Judge Ginger Lerner-Wren Honored as Community Champion for Mental Health Advocacy

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. – The Seventeenth Judicial Circuit proudly announces that County Court Judge Ginger Lerner-Wren has been named the recipient of the *Community Champion of Mental Health Award* in recognition of her decades-long leadership and advocacy in the field of mental health.

Judge Lerner-Wren was honored on May 22 at the 10th Annual South Florida Behavioral Health Conference, presented by the United Way of Broward County's Commission on Behavioral Health & Drug Prevention, in partnership with the Broward Behavioral Health Coalition and the Florida Department of Children & Families.

"Judge Lerner-Wren's Community Champion Award is a well-deserved recognition of her continuous efforts for mental health advocacy," said Chief Judge Carol-Lisa Phillips.

Judge Lerner-Wren has been a pioneer in mental health and justice reform since 1997, when she became the first judge to preside over Broward County's Mental Health Court—one of the first of its kind in the United States. In 2002, she was appointed by President George W. Bush to the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, where she served as Chair of the Criminal Justice Subcommittee.

Her work has garnered national and international recognition, including honors from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the Hague Institute for Innovation of Law, and the National Council for Behavioral Health.

In accepting the award, Judge Lerner-Wren stated, "This Community Champion of Mental Health Award belongs to a courageous community. For me, Broward's Misdemeanor Mental Health Court will always stand as a symbol of hope. It represents our belief that individuals living with mental illness and co-occurring disorders deserve access to behavioral health treatment, dignity, and compassion—not incarceration."

ABOUT THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA

The Seventeenth Judicial Circuit Court of Florida is the court for Broward County, headquartered in Fort Lauderdale, FL. It is the second largest circuit court in the state. Broward County has 90 judges. Of those, 32 are county court judges and 58 are circuit judges. Four courthouses comprise the 17th circuit and include the Broward County Courthouse in Fort Lauderdale, and three satellite courthouses: the North Regional Courthouse in Deerfield Beach, the West Regional Courthouse in Plantation and the South Regional Courthouse in Hollywood.

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