Georgia Association of Community Service Boards elects Officers for FY2020
An Introduction of Dynamic Leaders

DOUGLASVILLE, GA – June 12, 2019 – The Georgia Association of Community Service Boards (GACSB) is proud to announce the organization’s 2020 fiscal year officers: President Judge Joe Bishop, Vice President Kent Woerner, Secretary Melanie Dallas and Treasurer Charles Williamson. These individuals will serve a one-year term and be at the helm of GACSB’s mission to promote the exchange of information, represent members on legislative matters and advocate for the highest quality of life for citizens across Georgia in need of mental health, developmental disabilities and substance use disorder services.

Community Service Boards were statutorily created in O.C.G.A. § 37-2-6 as public corporations and instrumentalities of the state. As Georgia’s Public Safety Net the CSBs provide a holistic approach to further the RECOVERY and INDEPENDENCE of each individual in service; which are community-based and comprehensive in range. All services are provided in a cost-effective manner in the least restrictive setting while involving consumers and their families in their design and governance.

“This year’s leadership has not only passion, but more than a century of Georgia-based judicial, practical and clinical experience,” says GACSB Executive Director Robyn Garrett. “The GACSB’s work has always been vital to Georgia’s communities, but with the ever changing climate of healthcare, the increase need for services and supports across our great state, now it is more important than ever that we have leadership to guide us down a path of innovation in order to sustain opportunities for recovery and independence in our communities.”

GACSB President, Judge Joe Bishop

Prior to his nomination, election, and appointment to serve as GACSB President for the 2020 fiscal year, Judge Bishop served two consecutive terms as GACSB Vice President. Judge Bishop is an active member in good standing with the State Bar of Georgia, and he previously served as Chief Superior Court Judge for the Pataula Judicial Circuit in southwest Georgia for 27 years. Additionally, Judge Bishop serves on the Board of Directors for Aspire Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Services.

Judge Bishop was appointed to serve on the superior court bench in 1991 in the Pataula Judicial Circuit. Ten years into his appointment, he created the Pataula Adult Felony Drug Court in 2001 to serve four counties – Clay, Quitman, Randolph, and Terrell. In 2015, he expanded the Drug Court to include the southern counties in the circuit – Early, Miller, and Seminole. This is a task Judge Bishop took on because he saw a need in his community and wanted to make a difference. Being an accountability court judge allowed Judge Bishop to have a different type of interaction with participants that neither he nor the individuals are normally afforded in other court settings. Judge Bishop took an interest in each person that is sentenced to the Pataula Drug Court, learning not only about each individual, but also their families and their informal support systems. Twice a month, his interaction was unique with each participant. Judge Bishop asked individuals about their children’s performance in school or how an ailing mother or father was doing, and he often provided simple words of encouragement to help them become successful in the program. Over the years, he has taken the time to step away from what many think of as a “normal” judge’s role, and he has found a way to connect with individuals in his community who
needed additional support. Judge Bishop was committed to ensuring that his program gave individuals the tools they needed to become productive community members after completing the Pataula Adult Felony Drug Court.

In 2015, Governor Nathan Deal appointed Judge Bishop to serve a two year term on the Georgia Commission on Family Violence, where he previously served from 2006-2010. Judge Bishop has served as the President of the Council of Superior Court. He is a member and past president of the Dawson Rotary Club, Terrell County Heart Association, and the Terrell County Chamber of Commerce. He was the 2013 recipient of the Justice Robert Benham Award for Community Service for his significant contributions to the community beyond his legal or official work and a 2019 recipient of the Council of Accountability Court Judges STAR award for outstanding contributions and service to the Accountability courts of Georgia.

He volunteers his time serving youth through the Boy Scouts of America, the American Legion and the Sons of the American Legion Oratorical, Boys State and Boys Nation programs.

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GACSB Vice President, Kent Woerner

Residing in Rabun County, Kent Woerner has been an active member of AVITA Community Partners for almost three years. He is also a member of the Board of Health in Rabun County. He is a graduate of Furman University and resides in Rabun with his wife Kathie Ann Woerner. Together, the Woerner’s have seven children and three grandchildren. He is a retired Administrator of the Rabun County School System where he served for 11 years and prior to that was an administrator and teacher in Clayton and Henry Counties. Currently he serves as one of five commissioners in Rabun County.

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GACSB Secretary, Melanie Dallas

Melanie Dallas is a Licensed Professional Counselor and the Chief Executive Officer at Highland Rivers Health. During her 30 year experience in Behavioral Health, Melanie has held several administrative and clinical direct care and leadership positions in almost every level of care from crisis stabilization and mobile crisis assessment to in-home care. Her work experience has spanned both the public and private sectors working with children, families and adults. She is current chair of the Administrative Operations Committee for the Georgia Association of Community Service Board. In this most recent year, she has been selected to sit on the Substance Abuse Advisory Council for the Appalachian Regional Commission. She is a dedicated advocate for children and families and has provided testimony to several study committees in our Georgia legislature on youth and family issues.

Ms. Dallas is a graduate of the University of Kentucky with a BBA in Marketing, and also holds a Master of Science Degree in Counseling from Georgia State University. She recently graduated from the Georgia Academy for Economic Development.
Fiscal year 2020 will be Charles “Chuck” D. Williamson’s fourth term as GACSB Treasurer, continuing his oversight and assurance of the accuracy of all accounts for the Corporation. He is the CEO of Serenity Behavioral Health Systems, a Community Mental Health Center located in Augusta, Georgia. Serenity offers behavioral health services including Psychiatry, Substance Abuse counseling, Developmental Disabilities services, Child & Adolescent and Crisis Stabilization services to the citizens of East Central Georgia. Mr. Williamson has served as the CEO of Serenity for more than 15 years, beginning in 2004. Prior to coming to Serenity, Mr. Williamson served as the CEO of a Federally Qualified Health Center in West Virginia. He worked in that capacity at the Community Health Foundation at Man, West Virginia, for nine years. Mr. Williamson served as President of the Greater Augusta Health Network beginning in 2009 until 2013. Mr. Williamson has a Master’s Degree in Public Administration (MPA) from West Virginia University. He also possesses a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science from Marshall University. Born and raised in Man, West Virginia, Mr. Williamson now resides in Evans, GA. with his wife Patty and youngest son. His oldest son attends The University of South Carolina and is studying to be a physician. In his time off, he loves to be active in his church music program at the Sanctuary Church in Evans, GA.

Georgia’s Community Services Boards are the pre-eminent providers for children, youth and adults with serious mental illness, developmental disabilities, and addictive diseases. Recent surveys * indicate that:
- Nearly two million Georgians suffered from mental illness and / or addictive disease in the past year
- Over 320,000 experienced a serious mental illness in the past year
- There are over 145,000 adults in Georgia with intellectual / developmental disability
Of these, the Community Service Boards served over 175,000 with high quality, cost effective care to Georgia’s most vulnerable population. To learn more about the vital contributions of Georgia’s Community Service Boards to help persons with these disabilities at www.gacsb.org.

* US Department of Health and Human Services and Bethesda Institute.