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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT HONORS OHIO VICTIM ADVOCATE WITH RONALD REAGAN PUBLIC POLICY AWARD

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department’s Office for Victims of Crime, a component of the Office of Justice Programs, awarded the Ronald W. Reagan Public Policy Award to Jeannette M. Adkins for her more than 35 years of devoted service advocating for crime victims and building the credentials of victim service providers across the country. The award honors those whose leadership, vision and innovation have led to significant changes in public policy and practice that benefit crime victims.

“Jeannette Adkins is a true pioneer, leader and visionary in the victim services field,” said OJP Acting Assistant Attorney General Maureen A. Henneberg. “For more than three decades, she has advocated for victims at the local, state and national levels and helped to grow a vast network of victim service professionals. She has been a guiding force in helping to ensure that victims are validated, protected and respected.”

Throughout her long career in victim services, Jeannette M. Adkins has worked at all levels of government advocating for victims of crime. She joined the field in 1982, when she established the Victim/Witness Division of the Greene County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office in Xenia, Ohio, which she led for 22 years. While leading victim outreach in Greene County, she served as a reviewer on OVC’s National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium. She also oversaw the National Advocate Credentialing Program, which has credentialed nearly 10,000 victim assistance professionals to date.

Ms. Adkins has served on the Ohio Governor’s Task Force on the Investigation and Prosecution of Child Sexual Abuse and helped develop a program for the Department of Defense’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office that sets the standards for victim care as well as ethical guidelines for military advocates in the DoD Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program. In addition, she helped build a statewide crisis response team of more than 120 trained crisis responders and has personally responded to mass casualty incidents, including the Oklahoma City bombing and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. She has written books and training manuals for crime victims, served two years as Executive Director of the National Organization for Victim Assistance and retired in 2014 as Executive Director of Michael’s House Child Advocacy Center.

“Jeannette Adkins is a big reason why the victim service field has grown from a grass-roots movement into the important profession it is today,” said OVC Acting Director Katherine Darke Schmitt. “She has touched the lives of victims throughout her community, across her state and in every

corner of the country. We are proud to honor her for her long and distinguished career of service.”

Every April, OVC leads communities across the country in observing National Crime Victims’ Rights Week. President Ronald W. Reagan proclaimed the first Victims’ Rights Week in 1981, calling for greater sensitivity to the rights and needs of victims. The 40th anniversary of NCVRW took place this year, April 18-24, and featured the theme, “Support Victims. Build Trust. Engage Communities,” which emphasizes the importance of leveraging community support to victims.

The Office of Justice Programs provides federal leadership, grants, training, technical assistance and other resources to improve the nation’s capacity to prevent and reduce crime, advance racial equity in the administration of justice, assist victims and enhance the rule of law. More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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