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CONTACT: Executive Director Kim Crouch, 919-832-1413

NC Advocates for Justice Honors Champions of Justice at Annual Convention

RALEIGH, NC — This past weekend the North Carolina Advocates for Justice (NCAJ) recognized leaders in the legal field for their dedication to NCAJ's mission of protecting people's rights in North Carolina. Awards were presented at the association's annual convention in Wilmington, NC.

Former NCAJ President **Joseph B. Cheshire V** of Cheshire Parker Schneider & Bryan in Raleigh received the *Walter Clark Award*, NCAJ's highest honor given for extraordinary service to justice. Mr. Cheshire founded NCAJ's Criminal Defense Section, was responsible for creating the requirements of the specialization of criminal lawyers by the North Carolina State Bar, and served as an appointed member of the NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission and the Governor's Judicial Nominating Commission. He was named the top lawyer in North Carolina by SuperLawyers.com for 3 years in a row and is being honored for his contributions to the legal profession and to his many clients over 40 years in practice.

NCAJ's *Outstanding Trial Judge Award* was presented to both **Bernadine Ballance**, former Commissioner at the NC Industrial Commission, and to the **Honorable Rickye McKoy-Mitchell**, a District Court Judge for the 26th Judicial District. NCAJ is pleased to recognize Ms. Ballance for her long career supporting the fair treatment of injured workers in North Carolina and Judge McKoy-Mitchell for her fair-minded service as a District Court Judge in Mecklenburg County.

Ernest "Buddy" Conner Jr. of Graham Nuckolls & Conner, PLLC in Greenville, NC was awarded the *Charles L. Becton Teaching Award*. For many years, Buddy Conner has imparted his extensive knowledge on how to represent those charged with capital murder to his colleagues. He is being recognized for his invaluable contributions to NCAJ CLE programs.

Ebbie Awards were presented to attorneys **Janet Ward Black**, **Joseph B. Cheshire V**, **Narendra Ghosh**, NCAJ Diversity Officer **Karonnie Truzy** and NCAJ Political Affairs Specialist **Mary Lee** for their inspiring commitment to NCAJ's work.

NCAJ is a nonpartisan association of legal professionals dedicated to protecting people's rights. NCAJ provides continuing legal education aimed at enhancing the quality of the legal profession, works to improve access to the legal system, and advocates at the legislature in the areas of criminal and civil justice. NCAJ has served its members for over 50 years. xxx