

For Release: April 8, 2014 – Pamela Williams, Office of Communications – 405/271-5601

Child Abuse Prevention Award Winners Announced

The Family Support and Prevention Service (FSPS) at the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH), with the assistance of an interagency selection committee, recognized outstanding child abuse prevention efforts in Oklahoma at the *Child Abuse Prevention Day at the Capitol* on Tuesday, April 8. The OSDH/FSPS, along with members from the Child Abuse Prevention Task Force (formerly ITF), honors people and organizations that demonstrate significant and outstanding commitment and dedication to child abuse prevention activities. The 2014 award winners are Robert Block, M.D., for the 2014 Marion Jacewitz Award; and Emily Maxwell Herron, JD, Assistant District Attorney, District 17, for the 2014 Mary Ellen Wilson Award.

“The Child Abuse Prevention Task Force award recipients are great examples of people working in Oklahoma to prevent child abuse and neglect by strengthening families. These individuals show how one person’s commitment and actions can make a positive difference in the lives of Oklahoma’s children,” said Robyn Sears, child guidance administrator, Oklahoma City-County Health Department.

The 2014 Marion Jacewitz Award recipient is Robert Block, M.D. His involvement with child abuse spans more than 25 years. He has dedicated his life to preventing child abuse and is considered Oklahoma’s “Top Doc” in child abuse, having served as the state’s chief child abuse examiner for many years. He developed examination procedures and practices that have been adopted nationally and helped develop a new medical specialty for child abuse. Block is the retired head of the University of Oklahoma, Tulsa Department of Pediatrics. Over the years, he has educated doctors around the world about child abuse and worked alongside pediatricians to help them accurately identify children at risk of abuse. He successfully led the national effort to acknowledge child abuse as a pediatric sub-specialty recognized by the Board of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Block served as President of the American Academy of Pediatrics from 2011 to 2012. He was the primary catalyst for the partnership between the Child Abuse Network (CAN) where he was a founder and board member, the Jurak Foundation, and the University of Oklahoma to establish Oklahoma’s first children’s advocacy center, the “Justice Center” in Tulsa. Today the “Justice Center” is a child-friendly and child safe place where medical, mental health, investigative and legal professionals work side-by-side to determine whether abuse has occurred and the next best steps for the children and their families. It serves as a national model for appropriate child- friendly intervention. He belongs to numerous professional and community organizations.

The 2014 Mary Ellen Wilson Award recipient is Emily Maxwell Herron, JD. After six years in private practice, Emily became Assistant District Attorney for District 17. She is chairwoman for the Multidisciplinary Child Abuse Team, Coordinated Community Response Team, and Sexual Assault Response Team. Herron is a member of the Oklahoma Bar Association and the McCurtain County Bar Association and active on several committees. She is described by friends and professional peers as compassionate and determined in her constant fight to protect children. In her previous private practice, she represented deprived children and their families, and was often appointed by the court to serve as a guardian ad litem for children. In April 2013, she received the Governor’s Commendation award from Gov. Mary Fallin in recognition of her outstanding compassion, dedication, sensitivity, and service to victims of crime. Child safety is her first priority.

EDITORS – Please note two jpgs attached. See below captions:



Attachment 1: Dr. Robert Block, award recipient of the Marion Jacewitz Award



Attachment 2: Emily Maxwell Herron, award recipient of the Mary Ellen Wilson Award