

# **Andrew Jackson Higgins**

## **Excellence in Juvenile Justice Award**

**Thursday, October 27, 2011 - 12 noon**



### **The Recipient**

Denny Atherton began his career in 1969 as a Deputy Juvenile Officer working in the urban core of Kansas City after finishing his undergraduate work. He was a probation officer for 20 years working in all areas of the jurisdiction, and spent five of those years assigned as the court's expert witness in certification hearings.

In 1990 he became the manager of a three-person pilot unit established to conduct written assessments and provide recommendations to the court on initially referred youth.

Denny was also engaged in a part-time therapy practice for 15 years concentrating on marriage and family issues, prior to department level leadership.

Denny was promoted to Director of Field Services in 1993 at the Family Court where he managed prevention and diversion services, the probation units and three residential facilities.

In 2000 Denny Atherton became the Director of a new department called Assessment and Development Services. His responsibilities for the past 10 years include overseeing the development and maintenance of evidence based practices in treating youthful offenders, overseeing the training department and the family and juvenile drug courts.

Representing the Family Court, Denny was part of a four circuit initial effort to bring the Anne E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative to Missouri. He subsequently became the 16<sup>th</sup> Circuit's JDAI Site Coordinator, now in their sixth year as a replication site. He has been the state trainer for Missouri for JDAI, supporting new replication sites as they begin their reform efforts, as well as a national trainer for the Foundation as new JDAI states are designated.

He has served on a number of State committees including the Missouri Court Performance Standards Committee for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, the task force that established Training Standards for Juvenile Officers and committees that developed several juvenile risk assessment instruments. He is a member of the National Association of Probation Executives, the American Probation and Parole Association, and the Missouri Juvenile Justice Association.

Mr. Atherton earned a Bachelor of Arts from Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa, in Sociology/ Psychology, and a Master of Arts in Education – Counseling Psychology from the University of Missouri – Kansas City. He is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Certified Substance Abuse Counselor. He completed the Court Management Program from the Institute for Court Management, National Center for State Courts in Williamsburg, Virginia.