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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Terry Goddard Presents Seven Distinguished Service Awards

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Aug. 17, 2007) Attorney General Terry Goddard today presented Attorney General Distinguished Service Awards to seven recipients during a luncheon at the Arizona Coalition for Victims' Services Annual Conference at the Pointe South Mountain Resort in Phoenix.

The honorees were recognized for their exemplary service, uncommon commitment to victims' rights and improving the treatment of crime victims. The following people were honored:

Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award for Leadership: Cathy Cermak, Domestic Violence Unit Supervisor for the Pima County Adult Probation Department.

Through a STOP grant, Cathy helped create a Domestic Violence Court. One judge oversees all first-time and repeat offender cases. By creating this DV court, a new victim-centered process has been established to ensure victims of domestic violence can receive services they need to overcome the trauma, navigate the criminal justice system, secure offender accountability and live a safer future. Since establishing this process, offender accountability and victim services in Pima County have risen to new levels of excellence.

Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award for Leadership: Michael Eyer, Victim Assistance Caseworker for the Glendale Police Department.

Over the past 21 years, Michael has served Glendale residents as a Victim Assistance Caseworker for the Glendale PD. During that time, Eyer developed the GunSafe Homes Grant, which helped Glendale Police distribute more than 7,000 gun locks and 9,000 flyers promoting safe storage of firearms. Eyer also designed both the Victim Assistance Case Record database and the Glendale City Prosecutor's Office Victims' Rights notification database. Both of these tools are recognized in the Attorney General Office's Victim Services Best Practices Manual.

Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award for Innovative Practices: Keith Perkins, founder of the Never Again Foundation Legal Services.

In January 2001, Keith left a lucrative law partnership to form Never Again Foundation Legal Services, a non-profit charity. The Foundation provides pro bono legal services to low-income women, children and vulnerable adult victims of physical and sexual abuse in civil lawsuits. Perkins describes the Foundation's mission as using the law to help people achieve hope, justice and healing. Perkins calls this "therapeutic jurisprudence."

Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award for Public Service: Phoenix Police Department Detective Jack Ballentine (retired).

Ballentine has established himself as a champion for victims in both police work and the academic community. He developed and is the lead instructor of the Rio Salado Criminal Investigations Program, a curriculum used by police departments statewide to certify their criminal investigation detectives. The curriculum includes having homicide survivors address the classes to ensure all new detectives hear firsthand the plight of survivors.

Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award for Service Coordination: University of Arizona's OASIS Program.

This program was created in 1996 to assist victims of sexual assault and relationship violence in the University of Arizona (UA) campus community. This program coordinates victims' services between nine campus offices, the UA Police Department and the Tucson Police Department. Over the last 11 years, the highly qualified professionals at OASIS have provided care and service to hundreds of victims, raised awareness of sexual assault on campus and secured permanent funding for the program.

Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award for Advocacy & Direct Services: Jack Saunders, Bullhead City.

Saunders, a retired truck driver, wanted to give back to his community. Ten years ago, he began as a volunteer in Bullhead City's Victim Rights Crisis Intervention Program. He did his job so well that Bullhead City hired him as a part-time Victims' Advocate. Saunders is known for never turning down a call for help.

Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award for Advocacy & Direct Services: Parents of Murdered Children (POMC), Valley of the Sun Chapter.

This organization is run entirely by volunteers and has been providing services for crime victims since 1986. Over the past 21 years, it has grown from six volunteers to more than 1,000 volunteer families. POMC helps survivors deal with their grief and assists families with the criminal justice system.

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