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# NEWS RELEASE



## Judge Michael Jackson receives national veterans treatment court award

**Washington, D.C.:** At a ceremony held July 12, Judge Michael Jackson received the Justice For Vets 2017 Hank Pirowski Award. The award is presented annually by Justice For Vets to an individual who embodies the courageous spirit of Hank Pirowski; teacher, mentor, innovator, proud veteran and coordinator of the nation's first veterans treatment court.

Since 2013, Justice For Vets has bestowed the Hank Pirowski Award on individuals who have exemplified courage and perseverance in the mission to connect justice-involved veterans with the benefits and treatment they have earned. The Hank Pirowski Award is among the highest honors given by Justice For Vets.

Justice for Vets was established in 2010 and is a division of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, dedicated to transforming the way the justice system identifies, assesses and treats veterans, leading the national effort to put a veterans treatment court in reach of every veteran in need.

The presentation was made during the closing ceremonies of the NADCP annual training conference. The NADCP conference is the world's largest conference on treatment courts and criminal justice reform. Over 5,000 people attended the conference, which provides training for critical topics affecting court treatment programs. In his acceptance remarks Judge Jackson humbly stated, "I'm just an old Lieutenant doing what needs to be done."

Judge Jackson is a Marine Corps veteran who led a combat platoon and company in Vietnam as a lieutenant. He was awarded five personal medals for bravery, including two Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart. In May 2015, Judge Jackson presided over the first cases of the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Veterans Treatment Court.

Shortly after Judge Jackson was sworn in, and while he was working to start the Veterans Treatment Court, he was diagnosed with a rare cancer that the Veterans Administration determined was the result of his repeated exposure to Agent Orange while in Vietnam. Today, 42 months after treatment, Judge Jackson remains symptom-free and is living a very active life. He has said that he will continue to preside over the Veterans Treatment Court until his six-year term expires in January 2019, when by law he must retire.