

RESOLUTION HONORING THE SERVICE OF GRETCHEN UZZLE AYLSWORTH

WHEREAS, Gretchen Uzzle Aylsworth is retiring after seventeen years of tireless and talented service to the children of Chatham County as Director of the Guardian ad Litem Program for Judicial District 15-B; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Program across the State of North Carolina has been, since 1983, to recruit and train men and women from amazingly diverse backgrounds to serve, in court proceedings involving alleged abuse or neglect or other child custody issues, as the SOLE NEUTRAL ADVOCATE FOR THE CHILD; and

WHEREAS, the GAL program has served the best interests of thousands of children over the years, in cases allowing many to return home, others to live with family members, and still others to be adopted, with some 4,767 trained volunteers serving 17,189 children this past fiscal year alone -- always with the goal that each child represented by each GAL remain safe and in a permanent home; and

WHEREAS, the challenge for each GAL volunteer is to become totally involved in investigating each case, requiring persistence and dedication in winning the child's trust, interviewing parents, teachers, doctors, social workers and other significant participants in the child's life; and

WHEREAS, each GAL must then be prepared not only to report information gleaned from his or her investigation to the presiding judge in court, but, more importantly, to advocate strongly and courageously for what the GAL has come to determine is in the BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD -- even when the GAL's conclusions in the matter differ from those of the parents, the Department of Social Services, or even the judge; and

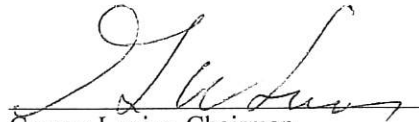
WHEREAS, when Gretchen Aylsworth assumed the directorship of this important GAL Program in Chatham and Orange counties in 1992, she was the only staff member, had only nine volunteers, no office and no training facility, and found most open court cases unassigned, having to perform work and training from her own home; and

WHEREAS, under Getchen Aylsworth's superb leadership, the GAL Program in District 15-B has achieved a reputation as one of the finest in North Carolina, having expanded to encompass some eighty-three (83) active volunteers serving two hundred fifty-two (252) children, including fifty-four (54) families and one hundred seven (107) children in Chatham County; and

WHEREAS, the impact of the Guardian ad Litem Program in Chatham County is beyond measure, in every juvenile court proceeding involving our abused, neglected and needy children, where the presiding judge is fortunate to have the advocacy of an informed GAL to weigh in deciding the best interest of each child;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chatham County Board of Commissioners are honored to recognize Gretchen Uzzle Aylsworth and her extraordinary Guardian Ad Litem Program, and to extend heartfelt thanks to her for every day of her seventeen years of labors on behalf of Chatham County's children.

Adopted this 4th day of May, 2009.



George Lucier, Chairman

ATTEST:



Sandra B. Sublett, CMC, Clerk to the Board
Chatham County Board of Commissioners