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MINNESOTA CORRECTIONS COMMISSIONER JOAN FABIAN NAMED “CORRECTIONS PERSON OF THE YEAR”

Minnesota Corrections Commissioner Joan Fabian was named *Corrections Person of the Year* by the Minnesota Corrections Association (MCA) at its Fall Training Institute held October 27-29 in Duluth, Minnesota. The award recognizes outstanding contributions to the field of Corrections in Minnesota.

“Working in corrections is an incredible responsibility, and an awesome and rewarding profession,” Commissioner Fabian said. “I’m so proud to be a part of the best corrections community in the country, and grateful for this great honor from MCA and my colleagues.”

Commissioner Fabian, of North Branch, began her corrections career in 1966 as a group supervisor at the Hennepin County Detention Center. She joined the Ramsey County Community Corrections Department in 1970, serving as a probation officer; Domestic Relations Division director; Juvenile Division director; and ultimately department director for 14 years. As department director, Fabian initiated and implemented a visioning process for all employees that defined and established agency goals and values. She increased employment of staff of color by 12 percent. She oversaw construction of a 100-bed Juvenile Detention Center and security additions at Boys Totem Town and the Workhouse. During her tenure, production also began on the Ponds at Battle Creek Golf Course, a joint effort of Ramsey County Community Corrections and the Parks and Recreation Department that uses inmate labor for ongoing maintenance of the facility grounds and buildings.

In 2003, Governor Tim Pawlenty appointed Fabian as State Corrections Commissioner. She has been faced with managing the state’s prison crowding problem and a serious budget

shortfall. As commissioner, Fabian also serves as a member of the Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission, CrimNet Policy Group, and Supreme Court Drug Task Force.

In announcing the award, MCA noted, “There is not much in corrections that Commissioner Fabian has not experienced firsthand. She’s experienced, bright, and knowledgeable - and a true leader. She clearly understands the issues, asks staff for input to which she truly listens, and makes sound decisions.”

MCA also recognized **Lieutenant Joan Thorsten** with a *Professional Achievement Award*. Lt. Thorsten, who works at the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Willow River/Moose Lake, was recognized for her work with sergeants at the facility, helping them identify and address facility issues and improve operations.

Thistledew Camp, a program of the Minnesota Department of Corrections, received the *MCA President’s Award* for creativity, resourcefulness, and innovation. Located in Togo, Minnesota, Thistledew began operations in 1955, working with serious youthful offenders from across the state. In 1970, the camp began working with a wide variety of male adolescents who have committed crimes. As of this year, Thistledew has provided programming to over 8,000 children. Thistledew is known for top quality, effective programming using best practices, restorative justice, and cognitive tools. A 1995 legislative audit rated Thistledew as “one of the most successful delinquency prevention programs in the State of Minnesota.”

Therese McCoy, of Scott County Court Services, received the *MCA Board of Directors Award* for exemplary service to MCA members through participation in association activities. McCoy has held significant positions on the board, including serving as president in 2000. She has also served on various committees and is regarded as an expert within the association on legislative matters. McCoy was cited for exemplifying the meaning of dedication and commitment to MCA.

MCA is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting professional development as well as ethical and just correctional practice. For more information about MCA, visit www.mncorrections.org/mca/default.htm.