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Contact: Allison Manning
Phone: 404-232-8900

GPDSC's Mears and Parker Recognized by Atlanta Business Chronicle

Atlanta –The Atlanta Business Chronicle has included Georgia Public Defender Standards Council (GPDSC) director Michael Mears and special counsel Gary Parker to its “Who’s Who in Law and Accounting for 2005.” The list features professionals considered to be “Atlanta’s finest lawyers and accountants” and was announced in the September 30-October 6 edition. Only 38 attorneys were included in this year’s list, and they are described as having “the greatest impact in the field of law.”

“I am very honored to have our public defender agency recognized by the business community. The services provided by the Georgia Public Defender Standards Council are really, in a very basic sense, good business for the state of Georgia,” Mears stated. “Both Gary and I are honored to represent the accomplishments of the Standards Council.”

The article points out that Mears has “served as lead trial counsel in more than 60 death penalty cases, and has authored numerous publications and professional articles dealing with the defense of criminally charged defendants.” His extensive work within Georgia’s indigent defense system is also highlighted. Prior to being appointed GPDSC’s director, Mears was the director of the Multi-County Public Defender Office. He has also played an instrumental role in helping to develop policies, procedures and guidelines which govern the provision of indigent defense services in Georgia. Mears is also on the faculty (part-time) of the Georgia State University School of Social Work, where he teaches Forensic Issues for Social Workers. He is currently the vice-chairperson of the State Bar’s Indigent Defense Committee and has served as chairperson of the State Bar of Georgia’s Criminal Law Section. From 1985 to 1993, Mears served as the mayor of the City of Decatur, Georgia.

Special counsel Gary Parker served in the Georgia State Senate from 1989 to 1990 where he “spearheaded legislation that resulted in the state appropriating its first \$1 million to indigent defense” funding, as noted in the “Who’s Who” list. Parker was the governor of the Judicial Nominating Committee from 1991 to 1996 and has also served on the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and the Georgia Indigent Defense Council. He is a recipient of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyer’s Champion of Indigent Defense Award and the Southern Center of Human Rights’ Equal Justice

Award. Prior to joining the staff of GPDSC, Parker devoted a great deal of his time to public interest work through his private law practice.

Both Mears and Parker have been vital to the growth and success of GPDSC since the agency's creation. GPDSC is an independent agency within the judicial branch of state government. Passed in 2003 by the Georgia General Assembly, the Indigent Defense Act created the agency and charged it with assuring that adequate and effective legal representation is provided, independent of political and private interests to ensure that justice is achieved for all indigent defendants in Georgia.

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