

**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Cherokee County Domestic Violence Task Force Named
Task Force of the Year**

September 16, 2020 – District Attorney Shannon Wallace announces that the Georgia Commission on Family Violence (GCFV) has presented its Task Force of the Year Award to the Cherokee County Domestic Violence Task Force. The honor was bestowed this morning during GCFV’s 26th annual conference.

The Cherokee County Domestic Violence Task Force is comprised of government agencies, community-based agencies, survivors of family violence, and other concerned community members and professionals. The group meets monthly at different law enforcement agencies throughout the county, with the goal to strengthen and sustain coordinated community response to family violence in Cherokee County.

“The District Attorney’s Office is pleased to participate in the work of the Cherokee County Domestic Violence Task Force,” said District Attorney Shannon Wallace. “This committed group of individuals is making a real impact on Cherokee County by working together to develop an effective response to this serious crime.”

The Task Force conducts reviews of serious domestic violence cases. One recent case review led to a change in the way special conditions of bond and probation are flagged, improving survivor safety and offender accountability in Cherokee County.

“We are honored to receive this recognition,” said Task Force Co-Chair Tommie DeGonzague, legal program director for the Cherokee Family Violence Center. “More than 20 years ago, Cherokee County showed its commitment to addressing the problem of family violence by establishing this task force. That commitment remains today with active members meeting once a month to discuss issues, plan training and events, and ensure victims are provided the services they need.”

In addition to monthly meetings, the Task Force co-sponsors and hosts community events. Last year, during National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, the Task Force worked with the Sheriff’s Office, the District Attorney’s Office, and the Solicitor General’s Office to host a candlelight vigil and seminar for a local senior center.

“This pandemic has changed a lot about the way we live and work, but the need for a coordinated response to domestic violence remains the same. Incidents of domestic violence have remained steady, or in some cases have increased, since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis. We are lucky to have a group that remains committed to ending family violence in our community,” said Task Force Co-Chair Rachel Ashe, assistant district attorney assigned to Cherokee County’s Domestic Violence Unit.

GCFV’s 26th annual family violence conference was held virtually on September 14-16, 2020. The theme of the conference was *Crafting a Coordinated Community Response: Working Together to Address Relationship Violence*. More than 650 local and national stakeholders attended the sold-out conference, including judges, prosecutors, law enforcement, advocates, survivors, faith leaders, counselors, and community members.

About GCFV: The Georgia Commission on Family Violence, created by the Georgia General Assembly in 1992, is charged with developing a comprehensive state plan for ending family violence in Georgia. If you or someone you know is being impacted by domestic violence, call 1-800-334-2836 to speak with a domestic violence advocate. Press Contact: Stephanie Woodard, swoodard@hallcounty.org

About the District Attorney's Office: The Office of the District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit is committed to seeking justice, acting with integrity, and collaborating with partner agencies in the criminal justice system in order to protect the citizens of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia.

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Photo (left to right): Cherokee County Domestic Violence Task Force Co-Chairs Rachel Ashe and Tommie DeGonzague. Ashe is an assistant district attorney assigned to Cherokee County's Domestic Violence Unit, and DeGonzague is legal program director for the Cherokee Family Violence Center.