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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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**DUPAGE COUNTY JUDGES COMPLETE TRAINING TO
PRESENT TEEN SAFETY PROGRAM**

Judges Daniel Guerin, Jane Mitton, Mary Beth O'Connor, Elizabeth Sexton, Dorothy French, Brian McKillip and Neal Cerne, of the 18th Judicial Circuit Court of DuPage County, in Wheaton, have completed a training program offered by the Illinois Judges Association (IJA) called "7 Reasons to Leave the Party," and are available to present the free program to schools.

Developed by the Honorable Mark A. Drummond, a judge in the 8th Judicial Circuit in Quincy, Il, the 50 minute award-winning presentation provides 7th through 12th grade students with information about the consequences of poor choices. The talk, which is peppered with true stories of teens who made wrong decisions, is designed to drive home this message: Encourage your friends to avoid wrong behavior, and you can prevent them from having a criminal record or losing their driver's license. You may even save a life.

To date, nearly 70 judges statewide have voluntarily completed the training, and the program has been presented to over 26,000 teens throughout the state.

"By the time a teen hits the courthouse, it is too late," Judge Drummond has said. "This is our attempt as judges at preventative law." "Most teens want to do the right thing and the program gives those teens 7 reasons to encourage them to do the same. Each teen is given a "contract" to go over with his or her parent or guardian where the teen pledges not to drink alcohol, not to drive with someone who has been drinking and, furthermore, to promise that, if they are at a place where they feel uncomfortable or unsafe, they will call the parent or guardian for a ride home-no questions asked."

The first five percent of teens at each school who deliver to the designated school official the "contract" with their signature and that of a parent or guardian will receive a key chain flashlight, courtesy of the IJA.

For further information or to schedule a presentation, contact the Illinois Judges Association at 321 S. Plymouth Court, Chicago, IL 60604 or call 312-431-1283 or email the Association at info@ija.org.

