

October 25, 2006

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Advocacy Program to Celebrate 30th Anniversary With Montgomery Event

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. -- The Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program will celebrate its 30th anniversary on Friday, Nov. 3 with a reception in the Old Archives Room at the Alabama Capitol in Montgomery from 1-3 p.m.

ADAP is housed at The University of Alabama and is part of a nationwide network of protection and advocacy systems called the National Disability Rights Network.

Curt Decker, executive director of the national network, will speak at the anniversary event before the reception.

The following Alabamians will also be honored at the celebration for their contributions to disability rights, advocacy and awareness in the state:

Paul R. Davis, owner and publisher of the Tuskegee News and also president and publisher of Davis Publications in Auburn

Jayne R. Chase of Florence, advocate, director, Partners in Policymaking of Alabama

Kathy E. Sawyer, advocate, acting administrator, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Administration in the District of Columbia, and former commissioner of the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation in Montgomery

Nicolas Dupree of Mobile, advocate, disability rights organizer

ADAP is Alabama's federally-mandated protection and advocacy system for persons with disabilities. It provides legally based advocacy services to Alabamians with disabilities in order to protect, promote and expand their rights.

"ADAP has been at the forefront of civil rights advocacy for persons with disabilities in Alabama since its inception," said Dr. Ellen Gillespie, ADAP executive director.

"We're probably best known for our class-action litigation in Wyatt v. Sawyer and R.C. v. Walley -- cases involving the deinstitutionalization of persons with mental illness and mental retardation and reform of the state's child welfare system," said Gillespie.

"But, on an individual basis we assist hundreds of Alabamians with

disabilities every year, helping to ensure their rights are protected,” she noted.