

## **Happy 40<sup>th</sup> CASA!**

This year we are celebrating the 40 year anniversary of Clark County's CASA Program along with my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday (well, maybe not). By way of background, Clark County's CASA Program was started in 1980 when Eighth Judicial District Court Judge, John F. Mendoza, got the idea from a Seattle program started in 1977. Judge Mendoza saw the need for the children of Clark County to have advocates in order to ensure that their voices were heard by the court. With the assistance of the Jr. League, and funding approved by the Clark County Commissioners, Clark County's CASA Program was born. To avoid any possible conflict of interest, the decision was made to operate the CASA Program through the courts. Considering that OUR children needed a loving and permanent home, as well as the fact that Judge Mendoza was Hispanic, he came up with the program's name of CASA, which was ultimately adopted as the national name of the Program. The children of Clark County will be eternally grateful to Judge Mendoza!

This month's CASA Newsletter is featuring a collage of all of the judicial officers who have presided over Juvenile Dependency proceedings over the past 40 years. While we recognize and appreciate all of the efforts and dedications of the judicial officers in helping OUR children find safe, loving and permanent homes, the true "stars" are the CASA volunteers. CASAs goal for 2020 was "400 in 40" which translates to 400 CASA volunteers in CASAs 40<sup>th</sup> year. Thanks to the outstanding efforts of the management and staff members of the CASA Program, the goal was achieved although we have recently dropped slightly below 400 due to some volunteers becoming inactive. While 400 CASA volunteers is a significant accomplishment, as a community we must not be satisfied until we have a CASA for EVERY CHILD in the child welfare system! With that in mind, THANK YOU CASAs and don't hesitate to recruit family members or friends to the CASA Program!