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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Woodland Man Graduates from Mental Health Court

(Woodland, CA) - October 6, 2017 - Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced today that on Monday September 25, 2017, 41-year-old Davis resident Gary Wight successfully graduated from Mental Health Court in Department Four of the Yolo County Superior Court.

Mental Health Court (MHC) is a minimum 18-month court-based treatment and monitoring system for adult offenders with serious mental illness. MCH is designed to increase the treatment engagement of the participants while reducing both arrests and jail time both during and after their involvement and participation in the program. The program is a collaborative effort between the Yolo County Superior Court, Probation, Health and Human Services Agency, the Public Defender, and the District Attorney.

Mr. Wight's parents, Linda and Tom who are both from Woodland, joined him for the graduation ceremony. Linda Wight regularly attended Mental Health Court hearings from November 23, 2015, when Gary entered the program, through his graduation almost two year later. Mrs. Wight spoke at the graduation ceremony and expressed her gratitude for the MHC program. "The atmosphere in Mental Health Court is the best in the world! When an entire team is collaboratively working in support of the client, success is possible. There is no comparison between walking into this space and walking into a traditional criminal justice courtroom where the clients arrive in stripes and chains. Our family is most appreciative of being a part of this opportunity."

The Honorable Janet Gaard is the judge assigned to Mental Health Court. Judge Gaard presided over Monday's proceedings and congratulated Mr. Wight stating, "Gary has been an inspiration to each of us on the MHC team, and he reminds all of us that, when we work together, we can do great things to help people improve their own lives and those of the people around them."

Courtroom Artist Vicki Behringer volunteered to draw some sketches of the graduation ceremony. One of the court sketches from the event depicts Judge Gaard

presenting Gary with a Mental Health Court graduation certificate. The other sketch depicts Deputy Public Defender Bret Bandley, who represented Gary Wight, addressing his former client at the graduation ceremony. The sketches can be seen on the District Attorney's website at the following web address yoloda.org.

Mr. Bandley congratulated Mr. Wight "on his accomplishments and the great change I have seen in him while in MHC." He further expressed that Gary is a great example for the other participants in this program to follow.

District Attorney Jeff Reisig commended Mr. Wight for his hard work during the 22-months he was in the program commenting, "Mental Health Court's collaborative process results in increased treatment engagement for participants such as Mr. Wight who gained valuable insight into his mental health along with the ability to better manage it. This program has proved to be a successful way to address those suffering from mental illness who find themselves in the criminal justice system."

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