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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA CALIFORNIA

**RESOLUTION HONORING JOHN VAN AKEN
FOR A LIFETIME OF ADVOCACY ON BEHALF
OF THOSE LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS**

WHEREAS, John Van Aken has devoted his time and energies to serving as a volunteer advocate for those living with mental illness in our community through his continuing service to the Santa Barbara Mental Health Association; and

WHEREAS, in commemoration of its 60th Anniversary, the Santa Barbara Mental Health Association is establishing the "John Van Aken Advocacy Award" in recognition of John's tireless dedication to improving funding of mental health services, creating more special needs housing in our community, championing the cause of jail diversion and prison reform for those diagnosed with a mental illness, and mentoring other advocates; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his thirty-year career as a labor law attorney, John Van Aken has volunteered as an advocate for individuals facing the criminal justice system, successfully persuading prosecutors, defense attorneys and judges to consider both the mental health history of people facing jail or prison sentences and the opportunity to determine treatment over incarceration; and

WHEREAS, for over fifteen years, John has focused on the need to improve deplorable jail and prison conditions that violate the 8th Amendment, becoming an expert on the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act, and writing hundreds of letters to policymakers citing its purpose, findings and recommendations; and

WHEREAS, John Van Aken has been recognized at the local, state and national levels for his selfless work and was honored with the National Mental Health Association's annual Sandy Brandt Volunteer of the Year award in 1995;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT AND IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AND RESOLVED that this Board of Supervisors honors John Van Aken for a lifetime of outstanding and tireless advocacy for the welfare and rights of individuals living with mental illness, for his dedicated service to the Santa Barbara Mental Health Association and its clients, and for the establishment of the "John Van Aken Advocacy Award" in his honor.

Passed and adopted by the Board of Supervisors of Santa Barbara County, State of California this 26th day of June, 2007 by a unanimous vote of all members present.



ATTEST:

[Signature]
Clerk of the Board

[Signature]
Supervisor - 1st District
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Supervisor - 2nd District
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Supervisor - 3rd District
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Supervisor - 4th District
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Supervisor - 5th District