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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The Honorable John J. Specia (Ret), Jurist in Residence for Children’s Commission, Named 2012 Winner of the T. Berry Brazelton, M.D. Infant Mental Health Advocacy Award.
Award to be presented at the 2012 Conference on January 6,7**

Dallas (November 22, 2011) – The Texas Association for Infant Mental Health recently announced the 2012 recipient of the T. Berry Brazelton, M.D. Infant Mental Health Advocacy Award as John J. Specia (Ret), Jurist in Residence for Children’s Commission. The award, upon which the Infant Mental Health Advocacy Conference was built, will be presented to Mr. Specia at the 2012 conference on January 6, 7 at the Hilton Dallas Lincoln Centre.

Judge Specia has long recognized that strong judicial leadership and oversight are essential to avoid unnecessary placements of children in foster care and to prevent delays in placing children in safe, permanent homes. Since 2009, Judge Specia has served as the Jurist in Residence for the Children’s Commission. In addition to his private law practice, he works tirelessly on the many and varied projects directed by the Commission by meeting with judges, legislators, child welfare officials, and countless stakeholders to promote the work of the Children’s Commission and to hear their compliments, concerns and criticisms in return.

“Judge Specia has spent his lifetime dedicated to judicial excellence and promoting best practices in improving the safety, permanency and well-being of children in the Texas foster care system. Although retired from the bench, his court in San Antonio has been recognized as a model court,” says Susan Craven, Executive Director for the Texas Association for Infant Mental Health. “He is an amazing advocate for children and exemplifies the very spirit of what the Infant Mental Health Advocacy Award stands for. Texas Association for Infant Mental Health is so pleased to recognize him as the 2012 Award winner.”

Annual Honorees are selected by The Infant Mental Health Advocacy Council and the Texas Association for Infant Mental Health, and Judge Specia will be inducted as 2012 honoree at the conference.

Infant Mental Health Advocacy Award and Conference:

Founded in 1990, the Infant Mental Health Advocacy Bi-annual Award and Conference has brought the brightest industry minds together for child advocacy for more than 20 years. For sponsorship opportunities, contact Susan Craven at scraven@taimh.org.

Texas Association for Infant Mental Health (TAIMH)

The Texas Association for Infant Mental Health (TAIMH) is a non-profit affiliate of the World Association for Infant Mental Health. TAIMH has addressed infant mental health issues in Texas since 1980, and is dedicated to improving the quality of nurturing family relationships for infants, young children, and their families.

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