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Media Release

**AFTER 28 YEARS OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP, CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF ALABAMA
ANNOUNCES CEO TRANSITION:
Gayle Watts to Retire; Director of Advancement John Stone Named Successor**

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Media Contact: Arema Granger, Marketing Communications Coordinator
205-943-5343 (office)

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — For more than a century, **Children's Aid Society of Alabama (CAS)** has stood as a steadfast refuge for the state's most vulnerable children and families. Founded in 1912, CAS has weathered wars, recessions, and generational shifts; always guided by the unwavering belief that every child deserves safety, stability, and the chance to thrive. Today, the organization announces the next chapter in that storied legacy: the retirement of longtime **CEO Gayle Watts** and the appointment of **John Stone** as her successor.

Watts, who has devoted 28 years of her life to CAS; more than a quarter of the organization's entire history, will officially step down as Stone assumes the role of Chief Executive Officer on June 1st. **"CAS has truly been fortunate to have Gayle Watts at the helm for 28 years. Under her leadership, our organization has not only grown in size and impact but also stayed true to our mission and values. We are stronger because of her leadership, and we are profoundly grateful for her integrity, vision, and service,"** said Anita Clemon, President of the CAS Board of Directors.

"Serving as CEO of CAS for more than 28 years has been the greatest honor of my life. I am deeply grateful for the dedicated staff, Board members, and supporters who kept our mission at the center of everything we did together. I am excited about CAS' future and confident that John Stone will lead with the same spirit of innovation and compassion that has always defined this organization." said Gayle Watts, retiring CEO of CAS. Under Watts' leadership, CAS expanded its reach across Alabama, deepening its impact through innovative programming, strategic partnerships, and an unwavering commitment to child welfare. Her tenure has been defined not by titles or accolades — though she has garnered several, including being named one of **Alabama's Women Who Shape the State** and earning a **Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Safe Place Network** — but the families across Alabama whose lives were redirected toward hope because of the organization she led, serve as her legacy.

The Board selected Stone following a thorough and deliberate vetting process — a testament to their commitment to ensuring CAS' mission endures without interruption. Stone's deep familiarity with the organization, its donors, its community partners, and its heart makes him a natural choice to carry the torch forward. **"I am humbled and honored to be entrusted with this mission," Stone said. "Gayle has built something remarkable here. My commitment is to honor that foundation while continuing to grow our capacity to serve Alabama's children and families for the next century and beyond."**

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About **Children's Aid Society of Alabama (CAS)**, since its founding in 1912, CAS has been dedicated to building strong children, youth, and families through professional, licensed, and loving service and care. CAS works to establish safe homes where families can stay together, and parents can strengthen their parenting skills. The Agency guides youth in foster care to independent adulthood. The path for families touched by adoption is reinforced while CAS helps them navigate the lifelong adoption journey. Formerly homeless young mothers are provided strong and stable homes, and communities are educated on the dangers of labor and sexual exploitation and trafficking. Children's Aid Society of Alabama is a charter agency of the **United Way of Central Alabama** and the **Child Welfare League of America**. Learn more about Children's Aid Society of Alabama's Programs, visit **www.childremsaid.org** or follow us on **facebook**.

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