

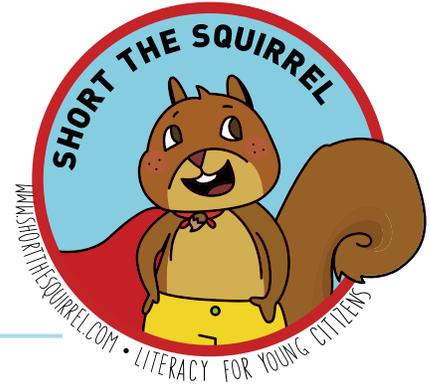
Press Release

Media Contact Information:

Monica Anderson Young

contact@SHORTtheSquirrel.com

Daphne, Alabama



LITERACY HAS A NEW FRIEND

SHORT the Squirrel reaches children attending court

Montgomery, January 2021 - SHORT the Squirrel, a literacy project aimed at reaching our youngest citizens, was named a 2020 Alabama Law Foundation grant recipient in December. SHORT, co-founded by Dr. Dee Dupree Bennett of Eufaula and Monica Anderson Young of Daphne, will release SHORT's first booklet *SHORT in Court* for all 67 Alabama counties to distribute in 2021.

The booklet features a blend of entertainment and education for children ages 4-9 visiting Alabama's courtrooms. The children may be accompanying adults with court business or involved in cases affecting their futures. *SHORT in Court* guides children through a courtroom experience with a lovable character who promotes understanding and reduces trepidation.

According to the Alabama State Department of Education 2018-2019 test results, 53% of Alabama's 4th grade students were not proficient in reading. As Alabama courtrooms do not allow electronics, SHORT the Squirrel fills a gap of time with activities encouraging literacy.

"The SHORT the Squirrel program is an innovative and outstanding program to encourage respect for the rule of law, as well as literacy in Alabama's children. I am thankful for Alabama Law Foundation's commitment and generosity in approving a grant for SHORT the Squirrel. I am looking forward to seeing the SHORT program in all of Alabama's courthouses," said grant committee member Brad Mendheim, Associate Justice, Alabama Supreme Court.

Governor Kay Ivey has endorsed the SHORT the Squirrel program. Ironically, SHORT was being founded at the same time the Alabama Literacy Act was established to increase reading levels across the state. Bennett, Young, and their team of volunteers look forward to using the Alabama Law Foundation grant to deliver *SHORT in Court* to each Alabama county court system.

SHORT the Squirrel is a non-profit founded in 2020 and was created after McRae Young, a Mobile County Assistant District Attorney, saw young children spending large unoccupied blocks of time in the courtroom. Her mother Monica Anderson Young and Dr. Dee Dupree Bennett created SHORT the Squirrel as a mechanism to fill the gap with "edutainment" and are establishing SHORT as literacy's identifiable, lovable mascot for children. For more information, please visit <https://SHORTtheSquirrel.com> or email contact@shortthesquirrel.com.

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