



**MICHAEL W. MORRISSEY**  
NORFOLK DISTRICT ATTORNEY

# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## NORFOLK DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

45 SHAWMUT ROAD | CANTON, MA 02021 | 781.830.4800 | F: 781.830.4801 | [www.norfolkda.com](http://www.norfolkda.com)

## Press Release

### 2016 Sam Berns Courage Award Conveyed to Mackenzie Anderson

Contact: D. Traub, 781-830-4917



A graduating Foxboro High School senior has been given the Sam Berns Courage Award For Peer Leadership, named for the local boy whose battle with pre-mature aging inspired an Emmy-winning documentary – and countless individual Americans.

Mackenzie Anderson, a varsity basketball player and leader at FHS, was presented with the award during a special ceremony including Sam's parents at the Wrentham District Court in May, during the court's Law Day ceremonies. She will attend Penn State in the fall.

"She is a bright light in the school and the community as a whole," FHS guidance counselor Lauren White wrote in her nomination letter to Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey, whose office created and administers the award. "She is certainly one who stands out as a person who always looks out for others, understands responsibility and is mature beyond her years."

"Young adults who lead their peers by example, by their courage and by their kindness, like Mackenzie Anderson, are a true measure of healthy schools," District Attorney Morrissey said. "Adults in law enforcement, in education and faith communities can supply scaffolding and help, but people like Mackenzie are the stuff of safe, strong communities. Foxboro High School's nomination made that very clear."

Anderson is one of only three Foxboro students in the last 20 years to earn her Girl Scout Gold Award – the organization's highest achievement. While working at a local camp ground, she has combined her athletics and Girl Scouts with church involvement and work for Hope Loves Company, an organization supporting children of parents with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS, or Lou Gehrig's Disease).

Mackenzie's mother Susan lost a 2-year battle with ALS in March. Roughly two-weeks prior, Mackenzie had worked with school officials to have a one-woman graduation ceremony that her mother could attend. The event was documented on the Ch. 5 evening news at the time.

"This is clearly an exceptional person, someone whose courage enables her to do and achieve great things even while in the midst of great pain and sadness," District Attorney Morrissey said.

The award, though founded and administered by District Attorney Morrissey's Office, is awarded by a committee comprised of Sam's parents, Dr. Scott Berns and Dr. Leslie Gordon, Hockomock Area YMCA president Ed Hurley, Patriots Place General Manager Brian Earley and Foxboro Superintendent of Schools Debra Spinelli.