

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY MERCER VICINAGE

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Mercer Vicinage to Celebrate 20th Drug Court Graduation

The Mercer Vicinage will hold its 20th drug court graduation on Friday, June 28 at 10 a.m. in the Special Proceedings Courtroom on the fourth floor of the Mercer County Criminal Courthouse, 400 S. Warren St., Trenton. The graduation program will honor 28 participants for their successes and accomplishments in completing the program.

Superior Court Criminal Presiding Judge Gerald J. Council, who leads the drug court team, will host the graduation. Judge Council has presided over drug court since 2007.

Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson Coleman will be the keynote speaker. Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes also will give remarks.

The drug court program is a highly specialized team process operating within the existing Superior Court structure that addresses non-violent drug-related cases. Drug courts are unique in the criminal justice environment, because they build a close, collaborative relationship between criminal justice and drug treatment professionals. The drug court team is composed of the judge, prosecutor, public defender, substance abuse evaluator, probation officers, criminal court staff and treatment providers. With the assistance of the team, drug court participants progress through four phases of intensive drug and alcohol treatment during a five-year probation period. Each level of supervision permits the program to support the many aspects of the recovery process.

Mercer Vicinage implemented drug court in 1999. Since then, it has graduated more than 130 participants. The program has been successful in breaking the cycle of addiction, improving the lives of individuals and their families and benefiting the community. There are 263 active participants in the Mercer Vicinage Drug Court program.

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