

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY MERCER VICINAGE

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Chief Justice Rabner to Speak at Mercer Vicinage Drug Court Graduation

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner will address the 20 graduates from the Mercer Vicinage Drug Court Program on their successes and accomplishments in completing the drug court program at a ceremony on Friday, Nov. 21 at 10 a.m. in the Special Proceedings Courtroom on the fourth floor of the Mercer County Criminal Courthouse, 400 S. Warren St., Trenton.

Assignment Judge Mary C. Jacobson will host the ceremony. Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman will give remarks and Trenton Mayor Eric E. Jackson will deliver the keynote address.

Criminal Presiding Judge Gerald J. Council, who leads the drug court team, said, "We are excited and happy for those who have struggled through the challenges of drug court and celebrate not only their sobriety, but their new lives, their reunited families, and their promising futures." Judge Council has presided over drug court since 2007.

The drug court program is a highly specialized team process, operating within the Superior Court structure to address non-violent drug related crimes and behavior. Drug courts are unique in the criminal justice system because they build a close, collaborative relationship between criminal justice agents and drug treatment professionals. Drug court participants must meet obligations to the court, their families, and society. To ensure accountability, participants must submit to frequent and random drug testing and appear in court to review their progress; they are rewarded for doing well and sanctioned for breaking the rules of the program.

Mercer Vicinage implemented drug court in 1999 and on July 1, 2014 joined five other vicinages in the implementation of mandatory drug court for certain offenders. Since its inception, Mercer has graduated more than 150 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 current participants in Mercer's drug court program.

For more information regarding drug court or the graduation ceremony, contact Janet VanFossen at 609-571-4102.

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