

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY MERCER VICINAGE

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Mercer Vicinage to Hold Drug Court Graduation

Presiding Criminal Judge Gerald J. Council will address 21 graduates from the Mercer Vicinage Drug Court Program on their successes and accomplishments at a graduation ceremony on Friday, June 26, at 11 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. Trenton Mayor Eric E. Jackson, state Sen. Raymond J. Lesniak and Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes are scheduled to speak.

Judge Council, who leads the drug court team, said, “We are excited and happy for those who have met the challenges of drug court and celebrate not only their sobriety, but their renewed 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 within the existing Superior Court structure that addresses nonviolent, 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.

Drug court programs are rigorous, requiring completion of four phases during five years of intensive drug and alcohol treatment and testing. Participants follow a tightly structured regimen of treatment and recovery. This level of supervision permits the program to support the recovery process, but also allows supervisors to react swiftly to impose appropriate therapeutic sanctions or to reinstate criminal proceedings when participants do not comply with 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 170 participants. The program has been successful in breaking the cycle of addiction, improving the lives of individuals and their families and benefiting the community. Mercer’s drug court program currently has 200 participants.

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