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Camden Vicinage to Celebrate Drug Court Graduates

The Camden Vicinage will celebrate an anticipated 29 graduates from its drug court program on Tuesday, Sept. 26 at 1:30 p.m. in Courtroom 63 at the Hall of Justice, 101 S. 5th St., Camden, Assignment Judge Deborah Silverman Katz announced.

Judge Silverman Katz will give the opening remarks. Criminal Division Presiding Judge Edward J. McBride Jr., who leads the vicinage's drug court team, will preside over the ceremony. Tony Luke Jr., founder of the cheesesteak franchise the bears his name, will give the keynote address. Luke's son and namesake passed away of a heroin overdose in March at the age of 35.

Drug court 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 court professionals. Drug court programs are challenging, requiring completion of four phases during up to five years of intensive supervision and drug and alcohol treatment.

The vicinage's drug court program began in 1996 as one of the first voluntary drug court programs in New Jersey. The program serves more than 700 participants. A total of 426 participants have graduated from the program.

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