

Drug Court graduation set for June 24

June 22, 2004

Mississippi Supreme Court Justice James E. Graves Jr. will be the guest speaker Thursday, June 24, at the 4th Circuit District Drug Court graduation in Greenville.

Circuit Judge Margaret Carey-McCray will preside over the program, which is scheduled for 3 p.m. in the Circuit Court courtroom at the Washington County Courthouse. Circuit Judges Ashley Hines and Betty W. Sanders will participate in the graduation ceremony.

Seven Drug Court participants are expected to graduate. Three are from Washington County and four are from Leflore County.

Each of the prospective graduates completed at least 18 months in the Drug Court program, said Drug Court Coordinator Tony Jones. The seven are eligible to continue participation in weekly group therapy sessions for another year if they choose, but that participation is optional.

The seven will continue to be monitored and subjected to random drug testing for another year.

Other participants who are moving up in the Drug Court program will also be recognized.

Approximately 50 people are enrolled in the 4th Circuit District Drug Court program, which includes Leflore, Sunflower and Washington counties. The program has been in operation since 2001.

Judge Carey-McCray said, "On a daily basis, we can see the changes that these participants are making in their lives and how the Drug Court is supporting them in being stronger in their recovery. The close supervision and monitoring, regular drug testing and accountability that are essential elements of the Drug Court provide the support necessary to keep the participants on the right course."

Jones said the seven set to graduate have fought drug addiction and demonstrated that they can turn their own lives around.

Jones said, "Drug Court is a place for people who really want to get their lives together, and if you want to get your life together, you have a lot of work to do. We hold people accountable."

The Drug Court program works to change people's behavior. "If their behavior doesn't change, the drug use doesn't change, and they slowly drift back into it," Jones said.

The 4th Circuit District Drug Court is among 11 drug courts operating in Mississippi. Five others are in planning stages.

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