

National drug policy leaders to speak at Mississippi conference

May 1, 2006

One of the nation's top drug control policy advisers and a leader of the national drug court movement are among the speakers for the Mississippi Association of Drug Court Professionals Conference May 3-5. The MADCP Conference will be held at the Grand Casino Conference Center at Robinsonville, near Tunica.

Scott M. Burns, Deputy Director for State and Local Affairs in the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, will be the lunch speaker at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 4. He is expected to talk about national drug control strategy.

Karen Freeman-Wilson, Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, will open the conference at 1:15 p.m. Wednesday, May 3, with a presentation on current issues and trends in drug court programs nationwide.

Freeman-Wilson said, "I would like to congratulate the citizens of Mississippi on their overwhelming support for drug courts. This state has come a long way since drug courts were first proposed by state Rep. Alyce Clarke."

MADCP President Christy Guthertz said, "We are honored that Karen Freeman-Wilson and Scott Burns, who are national leaders in the fight against drugs, will share their experience and insight at our conference. Our members are people who work every day to fight drug abuse in our local communities. We look forward to hearing from these leaders whose work at the national level helps shape policy and provide resources to combat the influence of illicit drug use."

Guthertz is Director of Community Corrections for Mississippi Department of Corrections' Region II.

Freeman-Wilson is former attorney general of the state of Indiana and former director of the Indiana Office of Drug Control Policy. She previously served as chair of the Indiana Governor's Council on Dangerous and Impaired Driving and the Commission for a Drug Free Indiana. She became CEO of the Alexandria, Va.-based National Association of Drug Court Professionals in April 2001. She served as a municipal judge in Gary, Ind., 1994-2000. She presided over that city's drug court from its inception in 1996. She is a former executive director of the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, a former deputy prosecutor and a former public defender.

The NADCP, a non-profit non-governmental organization, seeks to reduce substance abuse, crime and recidivism by promoting and advocating for the establishment and funding of drug courts and providing for collection and dissemination of information, technical assistance and mutual support to association members.

Burns has served as Deputy Director for State and Local Affairs in the White House Drug Control Policy office since April 2002. He previously served as county attorney in Iron County, Utah.

ONDCP advises the President on national and international drug control policies and strategies. Its purpose is to establish policies, priorities and objectives for the nation's drug control program. Its stated goals are to reduce illicit drug use, manufacture and trafficking, drug-related crime and violence, and drug-related health consequences.

The MADCP conference will kick off National Drug Court Month in Mississippi. Drug Court

graduations and other special activities will be scheduled throughout the month.

More than 100 people are expected to attend the conference, which is the Mississippi Association of Drug Court Professionals' second statewide training event. MADCP includes judges, court staff, corrections officials, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, defense attorneys and drug treatment professionals.

Other conference speakers, their speaking times and topics are:

- Judge Louis Presentza; 2 p.m. Wednesday, May 3; the role of the drug court judge.
Judge Presentza is president judge of the Philadelphia, Pa., Municipal Court. He has served on the bench since 1982, and previously was the supervising judge for that court's criminal division, where he instituted the first treatment court in Pennsylvania.
- Angela Sparks; 2 p.m. Wednesday, May 3; crystal methamphetamine.
Sparks is executive director of Marshall County Court Referral Services Inc. in Alabama. She along with a local district attorney formed a task force to study the methamphetamine problem in the rural northeastern Alabama county.
- Dr. Leo Kadehjian; 3:45 p.m. Wednesday, May 3; drug testing.
Dr. Kadehjian, of Palo Alto, Calif., is a biomedical consultant with experience in on-site drug testing programs. He lectures and writes about clinical, scientific, regulatory and legal issues in drug testing.
- C. West Huddleston III; 8:30 a.m. Thursday, May 4; integrating DUI offenders into drug courts.
Huddleston is director of the National Drug Court Institute in Washington, D.C. Huddleston is a licensed substance abuse counselor with 13 years of clinical experience working with misdemeanor and felony offenders on the county, state, and federal levels. He previously worked in Tennessee and Oklahoma correctional systems. He helped design and implement the first two drug courts in Oklahoma.
- Janiece Siegerist; 1 p.m. Thursday, May 4; drug court team building.
Siegerist is CEO of National Assessment & Developmental Services, an Oklahoma company providing training and consulting services to criminal justice agencies. She has more than 25 years of experience in the courts, private defense work, prosecution and corrections. She has served as curriculum designer for the National Drug Court Institute. She is a former training administrator for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections.
- Jim Binion, 2:30 p.m. Thursday, May 4, adult drug court case management systems; and 10:15 a.m. Friday, May 5, juvenile drug court case management.
Binion is president of Advanced Computer Technologies, a Montgomery, Ala., web design and case management software development company. Advanced Computer Technologies is the contractor developing the Mississippi Drug Court Case Management System.
- David Cook, 2:30 p.m. Thursday, May 4, adolescent treatment issues; and 10:15 a.m. Friday, May 5, adult treatment issues.
Cook is director of Fairland Treatment Center and Institute for the Treatment of Addictive Diseases in Coahoma County. He has 25 years of experience in the mental health field and has written several publications, including *Effects of a Prisoner-operated Delinquency Deterrence Program*:

Mississippi's Project Aware.

- Ralph Moulder; 4 p.m. Thursday, May 4, and 8:15 a.m. Friday, May 5; drug “rave” dance parties that attract teens and young adults.

Moulder, a member of the Florida Parole Commission, previously worked for 33 years for the Florida Department of Corrections. He started out as a parole officer and later served as regional administrator for field services and assistant bureau chief for staff development.

Moulder said the “raves” that combine dancing and drugs like methamphetamine “are organized there right under your noses. Every community has them.” He will talk about the phenomenon and the telltales that distinguish it from just another dance.

Rounding out the program will be an “ask the experts” panel discussion with Huddleston, Freeman-Wilson, Cook, Kadehjian, Sparks and Moulder at 10 a.m. on Thursday, May 4.

Drug courts seek to rehabilitate drug-using offenders through drug treatment and intense supervision with drug testing and frequent court appearances. Drug courts offer the incentive of a chance to remain out of jail and be employed, and the sanction of a jail sentence if participants fail to remain drug-free and in compliance with all program requirements

At the end of March, there were 955 people enrolled in the state’s 16 drug court programs. During the 2005 calendar year, drug court participants statewide paid \$200,452 in fines and \$272,288 in fees to participate in the programs.

Active drug courts in Mississippi include the 2nd Circuit of Hancock, Harrison and Stone counties; the 4th Circuit of Leflore, Sunflower and Washington counties; the 6th Circuit of Adams, Amite, Franklin and Wilkinson counties; the 7th Circuit of Hinds County; the 8th Circuit of Leake, Neshoba, Newton and Scott counties; the 9th Circuit of Issaquena, Sharkey and Warren counties; the 11th Circuit of Bolivar, Coahoma, Quitman and Tunica counties; the 12th Circuit of Forrest and Perry counties; the 14th Circuit of Lincoln, Pike and Walthall counties; the 19th Circuit of George, Greene and Jackson counties; the 21st Circuit of Holmes, Humphreys and Yazoo counties; Youth Courts in Adams, DeSoto and Madison counties; the Hinds County Justice Court; and the Jackson Municipal Court.

Nine other Mississippi jurisdictions have plans to start drug courts. Those with drug courts in the planning stages include Youth Courts in Forrest, Leflore and Rankin counties; the 1st Circuit Court of Alcorn, Tishomingo, Prentiss, Pontotoc, Lee, Itawamba and Monroe counties; the 3rd Circuit of Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Lafayette, Marshall, Tippah and Union counties; the 16th Circuit of Clay, Oktibbeha, Lowndes and Noxubee counties; the 17th Circuit in DeSoto County; the Columbia Municipal Court; and the Pike County Justice Court.

For more information about drug courts in Mississippi, go to the web site of the Mississippi Supreme Court, www.mssc.state.ms.us, then click on “AOC.”

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