

Justice Graves to speak at Drug Court graduation

February 22, 2008

Mississippi Supreme Court Justice James E. Graves Jr. will be the keynote speaker Feb. 28 in Natchez at a graduation ceremony for the Sixth Judicial Circuit Adult Drug Court. The ceremony will be held at 5 p.m. in the Sunset Ballroom at the Isle of Capri Hotel at 645 South Canal Street.

Five people are expected to graduate from the Drug Court program. Approximately 55 people will remain in the Drug Court program.

Circuit Judge Forrest Johnson will preside over the ceremony. Circuit Judge Lillie Blackmon Sanders supervises the Drug Court program.

The Sixth Circuit Drug Court program began in May 2004. The court district includes Adams, Amite, Franklin and Wilkinson counties.

Mississippi has 24 Drug Court programs. 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 the sanction of a jail sentence if participants fail to remain drug-free and in compliance with all program requirements.

Justice Graves has been a member of the Mississippi Supreme Court since Nov. 1, 2001. He previously served for 10 years as a circuit court judge for the 7th Circuit District.

He worked as a staff attorney at Central Mississippi Legal Services and as a special assistant attorney general. He headed the Human Services Division of the attorney general's office, where he served as chief legal counsel to the Mississippi Department of Human Services. He later was director of the Division of Child Support Enforcement of the Mississippi Department of Human Services.

Justice Graves has taught special programs at Harvard Law School, Stanford Law School and Syracuse University School of Law. He has served as an adjunct professor at Jackson State University, Tougaloo College and Millsaps College.

Justice Graves received a B.A. degree in sociology from Millsaps College. He received his law degree from Syracuse University College of Law. He also holds a Master of Public Administration degree from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.

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