

## **Pike County Juvenile Drug Court graduation is November 16**

November 10, 2009

Mississippi Supreme Court Presiding Justice James E. Graves Jr. will be the guest speaker at the Pike County Juvenile Drug Court graduation at 5 p.m. Monday, Nov. 16, in Magnolia. The ceremony will be in the Eva Gordon Elementary Cafeteria.

Ten participants are expected to graduate from the program.

Pike County Court Judge John Price, who oversees the Youth Court and the Juvenile Drug Court, will preside.

Judge Price said, "This graduation marks our most successful period of accomplishment. Our Juvenile Drug Court is maturing and progressing. I am seeing a real difference in how the program positively impacts our participants and the community. This ceremony will be a celebration of young people changing their lives for the better."

Members of the news media are invited to attend the graduation. Reporters, photographers and editors are reminded that participants are juveniles enrolled in a Youth Court program. **Because of the confidentiality required by law in Mississippi Youth Court matters, members of the media are asked to refrain from publishing or broadcasting information or photographs which would identify any individual juvenile participant or family member.**

Pike County formed the Juvenile Drug Court in October 2007. The program accepts participants ages 12 through 17 who have been adjudicated delinquent by the Youth Court for commission of nonviolent acts. The program takes a minimum of six months to complete. Some participants remain in the program longer. The Drug Court program includes counseling, drug testing, probation supervision and enforced curfews. Participants progress through three phases, earning more privileges and less supervision as they meet program requirements.

Mississippi currently has 34 drug courts – 13 juvenile programs and 21 adult programs. Statewide, 289 juveniles were enrolled in drug court programs in September, the latest period for which complete statistics were available, according to the Administrative Office of Courts.

Justice Graves, of Jackson, has been a member of the Mississippi Supreme Court since Nov. 1, 2001. He became a Presiding Justice of the Supreme Court on Jan. 5, 2009. Before his appointment to the Supreme Court, he served for 10 years as a circuit court judge for the Seventh Circuit District of Hinds County.

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.

Upon graduation from law school, 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.

####