

## **Hinds Drug Court graduation to honor longtime coordinator**

December 15, 2014

The Hinds County Circuit Drug Court will honor longtime Drug Court Coordinator Brenda Mathis during a graduation ceremony scheduled for 6 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 16, in Courtroom No. 1 on the second floor of the Hinds County Courthouse in Jackson.

Mathis is retiring after 14 years of service as coordinator of the Hinds County program. She has served in that role since 2000, when the Hinds County Drug Court began operation.

Circuit Judge Winston Kidd, who supervises the Drug Court, said, “Brenda Mathis has been a loyal and dedicated coordinator of the Hinds County Circuit Drug Court since its inception. She has served numerous roles in Drug Court. The success of our program can directly be attributed to Ms. Mathis' knowledge and understanding of Drug Courts. I am very appreciative of her service to Drug Courts.”

Mathis has worked to promote and improve drug courts statewide. She led efforts to organize the Mississippi Association of Drug Court Professionals, and went on to serve as the organization's president.

Before joining the Hinds County Drug Court, Mathis worked for more than eight years as a drug treatment program coordinator for the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

Seven people are expected to graduate from the Hinds County Circuit Drug Court on Tuesday, Judge Kidd said. It will be the 35<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony for the program.

The Hinds County Circuit Drug Court is the second oldest drug court in the state. Mississippi currently has 40 drug court programs enrolling about 3,500 people.

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.

####