

## **14th Circuit Drug Court graduation is May 15 in Summit**

May 8, 2017

Mississippi Supreme Court Presiding Justice Jess H. Dickinson will be the guest speaker at the 14<sup>th</sup> Circuit Drug Court graduation at 2 p.m. May 15 at Southwest Mississippi Community College in Summit. The ceremony will be held in the Horace Holmes Student Union Hall.

More than 20 people are expected to graduate from the program. Twenty participants will be recognized as they move to the final phase of the Drug Court program, and 19 others will move to Phase 3. The 14<sup>th</sup> Circuit Drug Court currently has about 220 participants from Lincoln, Pike and Walthall counties.

Circuit Judges Michael Taylor and David Strong will preside over the ceremony.

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

Mississippi currently has 41 drug courts. There are 22 adult felony programs, with a drug court operating in every Circuit Court district in the state. There are 13 juvenile programs, three misdemeanor programs and three family courts. Drug courts may operate within Circuit Courts, Chancery Courts, Youth Courts, Justice Courts or Municipal Courts. About 3,600 people are enrolled in drug courts. The state's drug courts are estimated to produce \$46 million in annual savings by avoiding incarceration costs of those drug court participants.

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