

Hinds Circuit Drug Court graduation set for May 23

May 17, 2017

Fourteen people are expected to graduate for the Hinds County Circuit Drug Court on May 23. The ceremony will be held at 6 p.m. on the second floor of the Hinds County Courthouse at 407 East Pascagoula Street in Jackson.

Circuit Judge Winston Kidd, who oversees the Hinds Circuit Drug Court, will preside.

Jimmie Gates, legal and political writer and columnist for the *Clarion-Ledger*, will be the guest speaker. Gates has been a journalist for more than 35 years, covering state and local government and the courts.

The ceremony will be the 39th graduation exercise for the state's second oldest drug court. More than 175 people are enrolled in the program.

May is National Drug Court Month, a celebration of the work of problem-solving courts that save lives and tax dollars. 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.

Nearly 3,200 drug courts operate all over the country, serving 150,000 people. Mississippi currently has 41 drug courts with more than 3,700 people enrolled. 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. 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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