

# BEAUTY FROM ASHES

Currie Mingledorff, Judge, Superior Court, Piedmont Judicial Circuit

Taylor Jones, Executive Director, Council of Accountability Court Judges of Georgia


Victoria Bowman, Director of Specialty Courts, Piedmont Judicial Circuit

September 17, 2024

CACJ Statewide Training



# **ACCOUNTABILTY**

- **Do we practice what we preach?**
  - **If accountability is good for our participants, is it good for each of us?**
  - **What does it look like?**
- 

# The Influence of ONE Team Member

► **Patricia Brooks, ADA**





# PRIDE

- **What happens to us if we are too proud to admit that we don't know what we don't know?**
- **For some of us, we get introduced to **humility**.**



# HUMILITY

- ➔ **Do we practice what we preach?**
- ➔ **If humility is good for participants, is it good for each of us?**
- ➔ **What does it look like?**

# ARROW JOURNAL

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## Drug court operations questioned

### Judge says program now 'on track'

By Susan Norman  
snorman@barrowjournal.com

With the son of Gov. Nathan Deal lined up as their keynote speaker, local court officials were anticipating a packed audience for the May 2 graduation of the first four people to complete the Barrow County Drug Court program.

But the woman whose agency over the past two years has played the biggest role in trying to change the lives of the former addicts said she would not attend.

After her agency's contract was abruptly terminated in February, Fawn Alexander, executive director of The Light Homeless Shelter in Winder, was stunned to learn over the weekend that two of her former Drug Court colleagues last week called into question her agency's services and her character during a court hearing.

At the hearing, which was about the possible termination of a man from the program, a defense attorney used the testimony of assistant district attorney Patricia Brooks and

part-time administrative contractor Krista Reynolds to instead put the Drug Court program itself on trial. Alexander also was called as a witness, but she did not learn until two days later what had been said about her and her agency from the witness box.

She contacted the *Barrow Journal* over the weekend to ask for an opportunity to publicly respond to the criticism — as did Superior Court Judge Currie Mingleдорff, who wants to assure the public that the program is now on the right track.

The judge in 2009 spearheaded the creation of the Drug and Mental Health specialty courts in Barrow

County. He said the issues aired last week were resolved with the January arrival of Taylor Jones as the new specialty courts director and the transfer of the contract for substance abuse treatment services to Project ADAM on March 15.

"We have encountered a lot of adversity, in fact enough that at many junctures we probably would have been justified to say we quit," Mingleдорff said. "But to a person our (executive) committee has been committed to persevering through some extremely difficult, unexpected challenges."

See **Drug Court** on Page 3A



Barrow BOE:

## BOE approves 160-day year

### Budget cuts, use of reserves to balance FY2013 budget

The Barrow County Board of Education approved a preliminary FY2013 budget Tuesday night that would cut the school year 160 days and use \$4 million of its reserves to balance its budget. The proposal does not increase the millage rate. The board approved \$88.9 million in expenses and a projected \$84.9 million in revenues.

That won't be the final budget, however, since the board is slated to again discuss the budget later this month before taking action for final approval in June. The BOE vote was 7-1 in favor of the preliminary budget with Will Dunn voting against.

"Myself and three other board members who voted were there for the original budget discussion," Dunn said of a budget



# The Myth of the “Indispensable Man”

➔ **“Listen. I know it isn’t easy to trust every other person in that boat as much as you trust yourself. It’s not about you! As good as you are, it’s not about you or me or anybody else. It’s about the boat.”**

*The Boys in the Boat*, 2023, Directed by George Clooney, Amazon MGM Studios, 2023



# **ADMITTING THAT [OUR PROGRAM] HAS BECOME UNMANAGEABLE....**

- **Our participants often say something like that.**
- **It can become the first MAJOR step in their recovery.**
- **It can become a time of decision.**





# **Building a Support Structure**

- ➔ Do we practice what we preach?**
- ➔ If building a support structure is good for them, is it good for each of us?**
- ➔ What does it look like?**



# THE DRUG COURT JUDICIAL BENCHBOOK



Edited by  
Margaret E. Anderson, J.D., Ph.D.  
Judge William Brown, III





► **Taylor Jones**



# How It All Started

- **Athens-Clarke County Probation.**
  - **Bartender to a POST certified law enforcement officer.**
  - **Treatment and Accountability Court (TAC) opportunity.**
  - **I did not receive formal training.**
    - **Observed operations**
    - **Attended the accountability court training conference in 2010 and 2011.**
  - **No state standards or technical assistance.**
  - **Very little state funding.**

# Piedmont Judicial Circuit

- Challenge from day #1.
- Judge and District Court Administrator support and guidance.
- MANY challenges to overcome.
  - Figuring out and learning all the Piedmont players.
    - Court staff
    - County staff
  - Budgets and funding
  - Sheriff's Office
  - New drug court treatment provider needed ASAP.
  - Moved a drug lab instrument through the middle of Winder, Georgia.
  - Jackson County expansion.
  - Standard operating procedures needed to be developed.



# **Criminal Justice Reform (HB 1167) and More National Resources**

- **The accountability court landscape completely changed.**
  - **State standards**
  - **Certification**
  - **Statewide case management systems**
  - **Peer review**
  - **Funding**
- **All Rise (formerly the National Association of Drug Court Professionals) resources and support.**

# ADULT DRUG COURT BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS

VOLUME I



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DRUG COURT PROFESSIONALS  
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

# ADULT DRUG COURT BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS

VOLUME II



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DRUG COURT PROFESSIONALS  
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA



## *Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards*







**ATRIse**



202

ADULT TREATMENT COURT

# Best Practice Standards, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

Definitive guidance for treatment court  
practitioners

# Impact and Lessons Learned

- Serving as the Piedmont Judicial Circuit Specialty Courts Director helped to define my career path.
- I had to rise to the challenge. I was determined to see our team and accountability courts succeed.
  - Personal
  - Professional
- Biggest mistakes:
  - Allowed myself to burn out.
  - I should have asked for more resources and delegated more.
- Sustainability and a lasting impact.



➤ **Victoria “Vickie”  
Bowman**


- **Background: DCS,  
Western Judicial  
Circuit (DC, TAC,  
VTC) - 2007**
- **Piedmont Judicial  
Circuit: February  
2016**
- **Leadership**
  - **Church**
  - **Coaching**
  - **Community**





***“Life is like  
riding a bicycle.  
To keep your  
balance, you  
must keep  
moving.”***

**~ Albert  
Einstein**



# **Staying in the Middle of the Road**

- Trainings (i.e. CACJ, All Rise)**
- Updating of Policies  
Procedures & Practices**
- Team Mechanics**
- Personal Growth &  
Development**

