



# COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES OF GEORGIA

FEBRUARY 2022

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## ACCOUNTABILITY COURT NEWS

### DOUGLAS COUNTY FAMILY TREATMENT COURT

*Submitted by Jennifer King, Douglas County Family Treatment Court Coordinator*



The Douglas County Family Treatment Court has "a participant who entered residential treatment and had a cat she was concerned about leaving behind.

One of our team members agreed to foster her cat while she is in treatment. We found a local vet who has assisted with services, too. We share pictures and updates to her in FTC and have really enjoyed this new venture. I think it shows the dedication we have!"

*Pictured: Sassy*

## ACCOUNTABILITY COURT GRADUATIONS

### CLAYTON COUNTY VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

*Submitted by Lakisha Dixon, Clayton County Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator*



The Clayton County Veterans Treatment Court with presiding Judge Robert L. Mack, held its 4th graduation on December 8, 2021. Graduates Rodney G. and William R. completed the program successfully without complaint.

Rodney served in the United States Army. During his five years in the service, he was an Automated Logistical Specialist. He completed VTC successfully and was affectionately known as "Mr. Consistency". As his graduation Community Service Project, Rodney partnered with the American Legion in Clayton County to complete a paint restoration on the outside of the facility. He was able to get all materials donated from Home Depot. A lot of time and sweat went into this project, and he did a wonderful job.

William served in the United States Navy for six years as Electronic Tech Supervisor. He initially struggled but, with great determination, completed the program without hesitation. He was also successfully able to create his very own non-profit organization "M.O.R.E. (Military Operation Restoration Experience)," while in the program. William partnered with the Paula Crane Center in Clayton County to complete his Community Service Project. The Crane Center is designed and





committed to empowering and supporting individuals affected by the disease of addiction. He completed a beautification restoration by improving the landscaping and planting multiple rose bushes on the property.

The keynote speaker for this occasion was Mr. Morocco Coleman, a decorated Vietnam Veteran who devoted his entire life to Veterans and their needs. He honorably served in the United States Army where he was awarded a host of medals to include the National Defense Service Medal. He encouraged the graduates to continue with their many successful accomplishments.

Both Rodney and William were thankful to the many individuals that helped and guided them along the way. William plans to move out of the county and ensure that his organization (M.O.R.E) can assist and give others opportunities that he was afforded. Rodney plans are to focus on his health, school, and career. He will continue to push himself to grow and will not let anything stand in the way of him

reaching his full potential in every aspect and category of his existence.

## COBB COUNTY DUI COURT

*Submitted by Darcy Kamau, Cobb County DUI Court Coordinator*

On Tuesday, January 25, 2022, Jacob P., who graduated the Cobb DUI Court Program in July of 2019, was sworn into the Georgia Bar by Judge Brewton. Judge Brewton oversaw Jacob while he was in the DUI Court program, and it was Jacob's goal to be sworn in on a graduation day, by Judge Brewton, marking his journey full circle. The entire team is so proud to have participated in Jacob's journey and to share this day with him.

Cobb County DUI Court had 12 graduates in this class, and it was an amazing graduation ceremony that was only further highlighted with this incredible success story. Jacob had graduated from law school prior to his DUI arrests. After he graduated from DUI Court, he hit the books and passed the Bar exam on the first try. He is incredibly grateful for his second chance. You will want to watch his story on either of the following links:

<https://www.11alive.com/article/news/local/cobb-county-dui-court-lawyer-jacob-pruett-second-chance/85-143d473a-67f9-44d9-a79f-d34065eb70ae>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q52E6wuAE3U&t=2975>



## MODEL COURTS FEATURE

The goal of Georgia's Accountability Court Model Court program is to recognize the great work of accountability courts across the state, as well as identify strong programs that may serve as mentors for other courts. Programs identified as Model Courts are those that have met and exceeded adherence to Georgia's Standards as dictated by strong performance on certification and peer review processes. To recognize the talent and expertise of the accountability court community, each month CACJ will recognize a model court or two and their work in the substance use and mental health fields.

### Barrow County Drug Court

**Court type:** Drug Court

**Presiding judge:** Judge Currie Mingledorff, II has presided over the court since program inception in 2010.

**Coordinator:** Victoria Bowman is the Director.

**Inception date:** 2010

**Number of graduates to date:** 93

**Current program census:** 30

**Recidivism rate:** Graduates after 24 months: 13%; Graduates after 36 months: 16%

**Innovative practices/unique programming:** "The Alumni implemented a kickball game as a sober activity for our participants! Lots of fun and we allow it to count as a community support meeting for active clients (recovery networking)!"

"Our Phase V participants must complete a Give Back Project before graduation. It is a 40-hour community service project that they must complete in the community. They design it, plan it, execute it, and then provide a report to the Court and Team! It has been very successful, and the participants really find it purposeful and enjoyable!"

#### **Why do you choose to preside over the accountability court?**

**Judge Mingledorff:** "Several years ago, while I was still practicing law, a client came seeking to legitimate his three-year-old daughter. This client was the picture of maturity and stability. He was in his mid-to-late 20s, working full-time, taking classes at a local college, and stepping up to become more of a real dad to his little girl. But I was nearly blown away when he told me that just a few years before he had been hooked on meth and had even sold some to support his habit! He then added that the best thing to ever happen to him was getting arrested and sentenced to the Hall County Drug Court. I was sold on accountability courts from that moment! A few years later, when I became a judge, I jumped at the chance to preside over the creation of our circuit's first drug court. A short time later, due of the powerful example and influence of the late, great Judge Steve Goss, I presided over the creation of our circuit's first Mental Health Court. Presiding over these courts has been the most professionally rewarding thing I have ever done!"

#### **What do you hope to accomplish as a model court?**

**Judge Mingledorff:** "As a Model Court, we continually strive to follow best practices in the hope that we will be instrumental in bringing the blessings of recovery and wellness to many more participants. We know this has a ripple effect into their families, especially their children. Just as addiction and mental illness runs in families with devastating consequences, recovery can also run in families with positive impacts over generations. These courts have a lot of moving parts. We have made plenty of mistakes of our own along the way. We are grateful for the opportunity to help our sister courts work through some of the challenges we have already experienced."

**Ms. Bowman:** "Provide encouragement and support to at least one other program! It is a hard job, but necessary, and encouragement and support can go a long way! I also hope to learn from other programs as to how we can improve our services!"

#### **What are you most proud of in terms of the program's success?**

**Ms. Bowman:** "I am proud of our AWESOME team!!! We have team members who care and work together to serve the participants and community! Everyone does their part, and the program works because of such! We are serious about our program reflecting best practice standards and current research! We are willing to modify our policies and practices to accommodate them because we believe they assist us in serving our clients and community better. I am also proud of the partnership with The Treehouse! We have



been able to provide our high-risk parents with free parenting classes and resources! Our parents have been able to retain custody of their children and become better parents because of this added support! I am proud of the partnership with the Barrow County Adult Literacy program! They provide GED classes and scholarships for GED tests! We have had five participants obtain their GED while in the program, and it has been such a wonderful boost of confidence for them! I am also proud of the cost savings we're able to provide our community! The Barrow County Drug Court has been able to provide an estimated cost-savings of \$1,524,885 because of alternative sentencing to prison and \$616,025 because of less jail time in local jails."

**What is something you wish you had known at program inception that you hope to impart to newer courts?**

**Judge Mingledorff:** "I wish I had understood sooner my own critical leadership role in the court, as the presiding judge. The early going was made tougher for our whole team because it took me a while to fully commit to paying the price in the form of studying and taking advantage of training opportunities. These courts work, but we are far more likely to have success if we are faithful to the model and committed to keeping current with best practices."

**Ms. Bowman:** "There is a steep learning curve when it comes to these programs! I believe it takes at least a year to become familiar with the program operations. So, new coordinators, be patient with yourself! SELF-CARE IS A HUGE MUST!! Because we're doing important work, we tend to overwork ourselves. And other days, the workload seems endless. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES! Take the necessary time to disconnect and unplug to replenish!

**Words of Advice...**

**Ms. Bowman:** "Do not hesitate to copy and 'steal' every good idea, form, policy, or practice you can from courts that function at a high level. We certainly have! Be willing to share your own good ideas, successes, and hard lessons learned."

**Barrow County Drug Court Team Members**

**Judge:** Honorable Currie Mingledorff, II

**Director:** Victoria Bowman

**Assistant Director/Coordinator:** Richard Bosten

**Coordinator/Specialty Courts Administrative Team:** Michaela Smith

**Assistant District Attorney:** Hannah McLear

**Public Defender:** Katie Anderson

**Probation Officer:** Sandra Laurent

**Treatment Providers:** Mike McDonald, Gina McDonald

**Surveillance Officers:** Caine Tate, Faye Spaulding, Jamie Holloway, Chad Knight

**Detention Center:** Robert White, Sabra Nasim

**Piedmont Circuit Trial Court Administrator:** Stephen Nevels (Barrow & Jackson Divisions)



**Model Adult Felony Drug Court (2020-2023)**

## Piedmont Circuit Mental Health Court\*

\*Will change name to **Piedmont Circuit Wellness Court** in 2023

**Court type:** Mental Health Court

**Presiding judge:** Judge Currie Mingledorff, II has presided over the court since inception in 2010.

**Coordinator:** Victoria Bowman is the Director/Coordinator of the Barrow County Division. Richard Bosten is the Assistant Director/Coordinator of the Jackson/Banks County Division.

**Inception date:** Barrow County Division – 2010; Jackson County Division - 2011

**Number of graduates to date:** Barrow County Division – 41; Jackson County Division - 24

**Current program census:** Barrow County Division – 10; Jackson County Division – 9

**Recidivism rate:** Graduates after 24 months: 25%; Graduates after 36 months: 35%

### What are you most proud of in terms of the program's success?

**Ms. Bowman:** "I am proud of our partnership with Reboot Jackson, our local recovery community outreach center! They have sat on our staffing team for the last two years and have greatly improved our program and clients' retention rate in recovery services during the program and after program completion! They add a much-needed perspective at the staffing table that we had been missing! Reboot Jackson earned the award for the 2021 Recovery Community Outreach program of the year! And Sunshine McCoy was named the 2021 CARES/Peer Support Specialist of the Year! VERY PROUD OF REBOOT JACKSON TEAM MEMBERS!!!

Additionally, I am proud of the cost savings we're able to provide our community! The Piedmont Circuit Mental Health Court has been able to provide an estimated cost-savings of \$673,643 because of alternative sentencing to prison and \$268,390 because of less jail time in local jails."

Barrow County Division:

Alternative to Prison: \$170,265

Reduced jail time: \$152,245

Jackson County Division:

Alternative to Prison: \$503,378

Reduced jail time: \$116,145



### Piedmont Circuit Mental Health Court Team Members

**Judge:** Honorable Currie Mingledorff, II

**Director/Coordinator (Barrow Division):** Victoria Bowman

**Assistant Director/Coordinator (Jackson/Banks Division):** Richard Bosten

**Coordinator/Specialty Courts Administrative Team:** Michaela Smith

**Assistant District Attorney (Barrow):** Hannah McLearn

**Assistant District Attorney (Jackson):** Patrick Najjar

**Public Defender (Barrow):** Katie Anderson

**Public Defender (Jackson):** Kristin Waller

**Treatment Provider (Barrow):** Cayman Smith

**Treatment Provider (Jackson):** Terri Weimorts

**Peer Support Specialists (Jackson):** Sunshine McCoy, Jenn Langston

**Probation Officer:** Latundria Laiz

**Surveillance Officers (Barrow/Banks):** Caine Tate, Faye Spaulding, Jamie Holloway, Chad Knight

**Surveillance Officers (Jackson):** Chris Smith, Steve Orta, Chris Peters

**Detention Center (Barrow):** Robert White, Sabra Nasim

**Detention Center (Jackson):** Jonni Arwood

**Piedmont Circuit Trial Court Administrator:** Stephen Nevels (Barrow & Jackson Divisions)



## Model Mental Health Court (2021-2024)

### COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES NEWS

#### **FY23 ACCOUNTABILITY COURT OPERATING GRANT SOLICITATION AND GRANT WEBINAR DATE**

The FY23 Accountability Court Operating Grant was released Tuesday, February 1, 2022. The completed grant application is due no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 4, 2022. **A webinar to provide help with navigating the grant application is planned for February 10, 2021.** The grant application, instructions, and webinar registration details are found on the CACJ website [here](#).

#### **COORDINATOR AND CASE MANAGER MENTORSHIP PROGRAM PAIRINGS**

CACJ successfully paired the inaugural group of case manager mentor and mentees for CY2022. Coordinators seeking mentorship were also paired with mentors. CACJ thanks all coordinators and case managers that applied to serve as mentor and volunteer their time to assist newer accountability court professionals. CACJ can accept mentee applications for the Case Manager and Coordinator Mentorship Program on a rolling basis.

#### **COORDINATOR QUARTERLY CALL**

The next quarterly coordinator call is scheduled for March 7, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom. Coordinators, please submit your RSVP for attendance to receive the Zoom meeting link by February 28. Attendees will receive the meeting agenda by March 4.

#### **NEW JUDGES ORIENTATION**

The CACJ New Judges Orientation dates for FY23 are August 23-24, 2022. Registration will open March 21, 2022. For additional information about the training or to inquire about attendance requirements/eligibility, please email Kimberly Howard at [Kimberly.Howard@georgiacourts.gov](mailto:Kimberly.Howard@georgiacourts.gov).

#### **CACJ 2022 ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE**



#### **CACJ 2022 Annual Training Conference**

**October 9-12, 2022**

**"Back to the Future of Accountability Courts"**

The Council of Accountability Court Judges will host its 7th Annual Training Conference October 9-12, 2022. The conference is expected to host more than 900+ attendees from Georgia's accountability courts.

Registration and hotel room block information will become available as the information is finalized. Registration is expected to open in July 2022. Coordinators are the primary point of contact for attendee registration. Please continue to monitor the CACJ website for the most up-to-date information about the conference. The webpage is [here](#).

## MARCH 2022 NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Please send submissions for the March 2022 newsletter to Debbie Mott ([Debbie.Mott@GeorgiaCourts.gov](mailto:Debbie.Mott@GeorgiaCourts.gov)) by Friday, February 25. If you plan to include a photo where participants can be identified, please be sure to send a signed photo consent with your submission.

## GEORGIA ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS JOB POSTINGS

Please see the Career Opportunities tab (under About Us) on the CACJ website for information about these job postings:

- \*Carroll County Family Treatment Court Case Manager
- \*Enotah Judicial Circuit Mental Health Court Case Manager
- \*Mountain Judicial Circuit Clinical Coordinator
- \*Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Group Facilitator
- \*Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Drug Testing Technician
- \*Fulton County Behavioral Health Clinician II
- \*DeKalb County Misdemeanor Mental Health Court Social Worker
- \*Towaliga Judicial Circuit Administrative Assistant
- \*Gwinnett County Case Manager
- \*Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Mental Health Court Coordinator
- \*Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Case Manager
- \*Fulton County Behavioral Health Clinician I
- \*Forsyth County Contract Counselors

## VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

Wondering about something? We are here to help Wednesday!

Join CACJ Staff for virtual office hours beginning in 2022!

**Who:** CACJ Teams – Data, Executive Director/Legal/Grants, Standards & Certification, Training, and Treatment

**When:** Every first Wednesday of the month, with staggered times

**Where:** Zoom – We are pleased to begin offering this new form of technical assistance!

**Why:** Virtual office hours give you the opportunity to ask your questions and receive support in a streamlined fashion. You can meet with CACJ Staff on a regular basis to stay informed and get the answers you need.

**\*Instructions:** In advance of the event, click on the link to register for the Zoom meeting. The drop-down box lists all meetings as 11:00 am; however, on the day of the virtual office hours event, join the Zoom meeting at the hour and for the Team meeting in which you wish to participate.



### Meeting Schedule

**March 2, 2022** (\*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Standards & Certification: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Data: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

**April 6, 2022** (\*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Executive Director/Legal/Grants: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Treatment: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Training: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

**May 4, 2022** (\*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Standards & Certification: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Data: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

**June 1, 2022** (\*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Executive Director/Legal/Grants: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Treatment: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Training: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

**July 6, 2022** (\*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Standards & Certification: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Data: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

**August 3, 2022** (\*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Executive Director/Legal/Grants: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Treatment: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Training: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

**September 7, 2022** (\*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Standards & Certification: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Data: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

**October 5, 2022** (\*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Executive Director/Legal/Grants: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Treatment: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Training: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

**November 2, 2022** (\*Register in advance: [Here](#))

- Standards & Certification: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- Data: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm