



# COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES OF GEORGIA

SEPTEMBER 2021

[WWW.CACJ.GEORGIA.GOV](http://WWW.CACJ.GEORGIA.GOV)

## ACCOUNTABILITY COURT NEWS

### ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS

*Submitted by Elisa Zarate, Athens-Clarke County Court Administrator*



The Dale Allen Memorial Success Scholarship Fund was established at the Athens Area Community Foundation (AACF) to support accountability court graduates and give them a hand up towards a better future through post-secondary education. Dale was the Chief Probation Officer for the Athens-Clarke County Probation Office from 2010 until his passing due to a battle with COVID-19. He was a longtime supporter of the accountability courts and firmly believed in accountability with compassion.

Through generous support of memorial gifts and donations, the Dale Allen Memorial Success Scholarship Fund was established and will provide one scholarship annually to a graduate of one of the Athens-Clarke County Accountability Courts.

The first scholarship will go to a participant of the Family Treatment Court (FTC). The participant graduated from the FTC in April 2019. Since she graduated from FTC, she has continued to be an avid supporter of individuals in recovery and FTC. She is passionate about her recovery and

helping others who have children in foster care. She is enjoying life as a mother in recovery, and she continues to meet with other people in recovery to spread hope and give support. This scholarship will support her as she pursues an Associate's Degree in Applied Science in Radiography and CAT Scans at Athens Tech.

To learn more about the AACF and how you can support The Dale Allen Memorial Success Scholarship Fund at the Athens Area Community Foundation, please visit [www.athensareacf.org](http://www.athensareacf.org).

### COLQUITT COUNTY ACCOUNTABILITY COURT

*Submitted by Heather King, Colquitt County Accountability Court Case Manager*

Substance abuse and addiction have many facets. One of which is criminal behavior that leads to jail, prison, and/or lengthy detentions. The rate of incarceration of persons with addiction issues continues to be significant across the country. Georgia is ranked 41st in incarceration rates. The number of women in Georgia's prisons has increased more than sevenfold, from 497 in 1978 to nearly 4,000 in 2017. The number of women in Georgia's jails has increased more than twenty-fold, from 227 in 1970 to 5,228 in 2015. 2019 Georgia facts: The Facilities Division is responsible for the direct supervision of all offenders sentenced to the Georgia Department of Corrections. There are four female state prisons, one medical facility, which houses pregnant offenders, two treatment facilities, and one probation detention center. There are 3,500 female offenders, which is 9% of the total state prison population. The female offender population is Georgia's fastest growing population.

Children of female offenders are seven times more likely to become incarcerated than those of the non-incarcerated females. Statistics show female offenders report leaving behind one to 10 children in the care of others during their incarceration. Pathways

to crime include a long history of sexual and/or physical abuse, unhealthy relationships and/or substance abuse. The statistics are staggering and increasing; 75% of female offenders report that drugs were directly correlated with their convictions.

There is good news. Studies have demonstrated that accountability court participation leads to reduced recidivism regardless of participation length (ARS, 2018). This means that any amount of participation in an accountability court, regardless of completion, leads to lower recidivism.

**Colquitt County Accountability Court (CCAC) in Moultrie is proud to share that since late March 2021, CCAC staff and participant alumni have been able to perform recovery meetings within the jail for both men and women. This is possible with the support of Sheriff Rod Howell, the CCAC treatment team, and Judge Brian McDaniel.**

Jail recovery meetings occur weekly and consistently. Our meeting goals are to change criminal thinking, inspire, motivate, and create recovery mindsets. Topics range from understanding your purpose, education on 12 steps, addiction tree, healthy choices, positive self-worth and self-talk, finding balance, and how to develop healthy relationships. Both male and female offenders are encouraged through positive affirmations, education, open discussions, and one-on-one recovery interactions. When either males or females chose drug court, they are more informed, desire recovery, and the goal is less likely to reoffend. Recovery at its core is about returning to a normal mindset, the process of regaining a healthy lifestyle. Those of us conducting jail recovery meetings believe in the value of each person struggling in their addiction and desire to offer hope while inspiring recovery. As one of our alumni often says, "living life on life's terms."

*References: (<https://patch.com/georgia/atlanta/georgia-incarceration-rate-see-how-it-stacks-other-states>); <http://dcor.state.ga.us/sites/default/files/Female%20Offenders.pdf>; <https://cacj.georgia.gov/data-research/statewide-reports>*

## ACCOUNTABILITY COURT GRADUATIONS

### FULTON COUNTY ACCOUNTABILITY COURT

*Submitted by John Collins, Fulton County Accountability Courts Director*

On July 30, Fulton County Accountability Court was delighted to celebrate the transition of eight Drug and Behavioral Health Treatment Court graduates. The ceremony was made all the more special because it was the first to be hosted in a hybrid format since the COVID pandemic began. In addition to being able to celebrate the graduates in the presence of their judges, the Honorable Robert McBurney and the Honorable Emily Richardson, and select family members, the graduates were joined by two

returning alumni who offered words of encouragement and support.



Fulton County's continued commitment to the Accountability Court Programs was evident as Board of Commissioners' Vice Chair and Commissioner for District 4, Ms. Natalie Hall, and District Attorney Fani T. Willis delivered their congratulations and words of encouragement during the ceremony. The Program would like to thank them for their unwavering support for our programs and our graduates!



*Photo to the right: Madam District Attorney Fani T. Willis; Top photo: (from left to right): BHTC Coordinator Jylise Lee, Board of Commissioners' Vice Chair Natalie Hall, Veterans Court Coordinator and Emcee Antonio Brewer (sitting), BHTC Graduate Michael Scott*

## PAULDING JUDICIAL CIRCUIT MENTAL HEALTH COURT

*Submitted by Lauren Ortiz, Paulding Judicial Circuit Mental Health Court Coordinator*



On Thursday, August 19, 2021 dozens of county leaders, elected officials, supportive citizens, and court staff gathered to celebrate the third graduation of the Paulding Judicial Circuit's Mental Health Court. Under the direction of Judge T. David Lyles, Mental Health Court is an extensive 18-month program designed as an alternative to incarceration. The guest speaker was Mr. Paul Miner from the Cobb Chapter of the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI). He spoke to the participants in the program about his own struggle with mental illness. He encouraged them to set high goals for themselves and reminded them that their mental illness does not have to stand in their way. The program plans to have 12 participants before the end of the year, and the next graduation is being planned for January 2022.

## COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES NEWS

### OCTOBER 2021 NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION

Please send submissions for the October 2021 newsletter to Debbie Mott ([Debbie.Mott@GeorgiaCourts.gov](mailto:Debbie.Mott@GeorgiaCourts.gov)) by Monday, September 27. 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:

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| *Forsyth County Contract Counselors                      | *Rockdale County Juvenile Drug Court Case Manager |
| *Rockdale County Behavioral Health Clinician – Team Lead | *Enotah Judicial Circuit Case Manager             |
| *Towaliga Judicial Circuit Treatment Provider            | *DeKalb County Clinical Coordinator               |
| *Fulton County Behavioral Health Clinician I             | *Fulton County Behavioral Health Clinician II     |

## TRAINING



### 2021 ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE CACJ WELLNESS ACTIVITY MINDFULNESS & MOVEMENT

9/28/21      6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

#### PROFESSIONAL SELF-CARE: YOUR DUTY TO DECOMPRESS

Treat yourself to an experiential yoga session designed to help you recover from burnout and protect you against vicarious trauma. In the session, you'll be guided through gentle movement sequences, rhythmic breathing practices, and empowering visualization techniques while seated in your preference of chair or on a yoga mat. Expect to develop competency with 3-5 mind-body practices and learn why it's your duty to implement them at work, home, or in the courtroom. The class includes complimentary access to a downloadable reference booklet and two customized Yoga Nidra audio files: one mini session and one full session.

Class is appropriate for all levels and abilities \* Please wear comfortable, fitted clothing during the class \*You are invited to bring a towel or small blanket for additional comfort \* End spaces are available for attendees using wheelchairs

**RSVP SHOULD BE COMPLETED DURING CONFERENCE REGISTRATION. SIGNED WAIVERS ARE REQUIRED FOR PARTICIPATION.**