



# COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES OF GEORGIA

NOVEMBER 2016

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## CACJ: QUARTER ONE UPDATE

The Council of Accountability Court Judges and Staff have been working hard to assist each of you and your programs. While Q1 wrapped on September 30<sup>th</sup>, below is a snapshot on what each committee is working on and/or accomplished from July to September.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Strategic Planning Meeting!! The Executive Committee brainstormed and developed the CACJ's Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles.

### STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE

Approved the release of the DUI and Family Treatment Court Certification.

### TRAINING COMMITTEE

2016 Training Conference! The Training Committee is already working on the 2017 CACJ Training Conference objectives.

### FUNDING COMMITTEE

Met to review the FY17 Supplemental grant application and process.

## VETERANS TREATMENT COURT HOSTS RECOVERY MONTH PICNIC

Debbie Mott

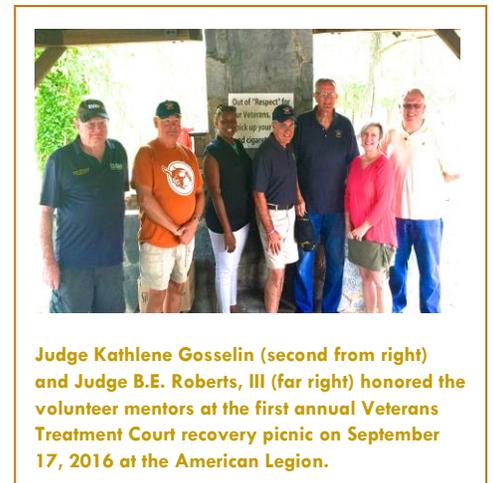
Recognizing the societal benefits of recovery for Hall County and to promote the widespread observance of National Recovery Month, Hall County's Veterans Treatment Court hosted a picnic on September 17, 2016 at the American Legion to celebrate the veteran participants' recovery and successes and to honor veteran volunteer mentors. Following a time of fellowship and lunch, Judge Kathlene Gosselin and Judge B.E. Roberts, III recognized the volunteer mentors and presented them with challenge coins.

Established in 2014, Veterans Treatment Court was created as the judges were seeing an influx of combat vets who were returning from deployment struggling with issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and ending up in the criminal justice system. This niche of the criminal justice population requires specialized support and is eligible for services that are often difficult for them to navigate alone. Additionally, many struggle with homelessness and employment issues, in addition to their mental health or substance abuse issues, which takes significant staff time to address and resolve. Judge Kathlene Gosselin presides over the Superior Court (felony) track and Judge B.E. Roberts, III presides over the State Court (misdemeanor) track. These programs link veterans to Veterans Affairs services, psychiatrists, medications, counseling sessions, employment resources, court personnel, housing resources, and transportation they need to be successful members of society.

The picnic was planned during Recovery Month, a national observance sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The observance raises awareness of mental and/or substance use disorders, celebrates individuals in long-term recovery, and acknowledges the work of prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.

## GWINNETT COUNTY VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

On October 13<sup>th</sup>, Gwinnett County honored their first Veterans' Treatment Court graduate. "Recovery is the hardest thing I've ever had to do. And it's not something that I'll ever stop learning how to do better." (Picture: Presented with his challenge coin for graduation.)



**Judge Kathlene Gosselin (second from right) and Judge B.E. Roberts, III (far right) honored the volunteer mentors at the first annual Veterans Treatment Court recovery picnic on September 17, 2016 at the American Legion.**



## Congratulations to Participants of all the October Graduations!

Baldwin County FTC	Barrow County Drug Court	Blue Ridge Drug Court	Carroll County Drug Court Graduation
Cherokee County DUI/Drug Court	Clayton County DUI/Drug Court	Douglas County DUI/Misd. Court	Forsyth County DUI Court
Fulton County Drug Court	Fulton County Veterans Court	Fulton County Family Treatment Court	Gwinnett County Veterans Treatment Court
Jackson County Drug Court	Muscogee County Juvenile Drug Court	Newton County Felony Drug Court	Western Veterans Treatment Court

### HALL COUNTY VETERANS TREATMENT COURT PARTICIPANTS HONORED AT VIETNAM CEREMONY

Debbie Mott

The Georgia Department of Veterans Service, in partnership with the Office of Governor Nathan Deal, created the Vietnam War Certificate of Honor program to recognize every one of Georgia's 234,000 Vietnam War veterans. On August 31, 2016 at the American Legion Post 7, in collaboration with the Oakwood VA Clinic, Hall County Veterans Treatment Court participants were recognized at the Vietnam Ceremony and presented with the Certificate of Honor for their service to our country. Each certificate was personalized with the Vietnam War veteran's name, rank, branch of service, and dates of service printed over the Seal of the State of Georgia and included the U.S. Department of Defense's Vietnam War Commemorative Partner logo.



(Pictured: Members of the Hall County Treatment Court Team attended the Vietnam Ceremony in support of their veteran participants on Wednesday, August 31, 2016 at the American Legion Post 7.)

### JUDGES CORNER: SUSAN EDLEIN

Judge Edlein presides over the Fulton County DUI.

Program Begin: June 2007

Judge Begin Presiding over Court: 2014

Current Participants: 101

How many participants have graduated? : 329

**What was your initial interest in being an Accountability Court Judge?** Judge Susan Forsling started the DUI Court in Fulton County. I spoke with her frequently about the program and her passion was contagious! When she retired I joined the DUI Court team. As a judge, I sentence individuals who have been convicted of a crime and generally, I never see them again. With an accountability court, I have the opportunity to work with the participants over 12-24 months. During that time, I get to know the participants and see the challenges they face. Most importantly, I get to see the positive changes they make in their lives once they stop abusing drugs and alcohol. It is incredibly rewarding to have participants share with our team their job promotions or improved relationships with loved ones.

**Was there a specific moment/event that happened that let you know you were doing something right for your program?** When a participant thanks me, I know I am doing something right. There is one case that stands out because the participant and I started DUI court at about the same time. I sentenced a young father who had 3 pending DUI cases to DUI Court. Initially, he struggled and resisted the program but as time went on he did better and better. By the time he graduated his life had improved exponentially - he had a good job and was proud of being a good role model for his children. When he graduated he thanked the team and told us the program had saved him. It is moments like those that keep me going.

**To date, what do you think is your court's biggest program accomplishment?** Our biggest accomplishment is serving more than 300 participants since inception. Not only are we helping the participants, but more importantly we are increasing public safety.