



COUNCIL OF ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGES OF GEORGIA

JUNE 2017

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FROM UNDER ARREST TO UNDER THE SEA: ONE MAN'S SECOND CHANCE THROUGH DRUG COURT

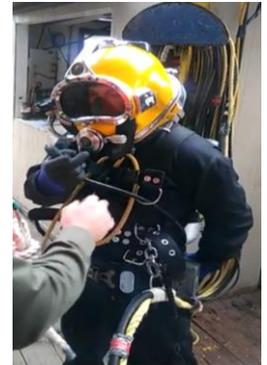
Chris Holt, Appalachian Circuit Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator

Cory never intended for his life to turn out this way. He dreamed of playing major league baseball and was a good player in his youth. Cory says, "I can remember watching the Atlanta Braves, and my mind could see my future self on third base where Chipper Jones played." However, he also had a backup plan. Cory was a big fan of the late Steve Irwin, known as The Crocodile Hunter. If his baseball dream did not work out, he decided that he would study biology and work in animal conservation. However, as Cory says, "life changes people."

Cory's mother spent time in prison and was not always around. When she was not incarcerated, she dragged Cory from place to place looking for drugs. According to Cory, "I would wake up in strange houses, being very hungry, but too shy to ask for food." Cory says this lifestyle took a toll on him and he realized he was developing feelings "he didn't want to feel." When an unexpected tragedy struck, the murder of his Aunt Brenda, Cory believed "something changed inside me. Something for the worst." At 15 years old, Cory did methamphetamine for the first time and found that all of the feelings he did not want to feel were now gone, at least temporarily.

By this time, he had police detectives, bounty hunters, and now gangsters looking for him. Cory's mom had been clean for the last two years and was in a program called drug court in Ellijay. She told Cory this program had changed her life. Two months later, he received the paperwork stating he was accepted into the Appalachian Judicial Circuit's Drug Court. Cory would live a very structured life at The Depot for months while attending drug court treatment classes, 12 step meetings, and bi-weekly status hearings in front of Chief Superior Court Judge Brenda Weaver. He obtained a full time job at the local chicken plant, he excelled at his job, and was soon promoted. After four months of living at The Depot, he was able to move in with his mother. On November 17, 2016, Cory Chastain graduated from drug court and had been sober over two years. However, this wasn't the end of his journey.

Cory was accepted into an underwater welding school in Jacksonville, Florida. He was turned down for all known financial aid. However, he did not give up, and the school agreed to finance his classes if he could put several thousand dollars down. Cory saved the money, and with his probation officer's permission, took off to Jacksonville to start the road to a new career as an underwater welder. *To read the full story of Corey, visit the CACJ website: www.gaaccountabilitycourts.org/apps/blog*



Cory gearing up for a dive.

Clayton County Drug Court hosted a picnic for participants in celebration of National Drug Court Month on May 17th.



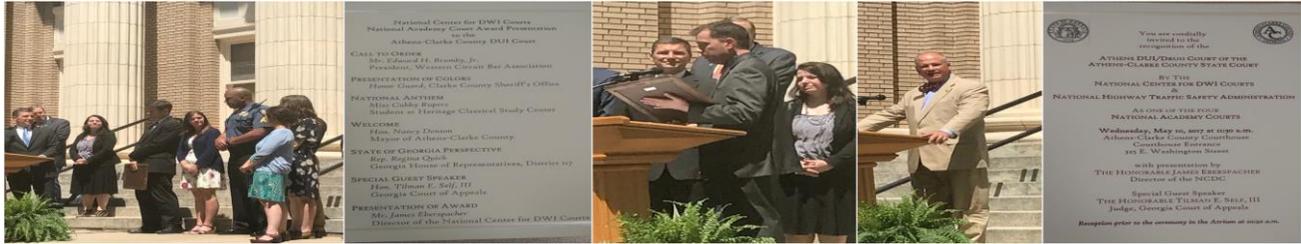
(L to R) Deputy George Angel (Cherokee Judicial Circuit Drug Court), Congressman Sanford Bishop, Jr. (2nd Congressional District), Judge D. Scott Smith, and Kevin Harris (former graduate of Cherokee drug court)

Judge D. Scott Smith (Cherokee Judicial Circuit) was invited by NADCP to visit D.C. During his visit, he met with a few of Georgia's Representatives and shared with them the initiatives of the Council of Accountability Court Judges and the impact of Georgia's Courts.

ATHENS – CLARKE COUNTY DUI COURT NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED!

The Athens-Clarke County DUI/Drug Court received national recognition. The National Center for DWI Courts, NCDC, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration have named the Athens court one of only **four national academy courts in the country!** As an Academy Court, the Athens Court helps develop, identify, and test national best practices for DWI Court. They will also assist NCDC in providing technical assistance. They were selected from over 700 similar courts nationally, and will serve a three – year term as an academy court. **CONGRATULATIONS** to Judge Auslander and his team!

(L to R) Athens - Clarke County DUI Team; Judge Auslander receiving the award from NCDC's Director, James Eberspacher; and Special Guest Speaker, Judge Self from Georgia Court of Appeals.



Congratulations to Judge Joe Bishop and his Drug Court in the Pataula Circuit. They had their FIRST graduation on May 18th, and graduated 16 participants!



Congratulations to all May Graduations!

- Clayton County Drug Court
- Cobb County Veterans Treatment Court
- Gwinnett County Drug Court
- Hall County Veterans Treatment Court
- Hall County Drug Court
- Hall County Family Treatment Court
- Pataula Judicial Circuit Drug Court
- South Enotah Felony Drug Court
- Troup County DUI/Drug Court
- Troup County Felony Drug Court

FEATURED in Gainesville times, Judge Kathy Gosselin writes an article on the stigma of mental health issues. The article can be found here:

www.gainesvilletimes.com/section/250/article/123566

JUDGES CORNER: HONORABLE RAYMOND GEORGE

South Enotah Felony Drug Court

PROGRAM BEGAN IN 2003

CURRENT PARTICIPANTS: 59

GRADUATED: 182

WHAT WAS YOUR INITIAL INTEREST IN BEING AN ACCOUNTABILITY COURT JUDGE?

I have been involved with the Drug Court since 2006, so when I was appointed as a Judge, I never considered not continuing my involvement.

WAS THERE A SPECIFIC MOMENT/EVENT THAT HAPPENED THAT LET YOU KNOW YOU WERE DOING SOMETHING RIGHT FOR YOUR PROGRAM?

The comments from family members of graduates. Also, when road deputies begin to make referrals, which means we have earned "street cred."

TO DATE, WHAT DO YOU THINK IS YOUR COURT'S BIGGEST PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENT?

The acceptance of the program from all facets of society and the CJ system. Police, prosecution, defense attorneys, treatment community, business community, etc.