



News Release

FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge
19th Judicial Circuit
Lake County
Waukegan, Illinois 60085-4359

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Waukegan, Illinois

THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT CELEBRATES THREE DRUG COURT GRADUATES

Chief Judge Diane E. Winter greeted attendees, both in-person and virtually, as the families of the graduates and the Therapeutic Intensive Monitoring (TIM) Court team gathered to celebrate Evelyn, Jason, and Clarence for their 24 to 30 months of successful monitoring and clean-time. She stated "On behalf of the entire Nineteenth Judicial Circuit, I congratulate you. Today is a new beginning. Through your determination, your strength of character, and your perseverance, Evelyn, Jason, and Clarence, you and your loved ones now have a chance for a better future."

Presiding Judge of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit's Specialty Courts, Circuit Judge Christen L. Bishop, explained the importance and impact of the TIM Court programs. She stated, "In 2005, Lake County officials recognized there were a substantial number of high-risk, addicted felons engaging in a continued pattern of criminal behavior. The system was not working, what we were doing was not working. There was a revolving door at the Department of Corrections and the defendants were not getting the help with their addictions or the other issues going on in their lives. The mission of our Drug Court was established to promote community safety by reducing substance abuse and recidivism of our high-risk substance use disordered offenders through a coordinated program that included treatment, intense supervision, and judicial interaction. The requirements needed to complete this program are tough, this is not the easy way; the easy way is to accept a sentence to the Department of Corrections. TIM Courts are the hard road, and the three of you succeeded in this part of the journey."

This was the first Drug Court graduation for the 19th Judicial Circuit since the pandemic began. Judge Bishop noted that the Lake County specialty court programs were amongst the first in the state to be hosting court via the Zoom virtual platform, ensuring that the clients could continue to connect with the team. In addition, she praised the TIM Unit of Probation for going above and beyond to interact with the clients and combat the isolation that accompanied the stay-at-home order, while continuing to hold the clients accountable.

Judge Bishop impressed upon and recognized the importance and impact of the Drug Court team: her former Drug Court partner Circuit Judge Christopher R. Stride, her new Drug Court partner Associate Judge Paul B. Novak, Chief Judge Diane E. Winter, former Lake County State's Attorney and newly appointed Circuit Judge Michael G. Nerheim, along with members of the Lake County Adult Probation Department, the Lake County State's Attorney's Office including Hitch the TIM Court Labrador Retriever, the Lake County Public Defender's Office, the Lake County Health Department, public officials, law enforcement officers, former program participants, volunteers, mentors, and treatment centers.

Judge Bishop concluded the ceremony by stating, "Jason has 911 days of clean-time, Evelyn has 821 days, and Clarence has 770 days. None of these three resilient, persistent, unbelievable people who we value so much ever tested positive while participating in Drug Court. It is now my privilege, honor, and duty to announce that you are all hereby discharged from any further obligations of this Court and your Drug Court probation is terminated. Your cases are closed. Congratulations."

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