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

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Point of Contact: Kasey Dunn Morgan  
Telephone: 847-377-3818

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## LAKE COUNTY DRUG COURT CELEBRATES TWENTY YEARS

The Nineteenth Judicial Circuit recently gathered clients, participants, current and retired judges, original team members, graduates, justice partners, Lake County elected officials, and Drug Court Team members to celebrate 20 years of growth and success in the Lake County Drug Court program. This program has proudly seen over 110 graduates. The Lake County Drug Court program began in 2005 when a committee of Lake County officials identified that many high-risk, addicted felons were trapped in a continuous cycle of criminal behavior to support their addictions. The mission of the Drug Court is to enhance community safety by reducing substance use and recidivism among high-risk, high-need offenders through a coordinated approach that includes treatment, intensive supervision, and judicial involvement.

"Today, we celebrate the remarkable vision of our Drug Court pioneers, honor our alumni by reflecting on the memories of Drug Court's past, and look toward our future with a commitment to recovery, justice, and hope," said Judge Christen L. Bishop, Presiding Judge of the Restorative Justice Division. "To commemorate our 20th anniversary, original team members, judges, probation officers, and our community partners will reflect on our beginnings and the progress we have made, all thanks to the collaboration and support from many of you in this room. Your contributions—whether financial, voluntary, or simply through performing your role—have been vital to the success of the Drug Court program and the sobriety of our graduates."

Also addressing the crowd were Chief Judge Daniel B. Shanes, who was part of the original prosecutor team from the State's Attorney's Office; Circuit Judge Victoria A. Rossetti, who previously presided over the Therapeutic Intensive Monitoring Program (TIM); Joy Gossman, retired Lake County Public Defender; Margaret Fontana, Director of Lake County Adult Probation; Circuit Judge Christopher R. Stride, who also previously presided over TIM Courts; Bruce Johnson, Chief Executive Officer of Nicasa Behavioral Health Services; and Judge Paul B. Novak, who currently presides over TIM Courts alongside Judge Bishop.

The TIM Court Program of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit Court aims to improve public safety and reduce the high costs associated with incarceration by lowering recidivism rates among high-risk, non-violent, addicted felons who have not benefited from conventional therapeutic and criminal justice approaches. The Court was established after recognizing that many of these individuals engaged in significant criminal behavior primarily to support their drug addictions. By providing intensive, court-monitored treatment and supervision, the Court seeks to reduce drug addiction and drug-related crime in Lake County, thereby breaking the damaging and costly cycle of addiction, crime, and incarceration.

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