

**SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY  
COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX**

**LORRAINE PULLEN, J.S.C.**  
DRUG COURT JUDGE

**VICKI DZINGLESKI-DICARO**  
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## NEWS

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### **Middlesex County Drug Court Celebrates Fourth Graduation Ceremony**

*NJ Supreme Court Associate Justice Barry T. Albin Will Deliver Keynote Address*

NEW BRUNSWICK –Supreme Court Associate Justice Barry T. Albin will deliver the keynote address at the fourth Middlesex County Drug Court commencement program.

The program will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 14 at 10 a.m. in the freeholder meeting room of the County Administration Building, 75 Bayard St., New Brunswick. A total of 22 participants will be awarded certificates marking their completion of the final phase of a rigorous 3- to 5-year program of comprehensive drug treatment and intensive supervision.

Assignment Judge Travis L. Francis will provide the opening remarks and speak about the success of the drug court program. Judge Lorraine Pullen, who presides over the Middlesex County Drug Court, will officiate at the graduation ceremony. Judge Dennis Nieves will give the closing remarks.

The mission of drug courts is to stop the abuse of alcohol and other drugs and related criminal activity. Participants enter the program in lieu of serving prison time. The drug court program is a highly specialized team process that functions within the criminal division of the Superior Court to address non-violent drug-related cases. Drug courts are unique in the criminal justice environment because they build a working relationship between criminal justice and drug treatment agencies.

Eligible defendants receive a sentence of three to five years of probation. They are required that they complete drug treatment and all aftercare requirements, attend self-help meetings and weekly drug court sessions, comply with random drug tests, pay legal obligations and obtain employment. Participants are closely monitored by designated drug court probation officers as

they transition through four phases of recovery over the course of their sentence and eventual graduation from the drug court program.

New Jersey's drug courts have proven effective at breaking the cycle of drug abuse and crime, providing people who have drug addictions the opportunity to become productive citizens. They offer an effective alternative to incarceration for non-violent offenders, and they help reduce minority over-representation in prison.

Since the program's inception, offenders have found employment and begun meeting their financial obligations, parents have regained custody of their children and dozens of drug-free babies have been born to participants around the state.

Since the Middlesex County Drug Court program began on Sept. 14, 2004, seven drug-free babies were born. Middlesex County graduated 40 participants as of March 1, 2010. Of those graduates, 10 regained custody of children; 16 regained their New Jersey drivers' licenses; and 20 became eligible for medical benefits with their jobs. Those graduates have paid a total of \$97,177 in penalties, fees and fines. Twenty-five percent of the graduates improved their level of education or obtained vocational training. A total of 22 graduates were employed for an average of sixteen month or longer at the time of their graduation from the program.

Drug courts operate in every vicinage in New Jersey and currently serve 3,928 people statewide. Currently there are 250 Middlesex County Drug Court participants.

More information on drug courts can be found on the Judiciary Web site at [njcourts.com](http://njcourts.com).

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