

Macon Judicial Circuit Unveils New Mental Health Court

At a ceremony April 4, 2007 Justice Leah Ward Sears stamped her seal of approval on the new initiative by Macon Judicial Circuit to have an alternative for their mentally ill population that find themselves in the Criminal Justice system. Judge Phil Brown will preside over the Mental Health Court that began April 18, 2007.

Establishing a Mental Health Court was a goal of Circuit Public Defender, Lee Robinson. He and his office were instrumental in developing the Court along with Judge Brown, Sheriff Jerry Modena, Frank Fields, Rivers Edge Community Service board and many other agencies in the county and state. *(Pictured: Georgia Supreme Court Justice Leah Ward Sears (left)and Judge Phil Brown, Bibb County Superior Court)*



The target population of this program is defendants arrested with lower level felonies as well as misdemeanor cases. The goal of the program is to address public safety while providing treatment to individuals with mental health issues that are involved with the criminal justice system. Each individual will have a "team" assigned to their case that will consist of someone from the District Attorney's office, the Circuit Public Defender's office, the Probation Department, Bibb County office of the Sheriff, River Edge, Bibb County Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), Macon Housing Authority and the Program Coordinator.

Together these agencies aspire to create an environment that will minimize the cost of incarceration, reduce recidivism and encourage a productive alternative for those with mental health issues that find themselves in the criminal justice system.



Left: Macon Circuit Public Defender Lee Robinson.



Right: Judge Phil Brown will preside over the new mental health court.