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Essex Vicinage to Hold Drug Court Graduation

Essex Vicinage will hold its adult drug court graduation and commencement Ceremony on Wednesday, Dec. 7 at 11 a.m. in the Leroy Smith Building, 14th Floor Conference Room, 60 Nelson Place, Newark, Assignment Judge Sallyanne Floria announced.

This event will honor 48 men and women who have maintained recovery from drugs and alcohol. Graduates consist of 13 early graduates who have successfully completed the program sooner than the prescribed time, three graduates, and 32 commencers who are moving to the fourth final phase of the drug court program.

Judge Ramona A. Santiago will preside over the event. John Miller, director of Legal Services for Delaney and Logan Hall, will be the keynote speaker. Essex Senior Probation Officer Noemi Quinones will lead the singing of the national anthem.

The drug court program is a highly specialized team process within the existing Superior Court structure that relies upon a collaborative relationship between criminal justice officials and drug treatment professionals to assist non-violent drug offenders in rehabilitation. Drug court programs are rigorous, requiring completion of four phases during five years of intensive drug and alcohol treatment and testing. The program supports the recovery process but also allows supervisors to react swiftly to impose appropriate therapeutic sanctions or to reinstate criminal proceedings when participants do not comply with the program.

The graduation ceremony is closed to the public. Arrangements will be made for reporters to interview willing graduates upon conclusion of the ceremony.