

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Graduation Ceremony Held for Cherokee County
Treatment Accountability Court Program**

May 3, 2024 – District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway, elected officials, law enforcement, courthouse personnel, treatment providers, and family and friends attended a formal graduation ceremony this week for four individuals who successfully completed the Cherokee County Treatment Accountability Court (TAC) program.

The graduation ceremony was held at 4 p.m. on May 2 in the Jury Assembly Room of the Cherokee County Justice Center.

Established in December 2015, TAC helps defendants suffering from mental health issues that contribute to criminal behavior. TAC serves both felony and misdemeanor offenders in Cherokee County. Since the program's founding, 54 people have graduated, including this week's graduates.

The TAC team is comprised of a presiding judge, coordinator, case manager, and representatives from the District Attorney's Office, Assistant Solicitor-General's Office, Defense Bar, Cherokee Probation Service, Georgia Department of Community Supervision, treatment providers, and law enforcement. These individuals meet regularly to discuss the progress of program participants.

"Accountability courts change lives, as this week's Treatment Accountability Court graduation ceremony clearly demonstrated," said District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway. "By offering this alternative to carefully selected offenders, we are helping people address underlying issues so that they can become healthy and productive members of society."

The multi-disciplinary approach of this program provides hands-on assistance to participants based on their unique struggles. At a minimum, the program takes 18 months to complete. The length of the program is determined by individual progress, and participants do not graduate until the team believes they are ready.

During the ceremony, TAC Presiding Judge Shannon Wallace introduced the graduates, who provided a brief testimony of their journey through the program.

One graduate said she's suffered mental health and addiction issues throughout her life. She said this program taught her how to make the right decisions and be accountable.

"I do not know where I'd be today if it had not been for Treatment Accountability Court. I was very lost. It seemed like maybe I'd always been lost. They helped me find my way," she said, adding that she would likely still be "lost and broken and probably not living had it not been for this program."

During his closing remarks, Probate Court Judge Keith Wood, who established the program, congratulated the graduates for putting in the work to make a positive change. He encouraged them to continue to prosper, to remember the tools they have learned, and to serve as an example for others.

TAC Program Background

The program utilizes community resources to address the mental health and social needs of its participants in order to increase their prospects for achieving long-term stability and to promote community and public safety interests that have been adversely impacted by those living with untreated mental illness.

Program supporters include the TAC Steering Committee, Cherokee Sheriff's Office, Cherokee County Friends of Recovery, Cherokee County Board of Commissioners, Cherokee County District Attorney, Cherokee County Solicitor-General, Cherokee Probation Service, Georgia Department of Community Supervision, Ascension Counseling, Flow of Wellness, Highland Rivers Behavioral Health, Sober Living America, MUST Ministries, and Cherokee County Accountability Courts.

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The Office of the District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit is committed to seeking justice, acting with integrity, and collaborating with partner agencies in the criminal justice system in order to protect the citizens of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia.

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