

Mississippi Association of Drug Court Professionals elects new officers

May 16, 2007

Representatives of court administration and substance abuse treatment were recently elected to new leadership positions in the Mississippi Association of Drug Court Professionals.

State Drug Court Coordinator Joey Craft of Clinton is the new president of the MADCP.

Marcus Ellis of Walnut Grove, Drug Court Coordinator for the 8th Circuit Drug Court of Leake, Neshoba, Newton and Scott counties, is MADCP vice-president.

Linda Edison of Jackson, Director of Improve Quality of Life, a non-profit aftercare and outreach program, is MADCP secretary.

Ruth Ann Rigby of Jackson, alumni relations coordinator for Pine Grove Behavioral Health and Addiction Services, is MADCP treasurer.

Circuit Judge Betty W. Sanders of Greenwood, conference and programs chair for MADCP's Third Annual Training Conference, swore in the new officers on May 11 during the final day of the conference in Jackson.

As State Drug Court Coordinator, Craft oversees all drug courts. He is responsible for monitoring each program's compliance with drug court laws and rules established by the State Drug Court Advisory Committee. He works with judges and court staff statewide in the planning and creation of new drug courts and the training of drug court staff.

Craft was named State Drug Court Coordinator July 1, 2006. He worked as a project manager with the Administrative Office of Courts since September 2002. He previously worked for 10 years at MCI-WorldCom.

Craft is a faculty member of the National Drug Court Institute, which is based in Alexandria, Va. NDCI provides comprehensive drug court training, works to develop more effective drug court policies and procedures, and disseminates drug court research and evaluations. As an NDCI faculty member, Craft helped facilitate training and implementation of a drug court program in Kentucky. He will continue to work as a facilitator for drug court training and implementation in other states.

Craft is a member of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and is a delegate to the Congress of State Drug Court Associations. He is a charter member of MADCP and previously served as the organization's treasurer and vice-president.

He has twice addressed the nationwide conference of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, speaking about sustaining drug courts through establishment of stable sources of state funding. Mississippi's funding mechanism is envied by drug courts in other states. Craft worked with legislators and judges in 2003 to establish a framework for drug courts statewide, and in 2004 worked through the State Drug Court Advisory Committee for passage of legislation that established a statewide funding mechanism for drug courts. The 2004 law added a special assessment for drug court operations to fines for felony crimes, misdemeanors, traffic offenses, driving under the influence of alcohol, game and fish law violations and litter law violations.

Ellis joined the 8th District Drug Court at its inception in late 2003. He volunteered his time to help establish the program before it had a budget, then was employed by the Drug Court. He previously served as secretary of MADCP.

He is a member of the Walnut Grove Board of Alderman and the Leake County Industrial Development Board. He serves on the board of directors of Healthy Teens/Healthy Tomorrows and on the administrative board of directors of Carthage United Methodist Church.

Ellis retired in 1995 after 26 years active duty in the U.S. Army. He last served as Senior Counterintelligence Warrant Officer assigned as Congressional Liaison Officer between Congress and the U.S. Army Intelligence Community. He spent three combat duty tours in Vietnam. His awards include three Purple Hearts, two Bronze Stars, two Meritorious Service Medals and three Joint Service Commendations.

Edison has a bachelor of arts degree in social work and has worked in the field for 27 years. She is director of Improve Quality of Life, a non-profit provider of aftercare and outreach services for participants in the Hinds County Drug Court. Edison is a charter member of MADCP and served on the organization's training conference planning committee.

Rigby joined Pine Grove Behavioral Health & Addiction Services as alumni relations coordinator in June 2006. She previously worked as discharge coordinator at St. Dominic Behavioral Health Services in Jackson for eight years. She is president of the Board of Directors of the Central Mississippi Chapter of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency. She is a past board member of the Mississippi Association of Addiction Professionals. She served on the MADCP training conference planning committee.

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