

OVER 10,000 PROGRAM GRADUATES AND COUNTING

Fort Lauderdale, FL – On Wednesday, July 13, 2011, the 17th Judicial Circuit's Drug Court program will mark 20 years, with a special graduation ceremony at the Broward County Main Library at 6:00 pm. In addition to honoring the graduates who have successfully completed treatment this quarter, the ceremony will also recognize special guests in attendance – those who helped to pioneer the program two decades ago.

Currently, the 17th Circuit offers adult felony drug court, juvenile drug court, and misdemeanor drug court. By mid-year 2011, the current caseload for adult felony diversion cases was approximately 2,700, with an average annual disposition rate of 1,000 cases. According to Circuit Judge Marcia Beach, an average of 90% of participants have successfully completed the conditions of Broward County's Drug Court program, and, after two years, an average of 80% of participants are not rearrested.

When it first began, the 17th Circuit's Drug Court was one of only three in the nation; today there are more than 1,000. Drug Courts provide an alternative to traditional criminal sanctions by putting individuals in closely supervised substance abuse treatment programs long enough for them to work.

"The 17th Judicial Circuit's Drug Court has been phenomenally successful and helps to save lives and taxpayers money," says Judge Beach.