



## Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

# News

Administrative Office  
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East  
Bldg. 1, Room E-316  
Charleston, West Virginia 25305  
(304) 340-2305 Jennifer Bundy  
(304) 340-2306 April Harless  
(304) 558-4219 / TTY  
(304) 558-1212 / FAX  
Web Site: [www.courtswv.gov](http://www.courtswv.gov)  
Twitter: [WVCourts](https://twitter.com/WVCourts)  
Flickr: [www.flickr.com/photos/courtswv/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/courtswv/)  
Email: [Jennifer.Bundy@courtswv.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Bundy@courtswv.gov)  
Email: [April.Harless@courtswv.gov](mailto:April.Harless@courtswv.gov)

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### **Justice Benjamin to attend drug court graduations in Randolph, McDowell Counties**

For immediate release Friday, April 11, 2014

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – West Virginia Supreme Court Justice Brent D. Benjamin will attend drug court graduation ceremonies in Elkins and Welch next week.

He will attend a graduation ceremony for the Randolph County Adult Drug Court at 2 p.m. Monday, April 14, at the Randolph County Courthouse in Elkins. The ceremony is open to the public and will be held in the courtroom of Twentieth Judicial Circuit (Randolph County) Judge Jaymie Wilfong, who is the supervising judge for the drug court.

Justice Benjamin also will attend a graduation ceremony for the McDowell County Juvenile Drug Court at 4 p.m. Tuesday, April 15, in the McDowell County Courthouse in Welch. The ceremony will be held in the courtroom of Eighth Judicial Circuit (McDowell County) Judge Rudolph J Murenky, II. Twelfth Family Court Circuit (Mercer and McDowell Counties) Judge Lisa J. Clark is the supervising judge of the drug court and will preside over the ceremony.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Because the McDowell County event is a juvenile proceeding, media representatives are requested to NOT reveal the identities of the two graduates. The justice, judge, and drug court coordinator will be available to comment on the program.

West Virginia has a growing network of adult and juvenile drug courts, which are intensive supervision probation programs.

Juvenile drug court participants are usually in the program for six to eight months. Initially, a participant meets with the drug court judge weekly and a probation officer several times per week. Juvenile drug courts are intended for youths who are at risk of becoming addicted, not those who are already addicted.

Adult drug courts include those who already are addicted. Participants complete a treatment program of no less than twelve months. They are required to attend group and individual counseling, to take drug tests multiple times per week, to perform community service work, to participate in education programs, and to work on individualized rehabilitation plans as directed. They meet with probation officers frequently and see the drug court judge at least weekly.

The average annual cost incurred by the state for one adult drug court participant is approximately \$7,100 compared to \$18,000 in jail or \$25,000 in prison. About 10 percent of drug court graduates return to jail compared to 80 percent of drug offenders who have not gone through drug court programs.

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