



News for Immediate Release

Dec. 11, 2025

Erie County Treatment Courts Celebrate 50th Graduation Ceremony

HARRISBURG — Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Debra Todd today joined President Judge Joseph M. Walsh, III, Judge John J. Mead, and Judge Erin Connelly Marucci to mark the 50th graduation ceremony of Erie County’s Treatment Courts, recognizing 15 participants who recently completed the program.

“Today is a powerful reminder of what is possible when the justice system, treatment providers, and community partners work together with compassion and accountability,” Chief Justice Todd said. “Each graduation represents far more than the completion of a program – it represents a future rewritten. I am grateful to the judges and treatment teams in Erie County and across Pennsylvania for their commitment to second chances and for helping to build safer, healthier communities.”

The judges who lead each of Erie County’s Treatment Courts reflected on their experiences and the significance of the occasion.

President Judge Walsh, who presides over the county’s Veterans Treatment Court, said, “I was pleased to join in the celebration of our 50th treatment court graduation and present one of our Veterans Court participants for graduation. I am proud to serve those that have served us and look forward to many more success stories.”

Building on that sentiment, Judge Mead emphasized the transformation he has witnessed among participants. “I am honored and privileged to be part of this milestone day,” he said. “I have presided over Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Treatment Court for approximately six years. During that time, I have been fortunate to have seen many people, who were once thought to be hopelessly addicted to drugs or afflicted by mental health issues, turn their lives around and become happy and productive citizens.

“The looks on our graduates’ and their family’s faces on graduation day are the best reward our treatment team can receive. I am looking forward to more graduations in the future with my dedicated and compassionate treatment team.”

Judge Connelly, who presides over Dependency Treatment Court, additionally highlighted the impact on families. “These courts give the parents in our community who are struggling with addiction additional resources and supports. The goal is that, with these added supports, they will maintain sobriety and successfully reunify with their children.”

Since the start of Erie County’s Treatment Courts in 2000, 267 individuals have graduated from the program.

There are currently 137 treatment court programs in Pennsylvania – including Veterans Courts, Mental Health Courts, Adult Drug Courts, Family Drug Courts, DUI Courts, Re-Entry Drug Court, Juvenile Drug Courts and Adult Drug/DUI Hybrid Courts. The purpose of these treatment courts is to reduce recidivism and help individuals return to their jobs and families and become productive citizens.

###

Media contact: [Casey Scheffler](#), 610-425-1712