

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Akron Municipal Court

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### **AKRON RECOVERY COURT LED BY JUDGE JON OLDHAM EARNS RENEWED STATE CERTIFICATION**

**Akron, Ohio, February 1, 2021** – On December 17, 2020, Akron Municipal Court’s Recovery Court, led by Judge Jon Oldham, earned a renewed certification from the Ohio Supreme Court’s Commission on Specialized Dockets.

Akron Recovery Court is a specialized docket that grants less-serious drug abuse offenders the opportunity to have their charges dismissed once they successfully meet all the demands of the twelve-month program, including treatment, aftercare, sobriety, case management and drug-free status.

Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O’Connor congratulated Akron Recovery Court and Judge Oldham for receiving final certification.

“Specialized dockets divert offenders toward criminal justice initiatives that employ tools and tailored services to treat and rehabilitate the offender so they can become productive members of society,” said Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O’Connor. “Studies have shown this approach works by reducing recidivism while saving tax dollars.”

The Akron Municipal Recovery Court began in 1995, and at that time, was known as Drug Court. It is a collaborative effort between Summit County Courts, the Akron Police Department, the Akron Prosecutor’s Office, the Public Defenders Office, the Akron Municipal Probation Department, the Summit County Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Board and Oriana House, Inc.

Judge Oldham began presiding over this specialized docket in 2016.

The success of the recovery court system is well documented. In 2020, Akron Recovery Court’s retention rate was 75%. We currently average 21 graduates per year from the program. From its beginning in May 1995, through the present date, more than 1,000 people successfully completed the Akron Recovery Court program.

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“Recovery Court is a proven way of making our community stronger and supporting men and women on their journey to lifelong recovery,” said Judge Oldham. “I am incredibly proud of my team for their dedication to helping individuals overcome the disease of addiction.”

Recovery Court is now certified through December 31, 2023. The certification Recovery Court received in 2017 was set to expire on December 31, 2020.

Marie Burger-Rutter, who now serves as a Recovery Coach Supervisor at Oriana House, Inc., is a graduate of Akron Recovery Court. Prior to her promotion in 2019, she was assigned by Oriana House to be a Recovery Coach for Akron Recovery Court.

“The Recovery Court team supported me during a time when I was struggling with the disease of addiction. I asked for help and they gave exactly what I needed. I would not be alive today without them,” said Burger-Rutter. “When things got hard, the team inspired me to keep going. Recovery Court taught me so much about accountability and the importance of being completely honest with myself and others. I am honored to be able to give back through my career with Oriana House, Inc.”

Specialized dockets as a whole are courts that are dedicated to specific types of offenses or offenders and use a combination of different techniques for holding offenders accountable while also addressing the underlying causes of their behavior. These are sometimes called problem-solving courts. The Akron Municipal Court is home to six specialized dockets. In addition to Recovery Court, the remaining five specialized dockets are: Active Recovery Creates Hope (ARCH) Court led by Judge Nicole Walker, Valor Court led by Judge Jerry Larson, Mental Health Court led by Judge Annalisa S. Williams, Family Intervention Court led by Judge Ron Cable and Restore Individual Self-Empowerment (RISE) led by Judge Ron Cable.

The certification requirements include establishing eligibility requirements, evaluating effectiveness of the specialized docket, and assembling a treatment team for implementing daily operations of the specialized docket. The team can include licensed treatment providers, law enforcement and court personnel and is headed by the specialized docket judge.

The standards provide a minimum level of uniform practices for specialized dockets throughout Ohio and allow local courts to innovate and tailor to meet their community’s needs and resources.

The Commission on Specialized Dockets has 22 members who advise the Supreme Court and its staff regarding the promotion of statewide rules and uniform standards concerning specialized dockets in Ohio courts; the development and delivery of specialized docket services to Ohio courts; and the creation of training programs for judges and court personnel. The commission makes all decisions regarding final certification.

Recovery Court takes place on most Thursday mornings.

*The Akron Municipal Court serves the cities of Akron and Fairlawn; the townships of Bath, Richfield and Springfield; the Villages of Lakemore and Richfield; and that part of Mogadore in Summit County, Ohio. For more information about Akron Municipal Court services and programs, please visit: <https://www.akronmunicipalcourt.org>.*

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