

# News

## Macomb County Circuit Court



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### **Macomb County Courts to Launch Coordinated Veterans' Treatment Dockets**

MOUNT CLEMENS, Mich. — Macomb County Circuit and District Courts are geared up to implement a county-wide coordinated Veterans' Treatment Court early next year. Chief Judge Mark Switalski and Judge Tracey A. Yokich from the 16<sup>th</sup> Circuit, together with Judge Stephen Sierawski from 41A District Court and Judge Carrie Fuca from 41B District Court have been collaborating with representatives from the John D. Dingell VA Medical Center, Prosecutor Eric Smith and Sheriff Anthony Wickersham to create a comprehensive and coordinated Veterans' Treatment Court for Macomb County.

The mission of the Macomb County Veterans' Treatment Court (MCVTC) is to serve Macomb County veterans in the justice system through a specialized treatment court docket focusing on substance abuse and mental health treatment. In the Macomb model, each participating court will retain its own cases, but the courts will share resources county-wide including procedures and protocols, a mentor support system and defense attorney lists. "Sharing resources allows us to pool our knowledge, maximize our areas of expertise, and make the most efficient use of limited resources. As a team, we are proud to be able to come together to serve those who have served us so admirably," stated Chief Judge Mark Switalski.

Attorney Gail Pamakov-Miller, President of the Macomb County Bar Association, has agreed to work with the Bar to develop defense counsel training and coordination of legal services for the MCVTC. Attorney and veteran, John Walus, has stepped up to coordinate the county-wide mentor program. Any veteran interested in becoming a mentor should contact Mr. Walus by email at [jewalus@aol.com](mailto:jewalus@aol.com).

Veterans themselves, Judge Tracey A. Yokich and Judge Stephen Sierawski have seen the need for a specialized docket for veterans over their many years of service on the bench. "The need is evident and we can make a difference in the lives of our veterans," stated Judge Sierawski. "We are privileged to be in a position to use our knowledge and resources to help provide the best possible outcomes for our fellow veterans," added Judge Yokich.

Judge Carrie Fuca first learned of the veterans' court model when she was knocking on doors campaigning. She immediately saw the value of having a veterans' docket and has hit the ground running to integrate one into the 41B District Court. "I am pleased that we have been able to develop a county-wide model and I am eager to get started in January." Other District Court Judges, including Joe Boedeker, Denis LeDuc and Dawnn Gruenburg, have expressed interest with the goal being to add them to the MCVTC once it has been established.

On a related note, another service available to Macomb County veterans starts Thursday, November 10 when Macomb County Clerk / Register of Deeds Carmella Sabaugh will begin offering veterans photo ID cards. For more information see: <http://www.macombcountymi.gov/clerksoffice/MilitaryRecords.htm>.