



DWI Court: Making Your Community A Safer Place

A Publication by the  **NCDC**  
NATIONAL CENTER  
FOR DWI COURTS

## Athens-Clark County DWI Court Named NCDC DWI Academy Court

The **HotSheet** is a NCDC publication to provide important information in a timely fashion.

It is published on an as needed basis.

If you have any suggestions or items to be disseminated for this publication, please contact David Wallace, Director, National Center for DWI Courts.

April 7, 2011 – It was a beautiful spring afternoon on the courthouse steps in Athens, Georgia, for the announcement of the Athens-Clarke County DWI Court’s selection as a DWI Academy Court. David Wallace from the National Center for DWI Courts (NCDC) and Terrance Schiavone, Regional Administrator with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), presented Judge Lawrence with a plaque naming his court one of four NCDC DWI Academy Courts. A DWI Court is an accountability court dedicated to changing the behavior of the hardcore blending of intensive DWI

supervision and long-term offender with a DWI Academy Courts serve as primary NCDC training locations, hosting training and technical assistance sessions, and demonstrating best practices for visiting DWI Court professionals and teams.

“Initially, the Athens-Clarke County court was a pilot project for DWI Courts in Georgia. We



**The Athens-Clark County DWI Academy Court Award Ceremony**

quickly learned that Judge Lawrence and his team were setting an example for the rest of Georgia. Now, they are an example for the entire nation,” said Harris Blackwood, director for the Georgia Office of Highway Safety.

*(Continued on page 2)*



Judge Lawrence raises the plaque to the crowd during the press conference.



NHTSA Regional Administrator Terry Schiavone making some remarks during the ceremony.



Georgia Governor’s Office of Highway Safety Director Harris Blackwood praising the court.



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### DWI Court: Making Your Community A Safer Place

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*(Continued from page 1)*

"This court saved my life," said DWI Court graduate Ferge, during the award ceremony. Ferge, who refers to himself as "Junior," brought with him several members of his family. He pointed out how important his sobriety has been for him and his family, and that it was all because of the DWI Court in Athens. With the success this court has seen, it is clear that it has saved not only Junior's life, but hundreds of others during its ten years of operation.

Mr. Schiavone noted that "the Athens DWI Court award ceremony highlighted everything that is right with the DWI Court system in this county." In a recent NHTSA study, three DWI Courts in Georgia demonstrated reduced recidivism rates when compared to traditional courts, and prevented between 47 and



**Junior, a graduate from the Athens-Clark County DWI Court, commenting on the effect the court has had on his life.**



**David Wallace, NCDC Director and Terry Schiavone, NHTSA Regional Administrator, presenting the plaque to Judge Lawrence.**

112 more DWI arrests, saving the taxpayers in Georgia a substantial amount of money.

Other dignitaries in attendance recognizing the Athens-Clarke County DWI Court included Harris Blackwood, Director for the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety; Nancy Denson, Mayor for Athens; Ira Edwards, Jr., Clarke County Sherriff; and Joseph Lumpkin, Sr., Athens Police Chief.

The Athens-Clarke County DWI Court will be a NCDC DWI Academy Court for three years. The three other Academy Courts are: Greene County DWI Court in Springfield, MO; Ottawa County DWI Court in Holland, MI; and the Harbor Justice Center and West Justice Center DWI Courts in Newport Beach, CA.