



Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court
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“Judge Cassandra Collier-Williams Joins MHDD Court”

(Cleveland) – Judge Cassandra Collier-Williams is the newest member of the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Court (MHDD).

The MHDD Court docket was established in 2003 as a response to the increasing number of defendants with serious mental health illness who were entering the criminal justice system.

“It’s so important to connect these defendants with the services they need,” says Judge Collier-Williams. “Everything from housing to medication, we can provide the help they are entitled to.”

Defendants qualify by meeting certain criteria that can include a diagnosis of suffering from a severe mental health illness, suffering from a developmental disability with an IQ of 75 or below, or having an adaptive skills deficit based on a diagnostic report.

“Serving on the MHDD Court is even more rewarding than I expected,” says Judge Collier-Williams. “The level of caring from the groups involved in the program is exceptional. We all have a common goal of helping people.”

Judge Collier-Williams took over the MHDD Court docket of Judge José A. Villanueva, who will be retiring from the Bench at the end of this year. Judge Villanueva was part of the MHDD Court since its inception and was co-chair of the docket.

The other four members of the MHDD Court are Judge Michael Donnelly, Judge Hollie Gallagher, Judge Robert McClelland, and Judge Deena Calabrese.

“It’s an honor to be part of this docket,” says Judge Collier-Williams.