

Summary and Speaker Bios
Empowering Mental Health: A Comprehensive Discussion of Fayette County
Mental Health Treatment Court
September 6, 2024 via webinar

Summary: *This CLE provides an overview of services provided by the Fayette Mental Health Treatment Court. Defense Attorneys and Prosecutors will be able to inform their clients/defendants of the necessary steps to graduate this diversion program and what is entailed once enrolled. Mental Health Court administrators will also give details about which criminal clients make good referrals versus criminal clients who are likely to be rejected, such that attorneys can efficiently represent persons with suspected mental illness. Lastly, Attorney Bruce Simpson will speak to the importance of attorneys maintaining good mental health.*

Judge John Lindsay Tackett is a graduate of the University of Chicago and the University of Kentucky College of Law. Judge Tackett, admitted to the bar in 2003, was a practicing attorney who most recently owned and operated his own law firm. He was elected to the Fayette District Court bench in 2018 and succeeded Judge Kim Wilkie as Fayette Mental Health Court Judge in 2019.

Elizabeth Bancroft graduated from Michigan State University and Valparaiso School of Law, receiving her J.D. degree in 1996. She worked as a deputy prosecutor for three years in South Bend, Indiana, and later formed her own law firm which operated for two years. She relocated to Lexington in 2002, and joined the Fayette County Attorney's Office in July, 2002 as a general prosecutor. Liz has a lead role in the office in running the Fayette County Drug Court and assisting families with Casey's Law petitions (forced drug treatment).

Bill Buckman, MSW, CSW, Fayette Mental Health Court Program Coordinator, holds a master's degree in social work with a clinical certification and substance use disorder cognate from the University of Kentucky. He specializes in the assessment and treatment of individuals with co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders and has worked with a justice-involved population since 2020 in his role with the Fayette Mental Health Court.

Annabelle Vance, MAT, APSS, the Fayette County Mental Health Court Recovery Navigator, holds a Master of Arts in Teaching degree, and is a certified Adult Peer Support Specialist. She serves the court by connecting program participants to recovery resources and services in the community and also by assisting the coordinator with the assessment and referral process.

Bruce Simpson is a distinguished Civil Trial Lawyer with 41 years of experience, specializing in real estate, zoning, constitutional challenges to governmental decisions, and related civil litigation. He is the founder of Bruce Simpson Law, PLLC. Bruce holds a JD from the University of Kentucky J David Rosenberg College of Law, an MSW from the University of Kentucky College of Social Work, and a BA from the University of Kentucky in Sociology. As a US Army Veteran, Bruce served for 2 years on active duty and 4 years in the reserve duty as part of the Infantry. He has also made significant contributions to various legal and social organizations, having served as the Past President of the Fayette County Bar Association and as the Past President and current board member of the Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass. Additionally, Bruce is a current board member of the Kentucky Equal Justice Center and Mental Health America-Kentucky Chapter. He also volunteers for the Kentucky Lawyer Assistance Program (KYLAP).