New MADD Director Says Group Now Needs To Take Different Approach

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The battle against the drunk driver made strides in 1982, but the chairman of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers said Monday night that the group now should slip into the background.

Mary Lib Guercio, who replaces May Waggoner as MADD chairman, said the group should focus on "solid education" of Lafayette's citizens and "co-exist within the framework" of other agencies concerned with the operating while intoxicated problem.

"In 1983 we see ourselves very involved in education," Mrs. Guercio said.

Members of MADD, which organized in March, 1982, gathered at the Lafayette Public Library for an annual membership briefing last night. Despite the rainy skies and stormy weather heaped on Acadiana, about 30 persons attended the meeting.

"Our role must be one of information collection, identification of problems and cooperative pursuit of solutions," Mrs. Guercio said.

Through MADD's court watching program, the group will gather information on OWI sentencing for education. Court monitors began attending traffic court today.

Georgia Buettner, court monitoring chairman, said that 10 monitors will be attending city and traffic court each Wednesday through the end of July.

In August, information gathered during the court watching will be compiled into a report. The report will be turned over to the local judges.

"We'll attempt to establish the length of time from the arrest to the court appearance to the final judgment," Mrs. Buettner said.

In addition to the education goals, Mrs. Guercio named 24 "need areas" for Lafayette Parish. Those include: one or two additional judges in the 15th Judicial District courts; one or two additional attorneys in the district attorney's office; support of a community service sentencing program by the private and business sector; a magistrate or additional City Court judge; funding for Halfway House; development of a statewide system to verify vehicular insurance; completion of the fourth floor shelf at the new Lafayette Parish Jail; and audio-visual equipment and additional manpower for law enforcement agencies.

New MADD officers also installed Monday were: Mark Thomas, co-chairman; Raymond Shaw, treasurer; Cathy Ritter, secretary; and Peggy Hunt, historian.