

Circuit Courier

July-September 2009

Vol. 2009-3

NEWS BULLETIN OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

Judge August Bonavita Investiture

Judge Caroline Shepherd Investiture

Judge Joseph Marx Appointed to Circuit Court

South County Courthouse Opening Ceremony

Justice Pariente visit

And more...



On the Cover: Main Judicial Center, WPB

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A PERIOD OF CHANGE

We have had historic changes in our local judiciary and in the court system the past fifteen months.

Sadly, in June 2008, **Judge Jeffrey Winikoff** passed away in office. He was a good soul and a bright light among the judiciary and is still sorely missed today.



Chief Judge Peter D. Blanc

Shortly before that occurred, Circuit **Judge William Berger** resigned to go back into private practice. **Judge Jack Cox** took the bench just about a year ago to replace Judge Berger. He has settled in to his civil division and is doing well.

County **Judge Don Hafele** was appointed to the circuit court to replace Judge Winikoff. Judge Hafele has also adjusted well to his new assignment in the civil division.

More recently, **Judge Jorge Labarga** has gone from the circuit court briefly to the Fourth District Court of Appeals (DCA) and now to the Florida Supreme Court where he has become Justice Labarga. He is missed locally, but we wish him well in his new position.

Judge Cory Ciklin has gone from the county court to the Fourth DCA. **Judge Jonathan Gerber** has gone from the circuit court to the Fourth DCA. They are both missed by the trial courts, but we are certain that they are both excelling in their new positions.

Judge Caroline Shepherd was appointed to the county court to fill the vacancy created when Judge Hafele went to the circuit court. Judge Shepherd has settled in and is enjoying her position in the civil division.

Judge August Bonavita has been appointed to replace Judge Ciklin in the county court. Judge Bonavita has been assigned to the criminal division and by all accounts is doing well.

A PERIOD OF CHANGE-CONT.

Most recently, County **Judge Joseph Marx** was appointed to fill the circuit court vacancy created by Judge Gerber's appointment to the Fourth DCA. With his broad experience, Judge Marx has fit right in to his civil division assignment.

Judge John Kastrenakes was appointed to fill a vacancy created when the Florida Supreme Court ruled that William Abramson could not become a member of the judiciary. Judge Kastrenakes, a former U.S. Attorney, is doing well, presiding over matters in a criminal division of the circuit court.

Judge Meenu Sasser was recently appointed to fill the vacancy created by the elevation of Judge Labarga. Judge Sasser has taken on the daunting challenge of running the Fifteenth Circuit's only full time foreclosure division. She is working very hard and making great strides with an overwhelming case load.

If you have followed all of this, then you know there is one remaining county court vacancy created by Judge Marx' appointment to the circuit court. The Judicial Nominating Commission and the Governor are in the process of screening applicants. We are all thankful to the Judicial Nominating Commission (JNC) for doing such an excellent job of screening and nominating applicants to fill these many vacancies. We anticipate that the JNC and the Governor will continue their excellent work as exemplified by the outstanding appointments described herein.

To add to these changes, **Judge Kathleen Kroll**, who has done an excellent job as Chief Judge the past four years, has transferred to the juvenile court. Her dedication and compassion, while leading us through the past four years, has set an example for us all.

I have been the Chief Judge for all of two and one-half months. Although I am in my twentieth year as a member of the judiciary, I learn something new about this position every day.

We are fortunate to have **Barbara Dawicke** as our Court Administrator to help us navigate through all these changes. Barbara has only been our Court Administrator for two years, but she is already doing an amazing job. The many changes described in this article have created their own challenges for our courts and Barbara has met those challenges superbly.

Woodrow Wilson once said, "If you want to make enemies, try to change something."

Here in the Fifteenth Circuit we have been the exception to the rule. All of us – the judges, the court personnel and all members of this team – have worked hard and as a team we have adapted.

We will continue to work hard to make Palm Beach County and the Fifteenth Circuit the home of the best court system in the State of Florida.

*"If you want to make enemies,
try to change something."*

Woodrow Wilson

**"Here in the
Fifteenth Circuit,
we have been
the exception
to the rule."**

Chief Judge Peter D. Blanc

JUDGE AUGUST A. BONAVITA

Judge August A. Bonavita took the bench on June 8, 2009 as a County Court Judge in the Criminal division.

Prior to his judicial appointment, Judge Bonavita was a lawyer with the Office of the Attorney General for the State of Florida.

Judge Bonavita received his bachelor's degree from Seton Hall University, and received his law degree from Seton Hall School of Law, New Jersey.

Judge Bonavita's first assignment is to Criminal Division "P" on the 4th floor of the Main Judicial Center.

His judicial assistant is **Marion Barclay**.

The office can be reached at 355-7881.

Investiture of Judge Bonavita

Family, colleagues and friends gathered in courtroom 11H of the Palm Beach County Courthouse on July 10, 2009, for the investiture of **Judge August A. Bonavita**.

The ceremony opened with remarks by **Chief Judge Peter D. Blanc**, followed by the invocation by **Reverend Donald T. Finney**, St. Peter Catholic Church. **Julia Rose Bonavita**, Judge Bonavita's daughter, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The presentation of the Judicial Commission was made by **Karen Heidtman**, on behalf of Sharon R. Bock, Clerk and Comptroller of Palm Beach County. The Bible was presented by **Lisa Small**, Esquire, Board of Governors of The Florida Bar. **Judge Peter Evans** presented a desk plate on behalf of the Florida Conference of County Court Judges.

Chief Judge Peter Blanc administered the Oath of Office. **Nelton Zuppa**, Judge Bonavita's friend, was given the honor of the enrobing. **Julia Bonavita** touched the crowd with her poetic tribute to her father.

The gavel was presented by **Michelle Suskauer**, Esquire, President of the Palm Beach County Bar Association, and gifts were given by **Seth Marmor**, Esquire, Director of the South Palm Beach County Bar Association, and by **Gregory Zele**, Esquire, Board member of the Palm Beach County Justice Association.

Remarks on behalf of Judge Bonavita were made by his wife, **Laura Bonavita**, **Celia Terenzio**, Esquire, Senior Assistant Attorney General, **Barbara Scheffer**, Esquire, Paralegal Program Department Chair, Palm Beach Community College, and Judge Bonavita's long-time friend **Joseph Mascaro**. The ceremony concluded with the benediction from Reverend Finney.



Judge August Bonavita, with his wife and daughter, is sworn in by Chief Judge Peter Blanc.

Photo by: Mark Billon

JUDGE CAROLINE C. SHEPHERD

Investiture of Judge Shepherd

The investiture of **Judge Caroline C. Shepherd** was held on August 24, 2009 in courtroom 11A of the Palm Beach County Courthouse. The ceremony opened with remarks by **Chief Judge Peter D. Blanc**, followed by the invocation by **Father Brian Flanagan**, St. Patrick Catholic Church.

Jack Shepherd, Judge Shepherd's son, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The presentation of the Judicial Commission was made by **Karen Heidtman**, on behalf of Sharon R. Bock, Clerk and Comptroller of Palm Beach County.

Judge Frank Castor presented a desk plate on behalf of the Florida Conference of County Court Judges and the Bible was presented by **John G. White**, Esquire, Immediate Past President, The Florida Bar, The Florida Bar.

Chief Judge Peter Blanc administered the Oath of Office assisted by **William** and **Jack Shepherd**, who were joined in the enrobing by **Carolyn** and **Bernard Cahill**, and **Ellie Laita**.

The gavel was presented by **Michelle Suskauer**, Esquire, President of the Palm Beach County Bar Association, and gifts were given by **Seth Marmor**, Esquire, Director of the South Palm Beach County Bar Association, and by **Gregory Zele**, Esquire, Board member of the Palm Beach County Justice Association.

Remarks on behalf of Judge Shepherd were made by her sister, **Ellie Laita, Doug Duncan**, Esquire, and **Judge James Martz**. Father Flanagan gave the Benediction.



(l-r) William Shepherd, Jack Shepherd, Judge Caroline Shepherd and Chief Judge Peter Blanc.

Judge Caroline C. Shepherd took the bench on June 1, 2009 as a County Court Judge in the Civil division.

Prior to her judicial appointment, Judge Shepherd served six years as an Assistant State Attorney, Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, in the Community-Based Anti-Crime Task Force (COMBAT) unit which prosecuted crimes such as narcotics trafficking, money laundering and violent crime. Before that she served from 2000-2002 as an Assistant State Attorney in Miami and from 1997-2000 as Assistant United States Attorney in Washington, DC.

Judge Shepherd received her bachelor's degree from the University of Southern California and received her law degree from the New England School of Law.

Judge Shepherd's first assignment is to County Civil Division "RB" on the 6th floor of the Main Judicial Center.

Her judicial assistant is **Jessica Wolfkill**. The office telephone number is 355-7884.

GOVERNOR CRIST APPOINTS JUDGE JOSEPH MARX TO FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

July 15, 2009

Contact:

GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE

(850) 488-5394

TALLAHASSEE – Governor Charlie Crist today announced the appointment of Judge Joseph Marx of West Palm Beach to the 15th Judicial Circuit Court.

“Joseph’s leadership and experience will help him apply the law in a consistent and tolerant manner,” said Governor Crist. “He is an ideal candidate because of his appreciation for fairness and justice. I am confident he will serve objectively from the bench.”

Judge Marx, 45, currently serves on the Palm Beach County Court. From 2001 to 2003 he practiced law at Burman, Critton, Luttier and Coleman.

Previously, he served as an assistant state attorney for the 15th Judicial Circuit from 1989 to 2001. He earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Florida and received his law degree from the University of Florida College of Law.

Judge Marx will fill the vacancy created the elevation of Judge Jonathan D. Gerber to the Fourth District Court of Appeal.



Judge Joseph Marx

FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT HOSTS LEVINE INVESTITURE

Courtroom 11A of the Main Judicial Center was the location for the investiture of the **Honorable Spencer Levine**, Appellate Judge for the Fourth District Court of Appeal, on Friday, August 28, 2009.

Many judges from the Fifteenth Circuit were present as Fourth District Court of Appeals **Chief Judge Robert Gross** opened the ceremony and welcomed the guests. The oath of office was administered by the **Honorable Martha C. Warner**, Fourth District Court of Appeal.

Present, but not pictured, was **Justice Barbara Pariente**, Florida Supreme Court.



Judge Spencer Levine (center) sits with his wife, children and other family members as the judges and guests listen to the speaker.

IN THE COMMUNITY

JUDGE RONALD ALVAREZ SPEAKS AT TEEN SUMMIT 2009

Juvenile **Judge Ronald Alvarez** delivered a motivational address as the keynote speaker at the 2009 Teen Summit held at John F. Kennedy Middle School in Riviera Beach on September 12, 2009.

The program was sponsored by New Beginnings Community Development Center with the theme, "Fresh Start-Supporting Adolescent Success." the event was attended by more than 150 teens, parents and speakers.

The program's goal is to help young people gain the skills and self-confidence they need to prevent entering/exiting the justice system as responsible, productive members of their communities. It also allowed a forum for teens to express their views on topics affecting teens today. The plan's success is illustrated by Veronica Limia, who was once in Alvarez's court, yet returned to the Circuit in the summer of 2009 as part of the law school intern program.



Keynote speaker, Judge Ronald Alvarez (center right) was introduced by his wife, Elaine. Also pictured (center) Diane Lewis, Executive Director New Beginnings; Officer Mitchell, Riviera Beach Police Department.



l-r: Judges Jack Cox, Glenn Kelley, Robin Rosenberg, David Crow, Diana Lewis, Judge Winikoff's widow Ellen, son Sam, and Judge Kenneth Stern. Not pictured: Palm Beach County Commissioner Burt Aaronson, County Administrator Bob Weisman.

JUDGE JEFFREY A. WINIKOFF SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

The first awards from the Judge Jeffrey A. Winikoff Memorial Fund Scholarship were announced on Wednesday, July 29, 2009 at 12:30 PM in the Rose Garden of the Palm Beach County Governmental Center.

Ellen Winikoff and her elder son, Sam, presented \$1000 scholarships to Inita Knox of Riviera Beach, Stephanie Gopie of Lake Worth and Elizat Baialieva of Boca Raton, in the ceremony attended by judges and local government officials.

JUSTICE TEACHING

The children in the third-grade classes at Everglades Elementary School in Weston, Florida, thanked **Judge Lucy Chernow Brown** with this banner for her Justice Teaching presentation .

Judges and attorneys that wish to participate in this program may obtain more information at www.justiceteaching.org.



ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE ASSIGNMENTS

The Fifteenth Circuit is pleased to announce that the following judges have been chosen as the new divisional Administrative Judges:

Not pictured:
Sandra Bosso-Pardo
County Criminal



Judge E. Garrison
Circuit Civil



Judge C. Brunson
Family



Judge K. Kroll
Juvenile



Judge J. Colbath
Circuit Criminal



Judge J. Cook
Probate



Judge F. Castor
County Civil



Judge C. Burton
South County



Judge N. Bailey
West County



Judge R. Oftedal
North County



Judge K. Marx
Criminal Justice Complex

DIVISION REASSIGNMENTS

Effective August 31, 2009, **Judge Joseph Marx** was assigned to Courtroom 10-B, where he presides over Circuit Civil Division AF. **Judge Diana Lewis** moved to Courtroom 6-K to preside over Family Division FA.

Judge John Phillips moved to the North County Courthouse to open Family Division FJ. Judge Phillips will also assist County Civil Judge Laura Johnson.

County **Judge Caroline Shepherd** will remain assigned to County Civil Division RB, but moved from Courtroom 6-J to 6-M.

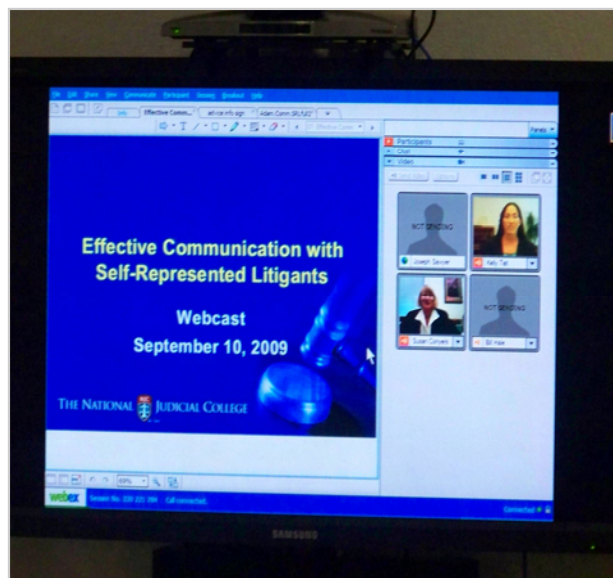
Magistrate Thomas Baker moved to North County effective September 8, 2009.

NATIONAL JUDICIAL COLLEGE

The National Judicial College is sponsoring a series of 90-minute webcasts to enable senior judges, judges and magistrates to attend seminars locally. The topics are intended to provide law updates and address other topics of interest to jurists. On September 2, 2009, participants in the Fifteenth Circuit viewed a Civil Law Update broadcast in the Judicial Dining Room. The topic for the September 10, 2009 video-seminar was “Effective Communication with Self-Represented Litigants.”

The final topic in this series, on October 13, 2009, will be “Ethics in Everyday Court.” Continuing Judicial Education credits are offered for attendance. Magistrates and staff attorneys may apply for credits from The Florida Bar.

For more information on the webcast series, see <http://www.judges.org/news/news091108.html>.



RIBBON CUTTING AT SOUTH COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Speakers and guests cut the ribbon at the South County Courthouse Expansion Ceremony on September 7, 2009.



Pictured above (l to r): South County Bar Association President-Elect **Ted DiSalvo**, County Attorney **Denise Nieman**, Chief Assistant State Attorney **Jeanne Howard**, Chief Judge **Peter D. Blanc**, Clerk of Court Chief Operating Officer **Un Cha Kim**, Judge **Kenneth Stern**, Delray Beach Mayor **Woodie McDuffie**, Judge **James Martz**, Commissioner **Steven Abrams**, Judge **Martin Colin**, Delray Beach CRA Board Chairman **Howard Lewis**, Trial Court Administrator **Barbara Dawicke**, PBSO Major **Daniel Smith**.

MEDIATION TRAINING

The Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Mediation Office has had many educational presentations recently. In August, two staff members and several contract mediators participated in dependency mediation certification training approved by the Florida Supreme Court. The five-day training was held in the Main Judicial Center and included participants from neighboring circuits.

The trainer was **Dr. Tina Jaeckle**, whose excellent instruction was based on her many years of experience in court dependency mediation and other areas – including being a special agent in crisis intervention for the FBI. The participants are now completing their required mediation observations, which will qualify them to serve the circuit as dependency mediators.

In addition to this certification training, mediators and staff had a ‘Lunch and Learn’ regarding the Family Connections Program presented by Unified Family Court Manager **Maria Giuliano**.

On September 11, 2009, a continuing mediation education session was held, “Mediation Models and Worldviews.” This training is based on Alternative Dispute Resolution Director **Rebecca Storrow**’s recent workshop at the statewide Dispute Resolution Center conference in Orlando.

A FinPlan ‘Lunch and Learn’ was held on September 23, as a follow-up to an earlier training provided by the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit’s Court Technology department. Several additional trainings by local agencies are being planned regarding dependency law.



Mediators receive FinPlan training. I-r: Alice Garfinkel, Nathalie Gendron, Laverne Mosley, Rebecca Storrow, George Polacek, Bill Moreno.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER CONFERENCE

The annual Dispute Resolution Center (DRC) conference on August 21-22, 2009, included an opening plenary by **Rachel Wohl**, Esq. and a closing plenary, by **Anthony Porter**, which focused on domestic violence.

Several court staff and mediators from the Fifteenth Circuit attended and this provided a great opportunity to exchange information and ideas with other Florida circuits.

Attendees welcomed the new director of the DRC, **Janice Fleischer**, and the former director, **Sharon Press**, was present. As a result of Sharon’s work, there seemed to be a general spirit of optimism for the future of mediation in Florida.



Rebecca Storrow presents “Mediation Models and Worldview” at the annual Dispute Resolution Center Conference in Orlando.

As this year’s annual International Conflict Resolution Day nears on October 15, 2009, the Mediation office staff is fine-tuning the program mission statement and values, and asking that Governor Charlie Crist bring attention to the work done in this area by proclaiming a statewide mediation week in October.

For more information, please contact Alternative Dispute Resolution Director Rebecca Storrow at (561) 355-2739.

UNIFIED FAMILY COURT

ANNUAL F.L.A.G. MEETING

The Family Law Advisory Group (FLAG) met in the Main Judicial Center on September 29, 2009 to establish the annual goals for 2009-2010.

The purpose of this group is to improve the operation of the Unified Family Court through the creation of sub-committees that meet during the course of the year. These sub-committees explore alternative approaches, create learning opportunities, solve problems, work to settle interagency conflicts, and resolve questions regarding various Unified Family Court processes.

Chief Judge Peter D. Blanc welcomed participants and introduced **Judge Catherine Brunson** who spoke briefly about the accomplishments for 2008-9.

Unified Family Court (UFC) manager **Maria Giuliano** provided attendees with a summary of new projects / initiatives for 2008-2009. One of the main accomplishments was the official presentation of *Healthy Beginnings* initiative by **Bryan Lindert** from Children Services Council. **Elisha Roy**, FLAG chair, elicited feedback from the group to define committee priorities for the upcoming year.

The meeting had over eighty people in attendance; including **Judges Nelson Bailey, Charles Burton, Kathleen Kroll, Diana Lewis, Magistrate Tom Baker**, court staff, attorneys, social service providers, local community leaders, and other interested persons.

For more information, please contact UFC Operations Manager, Maria Giuliano at (561) 355-1764.



Chief Judge Peter Blanc



Judge Catherine Brunson



Maria Giuliano



Bryan Lindert



Elisha Roy

DEPENDENCY SUMMIT 2009

The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) hosted the annual statewide 2009 Dependency Summit. The summit took place August 26-28, 2009, at the Loews Royal Pacific in Orlando. It was an opportunity for child welfare professionals throughout the state to share best practices and continue the advancement of child welfare practice in Florida.

At the Summit, child protective investigators, community-based care administration, case management staff along with judges, magistrates, children's legal services attorneys, law enforcement, medical and mental health providers, and child advocates joined together to benefit from increased coordination, communication, and creativity among their fields. Speakers included **Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp, George Sheldon**, Secretary of the Department of Children and Families, and **Chief Justice Peggy A. Quince**.

Representation from Palm Beach County included DCF Circuit Administrator **Perry Borman**, Child & Family Connections Chief Executive Officer **Judith Warren**, Program Director of Vita Nova **Jeff Demario**, and other welfare professionals. Representing the Fifteenth Circuit were **Chief Judge Peter D. Blanc, Judges Kathleen Kroll and Karen Martin, Magistrate Leonard Hanser and Gabriel Munoz**.

The statewide summits began in August 1997 and continued through 2004, while regional summits were held from 2004 through 2006. In 2007, DCF reinstated the statewide summit with more than 1,500 professionals in attendance.

COURT REPORTING & REALTIME

Coming to a Courtroom Near You....

The court reporting department is slowly changing the way criminal courts are covered.

The Fifteenth Judicial Circuit department consists of five reporters providing the official record for three courtrooms. Realtime technology coverage will now gradually be expanded to other criminal courtrooms.

Realtime technology allows court reporters to instantly translate their stenographic notes into English text, which is displayed simultaneously on computer monitors accessible to the judge, prosecution, defense, and clerk in the courtroom.

Realtime also assists those with hearing disabilities that do not use sign language.

For more information on the use of Realtime reporting, contact Susan Wiggins at (561) 355-6700.



(l-r) Court Reporters Phyllis Dames, Michelle Voce, Stella Beltran, Catherine Dore and Susan Wiggins in one of the courtrooms where Realtime reporting is now utilized.

FLORIDA DIGITAL COURT REPORTERS CONFERENCE

Rick Hussey, Court Operations Manager, served as moderator for the annual conference of the Florida Digital Court Reporters Association, held at the Orange County Courthouse in Orlando, FL on August 7, 2009.

Twelve Circuits and the Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) were represented at the conference. Mr. Hussey is one of the association's four founding members.

Circuit Court Judge Bob Leblanc addressed the group regarding the benefits of digital court reporting in the Ninth Circuit. The group discussed the processing of appellate orders and toured Orlando's digital court reporting offices. A panel discussion of the FL Supreme Court's recent decision on the release of electronic recordings was also held, attended by Laura Rush, OSCA General Counsel, Greg Youchuck, OSCA Chief of Court Operations and Sharon Buckingham, OSCA Senior Court Analyst.

TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

Noel Chessman, Court Technology Officer for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, attended the annual Court Technology Conference, hosted in Denver, CO. This County sponsored opportunity to test new technology applicable to the Court setting provides an invaluable venue for meeting vendors, researching new practices and planning for technology updates in the Circuit. The conference spanned Sept 21-24, 2009, inclusive.



Noel Chessman and Ken Cook, For the Record representative.

JUVENILE COURT

JUVENILES IN ADULT CRIMINAL COURT

On Thursday, August 20, 2009, **Juvenile Court Judge Ronald Alvarez** spoke to Adult Felony Court Judges and other Court Administration staff about juvenile offenders whose cases have been transferred to Adult Criminal Court. The purpose of this session was to provide the Adult Criminal Court Judges with alternative sentencing options for juveniles who have cases filed in the adult court.

Judge Alvarez began with an overview of the delinquency process and the juvenile justice system. The presentation included information on juvenile probation, the Delinquency Drug Court program and residential commitment programs. **Robert Pagano**, Department of Juvenile Justice Court Liaison, assisted in the presentation by providing detailed information on the residential commitment programs for juveniles. The presentation was followed by a question and answer session.

Attendees found the presentation very informative and it is hoped that other presentations will follow.

For additional information, please contact Cristy Altaro at (561) 355-6586.



Judge Ronald Alvarez speaks on juvenile court issues. Foreground: Robert Pagano, l-r: Michelle Spangenberg, Mary Quinlan



l-r: Judge Ronald Alvarez, Judge Amy Smith, Judge Jeffrey Colbath.

DRUG COURT RECEIVES FEDERAL GRANT

In August 2009, the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Palm Beach County Drug Court was awarded a Drug Court Discretionary Grant by the Office of Justice Programs.

This two-year federal grant will provide funding to expand the existing Drug Court program to include a track for co-occurring mental health issues. In so doing, 50 Drug Court participants with identified co-occurring disorders will receive both substance abuse and mental health treatment concurrently.

This additional mental health treatment will increase the likelihood of success for these participants, since it has been identified that individuals with co-occurring disorders fail to complete Drug Court at almost four times the rate of participants without identified mental illness.

The Drug Court Team looks forward to being able to offer a unified system of care for its participants with the help of this grant.

For more information on the Drug Court Program, please contact Dorrie Tyng at (561) 688-4493.

CRIMINAL COURT PROGRAM

MISDEMEANOR COMMITTEE

On June 30, 2009, stakeholders met to discuss the possibility of adding misdemeanor Violations of Probation and Failures to Appear to the docket at the Criminal Justice Complex on Gun Club Road. **Judge Sandra Bosso-Pardo**, Administrative Judge of County Criminal, led the meeting.

It was agreed that effective July 20, 2009, all preliminary Violations of Probation and Failures to Appear will be held at Gun Club. As demonstrated by the Felony Violation of Probation Program, this modification is expected to generate significant cost savings for Palm Beach County.



l-r: Judge Kathleen Kroll, Judge Ted Booras, Criminal Court Operations Manager Michelle Spangenberg.

FELONY DIVISION MEETING

On August 25, 2009, **Judge Jeffrey Colbath**, Administrative Judge of Circuit Criminal, and other stakeholders met to discuss the Felony Division. Topics included the criminal calendar, trial docket and assignment of capital cases, resulting in a revision to Administrative Order 4.502, Circuit Criminal Felony Reallocation.



l-r: **Judge Jeffrey Colbath**; **Doug Duncan**, Defense Bar; **Louis Tomeo**, **Tivi Parks & Beatrice Lovelace**, Clerk and Comptroller; **Cherry Grant & Barbara White**, Public Defender's Office, **Grey Tesh**, Defense Bar, **Captain Cecere**, Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and **Michelle Spangenberg**. Not pictured: **Lt. Milo**, Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, **Jill Richstone** and **Paul Zacks**, State Attorney's Office.

For more information, please contact Criminal Court Operations Manager Michelle Spangenberg at (561) 355-6396.

FELONY VIOLATION OF PROBATION PROGRAM

On February 9, 2009, **Judge Lucy Chernow Brown** formed a committee consisting of stakeholders involved in the Criminal Justice System. The Committee was tasked with reviewing current practices relating to Preliminary Violation of Probation (PVOP) hearings for in-custody defendants. On March 2, 2009, the committee met and determined that these hearings should be held at the Criminal Justice Complex on Gun Club Road. Further, the committee found that this would be a cost saving to Palm Beach County, as this will reduce the number of defendants transported to the Main Courthouse. This could also reduce the jail population if inmates are released pending a preliminary hearing. The pilot project commenced on March 16, 2009. Committee meetings occur on a regular basis to identify any necessary procedural amendments. A goal of this committee is to include misdemeanor cases.

JUSTICE PARIENTE VISITS TRIAL COURT LAW CLERKS

On July 9, 2009, the trial court law clerks and summer judicial interns had the privilege of meeting Florida Supreme Court **Justice Barbara Pariente**. Justice Pariente was visiting the courthouse to observe **Judge Ronald Alvarez'** delinquency drug court. Justice Pariente and Judge Alvarez joined the law clerks and interns for lunch and an informal discussion about future legal careers and the juvenile justice system.

After lunch Justice Pariente observed Judge Alvarez' court along with interns **Veronica Limia** and **Nicole Grassi**.



Justice Barbara Pariente and Veronica Limia



l-r: Veronica Limia, Chase Wiley, Wesley Mathieu, Michael Quintero, Jennifer Printz, Esq., Cristina DeCelestino, Esq., Lily Chang, Esq., Adelina Ruiz Baez, Esq., Jennifer Chamagua, Esq., Justice Barbara Pariente, General Counsel Amy Borman, Judge Ronald Alvarez, Nicole Grassi, James Maynor, Melissa Cohen, Mallory Keyser and Raul Novoa. (hidden in picture: Stewart Saalfield, Aaron Draizin, Devon Bennett-Ward, Esq. and Lauren White).

FORECLOSURES

Through the Foreclosure Case Management Summer Foreclosure Conference (Administrative Order 3.306), the judicial interns and trial court law clerks met with over 500 individuals facing foreclosure to explain options available to them under the circuit's Administrative Order 3.305.

With the assistance of representatives from the **Palm Beach County Legal Aid Society** and the **Clerk and Comptroller's Self Service Center**, these individuals were provided with additional resources to help them navigate the foreclosure process. The program received positive feedback from those who attended the conferences.



Summer judicial interns Chase Wiley (l) and Michael Quintero (r) assist at a Foreclosure Case Management Conference.

JUDICIAL INTERNS

The second half of the summer judicial intern program included ride-a-longs with the West Palm Beach Police Department, a tour of the Juvenile Assessment Center, a tour of the Clerk and Comptroller's Office, attendance at Baker Act and Marchman Act hearings, lunch with attorneys from the Offices of the State Attorney and Public Defender, as well as a 'Lunch and Learn' with the circuit and county court criminal judges.

Through the internship, the law students gained valuable insight into the legal profession, improved their research and writing skills, and made friendships that will last a lifetime.

For more information about the Judicial Intern Program, please contact General Counsel Amy Borman at (561) 355-2431.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION EVENT

The annual employee recognition reception was held on September 15, 2009, at the Main Judicial Center. In her welcome address, **Trial Court Administrator Barbara Dawicke** commended staff for their dedication to serving the public. **Chief Judge Peter D. Blanc** thanked them for their continuous hard work and relayed praise received from court visitors.

Fall-themed decorations greeted the staff, who were treated to specialty coffees and refreshments prior to honoring those among them who had achieved various milestones in length of service with the State Courts System. Thanks go to **Judge Kathleen Kroll, Barbara Dawicke, Krista Garber, Mary Ellen Feinberg and Letitia Warren** for their efforts in arranging the event.



left:
Ruth Ann
Kravetz and
Judy Lane



right: Trial Court
Administrator
Barbara Dawicke
and June Leone



left: James Montada,
Omar Rodriguez,
Anthony Gregory,
Crystal Dixon, Rosa Diaz.



right:
Chief Judge
Peter Blanc



right:
Debra Oats-Ducram,
Krista Garber



left: Jill Mitchell,
Barbara Dawicke,
Krista Garber

RETIRED LAW LIBRARY EMPLOYEE HONORED BY SOUTH COUNTY BAR

Pat Judge-Delatorre retired in July, 2009, after a long career in the South County Courthouse Law Library. Pat was a tireless and dedicated employee, serving the citizens and the attorneys of South County for almost twenty years.

Her dedication was recognized by the **South County Bar Association** when they presented her with a plaque at the recent South County Courthouse Expansion ribbon cutting ceremony.



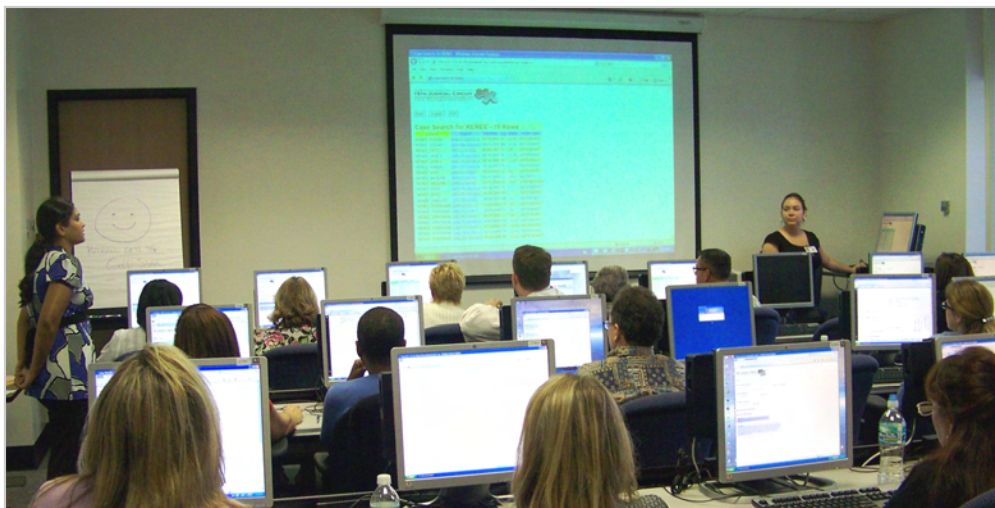
TRAINING

CASE MANAGERS ATTEND TRAINING ON THE “FRED” SYSTEM

The Court Technology Departments of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit and the Eighth Judicial Circuit (Gainesville) have collaborated on the development and implementation of a web-based, user-friendly, case management system called the Integrated Case Management (ICM) system.

The system, developed by **Fred Buhl**, Court Technology Officer in the Eighth Circuit, pulls the official court data from Banner and places a copy of the official data into divisional reports with links that allow the user to “drill down” to each case. With the click of a button, the system permits easy access to all details related to each case including the attorneys, docket, and any imaged documents, replacing the current need to access multiple screens to obtain case information.

On September 18, 2009, the case managers were trained on the “Fred” system, as it has become known by its users. The intent is to allow the case managers to review the data and bring any technology-related issues to the attention of Court Technology prior to the system being released to the judiciary, judicial assistants, and specific court employees. Several of the case managers have worked with the system for over a year and **Judge John Phillips** is using the system to access case information in his paperless division. The case managers report that the “Fred” system improves efficiency due to the speed with which one can access a case and the simplicity of the links to the cases. Court Administration intends to deploy the system in early 2010.



Paula Carvajal, Court Program Specialist II, demonstrates the ICM system to case managers and other court staff.

MICROSOFT EXCEL TRAINING

Terry Stanley, CJIS/CVIS Project Coordinator, conducts one of a series of Microsoft Excel 2007 training classes held for court staff throughout September, 2009.



OPEN ENROLLMENT

The Open Enrollment period for State employees began on September 14, 2009, with individual information packages being mailed to employees' homes in early September.

To assist staff in making benefit selections, **Krista Garber** and **Letitia Warren** held a series of information sessions and were available to answer questions on the extensive selection of employee benefits available to employees. The schedule for these one-hour presentations was:

- Sept 18: noon Judicial Dining Room (Judges)
- Sept 22: noon Judicial Dining Room (All staff)
- Sept 23: 2:30 PM North County
- Sept 24: 3:00 PM Judicial Dining Room (All staff)
- Sept 29: 3:30PM Judicial Dining Room (Judges)
- Sept 30: 2:30 PM Gun Club
- Oct 1: 3:00 PM South County

Open enrollment concludes on Friday, October 9, 2009, with all benefit selections becoming effective on January 1, 2010. Employees who wish to make changes online can do so by visiting <https://PeopleFirst.MyFlorida.com>.



Personnel Management Analyst **Letitia Warren** (l) and Chief Deputy Court Administrator **Krista Garber** (r) respond to staff questions during a state Open Enrollment presentation.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Now that school is back in session, health experts predict an increase in the incidence of the H1N1 virus.

The Circuit has a comprehensive plan designed to keep the courts open in the event of widespread transmission of the virus.

Prevention remains the best approach. All employees are reminded to wash hands carefully, keep work surfaces clean, and to stay home at the sudden onset of fever, cough and sore throat. Contact your doctor promptly. The infectious period passes 24 hours after a fever breaks.

For more information on pandemics and other emergency preparations, please contact Rick Hussey at (561) 355-3745.

The Office of the State Courts Administrator has produced an informative video on influenza and pandemic preparedness. To view this video, go to: www.flcourts.org/gen_public/emergency/pandemic.shtml. This webpage also contains links to documents entitled: "Courts' Pandemic Staffing Guide," the "Pandemic Influenza Benchguide" and "Pandemic Influenza Best Practices."

Other updated information on the H1N1 virus is available at: www.PandemicFlu.gov and at www.CDC.gov.

Brochures were recently distributed to all staff outlining steps for preventing the spread of the flu virus and how to prepare a supply kit for treating family members who become ill.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

STEWART SAALFIELD

A recent Political Science graduate from Ohio Wesleyan, Stewart volunteered full-time with Court Administration throughout the summer.



Instrumental in helping to launch the Violation of Probation (VOP) program, he also assisted with foreclosure case management conferences and juvenile court projects.

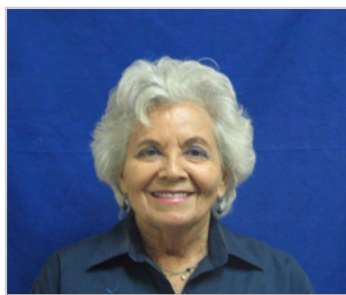
DANNEILE DAVIS

Currently a senior at Suncoast High School, Danneile volunteers each Friday afternoon for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit. She has assisted with special projects for Unified Family Court and for the American with Disabilities program. Danneile hopes to pursue a legal career and is currently active in debate tournaments.



CYNTHIA ELLOWITZ

Upon retiring from Facilities Management, Palm Beach County, Cynthia volunteered at the Delray Beach Courthouse. Reliable and responsible, she has been a volunteer for over ten years and is the lead volunteer for our information clerks.



JACK SOLOMAN

A long-time volunteer with the South County Guardianship Visitation Program, Jack works closely with the probate judge and case manager to ensure that wards of the court, under a court-ordered guardianship program, are receiving adequate care.



We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. --Winston Churchill

GEORGE KASTRENAKES

George grew up in Palm Beach County and graduated from Suncoast High School. In the Fall, he will be a Senior at the University of North Carolina majoring in History, Journalism and Mass Communication, and hopes to attend Law School in New York City after graduation. His hobbies include playing electric guitar and drums, watching movies and documentaries, and attending sporting events.



ERICA NAJMABADI

A native of Palm Beach County, Erica graduated from Cardinal Gibbons High School in Fort Lauderdale. In the Fall, she will be a Junior at the University of Florida, majoring in Accounting. Her ultimate goal is to attend Law School. She enjoys traveling, spending time with family, and rock climbing.



HR HUDDLE

The Fifteenth Judicial Circuit welcomed three new employees:

Lynda Salvetti joined Court Technology as the Circuit's first Senior Programmer on July 20, 2009. Lynda is based in the South County Courthouse.

Mona Driscoll was selected as Judicial Assistant to Judge Joseph Marx, joining him upon his elevation to Circuit Judge on August 26, 2009.

On August 24, 2009, **Laura Asteris** began her duties as Judicial Assistant to County Court Judge Debra Stephens.

Congratulations to **Noel Chessman**, who was promoted to the position of Court Technology Officer effective July 20, 2009. Noel was the department's Systems Administrator for eight years.

Jakobie Alexander is commended for attaining his Certified Internet Webmaster (CIW) designation on July 30, 2009.

Jakobie qualified for a scholarship to complete his training at PC Professor, which involved an intensive study in web fundamentals, XHTML coding, graphic design through Adobe Photoshop, and web animation using Adobe Flash.

The Criminal Justice Commission awarded three positions to Court Administration through its Byrne Grant program. The one-year positions of Court Analyst and County Court (Misdemeanor) Case Manager will be available in Fall 2009, while a Case Manager for Juvenile Court will be added in 2010.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS

For updates to the latest Administrative Orders (AO's) for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, please see our website at: <http://15thcircuit.co.palm-beach.fl.us/web/guest/ao>.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October

- 1 Substance Abuse Facility Tour
- 2 Judicial Webcast on Tenants' Rights in Foreclosure
- 9 State Open Enrollment ends
- 12 Columbus Day Training
- 13 Judicial Webcast "Ethics in Everyday Court"
- 15 Conflict Resolution Day
- 16 Judge Kastrenakes' Investiture
- 20 County Open Enrollment begins
- 22 Florida Trial Court Staff Attorney Association Annual Conference
- 24 American Association of Electronic Recording and Transcriptionist certification testing at Main Judicial Center
- 28 Judicial Webcast "E-Discovery: The Technology"

November

- 7 County Open Enrollment ends
- 18 Judicial Webcast "E-Discovery: The Players"
- 20 National Adoption Day

December

- 16 Judicial Webcast: "E-Discovery: The Rules"

COURT HOLIDAYS OCTOBER - DECEMBER

November

- 11 Veterans Day
- 26 - 27 Thanksgiving

December

- 24 - 25 Christmas

The Circuit Courier

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