

Circuit Courier

July-September 2014

Vol. 2014-3

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

Judge Ronald Alvarez Retires

Dependency Summit

Veterans' Court

And more.....



On the Cover:
Judge Ronald
Alvarez and
Therapy Dogs
Photo: Linda Sims

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The Conference of Circuit Court Judges was held August 5-8 in Daytona Beach. The annual conference provides an opportunity for Florida's Circuit Judges to receive continuing education and make recommendations to the legislature regarding laws of the state.

At the August Conference meeting, Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath was sworn in as the Conference Chair. The Chair of the Conference is responsible for appointing judges to the Conference subcommittees, organizing meetings to discuss statewide issues, and along with the subcommittees, creating the legislative agenda for the Circuit Judges.



Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath

Pursuant to Florida Statutes 26.55, the Conference Members must meet regularly to:

- Consider and make recommendations concerning the betterment of the judicial system of the state and its various parts;
- Consider and make recommendations concerning the improvement of rules and methods of procedure and practice in the several courts; and
- Report to the Supreme Court such findings and recommendations as the conference may have with reference thereto.

For more information on the Florida Conference of Circuit Court Judges please visit the website at: <http://www.flcircuitconference.com/index.htm>

JUDGE RONALD ALVAREZ RETIRES

The **Hon. Ronald Alvarez**, Circuit Judge, retired September 30, 2014, after serving the citizens of Palm Beach County for twenty-one years. The majority of his time on the bench was spent in the Juvenile division. Judge Alvarez, a Gary Indiana native, was appointed to Circuit Court in 1993 after obtaining his bachelor's degree from Indiana University and his Juris Doctor from the Indiana University School of Law, and after service in the United States Army. Also previous to his judgeship, he had his own law practice in West Palm Beach.

Judge Alvarez's passion was helping the youth that appeared before him in his courtroom and this dedication and concern merited him with several awards. In 2000, the Palm Beach Post recognized Judge Alvarez and his wife, Elaine, who also shares a passion for helping youth, as two of the "100 People Who Make A Difference For Palm Beach County. In 2001, he was the sole jurist selected to participate in the United States Surgeon General's Report on Youth Violence. He was honored with 'Jurist of The Year' several times and recognized in 2011 with the prestigious William E. Gladstone Award for Judicial Leadership and Service to Children for the State of Florida. Most recently, he was awarded the Champion of Children's Award by Florida's Children First.

Judge Alvarez also piloted and championed several, innovative court programs. For six years he presided over Delinquency Drug Court after leading the design and implementation of the program in the years prior. In that program, youth with a history of substance abuse work with treatment providers to develop treatment plans, receive counseling, and have regular court hearings to monitor their progress. Additionally, in March 2012, Judge Alvarez introduced the use of Therapy dogs into the juvenile courtrooms.

Under this program, trained service dogs are introduced to children who are involved in a dependency case. The presence of the dogs, and the children's interaction with the dogs has a calming effect on the children who are present because of a court hearing. The program, strongly supported by Judge Alvarez, proved to be very successful.

The awards and successful programs aimed at helping the youth are valued by Judge Alvarez, but most important to him are the children who appeared before him. Many of those children benefitted from Judge Alvarez's concern and care. He regularly stayed in touch with the children, helping to guide them into a successful adulthood.

On one of his final days in Court, Judge Alvarez allowed some Boy Scouts into his courtroom to observe juvenile court. One of the boys inquired about the near empty bookshelves outside of the courtroom. Judge Alvarez explained that the books were donated and available (for free) to any child who came to Court. Upon hearing from Judge Alvarez that the shelves were almost empty because the books are given away to children in court, the Boy Scout was motivated to fill the shelves. He made collecting books for court a Troop project. On September 24th, the Boy Scouts returned to see Judge Alvarez and proudly presented him with more than ten large boxes of books for the Juvenile division children.



JUDGE ROBIN ROSENBERG-FEDERAL JUDGE

On July 22, 2014, **Judge Robin Rosenberg** was unanimously confirmed by the U.S. senate as a Federal Judge of the Southern District of Florida.

Judge Rosenberg was elected to the Circuit Court in 2007 and again in 2012. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1983 from Princeton University and a Master of Arts degree and Juris Doctor in 1989 from Duke University.

She began her legal career as a law clerk to Judge James C. Paine of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida from 1989 to 1990. She served as a Trial Attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice from 1990 to 1994. While on leave from that position, she worked at a non-profit organization in the Czech Republic from 1993 to 1994. She was an associate at the law firm of Foley & Lardner from 1994 to 1995. She served as an Assistant City Attorney for the City of West Palm Beach, Florida, from 1995 to 1997. She was a partner at Holland & Knight LLP, from 1997 to 1999. She served as Vice President and General Counsel at the Slim Fast Foods Company from 1999 to 2001. She was a partner at the law firm of Rosenberg & McAuliffe, PL, from 2001 to 2006, and concurrently managed ARC Mediation from 2002 to 2006.



Judge Robin Rosenberg

NEWLY ELECTED JUDGE SAMANTHA SCHOSBERG FEUER

Samantha Schosberg Feuer was elected Circuit Court Judge for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit for a term starting January 2015, due to a vacancy created by the retirement of the Hon. Sandra McSorley.

Most recently, Ms. Feuer was of counsel with Akerman LLP in the Labor and Employment and Litigation Practice Group in West Palm Beach. She previously worked for the Office of the Florida Attorney General where she served as the Chief of the South Florida Bureau, Consumer Protection Unit. She also served as an Assistant State Attorney in both West Palm Beach and Miami.

Ms. Feuer is past president of the Florida Association of Women Lawyers and the recipient of the 2013 Annual Supreme Court Justice Barbara Pariente Award. She is also co-founder of the Women's Foundation of Palm Beach County and former co-chair of the Diversity Sub-Committee for the Palm Beach County Bar Association. She received her Juris Doctor from the University of Florida Levin College of Law and her Bachelor of Arts from Tufts University.



Samantha Schosberg Feuer

NEWLY ELECTED JUDGE JAIMIE GOODMAN

Jaimie Goodman was elected Circuit Court Judge for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit for a term starting January 2015 due to a vacancy created by the retirement of the Hon. Lucy Chernow Brown.

Most recently, Mr. Goodman was in private practice at his own law firm in West Palm Beach. He previously worked for a Birmingham, Michigan, law firm representing GM and other Fortune 500 companies. He also served as in-house counsel at General Motors.

Mr. Goodman has served as Legislative Director with the League of Women Voters of Palm Beach County. He has also served on the Executive Trustee Council of the Northern Palm Beach County Chamber of Commerce. He received his Juris Doctor from Cornell University Law School and his Bachelor of Arts from Cornell University.



Jaimie Goodman

NEWLY ELECTED JUDGE JESSICA TICKTIN

Jessica Ticktin was elected Circuit Court Judge for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit for a term starting January 2015.

Most recently, Ms. Ticktin was a partner with the Ticktin Law Group in Deerfield Beach. She previously worked as an Attorney for the Law Office of Matthew Nugent and as an Associate Attorney with the Law Office of Mark Maynor.

Ms. Ticktin has served as Co-Chair of the Membership Committee for the South Palm Beach County Bar Association. She received her Juris Doctor from the Stetson University College of Law and her Bachelor of Science from Florida State University.

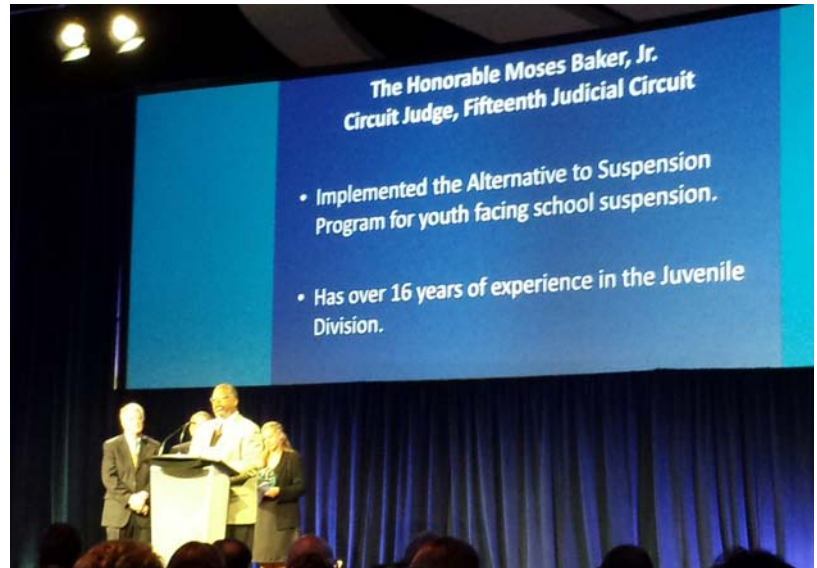


Jessica Ticktin

JUDGE MOSES BAKER RECEIVES GLADSTONE AWARD

Please join us in congratulating the **Honorable Moses Baker** for his nomination and selection as this year's recipient of the William E. Gladstone Award.

Judge Baker was presented the award September 4, 2014 at the Statewide Dependency Court Improvement Summit in Orlando, Florida. The Gladstone Award recognizes the important contributions made by Judges and Magistrates in the courts serving dependent children and their families. The award, first presented in 1998 to Judge William E. Gladstone, by then Florida Supreme Court Chief Justice, Major Harding, was given to Judge Gladstone, for his lifelong advocacy for the dignity of children.



Dependency Summit

The Florida Department of Children and Families hosted their annual child protection summit September 3-5, at the World Center Marriott in Orlando. The event is 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 and case management staff as well as judges, general magistrates, court personnel, attorneys, law enforcement, medical and mental health providers and child advocates joined together to benefit from increased coordination, communication and creativity among their fields.

The Fifteenth Circuit was well represented, including the following individuals: **Judge Moses Baker, Judge Kathleen Kroll, Judge James Martz, Judge Rosemarie Scher, Magistrate Judette Fanelli, Cristy Altaro, Mary Quinlan, Kelly Gould and Jacquie Marshburn.** The statewide summit offered two days of informative and interactive workshops as well as a number of featured speakers and plenary sessions.



L-r: Kelly Gould, Judge Kroll, Judge Baker, Mary Quinlan, Judge Martz, Cristy Altaro, Jacquie Marshburn

STATE COURTS ADMINISTRATOR VISITS THE CIRCUIT

At the invitation of the Chief Judge and Court Administrator, the Circuit hosted the (new) State Courts Administrator, P.K. Jameson, and her senior staff for a half-day meeting on September 8th. The meeting was the result of a spinoff of an earlier technology meeting held by Ms. Jameson and attended by Florida's Trial Court Administrators and Court Technology Officers. The goal of the Fifteenth Circuit's meeting was to generate ideas with the Office of the State Courts Administrator ("OSCA") staff related to the implementation of statewide technology which could assist the "have not" Circuits with their technology needs. Starting off the meeting, the Court Administrator, Barbara Dawicke, provided information on the history of the Fifteenth Circuit's technology and staff, and facilitated the discussion related to the creation of a statewide technology support system. Court Technology Officer, Noel Chessman, and Director of Case Management, Michelle Spangenberg, presented a PowerPoint presentation which further detailed the Circuit's technological advances such as the judicial viewer and the associated applications. Programmer Rich Haney was present to address specific programming questions. The end result was a constructive discussion on the direction needed to technologically support the Florida's Courts with the Fifteenth Circuit offering to assist where possible.



L-r: Blan Teagle, Kris Slayden, Greg Youchock, Chris Blakeslee, Noel Chessman, Eric Maclure, Barbara Dawicke, Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath, P.K. Jameson, Michelle, Patty Harris, Jessie McMillan, Rich Haney

Mediation Conference

The 22nd Annual Conference for Mediators took place August 15-16, 2014 in Orlando, Florida. Alternative Dispute Resolution Director Bill Moreno, Mediators Kelly Henderson and Cristina Maldonado, and Mediation Services Coordinator Walter Colbath, attended from our Circuit. Supreme Court Justice Peggy Quince addressed the attendees, a statewide group which included judges, attorneys, and other professionals.



Supreme Court Justice Peggy Quince

AROUND THE CIRCUIT

Justice Pariente visits the Circuit for Constitution Week

Florida Supreme Court Justice, Barbara Pariente, addressed the jury pool on September 15, 2014, in the Main Courthouse. The Justice spoke to the jurors about the legal system and the citizens' role in the system which in turn supports our democracy. **Judge James Martz**, representing the Circuit for Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath, spoke to the jurors about fairness being one of the core components of our justice system. Sharon Bock, Clerk and Comptroller also thanked the jurors for their service. She then presented Justice Pariente with an American flag which had previous flown in front of the Courthouse.



Judge James Martz



Clerk and Comptroller Sharon Bock presents Justice Pariente with an American flag



Justice Barbara Pariente presents a video of symbols of American democracy including the Lincoln Memorial

Welcome Magistrate Sarah Willis

Ms. Sarah Willis was selected as a Magistrate for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit and began her duties on September 2, 2014. She brings to the position extensive experience as an attorney in the West Palm Beach area. She grew up in Gainesville, Florida and received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Florida Atlantic University and her Juris Doctorate from Florida State University of Law.

Most recently, Ms. Willis has been employed as an Associate Attorney with Rudolph and Associates, LLP. Previous to that position she worked as an Assistant Statewide Prosecutor with the Florida Attorney General and from 2006-2011 as an Assistant State Attorney in the Fifteenth Circuit.

Ms. Willis presides over Department of Revenue Hearings.



Magistrate Sarah Willis

Welcome to Civil Traffic Hearing Officer Elliot Brooks

Civil Traffic Hearing Officers preside over civil traffic infractions. In the Fifteenth Circuit there are sixteen Civil Traffic Hearing Officers. The Chief Judge appoints experienced attorneys on a contractual basis to serve as traffic hearing officers. The attorneys selected to serve as Hearing Officers have each received intensive training which allows them to preside over all traffic cases except those mandated by law to be heard by a County Court Judge.



Elliot Brooks

AROUND THE CIRCUIT

National Association for Court Managers

The National Association for Court Management (“NACM”), in partnership with the National Conference of Metropolitan Courts, hosted its annual conference, July 13-17, 2014 in Scottsdale, Arizona. The theme of this year’s conference was “Embracing the Courts of the Future: Blueprint for Action.” The Administrative Office of the Courts and the Chief Judge sent a team of court staff: Noel Chessman, Court Technology Officer; Kelly Gould, Juvenile Case Manager; Rhoda Jones, Purchasing Manager; Tara Krantz, Family Court Director; Melissa Sotillo, Court Reporting Director; and Michelle Spangenberg, Director of Case Management.

The Court team attended various educational workshops over the four day conference. All of the workshops related to programs or projects that improved a specific court or court procedure or topics relevant to the Court setting. For example, workshops included: Policy in Technology Projects; The Future of Courtroom Video-conferencing; Sovereign Citizens; Court Leadership, Judge-Executive, teamwork in times of stress; The next generation courts-planning for the future; Diagnosing and improving the management of DUI caseloads in Scottsdale; and Collaborative leadership: considerations for transitioning to mandatory electronic filing. The team reported that in addition to the valuable sessions, time spent networking and sharing ideas with their counterparts was truly beneficial.

Michelle Spangenberg, Director of Case Management was asked by the Conference to present a poster on differentiated case management of foreclosure cases as part of the Court-2-Court presentations. Michelle’s presentation explained how a simple differentiated case management plan, created by then Chief Judge Peter Blanc, and outlined in Administrative Order number 3.312, resulted in a reduction of the foreclosure caseload by 7,940 cases. Additionally, because of the differentiated procedure, case management staffing was reduced, freeing up staff to better assist the judges in court. She noted that, ultimately, by embracing the simple plan, efficiencies were gained and taxpayers were spared an estimated \$91,933.00.



L-r: Rhoda Jones, Melissa Sotillo, Michelle Spangenberg, Tara Kranz, Noel Chessman

IN THE COMMUNITY

Veterans' Court

The city of West Palm Beach's Mandel Library will host an exhibit titled, "Start Spangled Heroes" from October 10-December 7, 2014. The Fifteenth Judicial Circuit's Veterans' Court will participate in the event. The Star Spangled Heroes event recognizes and honors local Veterans for their service and highlights the contributions of the United States armed services.



Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath (seated third from left) and Judge Ted Booras (seated third from right) with the Veterans' Court team & mentors.



Judge Ted Booras and Louis Kurtz



Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath

Delinquency Drug Court Graduation

At a graduation ceremony on August 20, 2014, **Judge Ronald Alvarez** honored a graduate who successfully completed the requirements of the Delinquency Drug Court Program. Participants, family members, advocates, Drug Court Team members, stakeholders and community members were present to recognize the participant's accomplishment. Judge Alvarez provided the Court attendees with an overview of the graduate's life history and presented the graduate with a certificate of completion.

Delinquency Drug Court targets youth who are on probation and who have committed drug-related offenses and/or have a history of substance abuse. The goal of the court is to reduce juvenile crime and drug use. Success requires the participant and the participant's family to participate in all steps of the program.



Judge Ronald Alvarez with graduate.

Drug Court Graduation

At a Drug Court graduation on August 28, 2014, **Judge Caroline Shepherd** honored the graduates who had fulfilled the requirements for graduation from the program.

The Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Adult Drug Court, led by Judge Shepherd and managed by Dorrie Tyng, has provided an irreplaceable service to Palm Beach County for 14 years. On average, after three years, the recidivism rate of the graduates is only 10% meaning that the majority of the graduates are able to remain drug or alcohol free as a result of participating in the program.



Top right: Judge Caroline Shepherd conducts the graduation in her courtroom

Bottom right: Judge Shepherd congratulates a graduate

TRIAL COURT LAW CLERKS

The Trial Court Law Clerks had a busy summer working with the summer interns and welcoming new law clerks. In July, the attorneys and interns visited Place of Hope, observed oral arguments at the Fourth District Court of Appeal, toured the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Crime Lab and 911 Call Center and viewed an autopsy. The law clerks also met with Justice Barbara Pariente and a visiting attorney from Tanzania. In September the Circuit welcomed three new law clerks, Margaret Greco, Thomas Collery and Joshua Dockus.



L-r: Amy Borman, Thomas Collery, Christine Gardner, Margaret Greco, Rachel Belcher, Michelle Logan, Justice Barbara Pariente, Comfort Lazier, Sean Fahey, Madhavi Menon and Gabrielle Jackson.

Ms. Margaret Greco is from Tampa, Florida, and obtained her Bachelor of Science, cum laude, in Journalism from the University of Florida. Ms. Greco then attended and graduated from Emory University School of Law, Atlanta Georgia. At Emory, she was involved with the Emory Public Interest Committee, Street Law and Student Legal Services. Margaret previously interned for District Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachevich, Magistrate Judge Elizabeth A. Jenkins of the Middle District of Florida and the Children's Law Center in Brooklyn, New York. Margaret was the Notes and Comments Editor for the *Emory Law Journal*, and her Note, *Take a Step Back: The Constitutionality of Strict Funeral-Picketing Regulations After Snyder v. Phelps* is published in the Boston University Public Interest Law Journal 23 B.U. Pub. Int. L.J. 151 (Winter 2014).



Margaret Greco

Mr. Thomas Collery is from Sunrise, Florida and attended the University of Central Florida where he obtained his Bachelor of Arts, *summa cum laude*, in Anthropology with a minor in Psychology. Collery attended and graduated from George Washington University Law School, Washington, D.C. At George Washington he was the Senior Notes Editor for the *Public Contract Law Journal* and was an Executive Member of the Moot Court Board. Additionally, Mr. Collery won the third best overall competitor in the 2012-2013 Van Vleck Constitutional Law Moot Court competition. While in college and during law school, Mr. Collery interned with with the Broward County Public Defender's Office, the Miami-Dade County State Attorney's Office, the U.S. General Services Administration, Office of General Counsel, and the Civilian Board of Contract Appeals in Washington, D.C.



Thomas Collery

Mr. Joshua Dockus relocated from Chicago where he has worked as an associate for the law firm of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom. Josh is from Venice, Florida and attended the University of Florida where he received his Bachelor of Arts, *Cum Laude*, in English with a minor in History. Josh attended the University of Michigan Law School graduating *magna cum laude* in 2013. While at Michigan, Josh was part of the Community Economic Development Clinic representing non-profit community development organizations. Josh clerked at the Legal Services of South Central Michigan working on landlord-tenant, foreclosure and family law issues and also clerked at the law firm of Dudley and Panek working on Social Security Act appeals.



Joshua Dockus

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Court Administration hosted two Volunteer Appreciation Day events – one at the Main Judicial Complex on August 19th and one at the South County Courthouse on August 20th. The theme for the Volunteer Appreciation Day events was “Volunteers Have a Heart of Gold!”

Court Administration presented each Volunteer with a token of appreciation for their service. As part of the thank you ceremony, the Volunteers were provided a catered brunch and a presentation from a member of the "Seniors vs. Crime Project." The Florida Attorney General's Office sponsors the Seniors vs. Crime project. It is a volunteer operated program created to help people with contract, warranty, and billing disputes as well as concerns related to possible investment and/or Medicare/Medicaid fraud.



Volunteers were presented with certificates and served breakfast.

Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath thanks the volunteers at the Main Courthouse.



Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath thanks the volunteers at the South County Courthouse.

AROUND THE CIRCUIT

Excellence Awards

Congratulations to those persons nominated for the Judicial Assistant (JA) Recognition Award for the second quarter of 2014: Susan Campbell, Diana Grant, Joli Katz, Judith Lane, Harriet Merlin, Marie Murphy, Amy Tracy, Jessica Wolfkill.

Congratulations, also, to those persons nominated for the Court Administration employee of the second quarter of 2014: Natasha Harris, Benjamin Kennard, Laura Lavoie, Jacquie Marshburn, Sharon Royal.

On August 21, a ceremony was held to announce the winners for the second quarter of 2014. Harriet Merlin, Judicial Assistant to Judge Amy Smith was named Judicial Assistant of the quarter ending June 2014. Laura Lavoie was named as the Court Employee of the quarter for the same quarter. The winning Judicial Assistant and Court Staff person received a plaque, a paid Administrative leave day, a photo in the newsletter, and four weeks of parking in the Judicial parking garage.



Judge John Phillips (right) congratulates Harriet Merlin



Judge John Phillips (right) congratulates Laura Lavoie

Law Library Services

Email Service/Fax Service

Copy Machines

CLE CD Rentals

Westlaw

Stamped Envelopes, Blank Orders

TV/DVD/Elmo rental

Military Employment Verification

Law Library Staff will do an online search and print a document to show if a person is currently on active duty.

\$5 service charge

Call 561 355-2928

WELCOME:

The Fifteenth Judicial Circuit welcomes the following new employees:

Ariel Bozeman	Foreclosure Case Manager
Thomas Collery	Trial Court Law Clerk
Sue Ling Curtis	Front Desk Receptionist
Margaret Greco	Trial Court Law Clerk
Sarah Willis	Magistrate

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS

Administrative Orders amended July 1—September 30, 2014:

10.403–7/14	IN RE: TRAFFIC INFRACTION MOTIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE
10.102–8/14*	IN RE: INACTIVE TRAFFIC CRIMINAL
4.605–8/14*	IN RE: INACTIVE MISDEMEANOR CASES
14.12.301–8/14	IN RE: ORDER TEMPORARILY ASSIGNING THE HONORABLE EDWARD GARRISON AS AN ACTING CIRCUIT JUDGE
11.203–9/14*	IN RE: APPOINTMENT OF MAGISTRATES
5.306–9/14	IN RE: FAMILY CONNECTION, SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAM
5.505–9/14	IN RE: ESTABLISHMENT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCES "FT" AND "FV"
5.21–9/14	IN RE: ORDER TO ATTEND PARENTING CLASS, ETC

For updates to the latest Administrative Orders (AO's) for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, please see our website at:

<http://15thcircuit.com/adminorders>

UPCOMING EVENTS

November

11/14-25 Thanks For Giving Food Drive

December

12/10 Fifteenth Circuit Judges' Farewell to Judges Alvarez, Fine, Lewis, McCarthy, Rosenberg and Magistrate Weaver

12/12 Staff Holiday Luncheon

12/19 Judicial Assistant Holiday Luncheon

COURT HOLIDAYS

November

11/10 Veterans' Day

11/27-28 Thanksgiving

December

12/25-26 Christmas

