



Circuit Courier

April-June 2015
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NEWS BULLETIN OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL
CIRCUIT



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The **Hon. Stephen A. Rapp**, Circuit Judge, retired April 30, 2015, after serving the citizens of Palm Beach County for twenty-seven years. Judge Rapp, originally from Detroit Michigan, was appointed to the Circuit Court in 1987 by Governor Bob Martinez.



Prior to his appointment, he served as an Assistant County Solicitor and then an Assistant State Attorney. In 1973, he joined the law firm Gunster, Yoakley, Criser, & Stewart, P.A. where he became a partner in 1978. He obtained his Bachelor's degree from Loyola University-New Orleans and his Juris Doctor from the University of Florida College of Law in 1971.

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JUDGE SANDRA MCSORLEY
RETIRES

The **Hon. Sandra K. McSorley**, Circuit Judge, retired on January 5, 2015, after serving the citizens of Palm Beach County for twenty-five years. Judge McSorley, a Dearborn Heights, Michigan native, was appointed to the Circuit Court in January 2000 by Governor Jeb Bush. She also served as a Palm Beach County Court Judge.



Judge McSorley obtained her Bachelor's degree and Juris Doctor from Wayne State University. Upon graduation, she worked as state prosecutor in Michigan and an Assistant State Attorney in Florida for ten years. Also, she was an assistant U.S. Attorney for two and a half years and in private practice for one and a half years.

LAW WEEK AT THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

In May 2015, the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit participated in the Palm Beach County Bar Association's Law Week by hosting the "Shadow a Judge" program. The program allows high school students an opportunity to interact with the court system and individuals within the legal field. This year's participants were from King's Academy, Palm Beach Lakes, Lake Worth, and Inlet Grove High Schools.



Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath welcomes the students.

Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath welcomed the student attendees and provided information on the Florida Court system. Panel discussions were held with Circuit Judges James Martz & Cheryl Caracuzzo, and Magistrate Sara Alijewicz. Also sitting on the panel was attorney Jason Siegel.



L to r: Judge Cheryl Caracuzzo, Judge James Martz , and Jason Siegel. Esq. on the panel during the lunch discussion.

The students were provided a tour of the courthouse which included an observation of court events. On the tour students were able to see the offices of the Clerk of Court, the jury office, and the law library. Bill Moreno, Alternative Dispute Resolution Director held a mock mediation for the students.



Chief of Personnel Services Tammy Anton introduces the lunch discussion panel

Law Week ADR Presentation

The Fifteenth Circuit’s Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Office hosted high school students during Law Week and provide an extensive overview of the mediation process. ADR Director, Bill Moreno and Mediation Services Coordinator Walter Colbath spearheaded the ADR presentation. In addition to speaking to the students about the mediation processes, the history of mediation in Florida, and the services that the ADR Office provides, the court partners present described their involvement and experience with the mediation process.

The invited speakers included Michelle Canaday, Kathleen Clendining, James Williams, Brian McDonnell, and Andrew Feigenbaum. Staff mediators Cristina Maldonado, Lourdes Castillo, and Kelly Henderson described the family mediation processes to the students. After the discussion, the students were given the opportunity to participate in a mock mediation. Volunteer County Court Mediators Bob Follick and Paul Kashden acted as the mediators during the mock mediation.



Left: Volunteer County Court mediator Bob Follick serves as the mediator in a mock mediation with students from Inlet Grove High School.



Right: ADR Director Bill Moreno discusses Mediation with the students.



Left: Walter Colbath provides an overview of the mediation process.

INVESTITURE OF JUDGE HOWARD K. COATES

Judge Howard K. Coates, Jr. was appointed to the Circuit Court by Governor Rick Scott on December 23, 2014, filling a vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Timothy McCarthy.

Prior to his judicial appointment, Judge Coates was a member of McDonald Hopkins, LLC since 2009. Previously, he practiced at the Coates Law Firm from 2004-2009. He began his legal career in 1986 with King & Spalding. Judge Coates also served as a Council Member for the Village of Wellington. He received his Bachelor's degree from the University of Florida, his Master's degree from Florida Atlantic University, and his law degree from Yale Law School.

Judge Coates' first assignment is in Family Division "FJ" and Probate Division "IJ" at the North County Courthouse. His Judicial Assistant is Kim Phillips. The office can be reached at 561-624-6670.

Family, colleagues, and friends gathered in ceremonial courtroom 11A of the Palm Beach County Main Courthouse on May 8, 2015, for the investiture of Judge Howard K. Coates as a Circuit Judge.

Following the invocation from Cameron Coates, Kelsey Coates led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath welcomed the group and acknowledged the Judicial Nominating Committee. The Judicial Commission, signed by Governor Rick Scott, was presented by Sharon R. Bock, Clerk and Comptroller of Palm Beach County.

Judge Rosemarie Scher presented a desk plate on behalf of the Florida Conference of Circuit Judges. A Bible was presented by Michelle R. Suskauer, Esq., representing the Florida Bar Board of Governors.

Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath administered the Oath of Office to Judge Coates assisted by his wife Cheri Coates. The honor of enrobing Judge Coates went to his sons Colby and Colton Coates.

Several traditional and ceremonial gifts were presented to Judge Coates including a gift from the Palm Beach County Bar Association, presented by the President, Theo S. Kypreos; a gift from the South Palm Beach County Bar Association, presented by Marc A. Kaufman, President; a gift from the Palm Beach County Justice Association, presented by John McGovern, Secretary; and a gift from the American Board of Trial Advocates, presented by Mariano Garcia, President-elect of the American Board of Trial Advocates.

Following remarks by his wife, Cheri Coates, Judge Coates thanked his family and members of the Judiciary who were present.

The ceremony concluded with the benediction from Reverend Rainer Richter.



Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath administers the Oath of Office to Judge Coates

INVESTITURE OF JUDGE CHERYL CARACUZZO

Judge Cheryl Caracuzzo was appointed to the Circuit Court by Governor Rick Scott on March 12, 2015, filling a vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Edward Fine.

Prior to her judicial appointment, Judge Caracuzzo was an Assistant State Attorney in the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit since 1996.

Judge Caracuzzo received her Bachelor's degree from Florida State University and her Juris Doctor from Nova Southeastern University.

Judge Caracuzzo's first assignment is in Circuit Civil Division "AN" at the Main Courthouse. Her Judicial Assistant is Stephanie King. The office can be reached at 561-355-7847.

Family, colleagues, and friends gathered in ceremonial courtroom 11A of the Palm Beach County Main Courthouse on May 29, 2015, for the investiture of Judge Cheryl Caracuzzo as a Circuit Judge.

Following the invocation from Dana M. Santino, Esq., Kyle Caracuzzo led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Judge Krista Marx welcomed the group and acknowledged the Judicial Nominating Committee. The Judicial Commission, signed by Governor Rick Scott, was presented by Cindy Guerra, Esq., on behalf of Sharon R. Bock, Clerk and Comptroller of Palm Beach County.

Judge Rosemarie Scher presented a desk plate on behalf of the Florida Conference of Circuit Judges. A Bible was presented by Michelle R. Suskauer, Esq., representing the Florida Bar Board of Governors.

Judge Krista Marx administered the Oath of Office to Judge Caracuzzo assisted by David Malone. The honor of enrobing Judge Caracuzzo went to her parents Tom and Alice Newhouse.

Several traditional and ceremonial gifts were presented to Judge Caracuzzo including a gift from the Palm Beach County Bar Association, presented by the President, Theo S. Kypreos; a gift from the South Palm Beach County Bar Association, presented by Marc A. Kaufman, President; a gift from the Palm Beach County Justice Association, presented by Gregory T. Zele, President; a gift from the American Board of Trial Advocates, presented by Mariano Garcia, President-elect; and a gift from retired Circuit Judge Timothy McCarthy.

Following remarks by Judge Marx, Judge Caracuzzo thanked her family and members of the Judiciary who were present.

The ceremony concluded with the benediction from Howard I. Weiss, Esq.



Judge Krista Marx (right) administers the Oath of Office to Judge Caracuzzo (left)

JUDICIAL RETIREMENTS



L-r: Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath; retired Judge Steven Rapp; retired Judge David Crow; & retired Judge Sandra McSorley.



L to r: Retired Judge Steven Rapp and Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath.



L to r: Retired Judge Sandra McSorley and Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath.

Justice Teaching Award

Palm Beach Circuit Judge John Phillips received a Justice Teaching Award on June 25, 2015 for his efforts to teach Florida students about the government and the courts.

Florida Supreme Court Justice R. Fred Lewis presented Phillips with the Judge of the Year award during the Florida Bar's annual convention in Boca Raton. Phillips regularly teaches civics lessons at Royal Palm School in Royal Palm Beach, where he works with severely disabled students. Justice Teaching is a decade-old organization that pairs legal professionals with Florida elementary, middle, and high schools.



The Honorable John Phillips

Source: Daily Business Review.

Kids “Kards”

The Juvenile Division of the 15th Judicial Circuit offers several community service opportunities for court-involved youth, including Kids “Kards.” Kids “Kards” is an opportunity for youth to create greeting cards that include a positive message for veterans and the elderly who are living in group homes. For every three cards created, the youth receive one hour of community service. Cards are delivered to the Veteran’s Administration quarterly or during major holidays, and are then distributed to veterans. As of May 12, 2015 nearly 500 cards have been created by the youth and distributed. If you are interested in referring a youth to the program, please contact Jasmin Rios, (561) 355-2961 or Jrios@pbcgov.org



Veteran's Court

On May 2, 2015, the Veteran's Court team participated in the "Welcome Home It's Your Place" event held at the Okeehetee Park in West Palm Beach.

The event was held to honor veterans as well as active duty service members. Information was available on the services available to veterans in the Palm Beach County area. Additionally, the event included a job fair staffed by local employers and college recruiters.



Judge Ted Booras (second from the right, face partially hidden) with the Veterans' Court Team.

Foreclosure Division Changes

On Friday, May 15th the Foreclosure Division of the Court hosted a meeting to discuss the upcoming changes to the division. Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath kicked off the meeting by welcoming all attendees, thanking them for their appearance, and giving a brief explanation of why the reassignments are necessary. Judge Richard Oftedal explained the details of how the pending foreclosure cases filed in 2013 and older will be randomly reassigned among the Circuit Civil Divisions of the Court. Division AW will continue to handle foreclosure filings for 2014 and 2015. Judge Peter Blanc discussed scheduling practices and reminded attendees to refer to the court's website for information. Civil Court Operations Manager, Devon Mugridge explained how to access the court's website and where to find divisional instructions for each judges' webpage. The clerk began randomly reassigning foreclosure cases on May 22 and the project was completed at the end of June.



Devon Mugridge discusses divisional instructions on the 15th Circuit's website.

Delinquency Drug Court Graduation

At a graduation ceremony on May 27, 2015, Judge Rosemarie Scher and retired 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 Scher and retired Judge Alvarez provided the Court attendees with an overview of the graduate's life history and presented the graduate with a certificate of completion.



Judge Rosemarie Scher and retired Judge Ronald Alvarez

Court Technology Seminar

On April 7, 2015, Court Technology Officer, Noel Chessman, presented at a lunch seminar for Judges and Judicial Assistants. At the seminar Mr. Chessman demonstrated the ICMS system for e-filing of court orders by Judges and Judicial Assistants.



Noel Chessman discusses e-filing of orders.

Judges present sidebar to the Palm Beach County Young Lawyers

On May 20, 2015, the Palm Beach County Bar Association's Young Lawyer's section presented their YLS Sidebar Series. Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath, Judge Donald Hafele, and Judge Lisa Small participated in the discussion. Guest speakers provided the attendees with information on jury selection.



L-r: YLS Sidebar guest speaker with Chief Judge Colbath and Judge Hafele seated.

Lunch and Learn

On May 14, 2015, Court Administration hosted a Lunch and Learn for Judicial Assistants and Court staff. Amber Girtman of AIG Valic provided information related to deferred compensation and retirement planning.



Amber Girtman discusses retirement planning

Civil Traffic Hearing Officers' Annual Training

The Civil Traffic Hearing Officers held their annual training on June 4, 2015. Judges Meenu Sasser, Laura Johnson, and Lisa Small, along with Michael Napoleone, Florida Bar Grievance Committee "G", and Ron Ponzoli, Florida Bar Board of Governors, assisted with the training. The training curriculum included mock scenarios, review of applicable laws, and a discussion on ethical procedures in traffic court.



Traffic Hearing Officers during training.



Traffic Hearing Officers Annual Training 2015

Judicial Lunch Series

On May 12, 2015, the Judicial Relations Committee of the Palm Beach County Bar Association held its monthly judicial luncheon titled "A View From the Other Side". At the luncheon, the new Circuit Judges discussed their experiences and their courtroom procedures. Judges speaking at the luncheon included Judge Edward Artau, Judge Samantha Schosberg-Feuer, Judge Jaimie Goodman, and Judge Jessica Ticktin. Attorney Jean Marie Middleton served as the moderator.



L-r: Judges Artau, Ticktin, Goodman and Schosberg-Feuer.

Governor Scott Appoints Dina A. Keever and Scott Ira Suskauer to the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Court

On June 18, 2015, Governor Rick Scott announced the appointment of Dina A. Keever and Scott Ira Suskauer to the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Court.

Judge Keever practiced with McCabe Rabin, P.A. since 2013. Previously, she worked with Lewis Tein, P.L., from 2009-2012; was a sole practitioner; served as an Assistant United State Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania; and the Southern District of Florida. She received her Bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois and her Juris Doctor from Florida State University. Judge Keever fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge David F. Crow.

Governor Rick Scott said, "Dina brings years of experience to the Fifteenth Circuit Court bench. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated a strong understanding of the judicial process and the law."

Judge Suskauer practiced with the Suskauer Law Firm, P.A., from 1994 until his appointment to the Bench. He also previously worked as an Assistant Public Defender in Palm Beach County. He received his Bachelor's degree from Northwestern University and his Juris Doctor from the University of Miami. He fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Stephen A. Rapp.



Amy Borman, General Counsel, recipient of two awards

Amy Borman received the Justice Barbara Pariente Award recognizing her as a lawyer pursuing excellence and professionalism. The Justice Barbara Pariente Award is given annually by the Palm Beach County Chapter of the Florida Association for Women Lawyers to an individual or organization who has demonstrated a commitment to promoting women in the Palm Beach County legal community.

Amy Borman also received a Prudential Productivity award for creating an efficient method of identifying and closing civil cases which were pending in error, thus saving judicial resources, postage, and taxpayer parking fees.



Amy was nominated for this award by Trial Court Administrator Barbara Dawicke, and Director of Case Management Michelle Spangenberg. Our congratulations to Ms. Borman for her service.

Mediation Training

The ADR Office presented a continuing education training entitled: “Theoretical, Ethical, and Legal Issues for a Pain Free Mediation” for the Volunteer, County, Family, and Dependency mediators of the Fifteenth Circuit. Judge Sandra Bosso-Pardo and Judge Laura Johnson were present and answered questions from the Mediators. Dr. Jorge Rice from Nova University, discussed a theoretical and multidisciplinary approach to mediation.



L-r: Bill Moreno, Judge Sandra Bosso-Pardo, Judge Laura Johnson, Walter Colbath III, & Dr. Jorge Rice.



County Family Dependency Mediators



SUMMER JUDICIAL INTERNS

Six legal interns were selected to join the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit's Summer Intern Program. The Interns, under the supervision of General Counsel, assist the judiciary with post-conviction motions, County to Circuit appeals, administrative appeals, and foreclosure issues.

As part of the Intern learning experience, the Interns are afforded the opportunity to tour the main detention facility, the West County jail, the juvenile detention facility, the Fourth District Court of Appeal, and the Palm Beach County Clerk's office. The Interns also met with Judge Peter Evens in Belle Glade; observed Judge Joseph Marx at First Appearance; Drug Court with Judge Caroline Shepherd; Juvenile Drug Court with Judge Rosemarie Scher; and Juvenile Court with Judge Kroll.

The Judiciary's openness towards the Interns including the willingness to hold discussions related to the law and court procedures is a large component of the Summer Intern Program's success.

To learn more about the 2016 Summer Internship Program or employment as a Trial Law Clerk, please contact Amy Borman: Aborman@pbcgov.org.



L-r: Justin Etcheverry, Anthony Rydelek, Kacy Murphree, Samantha Bowen, Christian Chessman, and Bret Daniel.

TAKE YOUR CHILD TO WORK DAY

On May 26, 2015, Court Administration hosted "Take our Daughters and Sons to Work" day. Included in the group were children of the staff of Court Administration, Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, and the State Attorney's Office.

Led by PBSO Sgt. Trent Crossen, the first part of the Program involved a tour of the courthouse's Sally Port where vehicles transporting prisoners are secured. Also as part of the tour, the children were privy to an explosive detection capability demonstration by "Dutch" a K-9 that is utilized in the Main Courthouse. The children were also entertained by "Sunshine", an Australian Labradoodle who is a member of the Caring Canines Therapy Program.



Caring Canine, "Sunshine" performs a trick for the children.



PBSO Canine handler and "Dutch" with the program attendees.



Caring Canine, "Sunshine" greets the children.

2015 LAW DAY MOCK TRIAL-MAGNA CARTA ISSUES

On June 10, 2015, more than 35 students, teachers, and assistants from the Royal Palm School in Lantana traveled to the North County Courthouse for a Law Day Mock Trial commemorating the 800th Anniversary of the Magna Carta. The defendant, a State official nicknamed “King John”, was charged with taking land from a civilian for State use without just compensation, and with stealing that same civilian’s song and using it for State promotional purposes, without just compensation. The crime charged was based on FSS 2.345 (Fake State Statute 2.345) which made it a misdemeanor to commit such acts.

Judge John Phillips presided, and Judge Richard Oftedal acted as prosecutor during the case. Other volunteers enthusiastically played the role of the victim, the defendant, defense counsel, court personnel, and independent witnesses. The point was to present a modern day trial, with legal issues based on some of the Magna Carta provisions which were incorporated into the U.S. Constitution; and, of course to have fun.

The trial was presented in an hour, including the use of video evidence and the some live fiddle music by the defendant during his testimony. The students sat as jurors, and deliberated their verdict while volunteers presented an impromptu acoustic-music concert in the well of the court. The jury found the defendant clearly guilty.

Thanks to everyone at Royal Palm School, with special thanks to Judge Philips, Judge Oftedal, teacher Regina Brodsky, and to Justice Teaching volunteer Sheri Hazeltine, Esq., for making this wonderful field trip happen. It was a great Law Day all around. We are already making plans for next year.



2015 Law Day Mock Trial



L to r: Ted Whatley, Don Phillips, Judge John Phillips, and Rex Blazer



Judge John Phillips & Jury Member



The Jury making their decision.



Judge Richard Oftedal



Judge John Phillips presenting to the Jury.

THE RETIREMENT OF DON DRODDY

On June 25, 2015, the Judges, Judicial Assistants, and Court staff gathered to recognize Don Droddy for his twenty-three years of service to the Circuit. Don was employed as a Purchasing Manager in Court Finance. In that role he helped coordinate and oversee facility issues as well as the procurement of goods and services for the Circuit courthouses. Don was the Judicial rotation expert, ensuring that the Judges and Magistrates land in the correct location with all their belongings.

During his tenure, Don developed lasting relationships with State and County personnel and vendors. He will be remembered for his good humor and kindness. He will be truly missed by his immediate work team in Court Finance, as well as by staff of the storeroom and the mailroom staff; and the Chief Judge and the Court Administrator.

At his farewell, his Supervisor, Janet Leach-Ruth stated that “Don is the nicest person, a great team member, and the best uncle, brother, son, and jokester. He is the ultimate gentleman. We all wish him well in his retirement.”



L to r: Janet Leach-Ruth, Don Droddy, and Barbara Dawicke.



Don Droddy accepts his retirement plaque.



Farewell cake created by Carla Glover.



The farewell crowd.

AROUND THE CIRCUIT

Excellence Awards

Congratulations to those persons nominated for the Judicial Assistant Recognition Award for the first quarter of 2015: Kristin Colbath, Diana Grant, Gloria Lozano, Kimberly Massengill, Eyder Orozco, Michele Smith, Amy Tracy, and Celanne Zeigler.

Congratulations, also, to those persons nominated for the Court Administration employee of the first quarter of 2015: Sean Fahey, Shane Hussey, Shilah James, and Kathy Sanchez.



Amy Tracy with Judge Krista Marx

On May 21, 2015, a ceremony was held to announce the winners for the first quarter of 2015. Amy Tracy, Judicial Assistant to Judge Krista Marx, was named Judicial Assistant of the quarter ending March 2015. Sean Fahey was named as the Court Employee of the 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.



L-r: Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath, Sean Fahey, General Counsel Amy Borman

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The Law Library staff wishes to thank Philip Curtis for all of his efforts on the newsletter.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS

Administrative Orders amended April 1-June 30, 2015 are:

A.O. 11.106-4/15* - In Re: Alternate Assignments
A.O. 11.101-4/15* - In Re: Assignment of Judges– as amended
A.O. 11.104-4/15* - In Re: Seniority Listing Of Judges – as amended
A.O. 11.110 – In Re: Appointment Of Circuit Judges As Acting County Judges, etc
A.O. 4.608-4/15 - In Re: Intoxilyzer 8000 Litigation w/attachment
A.O. 3.314-4/15 – In Re: Timely Resolution Of Motions In Foreclosure Division “AW”, vacated and set aside
A.O. 2.604-5/15* - In Re: Court Appointed Counsel – as (re)amended (from 5/4/15) to correct scrivener’s error in paragraph 1 only
A.O. 3.315 In Re: Reassignment Of Residential Foreclosure Cases
A.O. 5.603 - 5/15 - In Re: Delinquency Drug Court
A.O. 10.103-5/15 - In Re: Traffic Crimes & Infractions Associated with a Felony Charge
AO 4.408-5/15* – In Re: Assessment Of Fees For Public Defender’s Office/Office Of Criminal Conflict
A.O. 11.101-6/15*-In Re: Assignment of Judges- as amended
A.O. 11.106-6/15* In Re: Alternate Assignments-as amended
A.O. 5.201-6/15* In Re: Uniform Motion Calendar Practice In Unified Family Court- as amended
A.O. 5.101-6/15*, In Re: Unified Family Court Jurisdiction-as amended
A.O. 2.503- 6/15*, In Re: Court Reporting Services- as amended
A O. 4.907- 6/15; In Re: Destruction of evidence By law Enforcement
A.O. 2.313- In Re: Assignment of Criminal and Civil Contempt Cases
A.O. 11.109-6/15 in Re: Duty Judge Roster as amended
Local Rule No. 4-In Re: Uniform Motion Calendar as amended and approved by the Supreme Court of Florida, on June 17, 2015

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

<http://15thcircuit.co.palm-beach.fl.us/web/guest/ao>.

WELCOME TO THE CIRCUIT

Cheryl Caracuzzo	Circuit Court Judge
Stephanie King	Judicial Assistant
Gary Millar	Certified Court Interpreter
Mary-Yves Etienne	Digital Court Reporter
Anneeke Arnold	Magistrate Assistant
Kelli-Renee Williams	Judicial Assistant
Philip Curtis	Circuit Civil Case Manager
Meagan McCarthy	Magistrate Assistant



Court IT Team at their Appreciation Luncheon.

