

Circuit Courier

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





*On the Cover: Main Judicial Center
Photo by: Deputy LaFlamme*

Palm Beach County Leads the State with Judicial E-Filings

The Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Judges are moving away from paper orders faster than anyone else in the state, according to the Florida Courts E-Filing Authority. The Judges electronically filed 8,501 documents in December, far more than the triple-digit offering of more populous Broward and Miami-Dade counties and thousands more than the next-biggest adopter in the state.

The Court is making use of a judicial viewer built by the Circuit’s technology team. The viewer aggregates information from the Sheriff, Clerk’s Office, and others, providing a simplified dashboard for easy inspection. It also allows Judges to electronically view, sign, and file documents. The push for attorneys to submit proposed orders by computer so that a Judge can electronically sign and distribute them, is part of a statewide initiative to save time, money, and paper.

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JUDGE AMY SMITH RETIRES

The Honorable Amy Smith, Circuit Judge, retired March 31, 2016 after serving the citizens of Palm Beach County for twelve years. Judge Smith was appointed to the Circuit bench on November 2, 2004, by Governor Jeb Bush.

Judge Smith began her career in 1987 as an Assistant State Attorney in Palm Beach County. She then worked as a senior partner at the law firm of Walton, Lantaff, Schroeder, and Carson, LLP from 1989 until she was elected to the Circuit court in 2004.

She obtained her B.A. degree from Mercer University, attended the University of Florida for her graduate studies in Education, and received her Juris Doctorate from Nova Southeastern University School of Law.

As a Circuit Judge, Judge Smith served in many divisions of the Court in the South, North, and Main Courthouses.



Judge Amy Smith

Amy Borman, General Counsel, recipient of “Sid Stubbs Professionalism Award”

On February 19, 2016 at the annual Palm Beach Bar Association’s Bench Bar conference, General Counsel Amy Borman was the recipient of the “Sid Stubbs Professionalism Award”. The Sid Stubbs Professionalism Award is the highest award given out for professionalism within the 15th Judicial Circuit.

General Counsel Amy Borman is involved in many things within the 15th Judicial Circuit including: hiring staff attorneys, coordinating law interns, defending and prosecuting lawsuits, giving legal advice to the administrative staff, arranging continuing judicial and legal education, creating and overseeing the New Lawyers’ Breakfast event, and serving as Chair of the Florida Bar’s Rules of Judicial Administration Committee.

Our congratulations to Ms. Borman.



L to r: PBCBA President Grier Pressly, General Counsel Amy Borman, and Joanne O’Conner, Co-Chair of the PBCBA’s Professionalism Committee.

DRUG COURT GRADUATIONS

At graduation ceremonies on January 12 and February 24, 2016, Circuit Judge Rosemarie Scher honored graduates who successfully completed the requirements of the Delinquency Drug Court Program.

Participants, family members, advocates, Drug Court Team members, and community members were present at both ceremonies to recognize the participants' accomplishments.



L to r: Program graduate and Manager Juvenile Court Services Cristy Altaro.



Judge Rosemarie Scher and program graduate.



AROUND THE CIRCUIT



Mike Resto addresses Court Administration.

Lunch-n-Learn: All-Hazard Preparedness

Mike Resto of the Palm Beach County Emergency Operations Center presented “All Hazard Preparedness” to the Lunch-n-Learn attendees on February 16, 2016. Mr. Resto discussed the County’s Emergency Operations Center’s procedures and functions in the event of a County disaster. Mr. Resto also showed attendees how to prepare and what to do in the event of a disaster.



L to r: Ken Soule, Bill Bartels, Steve Benedict, Fred Solomon, Jerry Klein, Judge Ted Booras, Louis Kurts, Carla Paula-Dasilva, Michael Coleman, and Stewart Saalfield.

For the second year in a row, the Veterans’ Court team was invited to host a booth at the South Florida Fair for American Heroes Day. The Veterans’ Court team participated in this community outreach event to inform the public about their role, and link Veterans to services available at the Veterans Health Care Administration and the local community

Lunch-n-Learn: Email Etiquette

On January 12, 2016, General Counsel Amy Borman, presented “Email Etiquette” to Court Administration. Research has found that the average employee spends about a quarter of his or her time at work combing through the hundreds of emails each employee sends and receives daily. During this presentation, Amy Borman discussed how to appropriately use email in the workplace.



General Counsel Amy Borman presents “Email Etiquette”.

Palm Beach County Judicial Assistant Association Spreads Holiday Cheer

The Palm Beach County Judicial Assistant Association’s Holiday Project Committee presented Ms. Greta Jones and her family gift cards and other personalized gifts for the holidays. Ms. Jones was selected by the Committee based on information provided to the Committee by the Wounded Warrior Project. Ms. Jones is an Iraqi War Veteran.

Through their generosity, dedication, and hard work, the Palm Beach County Judicial Assistant Associations and the Association’s Holiday Project Committee made one family’s holiday season brighter.



L to r: Tanya Norton, Andrea Morris, Greta Jones, Sherri Norton, Sabrina Valdez, Greta Jones’s daughter, and Erin Brandt.

THE CHIEF JUDGE'S CIRCUIT FAMILY PICNIC

The second “Chief Judge’s Circuit Family Picnic” took place on February 27, 2016 at Carlin Park in Jupiter. Attendees enjoyed a catered BBQ lunch, socializing, games, and music by DJ Crutch and DJ Laundry. The Picnic Committee organized fun events for the children of the staff and Judges, with bounce houses, face painting, and other kid friendly activities. The popular dessert contest was won by Finance Department employee, Rhonda Dardashti, with her delicious brownies. Second place went to Chief of Personnel Services, Tammy Anton.

The weather and the crowd were perfect with over 300 Judges, Magistrates, staff, and their family members in attendance at the lively event.



L to r: Picnic Committee: Rhoda Jones, Barbara Dawicke, Sue Ling Curtis, Melissa Sotillo, Tammy Anton, Michelle Spangenberg, Mary Quinlan. Missing: Will Hutchings and Walter Colbath.



Rhonda Dardashti won the dessert contest.



L to r: Chief Judge Colbath, Karen Davis, Judge Johnson, Walter Colbath, and Bill Johnson.



Judges Feuer, Marx, Johnson, and Michelle Spangenberg.



Amelia Gomez Sotillo

THE CHIEF JUDGE'S CIRCUIT FAMILY PICNIC



Picnic crowd



L to r: Marissa Sansone and Sue Ling Curtis



Staff Attorney Stars in Local Play

Staff Attorney Alex Lohman starred in the play *Inherit the Wind* at the Lake Worth Playhouse. *Inherit the Wind* recounts the famous criminal trial of Tennessee v. Scopes which was a landmark debate between evolutionists and creationists.

Alex, plays Rachel Brown, a friend and fellow teacher of the defendant who is also the daughter of the town's minister. The play ran from February 25 to March 13, 2016.



Staff Attorney Alex Lohman

BENCH BAR CONFERENCE 2016

The Palm Beach County Bar Association hosted the Annual "Bench Bar" Conference on February 19, 2016. The annual event provides a valuable opportunity for the judiciary and the legal community to interact, socialize, and discuss topics relevant to the practice of law in Palm Beach County. Members of the Judiciary and Court Administration staff assisted the event by hosting and/or leading several of the educational and informational sessions.

The morning sessions were geared towards new attorneys and small or solo practices. During the morning sessions, attendees were able to attend presentations on topics that addressed dispute resolution; county civil; probate and estate; federal law; and e-courts. The Young Lawyers section of the Bar also presented on "Legal and Ethical Writing in the 21st century." The afternoon session focused on topics of interest to the Judges, Magistrates, and attorneys at large. Several members of the Judiciary participated in group discussions related to commercial litigation, criminal law, family law, and personal injury law.

Grier Pressly, the Palm Beach County Bar Association President, welcomed the attendees during the lunchtime program. During the program, Chief Judge Colbath addressed the "State of the Judiciary" followed by the awarding of the Sid Stubb's Professionalism Award to Ms. Amy Borman, General Counsel of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit and the Judge Edward Rodgers Diversity Award to attorney Scott Hawkins. Finally, the lunch program ended with a presentation on the upcoming presidential election by the guest speaker and political commentator, Dr. Robert Watson, from Lynn University.



L to r: Judges Melanie May, Robert Gross, Sandra Bosso-Pardo, and Robert Panse



L to r: Retired Judge David Crow and Judge Jack Cox



L to r: Judge Catherine Brunson and Judge Sheree Cunningham



L to r: Judge Richard Oftedal and Judge John Phillips

AROUND THE CIRCUIT

Excellence Awards

Congratulations to those persons nominated for the Judicial Assistant (JA) Recognition Award for the Fourth Quarter of 2015:

- Erin Borden
- Tornia Jenkins-Edwards
- Joli Katz
- Kimberly Mayorga
- Manuela Morales
- Lorainne Pratts

Congratulations, also, to those persons nominated for the Court Administration employee of the fourth quarter of 2015:

- Catherine Dore
- Kelly Gould
- Ruth Ann Kravetz
- Larissa Kries
- Shilpa Proddutoor
- Kathy Sanchez

The presentation ceremony was held on February 16, 2016 where the winners for the Fourth Quarter of 2015, as selected by the Committee, were announced. In the Judicial Assistant category, the winner was **Joli Katz**, Judicial Assistant to Judge James Martz. There was a tie between two Court Administration employees: **Larissa Kries**, Senior Programmer and **Shilpa Proddutoor**, Systems Administrator II. Each of the winners received a plaque, a paid Administrative leave day, a photo in this newsletter, and four weeks of parking in the Judicial Parking garage. Congratulations to our winners.



L to r: Judge James Martz, Judicial Assistant Joli Katz, and Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath.



L to r: Trial Court Technology Officer Noel Chessman, Larissa Kries, Shilpa Proddutoor, and Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath.

Chief Justice Jorge Labarga

In 2014, Justice Jorge Labarga became the first Cuban American selected by the Justices to serve as the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court. In 2016, the Justices selected Chief Justice Labarga to serve a second two-year term beginning July 1, 2016. He is the 56th Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Jorge Labarga graduated from Forest Hill High School, West Palm Beach, Florida. In 1976 he earned his Bachelor's Degree in political science from the University of Florida, Gainesville. He also obtained his Juris Doctorate from the University of Florida in 1979.

Prior to his appointment by Governor Crist to the Fourth District Court of Appeal and then to the Florida Supreme Court, Chief Justice Labarga served as a trial Judge in the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit where he presided over civil, family, and criminal cases.

Administrative Orders amended January 1—March 31, 2016:

- A.O 3.908-2/16 – Re: Establishment of Engle Progeny Tobacco Litigation Trial Division and Reallocation
- A.O.11.101-2/16 – In Re: Assignment of Judges
- A.O.5.308-2/16 – In Re: Administrative Child Support Cases
- A.O.11.106-2/16 – In Re: Alternate Assignments
- A.O.11.102-3/16* - In Re: Administrative Judges and Executive Committee
- A.O.4.412-3/16 – Alternative Sanctions for Misdemeanor Offenders
- A.O.4.301-3/16 – In Re: Discovery Stipulation SAO & PD in Adult Criminal Cases, as amended
- A.O.5.609-3/16 – In Re: Discovery Stipulation SAO & PD in Juvenile Delinquency Cases
- A.O.3.102-3/16 – In Re: Case Distribution County Civil, as amended
- A.O.10.402-3/16 – In Re: Civil Traffic Infraction Hearing Continuances – as amended

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>.

New Hires from January to March 2016:

Mary Yves-Etienne	Foreclosure Case Manager
Lauren Abbott	Family Court Mediator
Marnita Blanks	Magistrate Assistant
Kathleen Alexis	Mental Health Case Manager
Luis Coll	Computer Specialist II
Mordechai Spolter	Computer Specialist II
Pamela Pitts	Digital Court Reporter
Stephanie White	Family Court Case Manager



Photo By Lynn Anzalone

