

FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

JANUARY - MARCH 2020 | VOLUME 2020 - 1

COVID-19 RESPONSE OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Chief Judge Marx is leading the Circuit through the pandemic with a focus on guarding the safety of all who must visit or work in the Circuit courthouses AND keeping the courts open so that justice may continue to be provided to our citizens. In her April 2020 press release, she noted, “We are all experiencing unprecedented levels of stress and uncertainty as the public health emergency caused by the global spread of COVID-19 continues to impact Palm Beach County in ways that seemed unimaginable a few short weeks ago. It is in times of stress and uncertainty that the rule of law is most called upon. For this reason, the Court has committed itself to doing not only all that it must during this public health emergency, but also all that it can. The Court is limiting most face-to-face hearings. However, in order to protect the public’s constitutional right to access and to ensure the progress of essential proceedings, the courthouses have remained open. The judges of our Circuit have ensured that the citizens of Palm Beach County can continue to have their essential court matters heard quickly. Some essential matters must be heard face-to-face. Additionally, the judges are handling thousands of cases through electronic means. For cases that must be handled face-to-face, extraordinary measures have been taken to protect the safety and wellbeing of the public, court staff and court partners.”

Since that time, Chief Judge Marx has entered Administrative Order 12.510 (and amendments) that provide the judges, attorneys, court partners and the public, further guidance related to the types of cases that can be heard face-to-face as well as an emphasis on using remote means to address court cases. She hopes to slowly expand the types of cases that may be heard, safely, following the Centers for Disease Control guidelines and directives from the Florida Supreme Court Chief Justice.



Chief Judge Marx pictured on a Zoom meeting

The Judiciary of the Fifteenth Circuit Keep the Cases Moving

The Judges of the Circuit have quickly shifted to holding hearings remotely instead of face-to-face. Below is a chart that shows the number of hearings held, primarily remotely, from March 16 to May 11, 2020. The chart shows the number of cases scheduled via Online Scheduling (judges or attorneys) and cases scheduled by the clerk (primarily the criminal calendars). The last column shows the number of documents e-filed by each of the court divisions. The majority of these hearings were held remotely because face-to-face hearings are limited to a small group of “essential” matters—such as some criminal events.

With the shifting of operations from face-to-face to remote hearings and with an increased familiarity with conducting court business remotely, the Circuit expects to see a further increase in the number of hearings held in mid-May and June.

OLS AND CLERK SCHEDULED HEARINGS 3/16/20 - 5/11/20				
* Not all divisions schedule in OLS				
* Not all events are scheduled in OLS by participating divisions				
* e-Filing number is the total per judge for all divisions assigned				
Division	Total Hearings Scheduled	Total Hearings Canceled	Total Hearings Held	Total e-Filings
Circuit Civil	4,150	1,369	2,781	10,002
County Civil	5,688	3,881	1,807	9,506
Circuit Criminal	11,239	8,559	2,680	6,375
County Criminal	14,487	11,171	3,316	5,641
Family	1,826	568	1,258	12,283
Probate	750	139	611	
Juvenile	3,942	1,613	2,329	3,986
Magistrates	1,819	382	1,437	2,324
Traffic Hearing Officers	3,041	1,470	1,571	523
First Appearance	3,144	1,077	2,067	N/A
Senior Judge Filings				2,403
Mediations	529	140	389	401
Totals	50,615	30,369	20,246	53,444

Judge Booras Creates a Safe Procedure for Gun Club Cases in the Midst of the Pandemic

Judge Booras, along with Judge Johnson, presides over First Appearance cases as part of his judicial assignment. At the start of the pandemic he was asked by the Chief Judge to develop a system that would keep the court partners safe from possible COVID-19 infection and provide incarcerated individuals their right to be present and heard at their First Appearance. A day after meeting with court partners, on April 1, Judge Booras spearheaded a pilot project which allows incarcerated individuals to appear by video to the First Appearance courtroom. Pleased with the result, the court partners have moved to utilize video for all First Appearance hearings. Judge Booras expressed his gratitude to the Palm Beach County Sheriff and Major Starling for their assistance in creating this successful project.



Judge Booras

With Gratitude

The Court Administrator, Barbara Dawicke, would like to express her sincere and deep gratitude to those Court staff who have continued to carry out the mission of the courts during the pandemic. A special “shout out” is needed for the Court Finance team who have managed to procure personal protection equipment for judges and staff, in the midst of unprecedented world-wide demand, so that court operations can continue safely. A second special “shout out” goes to our Court Technology staff. These highly skilled individuals have worked long hours to ensure that judges and court staff have laptops to allow for remote hearings, meetings, and remote access to their files. Court Technology staff have spent many hours deploying ZOOM, training users on ZOOM, and trouble-shooting ZOOM meetings and hearings.



Barbara Dawicke

Finally, a big “shout out” to those Court Administration staff who tirelessly appear for work on their scheduled days without complaint. This group of special employees understand their role as public servants and have courageously taken on the work that needs to continue despite all of the challenges that working during a pandemic has created. The commitment of the staff and judicial assistants is impressive and truly appreciated.

The Circuit Reaches 1 Million E-Filing Mark

The Fifteenth Circuit recognized a significant milestone when the number of judicial e-filed orders submitted through JVS hit the one-million mark.

Judicial Assistants were treated to a catered luncheon on February 14th to celebrate. JAs were recognized for this milestone, including Kim Massengill, who filed the 1 millionth e-filing; Stefanie Lee, who filed the Circuit's first e-filing, and Jennifer Bernier, who has had the greatest number of e-filings (almost 40,000).

An estimated 6 million pages of paper have been saved due to e-filing at the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, which is estimated as enough to build a bridge from the West Palm Beach Courthouse to the Supreme Court in Washington, DC.



Trial Court Administrator Barbara Dawicke presents Stefanie Lee with an award for filing the first e-file at the Circuit

“Founding Filers”:

1. Stefanie Lee: 4/16/15 (10:33 a.m.)
2. Brenda Gleason: 4/16/15 (3:27 p.m.)
3. Andrea Morris: 4/17/15
4. William Rivera: 4/22/15 (3:21 p.m.)
5. Mary Beardsley: 4/22/15 (4:18 p.m.)

High Volume e-filers:

1. Jennifer Bernier: 39,576
2. Manuela Morales: 35,160
3. Rebecca Ricker: 27,352
4. Harriet Merlin : 24,137

AWARDS & HONORS

Employee Recognition Award Winners



Award recipient Mona Driscoll (center) with Chief Judge Marx (left) and Judge Marx (right)

On Tuesday, January 28th, Chief Judge Marx announced the Employee Recognition Award winners for the first quarter of 2020. Congratulations to all those nominated for each category including for **Judicial Assistants:** Mona Driscoll, Donna Holden, Katherine Matthews, Harriett Merlin, and William Rivera; as well as for **Court Administration Staff:** Erika Ireland, Erin Kenny, Angela Monk, and Eric Thompson.

Mona Driscoll was named the Judicial Assistant of the Quarter, and **Erika Ireland** was named the Court Administration Employee of the Quarter. The winners received a paid Administrative Leave day; a plaque; a month of parking in the judicial parking garage; the Circuit's Perpetual Trophy; an official Circuit tumbler; and a photo in the Circuit Courier.



Award recipient Erika Ireland (center) with Chief Judge Marx (left) and Tara Kranz (right)

Congratulations to our winners, nominees, and of course to all who work hard every day throughout the Circuit.

For more information on how you can nominate a Judicial Assistant or Court Staff for Employee of the Quarter, please visit the following hyperlink:

<http://151.132.36.247/nominations/>

JUDICIAL INVESTITURE

Hon. Sarah L. Shullman

Governor Ron DeSantis announced the appointment of Judge Shullman as a County Court Judge in December 2019. Judge Shepherd's elevation to the Circuit bench created this vacancy filled by Judge Shullman. On February 14, family, friends, and colleagues gathered for the investiture of the Honorable Sarah L. Shullman.

The enrobing ceremony included Judge Shullman's father, Edward Levien, and her husband, Alan Shullman. Dean Zenick, Esquire and President-elect of the Palm Beach presented the gavel. Adam T. Rabin, Esquire, and Michael J. Napoleone, Esquire gave remarks on behalf of Judge Shullman.

Prior to her election, Judge Shullman served as a Civil Traffic Hearing Officer for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit as well as a Bureau Chief in the Attorney General's Office. She earned a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Florida and a Juris Doctorate from Georgetown University.

Judge Shullman is assigned to the RE division in County Civil court. Her judicial assistant is Kelly Conte.



Adam T. Rabin, Esquire (speaking at podium) speaks on behalf of Judge Shullman (top left) who is seated next to Chief Judge Marx (top right).



Judge Shullman

AROUND THE COURTHOUSE

Teddy Bear Donations

Adopt-A-Bear delivered 400 teddy bears to the Juvenile Court. Adopt-A-Bear is a non-profit dedicated to ending child abuse. These bears are given to children whose families are involved in juvenile court.

In addition to delivering bears to judges, Adopt-A-Bear also provides firefighters and first responders with teddy bears for abused, neglected, and traumatized children.

The Circuit is very grateful for their efforts as these donations serve as a caring way to comfort the children who enter the court.



Left to right: Judge Bell, Judge Kroll, and Magistrate Printz, Top Right: Judge Keyser

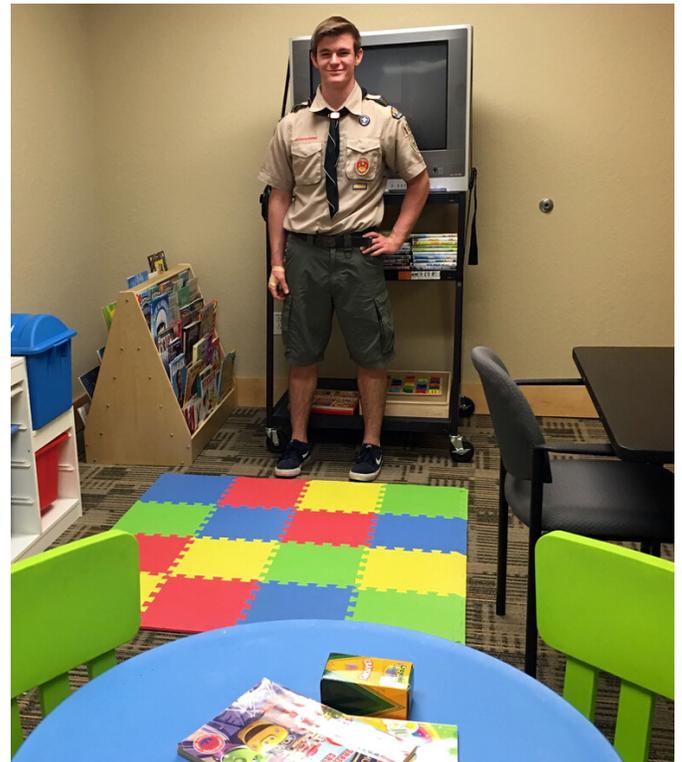
West County Updates

There have been some exciting new additions in our West County Courthouse in Belle Glade. Connor Farrell, a Senior at Suncoast High School, contacted the Circuit last April to discuss ideas he had to bring books to children in the community. As a Life Scout working towards the rank of Eagle Scout, he developed a proposal to open a child-friendly room at the West County Courthouse in Belle Glade. Mr. Farrell mapped out every detail, collected the necessary items and organized members of his troop to help build and deliver the necessary furniture, books, and toys. On January 6th, Judge Artau hosted a grand opening of this new addition. We are grateful for Mr. Farrell's dedication and desire to do something generous for his community by providing a more enjoyable experience for children and families who come to Court.

Additionally, the Circuit's therapy dog program, Caring Canines, expanded services to the West County Courthouse on January 27. For many years, the program has been offering the services of certified therapy dog teams to provide comfort, compassion and unconditional love to the children and families appearing for court at the Main Courthouse as well as South County Courthouse.



Above: Lin Cleary and Toast make a visit to the West County Courthouse



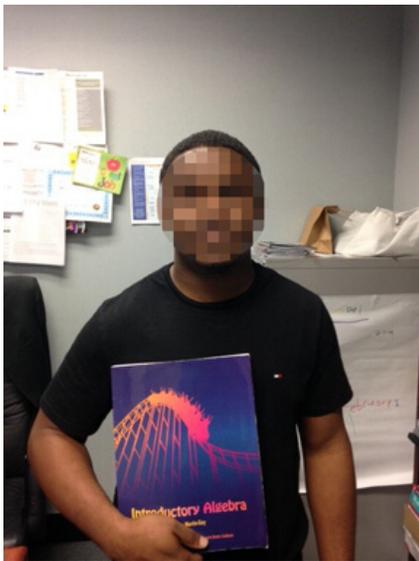
Above: Connor Farrell in the new, child-friendly room at the West County Courthouse

Delinquency Drug Court

Delinquency Drug Court, presided over by Judge Bell, continues its commitment to helping Palm Beach County youth with a history of substance abuse. Most recently, two participants entered college, two participants earned their High School diplomas, and one participant earned a GED. Additionally, three participants began vocational training, one started a paid internship and eight participants gained employment.

With the assistance of our non-profit organization, Making Every Day Count, Inc., Delinquency Drug Court has assisted many participants as well as their families with resources to help participants successfully complete the program. This assistance includes household bills, utility bills, car repairs and participant needs, college textbooks, college application fees, boxing lessons, and GED course fees.

This year alone, Delinquency Drug Court boasted a success rate of 75% for program completion, significantly higher than the national average. Additionally, nearly 85% of all drug screens taken were negative and program graduates increased their grade point average by 12%. Delinquency Drug Court looks forward to the continued successes of its participants in the upcoming months.



Pictured: Participants of Delinquency Drug Court

Family Drug Court

Family Drug Court, presided over by Judge Greg Keyser, is a specialty court program for parents with substance abuse issues and open dependency cases in Palm Beach County. It specializes in providing supportive services and case management, offers a designated team approach with the ultimate goals of family preservation, faster reunifications and long-term sobriety. The program is able to overcome many barriers for the participants and their families through the help of Making Every Day Count, Inc. (MEDC), a non-profit organization dedicated to raising funds to support program participants. This includes assistance with housing, food and transportation. MEDC has helped by continue to fund a part-time position which recruits and identifies mentors for program participants as well as assists participants with resume building and job placement opportunities. Recently, Family Drug Court was one of four sites in Florida to receive an opioid-assistance grant to enhance the program. In May, Family Drug Court will celebrate 10 years of serving Palm Beach County families impacted by substance abuse.

Welcome to Our New Judges and Court Staff

Welcome to all new employees who started working at the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit between January and March, 2020, including:

- Hon. Melanie Surber, County Court Judge
- Jasmine Valdez, Digital Court Reporter
- Hon. Sarah Shullman, County Court Judge
- Tyler Long, Intern - Juvenile Division
- Rochelle Belair, Advocate Coordinator
- Debbian Livingstone, Probate Court Case Manager
- Stephanie Miele, Program Coordinator (Transfer)
- Camilla Andrade, Intern - Family/Probate
- Michael Marrow, Intern - Juvenile Division
- Ariona Conville, Intern - Juvenile Division
- Tia Siagi, Administrative Secretary
- Maryam Rezaei, Volunteer - Law Library
- Jackson Mack, Drug Court Manager (Transfer)
- Tyrell Siagi, Criminal Court Case Manager (Transfer)
- Nedastha Dorcelly, Digital Court Reporter
- Maria Camporese, Magistrate Assistant
- Kelly Conte, Judicial Assistant
- Alejandro Camacho, Spanish Court Interpreter
- Amy Wagner, Mediation Services Coordinator (Transfer)
- Susan Byrne, County Court Case Manager
- Marissa Todino, Family Court Mediator
- Kelly Hughee, County court Judicial Assitant
- Gillian Corallo, Digital Court Reporter
- Reyaz Ali, Civil Court Case Manager

DEPARTMENT PROFILE

Juvenile Court Operations

The Juvenile Division is responsible for assisting the juvenile judges with juvenile delinquency and dependency matters. Made up of 11 staff members, some case managers are assigned to a judge to assist with research, the preparation of orders, and the collection of statistical data. Others assist the judges with the administrative side of Delinquency Drug Court, Family Drug Court and the Early Childhood Court. Other programs offered in the Juvenile Division include the use of therapy dogs of the Caring Canines Program and Juvenile Education Clinics which are free workshops offered to youth to assist them with finances, employment, and other life skills.

Cristy Altaro, Juvenile Operations Manager, reports that the Juvenile Division is comprised of dedicated team members whose focus is on assisting the judges and each other with the juvenile caseload. The work is challenging and the outcomes are not always pleasant. Ms. Altaro states that the work is difficult and those who choose to work in the Juvenile Division are strong and selfless individuals. She expresses great gratitude for her team and notes that their valuable contributions are largely “behind the scenes” and a necessary component of the Juvenile Division operations.



Left to right (around table): Kelly Gould, Jacquie Marshburn, Mia Werksman, Tyler Long (Intern), Daniel Svec, Mike Morrow (Intern), Cristy Altaro, Brittany Astrologo, and Brandon Richardson. **Juvenile Division staff not pictured:** Rochelle Belair, Drug Court Advocate Coordinator; Lisa Bozzone, Family Drug Court Coordinator; Angela Monk, Juvenile Court Case Manager; Kathy Sanchez, Juvenile Court Case Manager (South County).

Name Change Training

Judicial assistants to family judges, law clerks, and family case managers attended a crash course on Name Change petitions. This workshop was presented by Danielle Wagner and Rebecca Frieden, in-house law clerks. The attendees were educated on the proper review of Name Change petitions, most common deficiencies, and relevant case law.



Danielle Wagner presents on name changes to a group of participants, including judicial assistants, law clerks, and case managers.

Eldercaring Coordination



Left to Right: Speakers Fran L. Tetunic, Judge Ticktin, Tehera Smith, and Linda Fieldstone

On February 26, Court Administration hosted an Eldercaring Coordination course for court-appointed attorneys and professional guardians on the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit's Guardianship Registry Wheel. Eldercaring Coordination is a manner of dispute resolution in which a coordinator helps to resolve disputes. Speakers included Judge Ticktin, Judge Morley (Fifth Circuit), Tehera Smith, Linda Fieldstone, and Fran L. Tetunic.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Florida Court Personnel Institute

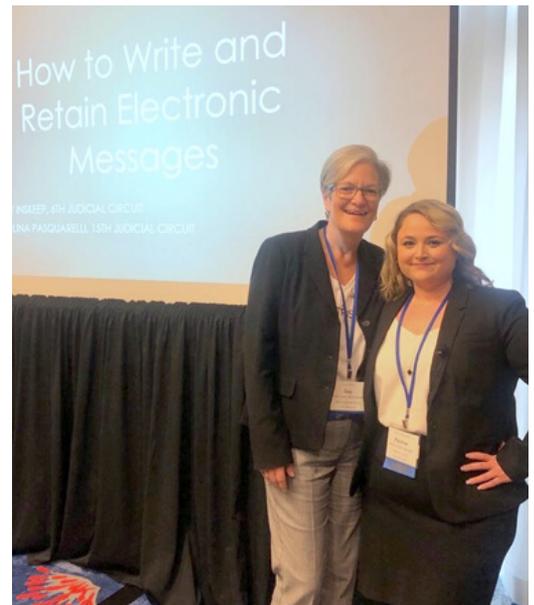
A number of judicial assistants and court staff had the opportunity to attend the 2020 Florida Court Personnel Institute, which was held in Orlando from February 17-21.

Judicial assistants, nominated by their circuits to attend, participated in a two-day training, which covered topics including: Dealing with Challenging People, Ex Parte and Legal Advice, and were given an overview of the new travel management system.

Additionally, Paulina Pasquarelli, Mental Health Case Manager, teamed up with Gay Inskip, Trial Court Administrator from the Sixth Judicial Circuit to serve as faculty teaching the course: How to write and retain electronic messages. This course identified elements of an effective email message. Some tips included: being mindful of audience with the greeting used, keeping the signature simple, responding with facts over feelings, recognizing that not all emails warrant a response, and more.



Right: Yvonne Williams, Violeta Woxberg, Isabel Pereira, Magistrate Maxine Williams, Alexandra Beeman, and Courtney Coleman



Above: Paulina Pasquarelli (right) and Gay Inskip co-taught a course on how to write and retain electronic messages

LUNCH AND LEARN

Couponsing 101

On February 11, Sabrina Valdez lead a Lunch and Learn session titled "Couponsing 101." This well-attended session covered mobile apps to help save money by simply uploading receipts and collecting points or cash back in return, largely by using manufacturer-issued coupons. Attendees learned about a number of coupon apps available. Additionally, the session covered coupon terminology, and an example of a successful savings transaction (with coupons) was shown, in which 15 items were purchased, and the total sale (including tax) came out to be just \$0.65.



Attendees of the Couponsing 101 workshop pose with presenter Sabrina Valdez (bottom row, center, with green top and black sweater), who works as a Judicial Assistant

Miss a Lunch and Learn?

Extra materials and information may be available. Please contact HR staff.

Farewell and Good Luck



Angelica Bennett

The Circuit sends a fond "farewell and good luck" to Angelica Bennett, Law Librarian. Angelica, who has been with the Circuit since September 2018 has accepted a position with Florida Atlantic University as Assistant Director of Research Programs and Services in the College of Nursing. This edition of the Circuit Courier is her last.

While she was the Circuit Law Librarian, Angelica helped modernize its holdings and transactions. Angelica and the law library team worked diligently to automate the law libraries, including cataloging the library's collection to make it easier to find books and other materials available. The law library also worked with Court Technology to automate the receipts and reporting system for financial transactions.

Angelica implemented a digital e-books library of LexisNexis legal offerings for court users to access while in any of our courthouses. She offered multiple services and trainings to the public including how to research on Westlaw, a workshop on the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants, as well as legal research resources freely available through the county public library system.

We wish Angelica the best with her new endeavor and thank her for her contributions which have enhanced the Circuit's Law Libraries

Remote Services in the Law Library

While the law libraries remain closed to the public until further notice, law library staff are still available via phone and email. The following services are available. Contact any law library staff member for more information.

- Attorneys can rent a CLE by mail
- Members of the public can request a temporary login to search Westlaw and the LexisNexis digital library from home
- General questions about the law library and information available can be answered by law library staff via phone and email

Visit the law library's website at <https://15thcircuit.com/services/law-library> for updates and more information.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS

A.O. 4.201, 1/15/2020: First Appearance Hearings

A.O. 6.101, 1/15/2020: Probate and Guardianship Division Regions, Hearing Sites and Assignment Criteria

A.O. 11.101, 1/15/2020: Assignment of Judges

A.O. 11.104, 1/15/2020: Seniority Listing of Judges

A.O. 11.106, 1/15/2020: Alternate Assignments

A.O. 6.31, 1/24/2020: Professional Guardian Registry & Appointment of Professional Guardian

A.O. 3.601, 1/24/2020: Small Claims Summons

A.O. 3.602, 1/24/2020: Residential Eviction Summons

A.O. 5.706, 1/28/2020: Juvenile Division - Therapeutic Court

A.O. 12.301, 2/4/2020: Temporary Assignment of Hon. Bradley Harper as Acting Circuit Judge

A.O. 5.101, 2/18/2020: Unified Family Court Jurisdiction

A.O. 12.504, 3/4/2020: County Canvassing Board

A.O. 2.606, 3/4/2020: Appt. of Chief Judge Designee to Hear Requests by General Counsel Registry Attorneys for Additional Compensation

A.O. 5.802, 3/12/2020: Judicial Waiver of Parental Notice of Abortion

A.O. 12.510, 3/13/2020: Mitigating Measures in Response to COVID-19

A.O. 12.511, 3/13/2020: Restricting Certain Visitors to the Courthouse

A.O. 12.510, 3/18/2020: Mitigating Measures in Response to COVID-19

A.O. 12.510, 3/19/2020: Mitigating Measures in Response to COVID-19

A.O. 12.510, 3/20/2020: Mitigating Measures in Response to COVID-19

A.O. 12.510, 3/24/2020: Mitigating Measures in Response to COVID-19

A.O. 4.202, 3/25/2020: Schedule of Bonds and Procedures Relating to Pre-First Appearance Release that has been amended

A.O. 12.510, 3/25/2020: Mitigating Measures in Response to COVID-19

A.O. 12.510, 3/25/2020: Mitigating Measures in Response to COVID-19

