

# County Court Courier

FALL 2005



CONFERENCE OF COUNTY COURT JUDGES OF FLORIDA

## Conference Congratulates Judge Doug Henderson

The Conference of County Court Judges congratulates its new President, Manatee County Judge K. Douglas Henderson, installed at its Summer Conference at Ocean Reef last July.

Judge Henderson has been a county court judge for eleven years. He was elected to office in 1994, and began his term January 1, 1995. He came to the bench from a private practice in civil litigation with the Bradenton law firm of Price & Price and Blalock, Landers, Walters & Vogler. Prior to private practice, Judge Henderson served the 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit as an assistant state attorney for five years.

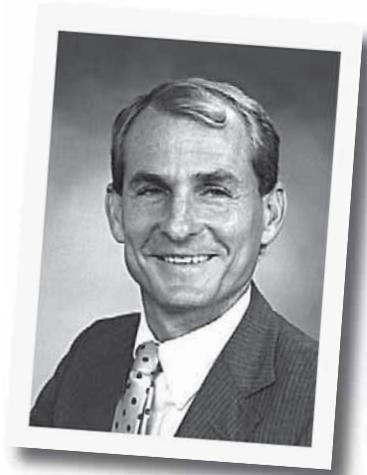
A graduate of the University of South Florida with both a Bachelors and a Masters degree in Criminal Justice, Judge Henderson furthered his interest in the law by attaining his J.D. degree

from South Texas College of Law in 1981.

He currently teaches criminal law at the University of South Florida, and spends countless hours as a member of the High School Mock Trial State Advisory Committee. Doug currently is our state's representative at the National High School Competition, which will be held in May in Oklahoma City.

He is a member of Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society.

Doug has been an active member of our Conference. He has served both as a Circuit Representative for the 12<sup>th</sup> Circuit, a District Vice President for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit and recently as the Chair of the Professional Relations Committee as well as the Single Tier/Concurrent Jurisdiction Committee.



The Judge has been married for 32 years to Sue Hagen. The couple have three sons, ages 28, 25, and 22.

One of his proudest moments has been winning the Conference's top prize in the Karaoke contest! He is an accomplished country music singer.

Judge Henderson is also a long distance runner.

## Judge Maney to Return to the Bench

By Judge Peggy Gehl

Our own Brig.Gen. and Okaloosa County Judge Patt Maney, who has served the past 18 months in Afghanistan, is presently being treated at Walter Reed Hospital for injuries he sustained in a car bombing on August 21.

Judge Maney received head, neck, and back injuries as a result of insurgents bombing his SUV as he traveled in a caravan with the U.S. Embassy on a mission to determine the feasibility of constructing a plant which would permit Afghans to bottle their own spring water.

Initially, Judge Maney was working for the State Department in an attempt to organize

the Afghan government and to prepare for elections.

Cheryl Bixell, Judge Maney's Judicial Assistant, reported that the Judge is anxious to return to his duties on the bench where he serves in the Shalimar courthouse in a civil and criminal division.

The Judge wishes to thank all the judges who have covered his dockets the past 18 months, including retired County Judge Keith Brace, who is currently sitting for the Judge.

Welcome home, Judge Maney. We thank you for your service to our country.



REPORT FROM TALLAHASSEE

## Conference Lobbies for Fully Funded Health Insurance

By President Doug Henderson

Just got back from Tallahassee, where our ace counsel, Don Lamonica, had scheduled appointments with a large number of Senators and Representatives.

Many unscheduled meetings occurred as well, as this was a Legislative Committee week. Included in these meetings were House Speaker Allan Bense and Rep. Joe Negron. He was truly our "man of the hour" during last year's session. Many of you witnessed our outgoing Conference President A.B. Majeed presenting Rep. Negron with a special Judicial Appreciation Award at our summer conference in Ocean Reef.

Shelly Kravitz (Miami-Dade) and Tim Harley (Leon) accompanied Don and me, as the Conference continues with our efforts to procure fully funded health insurance. I was extremely impressed with the respect and excellent reputation Don enjoys among our legislators. The same can be said of Shelly and Tim. Every official we met with was familiar with, and supportive of, our request.

As you know, the health insurance issue was an item before the legislature last year. County Court judges (as well as our Circuit Court colleagues) are the only elected officials who must make partial payment of coverage. I encourage you to make occasional contact with your local Senators and Representatives about this issue. You might also want to invite them to observe you "in action." One of my local Representatives, a nonlawyer, was extremely appreciative and told me he was fascinated after watching me preside over a morning court session.



### Judicial Compensation Update

Conference President-Elect Raul "Sonny" Palomino (Hillsborough) and I are current members of the Unified Committee on Judicial Compensation, which was formed last year by Florida Supreme Court Chief Justice Barbara Pariente in an effort to unite all levels of our state judiciary (Supreme Court, District Courts of Appeal, Circuit, and County) with regards to compensation proposals to the legislature.

Past Presidents A.B. Majeed and Jeff Arnold (Orange) were our initial Conference members. On September 14, the Supreme Court approved several proposals from this Committee, the most important of which is a salary percentage-tier plan. Under this plan, county judges' salaries

would consist of 85% of a Supreme Court Justice. The proposal has been well received by the legislators we spoke with. Justice Pariente, in an effort to finalize this proposal in time for the 2006 legislative session, has scheduled our next Committee meeting in early December.

### Welcome, New Judges

Welcome to all of our new Judges! We "seniors" very much look forward to working with you and seeing you at our wonderful Conferences, which provide top-notch continuing legal education and hospitality! I encourage you to be active in our Conference; it is a truly rewarding and enjoyable experience to serve on one (or more) of our Conference committees. You may want to be a presenter as well. Gary Flower (Duval) is our hard-working Education Committee Chair.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Judge Patt Maney (Okaloosa) and his family. Patt, an Army Reserve Brigadier General, is on the mend after being injured recently in a roadside bombing in Afghanistan. The family is currently staying in the Washington DC area for treatment at Walter Reed Hospital.

Congratulations are in order to many of our colleagues who were recently appointed to the Circuit Bench: Jeff Levinson (Broward), Jon Morgan (Osceola), Orlando Prescott (Miami-Dade), Dava Tunis (Miami-Dade), and Michelle Sisco (Hillsborough).

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# Could It Happen to You? Court Cracks Down on Election Violations

By Judge Peggy Gehl



As one of your representatives on the Judicial Qualifications Commission (JQC), I thought it would be timely to address an issue which seems to befall judges on a regular basis during election season—election violations.

The first week in November, I visited the Florida Supreme Court to watch a public reprimand of a circuit judge for judicial misconduct. He had admitted to campaign violations, and agreed to receive the public reprimand which was delivered by Chief Justice Barbara Pariente. By entering into the stipulation for punishment, he will keep his seat. In this particular case, there was no way to determine whether his campaign violations were a major contributor to his election success in 2002.

Believe me, this is not an enjoyable experience.

The judge stood at the podium before the seven justices in silence. Chief Justice Pariente delivered the reprimand sternly, outlining his election violations, including expending funds for his campaign PRIOR to having funds to cover the expenses, and making loans into his campaign account AFTER the deadline for making deposits.

Does this sound like something that could happen to you?

Chief Justice Pariente made it very clear that "election violations are misconduct that this Court will not tolerate," and not only does the "violator suffer consequences, but the entire judiciary suffers the consequences" of election violations. She pointed out that election violations negatively impact the judiciary as a whole and therefore the Court will strictly adhere to canons and statutes regulating judicial campaigns. Whether elected or appointed, the independence of the judiciary is an obligation of all judges, and strict compliance with our election statutes and ethical code is essential to maintain the dignity and respect of the judicial office.

She added that "this Court takes misconduct of judges, and especially election violations, very seriously."

Election violations come in all forms. Aside from errors in accounting, maintaining accurate records, and filing election reports timely, a common mistake can occur in advertising. Don't represent yourself for something that you're not. Don't mislead the public by suggesting you are smarter, more productive, or more experienced than you are. Don't permit public relations campaign experts to treat your judicial campaign the same as any other public office.

Besides the general rules set forth in election statutes, a judicial election has its own set of rules of conduct. Familiarize yourself with them. Re-read the Code of Judicial Conduct and ensure that your professional public relations expert complies with our canons. Read and approve all campaign materials before they're disseminated. Don't delegate this to someone who is not familiar with the limitations of our office. Your job may be on the line.

And, for those who will be running in 2006, good luck!

## On-line Courier

Since our funding was cut and we no longer have our Spring and Fall Committee Meetings, it was determined that publication of the *Courier* would also be reduced to twice per year, fall and spring, rather than quarterly.

Additionally, there is increasing interest in converting the *Courier* to an on-line publication. While this conversion has been discussed the past several years, most of the hesitation came from judges who were not yet computer friendly, or who simply had no computer.

With the rising costs of publication, design, printing and postage, it would be extremely advantageous to convert the *Courier* to an on-line publication. Judges could either read it on line, which they can now do at the Conference website (Judges.com), or simply print out the on-line version and read it at their leisure. This issue will be fully discussed at the Editorial Committee meeting at the January Education Conference. Any comments on this idea are welcomed. Call, fax, or email me your thoughts at [jgehl@17th.flcourts.org](mailto:jgehl@17th.flcourts.org).

I am delighted with all of our new judges, and have taken up much of this issue to introduce them to the Conference. For those who have been unintentionally overlooked, please call my office, email me, or send a fax with your biographical information, including when you were appointed, in what division you've been assigned, and send a photo. I'll be sure to introduce you in the next issue.

And, for those who have been appointed to the Circuit bench, congratulations! I have also saved space for the members we will be losing to the Circuit Conference. You will be missed, and I'm sure you will miss us!

Congratulations to all!

# Judge Lou Schiff's "Eye-opening" Tactics Taught at National Jurists' Symposium

*Reprinted from the Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*

By Joe Kollin  
Staff Writer

A Broward County Court judge who gives "eye-opening" experiences to young drivers charged with traffic violations spent last week teaching his unusual techniques to judges from across the country.

"It was really neat," said Judge Louis H. Schiff, who served as a volunteer instructor for the first time at the National Judicial College in Reno, Nev. He taught a class about sentencing young drivers, part of a four-day course on sentencing motor vehicle offenders.

Schiff told about a dozen judges how he requires young drivers to photograph 10 roadside memorial markers — each at a location where someone died in a traffic crash — so they can see the number of people who die on roads where they travel.

His homework assignments also include making them clip newspaper articles about auto accidents daily for a month, highlighting the names of the dead and injured, as a way to force them to see the results of accidents. He requires other young drivers to improve their grades at school and bring in report cards to prove it.

In exchange for the pictures, scrapbooks and improved grades, he refrains from imposing fines or making them perform community service.

Judges at the National Judicial College were from Washington, Ohio, Missouri, Kansas, South Carolina, Guam and an American Indian tribe in Arizona. Fort Lauderdale-based Broward County Court Judge Peggy Gehl also attended in preparation to teach Sentencing at the DUI Adjudication Lab.

Schiff's experiences with nontraditional sentences were well received, according to Jennifer Schoenfeldt, course administrator for the Reno college.

"The feedback from other judges was that they plan to try his programs, or variations of them," she said. "They said they were looking for sentencing options and were anxious to try them."

She called Schiff "enthusiastic and energetic."

Gehl agreed.

"He's passionate about what he does," she said. "He went over very big; I think the class really enjoyed it."

To help them get started, Schiff supplied them with scrapbooks from the thousands he has collected over the years from drivers he has sentenced.



**Judge Schiff requires young motor vehicle offenders to photograph roadside memorials such as this as part of their sentencing.**

That way the judges "don't have to reinvent the wheel," he said.

Based at the North Regional Courthouse in Deerfield Beach, Schiff has been honing his techniques for nine years, and not all involve traffic violations. For instance, he requires those guilty of possession of cigarettes by someone under 18 to write three-page essays on the dangers of smoking. Then he quizzes them on what they learned. He also runs the Broward Teen Tobacco Court, along with Plantation-based County Court Judge Steven Shutter.

Other Broward judges have been using his ideas for years.

Schiff said he has found that photographing memorials and clipping articles are educational experiences that help young drivers relate to what can happen to them and others.

"Education is the key to getting people to understand," he said. "It's an eye-opening experience. It calls attention to the dangers and makes people better drivers. They come in and tell me stories about how it changed their lives."

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# Bunnell: Florida's "Paradise Lost?"

By Judge Patti A. Christensen  
A Personal Journal Entry

As a visiting judge to this small burg, I was greeted by a local barrister, "Welcome to paradise."

"Bunnell—paradise?" I quietly mused to myself. The little town is basically a one traffic-light town, wedged between St. Augustine and Daytona Beach along U.S. 1. Once a thriving timber town, it is now the sleepy seat of Flagler County, presently the fastest growing county in Florida. The ever-expanding Palm Coast ITT community has caused the caseload to increase in Flagler, but the local courthouse remains much like it was 50 years ago. It is most likely the last Florida courthouse without a security system at the entrance.

The courthouse itself is a stately square brick building with high ceilings and airy hallways that emit the odor of antiquity. The odor reminds me of the comforting smell of old books in an old library.

Prior to the addition to accommodate a new county judge, Judge William L. "Billy" Wadsworth was the only rooster ruling this roost. He served as the presiding judge from 1967 to 1978, and his presence is alive and well in the courthouse today.

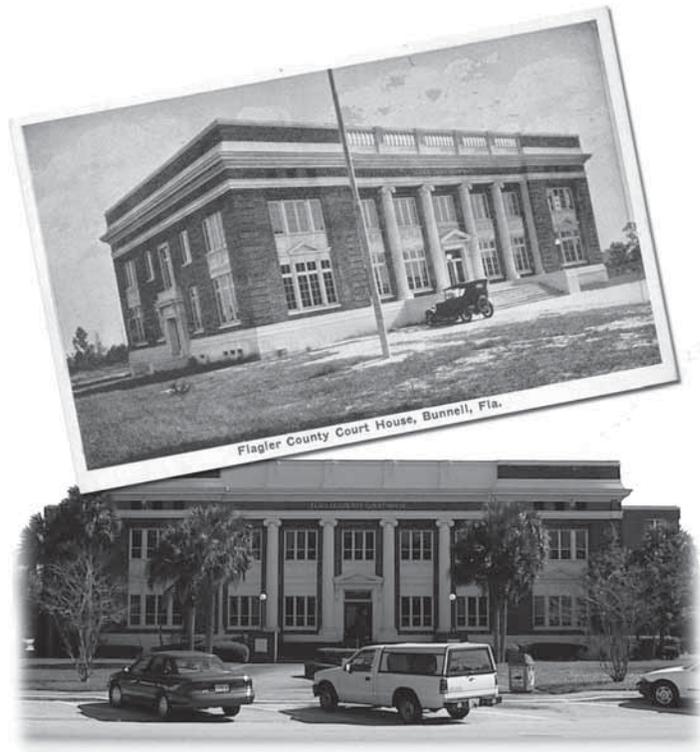
Judge Wadsworth's daughter, Prunie, serves as judicial assistant to the only circuit judge, Kim Hammond. Daughter Gail serves as Clerk of the Court. Daughter Susan is a circuit judge in the 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit! Needless to say, the courthouse is in capable hands. The majority of folks grew up knowing each other and their families have been friends for decades.

Many documents filed with the Clerk were authored or signed by "Papa" Wadsworth.

"Dad had terrible handwriting," said Prunie, who admits she inherited the same affliction. There are handwritten deeds, judgments, and other recorded documents that provide a constant reminder of the great man who served Flagler County for 11 years.

One shouldn't assume that a strong case of nepotism landed these capable folks into their present positions. Prunie worked her way up through the Clerk's office, juggling a variety of jobs and equally dedicated to each one. More recently Gail won her position as Clerk of the Court by popular vote. Circuit Judge Kim Hammond is famous around these parts, not because his family owned and operated the timber mill, but because he was the star quarterback for Florida State University.

Our own county Judge Sharon Attack is the sole county judge serving Flagler County. She "inherited" this position in 1995 at Governor Chiles' request after her husband, the late Judge William Attack, lost his valiantly fought battle with cancer.



The pressures and responsibilities of a Flagler County docket are just as weighty as larger counties, but they are different in some aspects, explained Judge Attack.

"For example, we don't do an 'on call' schedule because everyone knows where we live."

Court business in Flagler County is a family affair in many ways. The courthouse is run efficiently and professionally. The folks are cordial and respectful. To date there has been no need for high-tech x-ray security equipment or searches at the entrance. People just come in and conduct their business in a civilized way.

Some would say it's just like "paradise."

*Editor's Note: Since Judge Christensen wrote this piece for the Courier, Prunie has retired and security has been installed. Judge Attack reports that Flagler County is now the fastest-growing county in the United States. "A person might want to hurry up and visit the courthouse," she said, "before we become 'Paradise Lost.'"*

# Judge Ruth Thanks Colleagues for Help

*Reprinted from the Jacksonville Daily Record*

By Kent Jennings Brockwell  
Staff Writer

**W**hen Duval County Judge James Ruth invited the other 14 county judges to lunch, they all thought it was simply a nice gesture. The judges had no idea that they were going to be recognized by one of the top U.S. military commanders for their exemplary efforts.

Ruth, a Florida Army National Guardsman who recently returned from a year-long deployment in Iraq, held the lunch to thank the other Duval County judges for picking up his case load while he was deployed. At the secretly planned luncheon, which was sponsored by Ruth and his wife, Michelline, all of the attendees were quite surprised to see Florida Air National Guard Maj. Gen. Douglass Burnett, the adjutant general of Florida.

At the luncheon, Burnett individually thanked all of the judges for their extraordinary services and presented each with a commemorative plaque. He also presented Ruth's judicial assistant, Shirley Haag, with a plaque for her services during Ruth's deployment.

"They made it possible for Judge Ruth to go (into combat)," said Burnett. "They picked up his case load while he was gone. They didn't have to do that, but they did and I just wanted to thank them for what they did."



Fourth Judicial Circuit Chief Judge Donald Moran also thanked the group for their work, but said he is mainly glad that Ruth came home safely.

"We are glad that James is back," he said. "We were all worried about him."

In most cases when a judge is absent for an extended period of time, Moran said the court would usually shut down that judge's division. But in Ruth's situation, Moran said all of the other judges stepped up to the plate and each took on a few of Ruth's cases, clearing his calendar until he returned.

"It was kind of a unique experience," said Ruth. "They all just picked up the work load and we appreciate all that they did."

Though thanks and gratitude were showered upon the judges throughout the luncheon, Judge Ronald Higbee said picking up some of Ruth's case load while he was deployed was not a hassle at all and was simply the right thing to do.

"It was something we were glad to do for Judge Ruth while he was off serving his country," he said.



## Summer Conference

Dade County Judges Fred Seraphin and Shirlyon McWhorter stand before the "Highwaymen" paintings on exhibit at the Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo, venue of the 2005 Summer Educational Conference. The Highwaymen were a group of African American artists who sold their work on the roadsides of Florida. Their art has become recently popular with Florida art collectors. Their style and training is credited to Florida Everglades artist A.E. "Bean" Backus.

## COMMITTEE REPORT

### Traffic Rules Committee Minutes

Chairman: David L. Denkin

Co-Chair: Dava J. Tunis

- Discussed the benefits of implementation of pre-trials for all mandatory and requested civil traffic infraction hearings. This increases time efficiency and saves the court system the cost of unnecessary subpoenas.
- Judge Steven Liefman has been working over the past two years toward redrafting civil infractions more simplistically.
- There was discussion on the benefits of having periodic meetings with representatives of law enforcement, ASAs, PDs and the clerk's office to discuss problems and solutions regarding various issues occurring in county court.
- The committee unanimously approved supporting amendment Fla. R. Traffic Court 6.630(d)(2). (See also In Re Florida Rules of Practice and Procedure for Traffic Courts – Civil Traffic Infraction Hearing Officer Pilot Program, 559 So.2d 1101 (Fla. 1990) to allow the Hearing Officer to "hear" any traffic infraction payable by fine (this would include traffic infractions involving injury).
- The members of the committee also discussed the need for clarification from the Department and the statutory law on whether "clerk's withhold" applies to the criminal violation of DWLS with Knowledge, and in turn would NOT count toward the five-year HTO suspension.
- The members of the committee further discussed the five-year HTO license suspension and the fact that the time period is calculated from conviction date to conviction date (§ 322.264), unlike the time period calculated in DUI cases which is from conviction date to offense date (see § 322.28(2)(a)).

## Call for Nominations

### Judge Harvey Ford, Jr. Leadership Award

In Spring 1995, the Florida Conference of County Court Judges created its highest award in honor of a past president and stalwart judge, Harvey Ford, Jr. Judge Ford died following a lengthy illness in 1995.

Harvey, as his colleagues and friends affectionately knew him, was appointed to the county bench in 1977. He was elected to serve as president of the Conference of County Court Judges in 1983. Harvey was very active in his local community as well.

The twofold purpose of the Harvey Ford Award is to perpetuate the memory of Harvey while recognizing those persons who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to their office and have made a profound contribution to their local community as well as the Conference. This award is presented each year at the Summer Educational Conference

#### HARVEY FORD LEADERSHIP AWARD NOMINATION CRITERIA

Please provide a narrative statement (two-page maximum) about why the nominee should receive the Harvey Ford Leadership Award. Include in your narrative:

1. Nominated by
2. Name of nominee
  - a. Nominee's address and phone number
  - b. Position
  - c. Years of judicial service
  - d. Law school attended and years attended
  - e. Bar admissions
  - f. Conference involvement (past and present)
  - g. Community activities
  - h. Why you nominated this person/special leadership qualities

**Send to: Judge Mary Robinson  
201 S.E. 6th St.  
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301**

# Governor Appoints Several County Judges to Circuit Bench

## JUDGE W. JOEL BOLES

In October, Governor Jeb Bush appointed Santa Rosa County Judge W. Joel Boles to the First Judicial Circuit Court to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Circuit Judge John P. Kuder.

Judge Boles of Gulf Breeze, has proudly served as a Santa Rosa County judge for two years. Prior to his service on the county bench, he worked in private practice as a shareholder in the Pensacola law firm of Wilson, Harrell, Smith, Boles & Farrington.

Judge Boles, age 43, received his undergraduate degree from the University of Alabama in 1983, and his Juris Doctor from Cumberland School of Law in 1987, graduating in the top 10% of his class.

Congratulations, Judge Boles!

## JUDGE CHARLES BURTON

Governor Jeb Bush appointed Charles Burton to the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Court. Burton will fill the vacancy in the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit created during the 2005 legislative session.

Burton, 47, of Boca Raton, served as a Palm Beach County judge, a position he held since 2000. Previously, he was a partner with the law firm of Burton & Burton, in Ft. Lauderdale.

Burton received his undergraduate degree from Suffolk University in 1980 and his Juris Doctor from Nova Southeastern Law School in 1984.

## JUDGE MARK CARPANINI

Mark Carpanini has been appointed to the Tenth Judicial Circuit Court. Carpanini will fill the vacancy in the Tenth Judicial Circuit created during the 2005 legislative session.



Carpanini, 51, of Lakeland, had served as a county judge in Polk County since 2002. Prior to that, he was the Polk County Attorney.

Carpanini received his undergraduate degree from the Fordham University in 1975, his Juris Doctor from the University of Miami in 1978, and his Master of Public Administration from the University of South Florida in 1998.

## JUDGE PETER ESTRADA

Peter Estrada was appointed to the Tenth Judicial Circuit Court. He will fill the vacancy in the Tenth Judicial Circuit created during the 2005 legislative session.

Estrada, 43, of Sebring, was formerly county judge in Highlands County, a position held since 2002. Prior to that, he served as an assistant state attorney in the Office of the State Attorney, in Bartow.

Estrada received his undergraduate degree from the University of South Florida in 1983 and his Juris Doctor from the South Texas College of Law in 1988.

## JUDGE MARK KING LEBAN

Judge Mark King Leban, who had been a Miami-Dade County judge since 1995, was appointed to the 11th Judicial Circuit Court. Judge Leban will fill the vacancy created by the death of Judge Sidney Shapiro.

Prior to becoming a county judge, Leban, 57, was a sole practitioner in the law office of Mark King Leban, P.A.



Leban received his undergraduate degree from Boston University in 1969, and his Juris Doctor from the University of Miami School of Law in 1972.

Previously, Governor Bush had appointed Jorge I. Pedraza of Miami to fill the appointment. Pedraza subsequently informed the Governor he could not accept the commission.

## JUDGE JEFFERY LEVENSON

Governor Jeb Bush appointed Jeffrey Levenson to the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit Court. He will fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Judge Leonard Fleet, effective December 31, 2005.

Levenson, 48, of Parkland, is currently a Broward County judge, a position he has held since 2003. Prior to that, he served as an Assistant United States Attorney in the United States Attorney's Office, Southern District of Florida.

Levenson received his undergraduate degree, cum laude, from John Hopkins University in 1978 and his Juris Doctor from the University of Maryland School of Law in 1981.

## JUDGE JON MORGAN

Jon Morgan has been appointed to the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court to fill the vacancy in the Ninth Court created during the 2005 legislative session.

Morgan, 52, of Kissimmee, has served as a county court judge for Osceola County since 1998. He was previously an Assistant State Attorney in the Ninth Judicial Circuit for nearly 11 years.

Morgan received his undergraduate degree from the University of Florida in 1974 and his Juris Doctor from the University of Florida College of Law in 1977.



# More Circuit Court Appointees

## JUDGE JAMES NILON

James Nilon was appointed to the Eighth Judicial Circuit Court. He will fill the vacancy in the Eighth Judicial Circuit created during the 2005 legislative session.

Nilon, 57, of Gainesville, served as an Alachua County Court judge, a position held since 2000. Prior to that, he served as an Assistant State Attorney in the 8th Circuit.



Nilon received his undergraduate degree from the University of Florida in 1970, his Juris Doctor from the University of Florida in 1972, and his Masters of Business Administration from Indiana University in 1984.

## JUDGE CRISTINA PEREYRA-SHUMINER

Governor Jeb Bush has appointed Cristina Pereyra-Shuminer to the Eleventh Judicial Circuit. Pereyra-Shuminer will fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Judge Alex E. Ferrer.

Pereyra-Shuminer, 43, of Pinecrest, was a County Court Judge for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit, a position she has held since 1998. Prior to that she was an Assistant Public Defender for Miami-Dade County from 1990-1998.



Pereyra-Shuminer received her undergraduate degree from Universidad Anahuac Escuela de Derecho in 1984 and her Juris Doctor from University of Miami School of Law in 1988.

## JUDGE ORLANDO PRESCOTT

Orlando Prescott has been appointed to the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court to fill the vacancy

created by the resignation of Judge Michael Chavies.

Prescott, 45, of Miami, served as county court judge for Miami-Dade County since 2000. Prior to that, he was an assistant U.S. attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Florida.

Prescott received his undergraduate degree from Rutgers University in 1981 and his Juris Doctor from the University of Florida College of Law in 1984.

## JUDGE MICHELLE SISCO

Governor Jeb Bush appointed Michelle Sisco to the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Court. Sisco will fill the vacancy in the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit created during the 2005 legislative session.

Sisco, 38, of Tampa, served as a Hillsborough County Court Judge, a position she held since September 2002.

Sisco received her undergraduate degree from Vanderbilt University in 1988, and her Juris Doctor from the University of Florida School of Law in 1991.



## JUDGE DAVA TUNIS

Dava Tunis has been appointed to the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court. She will fill one of the vacancies in the Eleventh Circuit created during the 2005 legislative session.

Tunis, 43, of Key Biscayne, was a county court judge for Miami-Dade County, a position she held since 2000. Prior to that, she was an assistant public defender in the Office of the Public Defender.

Tunis received her undergraduate degree from Colgate University in 1982 and her Juris Doctor from the University of Miami School of Law in 1985.

## Conference of County Court Judges of Florida

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9 <sup>th</sup> Circuit _____	To Be Selected
10 <sup>th</sup> Circuit _____	Angela J. Cowden
11 <sup>th</sup> Circuit _____	To Be Selected
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# Governor Jeb Bush Appoints New County Judges

## JUDGE ANTONIO ARZOLA

Governor Jeb Bush appointed Antonio Arzola as a Miami-Dade County Judge in September. Judge Arzola is a direct descendant from Cuban-born parents who immigrated to the United States in 1967. He is the first person in his immediate family to graduate from college.

The new judge graduated with honors from Miami-Dade Community College, and thereafter received a degree in criminal justice with honors from Florida International University (FIU) in 1991.

Judge Arzola attended University of Miami College of Law. In his first year, he was the number one academic student. Because of his standing, he received full scholarships for his second and third years at UM. He graduated magna cum laude from UM College of Law in 1995 and wrote for the UM Law Review. He also received book awards (number one in the class) for Torts, Property, and Constitutional Law.

Upon graduating from UM, Judge Arzola clerked for U.S. District Judge Federico A. Moreno, and thereafter joined the law firm of Murai, Wald, Biondo, Moreno & Brochin, where he worked as a commercial litigator until the time of his appointment.

Judge Arzola is married to Ana Maria Arzola, his high school sweetheart, an administrator with the Dade County School Board. The couple have three sons, Antonio, Jr., Alejandro, and Andres.

Congratulations and welcome, Judge Arzola!

## JUDGE THOMAS P. BARBER

Governor Jeb Bush appointed Thomas P. Barber to the Hillsborough County Court. Barber will fill the vacancy created by the elevation of Judge Mark Wolfe to the 13th Judicial Circuit Court.

Barber, 37, of Tampa, was formerly a shareholder with the Carlton Fields law firm. In addition to his private practice experience, Barber



also served as Statewide Prosecutor in Tampa from 1999-2000 and as an assistant state attorney for the 13th Judicial Circuit from 1997-1999.

Barber received his undergraduate degree from the University of Florida in 1989 and his law degree from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1992.

## JUDGE SANDRA BOSSO-PARDO

Sandry Bosso-Pardo has been appointed to the Palm Beach County Court. Bosso-Pardo will fill the vacancy created by the appointment of Judge Jonathan D. Gerber to the 15th Circuit.

Bosso-Pardo, 50, of Palm Beach Gardens, was previously Senior Counsel for the School District of Palm Beach County. Prior to that, she was a partner with Paxton, Crow, Smith, Bosso-Pardo & Davis, P.A., in West Palm Beach.

Bosso-Pardo received her undergraduate degree from Spring Hill College in 1975, and her Juris Doctor from Stetson University College of Law in 1978.

## JUDGE JOHN CARASSAS

John Carassas, a former state House member from Palm Harbor who is currently a deputy state attorney general, has been appointed by the Governor to a county judgeship.

Carassas will fill a new county court judgeship created by the Legislature in the spring. The 39-year-old lawyer is a graduate of the University of South Florida and the Stetson University College of Law. He left the Legislature in 2003 to serve as a deputy under Attorney General Charlie Crist.

## JUDGE NURIA SAENA DE LA TORRE

Governor Jeb Bush has appointed Nuria Saena de la Torre to the Miami-Dade County Court. De la Torre will fill the vacancy created by the res-

ignation of Judge Cristina Pereyra-Shuminer.

"Nuria's prior experience as a general magistrate and special master will allow her to adapt quickly to the county bench," said Governor Bush. "Her rise in the court system after coming to the United States twenty-five years ago without speaking English is an inspiration to all who have sought freedom and opportunity in America."

De la Torre, 34, of Miami, is currently General Magistrate in the Family Division of Eleventh Judicial Circuit, a position she has held since April 2004.

De la Torre received her undergraduate degree from Barry University in 1992, and her Juris Doctor from St. Thomas University School of Law in 1997.

## JUDGE VICTOR HULSLANDER

Governor Jeb Bush has appointed Victor Hulslander to the Alachua County Court. Hulslander will fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Judge Jeanne D. Crenshaw.

Hulslander, 59, of Gainesville, is currently the President of the law offices of Hulslander & Griffis, P.A., a position he has held since 2000. Prior to that he was a sole practitioner. Hulslander is a certified family law mediator.

Hulslander received his undergraduate degree from the University of Florida in 1969 and his Juris Doctor from the University of Florida College of Law in 1974.

## JUDGE EDWIN JAGGER

Edwin Jagger has been appointed to the Pinellas County Court. He will fill the vacancy created by the death of Judge William B. Blackwood.

Jagger, 40, of Seminole, is currently a shareholder with the law firm of Battaglia, Ross, Dicus and Wein, P.A., in St. Petersburg, where he has worked since 1990.

Jagger received his undergraduate degree



from Western Carolina University in 1987, his Juris Doctor from Stetson University College of Law in 1991 and his Master of Laws in Taxation from the University of Miami School of Law in 1992.

#### **JUDGE BRONWYN C. MILLER**

Bronwyn C. Miller has been appointed to the Miami-Dade County Court to Miller will fill the vacancy created by the appointment of Judge Richard Suarez to the 3rd District Court of Appeal.

Miller, 32, of Miami, is currently the Training Director for the Assistant State Attorney, Eleventh Judicial Circuit, a position she has held since 1997. Miller also served as Adjunct Professor at Florida International University from 2000-2001.

Miller received her undergraduate degree from Columbia University, Barnard College, in 1994 and her Juris Doctor from the University of Miami College of Law in 1997.

#### **JUDGE BELLE B. SCHUMANN**

Belle B. Schumann was appointed to the Volusia County Court. Schumann will fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Judge Thomas E. Bevis.

Schumann, 46, of Port Orange, is currently a Senior Assistant Attorney General in the Daytona Beach Office of the Attorney General, a position she has held since 1984. Prior to that, Schumann served as an Assistant Public Defender for the 9th Judicial Circuit.

Schumann received her undergraduate degree from Stetson University in 1981 and her Juris Doctor from the Florida State University College of Law in 1983

#### **JUDGE JOYCE HENDERSON WILLIAMS**

Joyce Henderson Williams was appointed to the Escambia County Court. Williams will fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Judge William P. White.

Williams will be the first African-American to serve on the Escambia County bench and the first African-American woman appointed in the 1st Circuit.

Williams, 50, of Pensacola, is currently the Assistant City Attorney in Pensacola, a position she has held since 1994. Williams also served as assistant county attorney for the Escambia County

Attorney's Office from 1988-1994.

Williams received her undergraduate degree from the University of Florida in 1977 and her Juris Doctor from the University of Florida College of Law in 1981.

#### **JUDGE CATALINA AVALOS**

Gov. Jeb Bush has appointed Catalina Avalos to the Broward County Court.

"It's a great honor for the Hispanic community in Broward County," Avalos said. "It's a great opportunity for me on a personal level and on a community level as well."

Avalos is the first Colombian-born person

ever appointed to a judicial position in the United States, according to Carmenza Jaramillo, Colombia's Counsel General in Miami.

Judge Avalos, 34, is the fourth Hispanic to serve on the Broward County Court, joining Ana Gardiner, Robert Diaz and Robert Lee.

"I'm honored the Governor put his faith in me and gave me this opportunity to continue serving the people of Broward County and my community," Judge Avalos said.

Judge Avalos served as an assistant state attorney for seven years. She is a graduate of the University of Miami College of Law.

### **IN MEMORIAM**

## **Pinellas County Judge William Blackwood**

The Conference of County Court Judges will miss Pinellas County Judge William B. Blackwood Jr., who passed away at age 63 of cancer. He proudly served the bench for 28 years.

Judge Blackwood had been ill and off the bench for the previous six months, according to Ron Stuart, a spokesman for the Pinellas-Pasco Judicial Circuit.

"Judge Blackwood was a friend and a valuable colleague," Chief Judge David Demers said. "For many years, he has provided outstanding service to the people of Pinellas County. His wisdom and experience are irreplaceable. We all are immeasurably saddened by his loss. His great courage and zest for life and his struggle with this incredible illness are a model for us all. We will miss him."

A Louisiana native, Judge Blackwood earned his law degree from the University of Florida in 1971. He was an assistant state attorney the following three years, then worked in private practice for three years.

In 1977, Gov. Reubin Askew appointed him to the county bench. His 28-year tenure was the fourth longest of the 59 judges currently serving the Pinellas-Pasco circuit. A year after his appointment by Askew, Judge Blackwood won his first of several elections to the county bench. He last ran, unopposed, in 2004.

"The county court is very much a people's court," Judge Blackwood was quoted. "It's very interesting from a legal point of view, and I enjoy the work very much."

Judge Blackwood handled some high-profile cases during his tenure on the bench.

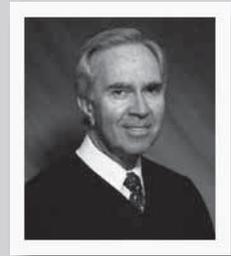
In 1981, he threatened to send a woman to jail if she didn't get her frequently truant son to school.

This was one of the first Pinellas cases in which a parent was punished for truancy.

In 1997, he ruled that a county ordinance banning soliciting on the sides of roadways was unconstitutional after police cited members of the National People's Democratic Uhuru Movement for handing out leaflets outside their building.

In 1998, Judge Blackwood sentenced Clearwater Mayor Rita Garvey to probation, community service and counseling for a drunken driving crash she had on her way to a City Commission meeting.

The Conference extends its condolences to the family and friends of Judge Blackwood. He will be missed.



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# UPCOMING CONFERENCES

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