



Spring 2018

# FULL COURT PRESS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE STATE COURTS SYSTEM OF FLORIDA

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## A Message from PK Jameson, State Courts Administrator

In our information-fraught world, most of us are bombarded with messages and graphics at all hours of the day and night. On the whole, Americans appreciate having access to lots of information and feel they are generally able to keep up with the information demands in their lives, recent research finds. But, even so, given all the competing claims on our time and attention, who does not appreciate getting a brief email or text message from our dentist's office or our child's school administrator, reminding us of an appointment or event? This is the thinking behind an electronic notification program that the judicial branch has just begun working on with the clerks of court: the idea is to send text messages or emails reminding people to show up for their court appearances.



Electronic notifications have been shown to improve the likelihood that defendants will show up for their hearings: a recent study of a text-alert pilot program in New York City found that the use of text message reminders reduced failure-to-appear violations by 26 percent. With a \$750,000 appropriation from lawmakers, we are now working with the clerks of court to make electronic notifications—text and email alert reminders as well as information—a reality in Florida. Chief Judge Linda Nobles, First Judicial Circuit, and Clerk of Court JD Peacock, Okaloosa County, are leading a workgroup to determine the scope of, and to implement, the initiative.

People miss their court dates for many reasons. They may mistakenly assume that most people skip court, especially when their offenses were relatively minor, for instance. Or the immediate inconvenience of going to court may eclipse their concern about the fallout of failing to appear. Or, because people's lives are so busy, and because the time gap between receiving the summons and the court date may be lengthy, they may simply forget. But the consequences of missing a court date are costly for the defendants and their families—and for the courts and clerks.

Failure to appear is a separate criminal offense in Florida, carrying its own penalties. It may result in the issuance of an arrest warrant that requires the defendant to be taken into custody immediately; any bond the defendants posted may be forfeited, causing them to lose cash or collateral; and, if arrested, they may be held in jail without bond and possibly ordered to pay fines and court fees. And for the courts and clerks, having to reschedule these cases is expensive and inefficient, costing both money and time.

Done right, electronic notifications will prompt more people to show up for court when they are required to do so, saving them a lot of difficulties and saving the state a lot of time and money in tracking them down. The courts and clerks are excited about working together to bring this technology to Florida in the coming fiscal year.

Sincerely,  
*PK Jameson*

## Access to Justice

### Florida Courts Help App Offers Mobile-Friendly Support to Self-Represented Litigants

Research shows that people are “increasingly connected to the world of digital information” via their smartphones or other mobile devices ([Pew Research Center](#)). Forty percent of smartphone owners now use their mobile devices to find out about government services, for instance ([Pew Research Center](#)). This trend is true for court users as well. Of the approximately two million unique visitors who access [flcourts.org](#) each year, almost one-third of them are using their mobile devices. Many of these visitors are self-represented litigants seeking family law forms and information. To respond to their need for mobile-friendly support, Office of the State Courts Administrator staff, under the direction of the [Florida Commission on Access to Civil Justice](#), recently developed an app.

Through the [Florida Courts Help app](#), Floridians seeking a divorce, an order of protection, a name change, a stepparent adoption, or help with other family law issues can easily access a repository of resources. The app, designed to help these litigants navigate the court system more efficiently, provides them with access to 186 supreme court-approved family law forms that can be filled out on their device; links and contact lists (by circuit and by county) to local help centers around the state; plain-language instructions and descriptions of first steps and next actions in filing a case, along with instructions about what to expect at each stage; tips for a full range of legal help, including online resources, free and low-cost legal services, and lawyer referrals; and guidance on what to expect in the courtroom without an attorney. The Florida Courts Help app is available at app stores, and links and instructions are also available at [Help.flcourts.org](#).



Since the app launched on December 15, 2017, more than 10,000 unique users have accessed the responsive website, some from their desktops and tablets, but most from their mobile devices. The app has been installed on more than 3,200 devices thus far.

### The Florida Domestic Violence Help App: Georgetown Law Students Help OSCA Develop a Valuable Resource for Self-Represented Litigants

Across the country, court leaders have been noting the rise, in recent years, of the number of family law cases in which at least one party is self-represented. This is especially true of victims of domestic violence (DV), many of whom represent themselves in court. This same trend has been seen in Florida: a 2017 single-day census of self-represented litigants at seven courthouses throughout Miami-Dade County revealed that, of all the parties observed, DV litigants were the most likely to be self-represented; indeed, on the day of the census, 88 percent of the DV litigants were representing themselves in court. (Note: the census was organized by The Florida Bar Foundation; more information can be found at [Everyone Counts Day](#)).

Like most self-represented litigants, victims of DV tend to have little or no prior experience with court proceedings. Moreover, emotional barriers, communication and sometimes language hurdles, lack of information, unfamiliar legal terminology in conjunction with the seeming complexity of court processes, and cultural and attitudinal biases may significantly hinder their ability to have meaningful access to the courts. To help these litigants navigate the judicial process without counsel, OSCA, with the help of the Georgetown Iron Tech Lawyer Program, is working to develop the Florida DV Help App.

The Georgetown Iron Tech Lawyer Program is a Georgetown Law Center initiative that launched in 2013. Each spring semester, teams of law students enrolled in the [Technology, Innovation, and Law Practice practicum](#)—in collaboration with Pro Bono Net and with Neota Logic—work with nonprofit organizations to design—at no cost to the organizations—web-based apps that promote access to the justice system and legal resources. In November 2017, the Iron Tech Lawyer Program invited public interest



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Ms. Kathleen Tailer and Ms. Susan Proctor, attorneys with OSCA's Office of Court Improvement, are providing the legal and content matter expertise for the Domestic Violence Help App.

organizations to submit proposals for apps that would specifically help to meet the objective of Resolution 5 of the Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Courts Administrators: this resolution, [Reaffirming the Commitment to Meaningful Access to Justice for All](#), “support[s] the aspirational goal of 100 percent access to effective assistance for essential civil legal needs.” Seizing this remarkable opportunity, OSCA proposed the development of the Florida DV Help App—and this app was one of the six chosen for the class to create in the spring 2018 semester.

The Florida DV Help App is designed to offer legal support to self-represented litigants who are facing a domestic or other interpersonal violence situation—e.g., someone has been physically violent with them, has placed them in fear of physical violence, or is stalking them. (Note: although interpersonal violence is the more inclusive term, OSCA opted to call the app the DV Help App because DV is the term that is most familiar to intended users.) Like tax preparation software, the app—a conduit to a responsive website with a mobile-friendly design—guides users through an interactive, web-based “interview” dynamic, culminating in the production of an editable petition for the type of civil injunction most appropriate to their situation: DV, sexual violence, dating violence, repeat violence,

or stalking. (This link goes to [additional information about interpersonal violence](#).) The legal and content matter expertise for this app is being provided by Ms Susan Proctor, Ms Kathleen Tailer, and Mr. Nathan Moon, all of OSCA’s Office of Court Improvement, and Ms Patty Ceci Sharp, of OSCA’s Innovations and Outreach Unit, is providing technical guidance.



Kathleen Tailer, OCI

Ms Patty Ceci Sharp, technologist with the OSCA Innovations and Outreach Unit, is providing technical guidance in the app development; here, at a recent statewide meeting of the court system’s domestic violence coordinators, she introduces the prototype and invites coordinators’ feedback.

In its first release, the Florida DV Help will assist self-represented litigants by determining the correct petition for their situation and helping them fill it out as completely and correctly as possible. But, as OSCA envisions it, the app will eventually serve as an icon-driven portal to all the tools and legal support mechanisms offered to self-represented litigants in DV cases: Florida Supreme Court-approved petitions and forms; informational videos; training modules; resources (including shelters) available by Florida county; digital brochures; a list of batterers

intervention program providers; a process map of DV cases; help with finding a court; help with finding self-help centers; and information for locating pro bono attorneys and low-cost legal aid services. When released (projected to be early this fall), the app will be accessible from [Florida Courts Help](#) and from the flcourts [Institute on Interpersonal Violence](#) page.

Through this OSCA-Georgetown collaboration, Florida’s courts are seeking to make Resolution 5 a reality for victims of interpersonal violence seeking meaningful access to the justice system.

## The Fifth Circuit Enkindles Future Court Interpreters

Together, California, New York, Texas, and Florida are home to more than half of the country’s foreign-born population, according to the US Census Bureau. Of the nearly 21 million people currently residing in Florida, approximately 3.9 million are foreign born. And of the 28.3 percent of Floridians who speak a language other than English at home, 41.3 percent say they “speak English less than ‘very well’” ([2012 – 2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate](#)). Judicial branch leadership recognizes that for people who do not speak English at all or whose English proficiency is limited, Florida’s system of jurisprudence is unfamiliar; its level of complexity may be daunting and may hinder their ability to participate fully in court processes. Thus the branch’s commitment to equal access to justice for all includes efforts to reduce the effect of language barriers for those with no, or limited, English language skills.

Branch endeavors to minimize language barriers began to flourish in 2006: seeking to ensure a high quality of interpreting services in the state courts, the Florida Supreme Court adopted the rules governing the certification and regulation of spoken language interpreters and established the Court Interpreter Certification Board to certify, regulate, and discipline court interpreters (court interpreters

are trained to help non-English speakers and people with limited English proficiency achieve equal footing with those who speak English). Then in 2008, the court implemented a state certification program for spoken language interpreters. Since then, the certification board has been working diligently to build a pool of qualified court interpreters.

Due to challenges in recruiting and retaining certified court interpreters, however, building this pool has often seemed more aspirational than achievable. As of May 2018, the OSCA Court Interpreter Database reports that Florida has only 335 certified court interpreters, two language skilled interpreters, and 19 provisionally approved interpreters (and these figures may include interpreters who are not actively interpreting for the courts system).

A number of Florida’s trial courts have devised some inspired strategies to address this dearth of qualified court interpreters. For instance, several circuits have designed recruitment sessions that aim to introduce language-gifted circuit residents to the profession and encourage them to attend a two-day orientation program administered by OSCA (attending this orientation program meets the first requirement of becoming a court interpreter). And other circuits have established internship/externship programs or volunteer opportunities to attract prospective court interpreters.

Recently, the Fifth Circuit debuted a new kind of outreach initiative: rather than waiting for prospective court interpreters to come to the courts, Mr. Todd Tuzzolino, the circuit’s chief deputy trial court administrator, went looking for them! The Fifth Circuit has the good fortune of being relatively close to the University of Central Florida, which has an Interpretation and Translation Certificate Program. This spring, Mr. Tuzzolino visited the campus to speak with students in the program’s Spanish Conversation class and Spanish Language Legal Translation and Interpretation class about court interpreting as a profession; he also invited the students to participate in the circuit’s mentoring and internship opportunities. Interested students followed up with a visit to the Lake County Courthouse in Tavares; they observed a mock interpreting event before Judge Don F. Briggs, and after the hearing, they met with the judge, supervising court interpreter Ana Braun, and other court administration employees for a question and answer session about court interpreting.



Chief Deputy Trial Court Administrator Todd Tuzzolino, Fifth Circuit, poses for a photo with University of Central Florida students in the Interpreting and Translation Certificate Program.

courtesy of the 5th Circuit



courtesy of the 5th Circuit

Ms Ana Braun, supervising interpreter at the Fifth Circuit, plays the part of an attorney during the mock hearing in front of Judge Don F. Briggs; Mr. Juan Carlos Villanueva, one of the circuit’s certified Spanish interpreters, interprets for the mock defendant.

the due process rights of limited English proficient individuals that appear before the court.” The hope is that this new practice will bear fruit and the Fifth Circuit will soon begin to see an increase in the pool of available interpreters. (This link goes to information about [becoming a court interpreter](#).)

## Court Initiatives

### Florida WINGS Strives to Advance Guardianship Reform in Florida

Over the last year, with a one-year grant and technical assistance from the American Bar Association and the National Center for State Courts, OSCA has been guiding a court-community partnership focused on improving practices in adult guardianship and providing less restrictive decision-making options. The need for this partnership—called Florida WINGS (Florida’s Working Interdisciplinary Networks of Guardianship Stakeholders)—had become pressing: the number of guardianship cases for adults is on the rise in Florida, and these cases are becoming increasingly complex. And although stakeholders had long agreed that Florida law and guardianship processes need to be assessed and improved, each entity was working autonomously to tackle the myriad and intricate issues related to guardianship. WINGS is changing that pattern.

Florida WINGS is a broad-based, interdisciplinary, collaborative initiative that aims to facilitate the coordination of key representatives from the various stakeholder groups to ensure that efforts are not duplicated and that collective impact is preserved. WINGS is Florida’s first concerted endeavor to advance guardianship reform in the state—and, ultimately, to enhance the lives of people who have, or may need, guardians.

WINGS stakeholders have met four times since July 2017, and at each summit, between 30 and 40 partners shared their particular perspectives on the key issues that this initiative needs to address (in addition to guardians and self-advocates, invited stakeholders have included members of the judiciary, of legislative and executive branch agencies, and of related, private organizations). At the first summit, stakeholders identified four areas that they agreed should serve as the foundation of all their thinking, proposing, and implementing: these four “pillars” are Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation; Alternatives to Guardianship; Process Improvement and Standardization; and Education and Awareness.



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Chief Judge Frederick Lauten, Ninth Circuit, who chairs the Florida WINGS stakeholder group, welcomes stakeholders to their fourth summit.



Tricia Knox, SC

To gather information about, and identify areas of need and concern regarding, the current state of guardianship in Florida, WINGS stakeholders held two public hearings; speakers at the February public hearing in Orlando, pictured here, share their concerns with WINGS members.

Because WINGS is strictly planning-oriented at this point, at the second summit, stakeholders laid the groundwork for developing a strategic plan for guardianship reform in Florida, including ideas for a WINGS mission statement and vision statement. They also discussed issues and enterprises on which they can work together in the geographic region they represent.

To inform the strategic planning process, before the third summit, WINGS partners sought feedback from people willing to voice their concerns about guardianship and to offer possible solutions for their concerns—judges and court personnel, state agencies, private and government attorneys, families, guardians, and other interested parties. This outreach endeavor included two public hearings on guardianship and a 29-question survey, dis-

tributed to the guardianship community at large; the results were presented and discussed at the third summit. Also at that meeting, stakeholders considered and voted to adopt the mission and vision statements they had crafted:

**Mission Statement**

*Florida WINGS is a collaborative group of stakeholders dedicated to creating solutions through court-community partnerships by identifying, assessing and improving guardianship practices and decision-making alternatives to enhance the quality of care and lives of vulnerable adults.*

**Vision Statement**

*The vision of Florida WINGS is to serve the best interests of those needing decision-making assistance in order to promote their well-being, dignity, self-determination, and independence.*

In addition, taking into account all the public input they had gathered, stakeholders proposed and reached consensus on the goals that they believe the group should pursue.



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Before the fourth WINGS summit, which was held at the Florida Supreme Court in May, stakeholders who were able to arrive early were treated to a tour of some of the public areas of the building; here, they gather for a photo in the courtroom.

At the fourth and final grant-funded summit, which took place on May 3 at the Florida Supreme Court, stakeholders finalized and prioritized the WINGS goals, agreeing to direct their initial efforts toward the three goals that received the most votes. Before ranking their priorities, however, stakeholders requested a final opportunity to talk more deeply about some of the goals, and even to make a case for those about which they felt strongly. This period of animated discourse and compelling give-and-take was critical, for it gave them a chance to think collectively about the best interests of adults who have, or who may potentially need, guardians. They then voted to prioritize the WINGS goals as follows:

1. Determine which circuits do not have a sufficient number of physicians participating on their examining committees and develop a recruitment plan for those circuits to use
2. Design a toolkit containing comprehensive information about decision-making options, for distribution to the public

3. Provide law enforcement officers and first responders with one or more tools to assist them in identifying and reporting abuse, neglect or exploitation
4. Develop a new component of the annual guardianship report that comprehensively addresses restoration of rights
5. Develop and pilot a volunteer court visitor program for individuals who have a family guardian
6. Create model annual guardianship/guardian advocacy reporting forms for use in all Florida circuits
7. Design an evaluation guide for courts to use when approving family guardianship training courses, in order to improve course consistency, quality, and content
8. Establish a process for courts to notify the Social Security Administration when a guardian of the property who is also a representative payee is removed

Following the vote, stakeholders broke out into three groups, one for each of the top three goals, to discuss how to implement them and how to sustain the WINGS initiative. The groups also began to consider methods of funding these goals.

Florida WINGS has had a rich and productive first year. But perhaps one of its greatest accomplishments thus far is that this gathering of partners, representing a rich diversity of backgrounds and viewpoints and interests, has learned to think and work interdependently—and to focus on the many and complex issues related to guardianship both systematically and concertedly. Surely, this is very promising news for Floridians whose lives have been touched by, or may be touched by, guardianship. (This link goes to more information about [Florida WINGS](#).)

## Education and Outreach

### Helping New Appellate Judges Prepare for Judicial Service

“Welcome to the best job in the world,” Chief Justice Labarga has been known to exclaim as he greets the judges who are about to take part in the three-day New Appellate Judges Program. What makes this job “the best,” he explains, is that appellate judges, working together in panels, have the opportunity for thoughtful review of the decisions of the lower tribunals; they “have time to think, time to contemplate” their decisions. Because this work situation is unique to the appellate courts, all new appointees, whether they come directly from the practice of law or from the trial court bench, benefit from assistance with transitioning to judicial service on the appellate bench. And that is what the New Appellate Judges Program seeks to provide. Offered annually, this dynamic judicial education program was established in 1991, and attendance is required by all new appellate judges.

After the chief justice’s welcome, the appellate dean of the program and one of its lead faculty members, Chief Judge Jonathan Gerber, Fourth DCA, sets the stage for the demanding agenda upon which participants are about to embark. He likens the program to a “discussion” about matters of relevance and concern to appellate judges, stressing that the program is decidedly “not prescriptive.” Rather, it “gives you things to think about” and opportunities to share “ideas with the different faculty members and your colleagues here”—but, in the end, “you must decide what works best for you.” He assures attendees that, for those who seek to learn “how I can do my job better, this program will help.”



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In his session on Opinion Writing: Making Great Writers Better, the appellate dean of the New Appellate Judges Program, Chief Judge Jonathan Gerber, Fourth DCA, offers strategies for “going from a Picasso to a Mona Lisa in your opinions.”

Indeed, the curriculum for this education program, consisting of a balance of lecture-style sessions and participatory learning experiences, gives attendees many opportunities to absorb, analyze, discuss, and put to the test practices designed to help them do their jobs better. Approximately half the program consists of information-imparting sessions on topics like ethics, certiorari and writs, motions and fees, supreme court jurisdiction, statutory interpretation, and post-conviction issues. The other sessions, which tend to be interactive in nature, give the new appellate judges practical opportunities to ponder, and to engage in energetic colloquies about, matters of pertinence to those who sit on the appellate bench—such as jurisdictional considerations, oral argument do’s and don’ts, working collegially (they reflect on crossing from the “solitary work of a trial court judge or lawyer” to being part of, and learning to work and to write as part of, a panel of judges), and strategies for becoming a better writer (Judge Gerber offers advice on “going from a Picasso to a Mona Lisa in your opinions”).

The 2018 New Appellate Judges Program unfolded during the first week of April, at the Florida Supreme Court. When the program takes place in Tallahassee, it offers a special perk: participants get a chance to meet and interact with all the supreme court justices. This year, their first opportunity came on the first day of the program: built into the schedule was “Lunch with the Florida Supreme Court.” During this informal lunch hour, after introductions were made all around, Judge Gerber invited the justices to share some advice about being an appellate judge—and they responded candidly and helpfully, with words both of a professional and a personal nature.

Civility was one of the topics that the justices frequently broached over lunch. “Remember what it was like to be a lawyer, on the other side of the bench,” Justice Quince suggested: “There are nice ways to make sure attorneys give you the information that you want.” And Chief Justice Labarga commented, “Most lawyers are doing the best they can with what they’ve got, so be patient.” Also discussed was the importance of collegiality—in particular, toward trial judges: acknowledging that “It’s our obligation to make sure that trial judges got the law right,” Justice Pariente also pointed out that “Trial judges have the toughest job,” and she underlined the need to “Be respectful of the trial judges; niceness is always going to win out.” The chief justice elaborated on this advice, reminding them that, “Unlike trial judges, you have the luxury of time; you can talk to colleagues, ponder; the trial judge has to make decisions on the spot. Be sensitive to that.”

Another popular topic was the need to work efficiently. Justice Quince encouraged the new appellate judges to “keep up with your caseload, getting things done in timely fashion; don’t let yourself fall behind.” And Justice Pariente added that “Delays, over time, take a toll—on you, but also on the litigants who are awaiting the result and on other judges.” She observed that the aphorism on the supreme court seal translates as “Soon enough, if correct”—but this practice needs to be tempered by the recognition that “Justice delayed is justice denied,” she emphasized.

Justices Canady and Lawson drew the new appellate judges’ attention to two different work-related issues: writing and thinking. Justice Canady stressed that because “every sentence we write can become law”—a responsibility he called *humbling*—“we must take seriously everything we say.” His suggested that the new appellate judges strive for what he called *lucid brevity* in their opinions. And Justice Lawson reminded them of the importance of “thinking critically. We teach lawyers to reason by analogy, but you have to develop a deeper skill; ask yourself questions like, ‘What’s the core principle here?’ ‘Does it make sense?’” He also remarked that, in reading about recent brain science research, he’s learned that “We make decisions mostly in the



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Because the New Appellate Judges Program was held in Tallahassee this year, participants had a chance to meet and interact with the supreme court justices; here, the justices and new appellate judges introduce themselves to one another before the program begins.



emotional part of the brain. But, as judges, we need to actively engage the rational part of the brain.” He emphasized that “The best appellate judges can see both sides of the argument” and urged them to “Learn to fight implicit bias and confirmation bias, and remember to listen to all sides of the issue.”

Justices offered some sound advice regarding off-the-bench activities as well. Justice Polston recommended that they “get involved in Florida Bar committees and in judicial branch governance,” adding that “We depend on boots on the ground, and it would be helpful to us.” And Justices Quince and Pariente proposed that they also stay close to and get involved in their communities—“Be active in making a difference,” they said. Stay close to your families as well, Justice Pariente proposed: referencing the hardship of having to live at a distance from her husband for 20 years (until he retired, her husband was a DCA judge in West Palm Beach), she advised them to remember to “Keep your families first; your families are always primary.” And Justice R. Fred Lewis encouraged them to “Do the best you can do, and enjoy it as much as you can.”

Clearly, the opportunities for learning transpire on a great many levels at the New Appellate Judges Program.

## Justice Teaching Institute Inspires Florida Educators

By Marisa Connell, Intern with the Florida Supreme Court’s Public Information Office

After a morning filled with introductions and informational sessions, 24 teachers from the Justice Teaching Institute (JTI) gathered on the bottom floor of the Florida Supreme Court for lunch. It was thirty minutes past noon on a Monday morning, and despite having been listening to lectures since 8:30 AM, the teachers were buzzing. As they gathered together to eat, they reflected on their experiences so far. Jasmine Oxley, a high school teacher from Viera Charter School, felt that although it was only the second day of the program, she had already learned so much. She explained that, after being involved in education for 22 years, she was seeking a revitalization in the way she teaches students about the judicial branch. “I want to take the information I am learning here back to my students. This way, they can use it in their everyday lives,” she said. Kim Herring, a civics teacher from Jupiter Middle School, couldn’t agree more. “Everything I am learning here, I am bringing back to my students,” she said. “This experience is almost surreal for me. It has been wonderful!”

Ms Oxley and Ms Herring were two of the 24 educators who came from throughout the state for the 2018 JTI. For this annual program, up to 25 teachers are accepted to participate in this comprehensive, five-day training session in civics education using a case-study approach. The event is sponsored and hosted by the Florida Supreme Court; coordinated by Ms. Annette Boyd Pitts, the executive director of the Florida Law Related Education Association; and funded by The Florida Bar Foundation. The institute was originally established in 1997 by Chief Justice Gerald Kogan as part of the Supreme Court’s Sesquicentennial Celebration. Since then, the program has been shaped by the oversight of Justice R. Fred Lewis and the involvement of the other justices.

This year, the institute took place from February 18 to February 22. Over the course of these five days, the teachers learned extensively about the judicial branch with the help of Ms. Pitts and this year’s mentor judges: Judge Kelly McKibben from the 18th Judicial Circuit and Judge Ross Goodman from the First Judicial Circuit. Through informative presentations and one-on-one guidance, the teachers received hands-on training about Florida’s court structure, the court process, the preparation for oral arguments, the use of technology in the courts, and various law-related lessons. The teachers also visited a courtroom in the Leon County Courthouse to see an enactment of the trial court process of the case they were studying, presided over by Judge Terry Lewis of the Second Judicial Circuit.



B.C. Schwartz

One of the highlights of the annual Justice Teaching Institute is the mock oral argument on a case for which the justices themselves are preparing; here, Justice Teaching Institute fellows play the part of attorneys during their mock oral argument.

The teachers also had the opportunity to learn from each of the seven justices. Justice Charles Canady spoke about the structure, function, and funding of the court system. Justice Ricky Polston differentiated between the federal court system and Florida’s court system. Justice Lewis provided an in-depth presentation on the Bill of Rights and the Fifth Amendment and provided additional clarification on the case that the teachers were working on. Chief Justice Jorge Labarga spoke about the unique relationship between judicial selection and judicial independence. Justice Barbara Pariente discussed the importance of a fair and impartial judiciary in American democracy. Justice Peggy Quince spoke about the qualities behind a good oral argument and differentiated the appellate process from the trial process. And Justice Alan Lawson conducted a Florida Constitution scavenger hunt with the teachers.

*“Everything I am learning here, I am bringing back to my students. This experience is almost surreal for me. It has been wonderful!”*  
 ~ 2018 Justice Teaching Institute fellow

All of these informative sessions helped the teachers prepare for the significant event of the institute: their mock oral arguments on the case they had been studying. Each year, the institute provides the tools and resources for teachers to enact a mock oral argument in the courtroom. This year’s case dealt with the Fifth Amendment and the exclusionary rule. Throughout the week, the teachers worked closely alongside their mentors and peers to prepare for their roles as justices or lawyers. Judge McKibben helped the petitioners prepare their arguments, while Judge Goodman aided the respondents. On February 21, the teachers, divided into two groups, gathered in the Supreme Court or the FSU Advocacy Center Courtroom to stage their oral arguments.

The peak of the program occurred when the teachers witnessed the same case being heard by the Florida Supreme Court justices later that morning, shortly after they conducted their mock oral arguments. The teachers enjoyed enacting an active Supreme Court case and noted that it can change the way students are taught in the classroom. Samantha Beovich, an advanced placement government teacher from Freedom High School, explained that using an active court case in the JTI not only enhanced her experience in the program, but also will reshape her curriculum for her students. “A lot of what we teach are decided cases,” she said. “So even if we are reenacting a case with our own students, it is not an active one. It’s one where a decision has already been made. But in this



B.C. Schwartz

Justices pose for a photo the Justice Teaching Institute fellows in the supreme court courtroom.

case, we can argue back-and-forth, and the decision hasn't yet been made, so there is no predetermined right answer. It's still up for discussion." Michael Lichtstein, an advanced placement government teacher from Pompano Beach High School, agreed with her sentiment. "The case is still up for interpretation. As government teachers, that's what we like to see for our students. We want to facilitate that argument."

Though they entered the program with the intent to better educate their students, most teachers came out of the program learning new information for themselves and carried a newfound appreciation for the judicial branch. "I didn't realize that there was such a misconception about the jobs of courts, lawyers, and judges," Ms Beovich said. Ms Herring emphasized that she felt very different about the judicial branch than she had just three days earlier. "I have a newfound respect for the justice system," she said. "I'm very much more appreciative of what they do. I now fully intend to take all this knowledge back to my students!" The justices are aware of how their personal involvement in the program helps fix the teachers' misconceptions about the judicial system. "The mere fact that all seven justices participate in the program has a profound impact on the teachers," Justice Quince said. "People usually regard justices as untouchable. Our involvement in the JTI shows teachers that the justices are human, and that we are all citizens of the United States together."

Year after year, this institute proves to be a wholesome experience for all of the teachers involved. And for the students whose lives they touch: though this year's program drew to a close, the impact these teachers will leave on their students about the judicial branch will surely last for years to come. ([This link goes to more information about the JTI.](#))

## Departing Justices Leave Impact on Florida Civics Education

By Marisa Connell, Intern with the Florida Supreme Court's Public Information Office

The end of the 2018 Justice Teaching Institute (JTI) marked a bittersweet moment for the law-related education program and for some of the Florida Supreme Court justices who have taken part in it for many years. Justice R. Fred Lewis, Justice Barbara Pariente, and Justice Peggy Quince will be retiring in January 2019, so this was their last JTI. All three justices have been involved with the JTI since their appointment to the supreme court, and each has made invaluable contributions to the ways in which civics education is taught in Florida's schools.

One of the chief ways Justice Lewis has been involved in the program is through his selection of the legal case that the teachers focus on. (Every year, the teachers study and conduct a mock oral argument on a real-life case that the justices themselves are reviewing. Later that week, the teachers watch the actual oral argument on that case and are able to compare their own thought processes and performances with those of the justices and attorneys.) Choosing the case to be used for the mock oral argument is much harder than it looks, Justice Lewis explained. "When I am selecting cases, the timing has to be exact," he said. He also tried to choose cases that would be "interesting to young students, usually cases with constitutional issues." His goal was to help teachers teach the same case to their students with the materials that he provided for them.

In addition to choosing the cases that the educators studied, Justice Lewis reviewed the program applicants, personally selecting the teachers who participated. He also taught the program's substantive law sessions, which provided the legal context for the cases, and he guided the teachers on how to conduct effective legal research. He also coordinated the program's faculty and made sure the other justices had plenty of opportunities to participate.

Justice Lewis's deep involvement in the JTI inspired his creation of Justice Teaching, a statewide program he established in 2006 that embodies the core principles of the JTI: to spread civics knowledge



Marisa Connell, SC

After Justice R. Fred Lewis' session on Case and Applicable Law, he and the teachers enjoy the chance to talk one-on-one.



B.C. Schwartz

Justice Barbara J. Pariente’s session on the Role of a Fair and Impartial Judiciary in American Democracy ignites the teachers’ interest.

in Florida’s schools. Justice Teaching seeks to promote an understanding of Florida’s judicial branch, to develop students’ critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills, and to demonstrate the effective interaction of Florida’s courts within the constitutional structure. To reach these three goals, the program aims to pair at least one legal professional with every Florida school. Justice Teaching “puts lawyers and judges in touch with our kids,” Justice Lewis said. So far, more than 4,000 judges and attorneys have volunteered to serve as resources for Justice Teaching and have received training in interactive methodologies designed to bring the courts and the constitution to life for Florida’s students.

Justice Lewis is not the only justice who will miss participating in the JTI. Justice Pariente and Justice Quince have also been actively involved in the program for many years. For Justice Quince, a participant in the JTI for 19 years, the program is a great way for teachers to learn about the importance of the judicial

branch. “The teachers receive a first-hand view of what the judicial branch is like,” Justice Quince said. “The teachers can then impart that understanding to their students.”

Justice Pariente, who has been involved in the JTI for 21 years, said the process has a ripple effect: all it takes is one teacher to become impacted, and the effects will spread far and wide among students. “If we make change in the teachers, we can make change in the communities,” she said.

Justices Pariente and Quince both noted the importance of the JTI and their personal connection to the program in the many years of their participation. “JTI has been one of the most rewarding projects since I came to the Florida Supreme Court,” Justice Pariente said. “I love interacting with the teachers. I hope they learn something from us, and I always learn from them every year.” “I will miss spending quality time with these teachers,” added Justice Quince. “I truly believe they are the backbone of this country.”

As for Justice Lewis, he hopes the program will persist far past his retirement and will continue to promote judicial knowledge among teachers and, by extension, their students. “Really helping [students] is the ultimate goal of the JTI,” he said. Teaching Florida’s educators and students about the judicial branch will continue to be the main focus of the JTI, thanks to the three justices’ steadfast dedication to the program.



B.C. Schwartz

When Justice Peggy A. Quince offers tips on the elements of a good oral argument, the teachers—especially those who are preparing to play attorneys in the mock oral argument—clearly pay careful attention.

## Ninth Circuit's Inside the Courts Program Marks 20 Years

The Ninth Circuit has an impressively long record of developing education and outreach programs and materials to enhance communication with court audiences and encourage vibrant court-community relations. Ongoing efforts include mock trials, Law Day activities and other civic education programs for children of all ages; meet your judge programs; town halls; a speaker's bureau; courthouse tours; public information booths in its courthouses; juror appreciation events; judicial "ride-alongs" for elected officials; citizen advisory committees; and a neighborhood restorative justice program. But perhaps the circuit's earliest and most cherished initiative is its Inside the Courts program, which just celebrated its twentieth anniversary.



courtesy of the 9th Circuit

Judge W. Michael Miller, Orange County, who recently retired, created the Ninth Circuit's Inside the Courts program and moderated it for 19 years; he was honored at this year's program.

First launched in 1998, Inside the Courts is a free, annual event that takes place at the Orange County Courthouse during four consecutive Tuesday evenings each spring. Taught by judges from different court divisions, this initiative provides attendees with a behind-the-scenes look at the operations of the court system and the workings of the judicial branch. Because session topics vary from year to year, participants often attend annually to learn about a wide range of judicial issues: past sessions have focused on topics like the role of the judge, the process of a case, juvenile delinquency and dependency, bonds, injunctions, mediation, court programs and services, and the challenges Florida's courts face today. Active audience participation is encouraged throughout the event—and this is one of the keys to its popularity. In fact, the last evening is an open forum, during which audience members are invited to ask questions of a panel of judges comprising presenters from prior sessions. Inside the Courts truly is a unique opportunity for the public to interact freely with judges in an accessible, informal, and welcoming environment.

On average, more than 300 attendees participate each year (and about half of them receive certificates of completion for having attended at least three of the four sessions!). Since the program's inception, approximately 2,500 people have participated, and thousands more have viewed it on public access television. The program has been so successful that the Nineteenth Circuit modeled its Your Courts Up Close program after it, and other Florida circuits are planning to set up similar programs for their communities.

For 19 of its 20 years, Inside the Courts was moderated by Orange County Judge W. Michael Miller, who developed the program, selected its content each year, and recruited the judges to participate. At this year's program, Chief Judge Frederick J. Lauten honored Judge Miller for his efforts in creating and sustaining Inside the Courts, saying, "I would like to thank Judge W. Michael Miller for his vision in developing Inside the Courts and for producing and moderating the program for almost two decades. The main role of a judge is to interpret the law fairly. Yet so much of what we do depends on the public's trust in our institution. Long before the supreme court established a communication plan encouraging courts to share their stories with the public, Judge Miller did just that by creating this remarkable program. His efforts are truly commendable." On the first evening of this year's event, Judge Miller was presented with a plaque containing a proclamation from the Florida Supreme Court recognizing his efforts in creating the program.

Even though Judge Miller has retired, this exemplary program will press on. After thanking Judge Miller, Chief Judge Lauten introduced the new moderator of the program, Judge Robert J. Egan, who will be carrying the torch henceforth, declaring, "We are honored to have Judge Egan assume this responsibility, and we look forward to another successful program. I am confident Judge Egan will continue to build upon the work that Judge Miller did to expand the reach and appeal of this community outreach program."



Courtesy of the 9th Circuit

Judge Robert J. Egan, Ninth Circuit, is the new moderator of Inside the Courts.

## Turning Points

### Honoring Judge T. Patt Maney: Okaloosa County Names Traffic Circle after Well-Loved Icon

By Justice Peggy A. Quince

On Monday, May 21, 2018, Judge T. Patterson Maney spent his last day as an active county court judge for Okaloosa County, Florida, saying goodbye to friends and colleagues and doing what he always does—clearing his docket. He was determined to leave as clean a slate as possible for his successor. However, the people of Ft. Walton Beach and Okaloosa County had some additional plans for this well-loved icon of this community. At 4:00 p.m., the large courtroom on the third floor of the Okaloosa County Courthouse in Ft. Walton Beach was overflowing with family, friends, and colleagues of Judge Maney for a special ceremony. A joint resolution was read that was entered by the County Commission of Okaloosa County and the City Counsel of Ft. Walton Beach, naming the roadway surrounding the courthouse as Judge Maney Way. Judge Maney (retired Army reserve Brig. Gen. Maney) was visibly moved by the outpouring of love from a community he has served for over 29 years as a county court judge.

Presentations were made to Judge Maney from various entities of the court system, including an acknowledgment of his ground-breaking work with the veterans court. Judge Maney, while a judge, was called to active duty and sent to service in Afghanistan. On August 21, 2005, the SUV he and four others were traveling in was blown up, with Judge Maney sustaining serious, life-threatening injuries. He spent the next two years at Walter Reed U.S. Army Medical Center battling for his life. But recover he did and came back to the bench in Okaloosa County. This experience, however, gave him a new perspective and understanding of the plight of our veterans. This experience made Judge Maney the ideal person to handle the needs of veterans who find themselves involved in the judicial system.

After hearing some of Judge Maney’s life story and after many presentations from various community leaders, all of those present in the courtroom were invited to go outside for the unveiling of the sign that read “Judge Maney Way”! What a deserving tribute to a man who has spent his life serving others.

Judge Maney, the judiciary will truly miss your active service on the bench. But we know that you will continue to give, for that is your nature.



In Okaloosa County, Justice Peggy A. Quince joins Judge T. Patt Maney for a photo under the street sign marking the roadway that was recently dubbed Judge Maney Way.

Kenneth Kelsch, Deputy Marshal, SC

## Awards and Honors

**The Adult Post-Adjudicatory Drug Court Expansion Program Team**—Ms Jennifer Grandal, Mr. Aaron Gerson, Mr. Chris Korn, and Mr. Joshua Kuch of OSCA's Office of Court Improvement—was awarded a 2018 Prudential Productivity Award, conferred by Florida Taxwatch. The expansion program—which identifies and diverts eligible felony offenders with diagnosed substance use and/or mental health disorders into drug court to obtain community-based treatment services, helping them break the cycle of addiction and incarceration and become productive members of their community again—was recognized for saving the state millions of dollars in avoided prison costs.

**Judge Nina Ashenafi-Richardson, Leon County**, received the 2018 Parks & Crump Thurgood Marshall Award for Judicial Excellence.

**Judge Alice L. Blackwell, Ninth Judicial Circuit**, was honored with a Women Business & Commercial Advocates Award by the American Bar Association; she was praised for having “distinguished herself in her nearly 40 years as an attorney and Judge by her intellect, demeanor, and many contributions to the advancement of women in our profession.”

**Judge Joe Boatwright, Putnam County**, was recently selected as the editor in chief for *Judicature*, a scholarly law journal published by Duke University School of Law and distributed throughout the country.

**Judge Robert Branning, Twentieth Judicial Circuit**, was chosen for the News-Press Trailblazer of the Year Award for introducing and piloting the circuit's therapy dog program in dependency court.

**Judge John C. Cooper, Second Judicial Circuit**, was presented with the 2017 Jurist of the Year Award from the Tallahassee Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates.

**Judge Miguel M. de la O, Eleventh Judicial Circuit**, received the Maxine Cohen-Lando Community Service Award from Transition, Inc., an organization that helps individuals released from prison or jail in South Florida become self-sufficient, law abiding citizens by providing treatment, housing, and job placement services, with the goal of reducing crime and recidivism in the community; he was honored for his leadership on the bench and his support for Transition.

**Judge Robert Diaz, Broward County**, received an award from the Hispanic Lawyers Committee of the Broward County Bar Association in recognition of and appreciation for his “outstanding commitment, loyalty, and service to the bar and legal community.”

**Judge Lee E. Haworth (ret.), Twelfth Judicial Circuit**, was honored with the McKaig Award from the Sarasota County Bar Association, celebrating him for his tireless advocacy for meaningful and effective increases in access to justice for the disadvantaged and for his efforts to educate lawyers and the public, thus enhancing the image of the legal profession.

**Mr. Leonard Helfand, Second Judicial Circuit**, received a 2017 Award of Appreciation from Florida's Dispute Resolution Center for his role in initiating the formal celebration of Mediation Day in Florida (the first was in 1996), which spurred a global movement to celebrate methods of peacemaking.

**Judge Cindy S. Lederman, Eleventh Judicial Circuit**, was presented with a Children's Trust Champions for Children Award, which “honors individuals and programs that have achieved greatness in their service to children and families.”

**Judge Norma S. Lindsey, Third District Court of Appeal**, was honored with a Judicial Lifetime Achievement Award by the Dade County Bar Association, recognizing her many years of service as a county court, circuit court, and DCA judge.

**Judge Patt Maney, Okaloosa County**, was distinguished with the Governor's Medal of Merit for his work on veterans issues in Florida, including his tireless advocacy for Veterans Treatment Courts in the First Circuit and throughout the state. He was previously recognized by lawmakers in 2012: the T. Patt Maney Veterans Treatment Intervention Act authorized the establishment of veterans courts to address the substance use disorders and mental health needs of veterans who become involved in Florida's criminal justice system. Florida now has 30 veterans courts.

**Judge Janeice Martin, Collier County**, was recognized by the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Collier County as the 2017 Mental Health Advocate of the Year; she was chosen for her support in getting funding for comprehensive mental health treatment in the community and for her steadfast commitment to improving the lives of those living with mental illness.

**Judge Melanie G. May, Fourth District Court of Appeal**, is a recipient of the 2017 National Center for State Courts Distinguished Service Award, which “honor[s] those who have made substantial contributions to the field of court administration and to the work of the National Center.”

**Ms Viviana Mendiola, Eleventh Judicial Circuit**, a case manager at the Lawson E. Thomas Courthouse Center in Miami, published an article about pro se litigants and Florida courts, titled “Observations on Floridians’ Access to Civil Justice,” in the Summer/Fall 2017 edition of [CABA Briefs](#), the Cuban American Bar Association magazine (see p. 23).

**Justice Barbara Pariente, Florida Supreme Court**, was recognized with the Sandra Day O’Connor Jurist Award by the American College of Trial Lawyers, given to a judge in the US or Canada who has demonstrated exemplary judicial independence in the performance of his or her duties, sometimes in especially difficult circumstances.

**Justice Peggy Quince, Florida Supreme Court**, was honored with the Dispute Resolution Center’s Sharon Press Excellence in Alternative Dispute Resolution Award, presented annually to a person for “visionary leadership, professional integrity, and unwavering devotion to the field of alternative dispute resolution.” A regular attendee of the DRC’s annual conferences, Justice Quince, in her welcoming addresses, never fails to remind conferees that “Florida courts need you, our mediators, as civil judges could not handle their caseloads without you”; with this award, the DRC and Florida’s mediators took the opportunity to tell Justice Quince, “We need you—we could not do it without you.”

**Judge Michael Robinson, Seventeenth Judicial Circuit**, was selected for the Judicial Distinguished Service Award from the Florida Council on Crime and Delinquency.

**Judge Jose R. Rodriguez, Ninth Judicial Circuit**, was honored with an award from the Orange County Bar Association Estates, Guardianship, and Trust Committee, recognizing his visionary guidance and tireless dedication to the Probate, Guardianship, and Mental Health Division of the Ninth Circuit.

**Judge Vance E. Salter, Third District Court of Appeal**, received the 2018 Distinguished Judicial Service Pro Bono Award, presented by Chief Justice Jorge Labarga at the Florida Supreme Court. This award was in recognition of Judge Salter’s outstanding and continuous support of, contribution to, and commitment to pro bono services and the community as a whole.

**Judge Mark Speiser, Seventeenth Judicial Circuit**, was recognized by the Broward County Crime Commission with the 2017 Outstanding Career Service Award for his lifetime of service to Broward County.

**Judge Margaret Steinbeck, Twentieth Judicial Circuit**, was named 2017 Southwest Florida American Board of Trial Advocates Jurist of the Year; she was chosen for her years of public service, her work to improve the courts system, and her unwavering commitment to justice.

**Retired Justice Charles T. Wells**, who served on the Florida Supreme Court bench from 1994 – 2009, was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Florida Court Public Information Officers. As chief justice when the September 11 tragedy struck, he established a workgroup to “develop a plan for the State Courts System to better respond to emergency situations.” In response to the workgroups recommendations, he directed each chief judge to designate a court staff member to serve as the court’s public information officer, responsible for coordinating emergency response activities and providing information to, and answering questions from, the media and the public.

**Ms Elizabeth “Betty” White, Fifth Judicial Circuit**, was recognized posthumously with a 2017 Award of Appreciation from Florida’s Dispute Resolution Center for being a “passionate supporter of peaceful conflict resolution, especially of conflicts involving families and children.” Ms White was the Fifth Circuit’s alternative dispute resolution director and then its director of case management

**Mr. Stephen Woodin, Sr., Seventh Judicial Circuit**, a Florida Supreme Court certified county mediator and director of the Flagler Mediation Center, was honored with a Presidential Volunteer Service Award for his contributions to the field of mediation.

**Chief Judge Raul A. Zambrano, Seventh Judicial Circuit**, published a tribute to Judge Kim Hammond, Seventh Judicial Circuit (on the bench from 1979 – 2010) in the [spring edition of \*Judicature\*](#); Judge Hammond passed away in 2017.

When judges and court personnel receive honors or acclaim  
for their contributions to the branch,  
please share that information with [OSCPublications@flcourts.org](mailto:OSCPublications@flcourts.org)



## In Memoriam

**Retired Judge Michael E. Allen** served on the bench of the First District Court of Appeal from 1990 – 2009.

**Retired Judge David B. Beck** served on the bench in Volusia County from 2003 – 2011 and on the bench of the Seventh Judicial Circuit from 2011 – 2014.

**Retired Judge Philip Bloom** served on the bench of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit from 1984 – 2003.

**Retired Judge John Booth** served on the bench in Lake County from 1967 – 1968 and on the bench of the Fifth Judicial Circuit from 1968 – 1999.

**Retired Judge Ted Coleman** served on the bench in Orange County from 1973 – 1982 and on the bench of the Ninth Judicial Circuit from 1983 – 2002.

**Judge Shelley Kravitz** served on the bench in Miami-Dade County from 1993 – 2018.

**Judge Kellie J. Miles** served on the bench of the Seventh Judicial Circuit from 2014 – 2017.

**Retired Judge Joseph Milton Nadler** served on the bench of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit from 1980 – 1993.

**Retired Judge George James “Jim” Roark, III**, served on the bench in Escambia County from 1988 – 2009.

**Retired Jorge Rodriguez-Chomat** served on the bench of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit from 2010 – 2016.

**Judge Glenn Shelby** served on the bench of the Tenth Judicial Circuit from 2013 – 2017.

**Retired Judge Stuart M. Simms** served on the bench in Miami-Dade County from 1972 – 1973 and on the bench of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit from 1973 – 1999.

**Retired Judge Gilbert A. Smith, Sr.**, served on the bench of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit from 1971 – 1991.

**Retired Judge Joseph Q. Tarbuck** served on the bench of the First Judicial Circuit from 1982 – 2001.

**Retired Judge Ray E. “Gene” Ulmer, Jr.**, served on the bench of the Sixth Judicial Circuit from 1974 – 2010.



B.C. Schwartz

*June*

5/29-6/1 College of Advanced Judicial Studies  
18-21 Court Interpreter Orientation Workshops

*July*

10-12 Conference of County Court Judges of Florida Annual Education Program

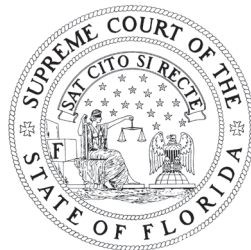
*August*

5-8 Florida Conference of Circuit Judges Annual Education Program  
5-8 Trial Court Administrators Annual Education Program  
10 Florida Commission on Access to Civil Justice Meeting

*September*

5-7 Annual Education Program of the Florida Conference of DCA Judges  
5-7 Appellate Clerks and Marshals Education Program  
24-25 Florida Bar Reporters Workshop

ON  
THE  
HORIZON



Under the direction of  
Supreme Court Chief Justice Jorge Labarga  
State Courts Administrator Patricia "PK" Jameson  
Chief of Innovations and Outreach Tina White

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