

2006-2007

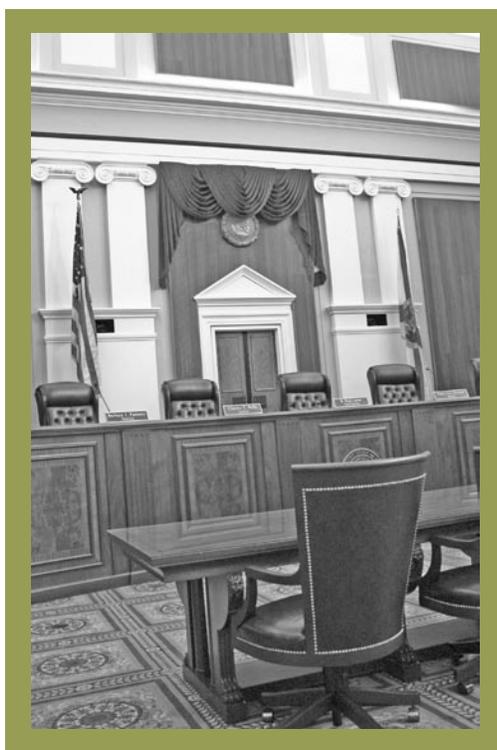
FLORIDA STATE COURTS



Annual Report

THE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA

2006-2007 Annual Report



R. Fred Lewis
Chief Justice

Charles T. Wells
Harry Lee Anstead
Barbara J. Pariente
Peggy A. Quince
Raoul G. Cantero, III
Kenneth B. Bell
Justices

Elisabeth H. Goodner
State Courts Administrator



Expressing strength and the spirit of freedom and independence, this eagle, sculpted by Panama City artist Roland Hockett, is one of two that adorn the Florida Supreme Court rotunda.

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Mission

The mission of the judicial branch is to protect rights and liberties,
uphold and interpret the law,
and provide for the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Vision

Justice in Florida will be accessible, fair, effective, responsive, and accountable.

To be accessible, the Florida justice system will be convenient, understandable, timely,
and affordable to everyone.

To be **fair**, it will respect the dignity of every person, regardless of race, class, gender or
other characteristic; apply the law appropriately to the circumstances of individual cases,
and include judges and court staff that reflect the community's diversity.

To be **effective**, it will uphold the law and apply rules and procedures consistently and in a
timely manner, resolve cases with finality, and provide enforceable decisions.

To be **responsive**, it will anticipate and respond to the needs of all members of society,
and provide a variety of dispute resolution methods.

To be **accountable**, the Florida justice system will use public resources efficiently,
and in a way that the public can understand.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE

When we came into the front office to begin service to this institution, one of the very first items was to issue an invitation: “Come share with us your vision of justice.”

Those words, painted large on the wall of the Supreme Court rotunda, greet all who enter the Court. We have also placed a book in a very prominent location for all who come to provide their thoughts on the “vision of justice.” Many only sign their names. Some make reference to their religious faith. There are even a couple of hearts connecting names, a romantic tradition that evidently has survived into the digital age! However, I am happy to also report that some do indeed share their vision of justice:

“Justice is about being impartial and fair to all, not a select few!”

“May the slow, deliberate course of Justice prevail in these halls and in our nation forever.”

“Justice is equality for all, regardless of all else.”

“To be just means providing justice for all as we are all created equal and we deserve respect and equal rights. Treating everyone fairly and applying the law evenly and interpreting the Constitution unbiased to each and every citizen is paramount to justice.”

Not all comments are positive. For example, this observation:

“Justice is not just (in today’s world).”

I think my favorite “vision of justice” was described and shared by a high school student who wrote:

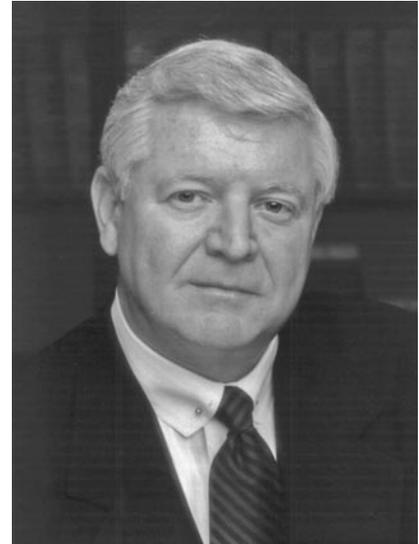
“Justice does not serve its full purpose if it is just delivered to the people. It must be understood by the civilians and common people.”

I am deeply impressed by this student’s insight; I wholeheartedly concur in this “vision.” The rule of law and the role of courts must be understood throughout our state and nation if they are to be preserved and passed to the next generations. This grand exercise in constitutional democracy in which we are so fortunate to be engaged is not a spectator sport. This republic requires the thoughtful and responsible participation of all citizens.

It is our hope that this annual report will help the people of Florida better understand the workings of their judicial branch of government and the efforts of the men and women who work in Florida State Courts to ensure *impartiality, equality, fairness, respect and justice.*

It is on behalf of all those wonderful men and women that I now invite you to review the annual report. It includes many articles as well as general information and statistics about the structure of the judiciary. I believe you will conclude that the programs and initiatives described indicate a commitment to ensuring *that justice IS just in today’s world.*

Let me emphasize, however, that the report cannot describe all the work that goes on in our trial and appellate courts around Florida. It is a snapshot of some of the highlights of the last fiscal year—and I cannot describe all of those highlights in this message. I will only underscore a few:



Chief Justice R. Fred Lewis

At the top of the list—of every list—is emergency preparedness. This fundamental concern remains front and center for this branch—even in a relatively slow hurricane season such as we enjoyed last year. Of course, emergencies of all types can develop and that must never be forgotten. For instance, court planners last year concentrated much energy and diligent work on preparing for the unique issues that we may expect to confront in the wake of a possible flu pandemic. One concrete result was a benchguide intended to be a practical guide for all judges who might find themselves addressing arcane legal issues and working without the usual support services and equipment provided and maintained by court administrators, clerks, technicians or others who might be absent from work because of illness or quarantine. Our efforts were recently recognized by the federal Homeland Security Council, which noted our bedrock policy goal of “keeping courts open to ensure justice for all.” I promise you our motto is “prepare, prepare, prepare.”

I also mention very briefly a few other critically important issues that you will find discussed in this report. I believe this year has seen a renewed dedication to collaboration and cooperation with the re-constitution of the Judicial Management Council, which includes leaders from other branches of state government and the public.

Collaboration and cooperation have also been an important part in our focus on the treatment of the mentally ill in our justice system and our efforts to identify and erase barriers that may reduce or eliminate access to the courts for those with disabilities. The urgency and the importance of both of these issues—treatment of the mentally ill and access for the disabled—simply cannot be overstated.

Significant work has also taken place this year in the area of public access to court records in the digital age and management of complex cases.

I began this letter by noting the invitation issued at the start of the year and I will close it by noting that we also made a pledge. That pledge was to lay the foundation for the most comprehensive approach to civic education ever attempted.

Justice Teaching is a cornerstone of the vision of justice within the structure of our constitutional institutions.

I encourage you to read the article on Justice Teaching in this report and also to visit www.justiceteaching.org for more information. Here we share that we have worked extremely hard this year on organizing the structure of Justice Teaching.

Our greatest pride and our deepest gratitude belong to the volunteers. Nearly 3,500 judges and attorneys across our state have volunteered this year to be law-related education resources for a school in their community. That commitment began with training in effective teaching strategies and proven classroom exercises and has followed with school visits every month.

I know that the relationships Justice Teaching volunteers establish with their schools as the years go by and their classroom visits month after month after month will do much to fulfill the promise of our democracy—and to shape the “vision of justice” that our children and following generations carry into the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "R. Reed Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R".

FLORIDA'S SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

R. Fred Lewis *Chief Justice*

Justice Lewis is the fifty-second chief justice of the Florida Supreme Court. He was appointed to the Court in December 1998, and he advanced to chief justice on June 30, 2006.

Born in West Virginia, Justice Lewis made Florida his home in 1965, when he arrived here to attend college in Lakeland. He remained in Florida for law school, and, after graduating, he attended and graduated from the United States Army A.G. School. After his discharge from the military, he entered private practice in Miami, where he specialized in civil trial and appellate litigation until his appointment to the Florida Supreme Court.

In his professional life, Justice Lewis has been deeply involved in children's issues and was selected as Florida's Citizen of the Year in 2001 by the Florida Council. While in private practice, he was actively committed to providing counseling to families with children with disabilities, and he offered pro bono legal services and counseling for cancer patients seeking proper treatment for multiple conditions. While on the Court, he has been a volunteer in the Florida Law Related Education Association, for which he works with teachers and students throughout the state to promote a better understanding of government institutions and to provide to the public open access to judicial officers.

Justice Lewis and his wife Judith have two children, Elle and Lindsay.

Charles Talley Wells *Justice*

Justice Wells joined the Supreme Court in June 1994; he served as the Court's forty-ninth chief justice from July 1, 2000, to July 1, 2002. He was chief justice during the Court's proceedings in the 2000 presidential election cases.

A native Floridian, Justice Wells was born in Orlando. Prior to his appointment to the Supreme Court, he spent 28 years in private practice in Orlando as an active civil trial lawyer engaged in commercial, insurance, and

personal injury litigation. He also served for one year as a trial attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.

While in Orlando, Justice Wells was vigorously involved in the Orange County Legal Aid Society as well as in the Guardian Ad Litem Program, representing dependent and abused children in juvenile and domestic court proceedings. The Legal Aid Society presented him with its Award of Excellence in 1989 in recognition of his outstanding pro bono service.

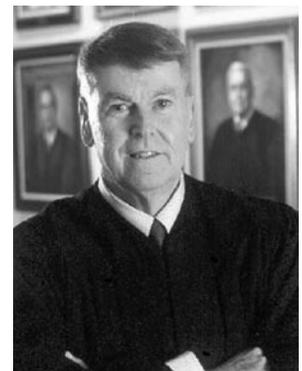
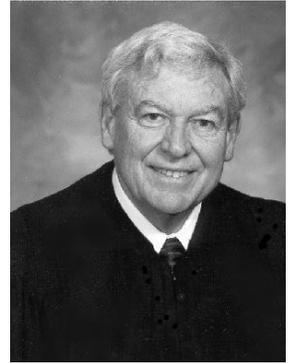
Justice Wells is married to Linda Fisher Wells, a lawyer, and they have three children, Charley, Shelley, and Ashley.

Harry Lee Anstead *Justice*

Justice Anstead was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court in 1994. He advanced to the highest judicial office in state government on July 1, 2002, when he became Florida's fiftieth chief justice, serving in that capacity until June 30, 2004.

Justice Anstead is a native Floridian, born in Jacksonville. He was a trial and appellate lawyer in South Florida until 1977, when he was appointed to the Fourth District Court of Appeal; there, he served as chief judge and from time to time as a circuit and county judge throughout the district.

As a citizen, lawyer, and judge, Justice Anstead has served his community and profession in a host of ways, including service to charities, government, church, schools, and children. While on the Court, he initiated a comprehensive statewide program to improve professionalism among judges, lawyers, and law schools in the state. He has also been committed to improving the lot of children whose lives are affected by the courts. The major priority of his administration as chief justice was maintaining the excellence of Florida's trial courts during a time of transition, when funding for the trial courts



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shifted from the local budgets to the state budget on July 1, 2004.

Justice Anstead and his wife Sue, a lawyer and child advocate herself, have five children: Chris, Jim, Laura, Amy, and Michael.

Barbara J. Pariente *Justice*

Justice Pariente was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court in 1997, and she advanced to chief justice on July 1, 2004. She was the Court's fifty-first chief justice and the second woman to serve in that role.

Justice Pariente was born and raised in New York City, but Florida has been her home for more than 30 years. Before her elevation to the Supreme Court, she spent 18 years in private practice in West Palm Beach, specializing in civil trial litigation. Then, in September 1993, she was appointed to the Fourth District Court of Appeal, where she served until her appointment to the Supreme Court.



During her time on the Supreme Court, she has actively supported programs that promote successful alternatives to incarceration such as Florida's drug courts. She has also worked to improve methods for handling cases involving families and children in

the courts. Based on her longstanding commitment to children, Justice Pariente continues to be a mentor to school-age children and has encouraged Court employees to participate in the Court's mentoring program, which has two partner schools in Tallahassee; the Florida Supreme Court recently won a national award for these mentoring initiatives.

Justice Pariente is married to The Honorable Frederick A. Hazouri, judge of the Fourth District Court of Appeal, and together they have three grown children and six grandchildren.

Peggy A. Quince *Justice*

Justice Quince was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court in December 1998; she has the distinction of being the first African-American woman on the Court.

Born in Virginia, Justice Quince began her legal career in 1975 in Washington, D.C., as a hearing officer with the Rental Accommodations Office administering the city's new rent control law. She entered private practice in Virginia in 1977, specializing in real estate and domestic relations, and then moved to Bradenton, Florida, in 1978 to open a law office, where she practiced general civil law until 1980. From there, she joined the Attorney General's Office, Criminal Division, serving for nearly 14 years. In 1994, she was appointed to the Second District Court of Appeal, where she served until her appointment to the Supreme Court.



Justice Quince has been active in civic and community organizations, including Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Jack and Jill of America, the Urban League, the NAACP, and the Tampa Organization for Black Affairs. She has also received numerous awards, especially for her work on behalf of girls, women, minorities, civil rights issues, and various school programs.

Justice Quince and her husband Fred L. Buckine, an administrative law judge, have two daughters, Peggy LaVerne and Laura LaVerne.

Raoul G. Cantero, III *Justice*

Justice Cantero was appointed to the Supreme Court of Florida in July 2002. He has the distinction of being the first Hispanic to sit on the Court.

Born in Madrid, Spain, to Cuban parents who had fled the communist regime in Cuba, Justice Cantero was a Fulbright Scholar who got his Bachelor of Arts from Florida State University and his law degree from Harvard Law School. Before his appointment to the Supreme Court, he was a shareholder and head of the appellate division of a Miami law firm, where he specialized in civil and criminal appeals at all levels, handling appeals in all five District Courts of

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Appeal and the Florida Supreme Court as well as in the U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeal and the U.S. Supreme Court. He also specialized in commercial litigation.



Justice Cantero is deeply interested in issues of professionalism in the practice of law, and he has spoken on this topic to both lawyers and law students. In addition, not only has he authored many articles for law journals, but he is also an accomplished fiction writer and has published several short stories. Moreover, he has also been active in the Miami community, serving

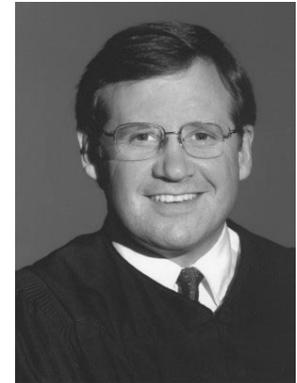
as a member of the board of Legal Services of Greater Miami, a member of the Planning and Zoning Board of the City of Coral Gables, and a member of the Pastoral Council at St. Augustine Church in Coral Gables.

Justice Cantero and his wife Ana Maria have three children: Christian, Michael, and Elisa.

Kenneth B. Bell *Justice*

Justice Bell was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court in December 2002.

A native Floridian, Justice Bell is in fact a seventh-generation Pensacolian whose paternal ancestors immigrated to the Pensacola area around 1819, when Florida was still a Spanish colony. Upon graduation from law school, Justice Bell entered private practice in Pensacola, focusing primarily on commercial and residential real estate. He continued his private practice until 1991, when he was appointed to the First Judicial Circuit of Florida, becoming the youngest circuit judge in the history of that circuit.



As a trial judge on the circuit bench for 12 years, he served on a variety of committees and boards that have actively sought to improve the judicial process. He has also dedicated himself to improving the justice process as it impacts children, opening the first "child witness room" in the First Circuit, for instance, and promoting the establishment of the only PACE Center for Girls in that circuit. In addition, he worked with officials to develop system-wide school violence prevention programs. He has also been active in community affairs, serving on the board of many civic organizations.

Justice Bell and his wife have four children.



Florida's Supreme Court Justices (l-r): (seated) Justice Wells, Chief Justice R. Fred Lewis, and Justice Anstead; (standing) Justice Cantero, Justice Pariente, Justice Quince, and Justice Bell.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Emergency Preparedness

Progress in Emergency Management

While many state court systems were propelled into addressing emergency management issues by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Florida's began to focus on emergency preparedness in 2001. The crises unleashed by the 9/11 tragedy prompted then Chief Justice Wells to establish the Work Group on Emergency Preparedness in November 2001. He charged this group with "developing proposed action plans for the Chief Justice for a variety of emergency situations and developing proposed statewide emergency preparedness guidance for the remainder of the judicial

dealing with crises were set up, and training programs were established to prepare judges, court administrators, marshals, and other court personnel to respond to threats of all kinds. Moreover, the Unified Supreme Court/Branch Court Emergency Management Group—an outgrowth of the work group—developed an extensive emergency preparedness website that hosts a wide range of planning templates, useful reports and articles, PowerPoint presentations, check lists, and even a family disaster plan.

In 2004, Florida battled a devastating tropical storm and four noxious hurricanes, and in 2005—though spared the calamities suffered by Louisiana and Mississippi—Florida was pummeled by four pernicious hurricanes. However, because the state court system had the above emergency preparedness measures in place, court operations remained intact. Fortunately, the 2006 hurricane season was remarkably restrained in Florida, and, because of the relative cooperation of the weather, the courts were able to direct their attention toward a new, potentially debilitating hazard: pandemic influenza.

To maintain order, enforce restrictions on movement, and prevent a public disaster, the courts must remain operational during a pandemic, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Since it would play a fundamental role in containing



Greg Cowan, former court operations consultant for OSCA's Court Services Unit, leads table top participants in a discussion about strategies for improving the Supreme Court's Continuity of Operations Plan.

branch while assuring local autonomy in both planning and execution." Undergirding the work group's efforts from the beginning have been two policy goals: "Deal with crises in a way that protects the health and safety of everyone in the court facilities," and "Keep the courts open to ensure justice for the people."

The work group produced its final report in March 2002, and, upon its approval, the courts were instructed to begin implementing its recommendations immediately. Soon thereafter, each court identified its mission-essential functions, and each court instituted a court emergency preparedness plan that incorporates both emergency and administrative procedures as well as a continuity of operations plan. Each court also designated an emergency coordination officer, a public information officer, and a court emergency management team. Internet sites for

the crisis, Florida's court system has undertaken initiatives to prepare judges and court personnel for dealing with a situation that could incapacitate the courts for up to 18 months and that could severely restrict—or eliminate altogether—face-to-face contact.

For instance, to help judges handle the unusual, unfamiliar, and often arcane legal issues that might arise in a pandemic emergency situation (e.g., habeas corpus), the Publications Committee of the Florida Court Education Council was directed to produce a benchguide that would familiarize judges and attorneys with the legal issues associated with isolation and quarantine. Unfortunately, as the benchguide writers soon discovered, Florida has no statutes that directly address a pandemic, which means that no specifically relevant case law exists, so benchguide writers had to be creative, drawing upon statutes that might

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be relevant to legal issues that could arise. Nonetheless, in just over a year, the Publications Committee completed the online publication, *Pandemic Influenza Benchguide: Legal Issues Concerning Quarantine and Isolation*. Project coordinator Judge Janet Ferris, Second Judicial Circuit, describes the benchguide as a practical guide for judges who find themselves in the throes of a crisis situation in which they cannot rely on the normal support services provided by their staff, their court administrator, the clerk, or their computers—under circumstances in which the courts might be off limits and judges might even have to hold hearings in their homes, over the phone.

Also this year, each court designed its own tactical plan for addressing a flu pandemic, and a compilation of the most promising practices was published on the Florida courts

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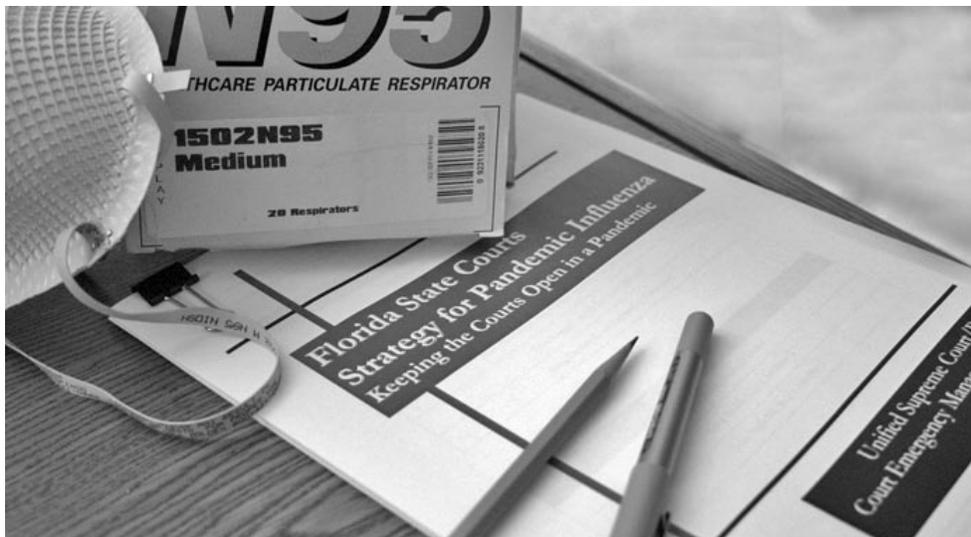
website. Moreover, the supreme court and several of the circuits staged table top exercises to test their continuity of operations plans with the goal of raising awareness about the impact of a pandemic influenza, promoting greater understanding of the responsibilities of leadership and management during such a crisis, and gauging any gaps in communication and coordination. And three statewide training sessions on emergency preparedness measures were offered for judges and trial court administrators.

In addition, because Florida's courts were among the earliest to institutionalize a planning process for emergencies of all sorts, including a pandemic, Florida has taken on a national role in this area, and Judge Ferris and Greg Cowan, former court operations consultant for OSCA's Court Services Unit, have been solicited to participate in various national symposia and conferences to share their expertise. For instance, in June 2006, Judge Ferris and Mr. Cowan were invited to a Centers for Disease Control Public Health Law Conference to offer ideas and recommendations on public health benchguides and on other practical tools for the judiciary's use in addressing public health issues. At the same conference, Mr. Cowan also participated in a panel discussion on "The Courts: Guardians of Health and Liberty." Judge Ferris was also an organizer and participant in another Centers for Disease Control event—the National Summit on Public Health Legal Preparation in June 2007. And Mr. Cowan and State Courts Administrator Lisa Goodner were invited to review and respond to the initial draft of the COSCA publication, *Position Paper on Emergency Preparedness in*

the State Courts. As a result of its efforts to anticipate and respond to a pandemic situation, Florida's court system was recognized in the recent White House publication, *National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza: Implementation Plan*.

According to Mr. Cowan, in its six years of developing emergency preparedness measures, Florida's court system has realized that, in order to address a disaster effectively, it must have five major components in place and ready

to engage at a moment's notice: leadership, communication, cooperation, individual self-sufficiency, and organizational resiliency. Although Florida's courts still have more work to do to ready themselves for disasters, both nature-made and human-induced, they clearly have made significant progress since 2001.





Chief Judge Joseph P. Farina, Eleventh Circuit, chairs the Judicial Management Council as well as the Task Force on Judicial Branch Planning.

Long-Range Planning

Encountering Challenges and Moving Forward

Judicial leaders have long recognized the benefits of strategic planning. With a long-range plan guiding its actions, for instance, a court system has a methodical, efficient mechanism in place for addressing the concerns and challenges it is confronting, such as the inevitability of rapid growth and of complex social, political, economic, and technological changes; waning public trust and confidence in government generally; and heightened public criticism of the judicial branch. Another asset of long-range planning is that it serves as a powerful performance management tool: court systems that clearly identify the issues that they currently are, or expect to be, facing—and that define their goals and strategies for dealing with those issues—tend to create regular opportunities to evaluate and improve themselves, thereby enhancing court performance and providing more competent and cost-effective court services.

Justice system leaders perceived the significant advantages of long-range planning—and also needed to respond to a 1992 voter-driven amendment to Florida’s constitution stipulating that all three branches of state government engage in it. Thus the Judicial

Management Council was established in 1995. The council was tasked with “the comprehensive study and formulation of recommendations on issues related to the efficient and effective administration of justice that may have statewide impact, affect multiple levels of the court system, or affect multiple constituencies in the court and justice community” (Rule of Judicial Administration 2.225, formerly Rule 2.125). This advisory body was also directed to guide the branch’s efforts to build public trust and confidence by improving performance and accountability methods and by establishing strategies for successful communication between the branch and the public. Moreover, the council was made responsible for developing the branch’s long-range plans (every six years) and its interim operational plans (every two years).

In 1998, after several years of visioning and outreach, the council produced *Taking Bearings, Setting Course: The Long-Range Strategic Plan of the Florida Judicial Branch*—a document that gave voice to the vision and mission of the branch; identified the kinds of concerns that the courts could expect to face over the next 20 years; and distinguished five broad, overarching, long-range issues on which the courts would need to focus, pinpointing specific goals, strategies for achieving those goals, and desirable outcomes for each goal.

The council remained active until 2002, when the branch had to start focusing intensively on preparing for the 2004 implementation of Revision 7, which shifted the primary funding responsibility for the state court system from the counties to the state so as to ensure that all Floridians, in all parts of the state, have equal access to justice. At that point, the council became dormant, but in October 2006, Chief Justice Lewis declared that “It is appropriate to reauthorize and renew the Council,” and he called for its reconstitution by administrative order. Although the renewed council’s role and focus are slightly modified and its membership is largely different, like its predecessor, it aims to “bring together the collective knowledge and experience of State Court System leadership with members of the public,” spurring “a collaborative approach” that will provide court system leaders “with a broad perspective on the myriad of administrative challenges facing the Florida courts.” Chaired by one of the members of the original council, Chief Judge Joseph P. Farina, Eleventh Judicial Circuit, the reauthorized council has already met twice, and, among its charges, it will play a role in updating the branch’s long-range plan.

To its benefit, the new Judicial Management Council will be able to rely on the wisdom and experience of the Task Force on Judicial Branch Planning (also chaired by Chief

Judge Farina), which has been engineering the court system's two-year operational plans and has already begun to pilot the current long-range planning process. The council also has the advantage of having Revision



Former Governor Reuben Askew and former Senator Philip Lewis exchange ideas at a Judicial Management Council meeting.

7 in place as it begins its tasks. Before Revision 7, the branch—consisting of the Supreme Court, five DCAs, 20 circuit courts, and 67 county courts—used to be a series of discrete, self-contained, self-defining entities.

Despite these and other challenges, Florida's judicial branch has clearly adopted a forward-looking stance and is working tirelessly to create a blueprint for where it wants to go and what it desires to be.

But with Revision 7, that phenomenon changed: one of the dividends of budgetary unification has been a movement toward organizational unification and toward the court system's self-conception as a coherent, integrated system replete with established, uniform mechanisms for accomplishing branch-wide goals—which will certainly ease the council's course.

Undeniably, the branch has made much progress. However, it still faces some appreciable challenges. One particularly worrisome challenge is that the court system is concerned about its ability to provide competitive compensation and benefits to recruit and retain qualified, experienced court employees. Although both Chief Justice Lewis and former Chief Justice Barbara J. Pariente have made the employee pay plan their highest priority for new funding for the judicial branch, they

have not yet met with success (Florida's courts get less than 1% of the state's total budget). Also, the state's 67 clerks of court are independently-elected officers, and coordinating court operations can at times require effort. Moreover, the court system has various commissions, committees, task forces, and work groups that need careful coordination to ensure that their responsibilities do not overlap or conflict.

Despite these and other challenges, Florida's judicial branch has clearly adopted a forward-looking stance and is working tirelessly to create a blueprint for where it wants to go and what it desires to be.

Education and Outreach

"Public knowledge about the courts is critical," Chief Justice Lewis stresses in his introductory message to *Horizon 2008*, the judicial branch's two-year operational plan. As research has

documented, such knowledge not only buttresses support for a vigorous judiciary, but it also helps to reinforce this nation's foundational ideals. When people understand the role and functions of the Third Branch—and when

they importantly embrace their own responsibility as partners in the justice system—they are able to grasp, embrace, and act upon what the chief refers to as this nation's "core values," thereby more deeply appreciating "the promise of this democracy." Historically, Florida's judicial branch has demonstrated a

considered commitment to helping Floridians realize this promise through its education and outreach endeavors.

Over the past fiscal year, the state court system has participated in a multitude of education and outreach efforts: among them have been ongoing educational initiatives for the general public, especially for children, and regular educational programs for county, circuit, and appellate judges as well as for court personnel.

The Florida Supreme Court Library

Established in 1845, the Supreme Court Library is the oldest state-supported library in Florida, housing over 122,000 print volumes and over 210,000 pieces of microfiche as well as providing electronic access to

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articles in more than 800 law journals and other resources through its subscription services. The library harbors a plethora of Florida primary and secondary resources, copious materials from other states (including all 50 state



The new rare book room houses approximately 2,500 of the books in the Supreme Court Library's rare book collection.

statute sets and all regional reporters), a significant federal collection (it is a limited federal depository library for legal materials published by the Government Printing Office), plus an extensive collection of historical law of the United Kingdom and Canada. The Supreme Court Library is also a treasury of historical documents relating to the development of the court and to the justices who served on it. Although originally designed to support the research of the justices and of the attorneys who practice before the Supreme Court, the library is now open for use by state agency employees and members of the public; it remains a fruitful and tranquil space in which to do legal research.

Among its various fiscal year projects, the library has been in the process of designing an expanded, dedicated rare book room that will be at least twice the size of the current one. Furnished with the original Globe-Wernicke bookcases that graced the first court building in 1912 and the current Supreme Court building (constructed in 1949), this new room will become home to approximately 2,500 of the 7,500 books in the rare book collection, and it will include a comfortable workspace in which people can research the library's rare books and archive materials.

A number of extraordinary rare books will be showcased in the new room. For instance, library staff are especially excited about being able to display a rare first edition of Andrew Ellicott's *The Journal of Andrew Ellicott* (Philadelphia: Printed by Budd & Bartram for Thomas

Dobson, 1803); the journal covers the four years during which Ellicott traveled down the Mississippi Valley and along the Georgia-Florida border, after he was appointed commissioner to determine the boundary between the United States and Spanish Florida, and it includes some of the maps he drew. Edward Coke's *The Second Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England Containing the Exposition of Many Ancient and Other Statutes, Whereof You May See the Particulars in a Table Following* (London: Printed for A. Crooke [and 12 others], 1669) will also be exhibited; generally considered one of the five greatest books of English law, Coke's work completed the codification of British Common Law and established it as the basis of the British constitution. The rare book room will be ready to receive visitors this fall.

The library also purchased an upgrade to its online library catalog system, which will be implemented in early fall. The current system, which is about 10 years old, is text-based, making it inefficient for cataloging library items. The new, web-based system will be far more efficient as well as safer and more stable—less likely to crash, in other words. Moreover, with its expanded search capability and its mechanism for enabling users to email search results, it will be a boon to library users.

At the request of Chief Justice Lewis, library staff also engaged in an aggressive library assessment, which involved taking inventory of every book the library owns and evaluating the entire collection, determining each item's age, currency, relevance, and use; in the process, library staff also considered the library budget, space allocations, and the cost of subscriptions. In giving library staff and the justices an opportunity to decide which items to retain as well as which subscriptions to continue, this "weeding" process enabled the library to save a considerable amount of money as well as to free up space for books that tend to be utilized more regularly.

In addition, over the past year, the library's rotunda cases featured four different exhibits, including "The Passing of the Gavel Ceremony" (to Chief Justice Lewis) and "Historic Florida Supreme Court Elections." The rotunda cases also exhibited artifacts from two periods of the library's *Evolution of Justice in Florida* project—a series of 40 displays depicting the development of Florida's judicial system; the two periods displayed this fiscal year were "The Prehistoric and Native American Eras" and "The Colonial Era." Initiated by then Chief Justice Harry

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Lee Anstead in 2002, the *Evolution of Justice in Florida* project aims to “educate the public about the history of our state’s judiciary and to strengthen confidence in Florida’s Courts system.”

Finally, archival materials going back to the late nineteenth century—consisting of the opinions, speeches, photographs, and personal memorabilia of some of the



The Supreme Court Library is the oldest state-supported library in Florida.

justices—will soon be available for the first time. This collection will also include some very recent items of relevance, including materials relating to the court’s role in Election 2000.

Whether doing inventory of rare books or archival material, improving book preservation methods, leading tours of the rare book room, answering questions from students working on school projects about the justice system, hosting the Florida State, Court, and County Law Libraries Conference, crafting educational exhibits, or providing research assistance to justices, attorneys, or

the public, library staff serve as an important interface between the judicial branch and the public. The library is clearly an animated hub of educational and outreach activity in the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court Tour Program

Established in 1994, the Supreme Court Tour Program was engendered when Mrs. Irene Kogan, wife of former Chief Justice Gerald Kogan (on the bench from 1987-1998), conceptualized it as a way to help student visitors learn more about the function and the workings of Florida’s judicial branch. The tours are conducted by docents, staff members, and volunteers who have completed a comprehensive training process in which they learn about every important feature of the Third Branch: the structure of Florida’s justice system; the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court; the names of and anecdotes about justices past and present; the history of the Supreme Court building, courtroom, and seal; the Constitution of the State of Florida and the U.S. Constitution; and the function and choreography of the oral argument—the most public of the justices’ activities (visitors are invited to witness this dramatic process, which is generally scheduled for the first or second week of each month).

Visitors to the Supreme Court can select from among three different kinds of tours: with the aid of brochures, they can take a self-guided tour of the public areas of the building (the courtroom, library, upper and lower rotunda areas, clerk’s office, portrait gallery, and lawyer’s lounge); they can have “The Historical Tour Experience,” in which they view and are informed (and often entertained) about the points of interest in the building by tour program guides; or, with the help of the guides, they can participate in “The Mock Oral Argument Experience,” in which they engage in a simulated oral argument, role-playing the parts of attorneys and justices in arguing and deciding a case. During Fiscal Year 2006-2007, over 6,200 visitors took advantage of the mock oral argument and the historical tours (no records are kept of the number of people who do the self-guided tour).

The most popular of the three tours, especially for school groups, is the “Mock Oral Argument Experience,” which lasts about 90 minutes. The tour program has put together 13 different age-appropriate cases in which students can role-play. These cases—all addressing First

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or Fourth Amendment issues—include “The School Search” and “The School Uniforms” for elementary school students and “The ID Stop,” “Violent Video Games,” “Juvenile Curfew,” and “Censoring the School Newspaper” for middle and high school students; there’s also a “Prom Night Alcohol Test” case for high school students.

Fourth and fifth graders constitute the majority of the school groups that visit—which means that, typically, they have just been studying early American history, the American Revolution, and the three branches of government, so they do have some knowledge of the court system. For most, it’s quite an awe-inspiring experience to be in the Supreme Court courtroom, and they bustle to sit up front and launch lots of questions at the tour program guides (Who sits in each chair? Who are the people whose pictures are on the walls? What do the justices wear under their robes?). The guides’ first duty is to get the students focused and on-task, which they do by asking basic questions to find out what the students know about the three branches and, in particular, the judiciary. The primary goal is to get the students involved and thinking about the justice system and the judicial process, which is not too difficult because even the youngest learners have a deep sense of the concept of fair versus unfair—a natural starting point for a discussion about the right to appeal, the right to petition the government, and the Constitution, especially the Bill of Rights. After the guides explain the procedure for appealing and for taking a case from a district court of appeal to the Supreme Court, they describe the role and responsibilities of the nation’s highest court.

At this point, it’s time to move into the specifics of the case with which they will be wrestling. Students are given a series of handouts: the exact language of the relevant amendment; the scenario that they’ll be addressing, including the decision of the trial court and of the district court of appeal; the constitutional question on which they’ll focus; and a case study sheet on which they are asked to jot down, in their own words, the facts of the case, the issue to be decided, and possible arguments for the petitioner and the respondent. Orchestrated by the guides, the students contemplate and discuss all these issues as a group. Then, 13 of them are assigned specific roles for the mock oral argument: seven play the part of justices (one is designated the chief justice); four play the part of attorneys (two petitioners, two respondents); and

one takes on the role of marshal and another, of clerk. These 13 separate out to prepare for their impersonations, and although the “justices” are given sample questions and the “attorneys” are given sample arguments, each group is encouraged to think of other questions/arguments to employ. After some preparation time, the mock oral argument unfolds, following the pattern of a real oral argument—with one big difference: after the mock oral argument ends, the “justices” congregate, discuss, and vote, so a decision is announced right away (meanwhile, the students who didn’t get to role-play have their own discussion and vote).



In the courtroom of the Florida Supreme Court, fifth graders from Leon County’s Buck Lake Elementary School learn about the procedure for appealing a case in preparation for their mock oral argument.

All told, this experience teaches the students a host of essential skills: they quickly understand the necessity of being a good listener and of listening to all sides; they learn the importance of presenting persuasive arguments; they brave the scary thrill of having to think on their feet; and of course they exercise their critical thinking skills.

The usefulness of this experience is best articulated by those visitors who have participated in it. According to one middle school teacher, “The students really gained a wealth of first-hand knowledge about the judicial branch and its importance to our system of government. The tour

was a wonderful opportunity for them to understand the role of the justices and key players through the mock oral arguments. The students raved about the experience of sitting in the justices' chairs and role playing as justices, attorneys, the marshal, and the clerk. The experience will be something that they will remember for years to come!"

"The Mock Oral Argument Experience" teaches students a host of essential skills: they quickly understand the necessity of being a good listener and of listening to all sides; they learn the importance of presenting persuasive arguments; they brave the scary thrill of having to think on their feet; and of course they exercise their critical thinking skills.

And as one seventh grader exclaimed, "The mock trial was fantastic! We learned so much about the judicial system. The case that we argued was violent video games, and I was one of the petitioners. It was a great hands-on experience that we will never forget!"

The Justice Teaching Institute

Following a competitive selection process each year, the Supreme Court's Justice Teaching Institute invites up to 25 secondary school teachers from across the state to participate in an intensive, five-day program that immerses them in the workings of the justice system and lets them witness the Supreme Court in action. The aim of this program is to inspire these teachers to share what they have learned with their students and colleagues, either by cultivating a courts unit for their classes or organizing a local Justice Teaching Institute for other instructors in their school or district. Inaugurated by former Chief Justice Gerald Kogan in 1997, the Justice Teaching Institute was established as a component of the court's Sesquicentennial Celebration. Since then, this court program has been framed and nurtured by Annette Boyd Pitts, executive director of the Florida Law Related Education Association, and by Chief Justice Lewis, who has played a pivotal role in its development since his 1998 appointment to the Supreme Court.

This April, 25 teachers, representing 19 judicial circuits, participated in the institute. Over the course of this densely-packed Sunday-through-Thursday program, teachers had an extraordinary opportunity to study and to interact informally with each of the seven justices, along

with Judge Janet Ferris (Second Judicial Circuit), Judge Kevin Emas (Eleventh Judicial Circuit), Ms Pitts, and other members of the court system family. They also got a private tour of the building—guided by the chief justice himself; learned about the structure and function of the state court system and about the criminal court process;

pondered the separation of powers and contemplated the merit and signification of having an independent judiciary; became adept at accessing legal resources from print and Internet media; investigated alternative methods of dispute resolution; and engaged in an energetic review of and dialog about

the constitutional issues at stake in a real case before the Supreme Court (each year's program has, at its center, a specific and timely legal case with which the teachers wrestle throughout the week). The point of all this study was to equip the teachers to participate in a mock oral argument about this case—climaxing in their observation of the justices' oral argument about this very case.

One of the most compelling aspects of the program generally is the way in which it perceptibly metamorphoses the teachers over the course of their five days at the court. When they first arrive, it's evident that they're somewhat overwhelmed and intimidated by the foreignness of the court environment and the ambitiousness of this enterprise in which they're participating. But the training they



Teachers Dwayne Jefferson (Jefferson County High School, Monticello), Rhonda Royston (Buchholz High School, Gainesville), and Cam Harrison (Fernandina Beach Middle School, Fernandina Beach) engage in some last-minute brainstorming before their mock oral argument.

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receive is so rigorous—and the justices, judges, and Ms Pitts make them feel so “at home” in this environment—that, before long, the teachers begin to evince a palpable sense of confidence in their justice system knowledge and abilities. By the time they’re ready to play the part of justices, petitioners, or respondents for the mock

But the ones who gain the most from the Justice Teaching Institute are in fact far removed from the electrifying give-and-take of this adventure: the students of these teachers are actually the biggest beneficiaries of all, for, through their teachers’ eyes, they have a distinctive and intimate window into the world of the judicial branch.

oral argument, they are able to wield sophisticated legal arguments like accomplished jurists, demonstrating that they’ve clearly grown into their new personae.

Best of all, everyone benefits from this experience. The justices and judges visibly enjoy teaching and interacting with these exceptional and ardent “students.” And the teachers manifestly relish this chance to meet and work with these seasoned jurists (one asserted that “It has been by far the most rewarding in-service experience I have participated in” as a teacher; according to another, “I came back to work refreshed and energized”; claimed another, “It helped me to reach higher to become a better teacher”). But the ones who gain the most are in fact far removed from the electrifying give-and-take of this adventure: the students of these teachers are actually the biggest beneficiaries of all, for, through their teachers’ eyes, they have a distinctive and intimate window into the world of the judicial branch.

The Justice Teaching Initiative

In his passing of the gavel address in June 2006, Chief Justice Lewis declared that “The cornerstone of the next two years will be justice teaching”: by building “a permanent, statewide structure for reaching out to every school in Florida,” he vowed that “We’re going to form the most comprehensive approach to support civic education that’s ever been attempted.” Less than one month later, by administrative order, he established the Select Committee on Justice Teaching, directing it to advise the Supreme Court about the most effective ways of supporting educational programs addressing our legal system and to oversee the creation of inspired collaborations among the courts, law-related specialists, and Florida’s schools.

Underscoring his commitment to this program, the chief justice himself chairs this 30-member committee, which is charged with accomplishing seven specific tasks in coordination with a wide range of legal and educational professionals—“attorneys, court managers, superintendents, school districts, boards of education, teachers, school administrators, the Florida Law Related Education Association, and other appropriate organizations.” As the administrative order states, the goal of Justice Teaching is to “promote an understanding of Florida’s justice system and our laws, develop critical thinking abilities and problem solving skills, and demonstrate to

students the effective interaction of our courts within the constitutional structure.”

One of the committee’s first tasks was to partner every public elementary, middle, and high school in the state with a legal professional—a judge or attorney—who serves as that school’s civics education resource person and works hand-in-hand with the teachers of that school for, on average, an hour a month. The movement to spur legal professionals to volunteer for this program took off in earnest in December, and, since then, remarkably, over



When Chief Justice Lewis visits with students, he strives to help them develop a deeper understanding of the court system and a greater trust in all the branches of government.

3,500 attorneys and judges have volunteered; of Florida's approximately 2,800 public, charter, and alternative schools, around 2,400 schools already have been partnered with at least one legal professional.

Before volunteers can begin working in a school, they attend a three-hour training session, and, so far, Chief Justice Lewis and Annette Boyd Pitts, executive director of the Florida Law Related Education Association, have conducted 25 training sessions across the state. The purpose of these training sessions is to teach the volunteers how to be compelling and effective teachers: the chief and Ms Pitts offer tips on how to break the ice with the students, and they share some of the lessons they've learned—"what's been positive, productive, easy to do"—in their many years of being guest teachers (the chief justice has been going to three or four schools



a month since 1998). Volunteers learn that it's usually helpful to begin by teaching the students listening skills, "the building block to civil discourse—and necessary in a representational democracy," and the chief justice suggests strategies for cultivating those skills. Chief Justice Lewis and Ms Pitts also take the volunteers on a tour of the vast body of teaching material—the "virtual library"—on the Justice Teaching website (justiceteaching.org), which offers an impressive selection of tested, age-appropriate lesson plans, all involving actual court cases.

Since every circuit and DCA is represented on the Select Committee on Justice Teaching, committee members have recently begun doing the training sessions locally to make sure that all the volunteers will be ready to go into the schools come fall semester. And, even though Justice Teaching is currently being spearheaded by Supreme Court efforts, the hope is that, eventually, the program will be locally-driven and that it will continue and will grow on its own.

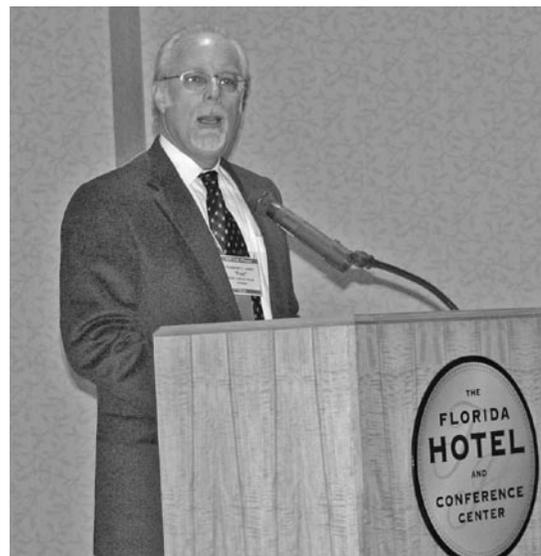
Underlying the chief justice's initiative is an endeavor to demystify everything connected with the judicial branch—the law, lawyers, judges, the trial process; by

unmasking the branch and making its operations more fathomable, Justice Teaching will help children develop a deeper understanding of the court system and a greater faith and trust in all the branches of government, he posits. Affirming that Justice Teaching will help to build a better future, he calls it "our gift to children."

Instructional Opportunities for Judges and Court Personnel

Continuing judicial education has been mandatory in this state since 1988, although it has been available for over 40 years. Every three years, Florida judges are required to take a minimum of 30 approved credit hours of court education, with additional requirements for new judges. Each year, through live, interactive presentations and distance learning formats, approximately 900 hours of instruction are available for judges and certain court personnel (e.g., court administrators, appellate law clerks, marshals). By helping judges and staff enhance their legal knowledge, administrative skills, and ethical standards, Florida's award-winning court education effort has the ultimate goal of leading to the competent and fair administration of justice.

The most substantial responsibility of the program lies in providing diverse, relevant educational opportunities for judges to meet their continuing education requirements. Supported by a trust fund administered by the Florida Court Education Council and staffed by the OSCA Court Education Section, education planners develop a wide range of judicial learning opportunities each year,



Judge Frederick J. Lauten, Ninth Circuit, is dean of the Florida Judicial College, an extensive, two-phase education program for new judges.

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including the education programs of the Conference of County Court Judges, the Conference of Circuit Judges, the Conference of DCA Judges, and the Florida College of Advanced Judicial Studies.

In addition to these usual court education-related duties, OSCA's Court Education Section also coordinates the annual Florida Judicial College, a comprehensive training program for new judges that takes place in two phases, each of which is five days long. The first phase, designed for trial court judges, is geared toward helping new judges make the transition from the bar to the bench, and it covers topics like judicial ethics; judicial immunity and liability; domestic violence, juvenile detention, and shelter hearings; fairness issues; contempt; and search warrants and first appearance. Judges also learn about the art of judging and building a judicial style. The second phase, devised for trial court and appellate judges, concentrates on substantive legal issues. One of the great strengths of the program is that it offers new judges a unique opportunity to receive feedback from some of the most seasoned judges in the state.

This year, the Florida Judicial College had its largest class ever: 107 new trial court judges attended phase one (compare that with last year's enrollment, which was 56—and that class was considered large). The reason for the huge class was the election of 85 new judges to the bench last November (which includes the 55 new judgeships funded by the legislature in 2006 as well as new openings created by retirement, death, or contested elections).

In addition to being required to attend the two phases of the Florida Judicial College within their first year on the bench, all new trial court judges must participate in Florida's Judicial Mentor Program, which couples each new judge with a veteran judge. The mentor's role involves providing information and serving as a resource; offering

constructive criticism and feedback; serving as an advocate or intermediary; and acting as a confidant, supporting the new judge with any ethical or personal concerns. Mentors, who are appointed by the chief justice for two-year terms, must undergo a rigorous training program of their own before they are paired with new judges. Established in 1991, this program was one of the first of its kind in the nation and has won national acclaim. Judge Lisa Davidson, Eighteenth Judicial Circuit, is the program director, and Judge John Marshall Kest, Ninth Judicial Circuit, is the associate director. Currently, the program has 162 mentors.



Judges Jeff Colbath (Fifteenth Circuit), Amy Williams (Sixth Circuit), Angela Cowden (Polk County), Orlando Prescott (Eleventh Circuit), Victoria Platzter (Eleventh Circuit), and Paul S. Bryan (Third Circuit) are among the Florida Judicial College faculty members who take new judges through the simulated trial proceeding.

To be able to offer 900 hours of continuing judicial education instruction each year, court education leadership must rely significantly on the time and dedication of a host of the state's sitting and retired judges who generously agree to serve as faculty. Judges who wish to teach are required to participate in a faculty training course designed specifically for them. This day-and-a-half long program is offered at least once a year, and it steeps the

aspiring judicial teachers in adult education principles. In a small-group setting (the course is typically capped at 20), they learn how to do a needs assessment and how to create viable learning objectives; they also learn how to team teach, how to teach to different kinds of learners, and how to plan a successful course. Most important, they get to work with some of the court system's most experienced and accomplished judicial faculty, who share practical and anecdotal pointers about what works superbly and what is likely to flounder. In the culminating session, each aspiring teacher gives a 15-minute presentation (on a topic of his/her choice), which is critiqued. Two faculty training courses were offered this fiscal year.

Other educational opportunities have abounded for judges and court personnel this year. For instance, in February, 75 judges and court personnel from around the state converged in Tampa for an education summit at which they addressed

current issues in judicial branch education. Also, local diversity and sensitivity awareness education programs for judges and state-funded court employees are now being offered at the trial and appellate courts. And appellate and circuit judges, chief judges, and trial court administrators had the chance to learn about emergency preparedness measures at their education programs this year.

Most of the above programming involves interactive presentations in a face-to-face setting. However, the Court Education Section has also been exploring electronic possibilities. Distance learning, in both asynchronous and synchronous formats, is especially promising, and it is being used to supplement traditional live programming as well as to create educational resources for other court personnel. This year, appellate law clerks could take advantage of four

One of the great strengths of the Florida Judicial College is that it offers new judges a unique opportunity to receive feedback from some of the most seasoned judges in the state.

distance learning programs: a “2006 U.S. Constitutional Update,” taught by Professor Erwin Chemerinsky, Duke Law School (videoconference); “Statutory Construction,” by Judge Philip Padovano, First DCA (videoconference); “Ethics,” by Judge William A. Van Nortwick, First DCA (Live Meeting presentation); and “Appellate Legal Writing,”

by Professor Robert Coogan, University of Maryland (videoconference).

Another electronic teaching resource is the recently revamped intranet site, which includes a newly-compiled Court Education Online Library Catalog. This library

provides judges and court personnel with ready access to a wide range of relevant educational materials: links to benchbooks and benchguides, case law summaries, toolkits, reports, manuals, books, newsletters, articles, training

curricula, CD-ROMS, videos, DVDs, and other media developed by the Florida court system as well as external sources. And on the Internet is the recently-released *Pandemic Influenza Benchguide: Legal Issues Concerning Quarantine and Isolation*, produced by the Publications Committee of the Florida Court Education Council.

The educational needs of other court personnel are now being actively addressed as well. The Florida Court Education Council completed an educational needs assessment of six different constituencies: general magistrates and hearing officers; trial court staff attorneys and general counsel; judicial assistants; administrative services personnel; family court personnel; and case managers. A consultant working closely with Court Education staff was directed to determine the education and training needs of these audiences and to present recommendations for the most appropriate and cost-effective delivery systems to handle those needs. After distributing surveys, conducting focus groups, and interviewing supervisory personnel, the consultant compiled the data and submitted a report and an implementation plan to the council. The council voted to accept the report and to approve, in concept, the first two years of the implementation plan, directing the Court Education Section to determine how to carry out the plan based on budget and staffing requirements. As a result of the study, a pilot program for new magistrates will take place in January; another is scheduled for June. Meanwhile, the council continues to assist with funding a variety of education initiatives for magistrates, case managers, and other non-judge court staff.

Services for Court Users

Access to the Courts for People with Disabilities

After the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law 17 years ago, Florida’s courts began to make significant progress in providing program accessibility to people with disabilities, but because structural barriers continue to exist, meaningful access to the courts remains incomplete. Today, approximately one in five Americans has some kind of disability—with one in ten suffering from a severe disability, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. Closer to home, over three million Floridians have some kind of disability—including over 29% of the people residing in the state’s most populous county, Miami-Dade. In his June 2006 passing of the gavel address, Chief Justice Lewis drew attention to these statistics, declaring, “These artificial barriers must not be in place for Florida’s citizens”



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and vowing to make architectural accessibility of court facilities one of his top priorities.

Thus in his September 2006 Administrative Order, among the responsibilities with which he tasked the Standing Committee on Fairness and Diversity, he directed it “First and foremost, [to] provide input and advice on the judicial branch initiative to survey and re-assess access to the courts for persons with disabilities, pursuant to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.” (Title II, which applies to programs and services of state and local governments, including the judicial branch, stipulates that, “subject to the provisions of this title, no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits

of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity.”) He instructed the committee to establish a Court Accessibility Subcommittee, which would be responsible for orchestrating the organization of surveys of all 138 court facilities in the state, supporting the development and implementation of transition plans, and creating a means by which courts can readily share their most promising disability access initiatives.

The Court Accessibility Subcommittee is chaired by Nick Sudzina, trial court administrator of the Tenth Judicial Circuit; half of its 20 members work within the judicial system, and half were selected for their expertise on the



Trial Court Administrator Nick Sudzina, Tenth Circuit and chair of the Court Access Subcommittee, and Judge Martha Cook, Thirteenth Circuit and vice chair, listen to subcommittee members’ suggestions about strategies for making Florida’s courthouses more ADA-compliant.

has already made consequential headway toward achieving its goals since its first meeting last November. For instance, since this multi-year endeavor will succeed only if there’s well-disposed collaboration between court representatives (judges, court administrators, court facilities personnel, court ADA coordinators, etc.) and court partners (clerks of court, county commissioners, county facilities personnel, local bar associations, state attorneys, public defenders, etc.), the chief judge of each circuit and DCA appointed a local Court Accessibility Team that reflects a broad configuration of stakeholders (statewide, over 500 people are participating on these teams, including people in the various capacities stated above as well as architects with ADA experience and people with disabilities).

Using ADA guidelines and the Florida Accessibility Code for Building Construction, the subcommittee also painstakingly designed a comprehensive, Florida courts-specific survey instrument; this user-friendly survey instrument, which includes approximately 35 separate forms for different public areas in the courthouse, takes into account ADA standards for existing structures, for court renovations, and for new construction. Once the survey instrument was completed, the subcommittee organized four regional training sessions for the members of the Court Accessibility Teams; altogether, 400 people attended these day-long training sessions, whose purpose was to instruct attendees on the use of the survey instrument, to familiarize them with the tools they would need for their surveys, and to give them a chance to practice surveying something in a courthouse using the survey instrument and the tools. After undergoing this comprehensive training process, participants were well-prepared to return to their home courts and begin re-evaluating their facilities. Surveys are expected to be completed by October 1, 2007, and the subcommittee will issue an interim report by the end of the year, after which the implementation process will begin.

“The judiciary has a legal, professional, and ethical duty to ensure that the State Court System is accessible to Floridians with disabilities.” -Chief Justice Lewis

Americans with Disabilities Act or for their experience representing the disability community. The subcommittee

Despite the general enthusiasm for ADA compliance, challenges, both external and internal, remain, naturally.

This is an extremely costly and time-consuming process, for instance. Also, since the counties fund infrastructure for Florida's trial court facilities, any structural modifications will necessitate county agreement and funding.



Steve Howells, of the Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities and member of the Court Access Subcommittee, demonstrates how to measure a door threshold; in order for a room to be wheelchair-accessible, the door threshold should be no more than one-half inch in height, beveled, with a slope no greater than 1:2.

Despite the challenges, incontestably, people with disabilities have the same right to make use of the services of their courts as do people without disabilities. Therefore, as Chief Justice Lewis emphasizes, "The judiciary has a legal, professional, and ethical duty to ensure that the State Court System is accessible to Floridians with disabilities." And, in fact, Florida is in the vanguard in its efforts to achieve court accessibility: according to Laura Einstein, an attorney from the U.S. Department of Justice who gave a presentation at the regional training sessions, Florida is the first and only state in the country to embark on such a comprehensive initiative on a voluntary and proactive basis. The court accessibility initiative reaffirms the judicial branch's commitment to the elemental values of access and fairness.

Access to the Courts for Indigent Defendants and Self-Represented Litigants

Chief Justice Lewis, in his message introducing *Horizon 2008: The 2006-2008 Operational Plan for the Florida*

Judicial Branch, declares that "equity and access" is one of the underlying principles that must continue to guide the court system. He specifically identifies two fundamental access issues that demand attention, both involving people whose access to the courts is somewhat fragile: the first issue entails indigent defendants in criminal conflict cases and various civil cases; the second involves self-represented litigants. To address the needs of these groups, the chief justice has called for a clarification of the roles of the trial courts and their justice system partners.

Indigent Defendants

"You have the right to remain silent and refuse to answer questions. Anything you do or say may be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to consult an attorney before speaking to the police. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed for you...." Anyone who has ever watched American movies or TV shows is bound to be able to recite parts of the Miranda warning in his or her sleep and therefore knows that suspects, before they can be interrogated by the police, must be informed that they have a due process right to an attorney—whether or not they can afford one. As the Sixth Amendment states, "In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right...to have the assistance of counsel for his defence."

Up until 1963, indigent defendants were guaranteed court-appointed counsel only in federal felony cases. That year, however, U.S. Supreme Court decision *Gideon v. Wainwright* extended this guarantee to indigent defendants in all state felony cases. This landmark case, which reversed the judgment of a 1961 Florida trial court, established that the right to an attorney is fundamental to a fair trial: litigants must be able to exercise their constitutional rights regardless of their wealth or education.

The cases of indigent defendants have typically been handled by public defenders. In the past, if the public defender had a conflict of interest—for instance, if there were multiple defendants who were accusing each other—the public defender represented the first defendant, and private attorneys were contracted to represent the others. Each of Florida's 67 counties was responsible for compensating the private attorneys hired for these conflict cases. However, the state became responsible for this cost after the 2004 implementation of Revision 7, the constitutional amendment that transferred the primary funding onus for Florida's court system from the counties to the state in order to ensure that all Floridians, in all parts of the state, have equal access to justice.

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When the state took over the costs associated with conflict counsel, several problems surfaced. First, because each county has its own data-collection and accounting methods, the legislature could not determine how much this due process service typically costs, so lawmakers were unable to gauge how much to budget for it. Also, unlike the counties, the state lacks flexibility in terms of when and how it can release funds, so an underestimate on the state's part led to serious fiscal shortages as the year wore on. Moreover, the state hadn't established financial oversight and accountability standards for conflict counsel, and, as a result, the costs began spiraling.

This spring, in an effort to contain costs, Governor Crist signed Senate Bill 1088, establishing the Offices of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel. In short, SB 1088 will create five regional offices to represent indigent defendants whom, due to a conflict of interest, the public defender cannot. Defendants will be assigned to a private attorney only when the regional counsel also has a conflict—which the legislature estimates will happen in only 20% of all such cases. An office will be established within each District Court of Appeal jurisdiction, and each will be under the supervision of a regional counsel appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate. These offices, with their total of 384 full-time state-employed attorneys, will provide criminal conflict counsel as well as primary representation in specified civil cases. In an additional effort to control costs, the legislature also significantly altered the way private counsel will be compensated for their services, establishing a flat fee for each case based on case type.

In his signing statement, Governor Crist praised the legislature's "laudable attempt" to address this issue. However, he also voiced several concerns about this new system: "My foremost concern is whether five central offices can effectively deploy attorneys to geographically dispersed county and circuit courthouses," he stated, adding that he is also "concerned that the number of attorney positions provided by the General Appropriations Act to support Senate Bill 1088 is insufficient." In his closing, he asked the legislature "to monitor the implementation of this bill with a willingness to mend any detected shortcomings with additional funding and positions or, if needed, more

drastic revisions to ensure the delivery of due process services to the indigent is not compromised." The regional counsel offices are expected to be fully operational by January 1, 2008.

Self-Represented Litigants

"The courts shall be open to every person for redress of any injury, and justice shall be administered without sale, denial or delay." So states Article I, Section 21 of the Constitution of the State of Florida, effectively guaranteeing all people the right to represent themselves in court on any matter and obliging Florida's courts to make themselves approachable and usable to all litigants—including those who cannot afford an attorney or who would prefer not to use one. The judicial branch, in other words, has a responsibility to reveal to the public how to achieve meaningful access to the court system.

In addition to recognizing this constitutional obligation, judicial leaders have also had to acknowledge that the percentage of litigants who choose to represent themselves in court, particularly in family law cases, has been increasing steadily since the 1980s (approximately 80% of family law and 65% of dissolution of marriage cases in Florida have at least one pro se, or self-represented, party). Since court procedures and protocols can be complex and counterintuitive, it is no surprise that most self-represented litigants are unfamiliar with them, leading all too easily to the filing of incorrect or incomplete forms—and thereby causing delays in the case. And when cases are delayed, the parties tend to become frustrated, and the court dockets tend to become clogged. Both because of its constitutional commitment and because of the rise in self-represented parties, Florida's court system began seriously addressing the needs of pro se litigants in 1996.

Fortunately, the 2004 implementation of Revision 7 initiated an institutional transformation that has made it easier for the court system to address the needs of the self-represented. For one inevitable consequence of Revision 7 has been the unification of the branch's budgetary and organizational structure—a change that has driven the courts to reframe themselves as a true and functional system. And in the course of this evolutionary



process, this system has developed uniform mechanisms that enable it, more readily, to accomplish branch-wide goals—like developing a self-help program.

Toward that end, the Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability established the Self-Help Workgroup to examine the basic principles and assumptions underlying the right of meaningful access and to seek consensus for the roles and responsibilities of court-based self-help services. Chaired by Chief Judge Robert Bennett, Twelfth Judicial Circuit, the workgroup

The workgroup has labored diligently to conceptualize a statewide, court-based framework for these self-help services. But to create a successful program, the workgroup has emphasized the need for a statewide definition, clarification, and standardization of services so as to ensure uniform access to pro se parties and to prevent duplication of effort. The challenge here is that services will need to be provided by a number of entities—among them, the bar, legal aid providers, the trial courts, and their clerks. Thus the Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability is currently striving to build a

dynamic collaboration among these entities so that, together, they can work to ensure meaningful access for self-represented parties.

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developed a comprehensive service framework that encompasses the self-help services that court programs could provide as well as the legal services that other entities (legal aid providers, pro bono attorneys, etc.) could offer. The workgroup also determined which trial court case types should be included in a self-help program. Finally, the workgroup identified 13 threshold services that a court-based self-help program should make available (e.g., directions to the correct location within the courthouse to

Court Interpreter Certification and Regulation Program

Nationwide, Florida is surpassed only by California, Texas, and New York in the number of people five years and older who speak English either not at all or “not well.” In Florida, 23.1% of people over the age of five do not speak English at all or speak it “not well” (U.S. Census 2000).



Statewide, in 28 of Florida's 67 counties, 10% or more of the general population is non-English speaking; in 13 of those counties, between 10 and 14.9% are non-English speakers; in another 11 counties, non-English speakers constitute between 15 and 29.9% of the residents; in three counties, between 30 and 49.9% are non-English speakers; and in one county—Miami-Dade—close to 70% of the population is non-English speaking (RAND Florida 2005). In descending order, Spanish, sign language, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Russian, Vietnamese, French, Arabic, Bosnian, and Laotian represent the top ten language needs in Florida.

find needed services; information about the scope—and the limitations—of self-help services; information about the legal process specific to the subject matter of the litigant's concern).

Unequivocally, all Floridians are entitled to equal access to justice—regardless of their linguistic background. However, without the aid of qualified language interpreters, litigants with limited English proficiency are likely to be at a grave disadvantage in a courtroom. The potential

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for problems—both for the defendants, who might find themselves paying a heavy price for crimes they did not commit, and for taxpayers, who might have to subsidize a retrial when a trial is discovered to have been riddled with interpreting errors—is understandably enormous.

Seeking to prevent language-based courtroom predicaments that end in consequential misjudgments, Florida's court system has been dedicated to developing a statewide foreign language court interpreter program. Since 1998, with the goal of helping judges and trial court administrators evaluate the qualifications of court interpreters, the Office of the State Courts Administrator has offered a training and testing program that includes written and oral language qualifications exams (currently, interpreters can take qualifications exams in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, French, Russian, Vietnamese, Arabic, Laotian, Hmong, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, and Somali). Up until recently, however, the Supreme Court lacked statutory authority to regulate and certify foreign language court interpreters, so the training and testing program has been entirely voluntary.



Justice Charles Talley Wells, the Supreme Court liaison to the Court Interpreter Certification Board, welcomes board members to their first meeting.

with determining the qualifications necessary for certification, such as written and oral exams, continuing education requirements, ethics and professional conduct components, and background checks.

Since the courts have had a standardized, though voluntary, training and testing program for nine years now, the board does not have to create its program *ex nihilo*, so it has begun its work by re-evaluating and formalizing the procedures that have developed over time. The board has been working diligently to finalize certification qualifications, focusing on the orientation program, the written and oral proficiency exams, the interpreters oath, and background check requirements as well as to establish the fee schedule. And the board's three committees—one committee

addresses the discipline of certified interpreters, another establishes continuing education requirements, and the last assists in planning and carrying out program operations—have been meeting regularly to address their tasks. At this point, over 250 state-qualified and/or federally-certified foreign language court interpreters are eager to undergo the Florida certification process once the program is established.

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The board's mission is "to afford all Floridians equal access to the justice forum by removing linguistic barriers and increasing the availability and effectiveness of qualified foreign language interpreters." Toward that end, the board aims to complete, as efficiently as possible, the first phase of its responsibilities, which is to implement the process through which those who meet the

required conditions established by the Supreme Court may become certified and duly qualified interpreters.

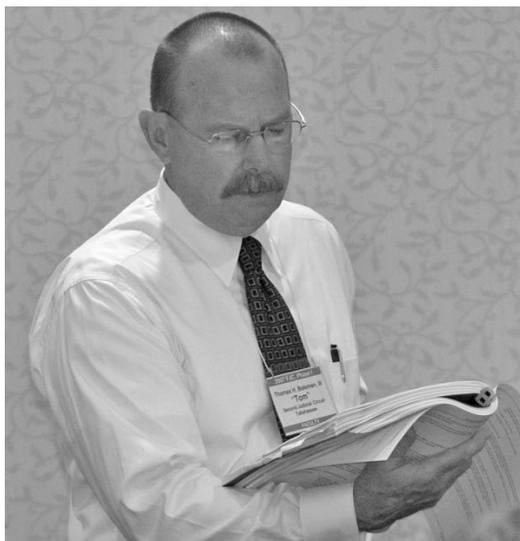
After Florida's legislature authorized the Supreme Court to "establish minimum standards and procedures for qualifications, certification, professional conduct, discipline, and training" of court-appointed foreign language court interpreters (spring 2006), the Supreme Court created the Court Interpreter Certification Board, making it responsible for the certification, regulation, and discipline of court interpreters as well as the suspension and revocation of certification. The board was charged

Improving the Management of Complex Cases

In his message at the helm of *Horizon 2008: The 2006-2008 Operational Plan for the Judicial Branch*, Chief Justice Lewis identifies "responsiveness" as a principle that must continue to guide the branch: "The governance

and management infrastructure of the courts must be responsive to the needs of the people,” he states. He singles out the management of complex cases as an area that especially merits judicial responsiveness. The operational plan announces that Florida’s courts will seek to institute mechanisms for managing complex litigation more efficiently and effectively in order to achieve the timely administration of justice.

According to the chief justice, complex cases can include “mass torts, class actions, product liability cases, intellectual property disputes, cases involving advanced scientific evidence, and cases involving multiple parties.” They are often identified as complex because they are “managerially and substantively intricate and may require considerably more resources and effective management techniques than other cases.”



Judge Thomas H. Bateman, III, Second Circuit, chairs the Task Force on Management of Cases Involving Complex Litigation.

In September 2006, in keeping with his goal of responsiveness, Chief Justice Lewis established the Task Force on Management of Cases Involving Complex Litigation, which he charged with analyzing and evaluating the management of complex cases and with recommending strategies for processing these cases more deftly and quickly, making the best use of judicial resources (case managers, law clerks, magistrates, etc.). He also authorized the task force to review the Florida Rules of Court Procedure to assess the need for proposing amendments that would facilitate the management of these cases.

Chairing this task force is Judge Thomas H. Bateman, III, Second Judicial Circuit; task force members consist of an energetic blend of circuit and appellate judges, attorneys who handle complex cases, and a clerk of court. The task force has met four times already and is working industriously to complete its charges. In addition to meeting together as a group, task force members are also participating in one of three subcommittees: one to define complex litigation; one to assess the need for rule changes; and one to examine how technology might expedite the processing of complex cases. And they designed a website to keep the public informed about their progress and to animate feedback from judges, attorneys, and other parties who have had experience with complex cases. Fundamentally, the task force’s goal is to improve the way in which complex cases are processed and to create an environment in which disposition can occur more quickly. It aims to present its final report to the court later this year.

At about the same time he established this task force, Chief Justice Lewis also created a committee to examine and make proposals about standardizing jury instructions primarily for negligence and product liability type litigation. The Supreme Court Committee on Standard Jury Instructions: Contract and Business Cases, chaired by Judge Thomas B. Smith, Ninth Judicial Circuit, is responsible for studying the principles of contract law and the principles of law associated with business litigation in Florida that could appropriately be placed in uniform, standardized jury instruction form; it is also directed to propose to the court standard jury instructions that would include both the jury process and the law that should be applied in the decision process.

Through the work of these two groups—the Committee on Standard Jury Instructions: Contract and Business Cases and the Task Force on Management of Cases Involving Complex Litigation—Chief Justice Lewis seeks to enhance the effective, efficient, timely, and just resolution of cases.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Typically, when litigants are able to settle conflicts with the aid of mediators rather than through the intervention of judges, all parties involved—the litigants, the court system, and the taxpayers—benefit. The litigants, because they have had a hand in authoring their own resolutions, welcome the sense of empowerment and self-determination that mediation grants—which also means that they are more likely to comply with the terms of the

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settlement. Mediation is also good for the courts because it keeps them from being fraught with cases that could be settled more expeditiously out of court. And taxpayers gain as well because mediation is more economical than a protracted lawsuit. Thus mediation plays a significant role in the administration of justice not only because it generally leads to the peaceful resolution of disputes while being responsive to the particular needs of the litigants, but also because it uses public resources efficiently and responsibly.



OSCA's Sharon Press, Director of the Florida's Dispute Resolution Center, introduces conference attendees to panelists Nancy A. Welsh, professor of law at the Dickinson School of Law, Pennsylvania State University, and James J. Alfani, Esq., dean and president of the South Texas College Law School.

For over 30 years, Florida's court system has been actively committed to establishing alternative methods for resolving certain categories of legal disputes. The history of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in Florida has its roots in Dade County, where, in 1975, the state's first citizen dispute settlement center was founded to address neighbor and community conflicts; soon after, centers sprang up in Duval County and Orange County as well. Over the 12 years that followed, although the legislature authorized judges to refer cases to family mediation and communities to create citizen dispute settlement centers, the growth of ADR was fostered largely by grassroots efforts. But from the very beginning, several visionaries in the court system believed that, since the court is the primary dispute resolution mechanism, ADR should play a role in the courts themselves, and they worked tirelessly with the judiciary and the legislature to make this conception a reality.

Their labors—coupled with the reports of the 1985 and 1986 Legislative Study Commissions—led to the adoption of transformative legislation granting trial judges the statutory authority to refer any contested civil matter to mediation or arbitration. In addition, the Supreme Court was authorized to create standards for a host of ADR components such as certification, training, conduct, and discipline. As a result of these changes, ADR in Florida began to secure an integral and respected role in the civil justice system, and the use of mediation and arbitration has flourished since then, propelling the development of one of the most extensive, court-connected mediation programs in the nation.

This flowering of ADR in Florida was supported by the founding, in 1986, of the Florida Dispute Resolution Center by then Chief Justice Joseph Boyd and Talbot "Sandy" D'Alemberte, Dean of Florida State University College of Law. Housed in the Supreme Court building, the Dispute Resolution Center assists the trial and appellate courts with their ADR programs; certifies mediators and mediation training programs; provides basic and advanced mediation training to volunteers; sponsors an annual conference for mediators and arbitrators; and publishes an annual compendium of state mediation and arbitration programs as well as a quarterly newsletter.

The center also provides staff assistance to four Florida Supreme Court mediation committees and boards: the Committee on Alternative Dispute Resolution Rules and Policy (which makes recommendations to improve and expand the use of court-connected ADR through the adoption of statutes, rules, policies, and procedures); the Mediator Ethics Advisory Committee (which issues advisory ethics opinions to certified mediators); the

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Mediator Qualifications Board (which is responsible for hearing grievances filed against certified mediators and for reviewing mediator "good moral character" issues); and

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the Mediation Training Review Board (which reviews complaints against certified mediation training programs and training program principals).

Florida now has eight citizen dispute settlement programs, 50 county mediation programs, 56 family mediation programs, 10 circuit civil mediation programs, 47 dependency mediation programs, one appellate mediation program, and four non-binding arbitration programs. And the number of mediators continues to grow as well:

to the growing acceptance and institutionalization of ADR in courts across Florida. The day-and-a-half event hosted opening, afternoon, and ethics plenary sessions as well as three sets of workshops, for each of which, participants could choose from among twelve different offerings. Dispute Resolution Center personnel are currently readying for the 2007 conference, "Insight and Inspiration," and are easily expecting this year's numbers to top last year's.

These conferences not only give attendees the opportunity to learn from and to network with kindred spirits; they also serve as an excellent medium for acquiring continuing mediation education (CME) credits. Mediator certification is granted for a two-year period, and, in order to renew their certification, mediators must demonstrate that they completed at least 16 hours of educational activities that are applicable to each area of certification and that enhance their professional competence as mediators. As of this year, mediators receive 12.9 CME hours for attending the entire conference.

Recently, the CME requirements were modified in some pioneering ways. In the past, of the 16 hours minimum of continuing education required, all certified mediators had to complete at least four hours in mediator ethics; in addition, all family and dependency

mediators had to complete four hours in domestic violence education. Although the 16-hour minimum has not changed, the distribution of the requirements has. As of August 1, 2007, included in the 16-hour requirement for all family and dependency mediators is one hour of diversity/cultural awareness education. And for all county and circuit court mediators, included in the 16-hour requirement are one hour of diversity/cultural awareness education and two hours of domestic violence education. The diversity/cultural awareness requirement personifies the court system's responsiveness to the increasing diversity in Florida's population, and the domestic violence education requirement ensures that all mediators have the training and canness to perceive and react appropriately to concealed domestic violence problems, regardless of the court in which a case is tried. Center Director Sharon Press calls these changes "very progressive," saying, "I don't know of any other state that has a diversity/cultural awareness and domestic violence



Leon County peer mediators sign the "mediation pledge" at "Let's Talk About It," the 2006 Conflict Resolution Day conference that the Dispute Resolution Center helped to coordinate.

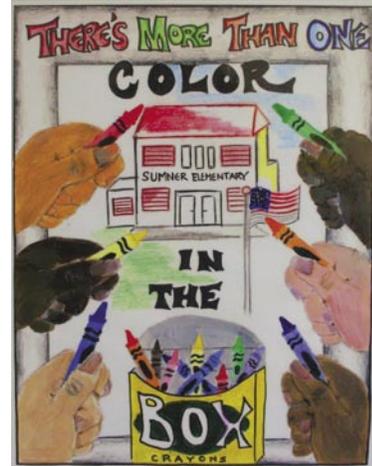
in fiscal year 2006-2007, the Dispute Resolution Center certified 808 mediators, bringing to 5,241 the number of certified mediators in the state of Florida.

Over the past fiscal year, the Dispute Resolution Center, in addition to its usual responsibilities of education, training, and research, celebrated its twentieth anniversary in August 2006 at its annual conference, whose theme was "Honoring Our Past...Celebrating Our Future." To help commemorate the anniversary, plenary speakers James Alfini and Joseph "Josh" Stulberg—and 2006 award recipient David Strawn—were chosen because of their pivotal roles in the maturation of ADR and in the eventual establishment of the Dispute Resolution Center. "Honoring Our Past" marked the Center's fifteenth conference, and, comparing the number of mediators and arbitrators at this year's conference (over 1,000) with the number attending the first one in 1992 (300), Center Director Sharon Press called dramatic attention

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Judge Thomas H. Bateman, III, Second Judicial Circuit, teaches trial skills to the new judges during Phase I of the Florida Judicial College.



Poster by Elaine Fenna, of Miami Killian Senior High in Miami-Dade County: one of the winners of the Law Day Poster Contest sponsored by the Florida Law Related Education Association.



Justice Peggy Quince was selected by Governor Charlie Crist for induction into the Florida Commission on the Status of Women's Hall of Fame.



Chief Judge Belvin Perry, Jr., Ninth Judicial Circuit, chairs the Trial Court Budget Commission; to his left is Chief Judge Charles A. Francis, Second Judicial Circuit, who is the commission's vice-chair.



This year's 25 Justice Teaching Institute fellows were divided into two groups for the mock oral argument; this group held its mock oral argument in the courtroom of the First DCA.

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Girls State representatives participate in a mock oral argument in the courtroom of the Florida Supreme Court.



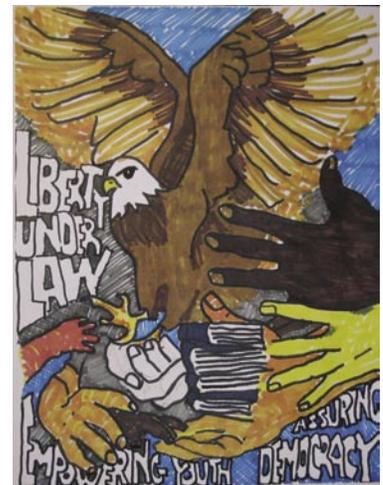
Judge Mary Catherine Green, Polk County, exchanges ideas with Corporal Pete Garcia, DV Civil Unit of the Lee County Sheriff's Office, at the Domestic Violence Needs Assessment Meeting.



Chief Justice R. Fred Lewis poses for a photo with Leon County's peer mediators at the October 2007 Mediation Day Celebration Day Conference, held at Florida State University.



Public Defender Nancy Daniels, Second Judicial Circuit, and former Representative J. Dudley Goodlette (R-Naples) are among the members of the recently reconstituted Judicial Management Council.



Poster by Daniel G. Lopez, of Gulliver Preparatory School in Miami-Dade County: one of the winners of the Law Day Poster Contest sponsored by the Florida Law Related Education Association.

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component in its continuing mediation education requirements for all mediators.”

The use of mediation in Florida’s school system is also continuing to grow. Last October, 200 Leon County peer mediators from three elementary schools, seven middle schools, and one high school received training credit for participating in “Let’s Talk About It,” a Conflict Resolution Day conference that the Dispute Resolution Center helped to coordinate. Held at Florida State University, this event featured Chief Justice Lewis, who gave opening remarks; students were then organized into small groups for participation in age-appropriate, educational workshops. As the chief justice reminded them, it’s never too early to learn that “It is good for you, for your schools, for this community, and for the nation that we be able to resolve any conflicts that arise in a peaceable fashion....The starting place is with each and every one of you”—wise words for anyone, of any age, who finds him or herself enmeshed in a conflict.

Trial Court Workload Measurement Project

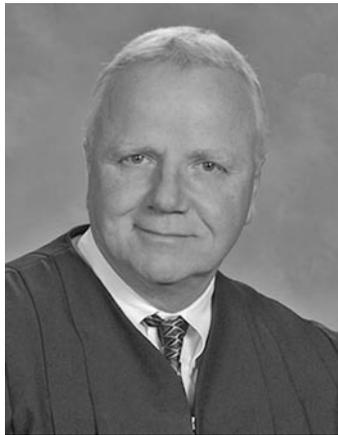
When trial courts have a sufficient number of judges on the bench, cases can be processed in an effective, efficient, and timely manner. However, when the courts lack an adequate number of judges, litigants may likely experience delays in case processing and, as a result, impaired access to justice.

To ascertain the number of judges that each trial court needs, the Supreme Court makes use of a recognized and reliable assessment method called the Delphi-based Weighted Caseload Model, developed in 1999. In short, this method divides the different cases heard in the courts into 26 case types according to their relative complexity—with cases that are generally uncomplicated (e.g., civil traffic or eviction cases) receiving a lower weight and with usually more complex cases (e.g., juvenile dependency or capital murder cases) receiving a higher weight. Enabling the judiciary to measure judicial workload and to establish recommended caseloads for judges, the weighted caseload model is a powerful tool for determining and documenting the need for new judges, as required by Florida’s constitution. This

model provides the branch with solid data that become the basis for the Supreme Court’s annual certification opinion, which is presented to the legislature and is used in the lawmakers’ deliberations regarding the funding of new judgeships.

However, over time, the issues judges confront change, and their workload can be affected by operational and procedural changes, changes in case precedent, the availability of new resources, and the introduction of new legislation (e.g., the Anti Murder Act, the Jessica Lunsford Act, the Jimmy Ryce Act). Therefore, the National Center for State Courts recommends that the model be reviewed and updated every five years to ensure that it remain valid and useful. The Supreme Court’s Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability established the Judicial Resource Study Workgroup in 2005 to review the weights. Co-chaired by Chief Judge Robert Bennett, Jr., Twelfth Judicial Circuit, and Mike Bridenback, trial court administrator of the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, the workgroup was charged with re-assessing, and, if needed, updating the case weights.

Last summer, in preparation for gathering the data needed to re-evaluate the case weights, the workgroup offered 60 training sessions across the state to familiarize judges with the update process and with the web-based surveys they would be asked to complete. In the surveys, judges were directed to estimate the number of minutes they spend on



Chief Judge Robert Bennett, Jr., Twelfth Circuit, along with Trial Court Administrator Mike Bridenback, Thirteenth Circuit, co-chaired the Judicial Resource Study Workgroup.

each individual component of each case type they typically hear. Due to the high participation rate (55%) and the volume of information collected, the workgroup collected ample data for determining the need to update specific case weights. Then, the workgroup brought together 75 judges—representing all 20 circuits and all divisions of circuit and county court—to review the survey results in light of existing case weights and judicial need. Finally, this spring, the workgroup analyzed the results, taking into account current and projected judicial need. While drafting the final report, workgroup members were particularly gratified to discover the extent to which the revised case weights corroborated the original model, validating the process begun in 1999. The report, presented to the Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability, was approved, and it is now under review by the Supreme Court.

The workgroup was also charged with developing a similar model to measure the workload of general magistrates, child support enforcement hearing officers, and civil traffic infraction hearing officers—which had never been done before in Florida. To prepare the general magistrates and hearing officers for this time study data collection, the workgroup offered six regional training sessions last fall. Then, general magistrates and hearing officers were asked to keep a daily log of their work activities, reporting the actual amount of time they spent on case-related and non-case-related work. At 87%, the response rate among the 185 eligible participants was excellent. After the data were analyzed, the workgroup brought together 39 of the participants, representing 19 circuits, to discuss the data and to make recommendations about the case weights. The results of this study will go to the Funding

this “interaction factor” is assessed, it is likely to affect the need for new judges.

In order for litigants to have meaningful access to justice, legislative funding must be secured to provide courts with an adequate number of judges, general magistrates, and hearing officers. The Judicial Resource Study ensures that case weights are valid and well-grounded, thereby substantiating and justifying the Supreme Court’s annual certification opinion and the judiciary’s budget requests for supplemental resources.

Families and Children

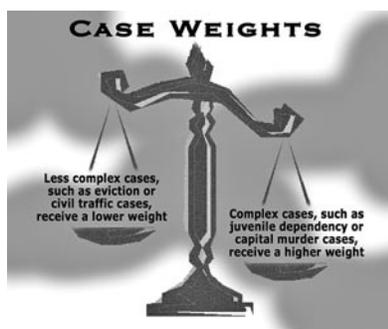
Family Court Issues

Enabling the judiciary to measure judicial workload and to establish recommended caseloads for judges, the weighted caseload model is a powerful tool for determining and documenting the need for new judges, as required by Florida’s constitution.

The Florida Supreme Court has identified unified family court as the most effective and efficient way to address family disputes, in part because the family court jurisdiction encompasses a comprehensive register of legal issues, including dissolution of marriage, annulment, division of property, domestic violence, family dependency, delinquency, truancy, paternity, child

Methodology Committee and the Trial Court Budget Commission, and, if approved, these case weights can be used to justify funding requests for additional general magistrates and hearing officers.

support, emancipation of minors, termination of parental rights, custodial care, and adoption. Covering virtually every kind of case that affects families and children, family court typically utilizes certain elements—the crossover docket, family law advisory groups, and court-related services, for instance—that facilitate the handling of these complex cases.



The Delphi-Based Weighted Caseload Model This model divides the different cases heard in the courts into case types according to their relative complexity, with relatively uncomplicated cases receiving a lower weight and with more complex cases receiving a higher weight.

Although the immediate work of the Judicial Resource Study is complete, the workgroup has been renewed in order to address a number of related tasks that will contribute to the greater utility of the workload models. Among these tasks, the workgroup is particularly eager to analyze the interaction between

judges and general magistrates/hearing officers with the goal of developing a mechanism to determine the best allocation of judicial and supplemental resources. Once

The Steering Committee on Families and Children in the Court and OSCA’s Office of Court Improvement are responsible for coordinating most of the Florida court system’s initiatives concerning families and children. Their focuses are shaped largely by two sources: the steering committee’s direction is governed by the administrative orders of each chief justice, and a significant portion of the work of the Office of Court Improvement is regulated by federal grant guidelines.

The steering committee, which has undergone several transformations since its original incarnation in 1994, is a 24-member body consisting of judges and justice system partners; it is chaired by Judge Nikki Ann Clark, Second Judicial Circuit. In response to Chief Justice Lewis’ August 2006 administrative order, this committee has been concentrating on seven major projects, each spearheaded by a subcommittee.

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One subcommittee has been examining the role of the courts in dependency cases in which children leave the foster care system without a permanent family—e.g., when children reach adulthood and “age out” of the foster care system. The subcommittee expanded its charge to include children who are involved with the Department of Juvenile Justice system; while children who “age out” of the dependency system have a number of services available to them as mandated by state statute and federal law, the young adults under the aegis of the Department of Juvenile Justice experience a gap in services, and the subcommittee seeks to address this problem. A second subcommittee is studying the impact on the court system of the increasing number of litigants with mental health issues; the subcommittee is tasked with developing recommendations for the courts to address, process, and deal with people who have mental health issues and with formulating an action plan for implementing these recommendations (for more information about the court system’s mental health initiative, see following article).



Judge Nikki Ann Clark, Second Circuit and chair of the Standing Committee on Families and Children in the Court, talks with Mental Health Subcommittee member Dr. Merlin Langley, clinical psychologist and professor of social work at Florida A & M University.

that will enable the courts to keep this information private. Another subcommittee is developing a standardized child support order that will give the Department of Revenue the information it needs for enforcement purposes, and yet another subcommittee is designing a vehicle for collecting meaningful data to improve the judicial case management of civil domestic violence cases. The seventh subcommittee is examining existing court rules that affect the implementation of unified family court and developing additional rules and amendments to rules to improve its operation. Over the years, the Steering Committee on Families and Children in the

Court has made significant progress in encouraging and facilitating family court initiatives across the state.

The Florida court system also aims to improve the experience of families and children in the court through various educational and outreach endeavors. The Office of Court Improvement coordinated several training opportunities this year, the most ambitious of which was its third statewide family court conference, “Tools to Move

Forward.” Designed for professionals in the justice system who work with children and families, the conference attracted over 600 attendees, among them, judges, court personnel, court clerks, domestic violence victim advocates, child advocates, parenting coordinators, guardians ad litem, law enforcement officers, and representatives from various state agencies. With over 40 workshops

and institutes as well as three plenary programs, the two-day conference covered an array of family-relevant topics, including sessions on drug court, dependency issues, adoption, independent living, parenting coordination, violence against immigrant women, and domestic violence.

Another subcommittee is developing a video on the dependency system for use in courthouses; geared toward parents, the video will inform them about the dependency case process. A fourth subcommittee is considering and making recommendations about sealing guardian ad litem reports and psycho-social and psychological evaluations in family court cases and, if necessary, proposing rule changes

The goal of the Domestic Violence Needs Assessment is to devise a comprehensive strategic plan for addressing the most pressing domestic violence issues in the courts—and to include the voices of the key stakeholders throughout the planning process.

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The Office of Court Improvement also coordinated two educational programs at the Supreme Court, each a day-and-a-half long, for the court system's domestic violence coordinators. These programs, which strike a balance between presentations and interactive learning, provided the coordinators with training, information, policy and legislative updates, and professional development



FAMILIES AND CHILDREN IN THE COURT STEERING COMMITTEE

education. At the heart of the first program was an introduction to OSCA's recently published *Domestic Violence Case Management Guidelines*; an in-depth presentation on "Domestic Violence Issues for Immigrant Women and Human Trafficking" was at the core of the second program.

Also at the Supreme Court this year, the Office of Court Improvement began a long-range planning initiative with the Domestic Violence Needs Assessment Meeting. Thirty people, all recognized leaders in the field of domestic violence, were invited to participate, among them, judges, law enforcement and correctional officers, batterers intervention program directors, victim advocates,

attorneys, and representatives from the Department of Children and Families and the attorney general's office. Participants were invited to identify and discuss, from their particular perspectives, the problematic domestic violence-related issues in Florida's courts and to help prioritize them. The goal is to devise a comprehensive strategic plan for addressing the most pressing domestic violence issues in the courts—and to include the voices of the key stakeholders throughout the planning process.

The Office of Court Improvement is able to coordinate a host of other kinds of projects with the support of federal grant money. This year, the office was awarded funds from the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program as well as two Court Improvement Program grants. With this federal funding, the office is conducting assessments of Florida's foster care and adoption laws and judicial processes and will develop and implement plans for system improvement. Over the next four years, this funding will also subsidize activities such as statewide family court conferences and dependency summits; dependency case manager training; the dependency court video for parents; the identification of promising practices in dependency court; an automated flagging system for dependency case activity; cross-training for local jurisdictions; circuit site visits; data sharing with external agencies; the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children assessment; involvement in the federal Child and Family Services Review; and collaboration with the Miccosukee and Seminole tribes.



Statewide domestic violence coordinators typically meet at the Supreme Court twice annually to receive professional development education and to learn about policy and legislative updates.

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Also this year, the Office of Court Improvement produced a number of publications for judges, attorneys, and court users, including the *Dependency Benchbook*; *A Parent's Guide to Juvenile Dependency Court*; the *Dependency Reassessment*; and *Chapter 985 Resource* (which deals with delinquency cases), with the Department of Juvenile Justice. Finally, the *Delinquency Benchbook* is scheduled for release later this year.

The most successful court initiatives involving families and children depend on fruitful collaborations between the court system and external entities such as the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Revenue, and Guardian Ad Litem. Nurtured by the Steering Committee on Families and Children in the Court and by the Office of Court Improvement, this collaborative approach enables the unified family court to offer a high and integrated level of service to the families and children who rely on it to resolve their extremely sensitive and complex cases.

Mental Health Initiative

"On any given day, a large number of people with mental illness are incarcerated in jails and prisons across the United States and an additional large group of people with mental illness are on probation in our communities....It is estimated that 70,000 people with serious mental illnesses requiring immediate treatment are arrested and booked into jails in Florida annually," Chief Justice Lewis declared.

Certainly, this issue should raise a red flag for taxpayers and county governments, for, according to a 2004 report, Miami-Dade spent \$18 a day to house in jail inmates from the general population—but it spent \$125 a day to house in jail inmates with mental illnesses (*Final Report of the Miami-Dade County Grand Jury*). However, the problem is far more extensive—and more expensive—than that. Because most communities lack the facilities and resources for adequate crisis, acute, and long-term care for people with serious mental illnesses, localities are witnessing increased homelessness and public safety issues; law enforcement and corrections officers are running the risk of increased injuries; courts are confronting mounting caseloads; and, with neither the means nor the services to alleviate the problem, jails and prisons are becoming congested with people with mental health issues—who are often arrested for committing relatively minor offenses. Moreover, because defendants with mental illness have a higher-

than-average recidivism rate, they cycle in and out of the criminal justice system with disheartening frequency, with little hope of help or relief.

Recognizing that the criminal justice system has become, for many, the treatment of last resort and that state and county correctional facilities are threatening to become the largest psychiatric institutions in Florida, Chief Justice Lewis is resolved to take on this issue aggressively, on several fronts: he authorized the creation of a committee to address the issue of mental illness among people caught up in the justice system; he appointed a special advisor on criminal justice and mental health; he was selected to participate in the nationwide Chief Justices' Criminal Justice/Mental Health Leadership Initiative; and he is preparing to host a Criminal Justice Mental Health Summit in Tallahassee this fall.

Mental Health Subcommittee

In August 2006, soon after the gavel passed to him, Chief Justice Lewis directed the Steering Committee on Families and Children in the Court to "create a subcommittee to study and examine the scope, impact, and relationship of mental health issues with regard to individuals involved in the justice system" and to "develop recommendations for courts to address, process, and deal with individuals



At a press conference, Chief Justice Lewis (at podium) announces his appointment of Judge Steven Leifman (on left), Miami-Dade County, as special advisor on criminal justice and mental health; flanking the chief justice are (l-r) Secretary Walt McNeil (Department of Juvenile Justice), Lieutenant Governor Jeff Kottkamp, Secretary Bob Butterworth (Department of Children and Families), and Chief of Staff Richard Prudom (Department of Corrections).

having mental health issues and formulate an action plan for implementation of the recommendations by the court system." Chaired by Judge Steven Leifman, Miami-Dade County, this subcommittee has been charged with

addressing mental health issues within the context of family courts; by focusing on the mental health needs of families and children, the subcommittee seeks to prevent these individuals from ending up in the criminal justice system. Subcommittee membership reflects a wide cross-section of professionals with expertise in the area of mental health, including judges, attorneys, public defenders, mental health specialists, law enforcement officers, representatives from affected state agencies, and legislators. Divided into four workgroups, committee members are concentrating on standards and evidence-based practices; policy, legislation, and finance; criminal justice issues; and judicial education and rule-making. Underpinning the important work of this subcommittee is the acknowledgement that, to achieve meaningful change, criminal justice system partners must seamlessly join forces with social services providers and with mental health and substance abuse professionals.

Special Advisor on Criminal Justice and Mental Health

In an effort to broaden the scope of these efforts, this April, the chief justice created the position of special advisor on criminal justice and mental health to work directly under him. Appointing Judge Leifman to serve in



In addition to serving as special advisor on criminal justice and mental health, Judge Steven Leifman, Miami-Dade County, also chairs the Mental Health Subcommittee.

this capacity, the chief justice directed him to “attempt to reduce the disproportionate representation of people with mental illnesses or co-occurring substance use disorders or both in the criminal justice system, [and] to enhance the administration of justice and the responsiveness of

the public mental health system.” Flanked by Lieutenant Governor Jeff Kottkamp, Secretary Bob Butterworth (Department of Children and Families), Secretary Walt McNeil (Department of Juvenile Justice), Chief of Staff Richard Prudom (Department of Corrections), and Judge Leifman, Chief Justice Lewis stressed the necessity

This initiative embodies the determined commitment of all three branches of government to improve the practices of the criminal justice and the public mental health systems when dealing with people with mental illnesses and/or co-occurring substance use disorders.

for “cross-systems collaboration” when he announced his appointment at a press conference. This initiative embodies the determined commitment of all three branches of government to improve the practices of the criminal justice and the public mental health systems when dealing with people with mental illnesses and/or co-occurring substance use disorders.

Leadership Initiative and Mental Health Summit

Soon thereafter, following a competitive selection process, Florida was invited to participate in the Chief Justices’ Criminal Justice/Mental Health Leadership Initiative, based on an application submitted by Chief Justice Lewis. In the application, the chief justice had to demonstrate that he had already assembled a broad base of state leaders to begin addressing the issue. Funded by the Council of State Governments Justice Center, this initiative entitles Florida to receive technical assistance from national experts as well as a small grant. Some of this grant money will go toward launching a mental health summit this fall at which leaders from the three branches will gather to begin seeking collaborative solutions.

The Conference of Chief Justices passed a resolution urging each chief justice to adopt a leadership role in addressing the effects of mental illness on the justice system and in bolstering the implementation of problem-solving techniques in cases involving people with mental health issues. Because of his ability to inspire collaboration among various justice system partners and policymakers, Chief Justice Lewis is ideally positioned to spearhead efforts to improve the criminal justice response to people with mental illnesses.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Drug Court

The world's first drug court was established in 1989 in what is now Miami-Dade County. Envisioned as a court-based diversion and treatment program for drug offenders, drug court was the brainchild of Judge Herbert Klein, who, with the approval of the Supreme Court and the support of key state and local community leaders, endeavored to address the problem of congested dockets and overcrowded jails prompted by the rise in crack cocaine use. Quickly, the drug court concept began to spread across the state and the country. Expanding significantly beyond adult criminal drug court, the drug court model now includes juvenile, family dependency, misdemeanor, and DUI drug courts, and aspects of this model, especially its case management practices, have been adopted in other court divisions, most notably, mental health, family-focused, and truancy. Florida has one of the most comprehensive drug court systems in the country, with 109 operational drug courts in all (currently, 48 adult criminal, 31 juvenile, 24 family dependency, three misdemeanor, two DUI, and one juvenile re-entry).

Drug court is not a "specialty court"; it's actually a 12 to 18 month process that involves placing non-violent substance abusers into treatment programs under the careful supervision of a judge and a team of treatment and justice-system professionals. Each drug court is singular, responsive to the needs, priorities, and resources of its local community. But all drug court programs have certain elements in common. For instance, they remove drug-related cases from the traditional courtroom environment; they offer a range of treatment and rehabilitation services; they require offenders to undergo random alcohol and drug tests, rewarding them for positive behavior and sanctioning them for negative behavior; they utilize a non-adversarial approach; they require offenders to maintain ongoing interaction with the court; and they implement interdisciplinary educational strategies.

Further, all drug courts are chiefly focused on the participants' treatment and recovery. Offenders who successfully finish the drug court program have a substantially greater chance of ending the cycle of drug abuse/addiction and re-arrest. According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, offenders who do not

participate in a drug court program have a recidivism rate of 43.5% (February 2003). On the other hand, drug court graduates have a recidivism rate of only 16 to 27 % (*Report on Florida's Drug Courts*, July 2004). Moreover, Florida's drug courts have a significant retention rate: 66% of those who enter the program successfully complete it (data based on drug court profiles collected by OSCA's Office of Court Improvement). Thus, by working to eradicate and not just punish the criminal behavior, drug court programs benefit the offenders—and, ultimately, their families, their communities, and the justice system as a whole.



Judge Terry D. Terrell, First Circuit and chair of the Task Force on Treatment-Based Drug Courts, listens to task force members deliberate over the appropriate scope of confidentiality regarding documents filed in drug court cases.

In 1998, the Supreme Court established its first committee to address treatment-based drug court concerns, specifically the legal, policy, and procedural issues that drug courts encounter; over the years, the committee has also been responsible for considering strategies to reduce substance abuse in Florida and for assessing the extent to which the drug court concept can provide a practical and enduring solution to the insidious effects of substance abuse on our society. In addition to addressing these issues, the Task Force on Treatment-Based Drug Courts—a collaboration of 21 drug court partners from the judiciary, executive branch, and non-governmental entities—has concentrated on two major initiatives this year: in preparation for making recommendations to the Supreme Court, it is reflecting upon the appropriate scope of confidentiality in drug court cases, and it is also developing a proposal regarding continuing education for drug court team members and other justice system

personnel on the impact of substance abuse on the courts and how drug courts effectively deal with these types of cases.

The task force also produced and published *Florida's Adult Drug Court Tool Kit: Recommended Practices*, an extensive collection of effective practices for use in adult drug courts. Offering information about how to implement an adult drug court as well as how to improve those that are already operational, this publication contains a guide to Florida statutes, case law, and reference materials that can support adult drug courts in the planning, implementation, and operational stages. It also suggests problem-solving techniques that can accommodate most divisions of the court system that address substance abuse and addiction issues. Topics covered include Florida Drug Court Standards, Collaborative Planning and Teamwork, Appropriate Treatment Standards, Drug

Thus, by working to eradicate and not just punish the criminal behavior, drug court programs benefit the offenders—and, ultimately, their families, their communities, and the justice system as a whole.

Testing, Judicial Monitoring, Community Partnerships, and Confidentiality and Ethics. The tool kit is now available online as well.

Several other recent drug court initiatives also warrant attention. For instance, OSCA's Office of Court Improvement, supported by a grant from the Department of Juvenile Justice, has been working to expand services to the state's juvenile drug courts. The grant was used in part to fund "Design Your Juvenile Drug Court," a five-day program this March that focused on implementation, enhancement, and training. Coordinated by the Office of Court Improvement in collaboration with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, this program offered sessions on topics such as What is Juvenile Drug Court, Behavior Management, Engaging Families, and Service Delivery Through Community Collaboration. Five circuits participated in the program, and each was assigned a facilitator, who is visiting the circuit to assist

in on-site implementation training. The Office of Court Improvement seeks to institute a juvenile drug court program in each of Florida's 20 judicial circuits.

In April, 375 drug court stakeholders gathered in Orlando to participate in Florida's sixth statewide drug court training conference, "Florida Drug Courts—The Next Generation." Sponsored by the Florida Association of Drug Court Professionals, OSCA, the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and the U.S. Department of Justice, the conference offered core drug court team members a comprehensive education program and an opportunity to network. The conference also became the occasion for a networking opportunity for Florida's drug court coordinators. Because most of them planned to attend the conference, the Office

of Court Improvement scheduled a drug court coordinators meeting for the day before the conference began (the last time the coordinators met as a group exclusively was in February 2005).

Coordinators were treated to several educational sessions and had a chance to share recommended practices with one another.

And in honor of National Drug Court Month, the Office of Court Improvement coordinated with the Sixth Judicial Circuit to host Florida's eighth Annual Statewide Drug Court Graduation in May. The ceremony, which was broadcast live, via teleconferencing, to participating drug courts across the state, commemorated 237 statewide drug

court graduates. Chief Judge David A. Demers, Sixth Judicial Circuit, welcomed graduates and guests, and distinguished speakers included Tampa Bay Buccaneer Mike Alstott and Lieutenant Governor Jeff Kottkamp, who summed up the mood admirably by reminding

everyone that drug court "provides real hope....Every graduate here today has a new opportunity."



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Fairness and Diversity

Eliminating Bias from Florida's Courts

"Justice requires that the court system be accessible to all, respect the dignity of every person, include judges and court staff that reflect the community's diversity, and respond to the needs of all members of society": so begins the administrative order that established the Standing Committee on Fairness and Diversity. Created in 2004 by then Chief Justice Barbara J. Pariente, the committee was renewed in September 2006 by Chief Justice Lewis, who reinforced its mission "to advance the State Courts System's efforts to eliminate from court operations bias that is based on race, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, socioeconomic status, or any characteristic that is without legal relevance." He also reappointed Judge Gill Freeman, Eleventh Judicial Circuit, to chair the committee.

In its first two years, the committee created an online court diversity information resource center; compiled a bibliography of resources on diversity and fairness in the justice system; wrote the report *Promoting and Ensuring the Diversity of Judicial Staff Attorneys and Law Clerks Within the Florida State Courts System*; and began an extensive outreach project on perceptions of fairness in Florida's courts. Under Chief Justice Lewis, in addition to focusing on several new directives, the committee has been implementing the recommendations contained in the above report and completing its outreach project on perceptions of fairness in the courts.

To promote the diversity of law clerks and staff attorneys in the court system, the report recommends improving outreach methods to increase the number of minority

applicants as well as making the recruitment and hiring process less laborious and more user-friendly. Toward

this end, committee members have been working with OSCA's Information Systems Services and Personnel Services to develop the Law Clerk Applicant Database,

which promises not only to expedite the recruitment/hiring process but also to be an important minority outreach tool. Instead of having to send out a resume for each position in which they are interested, applicants will submit one resume to an automated, central, online repository, which will be accessible to Florida judges in regions the applicants specify—or, if preferred, to judges statewide. Expected to be fully operational this fall, the easy-to-navigate database will be marketed nationwide, especially to attorneys associated with minority lawyer networks and to graduates from law schools with



Judge Gill Freeman (in center), Eleventh Circuit, chairs the Standing Committee on Fairness and Diversity. Pictured with her are several of her committee members, including (l-r) Trial Court Administrator Mary Vanden Brook (Sixteenth Circuit), Chief Judge Tonya Rainwater (Eighteenth Circuit), and attorney Carl Schuster (Seventeenth Circuit).

considerable minority populations. Once the database is in place, the court system envisions an increase in the pool of qualified applicants and, in particular, the pool of qualified minority applicants.

As for the outreach project on perceptions of fairness in Florida's courts, the committee is currently drafting a report outlining its findings and recommendations. The challenge is that the committee must integrate—and present coherently, relevantly, and fairly—a colossal amount of material, both data and narrative, reflecting people's perceptions of disparate treatment in the court system. One set of material derives from the committee's survey of over 5,000 Florida judges, court personnel, attorneys, jurors, litigants, and members of the public. The second set consists of transcripts from four public meetings that the committee held between January 2006 and February 2007. To attract a broad cross-section of

SURVEY
PERCEPTIONS OF FAIRNESS
in the
FLORIDA COURTS

speakers, the committee scheduled meetings in Miami, Tallahassee, Orlando, and Jacksonville.

And a diversity of speakers did indeed show up: in addition to members of the legal profession, speakers included representatives of state agencies, not-for-profits, and other government-associated entities as well as members of the public, especially self-represented litigants. Speakers focused on a range of topics: race, gender, domestic violence issues, socioeconomic concerns, children's issues, and various disabilities (e.g., speakers represented court users who are deaf/hard of hearing, have vision impairments, or have mental health concerns). Although committee members were, at times, daunted by some of what they heard, they were heartened by the realization that, as a starting point, the courts could employ many common-sense strategies that would significantly improve the public's perception of fairness in the courts. Recognizing the benefits—to the courts as well as to court-users—of having held these public meetings, several committee members have suggested that the committee continue to hold them periodically so that the branch remain sentient of and responsive to the public's perceptions.

In addition to directing the committee to complete the above two projects, Chief Justice Lewis gave the Standing Committee on Fairness and Diversity two further responsibilities. First, he instructed it to establish a Court Accessibility Subcommittee to work with the judicial branch to help survey and re-evaluate access to the courts for people with disabilities (for information on the work of this subcommittee, please see "Access to the Courts for People with Disabilities," p.17). And, second, he enjoined it to coordinate with the Florida Court Education Council, OSCA, and the trial and appellate courts to develop local court diversity and sensitivity awareness education programs for judges and court staff.



Craig Brown, president of the Tallahassee Barristers Association, speaks to members of the Standing Committee on Fairness and Diversity at the public meeting in Tallahassee.

To identify the features of effective diversity training, including the most promising delivery mechanisms, the standing committee created the Education/Diversity Training Subcommittee, chaired by Judge Scott Bernstein, Eleventh Judicial Circuit. To carry out the work of the subcommittee on the local level, the chief judge of each circuit court and DCA appointed a diversity team for each court, consisting of at least one judge and one staff member. With the support of the subcommittee, the team's role is to develop its local training program, coordinate the training sessions, market them among the judges and court personnel—and make sure that each court has had at least one formal training session by December.

The local diversity and sensitivity awareness education programs are designed to meet specified learning objectives. The ultimate goal of the programs is to increase awareness and understanding of how diverse perspectives can improve court performance; prevent discrimination and harassment in the workplace; improve workplace relations by fostering dignity, respect,

The ultimate goal of the local diversity and sensitivity awareness education programs is to increase awareness and understanding of how diverse perspectives can improve court performance; prevent discrimination and harassment in the workplace; improve workplace relations by fostering dignity, respect, and fairness for employees and court users; build more effective work teams; improve court problem-solving; and improve service to court users.

and fairness for employees and court users; build more effective work teams; improve court problem-solving; and improve service to court users.

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Since diversity training in the courts is envisioned as an ongoing process—not as a one-time event—diversity teams are eager to employ strategies to keep the concept of diversity alive and present throughout the year. Thus, they are seeking ways to supplement the formal training with other activities that honor diversity, e.g., celebrating calendar events like Women’s History Month, Black History Month, and Cinco de Mayo. Even though diversity teams are working with learning objectives approved by the subcommittee, they clearly have lots of room for local initiative, and they are aspiring to make the training process not only educational—but also experiential, creative, and fun.

In devising strategies to promote the diversity of law clerks and staff attorneys, in actively investigating people’s perceptions of disparate treatment in the courts, in working to make Florida’s courts accessible to people with disabilities, and in helping the courts provide ongoing diversity training to judges and court personnel, the Standing Committee on Fairness and Diversity is indeed working industriously to make possible a court system that reflects the community’s diversity and that is accessible to, respectful of, and responsive to all society’s members.

Technology

The Judicial Inquiry System

With a single query, the web-based Judicial Inquiry System (JIS) lets judges, clerks, state prosecutors, defense attorneys, and other justice system partners access records and information from a range of local, state, and federal agencies, including the Department of Law Enforcement,

In response to legislation over the last two years, the JIS has undergone two important expansions. The first was in compliance with the requirements of the Jessica Lunsford Act, signed into law in May 2005, which sentences anyone who preys on a child under 12 to no fewer than 25 years in prison and tracking for life. To accommodate this new legislation, the JIS was enhanced to include a First Appearance Calendar, which allows the system to “flag” automatically anyone whom the Department of Corrections has classified as a high risk sex offender. The calendar also flags registered sex offenders, revealing whether they are on probation, have injunctions or warrants against them, or have invalid drivers licenses. Because of the data this calendar provides, judges and criminal justice system partners have access to the information they need to handle the recently-arrested appropriately both before and during their first appearance for arraignment. The calendar has been fully operational since April 2006.

The second JIS expansion came after the Anti Murder Act was signed into law in March 2007. The goal of this legislation is to reduce, if not eliminate, the chance that previously convicted felony offenders will be able to strike again. Among other requirements, the Anti Murder Act stipulates that certain categories of offenders—specifically, those who are on probation or community control and are classified by the Department of Corrections as “violent felony offenders of special concern”—must be held without bail or pretrial release until their violation hearing. To comply with this new law, the court system was responsible for creating and maintaining an automated system that can provide the courts with the information necessary for determining immediately whether someone is a violent felony offender of special concern. Since the First Appearance Calendar



the Department of Corrections, and the Florida and the National Crime Information Centers (the JIS provides access to 13 different data sources altogether). Users can get much-needed information—for example, a complete criminal history background check—quickly and easily, thus saving time and money. All 20 circuits have access to the JIS, which has been in production since winter 2005 and currently has 4,100 users.

was already set up to flag registered sex offenders, all it required were some programming modifications so that the system would also have the capacity to flag violent felony offenders of special concern. Owing to the adaptability of the JIS, Florida’s court system was able to meet this new legislative specification merely a week after the Anti Murder Act was signed into law.

Digital Court Reporting

Court reporting refers to the process that creates and preserves a recording of words and events in a courtroom and, when necessary, provides a timely and accurate transcription if an appeal is filed. By law, Florida's trial courts are required to record court proceedings at state expense in the following types of cases: felony, misdemeanor, delinquency, family dependency, domestic violence injunctions, probate, mental health, and guardianship, as well as in general magistrate and child support hearing officer proceedings.



In the past, court reporting summoned up the image of a stenographer capturing proceedings in shorthand or operating a stenographic court machine. Now, court reporting typically relies on more sophisticated technologies that are often operated remotely. Florida's courts generally make use of three methods of court reporting: stenographic/real

time (using a stenograph machine or computer-aided transcription), analog (using cassettes or videotapes), and digital (using computer-based software to produce an audio and video recording). Three years ago, digital court reporting was available in 200 of Florida's trial court hearing rooms and courtrooms; currently, it is available in over 800 (approximately 61% of all hearing rooms and courtrooms).

Given the rapid rise in the use of digital recording technology, in September 2006, Chief Justice Lewis directed the Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability to "make recommendations on the effective and efficient management of due process services," focusing, among other concerns, on "clarifying the legal and operational issues arising from the use of digital recording technology" and "developing operational standards and best practices for providing court reporting services." To address these matters, Judge Alice Blackwell

White, Ninth Judicial Circuit and chair of the commission, resurrected the Court Reporting Workgroup, re-appointing Judge Robert Bennett, Twelfth Judicial Circuit,

as chair. The workgroup was directed to recommend rule and statutory revisions, standards of operation, and best practices for court reporting services. The workgroup's draft report, circulated to the trial courts in May 2007, provides a general overview of the court reporting process, proposes court rule and statutory revisions, and delineates operational standards and/or best practices on issues such as court reporter qualifications, service delivery models, monitoring ratios, preventing the recording of confidential communications, transcript production, and ownership of the official record.

Digital recording technology certainly has distinct advantages, but it has also raised some concerns as well as some pressing legal questions (e.g., do unedited digital recordings constitute the official record of judicial proceedings? Are they subject to disclosure as public records?). The commission is committed to addressing some of the sensitive issues that have materialized due to the entrance of digital court reporting into the once paper-bound court system. The final commission report is scheduled for release later this year.

Balancing Access to Court Records with Privacy Concerns

"The Sunshine State has the most transparent government in the world, and in that transparency, Floridians are the most exposed people on Earth": so states the Committee on Privacy and Court Records in its final report, *Privacy, Access, and Court Records* (August 2005). What the report alludes to here is the constitutional right of Floridians "to inspect or copy any public record made or received in connection with the official business of any public body, officer, or employee of the state, or of persons acting in their behalf."

The Committee on Access to Court Records also assists in monitoring and evaluating the Manatee County Pilot Program, a one-year project inaugurated in June 2007 that is testing the possibility of making court records electronically accessible while keeping confidential information protected.

However, as the quotation also indicates, this transparency—which is necessary and healthy for ensuring government accountability—has its obverse: because

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it can lead to the exposure of people's confidential or sensitive information, it also has the capacity to cause great harm. Floridians have a right to inspect the information contained in public records—but they also have a constitutional right of privacy: "Every natural person has the right to be let alone and free from governmental intrusion into the person's private life." The challenge for Florida's three branches—especially in the Digital Age—is to balance these two vital principles.

Over the last fiscal year, the court system continued to build on the work of previous committees; two committees that have been especially active are the Committee on Access to Court Records and the Florida Court Technology Commission. Chief Justice Lewis established the Committee on Access to Court Records to implement specific recommendations that the Committee on Privacy and Court Records made in its 2005 final report. Chaired by Judge Judith R. Kreeger, Eleventh Judicial Circuit, the court access committee has been focusing on several major projects. Most central has been its review of Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.420 (formerly, Rule 2.051), which the Committee on Privacy and Court Records declared unworkable in a digital context, suggesting that it be amended to narrow "its application to a finite set of exemptions that are appropriate in the court context and readily identifiable." In revising the rule, the committee aims to give clear direction—via a list of discrete items—to the clerks of court about what information must be kept confidential; for anything that is potentially confidential but not on that list, the rule will establish a process whereby the filer can assert confidentiality.

In another ambitious project, the Committee on Access to Court Records has been working with the substantive rules committees to review their rules of court in order to determine where the courts are collecting gratuitous personal information—and to propose amendments as necessary so as to minimize the unnecessary filing of sensitive or confidential information.

The committee also assists in monitoring and evaluating the Manatee County Pilot Program, a one-year project inaugurated in June 2007 that is testing the possibility of making court records electronically accessible while keeping confidential information protected (using redaction technology, the clerk's office is removing information such as social security numbers, bank account and credit card numbers, and the identities of victims of sexual or child abuse). The goal of the pilot model, according to Manatee

County Clerk of Court R. B. "Chips" Shore, is to offer experimental electronic access to court records through the county court's website and to collect information that will enable Florida's court system to develop data-based rules for electronic access. If this pilot program succeeds, it may become the model for Florida's other state courts. The Committee on Access to Court Records is providing input into the terms and conditions of the pilot program.



Judge Judith R. Kreeger, Eleventh Circuit, chairs the Committee on Access to Court Records.

Responsible for the implementation strategy and for oversight of the Manatee County Pilot Program is the Florida Court Technology Commission, chaired by Chief Judge Charles A. Francis, Second Judicial Circuit. Founded in 1995 to advise the chief justice and Supreme Court on issues associated with the use of technology in the judicial branch, the commission is also tasked with proposing interim rules of court procedure to govern electronic filing, pending the development of permanent rules. To date, five counties

have been authorized to proceed with their electronic filing systems, which means they can receive electronic documents for specific court divisions; other counties have been approved for various electronic filing initiatives such as electronic signatures and electronic notifications. Working on developing operational policies for a statewide e-filing portal, the commission has emphasized the need for a uniform e-filing interface so that the 67 different county systems will all be able to communicate with one another, no matter what technologies they use. The commission is also examining user access fees as well as software redaction practices and confidentiality.

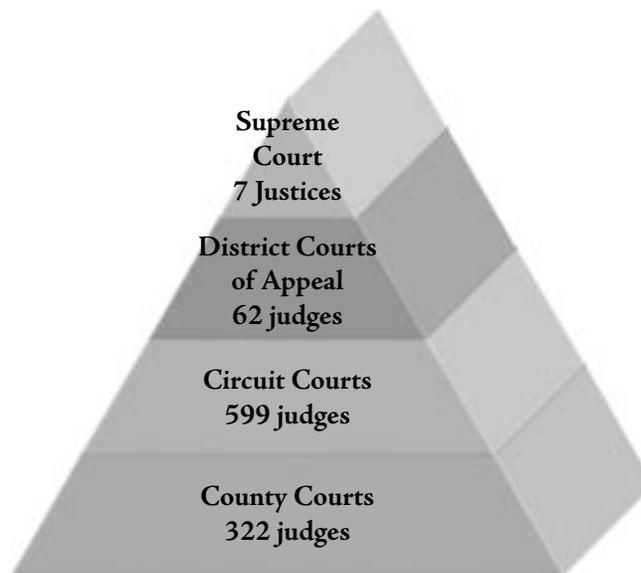
Undeniably, new technologies have significantly improved the ways in which courts access, manage, and share information. Among the benefits, case processing is more efficient; resources can be tracked and handled more dexterously; judges and court personnel have more immediate access to up-to-date information; courts can more readily exchange data with other courts, justice system partners, and other information providers; and, promptly and inexpensively, courts can make certain records electronically available to court-users. However, without clearly-defined safeguards, these technologies that dramatically simplify and speed up certain court operations also have the potential to make confidential information easily accessible, thereby jeopardizing the privacy of the public. Florida's court system has sought to embrace innovative technologies that enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of court operations while remaining acutely mindful of privacy concerns.

FLORIDA'S COURT STRUCTURE

Florida's Court Structure

Florida's court system consists of the following entities: two appellate level courts (the Supreme Court and five district courts of appeal) and two trial level courts (20 circuit courts and 67 county courts). The chief justice presides as the chief administrative officer of the judicial branch.

On July 1, 1972, the Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) was created with initial emphasis on developing a uniform case reporting system in order to provide information about activities of the judiciary. Additional responsibilities include preparing the operating budget for the judicial branch, projecting the need for new judges, and serving as the liaison among the court system and the legislative branch, the executive branch, the auxiliary agencies of the court, and national court research and planning agencies.



Appellate Courts

Supreme Court

- Seven justices, six-year terms
- Sits in Tallahassee
- Five justices constitute a quorum

District Courts of Appeal

- 62 judges, six-year terms
- Five districts:
 - 1st District: Tallahassee, 15 judges
 - 2nd District: Lakeland, 14 judges
 - 3rd District: Miami, 11 judges
 - 4th District: West Palm Beach, 12 judges
 - 5th District: Daytona Beach, 10 judges
- Cases generally reviewed by three-judge panels

Trial Courts

Circuit Courts

- 599 judges, six-year terms
- 20 judicial circuits
- Number of judges in each circuit based on caseload
- Judges preside individually, not on panels

County Courts

- 322 judges, six-year terms
- At least one judge in each of the 67 counties
- Judges preside individually, not on panels

FLORIDA'S COURT STRUCTURE

Supreme Court of Florida

The Supreme Court is the highest court in Florida. To constitute a quorum to conduct business, five of the seven justices must be present, and four justices must agree on a decision in each case.

Mandatory jurisdiction includes death penalty cases, district court decisions declaring a state statute or provision of the state constitution invalid, bond validations, rules of court procedure, and statewide agency actions relating to public utilities. The court also has exclusive authority to regulate the admission and discipline of lawyers in Florida as well as the authority to discipline and remove judges.

District Courts of Appeal

The bulk of trial court decisions that are appealed are reviewed by three-judge panels of the district courts of appeal (DCAs). In each district court, a chief judge, who is selected by the body of district court judges, is responsible for the administrative duties of the court.

The district courts decide most appeals from circuit court cases and many administrative law appeals from actions by the executive branch. In addition, the district courts of appeal must review county court decisions invalidating a provision of Florida's constitution or statutes, and they may review an order or judgment of a county court that is certified by the county court to be of great public importance.

Circuit Courts

The majority of jury trials in Florida take place before circuit court judges. The circuit courts are referred to as the courts of general jurisdiction. Circuit courts hear all criminal and civil matters not within the jurisdiction of county courts, including family law, juvenile delinquency and dependency, mental health, probate, guardianship, and civil matters over \$15,000. They also hear some appeals from county court rulings and from administrative action if provided by general law. Finally, they have the power to issue extraordinary writs necessary to the complete exercise of their jurisdiction.

County Courts

Each county has at least one county court judge. The number of judges in each county court varies with the population and caseload of the county. County courts are courts of limited jurisdiction, which is established by statute. The county courts are sometimes referred to as "the people's courts" because a large part of their work

involves citizen disputes such as violations of municipal and county ordinances, traffic offenses, landlord-tenant disputes, misdemeanor criminal matters, and monetary disputes up to \$15,000. In addition, county court judges may hear simplified dissolution of marriage cases.

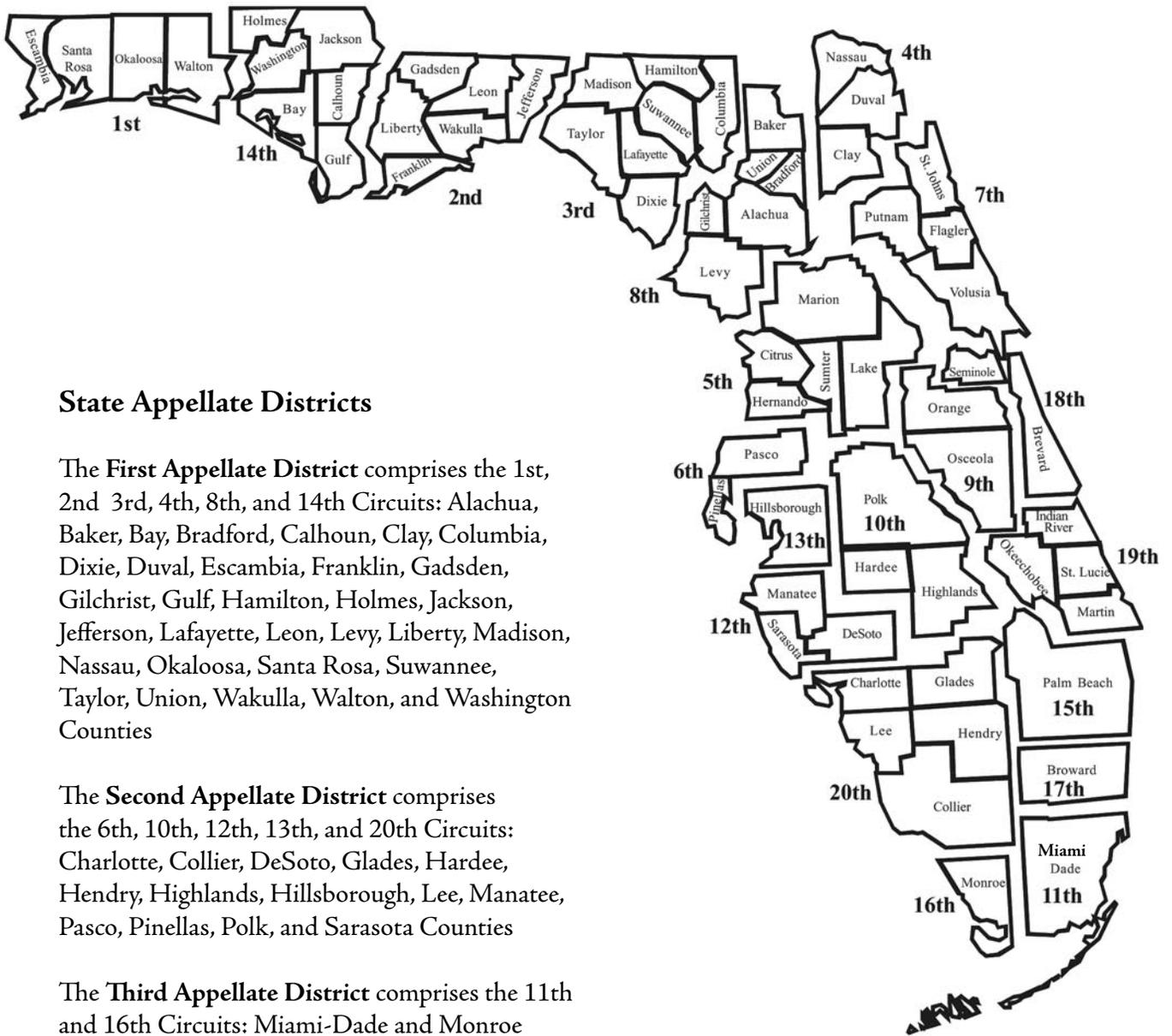
DCA Circuits

1st District:	1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 14
2nd District:	6, 10, 12, 13, 20
3rd District:	11, 16
4th District:	15, 17, 19
5th District:	5, 7, 9, 18

Circuit Counties

- 1 Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton
- 2 Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Wakulla
- 3 Columbia, Dixie, Hamilton, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor
- 4 Clay, Duval, Nassau
- 5 Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Marion, Sumter
- 6 Pasco, Pinellas
- 7 Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns, Volusia
- 8 Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy, Union
- 9 Orange, Osceola
- 10 Hardee, Highlands, Polk
- 11 Miami-Dade
- 12 DeSoto, Manatee, Sarasota
- 13 Hillsborough
- 14 Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Washington
- 15 Palm Beach
- 16 Monroe
- 17 Broward
- 18 Brevard, Seminole
- 19 Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, St. Lucie
- 20 Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee

STATE CIRCUITS AND APPELLATE DISTRICTS



State Appellate Districts

The **First Appellate District** comprises the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 8th, and 14th Circuits: Alachua, Baker, Bay, Bradford, Calhoun, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Gulf, Hamilton, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Leon, Levy, Liberty, Madison, Nassau, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, Wakulla, Walton, and Washington Counties

The **Second Appellate District** comprises the 6th, 10th, 12th, 13th, and 20th Circuits: Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Sarasota Counties

The **Third Appellate District** comprises the 11th and 16th Circuits: Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties

The **Fourth Appellate District** comprises the 15th, 17th, and 19th Circuits: Broward, Indian River, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, St. Lucie, and Martin Counties

The **Fifth Appellate District** comprises the 5th, 7th, 9th, and 18th Circuits: Brevard, Citrus, Flagler, Hernando, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Putnam, St. Johns, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia Counties

JUDICIAL CERTIFICATION TABLE

Session Year	District Court of Appeal					Circuit					County				
	Requested	Certified	Authorized	%Authorized (of those certified)	Total	Requested	Certified	Authorized	%Authorized (of those certified)	Total	Requested	Certified	Authorized	%Authorized (of those certified)	Total
1997	3	0	0	n/a	61	16	7	7	100.0%	468	6	3	3	100.0%	263
1998	0	0	0	n/a	61	19	13	0	0.0%	468	12	5	0	0.0%	263
1999	1	1	1	100.0%	62	27	25	25	100.0%	493	17	6	6	100.0%	269
2000	0	0	0	n/a	62	34	30	0	0.0%	493	17	13	0	0.0%	269
2001	0	0	0	n/a	62	40	30	16	53.3%	509	23	14	11	78.6%	280
2002	2	2	0	0.0%	62	35	34	18	52.9%	527	16	13	0	0.0%	280
2003	3	2	0	0.0%	62	35	33	0	0.0%	527	23	21	0	0.0%	280
2004	4	4	0	0.0%	62	54	51	0	0.0%	527	38	33	0	0.0%	280
2005	2	2	0	0.0%	62	69	67	37	52.2%	564	44	41	22	53.7%	302
2006	2	2	0	0.0%	62	41	40	35	87.5%	599	26	24	20	83.3%	322
2007	2	2	0	0.0%	62	24	22	0	0.0%	599	15	13	0	0.0%	322

Judicial Certification

For the last eight years, the Supreme Court has used a weighted caseload system to evaluate the need for new trial court judgeships. The weighted caseload system analyzes Florida's trial court caseload statistics according to complexity. Cases that are generally complex, such as capital murder cases, receive a higher weight, while cases that are typically less complex, such as civil traffic cases, receive a lower weight. These weights are then applied to case filing statistics to determine the need for additional judgeships.

Having an adequate number of judgeships is essential: if judicial workload exceeds capacity and a judicial need deficit is not addressed, likely consequences may be case processing delays, less time devoted to dispositions, and potentially diminished access to the courts.

In December 2006, the Florida Supreme Court certified the need for 37 new judges for the 2007-2008 fiscal year: two DCA judges, 22 circuit judges, and 13 county court judges. However, the Florida Legislature did not approve funding for new judgeships this year.

Administration

Office of the State Courts Administrator

The Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) was created in 1972 to serve the chief justice in carrying out his or her responsibilities as the chief administrative officer of the judicial branch. OSCA's purpose is to provide professional court management and administration of the state's judicial system—basically, the non-adjudicatory services and functions necessary for the smooth operation of the judicial



State Courts Administrator Elisabeth H. Goodner

branch, which includes the Supreme Court of Florida, the five district courts of appeal, the 20 circuit courts, and the 67 county courts.

OSCA has manifold duties: it prepares the judicial branch's budget requests to the legislature; it monitors legislation; and it serves as a point of contact for legislators and their staff regarding issues related to the state court system. OSCA also provides a wide spectrum of educational programs for judges; these programs, which enable judges to meet mandatory continuing education requirements, are designed to increase judicial knowledge and skills, thereby improving the administration of justice.

In addition, OSCA performs a broad range of other functions to assist the state court system, including implementing administrative and legislative initiatives for family, dependency, and delinquency court cases; collecting and analyzing statistical information relevant to court operations; developing strategic plans; offering statewide mediation training and certification through the Dispute Resolution Center; coordinating, writing, and editing administrative and judicial publications; and providing technical

support for trial and appellate courts, including support for the state-funded computer infrastructure of Florida's court system. For more information about OSCA, visit the Florida State Courts website at <http://www.flcourts.org/>

Trial Court Administrators

The trial court administrator supports the chief judge in his or her constitutional role as the administrative supervisor of the circuit and county courts; each of the 20 circuits in Florida has a trial court administrator. The office of the trial court administrator provides professional staff support to ensure effective and efficient court operations.

Trial court administrators have multiple responsibilities. They manage judicial operations such as courtroom scheduling, facilities management, caseload policy, ADA policy, statistical analysis, inter-branch and intergovernmental relations, technology planning, jury oversight, public information, and emergency planning. They also oversee court business operations including personnel, planning and budgeting, finance and accounting, purchasing, property and records, and staff training.

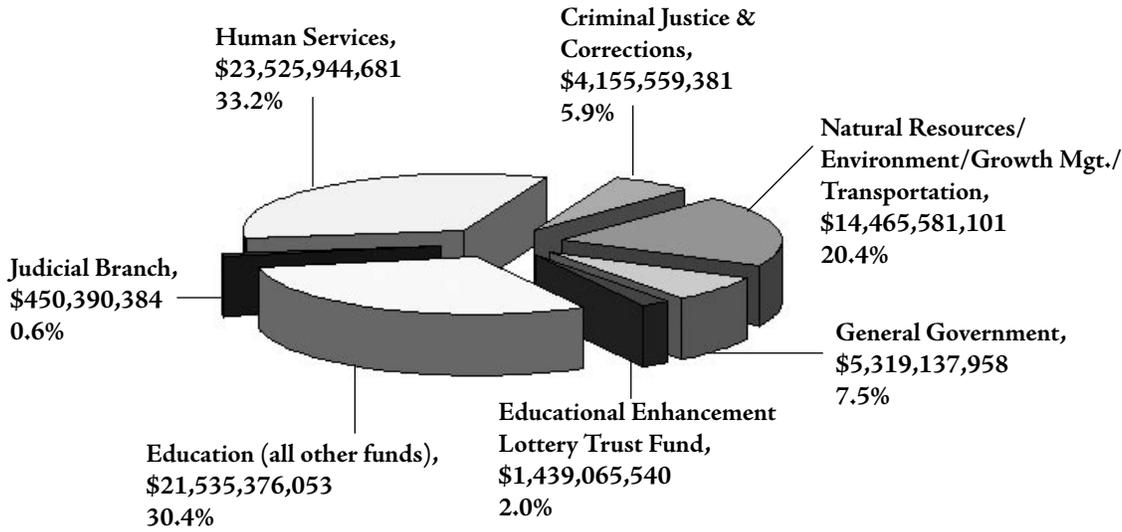
In addition, the trial court administrators manage and provide support for essential court resources including court reporting, court interpreters, expert witnesses, staff attorneys, magistrates and hearing officers, mediation, and case management. For links to the homepages of Florida's circuit courts, go to <http://www.flcourts.org/courts/circuit/circuit.shtml>



Participants engage in a range of practical table top exercises at the trial court administrators' winter education program. Pictured in the foreground are (l-r) Mark Van Bever, trial court administrator for the Eighteenth Circuit; Grant Slayden, trial court administrator for the Second Circuit; and Sharon Suhar, human resource manager for the Twentieth Circuit.

FLORIDA'S BUDGET

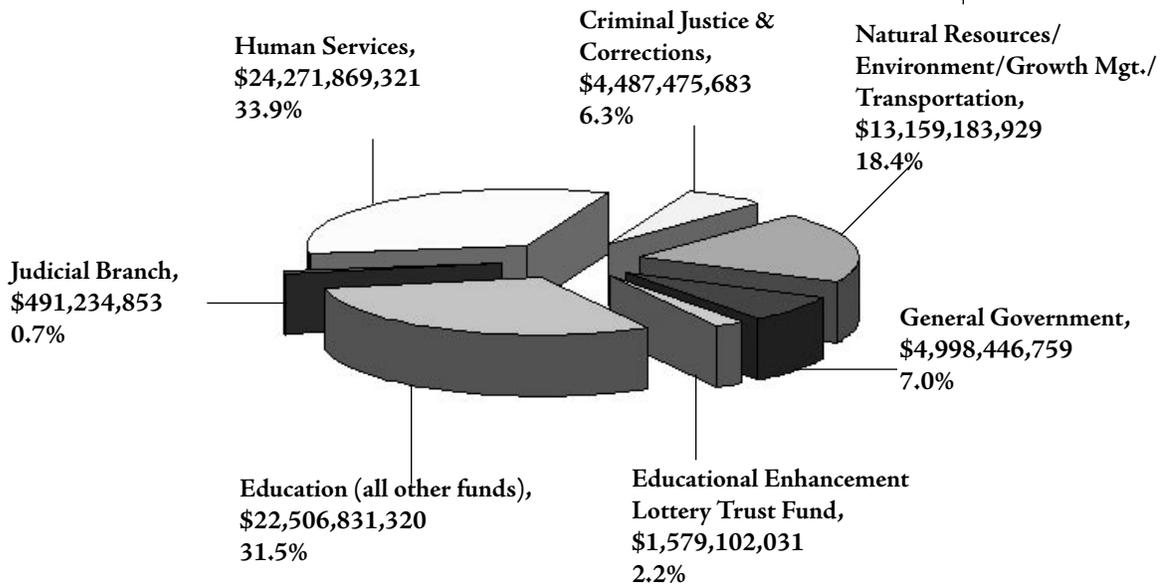
2006-2007 Fiscal Year Appropriations



Total: \$70,891,055,098

Note: Totals include only issues that were funded in the General Appropriations Act, HB 5001.

2007-2008 Fiscal Year Appropriations



Total: \$71,494,143,896

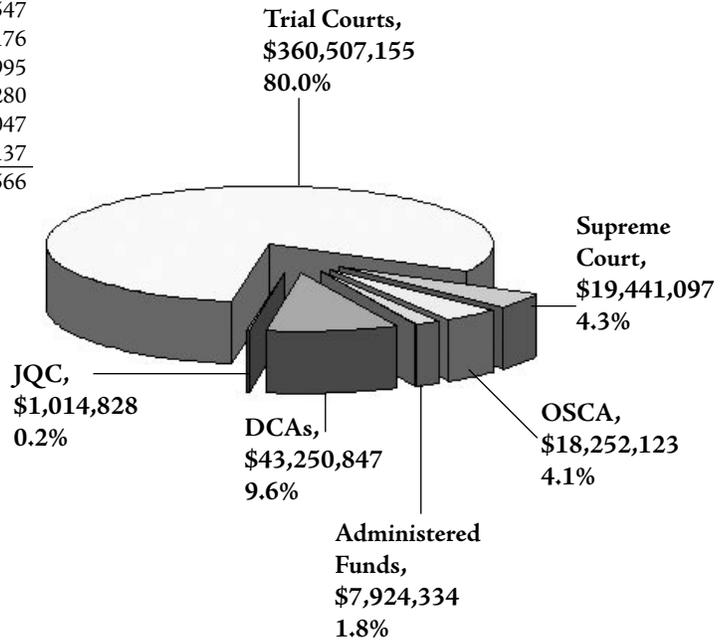
Note: Totals include only issues that were funded in the General Appropriations Act, SB 2800.

STATE COURTS SYSTEM APPROPRIATIONS

Judicial System Appropriations 2006-2007 Fiscal Year

State Courts System	\$450,390,384
Justice Administration Executive Direction	\$115,894,547
Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Program	\$33,978,176
State Attorneys	\$374,107,995
Public Defenders Judicial Circuit	\$187,207,280
Public Defenders Appellate	\$14,233,047
Capital Collateral Regional Counsel	\$7,712,137
Total	\$1,183,523,566

Note: Totals include only issues that were funded in the General Appropriations Act, HB 5001.



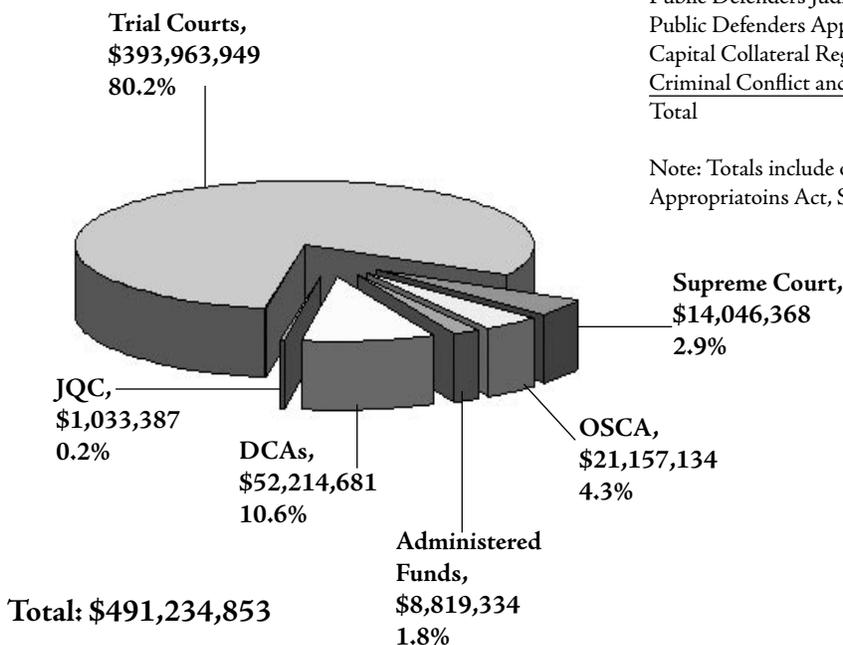
Total: \$450,390,384

Florida's courts get less than 1% of the state's total budget

Judicial System Appropriations 2007-2008 Fiscal Year

State Courts System	\$491,234,853
Justice Administration Executive Direction	\$100,643,038
Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Program	\$35,756,045
State Attorneys	\$402,069,350
Public Defenders Judicial Circuit	\$204,345,462
Public Defenders Appellate	\$14,965,070
Capital Collateral Regional Counsel	\$8,048,257
Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsels	\$29,405,757
Total	\$1,286,467,832

Note: Totals include only issues that were funded in the General Appropriations Act, SB 2800.

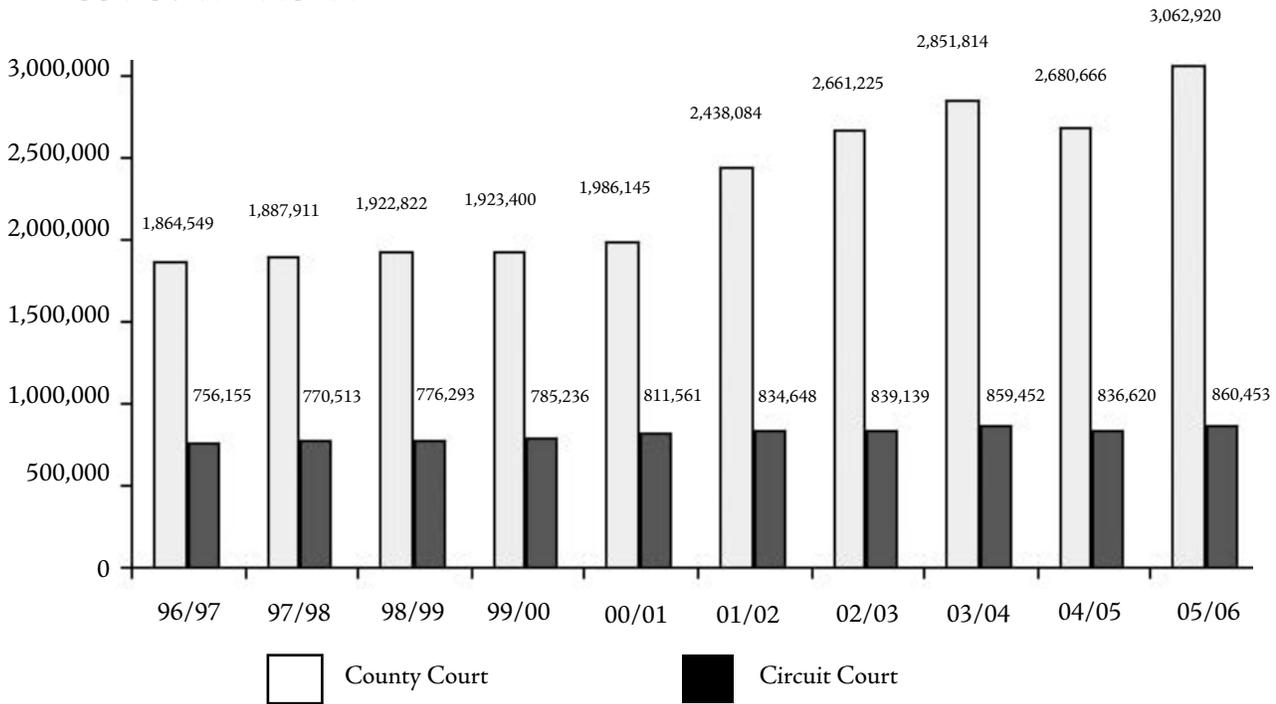


Total: \$491,234,853

Florida's Trial Courts

Circuit and County Court Filings

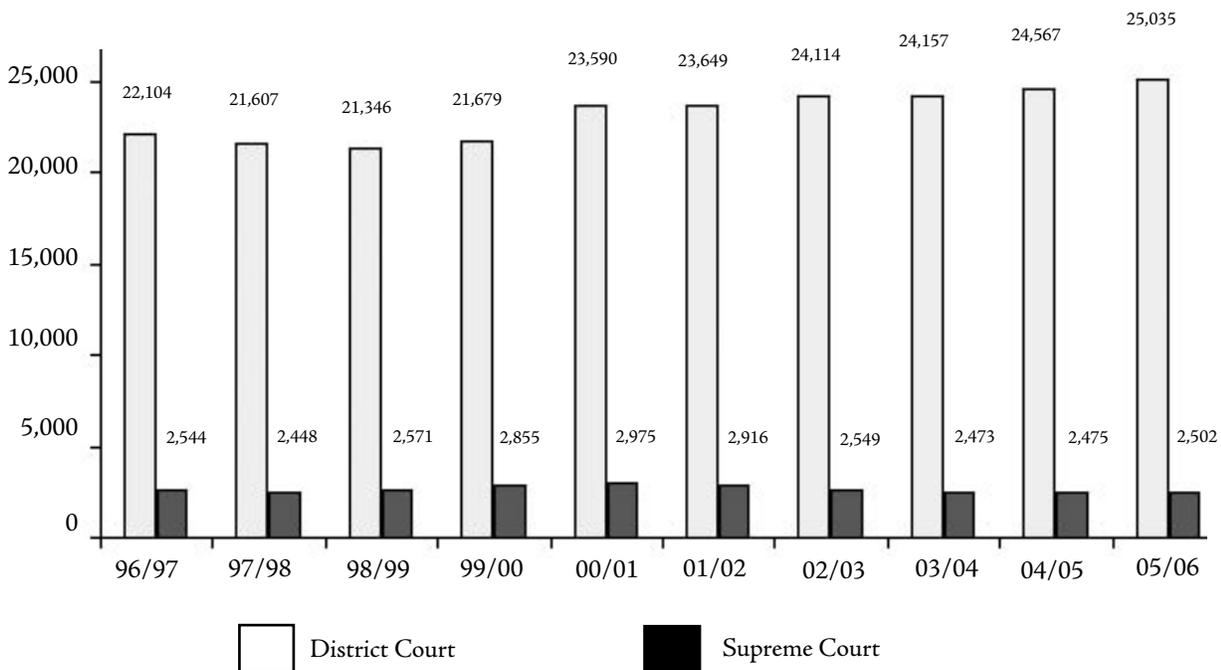
FY 1996-97 to 2005-06



Florida's Appellate Courts

Florida Appellate Filings

FY 1996-97 to 2005-06



DCA FILINGS BY CASE CATEGORY

Notice of Appeal and Petition FY 2005-06

* Criminal Post Conviction Filings include notice of appeal only

DCA	Case Category	Total Filings
All	Administrative	1,238
All	Civil	5,305
All	Criminal	9,634
All	Criminal Post Conviction*	5,977
All	Family	1,019
All	Juvenile	1,243
All	Probate/Guardianship	179
All	Workers' Compensation	440
		25,035

DCA	Case Category	Total Filings	DCA	Case Category	Total Filings	DCA	Case Category	Total Filings
1	Administrative	677	3	Administrative	132	5	Administrative	149
	Civil	1,440		Civil	847		Civil	717
	Criminal	2,087		Criminal	903		Criminal	2,018
	Criminal Post Conviction*	1,276		Criminal Post Conviction*	816		Criminal Post Conviction*	1,230
	Family	188		Family	186		Family	216
	Juvenile	225		Juvenile	176		Juvenile	321
	Probate/Guardianship	22		Probate/Guardianship	37		Probate/Guardianship	18
	Workers' Compensation	440						
		6,355			3,097			4,669
2	Administrative	96	4	Administrative	184	Total		25,035
	Civil	1,221		Civil	1,080			
	Criminal	2,679		Criminal	1,947			
	Criminal Post Conviction*	1,450		Criminal Post Conviction*	1,205			
	Family	163		Family	266			
	Juvenile	344		Juvenile	177			
	Probate/Guardianship	36		Probate/Guardianship	66			
		5,989			4,925			

COURT FILINGS BY CIRCUIT AND DIVISION

FY 2005-06 (drawn from frozen database on 5-14-2007)

Circuit	County	Division	Total Filings
All	All	Adult Criminal	219,157
All	All	Civil	164,245
All	All	Family Court*	365,468
All	All	Probate	111,583
All	All	County Adult Criminal	1,081,383
All	All	County Civil**	1,981,537
			3,923,373

COURT FILINGS BY CIRCUIT AND DIVISION

* Family Court filings include Domestic Relations, Juvenile Delinquency, Juvenile Dependency, and Termination of Parental Rights.

** These data do not include all Civil Traffic Infractions reported to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. They represent only those Civil Traffic Infraction filings involving a judge or hearing officer.

Circuit	Division	Total Filings	Circuit	Division	Total Filings	Circuit	Division	Total Filings
1	Adult Criminal	11,034	8	Adult Criminal	5,375	15	Adult Criminal	11,273
	Civil	5,063		Civil	2,414		Civil	12,407
	Family Court*	16,315		Family Court*	7,359		Family Court*	18,440
	Probate	4,434		Probate	2,438		Probate	8,125
	County Adult Criminal	36,921		County Adult Criminal	23,452		County Adult Criminal	77,547
	County Civil**	38,402		County Civil**	29,638		County Civil**	177,975
		112,169			70,676			305,767
2	Adult Criminal	5,796	9	Adult Criminal	21,674	16	Adult Criminal	1,531
	Civil	4,362		Civil	13,369		Civil	793
	Family Court*	7,438		Family Court*	30,023		Family Court*	1,574
	Probate	3,296		Probate	5,053		Probate	627
	County Adult Criminal	16,756		County Adult Criminal	65,187		County Adult Criminal	4,383
	County Civil**	26,188		County Civil**	91,495		County Civil**	5,096
		63,836			226,801			14,004
3	Adult Criminal	2,124	10	Adult Criminal	8,999	17	Adult Criminal	15,910
	Civil	1,238		Civil	6,072		Civil	17,946
	Family Court*	4,912		Family Court*	18,965		Family Court*	34,781
	Probate	1,159		Probate	5,100		Probate	8,994
	County Adult Criminal	10,427		County Adult Criminal	42,448		County Adult Criminal	86,975
	County Civil**	12,501		County Civil**	42,820		County Civil**	355,181
		32,361			124,404			519,787
4	Adult Criminal	11,560	11	Adult Criminal	26,812	18	Adult Criminal	9,722
	Civil	10,852		Civil	24,760		Civil	6,100
	Family Court*	24,266		Family Court*	41,372		Family Court*	16,921
	Probate	5,759		Probate	10,287		Probate	5,310
	County Adult Criminal	92,331		County Adult Criminal	150,940		County Adult Criminal	53,659
	County Civil**	97,446		County Civil**	587,094		County Civil**	64,127
		242,214			841,265			155,839
5	Adult Criminal	11,768	12	Adult Criminal	7,517	19	Adult Criminal	6,324
	Civil	7,805		Civil	4,771		Civil	4,476
	Family Court*	20,806		Family Court*	12,383		Family Court*	11,480
	Probate	7,981		Probate	5,247		Probate	3,780
	County Adult Criminal	38,518		County Adult Criminal	35,757		County Adult Criminal	35,592
	County Civil**	47,902		County Civil**	36,172		County Civil**	35,448
		134,780			101,847			97,100
6	Adult Criminal	18,814	13	Adult Criminal	18,146	20	Adult Criminal	9,845
	Civil	11,857		Civil	11,523		Civil	9,366
	Family Court*	26,437		Family Court*	26,991		Family Court*	19,736
	Probate	9,790		Probate	5,845		Probate	9,660
	County Adult Criminal	82,396		County Adult Criminal	78,561		County Adult Criminal	69,231
	County Civil**	81,850		County Civil**	119,647		County Civil**	61,599
		231,144			260,713			179,437
7	Adult Criminal	9,687	14	Adult Criminal	5,246	Total		3,923,373
	Civil	6,861		Civil	2,210			
	Family Court*	17,963		Family Court*	7,306			
	Probate	6,570		Probate	2,128			
	County Adult Criminal	58,634		County Adult Criminal	21,668			
	County Civil**	51,550		County Civil**	19,406			
		151,265			57,964			

COURT FILINGS BY CIRCUIT, COUNTY, & DIVISION

FY 2005-06 (drawn from frozen database on 5-14-07)

* Family Court filings include Domestic Relations, Juvenile Delinquency, Juvenile Dependency, and Termination of Parental Rights.

** These data do not include all Civil Traffic Infractions reported to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. They represent only those Civil Traffic Infraction filings involving a judge or hearing officer.

Circuit & County	Division	Total Filings	Circuit & County	Division	Total Filings	Circuit & County	Division	Total Filings			
1	Escambia	Adult Criminal	6,032	Leon	Adult Criminal	3,887	Madison	Adult Criminal	255		
		Civil	2,256			Civil		3,270		Civil	147
		Family Court*	7,866			Family Court*		4,675		Family Court*	466
		Probate	2,191			Probate		2,143		Probate	118
		County Adult Crim.	15,624			County Adult Crim.		10,789		County Adult Crim.	1,060
		County Civil**	16,724			County Civil**		18,370		County Civil**	2,539
		50,693			43,134			4,585			
	Okaloosa	Adult Criminal	2,785	Liberty	Adult Criminal	80	Suwannee	Adult Criminal	459		
		Civil	1,229			Civil		43		Civil	238
		Family Court*	4,500			Family Court*		183		Family Court*	1,026
		Probate	1,332			Probate		40		Probate	217
		County Adult Crim.	10,545			County Adult Crim.		372		County Adult Crim.	2,062
		County Civil**	11,610			County Civil**		733		County Civil**	1,727
		32,001			1,451			5,729			
	Santa Rosa	Adult Criminal	1,407	Wakulla	Adult Criminal	409	Taylor	Adult Criminal	238		
		Civil	1,056			Civil		315		Civil	135
		Family Court*	2,784			Family Court*		552		Family Court*	583
		Probate	565			Probate		269		Probate	200
		County Adult Crim.	6,938			County Adult Crim.		1,152		County Adult Crim.	1,365
		County Civil**	7,378			County Civil**		1,431		County Civil**	1,344
		20,128			4,128			3,865			
	Walton	Adult Criminal	810	3	Columbia	Adult Criminal	794	4	Clay	Adult Criminal	1,228
		Civil	522			Civil	501			Civil	1,172
		Family Court*	1,165			Family Court*	1,841			Family Court*	3,156
		Probate	346			Probate	397			Probate	535
		County Adult Crim.	3,814			County Adult Crim.	4,192			County Adult Crim.	7,309
		County Civil**	2,690			County Civil**	4,683			County Civil**	9,700
		9,347			12,408			23,100			
2	Franklin	Adult Criminal	307	Dixie	Adult Criminal	113	Duval	Adult Criminal	9,582		
		Civil	126			Civil		70		Civil	9,123
		Family Court*	350			Family Court*		530		Family Court*	19,575
		Probate	83			Probate		125		Probate	4,918
		County Adult Crim.	1,239			County Adult Crim.		554		County Adult Crim.	81,346
		County Civil**	544			County Civil**		778		County Civil**	84,581
		2,649			2,170			209,125			
	Gadsden	Adult Criminal	901	Hamilton	Adult Criminal	182	Nassau	Adult Criminal	750		
		Civil	421			Civil		108		Civil	557
		Family Court*	1,434			Family Court*		356		Family Court*	1,535
		Probate	654			Probate		57		Probate	306
		County Adult Crim.	2,727			County Adult Crim.		977		County Adult Crim.	3,676
		County Civil**	3,784			County Civil**		1,088		County Civil**	3,165
		9,921			2,768			9,989			
	Jefferson	Adult Criminal	212	Lafayette	Adult Criminal	83	5	Citrus	Adult Criminal	1,192	
		Civil	187			Civil		39		Civil	931
		Family Court*	244			Family Court*		110		Family Court*	3,048
		Probate	107			Probate		45		Probate	1,489
		County Adult Crim.	477			County Adult Crim.		217		County Adult Crim.	4,464
		County Civil**	1,326			County Civil**		342		County Civil**	5,696
		2,553			836			16,820			

COURT FILINGS BY CIRCUIT, COUNTY, & DIVISION

Circuit & County	Division	Total Filings	Circuit & County	Division	Total Filings	Circuit & County	Division	Total Filings		
Hernando	Adult Criminal	2,104	Volusia	Adult Criminal	6,088	10	Hardee	Adult Criminal	289	
	Civil	1,356		Civil	4,307			Civil	183	
	Family Court*	3,940		Family Court*	10,958			Family Court*	760	
	Probate	1,799		Probate	4,314			Probate	142	
	County Adult Crim.	5,854		County Adult Crim.	42,865			County Adult Crim.	2,052	
	County Civil**	9,726		County Civil**	33,724			County Civil**	1,762	
		24,779			102,256				5,188	
Lake	Adult Criminal	3,545	8	Alachua	Adult Criminal	3,731	Highlands	Adult Criminal	974	
	Civil	1,780			Civil	1,447		Civil	781	
	Family Court*	5,023			Family Court*	4,552		Family Court*	1,966	
	Probate	1,563			Probate	1,610		Probate	1,571	
	County Adult Crim.	12,542			County Adult Crim.	17,355		County Adult Crim.	3,940	
	County Civil**	13,920		County Civil**	21,813			County Civil**	5,580	
		38,373			50,508				14,812	
Marion	Adult Criminal	4,228	Baker	Adult Criminal	249	Polk	Adult Criminal	7,736		
	Civil	2,701		Civil	191		Civil	5,108		
	Family Court*	7,758		Family Court*	648		Family Court*	16,239		
	Probate	2,841		Probate	223		Probate	3,387		
	County Adult Crim.	12,908		County Adult Crim.	1,077		County Adult Crim.	36,456		
	County Civil**	14,366		County Civil**	1,625			County Civil**	35,478	
		44,802			4,013				104,404	
Sumter	Adult Criminal	699	Bradford	Adult Criminal	368	11	Dade	Adult Criminal	26,812	
	Civil	1,037		Civil	230			Civil	24,760	
	Family Court*	1,037		Family Court*	528			Family Court*	41,372	
	Probate	289		Probate	147			Probate	10,287	
	County Adult Crim.	2,750		County Adult Crim.	1,516			County Adult Crim.	150,940	
	County Civil**	4,194		County Civil**	2,920			County Civil**	587,094	
		10,006			5,709				841,265	
6 Pasco	Adult Criminal	3,785	Gilchrist	Adult Criminal	199	12	DeSoto	Adult Criminal	676	
	Civil	3,564		Civil	92			Civil	219	
	Family Court*	7,913		Family Court*	453			Family Court*	802	
	Probate	3,061		Probate	85			Probate	139	
	County Adult Crim.	19,623		County Adult Crim.	867			County Adult Crim.	2,016	
	County Civil**	20,989		County Civil**	633			County Civil**	1,515	
		58,935			2,329				5,367	
Pinellas	Adult Criminal	15,029	Levy	Adult Criminal	614	Manatee	Adult Criminal	3,417		
	Civil	8,293		Civil	338		Civil	1,866		
	Family Court*	18,524		Family Court*	907		Family Court*	5,985		
	Probate	6,729		Probate	288		Probate	1,812		
	County Adult Crim.	62,773		County Adult Crim.	2,161		County Adult Crim.	15,053		
	County Civil**	60,861		County Civil**	2,065			County Civil**	13,700	
		172,209			6,373				41,833	
7 Flagler	Adult Criminal	644	Union	Adult Criminal	214	Sarasota	Adult Criminal	3,424		
	Civil	716		Civil	116		Civil	2,686		
	Family Court*	1,789		Family Court*	271		Family Court*	5,596		
	Probate	597		Probate	85		Probate	3,296		
	County Adult Crim.	3,228		County Adult Crim.	476		County Adult Crim.	18,688		
	County Civil**	3,500		County Civil**	582			County Civil**	20,957	
		10,474			1,744				54,647	
Putnam	Adult Criminal	1,036	9	Orange	Adult Criminal	18,758	13	Hillsborough	Adult Criminal	18,146
	Civil	757			Civil	10,464			Civil	11,523
	Family Court*	2,178			Family Court*	24,090			Family Court*	26,991
	Probate	868			Probate	4,061			Probate	5,845
	County Adult Crim.	4,833			County Adult Crim.	52,357			County Adult Crim.	78,561
	County Civil**	4,561		County Civil**	72,391			County Civil**	119,647	
		14,233			182,121				260,713	
St. Johns	Adult Criminal	1,919	Osceola	Adult Criminal	2,916	14	Bay	Adult Criminal	3,448	
	Civil	1,081		Civil	2,905			Civil	1,233	
	Family Court*	3,038		Family Court*	5,933			Family Court*	4,371	
	Probate	791		Probate	992			Probate	1,165	
	County Adult Crim.	7,708		County Adult Crim.	12,830			County Adult Crim.	14,828	
	County Civil**	9,765		County Civil**	19,104			County Civil**	10,896	
		24,302			44,680				35,941	

COURT FILINGS BY CIRCUIT, COUNTY, & DIVISION

Circuit & County	Division	Total Filings	Circuit & County	Division	Total Filings	Circuit & County	Division	Total Filings
Calhoun	Adult Criminal	271	17 Broward	Adult Criminal	15,910	St. Lucie	Adult Criminal	2,698
	Civil	100		Civil	17,946		Civil	2,093
	Family Court*	366		Family Court*	34,781		Family Court*	5,477
	Probate	64		Probate	8,994		Probate	1,637
	County Adult Crim.	886		County Adult Crim.	86,975		County Adult Crim.	18,182
	County Civil**	895		County Civil**	355,181		County Civil**	18,295
		2,582			519,787			48,382
Gulf	Adult Criminal	245	18 Brevard	Adult Criminal	6,514	20 Charlotte	Adult Criminal	1,554
	Civil	167		Civil	3,560		Civil	1,626
	Family Court*	378		Family Court*	10,332		Family Court*	3,431
	Probate	91		Probate	3,462		Probate	2,326
	County Adult Crim.	903		County Adult Crim.	38,097		County Adult Crim.	4,274
	County Civil**	672		County Civil**	35,084		County Civil**	6,451
		2,456			97,049			19,662
Holmes	Adult Criminal	358	Seminole	Adult Criminal	3,208	Collier	Adult Criminal	2,678
	Civil	128		Civil	2,540		Civil	1,968
	Family Court*	483		Family Court*	6,589		Family Court*	4,682
	Probate	121		Probate	1,848		Probate	1,793
	County Adult Crim.	1,232		County Adult Crim.	15,562		County Adult Crim.	22,204
	County Civil**	1,290		County Civil**	29,043		County Civil**	19,868
		3,612			58,790			53,193
Jackson	Adult Criminal	595	19 Indian River	Adult Crim.	1,500	Glades	Adult Criminal	152
	Civil	347		Civil	904		Civil	87
	Family Court*	1,211		Family Court*	2,387		Family Court*	245
	Probate	413		Probate	1,038		Probate	49
	County Adult Crim.	2,583		County Adult Crim.	6,163		County Adult Crim.	758
	County Civil**	3,548		County Civil**	6,528		County Civil**	832
		8,697			18,520			2,123
Washington	Adult Criminal	329	Martin	Adult Criminal	1,414	Hendry	Adult Criminal	637
	Civil	235		Civil	1,096		Civil	382
	Family Court*	497		Family Court*	2,439		Family Court*	1,203
	Probate	274		Probate	791		Probate	214
	County Adult Crim.	1,236		County Adult Crim.	8,943		County Adult Crim.	3,152
	County Civil**	2,105		County Civil**	8,279		County Civil**	2,020
		4,676			22,962			7,608
15 Palm Beach	Adult Criminal	11,273	Okeechobee	Adult Criminal	712	Lee	Adult Criminal	4,824
	Civil	12,407		Civil	383		Civil	5,303
	Family Court*	18,440		Family Court*	1,177		Family Court*	10,175
	Probate	8,125		Probate	314		Probate	5,278
	County Adult Crim.	77,547		County Adult Crim.	2,304		County Adult Crim.	38,843
	County Civil**	177,975		County Civil**	2,346		County Civil**	32,428
		305,767			7,236			96,851
16 Monroe	Adult Criminal	1,531						
	Civil	793						
	Family Court*	1,574						
	Probate	627						
	County Adult Crim.	4,383						
	County Civil**	5,096						
		14,004						

COURT CONTACTS FOR 2007-2008

FLORIDA SUPREME COURT

Chief Justice R. FRED LEWIS (850) 488-0007
Clerk Thomas D. Hall (850) 488-0125
Marshal Edward DeCoste (850) 488-8845
Director of Public Info. Craig Waters (850) 414-7641
Website <http://www.floridasupremecourt.org>

DISTRICT COURTS OF APPEAL

1st DCA

Chief Judge EDWIN B. BROWNING, JR. (850) 487-1000
Clerk Jon S. Wheeler (850) 488-6151
Marshal Donald H. Brannon (850) 488-8136
Website <http://www.1dca.org>

2nd DCA

Chief Judge STEVAN T. NORTH CUTT (813) 272-3430
Clerk James R. Birkhold (863) 499-2290
Marshal Jo Suhr (863) 499-2290
Website <http://www.2dca.org>

3rd DCA

Chief Judge DAVID M. GERSTEN (305) 229-3200
Clerk Mary Cay Blanks (305) 229-3200
Marshal Dottie Munro (305) 229-3200
Website <http://www.3dca.flcourts.org>

4th DCA

Chief Judge GEORGE A. SHAHOOD (561) 242-2063
Clerk Marilyn Beuttenmuller (561) 242-2000
Marshal Glen Rubin (561) 242-2000
Website <http://www.4dca.org>

5th DCA

Chief Judge WILLIAM D. PALMER (386) 947-1502
Clerk Susan Wright (386) 255-8600
Marshal Ty W. Berdeaux (386) 947-1500
Website <http://www.5dca.org>

CIRCUIT COURTS

1st Judicial Circuit

Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton counties
Chief Judge KIM A. SKIEVASKI (850) 595-4456
Court Administrator Robin Wright (850) 595-4400
Website <http://www.firstjudicialcircuit.org>

2nd Judicial Circuit

Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, and Wakulla counties
Chief Judge CHARLES A. FRANCIS (850) 577-4306
Court Administrator Grant Slayden (850) 577-4420
Website <http://www.2ndcircuit.leon.fl.us>

3rd Judicial Circuit

Columbia, Dixie, Hamilton, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee, and Taylor counties
Chief Judge E. VERNON DOUGLAS (386) 758-1010
Act. Court Administrator Barbara Ceryak (386) 758-2163
Website <http://www.jud3.flcourts.org>

4th Judicial Circuit

Clay, Duval, and Nassau counties
Chief Judge DONALD R. MORAN, JR. (904) 630-2541
Court Administrator H. Britt Beasley (904) 630-1693
Website <http://www.coj.net/Departments/Fourth+Judicial+Circuit+Court/default.htm>

5th Judicial Circuit

Hernando, Lake, Marion, Citrus, and Sumter counties
Chief Judge DANIEL MERRITT, SR. (352) 754-4221
Court Administrator David M. Trammell (352) 401-6701
Website <http://www.circuit5.org>

6th Judicial Circuit

Pasco and Pinellas counties
Chief Judge ROBERT J. MORRIS, JR. (727) 464-7457
Court Administrator Gay Inskeep (727) 582-7477
Website <http://www.jud6.org>

7th Judicial Circuit

Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns, and Volusia counties
Chief Judge J. DAVID WALSH (386) 239-7790
Court Administrator Mark Weinberg (386) 257-6097
Website <http://www.circuit7.org>

8th Judicial Circuit

Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy, and Union counties
Chief Judge FREDERICK D. SMITH (352) 374-3652
Court Administrator Ted McFetridge (352) 374-3648
Website <http://www.circuit8.org>

9th Judicial Circuit

Orange and Osceola counties
Chief Judge BELVIN PERRY, JR. (407) 836-2008
Court Administrator Matthew Benefiel (407) 836-2050
Website <http://www.ninja9.org>

10th Judicial Circuit

Hardee, Highlands, and Polk counties
Chief Judge J. DAVID LANGFORD (863) 534-4650
Court Administrator Nick Sudzina (863) 534-4686
Website <http://www.jud10.org>

11th Judicial Circuit

Miami-Dade County
Chief Judge JOSEPH P. FARINA (305) 349-7054
Court Administrator Ruben Carrerou (305) 349-7001
Website <http://www.jud11.flcourts.org>

12th Judicial Circuit

DeSoto, Manatee, and Sarasota counties
Chief Judge LEE E. HAWORTH (941) 861-7950
Court Administrator Walt Smith (941) 861-7800
Website <http://12circuit.state.fl.us>

13th Judicial Circuit

Hillsborough County
Chief Judge MANUEL MENENDEZ, JR. (813) 272-5022
Court Administrator Mike Bridenback (813) 272-5894
Website <http://fljud13.org>

COURT CONTACTS FOR 2007-2008

14th Judicial Circuit

Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, and Washington counties
Chief Judge HENTZ MCCLELLAN (850) 674-5442
Court Administrator Jennifer Dyer Wells (850) 747-5327
Website <http://www.jud14.flcourts.org>

15th Judicial Circuit

Palm Beach County
Chief Judge KATHLEEN J. KROLL (561) 355-4378
Court Administrator Barbara L. Dawicke (561) 355-4495
Website <http://www.co.palm-beach.fl.us/cadmin>

16th Judicial Circuit

Monroe County
Chief Judge SANDRA F. TAYLOR (305) 292-3480
Court Administrator Mary Vanden Brook (305) 292-3423
Website <http://www.keyscounties.net>

17th Judicial Circuit

Broward County
Chief Judge VICTOR TOBIN (954) 831-6332
Court Administrator Carol Ortman (954) 831-7740
Website <http://www.17th.flcourts.org>

18th Judicial Circuit

Brevard and Seminole counties
Chief Judge CLAYTON D. SIMMONS (407) 665-4299
Court Administrator Mark Van Bever (321) 633-2171
Website <http://www.flcourts18.org>

19th Judicial Circuit

Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, and St. Lucie counties
Chief Judge WILLIAM A. ROBY (772) 871-7252
Court Administrator Tom Genung (772) 807-4370
Website <http://www.circuit19.org>

20th Judicial Circuit

Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties
Chief Judge G. KEITH CARY (239) 335-2156
Act. Court Administrator Richard Callanan (239) 533-1712
Website <http://www.ca.cjis20.org>

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