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A Message from Lisa Goodner, State Courts Administrator

This edition of the *Full Court Press* covers an especially wide range of topics—an indication of the progress Florida's court system is making in carrying out the judicial branch's goals. You'll find articles on the Justice Teaching Institute, which recently brought 25 teachers from across the state to the supreme court for a five-day program; on the chief justice's appointment of a special advisor on criminal justice and mental health; and on the four regional training sessions on court accessibility.



Also of special interest are the articles on emergency preparedness, which discuss the two recent, online court publications on pandemic influenza. The first is *Best Practices from the Pandemic Flu COOP Planning in the Florida State Courts*, and the second is the *Pandemic Influenza Benchguide: Legal Issues Concerning Quarantine and Isolation*, both of which will help the branch address issues that might arise in the context of a pandemic emergency.

I also want to call your attention to the article on the Anti Murder Act and its requirements, for this new legislation will definitely have an impact on the courts. You will also find articles on the new supreme court marshal, case weight updates, services for self-represented litigants, continuing education requirements for mediators; complex litigation; long-range planning for domestic violence, drug court initiatives, and more.

Lastly, I'm sure that most of you have an interest in the results of this year's legislative session, and the article on the budget wrap-up offers some information about the allocations for the judicial branch. Unfortunately, as you know, this was a very tight budget year, and, as a result, the employee pay plan, which was the judicial branch's legislative priority this year, was not funded. In fact, none of the special pay issues for any groups of state employees were funded.

Even though the employee pay plan did not pass, it was heartening to witness the effort and dedication of Chief Justice Lewis, Chief Judges Perry and Fulmer and the other members of the budget commissions, the judicial conferences, and the many other judges who invested so much time and energy to promote this critical need to legislators and their staff. We had one legislator tell us how impressive it was to be meeting with a group that was making such an impassioned plea for an issue that contained nothing for them personally. It really was timing rather than effort that caught us short. The branch will continue to promote the employee pay plan so that all court employees receive fair and competitive compensation for the important work they do for the state.

Sincerely,

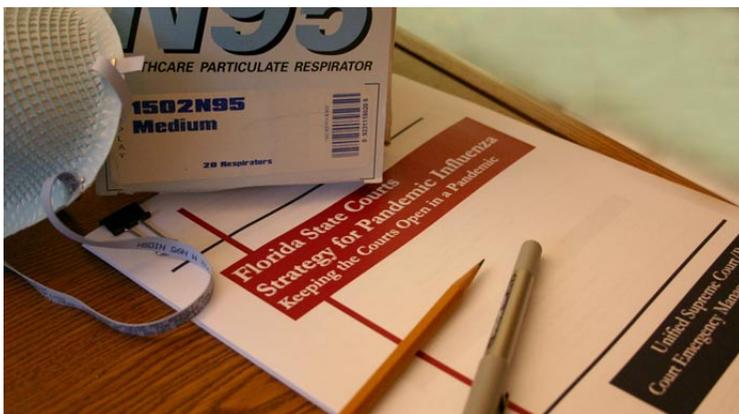
Lisa Goodner

Emergency Preparedness

FLU PANDEMIC: FLORIDA'S COURTS PREPARE THEMSELVES

Given the far-flung journeying of business travelers and tourists in this age of easy and relatively inexpensive global ventures and adventures, it doesn't take much mental stretching to imagine that the avian flu or a comparable infection could reach the United States—and could eventually wend its way into Florida. Imagine that this influenza achieves pandemic proportions, sweeping quickly through the state and into your county, and contemplate the possible ramifications for your court, which conceivably could be debilitated for up to 18 months: the potential for a steep absenteeism rate, leading to severe staffing shortages and thereby frustrating the performance of mission-essential functions; the likelihood of having to conduct court operations with acutely limited possibilities for face-to-face contact; and the prospect of having to address legal issues for which there is little or no precedent or case law (in addition to which, courts would find themselves administering a precipitous increase in emergency matters and case filings).

Such a scenario can't fail to provoke grave questions. For instance, how will the court protect its employees and maintain an orderly and productive work environment? How



will the court ensure that adequate precautions are taken to limit the spread of this flu within the courthouse? With a reduced staff, how will the court conduct operations and ensure adequate security? How will the court respond to disruptions in scheduled court events, a lower summoning yield for jurors, and a failure to appear by witnesses, parties, experts, and contracted employees (e.g., foreign language interpreters, mediators)? Once an influenza pandemic strikes, what are the essential court events that will absolutely need to be heard, and how will the court accommodate them? What technological innovations

can be implemented in advance to offer infrastructural solutions? Before a pandemic hits, what should a court do to prepare for the potential legal issues, especially those associated with isolation and quarantine?

Fortunately, Florida's courts have already begun to prepare themselves in the event that such a calamity assails the state. In March 2006, the Unified Supreme Court/Branch Court Emergency Management Group (CEMG) presented the supreme court with its *Florida State Courts Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*: a document that articulates both short-term and long-term tactical objectives as well as seven planning tasks (plus an array of specific subtasks) requiring immediate attention. The strategy was supported by all seven justices, and the courts were charged with promptly initiating efforts to address all the applicable tasks and to create their own tactical plans by November 30, 2006. By the deadline, almost all of Florida's courts had submitted documentation on their pandemic preparation efforts.

"Based on the submission of pandemic influenza plans by the district and circuit courts, the *Strategy for Pandemic Influenza* has been successful in achieving greater awareness and preparedness throughout the branch for this unique threat to court personnel and operations," asserted OSCA's Greg Cowan, Court Operations Consultant and CEMG member. Because some of the courts generated some especially insightful ideas—and because many courts anticipated that they might need to revise substantially the plans they submitted last November—Mr. Cowan saw the wisdom in assembling a best practices document, which would enable the courts to share their most promising ideas and action plans. Thus he compiled *Best Practices from the Pandemic Flu COOP Planning in the Florida State Courts*, which is now [available online](#).

The document addresses a range of administrative issues that will demand special attention in the event of a flu pandemic. In the chapter entitled Technology Plans, for instance, one circuit submitted a concept to use limited face-to-face contact supplemented by teleconferencing and/or videoconferencing technology during the first 30 days of a pandemic; on days 30 through 90, it would implement a mobile conferencing solution; and from day 90 on, it would use a mobile web conferencing solution for all statutorily-mandated hearings as well as introduce a "virtual courtroom" that utilizes a web-based dual line phone system. In the chapter on Infection Control Precautions, one circuit advanced a plan to conduct hearings remotely—using videoconference, phone, and teleconference—in order to limit face-to-face contact; among other infection control precautions, the circuit would offer education about hand hygiene and coughing etiquette, would enforce social distancing at work, would encourage telecommuting whenever possible, and would require employees to make use of personal protective equipment.

The chapter on Jury Management covers one circuit's concerns that, if there were a community-wide pandemic, the juror response rate could plummet from its current rate of 21%—which is remarkably low to begin with—to figures in the single digits; among a host of possible solutions (including suggestions for limiting potential jurors' exposure to disease and educating the public about the steps the court has taken to ensure everyone's safety), this circuit proposes the possibility of reducing the size of jury panels and limiting the number of jury trials. The *Best Practices* document also includes the extensive, three-part pandemic influenza table top exercise that one circuit engaged in—and that any circuit can use to test its continuity of operations plan, its emergency procedures, and its disaster recovery plan.

No one can anticipate where or when a pandemic will occur. However, according to health officials, a pandemic breaks out approximately every 35 years—and the last one was in 1968. Public health experts have expressed concerns that the next one could be so dire that it would eclipse any emergencies or disasters this country has experienced in the last 80 years. So the importance of preparation clearly must not be underestimated. Although Florida's courts still have more work to do in this area, they have definitely begun to take the necessary steps to meet the two strategic goals that undergird the court system's approach to preparing for any emergency: to “deal with crises in a way that protects the health and safety of everyone in the court facilities” and to “keep the courts open to ensure justice for the people.”

THE PANDEMIC INFLUENZA BENCHGUIDE: ENDEAVORING TO ANTICIPATE THE UNIMAGINABLE

What if a serious pandemic influenza were to strike, infiltrating your county and, inevitably, your court? Consider the possible ramifications from a purely work-related perspective. First, most hazards—e.g., hurricanes, tropical storms, tornados, floods, technological emergencies—tend to have a relatively short-lived effect; a pandemic, on the other hand, could significantly affect court operations for up to 18 months. Moreover, it could cause a prodigious absenteeism rate due to illness, isolation, quarantine, and death, profoundly minimizing court staffing. And consider

this possibility as well: if public health officials deem it necessary to close down all public places in which people congregate, a pandemic might render your court—the physical facility itself—completely off-limits to everyone.

If you are a judge, how do you imagine you'd fulfill your judicial responsibilities if the above scenario became a reality? Most likely, almost everything you typically need

to do your job is in the courthouse—your staff, your court administrator, your computer, your ability to perform legal research, your means to creating an official record, your contact with the people who pick up your signed orders and convey them to the court file and the parties. But in an emergency situation, the justice system must somehow remain functional—even if the courts cannot be entered. In fact, it's quite possible that you could suddenly find yourself holding hearings in your home—over the phone. According to the Centers for Disease Control, one way or another, the courts emphatically must continue to be operational in a pandemic because, if they aren't there to maintain order and enforce restrictions on movement, there will be no way to prevent a public disaster.



photo by Phillip Pollock

Judge Janet Ferris, 2nd Judicial Circuit, coordinated the recent, online publication, the *Pandemic Influenza Benchguide*.

Recognizing that the courts are an integral part of containing the crisis, how will judges “keep the courts open” and conduct business as usual if they have no staff and no access to their physical facility? What specifically will they need in order to be able to do their jobs properly?

Wrestling with these ponderous questions over the last year was the Publications Committee of the Florida Court Education Council. Under Task 2 of the *Florida State Courts Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*—“Prepare for Legal Considerations in a Pandemic”—is subtask 2d: “Ensure that judges and attorneys are aware of the legal issues associated with isolation/quarantine including the development of a bench book”—the task for which the committee was responsible. The fruit of the Publication Committee's intensive labors is the *Pandemic Influenza Benchguide: Legal Issues Concerning Quarantine and Isolation*, which was recently released and is now [available online](#).

The underlying purpose of a benchguide or benchbook is to give some background to judges who are rotating into a new division or to provide a refresher for judges who conduct hearings in a particular division. Most benchguides (the *Dependency*, *Domestic Violence*, and *Criminal Law*

Benchbooks, for instance) are called upon to address judicial issues that are known quantities—not to help judges try to navigate something that hasn’t even happened yet. So conceptualizing and designing this benchguide presented some unique challenges, according to Publications Committee Member Judge Janet E. Ferris, Second Judicial Circuit, who took the lead in coordinating this multi-authored project. For instance, at the heart of other Florida benchguides are the relevant statutes, rules of procedure, and court decisions. However, regarding pandemic influenza, Florida lacks any statutes that are specifically relevant; as a result, the pandemic benchguide writers had to draw upon statutes that might be related to legal issues that could arise should a pandemic occur. Also, because there are no statutes directly addressing a pandemic, there was no specifically relevant case law to include—other than one quite old sexually transmitted disease case, from which benchguide writers extrapolated as best they could.

Despite having a dearth of core legal material with which to work, Judge Ferris was determined that the Publications Committee create a benchguide that would be “basic, very practical, and that would describe those areas of the law—many of which are unusual and even arcane—that would be useful to judges trying to handle legal issues in a pandemic emergency situation.” The example she brought up is habeas corpus, which occupies a sizable chunk of the benchguide. Habeas corpus, she explained, “is not handled on a daily basis by most judges—and rarely in a public health context generally.” With this benchguide, she aimed to give judges some guidance about how to address an unfamiliar proceeding, like habeas corpus, in the turmoil of a crisis situation, when they can’t rely on the support services of their staff, the clerk, etc. “We don’t know if the choices we made are right,” Judge Ferris acknowledged; “Since a pandemic of this sort hasn’t happened, how could we know what quarantined people might need, for instance, or what orders would need to be produced?” So the writers tackled this project as logically as they could: after thoughtful study and animated debate, they made educated guesses.

After covering some useful background material (an introduction to public health law, executive powers, and



photo by Phillip Pollock

Florida executive branch procedures and players in a public health emergency), the benchguide moves on to topics of more pronounced relevance to Florida’s judges and attorneys during a pandemic crisis: the role of Florida’s courts (specifically, the range of legal issues that might arise), records of trial court proceedings and a review of trial court orders and judgments, information about maintaining essential court functions, and material about isolation and quarantine during a public health emergency of this nature. The benchguide concludes with useful links, including legal authorities; the Florida Department of Health’s “White Paper on the Law of Florida Human Quarantine”; a public health glossary; a table of authorities; and an index.

When asked about the special challenges that preparing this benchguide created for her and the other writers, Judge Ferris called it “an important exercise” that taught her “how to think way, way, way outside the box”—a useful process not just for the benchguide writers but for everyone in the judicial branch, she suggested. “There’s a lot to be said for the exercise of projecting into the future and dealing with the unknown. It’s usually hard to think differently about ways to do what we need to do,” she admitted, “but maybe the way we always do things isn’t the best way. It’s good to think differently for a change, and exercises like these drive judges to think more creatively about their work—not just in a pandemic situation but in any situation.”

Because of the unusual circumstances under which this benchguide was written—specifically the fact that it’s an effort to prepare for something that hasn’t yet happened—Judge Ferris imagines that it will need regular updating to address the developing field of public health law as it matures in response to the realities of a pandemic influenza or an analogous emergency. Since it’s not a finished product, she hopes that judges and attorneys will take the time to look at the guide before they need to use it and that they will offer suggestions and ideas about how the committee might make it more helpful. Benchguide writers see this text as a “work in progress,” and Judge Ferris is eager for readers to “provide feedback and input to help us improve it if we need to.”

THE FULL COURT PRESS WELCOMES EDWARD DECOSTE, THE NEW FLORIDA SUPREME COURT MARSHAL

With a commanding poster from the 1973 John Wayne movie *Cahill, U.S. Marshal*, behind his desk and a wall of awards flanking his work space, Edward DeCoste looks as if he's beginning to make himself at home in his new office and at his new job. Recently hired as the supreme court marshal, he is energetically embracing his wide spectrum of charges. They include security, custodianship of all property, maintenance of the building and grounds, administration of the building facilities, and coordination of the Court Emergency Management Team during state or national emergencies or natural disasters. He is also responsible for developing and implementing the court operational budget, purchasing, and maintenance contracting; in addition, it's his job to make sure that all the court's orders are executed throughout the state. But the marshal's principal concern is to ensure the safe conduct of judicial proceedings and to protect the justices and other members of the court family. Given that there are 300 people working in the building—which doesn't include the visitors for whom the marshal is also responsible (e.g., tourists as well as people who are here to attend meetings or oral arguments), being a marshal is an awesome undertaking.

Not surprisingly, then, to be the marshal of the Supreme Court of Florida, one has to have an extensive background in security or law enforcement and in executive management; in addition, one needs experience in strategic planning, budgeting, and facility management. And Mr. DeCoste has all the requisite experience—and more. His law enforcement career began in 1974, when he became a deputy sheriff in Pinal County, Arizona. Several years after that, he accepted a position as a deputy U.S. marshal with the U.S. Marshals Service, for which he served in various duty stations across the country (including San Francisco; McAllen, Texas; and Atlanta). Then, for the four years that prefaced his coming to Florida's supreme court, he worked for the Department of Homeland Security as the director of

the Federal Protective Service, Southeast Region. Although this is his first position as a supreme court marshal, one of the primary duties of a U.S. marshal is to protect the courts, so some of the most urgent responsibilities of his current job are logical extensions of his prior professional charges. He moved to Tallahassee with his wife and his two youngest children, tempted here from Atlanta, where they'd lived the past 12 years.

Mr. DeCoste, who began working at the court on February 1, has already set his first goal: to prepare the court for a flu pandemic, any type of bio-event, or any other natural or manmade disaster by establishing effective protocols and standard operating procedures. To create successful emergency preparation strategies, he pronounced, it's essential to pay attention to and learn from the past. As an example of what **not** to do, he cited the judicial branch's handling of the Great Flu Epidemic of 1918, which is estimated to have killed 40 million people worldwide. Courts across the nation were ill-prepared for that plight, he noted, and from that historical calamity, he's drawn lessons about the necessity of having clearly-defined and carefully-disseminated policies and procedures in place so that everyone knows what he or she is expected to do. (When Mr. DeCoste stresses the need to learn from past experience, he is decidedly not invoking a cliché—in fact, he means it quite literally: an avid reader, he is chiefly fond of reading history books—particularly ancient history—which he devours in part to learn from the mistakes made by these peoples. Another interesting sidebar: before beginning his career in law enforcement, he taught history and math at middle school.)



Edward DeCoste, Florida's new supreme court marshal, began working at the court on February 1.

photo by Phillip Pollock

Mr. DeCoste acknowledges that he is still in the settling-in stage: he's acclimating himself to the particularities of his office and of the supreme court and to a new way of doing things. And he's still familiarizing himself with the myriad departments, sections, and units housed in the building and with what they do, who manages them, and how they interact. But he is very clear about his priorities as marshal: he specifically singled out his commitment to making sure the court has an ample supply of qualified officers and the most up-to-date, electronic security systems in place. "The people of Florida deserve a state supreme court which can conduct the daily business of the people of the State of Florida in a safe, secure environment free of intimidation, coercion, or bullying," he emphasized. "My officers and I are dedicated to that end."

Performance and Accountability

THE COMMISSIONS ON PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: BUILDING PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

Is it possible for taxpayers and lawmakers to determine whether the courts are good stewards of public resources and are using these resources wisely and efficiently? Indeed it is if the court system has objective criteria with which to measure and report court performance—and if it also has an explicit mechanism for communicating how and when the courts make, or fail to make, improvements in performance. For then the court system is demonstrating that it holds itself accountable to the people. Deeply aware of the signification of accountability, former Chief Justice Anstead, in establishing the court system's two performance and accountability commissions, began his administrative



Judge Martha C. Warner, 4th DCA, chairs the Commission on DCA Performance & Accountability.

A number of different elements influenced the evolution of a judicial performance and accountability system in Florida. In part, it was formed in response to the 1992 voter-driven amendment to the Florida constitution calling for the development of a long-range plan—as well as quality management and accountability programs—for all state agencies as well as the judiciary. The drive for accountability is also evident in the judicial branch's vision statement—which pronounces that “Justice in Florida will be accessible, fair, effective, responsive, and accountable” and defines accountability as an obligation to “use public

orders with the words, “Improving court performance and accountability is a vital and overarching goal of the Florida State Courts System.” The importance of demonstrating accountability cannot be stressed enough, for only by being accountable can the judiciary earn the trust and confidence of the public—and also remain a truly independent branch of government.

resources efficiently, and in a way that the public can understand.” And the branch's long-range plan, *Taking Bearings, Setting Course*, developed by the Judicial Management Council (JMC) and adopted by the court in 1998, also enjoins the judiciary to establish a comprehensive performance and accountability system; Goal 5.1 of the plan affirms that “The judicial system will be accountable to the public,” and, to achieve this goal, the branch is urged to “establish evaluation and monitoring mechanisms of court performance” and to “share information about judicial system performance with policymakers, court users, and the public” ([read long-range plan online](#)).



Judge Alice Blackwell White, 9th Judicial Circuit, chairs the Commission on Trial Court Performance & Accountability.

The JMC created two committees to embrace the responsibility of establishing judicial performance measures and improving accountability: the District Court of Appeal Performance and Accountability Committee, created in October 1997, and the Trial Court Performance and Accountability Committee, created in December 1998. These committees made considerable progress toward advancing and executing a comprehensive performance and accountability system. Over time, however, their aggregating workload demands became ponderous, so then Chief Justice Anstead deemed it beneficial and necessary to separate these committees from the JMC and to reconstitute them as distinct commissions. Thus, in 2002, by administrative order, the two committees were reconstituted as the Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability, chaired by Judge Alice Blackwell White, Ninth Judicial Circuit, and the Commission on District Court of Appeal Performance and Accountability, chaired by Judge Martha C. Warner, Fourth DCA.

Since the trial courts and the DCAs have different jurisdictions, functions, and scopes, many of the charges of the two commissions are inevitably different. However, they do share some elemental ones: for instance, both are tasked with developing, coordinating, reporting, and making recommendations to the supreme court about a performance measurement, improvement, and accountability system; both review case management information and data

reporting requirements and coordinate the development of uniform reporting procedures; and each collaborates with its respective budget commission to build a budgeting framework for the responsible use of fiscal resources. Moreover, their work process is similar: both reach out to and depend on the input of subject matter experts; neither operates in a vacuum, for both regularly reach out to the chief judges and other key judicial branch parties for feedback; and the underpinning work strategy of both commissions is consensus building.

These commissions have already delivered some major accomplishments. Among them, the DCA commission articulated a mission for the DCAs; defined the DCAs' core processes; established uniform methods of counting cases and reporting appellate information; aided the DCAs in their management of case progress and their sharing of management practices; studied the effect of court size on collegiality and court performance; and designed a way to measure relative case weight and thus determine judicial workload. And the trial court commission, among other achievements, reached consensus on the mission, roles, and responsibilities of the trial courts in the management of cases and support resources; defined the core elements—i.e., services and functions—of the trial courts (e.g., case management, mediation, court interpreters, court reporters, expert witnesses, etc.); designed a way to measure relative case weight and thus determine judicial workload; produced a report on court-appointed counsel; and developed policies and practices for providing and managing court reporting. Moreover, both commissions have been involved in some very weighty projects lately, as the following two articles will reveal.

Since the early 1990s, citizens across Florida—and across the country—have been clamoring for improved performance and accountability in all governmental entities, including the courts. Judicial branch leaders quickly realized that the more informed the public is about the courts, the more likely the public will support, trust, and feel confident in the courts. The Florida judicial branch's two performance and accountability commissions have been working diligently toward that end so as to provide the public with impartial, measurable evaluations of court performance and with a transparent system of accountability.

THE JUDICIAL RESOURCE STUDY: UPDATING CASE WEIGHTS TO DETERMINE JUDICIAL NEED

To maintain an effective, efficient, and responsive justice system, it goes without saying that the judicial branch must have in place an adequate number of judgeships. If judicial workload exceeds capacity, a “judicial need deficit” can arise, impeding the timely and smooth administration of justice. In short, if the court system has a paucity of judges, litigants can experience delays in case processing and, therefore, diminished access to the courts.

To head off such a scenario, the supreme court presents the legislature with its annual certification opinion in

which it requests funding for additional judgeships when necessary. Since 1999, the judicial branch has assessed the need for new trial court judges using a methodology called the Delphi-based Weighted Caseload System, which analyzes each of the 26 trial court case types according to its relative complexity (e.g., complex cases that occupy a significant amount of judicial time—such as capital murder cases—receive a high weight while cases that can be addressed rather quickly—such as civil traffic cases—receive a lower weight). Using the Weighted Caseload System, the branch soundly evaluates judicial workload, establishes

recommended caseloads for judges, and determines the need for new trial court judges. (Since 2005, the DCAs have had a similar mechanism in place, also making use of objective, workload-based criteria for determining the need for additional judges.)

Once these case weights are established, however, they are not absolute forever. In fact, they must not be allowed to become fossilized because judicial workload tends to fluctuate over time; also, operational and procedural changes, changes in case precedent, the availability of new resources, and new legislation (e.g., the Jessica Lunsford Act, the Anti Murder Act) can result in new or different demands on judicial time. Therefore, in order to maintain the accuracy of the “judge need” model and to re-validate the process for certifying the need for new judges, case weights require periodic reassessment and, on occasion, re-adjustment.



Chief Judge Robert Bennett, Jr., 12th Judicial Circuit, co-chairs the Judicial Resource Study Workgroup and chairs the Self-Help Workgroup.

The branch has been using case weights that were established in 1999. Recognizing the need to revisit these weights, the Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability formed the Judicial Resource Study Workgroup in August 2005. Co-chaired by Chief Judge Robert Bennett, Jr., Twelfth Judicial Circuit, and Trial Court Administrator Mike Bridenback, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, the workgroup was tasked with re-evaluating and, if necessary, updating the case weights and also with developing a strategy that could be used to measure the workload of general magistrates, child support enforcement hearing officers, and traffic hearing officers. The workgroup has already made significant progress.

In 1999, data for determining case weights were collected using a time study, which required each judge to keep a daily log of his/her activities; this time, however, the workgroup opted to gather the necessary data through surveys, thereby reducing the amount of time demanded of the judges and, consequently, increasing their participation. The workgroup also realized that if it provided training about the process, it would get the most accurate results. So, last summer, OSCA staff in the Court Services Unit offered 60 training sessions across the state to inform all circuit and county court judges about the case weight update survey. The survey asked judges to estimate, based on their experience, the amount of time (in minutes) they spend on each individual component of each case type they typically hear. For each case type, in other words, judges calculated the number of minutes they spend on preliminary proceedings, arraignments, and pleas; on pretrial hearings, motions, and case conferences; on the jury trial and the bench trial; on disposition; on post-judgment activity; and on case-related administration. Over a four-week period beginning in mid-August, judges were able to complete the survey online or on printed forms.

Statewide, the participation rate was 55%, significantly exceeding the 30% participation rate in the 1999 study. On average, each judge completed seven of the case-specific surveys, and approximately 97 surveys were completed for each specific case type. Due to the high level of participation and the volume of information collected, the workgroup gathered ample data for making a valid determination about the need to update case specific weights.

Comparing the data collected last summer with the data from the 1999 study, OSCA staff were able to determine the proposed 2007 case weight for each case type, the 2007 judge need, and the 2007 divisional judge need, and they

presented this information to the Judicial Resource Study Workgroup in December. Then, in January, 75 judges—representing all 20 circuits and all divisions of circuit and county court—came together for a two-day forum in which they reviewed and discussed the viability of the data and comments from the surveys and the recommendation of updated case weights. The workgroup will review the results of the forum in May and present a final report and recommendations to the Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability in June.

The workgroup's second task is to develop case weights for measuring the workload of general magistrates, child support enforcement hearing officers, and civil traffic infraction hearing officers so as to determine the need for additional resources—the first time such data are being collected and analyzed for these entities. This data-gathering effort was actually designed in five stages, which have been administered over the course of the past year. For one stage of this effort, the workgroup conducted a one-month time study last fall, in preparation for which, OSCA staff offered six regional training sessions on time study data collection (videoconferencing was

available to those who couldn't make it to the training locations). The time study was subdivided by division of court, case type, and event, with each case type having three possible events: pre-judgment, final judgment, and post judgment. Participants were asked to report the actual amount of time they spent on case-related and non-case-related work, entering this information on time sheets, which they could fill out either online or on printed forms. Overall participation was excellent: of the 185 eligible participants, the response rate of the general magistrates and child support enforcement hearing officers was 87%.

After the data were analyzed by OSCA staff, 39 general magistrates and hearing officers representing 19 circuits gathered together in March for a two-day forum to discuss the viability of the time study data and to make recommendations of case weights to the workgroup. Because magistrates and hearing officers rarely have occasion to get together, they relished this opportunity to participate in the forum and to have input into the process of quantifying their workload. The Judicial Resource Study Workgroup will review the results of the forum in May and present recommendations to the Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability in June.



Mike Bridenback, trial court administrator for the 13th Judicial Circuit, co-chairs the Judicial Resource Study Workgroup.

Kris Slayden, senior court statistics consultant for OSCA's Court Services Unit and workgroup staff member, was impressed by "the incredible amount of work that the judges, general magistrates, and hearing officers of Florida have done to engage in a thoughtful process of what their workload consists of and to determine their need for additional resources." Their diligent work will ensure the continuing validity of the supreme court's annual certification opinion and will go a long way toward fulfilling the judicial branch's vision of providing Floridians with timely and meaningful access to justice.

SERVICES FOR SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS: ENSURING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Across the nation, the number of litigants who choose to represent themselves in court, especially in family law cases, has been on the rise since the 1980s. On average, for example, 80% of family law cases and 65% of dissolution of marriage cases in Florida have at least one self-represented, or *pro se*, party. Understandably, many *pro se* litigants lack familiarity with standard court system protocols, and if they inadvertently file incomplete or incorrect forms, for instance, they can cause delays in the resolution of their case—an unfortunate situation that both frustrates the litigants and clogs the court dockets. Whether they represent themselves because they can't afford to hire an attorney or because, for whatever reason, they choose not to, with their rapidly-growing numbers, they are impelling the court system to do something to help them achieve meaningful access to justice.

But the dramatic increase in numbers is not the only reason the courts are determined to help self-represented litigants. Florida's constitution affirms that litigants have the right to represent themselves in court on any matter: "The courts shall be open to every person for redress of any injury, and justice shall be administered without sale, denial or delay" (Article I, Section 21). Thus the courts must make themselves accessible to all—including those who do not have the benefit of an attorney. In fact, in the judicial branch's Vision Statement, accessibility is the first attribute named—"Justice in Florida will be accessible, fair, effective, responsive, and accountable"—with "accessible" defined as "convenient, understandable, timely, and affordable to everyone." The courts recognize that they have an obligation to disclose to the public—and this includes *pro se* litigants—how to navigate the court system.

In response to the growing concerns about the needs of self-represented litigants, among the responsibilities with which Chief Justice Lewis tasked the Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability in his September administrative order, he enjoined it to "make recommendations for a court-based service framework that will connect litigants with legal assistance, where possible, and reliably provide the ministerial assistances and procedural information needed to ensure that litigants representing themselves have meaningful access to the civil justice system" ([read order online](#)).

This is not an entirely new initiative, however: concerted efforts to address *pro se* concerns first began in 1996, when then Chief Justice Kogan called upon the Family Court Steering Committee to make recommendations about how the courts could help "self-represented litigants access the family courts through the use of standardized simplified forms, self-help centers, technological innovations, and other mechanisms, as appropriate." The committee was able to make some progress, completing a huge amount of work on the family law forms and developing the family law self-help rule (12.750) and the "unbundled" legal services rule (12.040). But with the 1998 passage of Revision 7—which shifted the primary funding responsibility for Florida's court system from the counties to the state in an effort to ensure that all Floridians have equal access to justice—the branch had to devote its energies unwaveringly to this constitutional amendment, which had an implementation deadline of July 2004.

The Revision 7 implementation process was such a lengthy and preoccupying endeavor that it temporarily deflected attention away from many court concerns, including the needs of self-represented litigants. Yet Revision 7 also effected significant institutional changes that have made it easier for the branch to help these parties. For instance, an incontestably positive consequence of the constitutional amendment was the judiciary's development of budgetary and organizational unification—which helped to reshape the courts into a true *system*, replete with standardized mechanisms in place to achieve branch-wide goals, such as



photo by Phillip Pollock

establishing a self-help program. In addition, because it required that the branch make services uniformly available to similarly-situated litigants, Revision 7 molded the branch into a far better place to spotlight, and to assist in addressing the needs of, the self-represented.

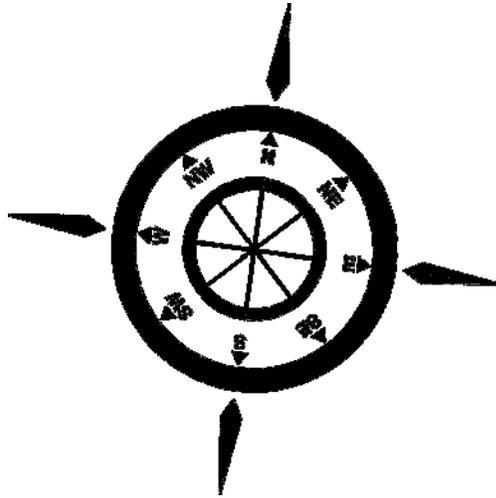
In January 2006, then Chief Justice Pariente convened a focus group consisting of 31 people—trial and appellate judges, clerks, court administrators and other court staff, lawyers, and other justice system partners—to re-direct attention to services for pro se litigants. This meeting gave rise to an action report and recommendations, which the performance and accountability commissions used as the basis for envisioning a court-based self-help program. Soon thereafter, the Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability established the Self-Help Workgroup, chaired by Chief Judge Robert B. Bennett, Twelfth Judicial Circuit, to address the basic principles and assumptions regarding the right of meaningful access in general as well as to find consensus for the roles and responsibilities that court self-help services should embrace.

To date, the workgroup has articulated a comprehensive service framework that includes the self-help services provided through a court program as well as the legal services appropriately provided by other entities (legal aid, pro bono attorneys, etc.). The workgroup has also identified the county and circuit court case types that should be included in a self-help program (e.g., small claims, garnishments, civil traffic appeals, landlord tenant/eviction, divorce, paternity, child support, name change, domestic violence/repeat violence and sexual violence/date violence, probate, foreclosures). Finally, it has detailed the thirteen threshold services that should be provided by a court-based self-help program (e.g., directions to the correct location within the courthouse to find services needed by a litigant; information about the scope of the self-help services—and the limitations of such services; information about the legal process specific to the subject matter of the litigant's problem).

Two significant challenges remain before the workgroup can submit its final report, however. First, in order to make meaningful progress in the effort to help self-represented litigants, the workgroup recognizes the need to clarify and standardize the services that will be provided

by the various entities involved—specifically, the bar, legal services, the trial courts, and their clerks. Expectations of each will need to be clearly defined to ensure access for pro se parties in every county across the state as well as to avoid duplication of effort. And, second, the workgroup has taken care to design a statewide, court-based framework for providing access to self-represented litigants; however, all of the state's 67 clerks are independently elected—and, therefore, enjoy operational and administrative independence in their performance of their statutory duties. The courts must engage in further dialog with the clerks to achieve this laudable goal of helping pro se parties.

Through this unique and exciting opportunity for cooperation and bridge-building among Florida's courts, clerks, and providers of legal services, the Self-Help Workgroup aims to achieve the eminent goal of ensuring meaningful access to justice for self-represented litigants.



Education and Outreach

THE JUSTICE TEACHING INSTITUTE: LEARNING BY EXPERIENCING

“This in an amazing model, unique, unlike any other professional development experiment you’ll ever experience,” the listeners were promised. “Over the course of the next five days,” they were told, “you’ll learn about and will trace a real-life court case from its very infancy—from the trial court to the appellate court to the supreme court,” which will give you a chance “to immerse yourselves in a balance of clinical and academic experience.” Moreover, “You’ve been assigned a role—as a justice, chief justice, or attorney (petitioner or respondent)—and, after preparing for and participating in a mock oral argument about this case, you’ll watch the supreme court justices engage in the real oral argument about this very case,” they were informed.

Contrary to expectation, however, the listeners—who heard these words from Chief Justice Lewis; Judge Kevin Emas, Eleventh Judicial Circuit; Judge Janet Ferris, Second Judicial Circuit; and Annette Boyd Pitts, executive director of the Florida Law Related Education Association—were neither new judges nor seasoned attorneys. In fact, they were 25 secondary school teachers from across the state

who were selected to participate in this year's Justice Teaching Institute, which took place at the supreme court on April 22-26. But, despite the daunting novelty of this experience, the teachers deftly took up the gauntlet and showed themselves ready for the challenges ahead.



photo by BC Schwartz

After welcoming Justice Teaching Institute participants to the courtroom, Chief Justice Lewis gives the teachers an opportunity to ask questions.

Sponsored by the supreme court, the Justice Teaching Institute (JTI) was first established by former Chief Justice Kogan, who made it a feature of the court's Sesquicentennial Celebration in 1997. Since then, the JTI has been an annual event, molded and fostered by Ms Pitts together with Chief Justice Lewis, who has actively participated in it since his 1998 appointment to the supreme court. A law-related education program, JTI brings to the court up to 25 secondary school teachers from across the state—who are chosen according to a competitive selection process—for an intensive, five-day program in which they learn deeply about the justice system and witness it in action. The goal is to inspire them to convey what they have learned to their students and colleagues, and, in fact, the teachers are encouraged to use their new knowledge to develop a courts unit for their classes or to organize a local JTI for other instructors in their school or district.

Over the course of this year's Sunday-to-Thursday program, teachers had an opportunity to be taught by and to interact informally with each of the seven justices, along with Ms Pitts, Judge Emas, Judge Ferris, and other members of the court system family. They also toured the building, piloted by the chief justice himself; learned about the structure and function of the state court system and about the criminal court process; delved into the importance of having an independent judiciary and separation of powers; became versed at accessing legal resources from library and Internet sources; studied alternative methods of dispute resolution; and engaged in a vigorous review of and conversation about the constitutional issues implicit in a real case before the court—all of which was geared toward preparing them to participate in a mock oral argument about this case and which culminated in their observation of the justices' oral argument about the case. At the debriefing after the oral argument, the teachers' excitement was palpable.

Undoubtedly, this is an experience from which everyone gains. The justices and judges clearly love the opportunity to teach and to connect with such keen and indefatigable "students." And the teachers themselves conspicuously enjoy this chance to meet and work thoughtfully with kindred spirits, seeing it as a "refreshing and energizing experience." But it is the absent ones—the students themselves—who will be the most important beneficiaries of this program, for, thanks to the thrilling labors of their teachers, these young people will have an opportunity to grasp something substantive about the history, functions, and significance of the judicial branch.



photo by BC Schwartz

Justice Teaching Institute fellows and faculty gather in the supreme court courtroom after the oral argument.

Scenes from this year's Justice Teaching Institute



photo by BC Schwartz

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 conferring before donning their judicial robes for the mock oral argument.



photo by BC Schwartz

Teachers listen to Public Defender Nancy Daniels, 2nd Judicial Circuit, present a motion to suppress hearing at the Leon County Courthouse.



photo by BC Schwartz

Judge Kevin Emas, 11th Judicial Circuit, and Judge Janet Ferris, 2nd Judicial Circuit, discuss the objectives of the program with the Justice Teaching Institute fellows.



photo by BC Schwartz

Teachers were divided into two groups for the mock oral argument; the above group held its mock oral argument in the courtroom of the First DCA.

THE SUPREME COURT ADOPTS LEADING-EDGE CHANGES IN CONTINUING MEDIATOR EDUCATION

Few states in this country have certified mediators and certified mediation training programs; even fewer require their mediators to earn continuing education credits, according to Sharon Press, director of Florida's Dispute Resolution Center. Florida is exceptional, however, for its supreme court is authorized to set the standards for certification, training, continuing education, conduct, discipline, and other alternative dispute resolution matters. As a result, Florida has fostered one of the most sweeping, court-connected mediation programs in the nation.

Mediator certification is granted for a two-year period; required to renew every two years, 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. In order for an education course or activity to qualify as continuing mediation education (CME), it must be an organized program of learning directly related to the practice of mediation and must have significant, current, intellectual or practical content.

Recently, the supreme court modified the CME requirements in some innovative ways. In the past, of the 16 hours minimum of continuing education, all certified mediators had to complete a minimum of four hours in mediator ethics; in addition, all family and dependency mediators had to complete a four-hour requirement in domestic violence education.

Now, however, although the 16-hour minimum hasn't changed, the CME configuration has changed for all certified mediators who have renewal dates on or after August 1, 2007. Specifically, family and dependency mediators, in addition to the four hours of mediator ethics and the four hours of domestic violence education, will now be required to take one hour of diversity/cultural awareness education. And all county court and circuit court mediators, in addition to taking four hours of mediator ethics, will now also have to take two hours of domestic violence education and one hour of diversity/cultural awareness education.



Sharon Press, director of Florida's Dispute Resolution Center, calls the recent changes in continuing mediator education requirements "very progressive."

"Very progressive—and a really big deal" is how Dispute Resolution Center's Sharon Press characterized these changes: "I don't know of any other state that has a diversity/cultural awareness and domestic violence component in its continuing mediation education requirements for all mediators," she emphasized. She sees the addition of the diversity/cultural awareness element as a testament to the court system's recognition of the increasing diversity in Florida's population—and to its expectation that mediators be sensitive to this reality. In addition, she noted that the new educational requirement also reinforces the efforts of the supreme court's Standing Committee on Fairness and Diversity, which is in the process of developing local court diversity and sensitivity awareness programs for all judges and state-funded court employees.

photo by Phillip Pollock

As for the new domestic violence education requirement for all mediators—not just those who do family and dependency mediation—this concept, which Ms Press described as "somewhat controversial," is a "response to the realization that domestic violence doesn't only impact family cases." Because domestic violence problems can lurk under the surface of cases that end up in county or circuit court—not just in cases that are tried in family court—this continuing education requirement will ensure that all mediators have the training and caniness to perceive and react appropriately to obscured domestic violence problems, regardless of the court in which a case is tried.

For an opportunity to satisfy CME requirements—including requirements in diversity/cultural awareness, domestic violence education, and mediator ethics—mediators are encouraged to attend the Sixteenth Annual Dispute Resolution Center Conference, which is scheduled for August 23-25 in Orlando. Supreme court approved arbitration training will take place on Thursday, August 23, 10 am to 5 pm, and the conference, whose theme this year is "Insight and Inspiration," will begin at 8:30 am on Friday, August 24, and continue through noon on Saturday, August 25.

For more information about the conference—and to reserve a hotel room—visit the [Dispute Resolution Center website](#).

TASK FORCE ON MANAGEMENT OF LITIGATION IN COMPLEX CASES: PUBLIC HEARING IS SCHEDULED

Because they typically involve a significant number of parties, generally draw upon prestigious topic experts (in medicine, statistics, and other, often arcane, sophisticated, or highly technical subjects), and frequently culminate in prodigious monetary settlements or awards, cases involving complex litigation tend to provoke a considerable amount of media attention and public interest. Of most concern to Florida's courts, however, is that these cases generally take a long time to decide, which prompted Chief Justice Lewis to establish a task force that is responsible for considering strategies to improve the management of these kinds of cases.

According to the administrative order creating the task force, cases that the court system characterizes as complex include "mass torts, class actions, product liability cases, intellectual property disputes, cases involving advanced scientific evidence, and cases involving multiple parties." They are labeled "complex" because they are "managerially and substantively intricate and may require considerably more resources and effective management techniques than other cases" ([read order online](#)).

Chaired by Judge Thomas H. Bateman, III, Second Judicial Circuit, the Task Force on the Management of Litigation in Complex Cases is charged with analyzing and evaluating the efficient and effective management of complex litigation and with recommending methods for processing these cases more constructively and for making the best use of available judicial resources (e.g., case managers, law clerks, magistrates). Since its creation in September 2006, the task force has already met three times, and its three subcommittees—one to define "complex litigation," one to propose rule changes, and one to consider how technology might facilitate the management and processing of these cases—are working feverishly to complete their tasks; members have until October 31 of this year to complete their work.

The task force created a [dedicated website](#) to keep the public informed about its progress, giving viewers ready access to its administrative orders, its member list, its

various meeting materials (agendas, minutes, subcommittee handouts, etc.), and the copious reference materials that support its efforts. In addition to chronicling its own activities for the public, the task force is seeking feedback from the public—especially from judges, attorneys, and other interested parties who wish to share details about their particular encounters with complex cases. In an effort to promote this exchange, the task force scheduled a public hearing for June 27 at the Orlando World Center Marriott—to be held in conjunction with the 2007 Annual Florida Bar Convention. People who have participated in complex cases in any way are invited to share their experiences with Chief Justice Lewis, Justice Pariente, and task force members. Whether positive or negative, these experiences have the potential to play a vital role in reshaping the way that complex litigation is handled in Florida's courts.

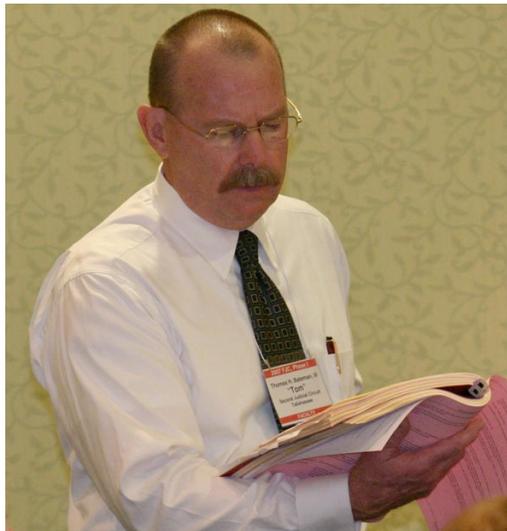


photo by Phillip Pollock

Judge Thomas H. Bateman, III, 2nd Judicial Circuit, chairs the Task Force on the Management of Litigation in Complex Cases.

Regarding the responsibilities of the task force, Judge Bateman said, "This is a very complicated and ambitious project. We are finding that some states have been working on similar projects for many years. The members of the task force are studying what other state and the federal courts have done and reaching out to them to gain from their experiences. The supreme

court and task force members would also like to hear from members of The Florida Bar and judiciary to try to understand what is actually happening or not happening in the trenches—the state's trial courts. We are looking forward to the public hearing."

People who wish to be included on the speakers list—or who have questions or comments—are encouraged to contact Greg Youchock, chief of OSCA's Court Services and staff to the Task Force on Management of Litigation in Complex Cases, at youchocg@fcourts.org or at (850) 922-5108.

Families and Children

SPECIAL ADVISOR ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND MENTAL HEALTH IS APPOINTED

Across the country, most communities lack adequate crisis, acute, and long-term care capacity for people with severe mental health problems. Unfortunately, when people are unable to get the mental health services they need, they frequently end up in the criminal justice system—often for committing relatively minor offenses. As a result, the criminal justice system has, for many, become the treatment of last resort. Consider the following, articulated by Chief Justice Lewis:

“It is estimated that as high as 72% of jail inmates in the counties around the state have some type of mental health issue or substance abuse disorder.”

“It is estimated that 70,000 people with serious mental illnesses requiring immediate treatment are arrested and booked into jails in Florida annually.”

“It is estimated that in the State of Florida, there are many more individuals with serious mental illnesses in jails and prisons than in state psychiatric hospitals.”

Calculations like these have given rise to the grave concern that Florida’s state and county correctional facilities—at immeasurable cost to taxpayers—might, for all intents and purposes, become the largest psychiatric institutions in the state. And, clearly, this would be a lose-lose situation for everyone—for taxpayers, the courts, jails and prisons, law enforcement officers, and, of course, the inmates themselves. Wanting to address this concern holistically, Chief Justice Lewis established the position of special advisor on criminal justice and mental health to work directly under and to report to him. With the help of the person appointed to this position, he aims 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.”

The chief justice announced his appointment at a press conference in the supreme court rotunda on April 4. The appointee, Judge Steven Leifman, Miami-Dade County, is

co-chair of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit’s Mental Health Committee, which was instrumental in implementing Miami-Dade’s Jail Diversion Expansion Program. Judge Leifman is “an innovator, a leading expert and a tireless advocate on the local, state and national levels for mentally ill individuals who come into contact with the criminal justice system,” says Bob Sharpe, president of the Florida Council for Community Mental Health. “Now, he will have an even larger stage from which to advocate for our most vulnerable citizens.”

According to the administrative order announcing the creation of this special position, Judge Leifman will have an extensive stretch of responsibilities. Among them, he will identify and recommend evidence-based practices that will work to improve the response of the public mental health system and the criminal justice system to people with

mental illnesses and/or co-occurring substance use disorders who are involved in—or at risk of becoming involved in—the criminal justice system; help policymakers better understand the impact of mental health issues on the criminal justice system; recommend modifications that can be made to the judiciary that will yield long-term solutions to the predicaments associated with untreated mental illness; and work collaboratively with the secretaries of the state agencies that are also affected by the problems

resulting from untreated mental illness ([read order online](#)). In addition, Judge Leifman is charged with identifying and making recommendations about policy, legislation, and funding priorities that will support the chief justice’s overarching goal of addressing the impact of mental health issues on the justice system. Funded by a grant from The Florida Bar Foundation, this position is supported through June 30 of this year; thereafter, the chief hopes that the legislature will provide funding to continue this initiative.

At the press conference, as a visual metaphor of the need for “cross-systems collaboration” to make this initiative successful, Chief Justice Lewis and Judge Leifman were flanked by Lieutenant Governor Jeff Kottkamp, Secretary Bob Butterworth (Department of Children and Families), Secretary Walt McNeil (Department of Juvenile Justice), and Chief of Staff Richard Prudom (Department of Corrections). Secretary Butterworth, remarking on the



Judge Steven Leifman, Miami-Dade County, was recently appointed by Chief Justice Lewis to serve as special advisor on criminal justice and mental health.

photo by Phillip Pollock

united commitment of all three branches of government, praised this initiative, calling it “unprecedented in this state.” And the lieutenant governor, after thanking the chief for “showing great leadership on this issue,” declared, “The governor and I commend the chief justice and look forward to working with him and the legislature to solve this problem.”

THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NEEDS ASSESSMENT MEETING: DEVELOPING A LONG-RANGE PLAN

“You were invited to be here because you are recognized as leaders in the field of domestic violence. Here with us today are law enforcement officers, judges, batterers intervention program directors, people from the Domestic Violence Program Office of the Department of Children and Families, victim advocates, judicial staff, attorneys, and OSCA staff. Because of the work you do, you know firsthand that family cases are some of the most difficult types of cases to decide. And, because there’s no jury in family cases, judges make the decisions on their own that significantly affect the lives of children and families. Judges are reliant on so many stakeholders to make the best decision possible for these families. You’re here because you’re all part of that system of very difficult work.”

So began Rose Patterson, chief of OSCA’s Office of Court Improvement (OCI), in welcoming the 30 participants to the Domestic Violence Needs Assessment Meeting on February 23 at the supreme court. In fact, this meeting could be seen as historic because it is the first time since 2002, when OCI began to receive federal STOP grant funding, that the court system has embarked on a long-range planning initiative for domestic violence. Also, although some representatives from the criminal justice system have been involved with OCI in planning for family court improvements in the past, this was the first time that law enforcement officers, probation officers, and people from the attorney general’s office have participated in the process.

The overarching purpose of the meeting, Ms Patterson emphasized, was to review “where we’ve been and where we need to go with domestic

violence.” And there was sound reason for the timing of a meeting on this particular subject: the Department of Children and Families, which provides the grant money for many of the domestic violence projects that OCI undertakes, recently effected a change in its grant cycle—from 12 months to two-and-a-half years—a change that lets OCI extend considerably its strategic planning process. Thus the time was ripe for convening with representative stakeholders to begin developing a long-range plan.

To support OCI’s development of a strategic plan, participants were invited to identify and discuss, from their particular perspectives, the domestic violence-related issues in Florida’s courts and to help prioritize them. OCI had hoped there would also be enough time for participants to suggest court-based approaches to addressing some of these issues. However, the group discussion was so animated and involved—and the issues identified were so multifarious—that participants agreed it would be most useful to focus exclusively on issue identification at this meeting.

After a brief overview of the progress the courts have made regarding domestic violence and a summary of civil and criminal domestic violence case processes, participants needed little prompting to begin a vigorous discussion of domestic violence-related issues in the courts. According to OSCA’s Joanne Snair, who has been working on the domestic violence project for over four years, “Although it’s not possible to convey all aspects of the issues discussed, several salient points bear mentioning. First, though some issues appear to be widespread (such as the lack of prosecution of criminal DV cases), not all issues are problematic in all areas of the state. Several participants have developed effective local responses to some of the issues raised and have offered to share information and resources with others. Second, the most important time period for both criminal and civil DV cases is how they are handled in the beginning, particularly with regard to safety issues. Finally, the ‘no-contact’ orders issued in criminal cases, ideally at the first appearance hearing, are often problematic for several reasons,” Ms Snair added. According to some of the participants, the orders “may contain conditions that conflict with injunction orders in the same case and can be very difficult for law enforcement officers to enforce. Further, they are generally not entered into a database that allows



photo by BC Schwartz

Participants at the Domestic Violence Needs Assessment Meeting are working with OSCA’s Office of Court Improvement to develop a long-range plan; here, Judge Mary Catherine Green, Polk County, shares ideas with Corporal Pete Garcia, DV Civil Unit of the Lee County Sheriff’s Office.

law enforcement officers to immediately determine the existence of the no-contact order in the way that injunctions can be verified.”

Because time was running short, the group as a whole did not have an opportunity to prioritize the gamut of issues they identified as problematic, but each participant did complete an individual priority list identifying the top three issues that, in his/her opinion, need to be addressed. Among their most urgent concerns were the following: the decline in the prosecution of criminal cases needs to be addressed; a mechanism is needed to monitor and enforce compliance with regard to child support and participation in batterers intervention centers, substance abuse treatment, and mental health counseling; orders regarding the surrendering of firearms need to be clear, and compliance must be monitored; victims should be provided with help/education about how to navigate the court system; victims should be informed early in the process about their rights and about the resources available to them; and everyone in the criminal justice process who deals with domestic violence needs more education so that all stakeholders are on the same page and following the same statutes and conventions.

When the intense day's work was drawing to a close, participants verbalized their appreciation for this needs assessment initiative, with many articulating an interest in further participating in OCI's planning efforts regarding domestic violence. Joanne Snair was delighted with the fruitfulness of the meeting and with the energized engagement of the participants: “Their knowledge, commitment, and effort were vital to the success of this meeting and will prove essential as OCI moves forward to develop a statewide strategic plan for domestic violence,” she stressed, adding that, “Through a series of meetings over the next year, OCI staff and the members of OSCA's Strategic Planning Unit will work together to produce a comprehensive, thoughtful plan to address the most pressing DV issues in Florida's courts—a plan in which all key players will have had a voice and one in which they all will play a crucial role.”



DRUG COURT EFFORTS BUILD IN ANTICIPATION OF NATIONAL DRUG COURT MONTH

May is National Drug Court Month, so it's no surprise that all sorts of drug court-related undertakings in Florida have ramped up significantly in anticipation of the country-wide effort to increase awareness among drug court professionals, policy-makers, the media, and the public about this treatment program that's coupled with the criminal justice system.

Capping National Drug Court Month will be Florida's Eighth Annual Drug Court Graduation on May 29. The Sixth Judicial Circuit will host the opening graduation ceremony, which will be broadcast live, via teleconferencing, to participating drug courts around the state. The event, which will take place in Clearwater, will feature remarks by Justice Quince and William H. Janes, director of the Florida Office of Drug Control Policy, and will commemorate the 137 statewide drug court graduates.

Leading up to National Drug Court Month were several other noteworthy phenomena. On April 26-27, Florida's sixth statewide drug court training conference, “Florida Drug Courts—The Next Generation,” took place in Orlando, with the participation of 375 drug court stakeholders. 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 was designed to offer a meaningful educational program for core drug court team members, e.g., judges, drug court coordinators and case managers, law enforcement and probation officers, state attorneys, defense counsel, and treatment professionals. With sessions on topics like “Emerging Trends and New Drugs of Abuse,” “Substance Abuse and the Family,” “Turnover, Burn Out, Communication, Stress Busters,” “Ethical Dilemmas in Drug Court,” and “Screening and Assessment Approaches for Co-occurring Disorders and Treatment Options,” the conference clearly met its goal of directly enhancing and supporting the duties and responsibilities of drug court team members.

Some attendees embarked upon educational activities in Orlando before the conference officially started. Members of the Task Force on Treatment-based Drug Courts, for instance, met for several hours the day before the conference began. In its third meeting of its current term, the task force focused on the two, very specific charges it had begun to address at its February meeting: considering and making recommendations about the appropriate scope

of confidentiality in drug court cases, and addressing continuing education on substance abuse issues for drug court team members and other justice system personnel.

Also convening the day before the conference began were 36 of Florida's drug court coordinators, who, as a group, had last met exclusively in February 2005. In addition to benefiting from the chance to network and share best practices, they were treated to several valuable educational opportunities. For instance, from Robert Kirchner, a consultant from the National Drug Court Institute, they learned about how to do a drug court evaluation. From Jim Santangelo, who's on the board of the Florida Association of Drug Court Professionals, they were given extensive background about this association and were told about how this resource can help them in the daily demands of their job. And facilitated by OSCA's Rose Patterson, chief of the Office of Court Improvement, the coordinators participated in an engaging group exercise to create a statewide drug court mission statement; according to Aaron Gerson, the OSCA senior court analyst who coordinated this meeting, their articulation will be presented before the Task Force on Treatment-based Drug Courts, and, if approved, it will become Florida's official drug court mission statement.

Another significant drug court milestone was the recent publication of *Florida's Adult Drug Court Tool Kit: Recommended Practices*, an initiative of the Task Force on Treatment-based Drug Courts. This substantive collection of effective practices for use in adult drug courts represents the most useful lessons learned from Florida's 17 years of drug court experience, during which the state has witnessed the implementation of 106 drug courts, and drug courts have expanded from felony to misdemeanor, juvenile, and family divisions. The publication provides information about how to implement an adult drug court as well as how to improve adult drug courts that are already operational, and it contains a resource guide identifying Florida statutes, case law, and reference materials that can assist adult drug courts in the planning, implementation, and operational phases. Furnishing problem-solving techniques that can be adapted to most divisions of the court system that have to address substance abuse and addiction, this tool kit even offers tips for those courts that lack a formal drug court model. Among other topics, chapters cover Florida Drug Court Standards, Collaborative Planning and Teamwork, Target Population and Eligibility, Incentives and Sanctions, and Confidentiality and Ethics. Seven hundred copies were printed for distribution to all members of the adult drug court team, but, eventually, the plan is to make the tool kit available online as well.



One other recent drug court accomplishment needs to be mentioned as well. Thanks to a grant received from the Department of Juvenile Justice, OSCA has been working to expand the state's juvenile drug courts, channeling the funding into implementation, enhancement, and training. One event that this funding made possible was a five-day program called Designing Your Juvenile Drug Court, in which five circuits—the first, third, fifth, fifteenth, and twentieth—participated at the end of March (only the fifteenth is seeking to implement a juvenile drug court; the other circuits have juvenile drug courts but seek to enhance them). Coordinated by OSCA in collaboration with the

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, this program had a very extensive agenda, covering everything from “What is a Juvenile Drug Court” and “Behavior Management” to “Engaging Families” and “Service Delivery Through Community Collaboration.” For the program, each circuit was assigned its own facilitator, and for Phase Two of this training initiative, the facilitator will visit his/her assigned circuit to work on on-site implementation training. Ultimately, OSCA aims to establish an operational juvenile drug court program in every judicial circuit.

Fairness and Diversity

THE COURT ACCESSIBILITY SUBCOMMITTEE COORDINATES REGIONAL TRAINING SESSIONS

Undeniably, people with disabilities have the same right to make use of the services of their courts as do people without disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act was passed in 1990, and even though Florida's courts have since made significant progress in providing program accessibility to people with disabilities, the courts continue to be riddled with structural barriers that impede access.

During the passing of the gavel ceremony in July 2006, Chief Justice Lewis stressed that he would make architectural accessibility of court facilities one of his priorities. With that in mind, among the responsibilities with which he tasked the Standing Committee on Fairness and Diversity in his September 2006 administrative order, he emphasized that, “First and foremost,” the committee is 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 (ADA)” ([read order online](#)). Specifically, he charged

the committee with engineering the organization of surveys of all 138 court facilities across the state, the development of transition plans, the implementation of those plans, and the creation of a mechanism through which the courts can share their best disability access initiatives. To address this multi-year endeavor, he instructed the committee to establish immediately a Court Accessibility Subcommittee.

Chaired by Trial Court Administrator Nick Sudzina, Tenth Judicial Circuit, the subcommittee has already met three times, and it is currently focused on coordinating four regional training sessions that are designed to teach attendees how to survey their court facilities to determine the architectural accessibility for persons with disabilities. These day-long sessions, scheduled for the second half of May, will be held in Tallahassee, Orlando, Clearwater, and West Palm Beach—with an agenda that is sure to keep participants industriously employed. After introductory remarks by Mr. Sudzina and a welcome by Chief Justice Lewis, the session will be divided into two discrete parts: generally speaking, in the first part, participants will learn about what the law requires them to do in their courts and what the penalties can be if they don't follow the law; in the second part, through constructive, hands-on experience, they will learn how to survey their court facilities.

More specifically, in the first half of the session, attendees will hear a presentation on how the U.S. Department of Justice resolves claims involving inaccessible courthouses, and they will also learn about the laws, standards, and guidelines that apply to Florida court facilities to ensure that the facilities are architecturally accessible to elders and persons with disabilities. Then, in the afternoon, participants will get some highly useful, practical instruction to prepare them to survey their own court facilities: among other topics, they'll be introduced to the survey instrument they'll use to evaluate their courts; will discuss the sorts of scenarios they can expect to encounter during the process; will learn to recognize typical accessibility problems; will find out about the tools and resources available to help them with this demanding project; and will learn ADA survey techniques, measuring methods, tips, and even some cool "tricks" that will make the evaluations less arduous (e.g., toilet rooms are required to have a 60-inch turnaround space. Purchase a 60-inch round table cloth, and fully open it up in the toilet room; if it fits, the room has a 60-inch turnaround). And for the very last part of the session, under the guidance of a subcommittee member or staff person, small groups of participants will actually do a practice survey in an assigned

area of the courthouse (e.g., a toilet room, parking lot, or courtroom) and will learn how to fill out the survey form. After all this instruction, participants will be well-prepared to return to their home courts and begin to re-evaluate their facilities.

Invited to these regional training sessions are the members of each trial and appellate Court Accessibility Team; the chief judges recently appointed these teams to survey their facilities and oversee the initiative within their jurisdictions. For each appellate court, the team includes the chief judge or another judge (who serves as chair), the court marshal, the ADA coordinator, other court staff, maintenance staff

responsible for the court facility, an architect with ADA experience, and people with disabilities. For each trial court, the chief judge or another judge and a county commissioner co-chair the team, and team members may include the county administrator or manager, the court ADA coordinator, court program staff, the county ADA coordinator, the county facilities

manager, maintenance staff responsible for the facility, the clerk or clerk's ADA coordinator, the state attorney, the public defender, the sheriff, a member of the local bar, an architect with ADA experience, and people with disabilities. (The team components for the trial courts and the appellate courts are necessarily different: Florida's trial courts occupy county-owned facilities, so structural modifications require county initiative, approval, and funding—hence the presence of county officials on those teams; on the other hand, since the state owns the appellate courts, the judicial branch has more influence over architectural changes.)

As Chief Justice Lewis iterates, "The judiciary has a legal, professional, and ethical duty to ensure that the State Courts System is accessible to Floridians with disabilities." But, as he also points out, it will take the collaborative effort and the combined resources of the judicial branch, justice system partners, the executive and legislative branches on the state and local levels, and people with disabilities to make full accessibility of court facilities a reality. These regional training sessions are designed to take Florida's courts one significant step closer to making that happen.



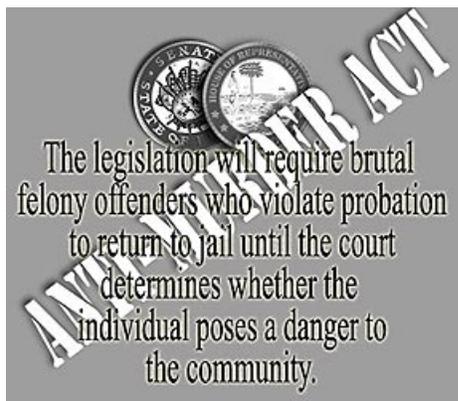
photo by BC Schwartz

Members of the Court Accessibility Subcommittee work to finalize details for the four regional training sessions that will provide instruction on how to survey court facilities in order to determine their architectural accessibility for people with disabilities.

Legislative Update

THE ANTI MURDER ACT: WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT MIGHT AFFECT THE COURTS

The Anti Murder Act, Governor Crist's highest crime-fighting priority, was passed unanimously by both the house and senate during the first week of this year's legislative session. Championed by Governor Crist for the past three years (beginning when he was still attorney general), the bill was signed into law on March 12, becoming effective immediately. The goal of this Act is to keep certain kinds of offenders off the streets—under scrutiny and in jail—until a judge can assess whether they should be sent to prison or released. It was conceived in the wake of the tragic, premature—and arguably preventable—deaths of Carlie Brucia, Jessica Lunsford, and Sarah Lunde.



In short, the Anti Murder Act requires that certain categories of offenders—those who are on probation or community control and who are identified as “violent felony offenders of special concern” (VFOSC)—be held without bail or pretrial release until their violation hearing. In the past, judges had the discretion to set bail for offenders before the violation hearing. Now, however, for a VFOSC, the **only** option before the violation hearing is jail.

Also according to the provisions of the Anti Murder Act, if the court finds that a VFOSC has indeed violated probation or community control, the court must then determine—and issue a written ruling about—whether the VFOSC poses a danger to the community. If the court determines that the VFOSC is a danger to the public, it must revoke probation or community control and sentence the VFOSC up to the statutory maximum or longer, if permitted by law.

Another feature of the Anti Murder Act is that it amends the Criminal Punishment Code, which provides sentencing guidelines for all but capital felonies. The Anti Murder Act stipulates that if a VFOSC commits a violation of probation or community control, his or her community sanction violation points will be increased by six or 12 points (depending on the kind of violation), thereby increasing the VFOSC's total sentence points. As a result of these additional points,

even the lowest permissible sentence will inevitably be lengthened.

The Department of Corrections determines whether an offender is a VFOSC. The determination depends upon an offender's commission of any one of approximately 90 “qualifying offenses” (which include kidnapping, false imprisonment, murder, sexual battery, lewd and lascivious conduct, carjacking, abuse of a child, robbery, home invasion, arson, burglary, aggravated stalking, treason, and others). If an offender commits one of these 90 offenses, he or she will be designated a VFOSC if he or she

is on felony probation or community control for a qualifying offense committed on or after 3/12/07;

is on felony probation or community control for **any offense** committed on or after 3/12/07 and has a prior qualifying offense;

is on felony probation or community control for **any offense** committed on or after 3/12/07 and violates it by committing a qualifying offense;

or is on felony probation or community control for **any offense that was committed at any time** if the offender has the previous designation of habitual violent felony offender, three time violent felony offender, or sexual predator and commits a qualifying offense on or after 3/12/07.

Through the Anti Murder Act, the state has placed special emphasis on violent offenders of special concern and has significantly strengthened the law regarding their release. The goal is to reduce, if not eliminate, the likelihood that previously convicted felony offenders—such as those who murdered Carlie Brucia, Jessica Lunsford, and Sarah Lunde—will have the opportunity to strike again. According to an editorial penned by bill sponsor Paula Dockery, R-Lakeland, “Counties that already expend funds on repeat offenders under the Department of Corrections' zero-tolerance policy will be aided by the Anti-Murder Act, which will identify those who are especially dangerous, and help communities keep them off the streets, and away from our children and loved ones.”

But an unintended consequence of the Anti Murder Act is that the jails and prisons might become seriously crowded with offenders who—although they do fall under the VFOSC designation—are not deemed dangers to the community and might not otherwise have been sentenced to prison. Consider the following scenario:

A 65-year-old woman was convicted when she was 18 for the offense of aggravated assault. She got into an argument in her high school cafeteria and threatened a fellow student with a fork. The court placed her on probation for one year,

which she successfully completed. She had no other convictions until she was 65, when, having lost her job, she forged her ex-husband's name on a loan application. The loan was for \$200. The court placed her on one year of probation for forgery and, as a condition of probation, ordered her to make restitution to the bank. On April 16, 2007, while still on probation, she missed an appointment with her probation officer, and the officer filed an affidavit for violation, and a warrant was issued. She sat in jail for two months until her violation hearing. At the hearing, she admitted the violation. The court held the required danger to the community hearing and found she was not a danger to the community. But, based on the two felony arrests and convictions and on her designation as a VFOSC, the court sentenced her to five years imprisonment.

Aside from overcrowding concerns, the Act also has the potential to create weighty challenges for the courts. According to Les Garringer, senior attorney with OSCA's Office of the General Counsel, "The Anti Murder Act is going to have a significant impact on the court system because of the requirement to hold a danger to the community hearing. The court has to make a finding that an offender is or is not a danger. Although the language of the Act attempts to shorten the length of such a hearing, there is nothing to prevent the defendant from introducing testimony and evidence in an attempt to convince the court that he or she is not a danger. The defendant is going to have the right to appeal the factual finding by the court, which opens up a whole new avenue of appeal not previously afforded these offenders." Anticipating a considerable increase in judicial workload, OSCA has already begun to calculate the impact on the courts as a result of the Anti Murder Act, and the supreme court will factor this information into its annual certification opinion, in which it requests that the legislature provide funding for additional judges.

Making a bill effective upon becoming law is unusual in bill-drafting practice—especially with criminal laws; typically, bills provide time for the act to become law, for publication in the Laws of Florida, and for affected and interested parties to learn about the law's provisions. Given its potential for glitches, the Anti Murder Act requires the Department of Corrections, along with OSCA and other affected entities, to prepare a report, due February 1, 2008, that addresses any legal, fiscal, or administrative impediments to full implementation of the act and that recommends legislative actions that should be taken to implement it.



THE JUDICIAL INQUIRY SYSTEM IS EXPANDED TO ACCOMMODATE THE ANTI MURDER ACT

For the Anti Murder Act to achieve its desired effect, the courts and criminal justice system obviously must have a mechanism in place for readily and immediately identifying whether an arrested person is on probation or community control, has committed a qualifying offense, and meets the criteria of a violent felony offender of special concern (VFOSC). The law spells out specific requirements that various justice system partners must fulfill in order to make these identifications. For instance, the Department of Corrections is required to develop a system that identifies a VFOSC in its database as well as to post a list of offenders in the FDLE's Criminal Justice Intranet; the county in which the arrested person is booked is required to make sure that state and national criminal history information and information in both the Florida and the Federal Crime Information Centers are provided to the courts at the offender's first appearance; and, at each critical stage of the process, the state attorney or statewide prosecutor is required to inform the courts about whether an alleged or convicted offender is a VFOSC or other designated offender.

The courts too have an obligation: the judicial branch is charged with creating and maintaining an automated system that can provide all this information to the court that has jurisdiction to conduct the hearings. The court system satisfied this legislative mandate with remarkable velocity: the Anti Murder Act was signed into law on March 12, 2007, and by March 19, an automated system that met legislative specifications was already in place.

How is that possible? The answer is that, since winter 2005, the judicial branch has had in place its fully operational Judicial Inquiry System (JIS)—the web-based system that, with a single query, enables judges, clerks, state prosecutors, defense attorneys, and other justice system partners to access records and information from an array of local, state, and federal agencies (from sources such as the Department of Corrections, FDLE, and the Florida and National Crime Information Centers). (For more information about the JIS, see article in the Winter 2006 edition of the *Full Court Press*, p. 17.)

As a consequence of the 2005 Jessica Lunsford Act (JLA), the JIS was expanded to include the JLA First Appearance Calendar, which automatically flags people who have been classified as high risk sex offenders by the Department of Corrections so that judges and justice system partners have immediate access to information they need to appropriately handle the recently-arrested. Literally, a flag appears next to an offender's name, instantly revealing his or her status: a red flag indicates that someone is a high risk sex offender; a yellow one designates a regular sex offender; and an orange flag denotes that the offender is on probation, has an injunction, or has a warrant. Since April 2006, the JLA First Appearance Calendar has been fully operational and available to judges, state attorneys, public defenders, case managers, and law enforcement officers.

In order to comply with the requirements of the Anti Murder Act, therefore, the JLA First Appearance Calendar's programming simply needed some modifications so that the system would flag the VFOSCs as well. In addition to the above flags, the Calendar now has a green one, which signifies the VFOSCs, the highest priority offenders.

According to OSCA's Christina Blakeslee, project manager of the JIS, Florida's is "the first system in the country that has this ability. No other state has a system that is as sophisticated as the one Florida has developed—a system that, right there, at first appearance, lets the judge know if someone's a VFOSC or a high risk sex offender."



Charlotte Jerrett, director of OSCA's Administrative Services, is responsible for managing/administering Florida's state court system's budgetary, fiscal, and procurement efforts.

photo by BC Schwartz

BUDGET WRAP-UP

Who among us who works for the state needs reminding that this was a rather lean budget year? Not only did legislators have considerably less general revenue with which to work than originally estimated, but they also had to comply with new restrictions on the use of non-recurring dollars for recurring purposes—the result of a constitutional amendment that Florida voters passed last November. As a result, every entity seeking legislative funding this year was affected—and (no surprise here) new funding issues faced special challenges.

In short, despite the concerted, robust efforts of Chief Justice Lewis, the two budget commissions, the judicial conferences, OSCA's Lisa Goodner and Brenda Johnson, and the countless others in the judicial branch who rallied to support it, the employee pay plan did not receive funding for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. (Note that the legislature did not fund the special pay issues that were promoted on behalf of any state employees this year.)

Despite the enormous disappointment everyone in the judicial branch no doubt feels, it's something of a comfort to keep in mind that a significant number of judges spent a substantial amount of time in Tallahassee these last four months to champion the employee pay plan issue—an issue that they promoted solely for the benefit of those who work for them (judicial salaries were not included in the pay plan package). As Lisa Goodner points out in her Message, one legislator emphasized the impressiveness of meeting with a group that was making such an inspired plea for a cause that would not personally benefit them.

Nor did legislators fund an across-the-board pay raise for state employees. Instead, they funded a \$1,000 bonus, effective November 1 (post-tax, the bonus will come to approximately \$700); this bonus will also go to all constitutional officers, so judges too will receive it.

In addition, although the supreme court certified the need for an additional 37 judges this year—two DCA, 22 circuit, and 13 county judges—the legislature did not approve funding for any new judges.

However, the court system did manage to fare quite well with other funding issues, according to Charlotte Jerrett,

OSCA's director of Administrative Services, who manages/administers the budgetary, fiscal, and procurement efforts branch-wide for the state court system. For instance, the supreme court, DCAs, trial courts, and OSCA received funding for a number of new FTEs (full time equivalents)—50 altogether—and hiring can begin as of the new fiscal year, on July 1. And the legislature also supported most of the DCAs' requests for non-recurring funds for maintaining and renovating aspects of their facilities; in addition, the First DCA received funding for a new building. Moreover, the Trial Court Budget Commission was successful in its requests for funding for various due process elements (expert witnesses, court reporting, and court interpreting). Finally, the supreme court received funding to correct a range of facility maintenance issues—most notably, the below ground water intrusion that, for years now, has caused significant damage every time it rains briskly.

Although court employees definitely did suffer a defeat at this year's session, it's important to remember that the branch has reiterated its commitment to fair and competitive pay and benefits for its employees—and this issue will continue to be a priority for the chief justice and the judicial branch.



photo by Phillip Pollock

Turning Points

AWARDS AND HONORS

Judge Steven J. Levin, Nineteenth Judicial Circuit, was recently honored with the Citizen of the Year award from the Treasure Coast Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

Jacinda (Jo) Haynes Suhr, senior court operations consultant with OSCA's Strategic Planning Unit, was awarded a scholarship from the State Justice Institute to attend the Court Executive Development Program, a three-week training program offered by the National Center for State Courts Institute for Court Management.

The following were honored at the annual OSCA Employee Recognition Ceremony:

Lavitta Stanford, Finance and Accounting, received the Award of Excellence;

The Annex Team (Steven Hall, Blan Teagle, Alan Neubauer, Rodger Reynolds, Jim Mondragon, Perrone Ford, Susannah Davis, Billy Martin, Jackie Settles, Jimmy Beasley, Charles Hash, and Josh Hough) received the Annual Teamwork Award;

Richard Cox, Office of the General Counsel, also received the Annual Teamwork Award;

Kimber Perkins, Information Systems Services; **Ramon Waters**, Dispute Resolution Center; **Eduardo Sanchez**, Finance and Accounting; and **Jimmy Beasley**, Information Systems Services, received the Employee of the Quarter Awards.

When judges and court personnel receive awards or honors for their professional contributions to the branch, please send the information to schwartzb@flcourts.org

July 2007

- 8-12 National Association of Court Management (NACM) Annual Conference, Chicago, IL
- 11-13 FL Conference of County Court Judges, Annual Business Program, Marco Island, FL
- 11-16 Judicial Assistants Association of FL (JAAF), Education Program/Summer Conference, Ft. Myers, FL
- 12-13 Supreme Court Committee on Standard Jury Instructions in Civil Cases, Palm Beach, FL
- 26-27 Supreme Court Committee on ADR Rules & Policy Meeting, Tampa, FL
- 27-8/2 Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) & Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA), Annual Meeting, Mackinac Island, MI

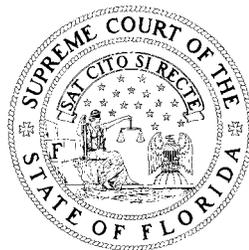
August 2007

- 1-3 Conference of Court Public Information Officers (CCPIO), Annual Meeting, Columbus, OH
- 4-10 National Conference of Appellate Law Clerks, Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA
- 7-14 American Bar Association (ABA), Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA
- 9-10 Court Interpreter Oral Language Exams, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
- 12-15 National Association of State Judicial Educators (NASJE) Conference, Portland, OR
- 23-25 Dispute Resolution Center Annual Conference for Mediators & Arbitrators, Orlando, FL

September 2007

- 9-12 FL Conference of DCA Judges, Annual Education Program, Naples, FL
- 9-12 Appellate Clerks & Marshals, Annual Education Program, Naples, FL
- 28 Supreme Court Committee on ADR Rules & Policy Meeting, Orlando, FL

ON
THE
HORIZON



Under the direction of
 Supreme Court Chief Justice R. Fred Lewis
 State Courts Administrator Elisabeth H. Goodner
 Deputy State Courts Administrator Blan L. Teagle
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