



FIFTEENTH CIRCUIT COURIER

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A NEWSLETTER PROVIDING COURT-RELATED INFORMATION

JUDGE ROBERT V. PARKER RETIRES



A RETIREMENT CELEBRATION was held at the end of December for Judge Robert V. Parker.

One of Palm Beach County's most senior judges, Judge Parker was first appointed by Gov. Rueben Askew in 1977. Subsequently, he was re-elected five times in his twenty-two years on the bench. Although he was one term shy of the mandatory retirement age, Judge Parker says he chose to retire now in order to "enjoy all that remains in life."

Judge Parker has lived in Florida since 1946. He graduated from Miami Senior High School, then received his bachelor's degree from the University of Florida in 1953. He served two years of active duty in the U.S. Army and continued to serve in the reserves until retiring as a Lt. Colonel in 1991.

In 1955, he returned to UF for law school. He practiced real estate and commercial litigation law, working in Orlando for a short time before he relocated to West Palm Beach. In West Palm, he worked two years with Phil O'Connell, Larry Cooper and Bill Williams, then with Richard Stierer from 1969-77.

As a county court judge, Judge Parker presided over civil and criminal matters, as well as serving as Administrative Judge twice. Although he served all his years on the county bench, he was nominated for circuit court appointment seven times before deciding that the county bench suited him just fine. And

certainly, there were times when it provided its own excitement.

For example, one of the rulings which Judge Parker might remember more proudly involved what could have seemed a simple misdemeanor case. However, the charge involved a local publishing conglomerate which had published the name of a crime victim in a sexual assault case alleged against a member of the Kennedy family, triggering an international media frenzy. The motion to dismiss which ended the case pitted the constitutionality of F.S. 794 against the State's desire to protect the rights of crime victims. Judge



Chief Judge
Walter
Colbath, Jr.
(right)
congratulates
Judge Parker

Parker's 21-page ruling in favor of the dismissal was so thorough that, when the State Attorney's office brought it up on appeal, the appeal was dropped after Attorney General Robert Butterworth filed a letter saying, "This office can find little to fault in the detailed factual findings of the court."

As Judge Parker leaves the bench behind, it is easy to guess how he will enjoy retirement. His hobbies were well-evidenced by the memorabilia decorating his chambers over the years, such as the railroad prints

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**FIFTEENTH
CIRCUIT COURIER**

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Judge Parker Retires

on his walls (and, at one time, a depot's old iron stove).

While cleaning out his chambers, he laughed that he never threw anything out: Mixed in with standard-issue law books, he found a book of Audubon bird prints, framed maps, a leather-bound collection of historical photographs of Palm Beach County, and a book of legal theory published in 1942 which was handed down to him by an unknown predecessor when he first took the bench.

Perhaps, though, the most memorable item of decor was the giant taxidermically-stuffed turkey which appeared one year after it had responded a little too eagerly to one of Judge Parker's renowned turkey gobble-calls. The Judge is an avid turkey and deer hunter, as well as an amateur photographer.

Beyond his hobbies, Judge Parker's family is important to him, and certainly his wife, Ruth, his two daughters, Ruth's three daughters and son, and their numerous grandchildren will be a large focus of his retirement plans. Ruth is from Tennessee, and the Parkers bought a vacation home there several years ago, where they often travel to be near her family and enjoy the Appalachian foothills.

**Debbie Bradley Joins
Court Administration**

Debbie Bradley, Judge Parker's former judicial assistant, will remain with the 15th Circuit after his retirement.

After years as a J.A., including active participation in continuing education programs and activities for local and statewide J.A. Associations, she has been hired by Court Administration. She will be active with the CIVIS/CJIS project under Mike Pinkney.

Judge Deborah Pucillo has announced that she will retire effective April 1. Look in the March-April issue of the 15th Circuit Courier for a profile on Judge Pucillo, as well as anticipated new judicial appointments.