

Circuit Courier




News Bulletin of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit



Palm Beach County

October/November, 2006
Volume 2, Issue 2



-  Legislative Delegation Visit Page 3
-  ABOTA Honors Judge Alvarez Page 4
-  Magistrate Kirigin Honored Page 5

Contents

News	3 - 9
• Legislative Delegation Visit	3
• ABOTA Jurist of the Year	
Judge Ronald Alvarez	4
• Magistrate Kirigin Honored	5
• Justice Teaching Institute	5
• Substance Abuse Coalition	5
• National Adoption Day	6
• Welcome New Magistrates	7
• Courts and the Media Workshop II	8
• Family Law Advisory Group	9
 Court Program News	 10 - 12
• Alternative Dispute Resolution	10
• Law Library	10
• County Court Case Management	11
• Probate	11
• Unified Family Court	11
• Domestic Violence	12
• Court Technology	12
 Training	 13
 Items of Interest	 13
 Staff Profile	 14
 Personnel	 15
 Upcoming Events	 15

Cover - Legislative Delegation Visit





Legislative Delegation Visit

Bright and early on the morning of October 16, 2006, judges hosted a contingent of State Legislators, Representatives and Aides at the Criminal Justice Complex. Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll opened the event titled "Down in the Judicial Trenches" with an overview of the agenda. The lawmakers then were escorted to the courtrooms to observe actual proceedings including Criminal First Appearance, Juvenile Detention hearings, Small Claims Pre-trial hearings and Domestic Violence Injunctions.

Following the courtroom observations was a question, answer and commentary session. Representatives heard presentations by Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll, Judge John Phillips, Judge Ronald Alvarez and Magistrate Leonard Hanser explaining funding and various legislative issues affecting the court and the citizens of Palm Beach County.

The visit concluded with the delegation having a clearer insight to the real challenges the court faces every day.



Todd Bonlarron & Rep. Priscilla Taylor



Chief Judge Kroll addressees delegation

Judge Jack Cook, State Representatives and staff participate in the discussions



Mike Edmondson, SA Office & Michael McAuliffe



Rep. Elect Kelly Skidmore & Beth Murphy from Rep. Machek's office



Judge John Phillips



Senator Dave Aronberg & Kristen Pesicik of his Office



Judge Cory Ciklin



Magistrate Leonard Hanser



Circuit Judge Ronald Alvarez

FLABOTA Jurist of the Year

The 9th Annual FLABOTA

(American Board of Trial Advocates) Convention held July 28-30 in Tampa, Florida was an outstanding success. About 130 people attended the Saturday evening Awards Banquet which featured the presentations of the Trial Lawyer of the Year which went to Tampa defense lawyer John L. Holcomb and Jurist of the Year which was presented to our own Circuit Judge Ronald Alvarez.

Judge Alvarez was assigned a case brought by the Department of Children and Families that moved to enjoin a thirteen year old from undergoing an abortion. Immediate attention was given to this matter by political, social and religious entities. After entering a temporary injunction and ordering the child to undergo a psychological evaluation, he reviewed the applicable law and ruled that pursuant to the Florida Constitution and decisional law, the child had the right to make the decision as to whether to undergo the procedure and that she was competent to make such a decision.

Within moments of his ruling being made public, the judge's office received a call from a man who said that he was a representative of the Catholic diocese inquiring as to the judge's religion. If the judge was a Catholic, the sacrament of communion would be denied him. As a life long Catholic, Judge Alvarez was disturbed by these remarks, but undeterred and steadfast in his conviction in the rule of law. He stated that it is wrong for any religion to try to intimidate a judge into putting his or her faith above the law. Punctuating his feelings, he said "This is not a religious state yet."



Judge Alvarez exemplified judicial excellence and independence, intellectual courage, and dignity in his handling of the case that came to be known as the "L.G. Matter".

Magistrate Diane Kirigin Honored

The South Palm Beach County Bar Association honored General Magistrate Diane M. Kirigin with a Lifetime Achievement Award for public service on June 10, 2006 during its Annual Installation Dinner Dance at the Ritz Carlton in Manalapan, Florida. General



Magistrate Diane M. Kirigin was also recognized for her outstanding service to the Family Law Section of The Florida Bar, during 2005 - 2006, specifically for her efforts as Legislative Chair of the Family Law Section, as well as for her co-authorship of Florida's new Parental Relocation Statute during the Section's Annual Meeting in Boca Raton, Florida on June 21, 2006.

Justice Teaching Institute

The Palm Beach County Justice Teaching Institute, coordinated by Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll and Judge Peter Blanc was conducted November 13-15, 2006. The program was developed based on a Florida Supreme Court initiative, training and outline, provides Justice information training to middle and high school teachers. Judge Blanc had conducted this program in 2000 and 2002, and currently is planning to provide this training on an annual basis.

The program began with a welcome and discussion of learning objectives presented by Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll. Judge Blanc presented an overview of the structure and function of the court. There were a multitude of distinguished speakers explaining their roles in the system, including United States District Court Judge Daniel TK Hurley, Judge Fred Hazouri, Forth District Court of Appeal, County Judge Peter Evans, Barry Krischer, State Attorney,

Carey Haughwout, Public Defender and Robert Bertisch, Director of the Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County. The teachers participated in a mock trial, role playing judges, jurors and attorneys and personally experienced the various roles within the legal system. The session concluded with Annette Boyd-Pitts from the Florida Law Related Education Association providing training on classroom applications.

Substance Abuse Coalition

On November 17, 2006, Judge Corey Ciklin hosted the Palm Beach County Substance Abuse Coalition Meeting at the Criminal Justice Complex. Judge Ciklin and coalition director Doris Carol created a unique agenda, having



Judge Ciklin

approximately 30 local providers explain in 2 minute "infomercials" the services provided by their agency.

The meeting was video recorded by Court Administration and will be converted to DVD format for reference. The DVD will have each agency title, presenter and contact information subtitled, and should be available for check out by the first of the year. For information regarding the DVD, please contact Robin Shepett at 355-6586.



National Adoption Day



This year's National Adoption Day ceremonies were held at the Palm Beach County Courthouse on November 18th. Approximately 29 children were adopted. Florida Supreme Court Justice Barbara Pariente participated along with Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll, Judge Peter Blanc, Judge Ronald Alvarez, Judge Roger Colton, Judge Moses Baker and Judge Nelson Bailey.

The Guardian ad Litem program, a group of community advocates and professional staff that provide powerful voices on behalf of Florida's abused and neglected children were also part of this life changing event.

After the adoption ceremonies, there was food and entertainment in the Judicial Dining room. This event would not have been possible without the help of sponsors, local businesses and the Palm Beach County Bar association, all of whom have made the day possible.





Welcome New Magistrates

Magistrate Maxine Williams

Magistrate Williams received a Bachelor's degree in English Literature from the University of Florida in May 1990 and a Juris Doctor also from the University of Florida in December 1993.

Admitted to the Florida Bar in April 1994 Magistrate Williams was employed by the Public Defender's Office in West Palm Beach, Florida from 1994 through July 2001. While at the Public Defender's Office, she was assigned to Juvenile, County Court and Appellate Divisions.

In July 2001, Magistrate Williams left the Public Defender's Office and joined the Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach's Juvenile Advocacy Project as a staff attorney, where she served until her appointment as Magistrate in October 2006.



Magistrate Tom Baker

Magistrate Baker received a Bachelors in Accounting degree from the University of Florida in 1981, and a Juris Doctor from the South Texas College of Law in 1985.

Admitted to the Florida Bar in 1985, then the Texas Bar in 1987, he was a solo practitioner in Jupiter for 19 years mainly family law, guardianships for minors until his appointment as a Magistrate in October of 2006.

Magistrate Baker is married with two children and has been a Soccer Coach, Baseball Coach and involved in the Cub Scouts.



The second session of the Courts and the Media Workshop was hosted by the *Palm Beach Post* at their facility on September 21, 2006. John Bartosek, Editor of the *Palm Beach Post* welcomed the participants. He presented the media's agenda which included Secret Dockets and Closed Hearings, Sidebars, Public Access to Court Records Maintained by the Court and Photo Access.

There were lively and informative discussions, including details of the Clerks criminal records system (BANNER) conversion provided by the Clerk and Comptroller Sharon Bock. There was also clarification of these issues, including the details and the court's explanation to the media of sidebar access discussed by several of the attending Judges, and clarification of photo access.

Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll presented the closing remarks. The next Court's and the Media Workshop is scheduled January 24, 2007 at 1:00P.M. and will be hosted by Channel 12 News.



John Bartosek, Editor of the Palm Beach Post welcomes participants



Court/Media Workshop



Judge Jack Cook, Judge Martin Colin and Susan Spencer of the Palm Beach Post



Judge Ronald Alvarez and media representatives



Family Law Advisory Group

On September 19, 2006 the Family Law Advisory Group met in order to establish goals and committees for 2006-07. Judge John L. Phillips hosted the event and Tom Sasser, Esq. served as the moderator. Judge Phillips asked the groups to report back to the court on a regular basis. Chief Judge Kroll advised the group to communicate freely regarding issues of concern. Seven committees were formed and several community stakeholders volunteered to chair these committees. Below is a listing of the 2006-07 FLAG subcommittees. Please contact the committee chair listed if you wish to participate.



Committee Name	Committee Chair	Contact Information
Pre-Filing Assistance	Jean Williams	jrwillia@co.palm-beach.fl.us
Interaction between the School Board and the Court	Tami Augen	tamiaugenlaw@cs.com
One Stop Family Services	Mary Quinlan	M Q u i n l a n @ c o . p a l m - beach.fl.us
Evaluating Divorce in Juvenile Proceedings	Elisha Roy	eroy@eroylaw.com
Expansion of Services in Supervised Visitation	Nicole Saunders	nsaunder@co.palm-beach.fl.us
Preventing Overlap of Court and Community Services	Michelle Spangenberg Mary Quinlan	m s p a n g e n @ c o . p a l m - beach.fl.us
Dependency Summit	Pamela Wynn	pamelaswynn@bellsouth.net

Alternative Dispute Resolution

The ADR Office is presently preparing its upcoming training season for the small claims volunteer mediators. They traditionally offer five two-hour trainings each year so that the distinguished team of volunteers can maintain their certification as county court mediators.

This year their first training, November 17, 2006, was presented by Judge Sandra Bosso-Pardo. Judge Basso-Pardo addressed several topics of particular interest to pre-trial small claims mediation, such as Landlord-Tenant Law, mediating Credit Card cases and other engaging issues. The next training will be on Mediation Ethics, presented by

Sharon Press, the Director of the Dispute Resolution Center in Tallahassee. This will take place on December 15, 2006.

The third training, on January 19, 2007, will be with Judge Peter Evans and Judge Janis Keyser, who will team up to present a topic or topics of their choice. This should be entertaining as well as informative. Two final trainings are being developed and are scheduled for February 9, and March 9, 2007. For further information, please contact the ADR Office at 355-2739.



Court Program News

Law Library

Sara Jones and Linda Sims attended the annual meeting of the Florida State Court and County Law Libraries, (FSCCLL), in Tallahassee, October 12-14. The focus of the agenda was, "Is Everything Really Online? Paper v. Electronic."

Justice Pariente greeted the members in the Florida Supreme Court courtroom, and spoke on the importance of having trained and educated librarian assistance when doing legal research, whether it be in the books or online.

Tours of the capital included, the Florida State Archives and Legislative Library, the Supreme Court and the Knott House.

Roundtable discussions were held by the attending Law Librarians from throughout the State of Florida, and the general consensus was, that legal research requires a combination of sources, both print and electronic.

Hours of operation:

Monday-Wednesday ----- 8:00am-6:00pm

Thursday-Friday ----- 8:00am-5:00pm

Saturday ----- 10:00am-2:00pm

Please visit our website at

<http://www.pbcgov.com/cadminlawlibrary/>



County Court Case Management

Recently the Administrative Office of the Court identified the need to expand case management services to the County Court Civil Division. Currently, County Court is experiencing well over 3,000 filings per month. Case Management will be focusing on expediting the resolution of County Court filings to ensure cases are in compliance with Supreme Court Time Standards for case disposition. Additionally, we will be identifying cases in a pending (PE) status with no record activity for 10 months or longer, therefore cases will be disposed of in a timely fashion. Please contact Michelle Spangenberg at 355-4657 for further information.

Probate

On August 23, 2006 the Probate/Guardianship Practice Committee met and identified the need to review procedures and forms relating to Guardianship filings. Several attendees volunteered to participate on a committee to streamline the process. This subcommittee met on October 25, 2006 at noon. Parties interested in participating in this committee should contact Michelle Spangenberg at 561-355-4657.



Family Court Support

Unified Family Court

The UFC Social Service Coordinator, Mary Hurm-Quinlan, LCSW presented the Assessment Phase Report to the Community Alliance of Palm Beach County's UFC Social Service Workgroup in August. The UFC consultant, Dorothy Schwab, Ph.D., presented mapping diagrams created from the various workgroups held during the assessment phase. These presentations were also made to the UFC Judges. The Unified Family Court Social Service component has moved into the Protocol Development phase, which is expected to be completed by the end of November.



The Community Alliance of Palm Beach County UFC Social Service Workgroup held a workshop on October 12, 2006 where members of UFC families, the Judiciary, Attorneys, DCF and DJJ staff, testified in panels as to their vision and hopes for the Social Service Component. On October 16, 2006, the State Attorney's Office and Children Service's Council then partnered to bring in the Family Court Advocate from Deschutes County, Oregon to give a presentation of their UFC Social Service model that has been in effect for over 10 years. Two additional meetings have been scheduled to formulate the design of the model for the 15th Circuit with the goal of moving into the Implementation Phase in late November, early December, 2006. For further information, please contact Mary Quinlan at 355-1925.

Domestic Violence

October was Domestic Violence Awareness month. Nicole Saunders, the Domestic Violence Coordinator and UFC Operations Manager held a brown bag weekly training series for court staff, the Clerk and Comptroller's Office and Victim Services. The sessions were well attended and were held each Tuesday from 12:00-1:00. The first training "DV 101 and Available Resources" was conducted by Mary Hurm-Quinlan, Social Service Coordinator and Sandy Reynolds, Program Coordinator from Victim Services. Staff from the local shelters, operated by AVDA and YWCA Harmony House were present to discuss the services they provide to victims of Domestic Violence and their families.

The second training in the series was "The Effects of DV on Children" conducted by Dr. Denny Cecil-Van Den Heuvel, PhD, NCC, LMHC from South University. The third in the series was a presentation by Laurie Pine Farber of Public Safety regarding the Family Violence Intervention Program.

The last training of the series featured local providers of Anger Management and Batterer's Intervention programs who presented a session entitled "B.I.P. vs. Anger Management: Demystifying the Difference." For further information, please contact Nicole Saunders at 355-1764.

Court Technology



Staff Addition To Court Technology

Court Technology welcomed a new staff member in October. Jackson Winn II filled the systems administrator I vacancy in the court technology projects division. Jackson "Jack", an honorably discharged veteran from the United States Air Force was most recently a Systems Analyst for Palms West Hospital. Jack will be

working on project development with Noel Chessman under the supervision of Court Technology Officer Les Davis.

New Computers

Court Technology recently completed the software configuration/testing for the Windows XP operating system and will begin a "desktop refresh" of each PC in the 5 courthouses in November. All users will be provided with a small form computer and a 19 inch flat panel monitor. Prior to the swap, Court Technology will meet with each user to ensure all local data (i.e. internet favorites) is captured and transferred to the new computer. For more information please contact the Court Technology office's Les Davis 355-6245, Glenn Reed 355-4359 or Noel Chessman 355-4406.

Are You a Tekkie? Take the Quiz

The Court Technology Committee recently directed the technology department to survey judicial officers to determine their comfort level and proficiency with current technologies. Court Technology will be distributing a short questionnaire to judges/magistrates to help determine what technologies not currently in use might be of interest to them. The survey will also include a "most like" and "most dislike" area for judges to speak out about services currently offered. For more information please contact the Court Technology office's Les Davis 355-6245, Glenn Reed 355-4359 or Noel Chessman, 355-4406.



Training Update

On September 14, 2006, General Magistrate Diane M. Kirigin conducted a training session on 2006 Legislative Updates. The training was attended by members of the Judiciary, UFC Case Managers, Court Staff and staff from the Clerk and Comptroller's Office. The following House and Senate Bills' were discussed, Adoption Glitch Bill (House Bill 7151), Child Protective Services Bill (Senate Bill 1080), Domestic Violence Center Trespass (House Bill 761), Interference With Custody (House Bill 7111), Parental Relocation

(Senate Bill 2184), Paternity Disestablishment (House Bill 7151), Person with Disabilities (Senate Bill 1503), Psychotherapist-Patient Privilege (Senate Bill 1400), Substance Abuse Treatment (House Bill 175) and Temporary Child Custody (Senate Bill 118).

October was Domestic Violence Awareness month. The Administrative Office of the Court had planned a weekly brown bag training series on each Tuesday of October.

The training schedule for 2007 is currently being developed. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Nicole Saunders at 561-355-1764.

General Updates



The following Administrative Orders were amended:

September:

6.001-9/06 - Probate and Guardianship Division

2.011-9/06 - Court Reporting Services

October:

2.032 - 10/06 - Sealing Court Hearings and Records

4.013 -10/06 - Schedule of Bonds and Procedures Relating to Pre-First Appearances

10.001 - 10/06 - County Court Procedures and Bond Schedule

In the event a pandemic does occur, the Florida Supreme Court plans on maintaining court functions and would like staff to be informed of the nature of this illness.

Alfred Grasso, Public Health Preparedness Division and Dr. Alina Alonso, Assistant Director of the Palm beach County Health department explained pertinent facts and issues related to this pandemic in a thirty minute presentation. The presentation was scheduled in five sessions in order to meet the needs of Judges and other related employees.

Bird Flu Pandemic Presenta-

On Friday, October 13, 2006, representatives from the Palm Beach County Health Department presented to court and related courthouse employees an overview on the Bird Flu pandemic.

For those who could not attend the presentation, it will be available in it's entirety to view by DVD or on the Court's website in the future. Information on the release of the presentation will be posted.

ELVIRA DORSEY

Ruth Elvira Dorsey (known to many as “Ms. Elvira”) is a native of West Palm Beach, Fl. She graduated from Roosevelt High School and attended Clark College , Atlanta, Ga. and Virginia Union University, Va. She’s the mother of two lovely daughters, Denise Carter of Melbourne, Fl, and Lisa Dorsey of West Palm Beach.

In 1976 Ms. Dorsey was hired by the Clerk of Courts, John B. Dunkle as a File Clerk in County-Civil Division. In 1986 she became Judicial Assistant to the Honorable Judge I.C. Smith. Upon Judge Smith’s retirement in 1993, Ms. Dorsey went back to work in the County Clerk’s Office as a File Room Clerk Supervisor. In 1997 Ms. Dorsey left the Clerk’s Office and returned to the Court accepting a position in the Mediation Department. In 1999 she moved to her present position in Court Administration.



Staff Profile

Ms. Dorsey has expressed how grateful she is to have worked in so many different areas of the court system, “it is a really great feeling when a client comes into your office and you can actually help him/her.”

Ms. Dorsey said that she’s often asked when is she going to retire. Her answer is, “I enjoy working. I like people and I can’t imagine being bored at home or trying to find something to do each day. I don’t watch a lot of TV. It gets boring to me, so the routine of going to work and smiling and greeting co-workers is okay with me.” In September, 2006, a Family Connection Certificate of Appreciate was awarded to Ms. Dorsey for Outstanding Performance and Lasting Contribution to the well being of Children and Families in Palm Beach County by Chief Judge Kathleen J. Kroll and the Family Connection Director, Mary Quinlan.



Ms. Ruth “Elvira” Dorsey

"Retirement brings the time and freedom to follow your heart and pursue new interests. May it be a season of contentment and happiness for you."

Author unknown.



Personnel

Farewell To:

William Bollinger, County Court Judge -12/2006
Roger Colton, Circuit Court Judge-12/2006
Gary Vonhof, Circuit Court Judge -12/2006
Arthur Wroble, Circuit Court Judge-12/2006
Valerie Cahill-Pulchtopek, Court Program Specialist -11/2006
Jean Madden, Judicial Assistant -11/2006

Welcome Aboard

Lori Noel, Administrative Assistant 11/2006
Maria Stevens, Administrative Assistant-12/2006
Eider Orozco, County Judicial Assistant -1/2007
Shaib Rios, Trial Court Law Clerk-12/2006
Shavarne Dahlquist, Trial Court Law Clerk 11/2006



Upcoming Events

Meetings

County Judges Conference - January 3 - 5

Florida Judicial College - January 7-12

Phase I



This Is Your Newsletter

This is your Newsletter. We need everyone's help with submissions and articles of interest to the court. Please send your news, photos or upcoming events via Groupwise to Robin Shepett. Or even easier, just copy Robin on any news you are sharing with your colleagues.

With your input, we will look forward to developing an interesting and informative Newsletter.

Published by the Fifteenth

Judicial Circuit

Kathleen J. Kroll,

Chief Judge

Susan D. Ferrante,

Court Administrator

Fifteenth Judicial Circuit

205 North Dixie Highway

West Palm Beach, Florida

33401

561/355-2431

