

Circuit Courier

January-March 2008

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NEWS BULLETIN OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA



In this issue:

**Commissioners visit
Judge Cunningham
honored**

**Renovated Historic
Courthouse Ribbon-Cutting**

And more...

JANUARY-MARCH 2008

On the Cover...

Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll at a court/media workshop.



Judge Bailey

The Spirit of the Courthouse in Our Community

"It is our temple of Justice. It is the repository of our titles, the fortress of our personal and property rights, the fountainhead of our school system, the registry of our births, marriages, and deaths, and its inmates stand guard by day and night over the peace and good order of our communities."

-Judge J.E. Prewett

(A quote included in a presentation during the workshop with County Commissioners-see pages 3&4)

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See pictures of the Ribbon Cutting for
the Restored Historic Courthouse
(pages 16-17)



Judge Charles Burton works among boxes and equipment labeled for a new destination, as he waits for movers on judicial rotation day. Judge Burton had been presiding in the family division in the South County Courthouse, and rotated to the Central Courthouse to take over a Criminal Division, effective February 19th.
(see note on South County move page 18)

“The Court’s Partnership with the County”: Circuit Hosts Palm Beach County Commission

On February 6th, the Fifteenth Circuit invited the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners and other county representatives to the Central Courthouse for what proved to be an invaluable half-day workshop, titled *The Court’s Partnership with the County*.

County representatives in attendance included: **County Commission Chair Addie Green, Commissioners Robert Kanjian, Mary McCarty and Jess Santamaria, and Sandy William (Secretary), Susie Bowman (Aide) and Kim Ciklin (Senior Administrative Assistant) for Commissioner Jeff Koons; County Administrator Bob Weisman, Assistant County Administrator Vince Bonvento, County Attorney Denise Neuman, and Justice Services Director Nicole Saunders.**

The County’s visit began with welcoming remarks from **Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll** in the Judicial Dining Room. Participants then proceeded to an opportunity to observe court proceedings, including: **Judge Sheree Cunningham** presiding over Domestic Violence/Repeat Violence Injunction Hearings, **Judge Cory Ciklin** presiding over County Criminal First Appearances, and **Judge Ronald Alvarez** presiding over Juvenile Detention Hearings.

Participants then regrouped for an hour before lunch, for a valuable discussion regarding “The Court’s Partnership with the County – Addressing the Needs of the Citizens.” Three main areas of partnership were presented: court facilities, collaboration on problems affecting citizens and court technology.



Commissioner Mary McCarty, Commission Chair Addie Green and Commissioner Robert Kanjian.



Judge John Phillips addresses the Commissioners.



Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll (above) and Judge Cory Ciklin (below).



Court Facilities

Physical courthouse facilities are funded by Palm Beach County, and the Circuit recognized the high quality facilities provided, with the statement, “We thank you for providing the citizens of Palm Beach County with court facilities that are not only beautiful, but safe, secure and functional.”

With evolving demands on the courts, areas needing imminent improvement were identified as including: expansion of the jury room, enhancing jury capability downtown, improved mailroom security and traffic court needs. Photos were also shown of citizens lined up, waiting to get through security to access the Central Courthouse, with the line wrapping around the building, depicting an issue with courthouse accessibility which was already under discussion between the Circuit, and county staff Audrey Wolf and Bob Weisman.

Collaboration to Meet Citizen Needs

Meeting citizen needs is an area where court programs and services receive funding from both the County and the State. At a time when state budgets are under pressure, it was emphasized that current and forecast budget

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“The Court’s Partnership with the County”: Circuit Hosts Palm Beach County Commission

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reductions from the state limit the Circuit to provide only the “bare basics,” which does not meet the expectations of Palm Beach County citizens. The presentation highlighted programs currently funded by the County for citizens involved in the criminal justice system (including Domestic Violence Case Managers, Drug Court, Juvenile Alternative Sanctions, Mental Health Case Manager, Pre-Trial Services, Elder Justice and Court Psychology), emphasizing the range of citizens benefiting, who might otherwise be at risk (including dependent families, abused children, victims of domestic violence, the elderly, the mentally ill and citizens battling substance abuse). As the Courts and County continue in partnership to address citizen needs, the workshop recognized their common goals of “service to the community, accountability to tax payers and collaboration for effective programs.”

Court Technology

Court Technology is imperative to the Circuit’s obligation to provide equality of services to all Palm Beach County citizens. This is another area of common ground, as the Courts are reliant on the County’s Information Services System (“ISS”) for network services. It was identified that the Court’s Technology staff “provides immediate in-person response in the support of the judicial process” and “provides courtroom support for all agencies that utilize the court.” Court Technology also develops in-house projects to improve efficiency in the court (recent examples including the conflict attorney wheel, automated assessment of costs, Unified Family Court crossover data base and remote appearance for attorneys).

Current needs identified for the Court’s technology department were: court systems support (2), a programmer and a systems administrator I.

The program concluded with a lunch with the judiciary and closing remarks by Chief Judge Kroll.

Attendees and participants on behalf of the 15th Circuit included: **Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll, Trial Court Administrator Barbara Dawicke, Court Operations Consultant Debra Oats-Ducram, General Counsel Amy Borman, Court Technology Officer Les Davis, Law Library Manager Linda Sims and Court Education Consultant John McGovern.** Judges and Magistrates participating included: **Judges Ronald Alvarez, Thomas Barkdull, William Berger, Peter Blanc, Lucy Chernow Brown, Cory Ciklin, Jack Cook, Sheree Cunningham, David French, Jonathan Gerber, Diana Lewis, Karen Martin, Timothy McCarthy, John Phillips, Robin Rosenberg, Kenneth Stern, Richard Wennet and Jeffrey Winikoff; and Magistrates Linda Goodwin, Joy Shearer and Larry Weaver.**

The common ground shared by the Courts and County made this a genuinely successful forum. County representatives were interested in furthering the discussion, for the Board to learn more about what the courts do, so an additional workshop was held on April 22nd.

For information, you may contact Court Operations Consultant Debra Oats-Ducram at (561) 355-4495.



Judge Cory Ciklin (above) addresses the participants.



JUDGE PHILLIPS PILOTS WEB-EX: FIRST REMOTE VIDEO HEARING HELD AT SOUTH COUNTY COURTHOUSE

February 13, 2008, was a miserable, blustery, rainy day at the South County Courthouse in Delray Beach. Soaked litigants and their attorneys clamored to get in the door, through security and hustle to hearings.

In the midst of the mess, **attorney Jay Kauffman** made a bit of Palm Beach County legal history, when he fired up a laptop computer at his office in Boca Raton and participated in the County's first pre-scheduled computer-video hearing with Probate and Guardianship **Judge John Phillips**, working from his courtroom in Delray Beach.

Both participants appeared on their computer screens simultaneously as an *ex parte* petition was presented for consideration, argued and approved. Attorney Kauffman emailed a proposed Order to Judge Phillips, which the parties could watch him review and modify on their computer screens. Judge Phillips then printed and signed an original of the Order at his desk, for inclusion in the court's paper file, while conformed copies were instantly emailed to the parties. The hearing was concluded in less than 10 minutes.

Judge Phillips said, "Attorneys often come to the Courthouse for routine non-evidentiary hearings, spending time on the road, parking, getting through courthouse security and waiting behind other attorneys for their hearing. It seemed we could accomplish many fairly routine matters with computer technology, saving a lot of aggravation, fees and courthouse trips. **Judge Peter Evans** (my technology guru) and I envisioned a hearing system using cheap, easily available technology most attorneys already have: a laptop computer with accessory camera and a cell phone."

Court technology staff, **Noel Chessman**, **Mary McLean** and **Matt Dreiss** assisted with the technical end of the project.

Attorney Kauffman is more than mildly enthused: "It used to take me over an hour to appear at even the briefest hearing, most of that being travel time. Judge Phillips and his staff have worked diligently to create a streamlined procedure for computer-based videoconference hearings that will benefit my practice and my clients' bottom line.



Judge John Phillips and his judicial assistant Harriet Merlin.

I am not a computer expert by any means, yet the system took me very little time to learn and is easy to use... I am sure that many judges, lawyers and clients will find these procedures valuable."

Judge Phillips said, "I'm hopeful this technique will open a lot of opportunities for attorneys to improve the quality of their practice and their lives, with less cost, less stress and more productive use of time. The Court system should see lower traffic volume at the Courthouse, more productivity, and lower costs per case, which has become of utmost importance in light of funding decreases."

"Judge Phillips and his staff have worked diligently to create a streamlined procedure"

Jay Kauffman

The South County Probate and Guardianship Bar volunteered to pioneer the concept. Since early 2008, about 20 attorneys have attended training in use of the technique. Judge Phillips stated, "We will work out any 'bugs' at South County, then try it in the other Probate and Guardianship divisions, and hopefully develop a worthwhile tool that can be used by many divisions of the Court throughout our Circuit."

Probate and Guardianship attorneys interested in participating in this South County pilot project can contact Judge Phillips' Judicial Assistant, Harriet S. Merlin at 561-330-1750, for more information regarding training sessions and hearing dates.

Judge Cunningham Honored as: “One of the Most Influential & Prominent Black Women of 2007”

The Fifteenth Circuit’s **Judge Sheree Davis Cunningham** was recognized at an awards presentation in January 2008 as having been nominated and selected as *One of South Florida's 25 Most Influential and Prominent Black Women of 2007*.

Judge Cunningham was born in Trenton, New Jersey. She received her undergraduate degree in Psychology from Rutgers University, where she was the recipient of the Paul Robeson Award for Academic Excellence and a member of the Chi Psi Psychology Honor Society. She then earned her juris doctorate degree from Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C., where she served as Deputy Articles Editor for the *Howard Law Journal*.

After graduation from law school, Cunningham served as a law clerk for the Honorable Paul H. Roney, Former Chief Judge of the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals. She then served as a prosecutor in Hillsborough County before relocating to Palm Beach County, where she served as Felony Division Chief Attorney in the State Attorney’s Office.

Judge Cunningham joined the 15th Judicial Circuit when she was appointed to the bench as a County Court Judge by Governor Lawton Chiles in November, 1993, marking the first time in Palm Beach County history that an African American woman served as a jurist.

Judge Cunningham has previously been recognized as a recipient of the Thurgood Marshall Awards for Judicial Commitment (July 2005). She serves on the Executive Committee of the National Bar Association’s Judicial Council; Co-Chair of the Awards and Merit Committee of the Florida Conference of County Court Judges; and is a member of the F. Malcolm Cunningham, Sr., Bar Association and Virgil Hawkins Florida Chapter of the NBA. She describes herself as the “proud mother” of three children (two daughters and a son), and is active in the community, including membership in the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Past-President of the West Palm Beach Chapter of the Links, Inc., and serving on the Board of Trustees and member of the Education Committee for the Norton Museum of Art.

In her nearly-15 years on the bench, she has presided over county criminal and county civil divisions, and currently presides over the County Criminal Trial Division at the Central Courthouse and is a volunteer judge for the Civil Drug Court.

Judge Cunningham and her judicial assistant, Carla Glover, can be reached at (561) 355-2330.



JUDGE ROSENBERG HOSTS 3RD GRADERS FOR MOCK TRIAL



Judge Robin Rosenberg was approached by the mother of a third grader at Timber Trace Elementary, about a teacher who is one of those educators who thinks outside the box. The teacher's students had been studying the three branches of government and, between the teacher and the parent, (who was also a lawyer) had come up with materials for the students to enact a mock trial and so they asked Judge Rosenberg to preside.

Between the teacher and the parent of one of the students, they collected materials and a script for the students to re-enact *United States vs. John Wilkes Booth*, the murder trial of Abraham Lincoln. Two students were assigned as prosecutors, two as defense attorneys, six as witnesses, six as jurors and one as a bailiff.

Judge Rosenberg, the mother of three children, one of whom is in third grade, said it was an "appropriate age to do this," as the students have been busy studying the three branches of government and, "It was quite an extraordinary experience."

The students were well prepared. Their teacher and the lawyer-parent assisting in the project assembled a package of scripts for each of the students, and worked with them for three days before the trial. Judge Rosenberg said it was impressive how well-prepared the students were. They dressed professionally (some in suits) and they knew their roles. Witnesses, for example, had to have learned the background of their character to be ready for questioning on the witness stand. Beyond this, she found it remarkable "how insightful they were about the process." They understood the difference, for example, between direct questioning and cross examination, or asking a leading question.

"It was quite an extraordinary experience."

Judge Rosenberg



After the trial, students posed for pictures with the judge and had Judge Rosenberg autograph the booklets on the Constitution that they had been given. She says, later, "I got letters from all of them... From reading the letters, it really hit home what an extraordinary, memorable experience this was for them."

"It was such a good experience," she says, that she didn't hesitate to ask the attorney who coordinated the mock trial if she could borrow the materials to replicate the event for her daughter's school as well — so she presided over a second mock trial on May 27th.

MEET THE JUDGES

Concluding our series: In this issue, we feature the 15th Circuit's Judges who were first elected or appointed from 2000-2005...



Judge Charles E. Burton

County Court: May 2000-2005
Circuit Court: November 2005-present
Current Division: Circuit Criminal



Judge Debra Moses Stephens

County Court: June 2000-present
Current Division: County Civil



Judge Paul Damico

County Court: November 2001-present
Current Division: County Civil



Judge David F. Crow

Circuit Court: February 2002-present
Current Division: UFC Family



Judge Jonathon A. Gerber

County Court: May 2002-2004
Circuit Court: September 2004-present
Current Division: Circuit Civil



Judge Laura S. Johnson

County Court: January 2003-Present
Current Division: County Criminal

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MEET THE JUDGES

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Judge Diana Lewis

Circuit Court: January 2003-Present
Current Division: Circuit Civil



Judge Karen M. Miller

Circuit Court: January 2003-Present
Current Division: Circuit Criminal



Judge Jeffrey A. Winikoff

Circuit Court: January 2003-Present
Current Division: Circuit Civil

Not pictured



Judge Joseph Marx

County Court: August 2003-Present
Current Division: County Criminal

Judge William J. Berger

Circuit Court: 2003-present
Current Division: Circuit Criminal

Judge Martin Colin

Circuit Court: January 2005-Present
Current Division: Family

Judge Mark Eissey

County Court: January 2005-Present
Current Division: County Criminal

Judge Sandra Bosso-Pardo

County Court: January 2005-Present
Current Division: County Criminal

Judge Amy Smith

Circuit Court: January 2005-Present
Current Division: Family

PALM BEACH COUNTY COMMISSION PROVIDES TEMPORARY TRAFFIC HEARING PROGRAM FUNDING

The Fifteenth Circuit's Civil Traffic Infraction Officer Program faced extinction on March 14th due to the state budget deficit. However, upon a request from **Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll**, the Palm Beach County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously on March 11, 2008 to provide emergency funding for the Program through June 30, 2008, thereby allowing the program to continue through the State's fiscal year.

The Civil Traffic Hearing Officer program first began in the Fifteenth Circuit in 1991 with the mandate to handle those traffic infraction cases that do not involve accidents with injuries and cases not connected with a traffic crime. There are currently 27 Traffic Hearing Officers in Palm Beach County who preside over 18 sessions of traffic court each week, at the Central Courthouse, North County, South County and West County Courthouses, as well as from two remote locations via video.

Individuals who receive traffic citations have the option of paying the fine, attending traffic school, or pleading not guilty. When a plea of not guilty is entered, the Defendant is first scheduled to attend a pretrial hearing in front of a Civil Traffic Hearing Officer.

Law enforcement officers and other civilian witnesses are not required to attend the pretrial hearing. Because the vast majority of traffic cases result in the entry of a plea of no contest at the pretrial stage, the police officers who issue the tickets are able to remain on the job providing services to the public instead of being tied up in court at great expense to the law enforcement community. Those cases that do not result in a no contest plea at the pretrial stage are set for trial before one of the Traffic Hearing Officers.

From the approximate 3,000 cases heard by the Traffic Hearing Officers each week, over \$2,000,000 in court costs was paid to the County this past fiscal year.

With each judge in our circuit already working with extraordinarily large caseloads, the loss of this program would have had an enormous effect on the judiciary as well as the public. The Fifteenth Circuit appreciates the County's partnership with the Court which has allowed the Program to continue. The Program's benefits, i.e., an effective, convenient, and expedient process for handling civil traffic infractions are felt by the citizens and law enforcement officers in Palm Beach County.

BRIEFLY SPEAKING...

Judge Phillips Teaches FinPlan Training

FinPlan Training On March 31, 2008, **Judge John L. Phillips** visited the Central Courthouse to present a training on FinPlan. The training was recorded by Court Technology in order for individuals who were not able to attend to view the training at their leisure.

You may contact Unified Family Court at ext. 6244 if you are looking to borrow the CD and review the training.

Kirigin to Teach "Structure of the Court" for Staff

Magistrate Diane Kirigin will teach a special training session for interested court staff, titled "The Structure of the Court System – The Big Picture," on June 27th. This training is intended to serve the purpose of giving employees an overview of the court as a system.

Our Judges Presiding Over Mock Trials

Winter-Spring has been mock trial season, and several of our judges have supported local, state and even national education by presiding over mock trials at the Central Courthouse. Winter and Spring seemed to be mock trial season at the Central Courthouse... The American Association of Justice held the finals of the National Law Student Mock Trial competition in the Main Courthouse April 3-6th, with the top 14 teams from an initial pool of 256 teams competing. High School Law Week was held April 1st-3rd.

Additional mock trials were held in Feb/March, and the Palm Beach County Bar Association's Mock Trial Event was held May 3rd. Many of our judges have participated, either offering their courtrooms to host the events, or presiding over trials. Judges presiding over trials have included **Judge James Martz**, **Judge Ted Booras**, **Judge Jonathan Gerber** and **Judge Robin Rosenberg** (*see article on page 7*).

MAGISTRATE PETER BASSALINE SWORN IN

On February 15 2008, **Peter Bassaline** was sworn in as Magistrate for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit of Florida.

Attending were his wife, all the magistrates and many court staff who had known Magistrate Bassaline during his time with the Attorney General Office.

Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll officiated the ceremony.



Magistrates Leonard Hanser, Larry Weaver, Peter Bassaline, Judette Fanelli, Diane Kirigin, Administrative Magistrate Linda Goodwin, and Magistrates Joy Shearer, Maxine Williams, Thomas Baker.

The swearing in ceremony of Magistrate Bassaline was a wonderful opportunity for the magistrates to show their appreciation to Michelle Spangenberg, who was leaving as Family Court Manager to become the new Criminal Court Manager.



TRIAL COURT LAW CLERK PROGRAM

The Trial Court Law Clerk Program currently has 14 law clerk positions - 12 at the main courthouse, 1 at the South County Courthouse and 1 at the North County Courthouse. The 2 law clerks at the satellite courthouses assist the judges in a variety of ways including reviewing and ensuring that adoption files are complete; reviewing and ensuring that probate files are complete; assisting with research projects in county criminal, family and probate/guardianship cases.

The law clerks at the main courthouse are divided into three groups: Circuit Civil; County and Circuit Criminal; Probate/Juvenile/Family/County Civil.

The Circuit Civil division reviews and prepares bench memoranda for the three-judge appellate panel that is held monthly, hearing appeals from county civil. Circuit civil law clerks also address extraordinary writs and undertake a multitude of circuit civil legal research assignments (including foreclosure). Many times the law clerks sit in on a highly contested hearing to assist the judge with issues as they arise. Like their Circuit colleagues, the Criminal law clerks also review and prepare bench memoranda for a three-judge appellate panel held monthly to hear appeals, in this case from county criminal.

In addition to research assignments, the law clerks handle a high number of post conviction pleadings wherein

prisoners seek to reduce their sentence, present mitigating factors, or claim ineffective assistance of counsel.

In the Probate, Juvenile, Family and County Civil group, one law clerk is assigned specifically to the probate/guardianship division, assisting the probate/guardianship judge with a review of the files. The family/juvenile aspect entails reviewing adoptions to ensure that the parties have complied with the statutory requirements and providing legal research on domestic and juvenile matters. These law clerks also address research questions that arise in county civil, which may include debt collection or landlord-tenant cases.

At the satellite courthouses, where judges are often assigned to multiple areas of law or are dealing with increasing caseloads from population growth, and judicial time is at a premium, the assigned law clerks provide valuable support ranging from reviewing and ensuring that adoption files are complete, reviewing and ensuring that probate files are complete, and assisting with assigned research projects in county criminal, family and probate/guardianship cases.

*For additional information on the Law Clerk program please contact **General Counsel Amy Borman** at 561 355-1927.*



In January the trial court law clerks spent a day in Belle Glade observing court, touring the State Attorney's offices and having lunch at the Elk's Club with Judge Bailey. The law clerks also were given a tour of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Eagle Academy to learn about diversionary programs offered in Palm Beach County.

UNIFIED FAMILY COURT PROGRAM

FAMILY LAW PRACTICE LUNCHEON

On March 28th 2008, the Family Law Practice Committee hosted its annual joint luncheon with the Palm Beach County Bar and South County Family Section at the Columbia Restaurant at City Place in West Palm Beach.

Family court judges, magistrates and members of the Family Law Practice Committee were in attendance.

Judge Elizabeth T. Maass and **Judge David F. Crow** were welcomed to the Family Division effective February 19, and **Tom Sasser** officially stepped down as the Chair and named **Elisha D. Roy** as his successor. There was also an update regarding the on-going revisions on all Administrative Orders which will shortly be finalized. Also discussed were Legislative and Family Case Law updates.



Michelle Spangenberg, in one of her last duties as UFC Manager before she became the new Criminal Court Manager, and Chief Judge Kroll.



Former Committee Chair Tom Sasser with Magistrate Kirigin.

Magistrate Hanser's Judicial Review Hearings Web Camera Pilot Project

Magistrate Leonard Hanser and members of the project collaboratively created a procedure wherein children can appear for Judicial Review hearings via Web Camera. This pilot project had its first hearing in May 2008. State holders included are: Palm Beach County, School District, Guardian Ad Litem, Legal Aid, Olympic Heights High School and The Haven. At this time, a total of eleven children have been identified as participants within these facilities.

There were many hours invested in this project and everyone involved is thrilled to ultimately see the results of everyone's hard work and dedication. Thank you so much for all of those who collaborated in the creation of this pilot project.

Judge Martin's Independent Living Court

Judge Karen Martin is in the process of starting her Independent Living Court Project. Judge Martin's main priority is for the child appearing at the hearing to feel empowered and have a sense of control of their own future. The project is planned to start the second week in July. Judge Peter Blanc's own Independent Living Court Project, which has been up and running for the past year, has been a success and Judge Martin's will be as well without a doubt.

UFC SOCIAL SERVICE COORDINATION PROGRAM CELEBRATES ONE YEAR OF SERVICE

The Unified Family Court Social Service Coordination program is a court based program developed in collaboration with the Community Alliance of Palm Beach County which began implementation on April 2, 2007.

As a social service component to the Unified Family Court, the program assists children and families involved in complex cases (more than one court case, with multiple agency involvement) to achieve self sufficiency by convening regular group meetings with all agencies/individuals with the family and facilitating the effective delivery of services.

To date over 40 court and community agencies have signed Memorandums of Understanding with the Court agreeing to participate in the program. The families and professionals that have been involved in the program during the past year have been very pleased with the coordination of services. By implementing ongoing meetings with the families and professionals, the UFC Social Service Facilitators have been able to prevent duplication of services and increase communication between the agencies involved with the families. The monthly meetings have also assisted in helping the families gain a clearer understanding of the dependency/delinquency process and the how the court system works.

*For more information, please contact **Susan Brown**, UFC Social Service Facilitator at 355-1961.*



Susan Brown and Cristy Altaro, Juvenile Sanctions Coordinator.

More UFC News.....

Webcam for Judicial Reviews

The committee for Children Appearing for Judicial Review Hearings is pleased to announce that this new procedure took effect on April 15, 2008. This pilot project includes children who attend Olympic Heights High School and are between the ages of 16 and 17. Children will now be able to appear for Judicial Review Hearings via a webcam, set-up at the School. The Guardian Ad Litem's Office has agreed to ensure that the GAL will be present with the child for emotional support. Additionally, volunteers from The Haven have agreed to be present at the school. The idea is to allow the child to participate in the Hearing as though he/she were appearing in person. This committee would like to especially thank Dr. Anne Farone and Peter Cummings from the Palm Beach County School District for their support and commitment to this new procedure!

Training:

On Friday, March 6, 2008 **General Magistrate Thomas Baker** provided a training session for the Case Managers on post-judgment proceedings. Specifically, the procedural case flow of a modification proceeding as well as general post-judgment case flow. The session was well attended and feedback from the session concluded that it was productive.



CRIMINAL COURT PROGRAM

CASE MANAGEMENT

Case management in the criminal division is up and running.

The goal of case management is to improve efficiency and the timely disposition of criminal cases by developing strategies to enhance case flow management in the 15th Circuit.

Criminal Court Case Management provides the judiciary with assistance by facilitating the resolution of cases that are past 180 days old, assisting with the development of uniform forms, providing specialized statistical case data and evaluating prisoner movement.



Criminal Court Operations Manager Michelle Spangenberg reviews case files with Paula Carvajal, Criminal Case Manager

For more information, please contact Michelle Spangenberg at (561) 355-6396.

DRIVE LEGAL

A committee met on February 27, 2008 to discuss the possibility of implementing a specialized docket to assist criminal defendants charged with a misdemeanor traffic offense of Driving while License Suspended and who seek to retain their driving privileges. The committee is in the process of establishing the eligibility criteria and defining the procedures for this specialized docket.

ORDER ASSESSING COURT COSTS

On March 12, 2008 a committee met to finalize the automation of the form *Order Assessing Court Costs*. This automation requires the user to insert the case number only; the case style, judge's name, date and address are automatically inserted into the form. Additionally, with the click of a button, the fees are input and automatically totaled. **Judge Cory Ciklin** has agreed to "pilot" the new form, to ensure the program is operating smoothly prior to distribution.

RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY FOR THE RESTORED HISTORIC COURTHOUSE

The grand opening of the historic 1916 Court House was held on Saturday, March 15, 2008.

Several judges attended the event including:
Judges Nelson Bailey, Peter Blanc, Lucy Chernow Brown, Edward Fine, and Timothy McCarthy.

A photographic perspective.....



Photograph by: County Court Judge Nelson Bailey.

RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY FOR THE RESTORED HISTORIC COURTHOUSE-CONT.



Judge Bailey and
Judge McCarthy



Judge Blanc
and his wife
Juliana



Judge Brown and her husband Terry.



Judge Fine and his wife Marcy



UPCOMING EVENTS

June

9th (12:15-1 p.m.) and 12th (4-4:45 p.m.) Hurricane Preparedness presentation for court staff. 5th floor Central Courthouse. Contact person: Rick Hussey, 355-6398

12th PBCBA Appellate Practice Committee honors incoming Judge Damoorgian and retiring Judges Stone, Shahood and Klein of the 4th DCA (Courtroom of the Historic Courthouse, 15th Circuit Judges invited, rsvp on PBCBA's website)

July

3rd-6th South County Courthouse move. **The South Courthouse will be closed on Thursday.**

17th Courts-Media Workshop (Central Courthouse, Judicial Dining Room) Contact person: Debra Oats 355-4495

Florida Supreme Court seeks survey responses for Florida's State Court System Long-Range Strategic Plan

Florida's Supreme Court is conducting a survey seeking input from judges, court staff, attorneys, jurors, litigants and other individuals in order to update the long-range strategic plan for Florida's State Court System. Such people are asked to complete an anonymous survey on the State Courts' website by June 30, 2008. The Court is most interested in responses to the questions, "What are the most important issues facing Florida's courts?" and, "What suggestions do you have for improving Florida's courts?"

Please log on to the State Courts' website at www.flcourts.com and click on the link for "Florida State Courts' Strategic Plan." You can then select the survey that pertains to your role or position with the courts.

South County move

The South County Courthouse will be closed for moving on July 3, the Thursday before the Fourth of July weekend.

All of the offices in the current building will be moved into the brand new courthouse building which is immediately adjacent.

The new courthouse will be open July 7th.

FYI

The Florida State Court System has instituted a hiring freeze effective Feb 22, 2008 due to budget cuts expected in the upcoming fiscal year.

The Circuit Courier

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