

# Circuit Courier

January-March 2009

Vol. 2009-1

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



Chief Judge-elect Peter Blanc  
Judge Richard Wennet retires  
Stabilizing Court Funding  
Circuit Civil Pilot Project  
Court-Media Workshop  
Video Traffic Hearings

*And more...*



**On the Cover:**  
*Judges saying the "Pledge of Allegiance"*

Photo by:  
Linda Sims

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## MESSAGE FROM TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATOR BARBARA DAWICKE

As March draws to a close, the Florida Legislature is mid-way through its regular session. The news from Tallahassee fluctuates on a daily basis and will not settle until the term concludes.



Trial Court Administrator  
Barbara Dawicke

One issue that has received considerable attention this session concerns the transfer of court record-keeping from the clerks of court to the court. Senate Bill 2108 and its House counterpart Bill 1121 initially proposed that several court-related clerk functions be transferred to Court Administration. This elicited heated discussion throughout the State on the most efficient assignment of court-related administrative functions. The Bills are not creating precedent. In other state court systems, in Florida's District Courts of Appeal, and in the Federal Courts, the clerk is an employee of the Court.

In this Circuit, we are fortunate to enjoy a very good working relationship with our Clerk and her staff. Unfortunately, this is not the case in all circuits--tempers and rhetoric have risen, and the discussion has not always remained civil. Clerks have accused the courts of a "power grab" and have insisted that their role is to "guard" the court's own records--from the court. Former Florida Supreme Court Chief Justices Ben Overton and Major Harding addressed some of the rhetoric in a recent editorial (See "Let the Legislature Study Court Records Handling" at [www.floridabar.org/fundingfloridacourts](http://www.floridabar.org/fundingfloridacourts)) where they explain why the function of the clerk is not to act as a check on the judiciary--instead, under the Florida Constitution, each branch of the government: the executive, the legislative, and the judicial, serve as an independent check upon each other. As the former Chief Justices note, the clerks are "...charged by statute with ministerial administrative duties on behalf of the judiciary."

What is not to be forgotten in this debate is the fact that these two Bills also have the goal of creating a stabilized funding source for the state courts system. This is important when one realizes that the amount of dollars allotted to the courts **is less than 1% of the entire State budget** yet each year the courts must get in line with state agencies and justify and fight for state dollars. Already greatly under funded, the courts struggle to stay afloat because each budget reduction hits us where it hurts the most, personnel, as 87% of the state court system budget is comprised of salaries.

Recent amendments to the two Bills remove the provisions related to shifting the duties of the clerk. We are hopeful that provisions concerning the creation of a stable funding source for the courts are carried forward and become law. In difficult economic times such as these, Floridians' access to justice depends on it.

*See article on page 3 for principles underlying stable Court funding.*

# STABILIZING COURT FUNDING

On February 17-18, 2009, Chief Justice Peggy Quince visited the Florida Legislature to deliver the “State of the Judiciary” address.

During her comments she stated, “I must address what is the largest crisis the courts in Florida have ever faced, and what has had to be my top priority for my term: adequate court funding. Without adequate funding, we are sure to fail in our attempts to improve the administration of justice in initiatives such as those I have outlined here today: we cannot properly adjudicate our cases-fairly, impartially and timely-without adequate resources.” Justice Quince went on to say that new budgeting practices are needed to better stabilize and protect the operation of the courts during times of economic crisis.

To that end, the Trial Court Budget Commission, the District Court of Appeal Budget Commission, the 25 chief judges across the state, and the Supreme Court have developed seven basic principles\* that will address the current financial situation and also offer solutions for long-term funding stability for the courts system.

*Principle One:*

**The elements of the State Courts System codified in section 29.001, Florida Statutes, should be adequately funded by the State to ensure the guarantee of court access by Florida’s citizens.**

*Principle Two:*

**Court fees assessed and paid by Florida’s citizens to access their court system should be dedicated to the court system, as already provided for by state law.**

*Principle Three:*

**Unless adequate safeguards are in place, court-related revenue other than filing fee revenue (revenue derived from fines, service charges, and costs) should not be dedicated to court funding but used to support other justice system partners.**

*Principle Four:*

**All current court-related revenue being collected should be reevaluated to determine what portion of current filing fee revenue should be dedicated to court funding.**

*Principle Five:*

**Additional or increased filing fees should be considered, but only after an adequate review of the distribution of the current filing fee revenue has been made.**

*Principle Six:*

**Some components of the State Courts System are more appropriately funded from the general fund and should remain so.**

*Principle Seven:*

**State Court Trust Funds are the appropriate depositories for court filing fee revenue.**

Work on these seven principles has already begun; during the recent special session, the legislature established a trust fund for the state courts and directed revenues to it which kept the courts from sustaining another large reduction.

There is also proposed legislation, which the courts are closely following, which could reallocate responsibility for court-related duties and also redirect funding channels for clerks and court partners.\*\*

\*For more information on court funding please go to the Florida State Courts web-site:

[http://www.flcourts.org/gen\\_public/funding/index.shtml](http://www.flcourts.org/gen_public/funding/index.shtml)

\*\*For more information on Senate Bill 2108 and House Bill 1121 please go to:

[www.myfloridahouse.gov](http://www.myfloridahouse.gov)

## CHIEF JUDGE-ELECT PETER D. BLANC

Circuit **Judge Peter D. Blanc** has been unanimously elected as the next Chief Judge of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, to serve a two-year term beginning July 1, 2009.

Judge Blanc, who currently presides in the juvenile division, will succeed Chief Judge Kathleen J. Kroll, who has served the circuit with distinction for the past four years but chose not to seek an additional term.

Judge Blanc has been on the bench since 1990, when he was appointed to a vacant county judgeship by Governor Bob Martinez. His tenure as circuit judge began in 1999 after he was appointed by Governor Buddy MacKay.

Prior to his judicial appointment, Judge Blanc was an Assistant Public Defender in Palm Beach County from 1978 through 1981. From 1981 through 1982, he was an associate with the law firm of Altman, Colin & Friedland, P.A. in Lake Worth, FL. From 1982 through 1990, he was a sole practitioner in Palm Beach County, with his practice focusing mainly on areas of criminal defense and marital and family law. Judge Blanc earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from the University of Illinois in 1974. He later attended the University of Miami Law School where he earned his Juris Doctor in 1978.

*A feature article on Chief Judge-elect Peter D. Blanc will be in the July issue of the Circuit Courier.*



## MICHAEL F. MCAULIFFE SWORN IN AS STATE ATTORNEY FOR THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

**Michael F. McAuliffe** was sworn in as the State Attorney for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit on January 6, 2009, as attendees filled the Ceremonial Courtroom of the Main Judicial Center.

**Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll** convened the ceremony and the Oath of Office was administered by **Circuit Judge Robin Rosenberg**, who is also Michael's wife.

Presentations were made by **John G. White III**, Esquire, President of the Florida Bar, and **Richard D. Schuler**, Esquire, President of the Palm Beach County Bar Association.

**Sheriff Ric Bradshaw** and **Dr. Robert Green** introduced the new State Attorney.



Michael McAuliffe is sworn in by his wife, Judge Robin Rosenberg, as two of their three children look on.

# JUDGE RICHARD WENNET RETIRES

**Judge Richard I. Wennet** retired on January 5, 2009, following a closely contested election.

Judge Wennet served twenty-four years on the bench, after being elected as a Circuit Judge in 1985. Before that, he served for five years as a Domestic Relations Commissioner (now called a magistrate) and was an attorney in private practice from 1976 to 1979.

Choosing to retire on the same day was Wennet's long time Judicial Assistant **Gloria Werner**, who served the courts for 26 years.

Both were honored and thanked for their service at the December 2008 judges' meeting.



*Footnote: The successor to the Circuit Court Judgeship will be appointed, due to the Florida Supreme Court opinion disqualifying judge-elect William Abramson from taking the bench in January.*

## CIRCUIT CIVIL PILOT PROJECT

Circuit Civil Divisions AF (**Judge Diana Lewis**) and AJ (**Judge Robin Rosenberg**) are the first to implement a three-month pilot project that will allow litigants to request Special Set Hearing times and cancellation of UMC hearings via email. The goal of this project is to reduce the number of telephone calls necessary to schedule a hearing and thereby streamline the scheduling process.

A project website providing detailed instructions, along with requirements for participation in this pilot project, is available on the Fifteenth Circuit's website at <http://15thcircuit.co.palm-beach.fl.us/web/guest/divisions/circuitcivil/specialsethearing#request>.

Those interested in participating can get started by visiting the project website. This page can also be reached from the 15th Circuit's homepage, in the "updates" section.

A memo governing the acceptable use of this procedure is also available on the website and will be strictly enforced. All parties interested in participating in this pilot project are required to review the memo prior to participation.

Judges Lewis and Rosenberg will evaluate the project after a three month trial period; the success of this pilot will determine the future participation of additional divisions.

*If you have any technical questions concerning this project, please contact Court Technology's Noel Chessman at (561) 355-4406.*



Judge Lewis



Judge Rosenberg

# JUDICIAL ROTATIONS 2009

Judicial Rotations for the Fifteenth Circuit were effective January 20, 2009. Please see below for the most current information on judicial division assignments and courtroom numbers.

## **CIRCUIT CIVIL- MAIN COURTHOUSE**

Division AA	Judge Kelley	Courtroom 9D
Division AB	Judge Hafele	Courtroom 11B
Division AD	Judge French	Courtroom 11D
<b>Division AE</b> (formerly Judge Stern)	J. McCarthy/Rotating Judge Uniform Motion Calendar	Courtroom 10B
	For trials scheduled after 1/26	Contact 355-2147 Division AF
	Judge Lewis	Courtroom 9A
<b>Division AG</b> (formerly Judge Hoy)	Judge Crow	Courtroom 9C
Division AH	Judge Fine	Courtroom 11C
Division AI	Judge Garrison	Courtroom 11A
Division AJ	Judge Rosenberg	Courtroom 10A
Division AN	Judge Cox	Courtroom 10C
Division AO	Judge Barkdull	Courtroom 10D
<b>Division TD</b> (temporarily closed)	Judge McCarthy	Courtroom 9B

## **FORECLOSURE – MAIN COURTHOUSE**

<b>Division AW</b>	Judge Cook	Courtroom 4B
	Judge McCarthy	Courtroom 9B
	For foreclosure information	Contact 355-6570

## **FAMILY – MAIN COURTHOUSE**

Division FA	Judge Rapp	Courtroom 6K
<b>Division FB</b> (formerly Judge Crow)	Temporarily closed	

All existing cases will be reallocated based upon zip code. See Administrative Order 5.101 1/09 for more details. Cases currently scheduled will be heard by Judges Kroll, McCarthy and Crow. Call Connie Thomas at 355-4656 for courtroom number.

Division FC	Judge Brunson	Courtroom 6D
Division FD	Judge Maass	Courtroom 6C
Last Name Husband A-G	Magistrate Goodwin	Courtroom 6G
Last Name Husband H-R	Magistrate Shearer	Courtroom 6F
<b>Last Name Husband S-Z</b>	Magistrate Baker	Courtroom 6I
Child Support/DOR (A-N)	Magistrate Bassaline	Courtroom 6H
<b>Child Support/DOR (O-Z)</b>	Magistrate Weaver	Courtroom 6E

## **JUVENILE – MAIN COURTHOUSE**

Division JK	Judge Alvarez	Courtroom 2A
Division JL	Judge Blanc	Courtroom 2B
Division JM	Judge Baker	Courtroom 3A
Division JO	Judge Martin	Courtroom 3B
Judicial Reviews/	Magistrate Hanser	Hearing room 3.1100

## **PROBATE – MAIN COURTHOUSE**

Division IB/IC	Judge Cook	Courtroom 4B
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# JUDICIAL ROTATIONS: CONT.

## **CIRCUIT CRIMINAL – MAIN COURTHOUSE**

<b>Division R</b> (formerly Judge Labarga)	Judge Hoy	Courtroom 10G
<b>Division S</b> (formerly Judge Brown)	Judge Smith	Courtroom 11E
Division T	Judge Marx	Courtroom 11H
Division U	Judge Burton	Courtroom 11G
Division V	Judge Gerber	Courtroom 10E
<b>Division W</b> (formerly Judge McSorley)	Judge Colbath	Courtroom 11F
Division X	Judge Miller	Courtroom 10H
<b>Division TD</b> (formerly Judge Wennet)	Judge Brown	Courtroom 10F

## **COUNTY CIVIL – MAIN COURTHOUSE**

<b>Division RB</b> (formerly Judge Booras)	Judge Eissey	Courtroom 6M
Division RE	Judge Evans	Courtroom 4C
Division RF	Judge Stephens	Courtroom 6L
Division RJ	Judge Castor	Courtroom 6B
Division RL	Judge Damico	Courtroom 6A

## **COUNTY CRIMINAL- MAIN COURTHOUSE**

<b>Division B</b> (formerly Judge Eissey)	Rotating Judge	report to 2D for Courtroom number
	For more information	Contact 355-1803
<b>Division C</b>	Judge Bosso-Pardo	<b>Courtroom 9H**</b>
<b>Division E</b> (formerly Judge Johnson)	Judge Moyle	Courtroom 9E
Division L	Judge Marx	Courtroom 9G
<b>Division M</b> (formerly Judge Corlew)	Judge Cohen (temporarily)	Courtroom 9F
Division P	Judge Keyser	Courtroom 4D
<b>Division TD</b> (Temporarily closed)	Judge Cohen	Courtroom 9F
Division TD/DV	Judge Cunningham	Courtroom 2C

## **NORTH COUNTY**

<b>Division II, FI</b> (formerly J. Colbath)	Judge McSorley	Courtroom 3
Division IH, FH	Judge Oftedal	Courtroom 4
<b>Division RH/NC/H</b> (formerly J. Ciklin)	Judge Johnson	Courtroom 1
	Magistrate Fanelli	Hearing Room 1418

## **SOUTH COUNTY**

Division D	Judge Corlew	Courtroom 5
Division RD	Judge Martz	Courtroom 6
Division IY	Judge Phillips	Courtroom 9
Division FY	Judge Colin	Hearing Room E
<b>Division FZ</b> (formerly Judge Smith)	Judge Stern	Courtroom 7
Last Name Husband A-K	Magistrate Kirigin	Hearing Room C
<b>Last Name Husband L-Z</b>	Magistrate Williams	Hearing Room D

## **GUN CLUB**

Division W132K	Judge Perez
<b>Division W129K</b> (formerly J. Moyle)	Judge Booras

## **BELLE GLADE**

Division A, BG, FW	Judge Bailey
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# COURT-MEDIA WORKSHOP

The Palm Beach Post hosted a Court-Media workshop in its auditorium on February 26, 2009.

This forum was created to give all members of the courts, clerk, county and state that are involved in the process of court activity an opportunity to interact with all media to share ideas, trouble shoot problem areas and create a plan agreeable to all parties.

The workshop's success depends upon the ability to express ideas freely. To that end, **John Bartosek**, Editor of the Palm Beach Post, told the audience during his introduction that all comments and discussions would be "off the record."

General Counsel for the Fifteenth Circuit, **Amy Borman**, spoke about the new Administrative Order, 2.208, which prescribes procedures for "Special Interest/High Profile Proceedings." She also noted the problems with online comments or "blogs" that appear with stories posted on the Internet. The fact that people are able to identify themselves as someone they are not has created issues for the courts.

**Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll** spoke about her concerns with publishing pictures of jurors, especially when they are also posted on the web. All parties agreed that this was a very difficult and sensitive issue.

**Sharon Bock**, Clerk and Comptroller, and **Michael McAuliffe**, State Attorney, also spoke at the workshop.

Other attendees from the court included:

**Judge Peter Blanc**, Chief Judge-elect; **Judge Lucy Chernow Brown**; **Judge Jeffrey Colbath**; **Barbara Dawicke**, Court Administrator; **Debra Oats-Ducram**, Court Operations Consultant.

*For information on future workshops, please contact Debra Oats-Ducram at (561) 355-4495.*

Photos by:  
Linda Sims



Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll addresses the audience at the meeting held in the conference room at the Palm Beach Post.



John Bartosek, (left) Editor of the Palm Beach Post, points out recent changes in the Palm Beach Post to General Counsel Amy Borman and Circuit Judge Lucy Chernow Brown.



John Bartosek, Amy Borman, Judge Lucy Chernow Brown and Debra Oats-Ducram.

# TRAFFIC COURT

## Innovative Use of Technology in the Traffic Courtroom

Did you know that not every person who receives a traffic citation in Palm Beach County needs to travel to one of our four courthouses for a pre-trial hearing?

Over the past few years, Palm Beach County has utilized videoconferencing equipment, enabling thousands of people each year to appear at either the Wellington Community Center or the South County Civic Center in lieu of traveling to court.

Upon receipt of a traffic ticket, the Defendant is given the option to pay a fine, elect school, or plead not guilty and appear during the week in one of the four county courthouses, attend a Saturday hearing at the Gun Club facility or attend via video conference from either the South County Center or the Wellington Community Center.

One Monday of each month, a Traffic Hearing Officer conducts video pre-trial hearings for those Defendants that elect to appear at the South County Civic Center.

The Traffic Hearing Officer presides in open court with the Clerk and the court files, while the Defendants appear on camera at the Civic Center. The parties can see and hear each other through the televisions mounted in each location.

When a case is called, Defendants approach the podium and are asked whether they would like to resolve the ticket that day or come back at a future date to the appropriate courthouse for their trial. If they elect to resolve the citation that day, the Hearing Officer determines the appropriate penalty and advises the Defendant of same. A volunteer at the Civic Center completes a form that explains the penalty to the Defendant and details how and when to pay the fine to the Clerk.

A similar process takes place once a month on Wednesdays between the Wellington Community Center and the Traffic Hearing Officer, who presides from a videoconference room located in the main courthouse in West Palm Beach.

*For information, please contact Sara Blumberg, Civil Traffic Administrator at (561) 274-1435.*



Traffic Hearing Officer Ivonne Reynolds (on the tv monitor) rules on a traffic ticket as volunteer John Sochaki, who is there to guide the defendant, assists and James Montada (seated at table) from Court Administration keeps the records.

# CRIMINAL COURT

## Pilot Project-PVOP hearings

On February 9, 2009, **Judge Lucy Chernow Brown** formed a committee consisting of stakeholders involved in the Criminal Justice System. The committee was tasked with reviewing current practices relating to Preliminary Violation of Probation (PVOP) hearings for in-custody defendants.

On March 2, 2009, the committee met and determined that these hearings should be held at the Criminal Justice Complex on Gun Club Road. Further, the committee found that this would be a cost saving to Palm Beach County, as this will reduce the number of defendants transported to the Main Courthouse. This might also reduce the jail population if inmates are released pending a preliminary hearing.

The pilot project commenced on March 16, 2009. Committee meetings will occur on a monthly basis to identify any necessary procedural amendments. A future goal of this committee to expand the program to include misdemeanor cases.

*For additional information, please contact Michelle Spangenberg, Criminal Court Operations Manager at (561) 355-6396.*



Judge Lucy Chernow Brown, Michelle Spangenberg, Judge Ted Booras and Rosalyn Baker, Department of Corrections.



Stakeholders involved in the Criminal Justice System meet with Judge Chernow Brown and Judge Booras.

## DRUG COURT

Drug Court announced twenty additional graduates so far this year, joining the 852 former graduates. Although the graduates all told similar tales of conquering addiction, the following stories were most memorable:

Victoria, a thirty-five year old female, previously had lost custody of her child and turned to prostitution. She continued using crack cocaine daily for six years and stated tearfully at graduation, "Nobody ever said I could do it, except Drug Court."

Richard, an eighteen-year old male who required residential treatment for his addiction, bowed his head while sadly remembering his friend, who should have graduated with him but died tragically two months earlier.

Anna, a nineteen-year old female, who had been hooked on Xanax since she was sixteen years old, proudly introduced her newborn, drug-free baby boy and vowed, for her baby's sake, never to go back to drugs.

Drug court holds monthly graduation ceremonies at 1:30 pm, in the Criminal Justice Complex on Gun Club Road.

*Contact Dorrie Tyng at the Drug Court Program office at (561) 688-4530 for specific graduation dates.*

## Increased Violence In Stressful Times: *Coordinating a Community Response to Domestic Violence*

**WHY:**

Provide a forum for strategic planning and increased awareness regarding domestic violence issues.

**WHO SHOULD ATTEND:**

- Judicial Officers/Court Personnel
- Court/Community stakeholders
- Child Welfare professionals
- Juvenile Probation Officers
- Attorneys/Advocates

**WHEN:**

Friday, April 24th, 2009  
8:30am - 3:30pm

**WHERE:**

The Kravis Center  
710 Okeechobee Boulevard  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401  
(For map [click here](#))

The 15th Circuit's Unified Family Court is hosting a FREE training event to focus on implementing a coordinated community response to domestic violence.



**Dave Mandel** has assisted Florida DCF in 3 counties as part of their foster care design efforts. Areas of specialization include batterer accountability and change, domestic violence and child welfare, fatherhood and prevention.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

**Maria Giuliano**  
Unified Family Court  
Operations Manager  
(561) 355-1764  
[mgiuliano@pbcgov.org](mailto:mgiuliano@pbcgov.org)

**Cristy Altaro**  
Juvenile Alternative  
Sanctions Coordinator  
(561) 355-6586  
[caltaro@pbcgov.org](mailto:caltaro@pbcgov.org)

**FREE ADMISSION**  
LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

**CLICK HERE**  
for online registration



**THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**  
OF FLORIDA  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURT

For online registration please go to:

<http://15thcircuit.co.palm-beach.fl.us/web/guest/programs/ufc/registration>

# JUVENILE COURT

## Delinquency Drug Court

Delinquency Drug Court, operational for almost one year, continues to grow and service Palm Beach County. This program serves youth, on juvenile probation, who have substance abuse issues. Currently the program has seven participants. Three of these youth are in residential substance abuse treatment, while the remaining participants are at home, in the community. The program hopes to have its first graduate in May, which is National Drug Court month. According to **Judge Ronald Alvarez**, “for the youths and their families who are involved in Delinquency Drug Court, this is an opportunity to stop substance abuse and help heal the many wounds that addiction has inflicted on each family member.”

In order to be eligible for Delinquency Drug Court, candidates must be between the ages of 12 to 17 and on juvenile probation with a pending violation of probation.

Despite the tough economic times, Delinquency Drug Court recently received notice that the program will be funded for the 2009-2010 year.

*For additional information, please contact Cristy Altaro at (561) 355-6586.*



Judge Ronald Alvarez presides over Delinquency Drug Court.

## Independent Living Court

**Judge Ronald Alvarez** will begin an Independent Living Court in his division on March 19, 2009. He will be joining **Judge Peter Blanc** and **Judge Karen Martin** who also operate Independent Living Courts in their respective divisions. This program will be offered to youth between the ages of 13 and 19 who have been in the foster care system for a period of six months or longer. These youth will attend Independent Living Review hearings, which will update the court as to the plan and steps being taken to assist the youth in moving towards independence as he/she “ages out” of the system.

Guardian Ad Litem, Juvenile Advocacy Project and Foster Children’s Project attorneys along with the Department of Children and Families Child and Family Connections and all other related parties will be invited to attend. Hearings will be held on Thursday afternoons.

## Video Dependency Hearings

**Judge Ronald Alvarez** is piloting a Dependency Video Hearing Project. This project provides students, between the ages of 14 and 17, attending various Palm Beach County High Schools, the opportunity to participate in their dependency hearings via videoconferencing (Webex). Through these hearings, youth will remain at school and will be able to actively participate in his/her dependency case without missing time in school.

Currently, the project is working to identify Palm Beach County schools that have the technology available to participate in this project.

*If you have questions on this program or the Independent Living Court program, please contact Gabriel Munoz at (561) 355-6280.*

# JUVENILE COURT: CONT.

## School Initiative

**Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll** has been working closely with **Dr. Art Johnson**, Superintendent of the Palm Beach County School District, to provide the highest level of services to the youth and their families in the juvenile justice system.

The Court recognizes that education is a critical factor in assisting these youth. Through this partnership, the School District has allocated staff to work in the courthouses as well as at the Juvenile Detention Center and the Palm Beach County Jail.

The Court's goal is to provide smooth and seamless transitions for youth in the legal system as it pertains to their educational needs and matters. To continue the commitment to this initiative, Judge Kroll has been making presentations in the community to middle and high school administrators, trying to raise awareness about youth in the juvenile justice system and open the lines of communication for increased collaboration between the Courts and School District.

*For additional information, contact Cristy Altaro (561) 355-6586.*

### ***Key Players***

*Who is involved in the  
Juvenile Justice Process?*

*Judiciary  
Department of Juvenile Justice  
Office of the State Attorney  
Defense Counsel  
Law Enforcement*



Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll, School Superintendent Dr. Art Johnson, Iola Mosley, PBC School District Associate Counsel, and Cristy Altaro, Alternative Sanctions Coordinator.



Juvenile Alternative Sanctions Co-ordinator Cristy Altaro presents to high school principals at Lake Worth High School.



Chief Judge Kathleen Kroll, Cristy Altaro and Dr. Art Johnson.

# MENTAL HEALTH COURT

Since the inception of the Mental Health Specialty Division on January 20, 2009, approximately 30 cases have been temporarily reassigned to **Judges Lucy Chernow Brown and Krista Marx** due to inmates' Competency to Proceed issues.

The Mental Health Case Manager, **Marcela C. Millett**, has found that the majority of these defendants are incarcerated when a motion for Competency Evaluation is filed. As she continues to work closely with all parties involved, including judges, attorneys, Court Psychology (a Palm Beach County program), the Clerk and Comptroller, contracted Expert Witnesses and PBSO, a team effort has been established to expedite the processing of these cases in relation to Competency Evaluations.



Judge Lucy Chernow Brown and Marcela Millett, Mental Health Case Manager discuss a case file.

The Mental Health Case manager continues to monitor the timely filing and accuracy of experts' reports. Thus far, the reports have been arriving in a timely manner and have met all statutory requirements. As with all new endeavors, collaboration among key players has been an integral aspect in creating a smooth process for the Mental Health Specialty Division. The Mental Health Case Manager, in conjunction with Judges, Judicial Assistants and other Court Administration staff, continues to amend Administrative Orders and update all those involved so that this new Specialty Division can be a success.

*If you have any questions regarding the Mental Health Specialty Division or Expert Witness Services, please contact Marcela Millett, Mental Health Case Manager, at (561) 355-1537.*

## Trial Court Law Clerks

This winter, **Rick King** joined the Trial Court Law Clerks as a legal intern. Rick received his Bachelor of Science in Human Resource Management from Palm Beach Atlantic University and is currently a first year law student in the evening division at Nova Southeastern University.

Prior to attending law school, Rick was employed by the West Palm Beach Police Department from 1989 until his retirement in July 2008. Rick started with the West Palm Beach Police Department as a patrol officer, moving on to become a narcotics agent and a federal drug task force officer. Rick was promoted to Patrol Division Sergeant in November 1999 and then to Lieutenant in December 2005. In July 2008, Rick retired as a Special Investigations Lieutenant in the Criminal Investigations Division.



# ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

## VOLUNTEER MEDIATION TRAINING

On Friday, February 13, 2009, volunteer mediator **John Cohen** made a presentation entitled, “Mediation in the Community” to the Small Claims Volunteer Mediators. Invited guests included several mediators from the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit.

The training session opened with the introduction of the new Alternative Dispute Resolution Director **Rebecca Storrow**. On behalf of Court Administration, Chief Deputy Court Administrator **Krista Garber** thanked **Alan Kahn** for his interim leadership of the mediation office.

“Mediation in the Community” outlined Mr. Cohen’s vision of how the process of mediation in neighborhood communities could resolve disputes quickly, before they escalate out of control, and well before they result in filing a Court case. The process would be implemented through Citizens’ Dispute Resolution Centers.

Mr. Cohen summarized, “The grassroots of problem solving in a democracy empowers citizens to come together at an early stage and learn how to deal with disputes. The area covered can be widespread, and can deal with anything from a neighborhood dispute, to problems in a prison; it is particularly well respected in centers of higher learning. Most universities offer internal mediation programs for students. Ideally, citizens are trained to facilitate local resolution, rather than proceed to the Courts. This makes sense, as so many cases that get into the courts are resolved without a trial. This type of program is sanctioned under Florida Statutes and is successful in many parts of America and other countries.”

*If you have any questions regarding volunteer mediation, please contact **Rebecca Storrow** at (561) 355-6317.*



Alan Kahn (behind podium) and John Cohen (right of podium) and the volunteer mediators.

## STAFF PROFILE: REBECCA STORROW- ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION DIRECTOR

**Rebecca Storrow** is the Alternative Dispute Resolution Director for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit in Palm Beach County. Previously, she was the Mediation Services Coordinator with the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit.

“Conflict resolution is my passion,” says Rebecca, “and indigenous processes are my area of concentration.” She is a certified restorative trainer through the University of Minnesota and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University. She also has a Master’s Degree in Organizational Leadership.

“It is just amazing how different cultures perceive conflict and create very different and effective ways to resolve it,” Rebecca stated. “I began my career teaching students with emotional and behavioral challenges. With an undergraduate degree in Psychology from Palm Beach Atlantic University, it seemed that creative teaching techniques were effective in connecting emotionally with students - building motivation and self esteem. The creative process is a great tool for teaching and consensus building. I taught in vocational settings, as well as the post-secondary level. I devoted decades to staff development and training for several organizations, including my own - with professional certification in the food service and insurance industries. I then began to apply some of these creative techniques in mediation. My belief and conviction is that conflict in our western culture is best solved through effective dialogue and understanding. In mediation and in business, creative methodologies allow for a transformative environment that empowers individuals to think critically, communicate, and relate.”

Rebecca has had a varied life and career path. She has been an educator, consultant, artist, actor, musician, and a competitive figure skater. She has owned a recording studio in New York, worked with Burt Reynolds in Florida, has done three films, and hosted a cable show in Manhattan during the ‘80’s. She says, “Creativity has always been the centerpiece of my business philosophy.”

Rebecca Storrow can be reached at (561) 355-6317 or [RStorrow@pbcgov.org](mailto:RStorrow@pbcgov.org)



*Rebecca Storrow*

*“My belief and conviction is that conflict in our western culture is best solved through effective dialogue and understanding.”*

Joining the Mediation Department on March 30, 2009 is **Nathalie Gendron** who is the Mediation Services Coordinator. Nathalie will be responsible for many areas including county mediation, domestic violence screening, and training.

# AROUND THE FIFTEENTH.....

## Prison Tour

On March 25-26, 2009, **Judge Jonathan Gerber, Judge Moses Baker, Judge Jeffrey Colbath and Judge Amy Smith**, along with Criminal Court Operations Manager **Michelle Spangenberg** and Mental Health Case Manager **Marcella Millett** participated in the annual prison tour conducted by **Warden Randy Bryant** of Florida State Prison, Classification Supervisor **Margaret Kovacs** of Zephyrhills Correctional Institution, and retired Senior Sentencing Specialist **Pat Fleck**.

As part of a group of thirty in attendance, they represented the Fifteenth Circuit on tours of seven correctional institutions, during which they expanded their first-hand knowledge of the challenges currently facing Corrections facilities.

*See next issue for full article with photos.*

*“The tour provided a tremendous amount of information, along with sobering insights concerning incarceration,” Spangenberg said.*

## Update regarding South County Juvenile Division:

At the last Juvenile Division meeting on March 16, 2009, **Judge Moses Baker** formed three committees to assist with the expansion of Unified Family Court to the South County Courthouse in Delray.

These committees will address:

- a) Identification of Cases to be Transferred
- b) Transportation
- c) Scheduling

All three committees are now working towards making the transition as seamless as possible. An Administrative Order addressing the expansion of the juvenile division into South County has been drafted by Court Administration and the Clerk's Office. Following appropriate review the AO will become effective. The Juvenile Division move is expected to occur the first week of July.

*For more information please contact Maria Giuliano, UFC Manager, at 355-1764 or [mgjuliano@pbcgov.com](mailto:mgjuliano@pbcgov.com)*

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## ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS

The Administrative Orders (AO's) for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit have been revised to be more user-friendly. This revision includes restructuring and renumbering the administrative orders. The Administrative Orders were converted effective October 11, 2008. You can find the new AO's, along with a conversion chart, on our website at:

<http://15thcircuit.co.palm-beach.fl.us/web/guest/ao>.

The topics for the new series are listed below:

- Series 1: Local Rules (no change)
- Series 2: General Administrative Orders (applicable to all Divisions of the court)
- Series 3: Civil Administrative Orders (county and circuit)
- Series 4: Criminal Administrative Orders (county and circuit)
- Series 5: Unified Family Court Administrative Orders (domestic relations, dependency, delinquency)
- Series 6: Probate and Guardianship/Mental Health/Substance Abuse Administrative Orders
- Series 7: Writs, Post Conviction and Prisoner Litigation
- Series 8: Appeals (county to circuit and administrative appeals)
- Series 9: Open
- Series 10: Traffic Administrative Orders (criminal and civil Infractions)
- Series 11: Internal Policies and Procedures
- Series 12: Special Appointments

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### April

- 14 Court Staff Lunch & Learn (details by email)
- 21-23 "A Legacy of Liberty" Law Week events
- 23 Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day
- 24 UFC Summit
- 25 Judges/Attorneys Softball Game

### May

- 22 South County Courthouse Closed
- May 22-June 6 South County Law Library Closed
- TBA Continuity of Operations (COOP) training

### June

- 8 South County Law Library re-opens

## COURT HOLIDAYS 2009

### April

- 10 Good Friday (Court Closed)

### May

- 25 Memorial Day (Court Closed)

### July

- 3 Independence Day observed



The South County Courthouse Law Library will be undergoing renovation and will be closed from May 22, 2009 through June 6, 2009, re-opening on June 8, 2009.

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Kathleen J. Kroll, Chief Judge  
Barbara Dawicke, Trial Court Administrator

205 North Dixie Highway  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401  
(561) 355-2431

Editor: Krista Garber  
Newsletter staff: Linda Sims