



# Circuit Courier

April-June 2012

Vol. 2012-2

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

**Daliah Weiss Appointed to County Court**

**Judge Phillips Hosts Mock Trial**

**Law Week**

**Summer Judicial Interns**

*And more...*



Cover:  
Main Judicial Center  
Photo by:  
Deputy LaFlamme

Representatives from the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit were among fifty teams awarded a 2012 Davis Productivity Notable Team Achievement Award. A ceremony on June 20, 2012, recognized the winners for excellence, innovation and government productivity.

The Mental Health Specialty Team, led by Circuit **Judge Krista Marx**, created a first-in-Florida specialized court for felony competency cases. Cases involving mentally ill defendants, whose competency is in question, are temporarily reassigned to the specialty division.

*In this issue...*

Davis Productivity Award	2
Daliah Weiss Appointed to County Court	3
Judges-Nova Southeastern Alumni Honored	3
Around The Circuit:	4
Judge Alvarez, Jurist of the Year-North Section	
Judge French, Jurist of the Year-South Section	
PIPE Plea Program	
Law Week	5-7
Law Week at the 15th	5
Law Day Luncheon	5
Judge Phillips Hosts "Mock Trial"	6
Judges/Lawyers Softball Game	7
Fifteenth Circuit/PBC School District Meeting	8
New Attorney Breakfast	9
Summer Judicial Interns	10
Drug Court	11
Traffic Hearing Officer Training	11
New Court Reporting Services Manager	12
Alternative Dispute Resolution	12
Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work Day	13
AO's/Upcoming Events/Court Holidays	14

The team that was recognized included Judge Marx; Judicial Assistant Amy Tracy; Assistant State Attorney Elizabeth Neto; Assistant Public Defender Jennifer Marshal (former team member); Chief Deputy Court Administrator Mary Quinlan; and case manager Marcela Millett (former team member).

The Team's submission described how the Mental Health Specialty Division reduced the time of case adjudication an average of 2.5 months, which also reduced the cost of mental health experts and the average amount of time a mentally ill defendant spent in jail prior to transfer to a forensic state hospital. The total savings obtained by the implementation of the Division is approximately \$674,125. Moreover, consolidating competency cases, has allowed for more efficient use of judicial resources.



(l-r) Mental Health Specialty Division, Elizabeth Neto, Mary Quinlan, Judge Krista Marx, Amy Tracy, (not pictured: former team members Jennifer Marshall and Marcela Millett).

For more information please contact Mary Quinlan, at [mquinlan@pbcgov.org](mailto:mquinlan@pbcgov.org) or (561) 355-1925.

## GOVERNOR SCOTT APPOINTS DALIAH WEISS TO THE PALM BEACH COUNTY COURT

MAY 18, 2012

Tallahassee, Fla. - Today, Governor Rick Scott announced the appointment of Daliah Weiss, of Wellington, to the Palm Beach County Court.

Weiss, 41, has been an assistant state attorney with the State Attorney's Office in Palm Beach since 1996. Currently, Weiss is chief of the county court and family violence units within the office. Prior to that, she was chief of the special victims unit. Weiss received a bachelor's degree from Emory University and a law degree from Villanova University School of Law.

"During Daliah's 17 years as a prosecutor, she has gained extensive trial experience in some of the most difficult cases," Governor Scott said. "Daliah has also demonstrated leadership skills as the chief of multiple units, and I am confident she will be a great addition to the bench in Palm Beach County."

Weiss will fill the vacancy created by the appointment of Judge Gregory Keyser to the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit.

## JUDGES HONORED BY NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Nova Southeastern University Law School Alumni Chapter in Palm Beach County recently honored several Fifteenth Judicial Circuit judges, all of whom were graduates of Nova Southeastern. The judges included: Circuit Court **Judges Lucy Chernow Brown, Charles Burton, Jeffrey Colbath, Amy Smith**, County Court and Veteran's Court **Judge Ted Booras** and County Court **Judge Frank Castor**.

The alumni donated books for children through the Palm Beach County Literacy Coalition.



(l-r standing) Assistant Public Defender Eunice Tall Baros (Founding chapter president), Judge Ted Booras, Judge Frank Castor, Judge Jeffrey Colbath, Judge Amy Smith, Judge Charles Burton.

(l-r sitting) Judge Lucy Brown, Athornia Steele, NSU Law School Dean, Nicole Morris, Current alumni chapter president.

### OUTSTANDING JURISTS 2012

#### North County

On May 24, 2012, **Judge Ronald Alvarez** was presented with the 2012 Distinguished Jurist of the Year Award by the North County Section of the Palm Beach County Bar Association.

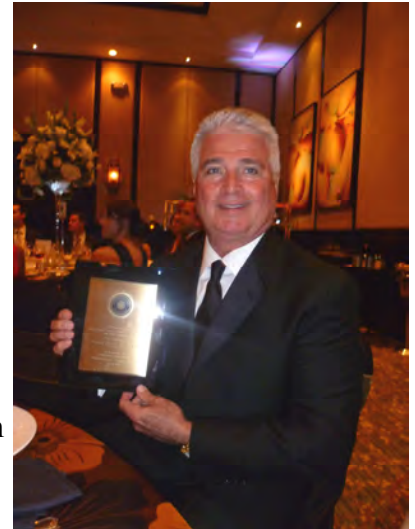
The ceremony held at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse in North Palm Beach.



Judge Ronald Alvarez

#### South County

On May 12, 2012, **Judge David French** was presented with the 2012 Distinguished Jurist of the Year Award by retired Judge Edward Garrison at the Fifty First Annual Installation Gala of the South Palm Beach County Bar Association (SPBCBA), held at the Boca West Country Club.



Judge David French

---

### JUDGES PARTICIPATE IN PROSTITUTION IMPACT PREVENTION EDUCATION (PIPE)

PIPE is a plea offer program created by the City of West Palm Beach Police Department developed to address inequities in the prosecution of men and women arrested for solicitation for prostitution. The purpose of the PIPE plea offer is to standardize sentencing in these cases and to educate the defendant as to the consequences of soliciting prostitutes. Working in conjunction with the State Attorney's Office and the Public Defender, a plea offer allows defendants to avoid jail time by opting for a three-hour educational class.

This program is intended to act as a deterrent and to educate. Speakers representing many agencies include: Fifteenth Circuit Judges, Palm Beach County Sheriff, West Palm Beach Police Department, and State Attorneys. Lectures are given by representatives from: Palm Beach County Health Department Comprehensive AIDS Program, Detectives who specialize in violent crimes and prostitute murders, and sex therapists.

In addition to the education awareness program, the plea agreement includes testing for STD, HIV, and hepatitis. The Defendant pays all fees, including a fee for the health education class. If the Defendant completes the above requirements, is not arrested for any new offense, and stays out of the area he/she was arrested in, the sentence is mitigated.



# LAW WEEK AT THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

The national theme for Law Week 2012 was “*No Courts, No Justice, No Freedom.*”

To mark the event, the Fifteenth Circuit hosted events on May 1-3, 2012. Over 120 students from Berean Christian, Palm Beach Lakes Law Magnet, Village Academy, Spanish River and Homeschool Program schools spent a day at the Main Courthouse to learn firsthand about the role and procedures of the third branch of government.

Each morning, **Chief Judge Peter Blanc** or **Judge Peter Evans** welcomed the students and explained the importance of judicial independence.

**Judges Karen Miller, Jeffrey Colbath, Joseph Marx, and Marni Bryson** made their courtrooms accessible to the students during their busy mid-morning dockets. Tanique Lee, Chairperson of the Law Week Committee of the Palm Beach County Bar Association made arrangements for lunchtime presentations by **Judge Ronald Alvarez**, Assistant State Attorney(s) and Assistant Public Defender(s).

The Palm Beach Sheriff’s Office Court Containment Team (CCT) and K-9/Deputies provided demonstrations and answered questions.



Judge Jeffrey Colbath



Judge Peter Evans

## Law Day Luncheon

On May 4, 2012, the Palm Beach County Bar Association held its annual Law Day Luncheon. Many Fifteenth Circuit judges attended.

Keynote speaker, Elizabeth Smart, who was kidnapped in 2002 from her home in Salt Lake City, Utah, shared details of her story of survival, hope, faith, and courage. She spoke about becoming an advocate for children and how she made a decision that her involvement in community and law enforcement awareness could help children. In addition to founding The Elizabeth Smart Foundation [www.elizabethsmartfoundation.org](http://www.elizabethsmartfoundation.org), she has also partnered with the non-profit radKIDS® <http://www.radkids.org>, a children’s safety education program. Her kidnappers were eventually convicted and one is serving a life sentence.

# LAW WEEK: JUDGE JOHN PHILLIPS HOSTS MOCK TRIAL

## Judge John Phillips Hosts ‘Mock Trial’

As part of the Law Week program and the Justice Teaching program, Judge John Phillips hosted a Mock Trial at the North County Courthouse on May 4, 2012.

Students from the Royal Palm School participated by acting as ‘jurors’ in a ‘case’ in which court staff acted as plaintiff, defendant, attorneys and witnesses.



Back l-r: Judge John Phillips, Deputy George Gasperini (witness) Angela Claud (prosecutor), Lynn Phillips (defendant), Shiloh (King Charles Cavalier Spaniel therapy dog), Susan Goldsmith (owner/dog handler), Harriet Merlin (victim), Careca, Sheri Hazeltine (behind hat) (defense attorney), Mary, Andrea Morris, Sharyn Robbins, John Berg, Bill Giarraputto, and Regina Brodsky (teacher) .

Front l-r: Andre, Dinah, Luciano, Rex, Adam, Christopher .

The ‘trial’ centered around the ‘defendant’, played by Lynn Phillips who took the ‘culprit’, Shiloh, a Certified Therapy Dog into a school. She was subsequently sued by the ‘plaintiff/victim’ (Harriet Merlin) who claimed she was terrified of dogs.



Shiloh

The picture right shows Shiloh being examined by the jury.





## LAW WEEK: ANNUAL JUDGES/LAWYERS SOFTBALL GAME

On Saturday, April 28, 2012, the 17th Annual Judges/Lawyers softball competition was held at John Prince Park.

This is the second year the event has been dedicated to Dennis P. Koehler, Esq. who passed away over a year ago after a valiant fight against melanoma. It is now known as the 'Koehler Classic.'

Participating in this event were: U.S. District Court **Judge Kenneth Marra**, Fifteenth Circuit **Judges Frank Castor, Mark Eissey, Jim Martz, Richard Oftedal** and **Magistrates Sara Alijewicz and Thomas Baker**.

Although the judge's team fought hard, the winner, once again, was the attorney's team.

Immediately following the game, the judges and lawyers enjoyed a picnic lunch donated by Duffys at Village Commons.



Back: (l-r) Magistrate Sara Alijewicz, Judge James Martz, Jeff Martz, Tommy Vallee, David Aponte, Keith Moak, Judge Frank Castor, Judge Richard Oftedal, Judge Kenneth Marra, Kirk Volker, Matt Eissey.  
Front : (l-r) Jake Nobel, Matt Naparstek, Sam Miller, Magistrate Thomas Baker, Judge Mark Eissey, retired Judge Richard Wennet.



Back: (l-r) Craig Pohlman, Alex Brantler, Greg Salnick, (unidentified), Joe Walsh, Tom Spall, David Prather, Abigail Beebe, John Parnofiello, Adam Myron.  
Front : (l-r) Phil Mugavero, Heather Wallace-Bridwell, (unidentified), Brian Balaguera (with Tank), Dan Marshall, Luis Delgado.



## FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT AND PALM BEACH COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT COLLABORATE

On May 15, 2012, the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit and the Palm Beach County School District hosted a “School-Justice Partnership Meeting,” coordinated and arranged by **Judge Kathleen Kroll**.

The purpose was to create a school/court partnership to keep kids in school and out of court. The meeting was well attended with over 50 stakeholders present from various agencies including Florida Supreme Court **Justice Barbara Pariente**, Department of Juvenile Justice Secretary **Wansley Walters**, **Chief Judge Peter Blanc**, **Judge Kathleen Kroll**, Thirteenth Circuit **Judge Katherine Essrig**, Florida Director of Children’s Legal Services **Mary Cagle**, Superintendent **E. Wayne Gent**, with Commissioner of Education **Gerard Robinson** appearing by video conference.

The goal of the meeting was to create strategies for improving the disciplinary policy and practice and thereby reducing referrals to juvenile and criminal courts. Research has shown that suspension and expulsion are ineffective in improving student behavior, and in some cases have been associated with involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice system.

School-justice partnerships help improve outcomes for students through policies and practices that encourage supportive learning environments and promote positive student behavior. At the all-day meeting, the participants heard from several speakers, observed court, and worked in small groups to develop initiatives for the upcoming year.

On video: Commissioner of Education Gerard Robinson, (middle) Justice Barbara Pariente, (right) Keith Wright.



l-r: Chief Judge Peter Blanc, Justice Barbara Pariente, Judge Kathleen Kroll.



l-r: Assistant Superintendent Keith Oswald, Superintendent E. Wayne Gent, Christopher Ginton, Program Planner for the School District, Dr. Debra Robinson, Vice Chair of School Board.





## NEW ATTORNEY BREAKFAST: PRESENTED BY GENERAL COUNSEL AMY BORMAN

On May 17, 2012, the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, in conjunction with the Professionalism Committee of the Palm Beach County Bar Association, hosted a "New Attorney Welcome Breakfast" for recently admitted attorneys practicing in Palm Beach County. The goal of this breakfast was to provide information on the local practice and professionalism in Palm Beach County, and to encourage the new attorneys to participate in the local legal community.

Following opening remarks by **Chief Judge Peter Blanc**, Administrative **Judges Thomas Barkdull, Jeffrey Colbath, Glenn Kelley, August Bonavita, Kathleen Kroll** and **Sandra Bosso-Pardo** spoke to the group of over 75 newly admitted Palm Beach County attorneys about the importance of building and maintaining their reputations and the "Do's and Don'ts" of practicing in the various divisions. Florida Supreme Court **Justice Jorge Labarga** also addressed the group and discussed the rise of ethical violations occurring amongst members of The Florida Bar.

In attendance were **Judges Ronald Alvarez, Lucy Chernow Brown, Jack Cox, David Crow, Peter Evans, David French, Donald Hafele, Janis Keyser, Timothy McCarthy, Karen Miller, Nancy Perez, Robin Rosenberg, and Meenu Sasser**. Eleven different local bar associations, along with the Palm Beach Legal Aid Society and Sharon Bock, Clerk and Comptroller, Palm Beach County, had the opportunity to distribute information and speak with the new attorneys. The morning's event concluded with a tour of the courthouse.

In an effort to provide a resource for new attorneys needing guidance and advice, the subcommittee on New Attorney Outreach, chaired by General Counsel Amy Borman, will match up experienced attorneys in the community with those new attorneys in attendance.



Judge Jeffrey Colbath, Administrative Judge for the Circuit Criminal Division.



l-r: Administrative County Criminal Judge August Bonavita, Justice Jorge Labarga; Judge Peter Evans.



l-r: Amy Borman, General Counsel; Justice Jorge Labarga; Sharon Bock, Clerk & Comptroller, Judge David Crow; John Howe, President Palm Beach County Bar Association.

## TRIAL COURT LAW CLERKS

Eric Eves joined the 15th Judicial Circuit in April 2012 as the newest Trial Court Law Clerk. Eric is a double Hurricane having received his Bachelor of Science, *Cum Laude*, in Communications from the University of Miami in May 2008 and his Juris Doctor, *Cum Laude*, in May 2011. While in law school, Eric was the Executive Vice President of the Charles C. Papy, Jr. Moot Court Board, a Finalist in the John T. Gaubatz 1L Moot Court Competition, a Dean's Merit Scholar, and was awarded the Thomas Ewald Memorial Award which is the highest honor in the Litigation Skills Program. Eric previously interned with the Office of the Attorney General, Criminal Appeals Division, and the Honorable Andrea M. Simonton, Magistrate Judge of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida. Prior to joining the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, Eric was a Miami Law Legal Corps Fellow with the Honorable Leslie B. Rothenberg of the Third District Court of Appeal.



The Trial Court Law Clerks welcomed the 2012 **Summer Judicial Interns** on May 16.

The summer interns have committed to an eleven week intensive educational/work program that ends in August. As part of the summer program, the interns have been reviewing post-conviction files, preparing bench memoranda for the circuit civil appellate panels, and reviewing caseloads and preparing lack of service and lack of prosecution notices in the circuit and county court civil divisions.

Since starting in May, the interns and law clerks have toured the Palm Beach County Jail, the Juvenile Assessment Center, and the Juvenile Detention Facility. They have attended first appearance court with



Summer Judicial Interns: l-r: Spencer Keyser (Nova Southeastern), Alissa Kranz (University of Florida), H. Seth Rosenthal (Nova Southeastern), Samantha Robbins (Georgetown University), Laura Brickell (University of Miami), Robert Bernstein (University of Miami), Stratton Smiley (Nova Southeastern) and Sean Smith (University of Florida).

Circuit Civil Uniform Motion Calendar, juvenile court with **Judge Ronald Alvarez**, and a variety of hearings and trials.

The interns visited with **Judge Nelson Bailey** at the Belle Glade Courthouse and toured the new Belle Glade jail. They visited the South County Courthouse, observed an autopsy and attended oral arguments at the Fourth District Court of Appeal. Upcoming tours include the North County Courthouse, the Federal District Court, Veteran's Court and Drug Court. Scheduled lunch and learns include career opportunities with public agencies, resume and cover letter writing with General Counsel Amy Borman and Gail Johnson of the Department of Justice, and discussion of young lawyers and professionalism with **Judges Booras, Evans, McCarthy, Diana Lewis, Lucy Brown, Crow Lisa Small, David French, Ed Fine and Meenu Sasser**. Applications for the Summer 2013 program will be available in January 2013.



## DRUG COURT

On May 1, 2012, **Commissioner Shelley Vana** presented a proclamation to Circuit **Judge Ronald Alvarez** the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners meeting. The Proclamation declared May 2012 as “Drug Court Month” in Palm Beach County.

Also in attendance were Trial Court Administrator **Barbara Dawicke**, Adult Drug Court Coordinator **Dorrie Tyng**, Adult Drug Court Program Specialist **Maria Stevens** and Family Drug Court Coordinator **Lisa Bozzone**. All team members of the Adult, Delinquency, and Family Drug Courts were acknowledged for their work in restoring lives,

reuniting families, and making the community safer. Drug Courts unite criminal justice entities and substance-abusing offenders in a therapeutic court setting in order to assist them to develop a structured, disciplined, law-abiding drug and alcohol-free way of life.

The Drug Court Programs of Palm Beach County have been providing irreplaceable services to our county for a number of years: Adult Drug Court for the past 12 years, Delinquency Drug Court for 4 years, and Family Drug Court is in its second year.

l-r: Drug Court Specialist Maria Stevens, Circuit Judge Ronald Alvarez, Palm Beach County Commissioner Shelley Vana, Drug Court Manager Dorrie Tyng, Trial Court Administrator Barbara Dawicke, Coordinator Family Drug Court Lisa Bozzone.



## Traffic Hearing Officer Training

On June 18, 2012, the Palm Beach County Traffic Hearing Officers (THO) joined together with the THO's from Broward County and Martin/St. Lucie County for their annual recertification training. Funded by a grant from the National Judicial College, Judge Toni Boone, an administrative law judge from Reno, Nevada, and Melody Luetkehans from the National Judicial College located in Reno, traveled to the Fifteenth Circuit to present the training.



Judge Toni T. Boone, administrative law judge for the Office of Administrative Hearings of the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles is also on the faculty of the National Judicial College.

## NEW COURT REPORTING SERVICES MANAGER

Melissa Sotillo has been selected for the position of Court Reporting Services Manager for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit. Effective July 2, 2012, she will oversee the Court Reporting Department.

Melissa has over ten years of management experience and holds a Bachelors Degree in Business Administration, with a focus on Management and Marketing, from the University of Central Florida.

Melissa worked as Administrative Assistant to the Trial Court Administrator for the past ten months which allowed her to gain valuable insight into the operations of the Circuit and the Court Reporting Department.



## ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The Fifteenth Circuit's Alternative Dispute Resolution Office coordinated an OSCA/DRC County Mediation Training program June 5-June 8, 2012. It was hosted by Bill Moreno, Director, and Walter Colbath III, Mediation Services Coordinator.

This training program provided the required State Supreme Court certification training to professionals in our Circuit. Retired Judges, lawyers, and other professionals who would like to serve the Court as volunteer County Court mediators attended.



Janice Fleischer, Director, OSCA/Florida Dispute Resolution Center, and Kimberly Kosch, OSCA/Court Operations Consultant conducted the training program at the West Palm Beach Library.

## Boy Scout Troop 128

came to the Courthouse to fulfill the requirement for the Citizenship in the Community Merit Badge.

Scoutmaster J. D. DeBoesky, (second from left) is their leader.



Walter Colbath,III, (far left), Mediation Services Coordinator, has been a Boy Scout Leader for 13 years.



## TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS AND SONS TO WORK DAY

On April 26, 2012, Court Administration partnered with the Clerk and Comptroller, Sheriff's Office, State Attorney, and Public Defender to host the annual "Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day." More than 155 children between the ages of 8 and 12 registered for the day's activities.

The theme was "Build Opportunity: 20 Years of Education, Empowerment, and Experience."

During the lunch period children joined their parent for lunch and job shadowing.

In the afternoon a "Scavenger Hunt" led groups of eager children to different areas of the courthouse based on clues they were given. They were then required to complete a task before getting their next clue.

The day concluded with a demonstration of the explosive detection capability of the PBSO K-9 unit, a weapons demonstration, and a visit to the courthouse holding cell.

The event is held on the last Thursday of each April to showcase career possibilities to school-age children.



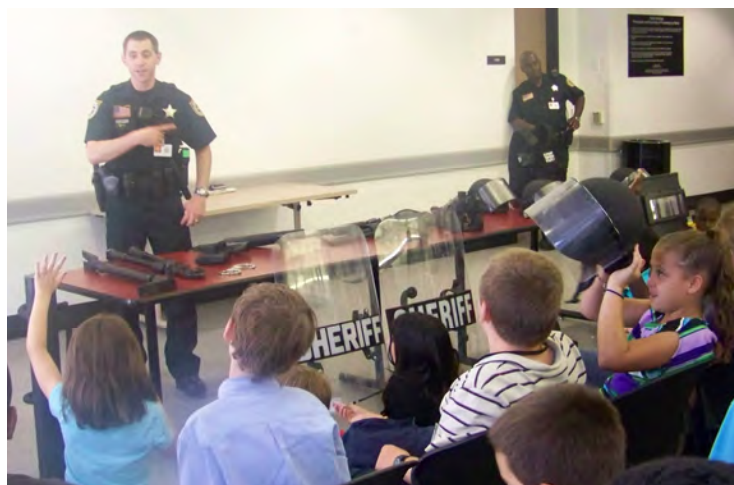
Children gather in the cafeteria to divide into groups and receive their assignments and mentors for the day.



A group of children in the law library receive their next clue for the scavenger hunt after reciting the alphabet backwards.



PBSO Deputies demonstrate the ability of the K-9 to detect explosive materials.



PBSO Deputies demonstrate various weapons and protection used by Sheriff deputies.

## WELCOME TO THE CIRCUIT APRIL-JUNE 2012

### Welcome:

County Court Judge Daliah Weiss  
Eric Eves, Trial Court Law Clerk  
Jomekeyia McNeil, Administrative Secretary I  
Michael Gaballa, Desktop Administrator

### Congratulations:

Maria Powers, Court Reporter II  
Astrid Limouzin, Court Program Specialist I

## ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS

Administrative Orders amended April 1-June 30, 2012 are:

5.505	4/12	Establishment of Domestic Violence Divisions FT and FV
3.311	4/12	Disposal of Foreclosure Trial Exhibits
11.110	4/12	Appointment of Circuit Judges as Acting County Judges & County Judges as Acting Circuit Judges
8.101	4/12	Appeals from County Court and Local Administrative Agencies; Petitions for Extraordinary Writ
4.107	4/12	Appointment of Elder Justice
7.102	5/12	Prisoner Litigation
11.101	6/12	Assignment of Judges
11.106	6/12	Alternate Assignments
11.104	6/12	Seniority Listing of Judges
5.608	6/12	Application of Funds Received from Probationer in Juvenile Proceedings
2.605	6/12	Provisional Indigency Determination
12.503	6/12	Interim Policy on Electronic Release of Court Records
5.704	6/12	Independent Living Review (ILR) Court
2.503	6/12	Court Reporting Services

For updates to the latest Administrative Orders (AOs) for the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, please see our website at:

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

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### July

17-19 Conference of County Court Judges

### August

13-15 Conference of Circuit Judges

23-25 Annual Dispute Resolution Conference

24 Investiture of Judge Daliah Weiss

## COURT HOLIDAYS JULY-SEPTEMBER

### July

4 Independence Day

### September

3 Labor Day

17 Rosh Hashanah

26 Yom Kippur



Ms. Ruth (Elvira) Dorsey retired from the circuit at the end of May after 35 years of dedicated service. She will be missed by all who knew her.

