

# Circuit Courier

April-June 2014

Vol. 2014-2

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

**Chief Justice Polston Visits Circuit**

**Law Week**

**Davis Productivity Award**

**Summer Judicial Interns**

*And more...*





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Judicial  
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by: Deputy  
LaFlamme

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On May 29, 2014, **Chief Justice Ricky Polston**, **Justice Jorge Labarga**, and Lisa Goodner traveled to West Palm Beach to meet with **Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath**, **Judge Richard Oftedal**, Barbara Dawicke, Noel Chessman, Michelle Spangenberg and Devon Mugridge, to discuss the innovative technologies put into practice in the Foreclosure Division.



Chief Justice Ricky Polston

The Chief Justice complemented the Chief Judge and Judge Oftedal for their hard work in reducing the foreclosure backlog. Judge Oftedal provided the group with an overview as to how the system functions and he highlighted the assistance provided by **Judge Diana Lewis** and the Circuit Civil Judges. Barbara discussed the Circuit's Judicial Viewer (ICMS) and the features in ICMS that assist with case management including the ability to sort caseloads, generate court orders, and flag cases.

The meeting was productive and the Circuit appreciated the positive feedback received by the Chief Justice, Justice Labarga, and Lisa Goodner.



Judge Richard Oftedal during Foreclosure hearing

## LAW WEEK AT THE FIFTEENTH

In April, 2014 the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit participated in the Palm Beach County Bar Association's Law Week by hosting the "Shadow a Judge" program. The program allows a group of high school students with an interest in the legal profession an opportunity to interact with the court system and individuals within the legal field. This year's participants were from King's Academy, Berean Christian, Lake Worth and Inlet Grove High Schools.



Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath welcomes the students.

**Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath** welcomed the student attendees and provided information on the State Courts system. A panel discussion was held with Circuit **Judges Peter Blanc** and **Glen Kelley** along with County Court **Judge August Bonavita** and Senior **Judge Howard Harrison, Jr.** Also sitting on the panel were representatives from the State Attorney's and Public Defender's offices.



Judge August Bonavita sits on the panel during the lunch discussion.

The students were provided with a tour of the courthouse which included an observation of court events. Other areas toured included the office of the Clerk of Court, the jury office, and the law library. The Sheriff's office provided a canine demonstration. Bill Moreno, Alternative Dispute Resolution Director held a mock mediation of which the students participated.



Bill Moreno, Alternative Dispute Director conducts a mock mediation.



### 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 2, 2014.

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.



Participants of the mock trial included Judges, judicial assistants, a court deputy, court staff, teachers, parents and most of all the students.



L-r: Judge John Phillips, Judge Richard Oftedal



Judge Richard Oftedal is clearly having fun.

## DAVIS PRODUCTIVITY AWARD

The members of the 2012-2013 Foreclosure Team are the proud recipients of a 2014 Davis Productivity Award. The Award is specifically for the differentiated case management plan that former **Chief Judge Peter Blanc** and his Team developed as a method for addressing the foreclosure case backlog. The Foreclosure Team consisted of **Judge Diana Lewis**, **Judge Robin Rosenberg**, Devon Mugridge, Michelle Spangenberg, and approximately twelve case managers.



L-r: Michelle Spangenberg, Devon Mugridge, Judge Robin Rosenberg, Judge Diana Lewis, Judge Peter Blanc

The Juvenile Court Team of retired **Judge Karen Martin**, Cristy Altaro, and Will Hutchings are the recipients of a 2014 Davis Productivity Award. The Award is in recognition of a pilot program that Judge Martin and staff started in January 2011. The pilot, entitled, Reminder Notification Program, was implemented to: reduce the failure to appear rate for juvenile defendants; reduce court delays; reduce the number of warrants issued; and decrease the utilization of detention beds. The program worked in partnership with the local Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative with a common strategy aimed at improving internal operations and expediting the judicial handling of cases while avoiding the expenditure of County and State funds on defendants who failed to appear for Court. The program continues to this day.



Retired Judge Karen Martin



Cristy Altaro



Will Hutchings



## OUTSTANDING JURISTS 2014

### North County

On May 15, 2014, **Judge Lucy Chernow Brown** was presented with the 2014 Distinguished Jurist of the Year Award by the North County Section of the Palm Beach County Bar Association. The award recognizes a local judge for their commitment to the Bench and Bar. The ceremony was held at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse in North Palm Beach.



L-r: Todd Stewart, Esq., Judge Lucy Brown, Judge Richard Oftedal

### South County

On May 31, 2014, **Judge Moses Baker, Jr.** was presented with the 2014 Distinguished Jurist of the Year Award at the 53rd Annual Installation Gala of the South Palm Beach County Bar Association (SPBCBA). The award recognizes a local judge for their commitment to the Bench and South County Bar. The ceremony was held at the Mizner Country Club.



Judge Moses Baker with his daughter Sia.

### Inn of Court-Jurist of the Year

On April 22, 2014, Judge Meenu Sasser was presented with the Craig S. Barnhart American Inn of Court Jurist of the Year Award. The ceremony was held in Courtroom 9D, and the presentation was made by Fourth DCA **Judge Spencer Levine** and Circuit **Judge Lisa Small**.

The Mission of the American Inns of Court is to foster excellence in professionalism, ethics, civility, and legal skills.



L-r: Judge Lisa Small, Judge Meenu Sasser, Judge Spencer Levine, attorney Terrill Pyburn

### Judiciary and Court Partners Tour Juvenile Justice Facilities

On June 23, the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) coordinated a tour of residential facilities in Circuit 19. Several members of the Judiciary and Court personnel including **Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath**, **Judge Kathleen Kroll**, **Judge Jim Martz**, **Judge Rosemarie Scher**, Magistrate Sara Alijewicz as well as Trial Court Administrator Barbara Dawicke and Juvenile Manager Cristy Altaro were part of a group from Palm Beach County who participated in the all day event.



L-r: Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath, Judge Kathleen Kroll, Magistrate Sara Alijewicz, Judge Rosemarie Scher, Judge Jim Martz, and Chief Probation Officer Greg Starling.

Local stakeholders from Legal Aid as well as the Offices of Regional Conflict Counsel, the State Attorney and the Public Defender also participated in the tour.

The tour included visits to the following programs: Martin County Girls Academy, Okeechobee Juvenile Offender Corrections Center, Okeechobee Youth Development Center, and Okeechobee Girls Academy. Lunch was spent with juveniles at the Okeechobee Youth Development Center.

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### Veterans' Court

On July 1, Veterans' Court participated in the Governor's Veterans Service Award Ceremony at the Callaway Armory. This event was created to honor Florida's more than 1.5 million Veterans. The Governor of Florida, Rick Scott, created an executive resolution to thank Veterans and Florida's military for their service. The Governor's selection committee selected Jerry Klein as this year's spotlight Veteran. Mr. Klein is a lead mentor and has assisted Veterans' Court since its inception.



Florida Governor, Rick Scott, with the Veterans' Court Team

**Judge Ted Booras** along with other court partners attended the event, afterwards Judge Booras conducted Court. As a result many Veterans were assisted and linked to services available at the Veterans Health Care Administration.



### Judges Host Leadership Boca

Leadership Boca spent part of their government day with the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit again this year. The group received an opportunity to ask questions of **Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath** along with **Judge August Bonavita** and **Judge Robert Panse**. Each judge discussed the role of the court system in Palm Beach County and how as a business leader in Boca one may become involved in a court action within the circuit. Their visit to the courthouse included a speech by Senator Maria Sachs about the role of leadership in government within the Florida legislature.



Judge August Bonavita



Senator Maria Sachs

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### Judge Lisa Small Presides over Mock Trial

On Monday, June 2, 2014, **Judge Lisa Small** presided over two mock trials presented by third graders from the Palm Beach Day Academy. The trials involved a civil dispute between developers and conservationists over whether development should be allowed in an area located in a nature preserve. Under the guidance of their teachers, the students researched the issues for one semester. They then drafted the opening statements, direct and cross examination of their witnesses, etc. The students also took on the roles of attorneys, parties, witnesses, and courtroom deputy.

The mock trial is an ongoing program of the third grade classes of the Palm Beach Day Academy. The program teaches the students critical thinking and encompasses numerous fields of study including public speaking, civics, science, and writing skills.





### Delinquency Drug Court Graduation

At a graduation ceremony on April 30, 2014, **Judge Ronald Alvarez** honored a graduate who successfully completed the requirements of the Delinquency Drug Court (DDC) Program.

Participants, family members, advocates, Drug Court Team members, stakeholders and community members were present to recognize the participant's accomplishment. Judge Alvarez provided the Court attendees with an overview of the graduate's life history and presented the graduate with a certificate of completion.



Judge Ronald Alvarez congratulates graduate

### Judges present sidebar to the Palm Beach County Young Lawyers

The Palm Beach County Bar Association's Young Lawyer's section presented the second of their YLS Sidebar Series. Judges **Meenu Sasser, Lucy Chernow Brown, Jack Cox, Donald Hafele, and Lisa Small** participated in the discussion.

Judge Sasser provided the attendees with information on Uniform Motion Calendar Hearings. The attendees also participated in mock hearings and were provided with constructive criticism by the Judicial panel.



L-r: Judges Lisa Small, Donald Hafele, Meenu Sasser

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### Judge John Phillips Presents “Laptops and iPads in the Courtroom”

In May 16, **Judge John Phillips**, CTO Noel Chessman and iPad expert Reinaldo Llovet were invited to speak on the “use of laptops and iPads in the courtroom” by the 2014 Court Affiliates Conference. The Conference, which is sponsored by the Center for Legal and Court Technology, was held at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, boasted a multinational audience of technology specialists, clerks, and judges. Judge Phillips, Noel and Reinaldo appeared by video for 45 minutes. Noel’s presentation included a brief overview of Palm Beach County, the history of courtroom technology in the 15<sup>th</sup> Circuit, and current technical and security elements. Judge Phillips gave a judicial perspective to the use of file-less courtrooms, electronic signatures and the impact of mobile devices on judicial workflow. Reinaldo provided technical details concerning encryption and security management. The presentation was well received, and conference attendees were able to ask questions of the circuit panel at the conclusion of their presentation.

### Covering Attorney Symposium

On Friday, May 16, 2014 the 15th Judicial Circuit hosted a "Covering Attorney Symposium". Attorneys who "cover" hearings for attorneys as well as attorneys who hire "coverage counsel" were invited to attend this 3 hours symposium. Amy Borman, General Counsel for the circuit and a member of The Florida Bar Rules of Judicial Administration Committee, presented on Rule of Judicial Administration 2.505 and potential conflicts of interest.



Amy Borman

The second part of the symposium was a panel discussion with **Judges Diana Lewis, Richard Oftedal, Sandra Bosso Pardo, August Bonavita, Robert Panse** and Traffic Hearing Officer Sara Blumberg. Also in attendance were Keith Park and Paul Regensdorf from the Rules of Judicial Administration Committee as well as David Prather from The Florida Bar Board of Governors.



Amy Borman answers questions from the attorneys

### Judicial Lunch Series

On June 23, 2014, the Judicial Relations Committee of the Palm Beach County Bar Association held its monthly judicial luncheon where they discussed "Effective Advocacy-The Judges' Perspective." The judicial panel consisted of **Judges Jack Cox, Donald Hafele and Nancy Perez** with N. Patrick Hely, Esq. of Mrachek, Fitzgerald, Rose, Konopka, Thomas & Weiss, P.A. as the moderator.



L-r: N. Patrick Hely, Judges Nancy Perez, Donald Hafele, Jack Cox



### Courthouse Tours

**Judge Nancy Perez** hosted a group of young future leaders from ASPIRA of Palm Beach County.

ASPIRA of Florida, Inc., is a community-based youth organization. Operating in Palm Beach County since 1996, ASPIRA'S mission is "To empower the Puerto Rican, Latino and other communities through advocacy and the education and leadership development of its youth." The basic philosophy of ASPIRA is the belief that school, parents, youth, and community must interact to bring about positive results. ASPIRA'S goals are to develop their leadership potential, to develop their skills to the advancement of the community, to motivate, orient and assist youth through counseling and educational services, to advocate for greater access to quality education, leadership programs and other opportunities. The ASPIRANTES' day included an opportunity to talk with **Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath**, a court observation, courthouse tour and lunch with Judge Perez and members of the Palm Beach County Hispanic Bar Association.



R: Chief  
Judge Jeffrey  
Colbath



R: Judge  
Nancy Perez

On May 2, 2014, Palm Beach Gardens High School students received a tour of the courthouse and a presentation from **Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath**.



### Mediation Training

On June 16, 2014, the ADR Office provided a continuing mediation education program for the volunteer mediators of the Fifteenth Circuit. Patricia Propheter presented on Juvenile Dependency mediation. In addition, volunteer mediator Paul Tuck was presented with an “Above and Beyond Award” for all the service that he provides in the South County Court.



L-r: Walter Colbath III., Paul Tuck

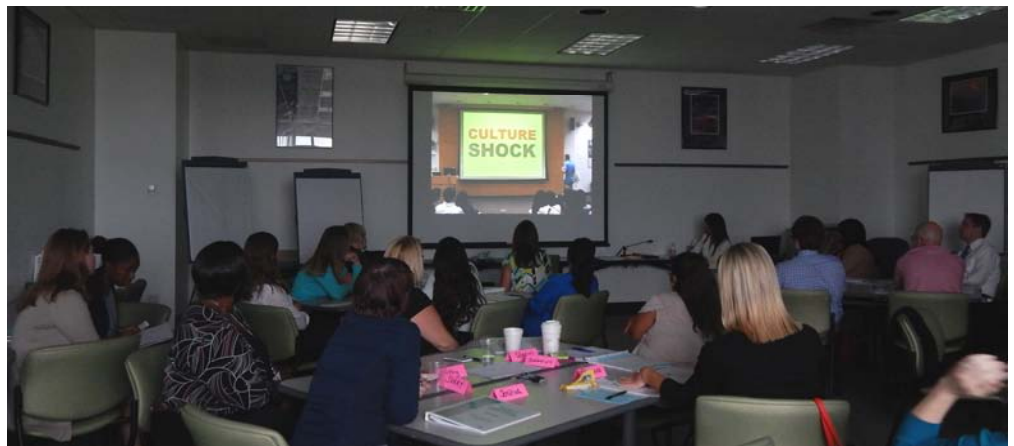


L-r: Bill Moreno, Patricia Propheter, Walter Colbath III.

### Fairness and Diversity Training

In compliance with recommendations of the Supreme Court’s Standing Committee on Fairness and Diversity, the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit offered fairness and diversity trainings to judges, magistrates and court staff on June 2<sup>nd</sup> and June 3<sup>rd</sup> at the main Judicial Complex.

The training was led by Wilhelmina Tribble, a certified international facilitator, who has over twenty years of experience leading diversity trainings in the Florida court system, law firms, and law schools. Ms. Tribble's sessions were interactive, thought provoking, and engaging. The training provided an opportunity for spirited discussions among the participants. A total of 50 judges and court staff participated in the mandatory training.





## TRIAL COURT LAW CLERKS

The circuit welcomed the summer 2014 judicial interns on May 21, 2014 for a 10 week program run by General Counsel Amy Borman with oversight from the trial court law clerks. The interns assisted the law clerks with post conviction motion review and county to circuit appeals. The interns, along with the law clerks, observed circuit civil motion calendar and special set hearings. They also attended various criminal trials, juvenile shelter and detention hearings and drug court. They toured the Palm Beach County Jail, the West County Detention Facility, the Juvenile Detention Facility, and the South County Courthouse. In addition to a ride-a-long with the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, the interns and trial court law clerks went for a boat ride-a-long with the Florida Fish and Wildlife officers. As a way of giving back, the law clerks and interns prepared dinner for families staying at the Quantum House at St. Mary's Medical Center.

To learn more about the 2015 summer internship program or a position as a trial court law clerk, please contact Amy Borman at [Aborman@pbcgov.org](mailto:Aborman@pbcgov.org).



L-r: Madhavi Menon, Leslie Metz, Sean Fahey



L-r: Sean Fahey, Amy Borman, Harrison Fischer, Jessica Carroll, Jessica Underwood, Whitney Harrington, Toni-Ann Miller, Miguel Aristizabal, Riley Kennedy, Michelle Logan, Rachel Belcher, Christine Gardner and Gabrielle Jackson

## Summer Judicial Interns



L-r: Jessica Underwood, University of Miami; Riley Kennedy, University of Florida; Sam Winikoff, University of Miami; Whitney Harrington, Boston College; Harrison Fischer, Nova Southeastern University; Miguel Aristizabal, Emory University; Jessica Carroll, Florida International University; Toni-Ann Miller, University of Florida



### Circuit Picnic

After months of planning, on Saturday, April 26, 2014, the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit held the first circuit wide Family Picnic at Carlin Park in Jupiter. It was a beautiful, sunny day and we had a wonderful turnout with nearly 300 attendees, including Judges, staff and family members. There were many activities scheduled throughout the day, including: a tug of war, limbo contest, volleyball, and land skiing. Two bounce houses, sidewalk chalk, face painting, and lots of bubbles kept the children in attendance entertained. James Montada did a fantastic job as the resident D.J., playing a variety of music throughout the event. No picnic would be complete without food – Chef Richard catered the event and offered hamburgers, hot dogs, and a few side dishes. Many enjoyed sampling the delicious desserts as part of the dessert contest which had over 20 entries. Mrs. Oftedal, Judge Oftedal's wife, won first prize in the contest, with 2<sup>nd</sup> prize going to Judicial Assistant Stefanie Lee and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize was awarded to Administrative Assistant Marissa Sansone.

Staff members expressed their appreciation for such a lovely event and said how nice it was for everyone to get together with their families and relax. The picnic committee that organized the event included: **Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath**, Barbara Dawicke, Gina Evangelista, Michelle Spangenberg, Mary Quinlan, Cristy Altaro, Melissa Sotillo, Rhoda Jones, Noel Chessman, Stefanie Lee, Will Hutchings, Rebecca Ricker, James Montada, Janet Leach-Ruth, Angie Afanador, Diana Grant, and Walter Colbath. A very special thank you goes out to Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath for championing the idea of a Circuit picnic. Thank you, too, to the Judges and Magistrates (and staff) who donated funds which went to the support of the picnic.



Court Administrator Barbara Dawicke and other court staff served the food.



Land skiing proved to be a popular event



## AROUND THE CIRCUIT

### Excellence Awards

Congratulations to those persons nominated for the Judicial Assistant Recognition Award for the first quarter of 2014: Nancy Brody, Susan Campbell, Diana Grant, Judith Lane, Gloria Lozano, Amy Tracy, Denise Vanvooren, Jessica Wolfkill, Maryann Yarosz.

Congratulations, also, to those persons nominated for the Court Administration employee of the first quarter of 2014: Jacque Marshburn, Sharon Royal, Stewart Saalfield, Sarwar Siddiqui.

On May 27, a ceremony was held to announce the winners for the first quarter of 2014. Maryann Yarosz, Judicial Assistant to Judge Peter Evans, was named Judicial Assistant of the quarter ending March 2014. Sarwar Siddiqui was named as the Court Employee of the quarter for the same quarter. The winning Judicial Assistant and Court Staff person received a plaque, a paid Administrative leave day, a photo in the newsletter, and four weeks of parking in the Judicial parking garage.



Maryann Yarosz, appeared by video from Belle Glade to receive her plaque from Judge Richard Oftedal



Sarwar Siddiqui receives his plaque from Judge Richard Oftedal

### Law Library Services

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Westlaw

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## TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS AND SONS TO WORK DAY

Court Administration celebrated “Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day” on June 25, 2014. This year's theme was “Plant A Seed, Grow A Future”. The program consisted of a welcome by **Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath**, a canine presentation, an introduction to court reporting, and an opportunity to experience court interpreting in both Spanish and Creole.

The young adults who appeared for the program have parents who work as Magistrate Assistants, in Court Reporting, the Law Library and Human Resources. At the completion of the program the attendees shadowed their parent as they carried out their duties for the Court.



Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath.



Sheriff Canine Handler Deputy Andy Guevarez and Deputy Ozzie with the children, parents and court staff.



## COURT HOLIDAYS JULY-SEPTEMBER

### July

4 Independence Day

### September

1 Labor Day

25 Rosh Hashanah

### Welcome April-June 2014:

Philip Curtis-Law Library Associate 1

Kelly Henderson - Family Mediator

Pam Pitts - Information Desk Specialist

Parin Shah - Computer Specialist II

### Retirement:

Court Administration recently bid farewell to a valued employee, Pat Balch, who worked with Court Administration for approximately 10 years.

Pat, who over the past few years has worked primarily in the foreclosure division, will be greatly missed. The Circuit wishes Pat a happy and relaxing retirement.



## ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS

Administrative Orders amended April 1-June 30, 2014 are:

- 4.205-4/14\* - IN RE: FORFEITURE AND DISCHARGE OF SURETY AND CASH BONDS
- 3.314-4/14 - RE: TIMELY RESOLUTION OF MOTIONS IN FORECLOSURE DIVISION AW
- 2.310-5/14\* - IN RE: SERVICE BY EMAIL
- 4.202-5/14\* - IN RE: SCHEDULE OF BONDS AND PROCEDURES RELATING TO PRE-FIRST APPEARANCE RELEASE
- 2.606-6/14 - IN RE: APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF JUDGE DESIGNEE TO HEAR REQUESTS BY GENERAL REGISTRY ATTORNEYS FOR ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION
- 10.301-6/14 - IN RE: CIVIL TRAFFIC INFRACTION HEARING OFFICER PROGRAM

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

1 Governor's Veterans Service Award

8-11 Conference of County Court Judges

13-17 National Association for Court Management

21-23 Conference of Circuit Judges

21-23 Trial Court Administrators Educational Program

### August

14-16 Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Conference

26 Trial Court Budget Commission Meeting

28-29 Florida Courts Technology Commission Meeting

### September

16-19 Judicial Assistants Association of Florida Educational Conference

### Congratulations:

Congratulations to Chief of Personnel Germaine English who passed the Florida Bar exam. She was sworn in as an attorney on April 23, 2014, by Judge Nancy Perez.



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