

# Circuit Courier

July-September 2015  
Vol. 2015-3

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





*On the Cover: Main Judicial Center  
Photo by: Deputy LaFlamme*

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The Conference of Circuit Court Judges was held August 2-5, 2015 in Tampa, Florida. Judge Colbath is in his second term as Conference Chair.

Florida Statute 26.55 requires that conference members meet regularly to:

1. Consider and make recommendations concerning the betterment of the judicial system of the state and its various parts;
2. Consider and make recommendations concerning the improvement of rules and methods of procedure and practice in the several courts; and
3. Report to the Supreme Court such findings and recommendations as the conference may have with reference thereto.

Not only is this a wonderful opportunity for Florida's Circuit Judges to receive continuing education, but it is also their opportunity to make recommendations to the legislature regarding any "defects in the laws of this state." FLA. STAT. 26.55 (3) (b).

The conference is attended annually by as many as 400 Circuit Court Judges. Many of the Judges from this Circuit attended.

For more information on the Florida Conference of Circuit Court Judges please visit the web site at:  
[http://  
www.flcircuitconference.com/  
index.htm](http://www.flcircuitconference.com/index.htm)



*Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath*





# INVESTITURE OF JUDGE SCOTT I. SUSKAUER

Judge Scott I. Suskauer was appointed to the Circuit Court by Governor Rick Scott on June 18, 2015, filling a vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Stephen A. Rapp.

Prior to his judicial appointment, Judge Suskauer practiced with the Suskauer Law Firm, P.A., from 1994 until his appointment to the bench. He also worked as an Assistant Public Defender in Palm Beach County. He received his Bachelor's degree from Northwestern University and his Juris Doctor from the University of Miami.

Judge Suskauer's first assignment is in Family Division "FC" at the Main Judicial Complex. His Judicial Assistant is Johnna Hochella. The office can be reached at 561-355-3028.

Family, colleagues, and friends gathered in ceremonial courtroom 11A of the Palm Beach County Main Courthouse on September 25, 2015, for the investiture of Judge Scott I. Suskauer as a Circuit Judge.

Following the invocation from Gary S. Lesser Esq., Samuel, Alexander, and Ryan Rosenkranz led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath welcomed the group and acknowledged the Judicial Nominating Committee. The Judicial Commission, signed by Governor Rick Scott, was presented by Sharon R. Bock, Clerk and Comptroller of Palm Beach County.

Judge Lisa S. Small presented a desk plate on behalf of the Florida Conference of Circuit Judges. A Tanakh was presented by William J. Schifino, Esq. and Michael J. Higer, Esq. representing the Florida Bar Board of Governors.

Florida Supreme Court Justice Barbara J. Pariente administered the Oath of Office to Judge Suskauer assisted by Michelle, Talia, and Rebecca Suskauer. The honor of enrobing Judge Suskauer went to his parents Terry and John Suskauer.

Several traditional and ceremonial gifts were presented to Judge Suskauer including a gift from the Palm Beach County Bar Association, presented by the President, J. Grier Pressly III; a gift from the Palm Beach Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, presented by Kai Li Aloe Founts, President; a gift from the South Palm Beach County Bar Association, presented by Mark R. Osherow, President; a gift from the Palm Beach County Justice Association, presented by Gregory T. Zele, President; and a gift from the American Board of Trial Advocates, presented by John A. Lurvey, President of the American Board of Trial Advocates.

Following remarks by Gregory W. Coleman, Esq., Judge Joseph G. Marx, Gregory Tendrich, Esq., and Michelle R. Suskauer, Esq., Judge Suskauer thanked his family, friends, and the Judiciary. Judge Suskauer's daughters, Talia and Rebecca Suskauer, performed a song in honor of their father.

The ceremony concluded with the benediction from Howard I. Weiss, Esq.



Judge Barbara J. Pariente administers the Oath of Office to Judge Scott I. Suskauer

## 23RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE FOR MEDIATORS

On July 30-August 1, 2015, the Conference for Mediators took place in Orlando, Florida. Judges, mediators, attorneys, and other professionals from throughout the state were in attendance, to map the future role of the ADR in the courts. Florida Supreme Court Justice, Peggy Quince, addressed the conference attendees, stressing the Court's appreciation of the integral role mediation plays in the state courts system.

ADR Director Bill Moreno, Chief of Personnel Services Tammy Anton, and Mediators Cristina Maldonado, Hadas Stagman, Danni Hoefling, and Lourdes Castillo attended the meeting on behalf of the Circuit.



L-r: Mediators Cristina Maldonado, Hadas Stagman, Danni Hoefling, Lourdes Castillo, and ADR Director, Bill Moreno.

## 2015 Dependency Summit

On September 9-11, 2015, The Florida Department of Children and Families hosted the annual child protection summit at the JW Marriott in Orlando, Florida. The event is an opportunity for child welfare professionals to share best practices and continue the advancement of child welfare practices in Florida. Child protective investigators, community based care administration, case management staff, judges, magistrates, court personnel, attorneys, law enforcement officials, medical/mental health providers, and child advocates joined together to benefit from collaboration, communication, and creativity amongst their fields.

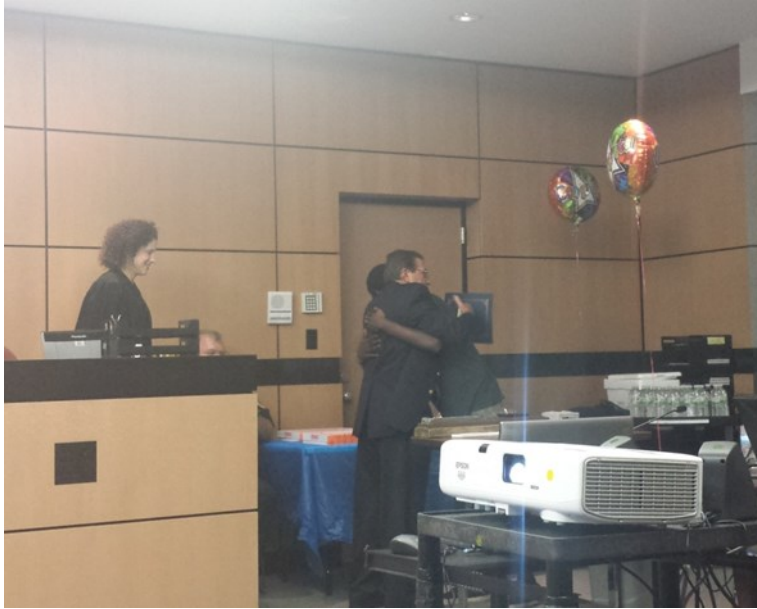


L-r: Judge James Martz, Magistrate Judette Fanelli, Cristy Altaro, Mary Quinlan, and Judge Kathleen Kroll.

Members from the 15th Judicial Circuit Court Administration in attendance were: Judge Kathleen Kroll, Judge James Martz, Judge Rosemarie Scher, Magistrate Judette Fanelli, Cristy Altaro, Mary Quinlan, and Brittany Jenkins. The summit offered two days of informative and interactive workshops with speakers and plenary sessions. The 15th Judicial Circuit Court was selected to facilitate a workshop, featuring Magistrate Fanelli's Therapeutic Court.

# DELINQUENCY DRUG COURT

Delinquency Drug Court recently held a graduation on July 8, 2015. Participants, family members, advocates, Drug Court Team members, stakeholders, and community members were present to celebrate the accomplishments in the lives of two program participants. Judge Rosemarie Scher presided and presented the graduates with their certificates of completion. Retired Judge Ronald Alvarez made a special guest appearance. Judge Alvarez initially worked with one of the youth in the program. Both participants thanked the Drug Court Team for not giving up on them and for all of their help. One participant was successfully terminated from probation and the other participant had their charges “nolle prossed.” There was a short recess to celebrate with refreshments.



Retired Judge Ronald Alvarez with program graduate.



Judge Rosemarie Scher with program graduate.





## AROUND THE CIRCUIT

Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath and a team of Court Partners attended the Safety and Justice Challenge Conference in Washington, D.C., on May 27-29, 2015 to accept a \$150,000 grant from the MacArthur Foundation. Grants of \$150,000 were awarded to only twenty jurisdictions throughout the United States. Palm Beach County is the only location to receive a grant.

According to the MacArthur Foundation, “America relies on incarceration as a response to crime more than any other country and the problem begins in local jails. Jail usage has more than tripled since the 1980s and so have the costs of building and running jails. Jails now hold 731,000 people on any given day and admit nearly 12 million a year, with devastating impacts on individuals, families, neighborhoods, and the economy. We want to change the way America thinks about jails.”

The purpose of the local grant is to assist the Chief Judge, Court Partners, and the MacArthur Foundation Consultants analyze the following six key point decisions related to incarceration: arrest, charge, pre-trial release, case processing, disposition, and post-conviction. The data analysis will help with the overall goal of reducing the jail population. If the plan is accepted sometime early in 2016, Palm Beach County may receive an award of up to \$2 million over five years for implementation of the plan.



L to r: Jenise Link, Mike Edmonson, Jeanette Marshall, Craig Spatara, Geraldine Nagy, Jennifer Loyless, Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath, and Daniel Gibson.

# IN MEMORIAM

## Irene Nocera

Irene Nocera passed on August 26, 2015 due to complications from cancer. She was a very dedicated and skilled Court Interpreter. She was loved and respected by many in the Circuit— Judges, Magistrates, Judicial Assistants, Court Administration, and her dear friends and peers in the Court Interpreter's Office.

Irene, who was born in Argentina, began her work with the Circuit as a County employee in August 1996 and switched over to the State in July 2004. She successfully passed the Certification Exam in 1998. Irene was promoted into the position of Manager of the Court Interpreter's Office in January 2013. In her role, she continued to interpret but also managed the scheduling of the Interpreters, evaluated the staff Interpreters, and responded to inquiries from the public, Judges, and Judicial Assistants. She also assisted with the interviews of all court interpreter candidates and provided an assessment of the candidates' language skills.

Irene will be greatly missed.



Court Interpreter Irene Nocera

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## Hans Belizaire

Hans Belizaire passed on August 30, 2015. He was a very dedicated and skilled Certified Creole Interpreter. He was loved and respected by many in the Circuit— Judges, Magistrates, Judicial Assistants, Court Administration, and his dear friends and peers in the Court Interpreter's Office.

Hans was born in Cavaillon, Haiti and taught secondary school for several years. He moved to the United States in the late 1980s and obtained his Bachelor's of Arts degree in Spanish from Florida Atlantic University. He was married to his wife, Evelitha for twenty-four years.

Hans began working for the Court in 2002 as an independent (Interpreter) contractor. In 2004, he was hired as a State employee into the position of Court Interpreter for the Circuit. He passed the arduous certification exam in 2006 and obtained his certification as a Creole Interpreter in 2011. He was also fluent in French and Spanish.

Hans will be remembered by those of us in the Circuit as an intellectual with a very kind demeanor who was soft spoken with a quick wit.



Creole Interpreter Hans Belizaire



# TRIAL COURT LAW CLERK PROGRAM

In August 2015, the Trial Court Law Clerk Program welcomed four new law clerks: Kristen Farber, Alexandra Lohman, Stuart Rimland, and Lindsay Watkins.

## Kristen Farber

Kristen Farber received a Bachelor of Science, *cum laude*, in Political Science and International Affairs from Florida State University in December 2011. She attended Florida International University College of Law where she was a merit scholar, continuously made the Dean's List, and received the book award for Products Liability, Scientific and Forensic Evidence Seminar. Kristen was a member of the Student Bar Association serving as an SGA representative and a class representative. She also was a Law Senator advocating on behalf of the College of Law and serving as a liaison between the College of Law and the University. Kristen served as an intern with Judge Robert Luck of the 11th Judicial Circuit where she worked on post conviction matters and later interned with the City Attorney's Office in Coral Springs where she worked on matters involving employment law, fair housing, Florida's Sunshine Law, sovereign immunity and civil forfeiture. Kristen graduated FIU College of Law in May 2015.



Kristen Farber

## Alexandra Lohman

Alexandra "Alex" Lohman was raised in California and received her Bachelor of Arts, *summa cum laude*, in Political Science from California State University, Long Beach in May 2011. She attended Northwestern University School of Law where she was the managing editor of the *Northwestern Law Journal of Law and Social Policy* and was part of the moot court team. Her note, *Silence of the Lambs: Making Noise about the Silent Epidemic of Rape & Sexual Assault in the US Armed Forces* was published in the spring 2015 edition of the *Northwestern Law Journal of Law & Social Policy*. While in law school, Alex was a student attorney representing juvenile clients in criminal and civil matters, was a summer intern with the New York County Defender Services in the Integrated Domestic Violence Division and was a summer extern with Judge James Otto of the Los Angeles Superior Court. After graduating law school in 2014, Alex went to work in Washington, D.C. as a fellow for the American Constitution Society where she researched, edited and drafted issue briefs addressing current constitutional challenges and drafted the annual program guide for student and lawyer chapters on constitutional questions for event programming.



Alexandra Lohman



# TRIAL COURT LAW CLERK PROGRAM

In August, the Trial Court Law Clerk Program welcomed four new law clerks: Kristen Farber, Alexandra Lohman, Stuart Rimland, and Lindsay Watkins.

## Stuart Rimland

Stuart Rimland is a 2012 graduate of the University of Florida's Warrington College of Business with a Bachelor of Science in economics. Stuart attended Northwestern University School of Law where he was a recipient of a three year merit scholarship and was a member of the Journal of International Human Rights. Stuart was actively involved in Moot Court serving as the Director of Competitor Preparation, Director of Competition Strategy and as Alumni Outreach chair. He received both the William Jennings Bryan Award for the Miner Moot Court Competition and the International Academy of Trial Lawyers Award for Outstanding Speaker. During his 1L and 2L summers, Stuart interned for U.S. District Judge Kenneth Ryskamp and was a summer associate at a South Florida law firm. Stuart graduated Northwestern University School of Law in May 2015.



Stuart Rimland

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## Lindsay Watkins

Lindsay is a 2012 graduate of the University of Florida, *cum laude*, with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology and Law and a Bachelor of Science in Psychology. Lindsay attended the University of Miami School of Law where she was the Articles and Comments Editor for the Race and Social Justice Law Review and was a member of the Children and Family Law Society. While in law school, Lindsay was a legal intern with the University of Miami Innocence Clinic, the University of Miami Children and Youth Law Clinic, and the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Unified Family Court. During her 3L year, she worked at a law firm in Miami where she researched matters pertaining to the dissolution of marriage, paternity, adoption, and dependency. Lindsay graduated from the University of Miami School of Law in May 2015.



Lindsay Watkins

# TRIAL COURT LAW CLERK PROGRAM

## Stuart Hartstone

In September 2015, Stuart Hartstone joined the Trial Court Law Clerks as a Senior Trial Court Law Clerk overseeing the criminal and juvenile assignments.

Stuart received his Bachelor of Science in Entertainment Industry from Ithaca College in 2003 and co-founded Hartstone Productions where he was a concert promoter in New York until returning to law school in 2007 at Florida International University.

While in law school, Stuart was a research assistant to Professor Ediberto Roman and a student attorney with the Immigration & Human Rights Clinic. While in the clinic, Stuart represented clients in removal proceedings before the Immigration Court and led FIU's response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake by training over 150 volunteer law students and local attorneys in the application process for Haitian Temporary Protected Status. Stuart received the Excellence in Service to the Program Award and the book awards in Intellectual Property and the Immigration & Human Rights Clinic.



Stuart Hartstone

Prior to joining the circuit, Stuart worked at the Florida Center for Capital Representation at FIU College of Law and the Florida Capital Resource Center, two Miami-based organizations created to assist indigent defendants facing the death penalty by providing consultation, research, training, and advocacy to capital defense attorneys across the state. He also worked part-time for a Miami law firm where he directly assisted in first degree and capital murder cases.



L to r: Stuart Kimland, Alexandra Lohman, Kristen Farber, and Lindsay Watkins



## 2015 Summer Interns

The month of July was busy for the 2015 summer interns and staff attorneys. Tours included the Palm Beach County Sheriff Office's Crime Lab, The Clerk and Comptroller's Office, Place of Hope, and the Juvenile Detention Center. The interns and attorneys were able to observe a Naturalization ceremony at the Federal Courthouse and visit the Quantum House where dinner was prepared for the families whose children are being treated at St. Mary's Hospital.

In addition to lunch and learn sessions with judges, the interns and staff attorneys had a lunch and learn with local civil practitioners to learn more about the areas of commercial litigation, personal injury litigation, probate litigation, family law, and land use. The final lunch and learn of the summer was with attorneys from other governmental agencies including the Palm Beach County Attorney's Office, Legal Aid of Palm Beach County, the Guardian Ad Litem's Office, the Delray Beach Police Department, the City of West Palm Beach, the South Florida Water Management District, and the Department of Children and Families. Applications for the 2016 summer intern program will be available in January 2016.



Summer Interns and Staff Attorneys from the 15th Judicial Circuit Court gather to prepare dinner for families staying at the Quantum House.



L to r: Thomas Collery, Joshua Dockus, Justin Etcheverry, Samantha Bowen, Kasey Murphree, Christian Chessman, Margaret Greco, and Anthony Rydelek.

Front: PBSO Canine Handler and "Dutch."

### Excellence Awards

Congratulations to those persons nominated for the Judicial Assistant (JA) Recognition Award for the second quarter of 2015:

Mary Ellis, Stephanie King, Eyder Orozco, Lorainne Laguer Pratts, and Michele Smith.

Congratulations, also, to those persons nominated for the Court Administration employee of the second quarter of 2015: Shane Hussey, Debra “Jill” Sconyers, and LaPorcia Wagner.

On August 19, 2015, a ceremony was held to announce the winners for the second quarter of 2015. Mary Ellis, Judicial Assistant to Judge Gillen and Michele Smith, Judicial Assistant to Judge Sasser, were named Judicial Assistants of the quarter ending in June 2015. Debra “Jill” Sconyers was named Court Employee of the quarter. The winning Judicial Assistants and Court Staff Employee received a plaque, a paid Administration leave day, a photo in the newsletter, and four weeks of parking in the Judicial parking garage.

## *Judicial Assistant & Court Administration Employee of the Quarter ending June 2015*



*Michele Smith*



*Mary Ellis*



*Debra Sconyers*



## ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS

Administrative Orders amended July 1—September 30, 2015:

A.O. 11.101-7/15\* - In Re: Assignment of Judges – as amended to reflect changes in the assignments of Divisions AA and AW, which became effective August 3, 2015.

A.O. 11.102-7/15\* In Re: Administrative Judges and Executive Committee– as amended, with an effective date of August 3, 2015.

A.O. 5.104-7/15\* In Re: Appointment of Magistrates Unified Family Court Cases– as amended.

A.O. 5.307-7/15 - In Re: Filing Of Certificates of Live Birth In Family Law CASES – as entered on 7/8/15.

A.O. 2.601-7/15 - In Re: Selection And Payment of Court Appointed Experts-as amended.

A.O. 6.301-7/15\* - In Re: Probate & Guardianship Division Compensation, etc. – as amended.

A.O. 11.101-7/15\* - In Re: Assignment of Judges – as amended

A.O. 11.106-7/15\* - In Re: Alternate Assignments – as amended.

A.O. 11.104-7/15\* - In Re: Seniority Listing of Judges – as amended.

A.O. 6.307-8/15 - In Re: Temporary Extension For Annual Guardianship Plans entered on August 6, 2015.

A.O. 2.104-8/15\* - In Re: Designation of Record Newspaper– as amended.

A.O. 6.308-8/15 - In Re: Administrative Closure of Baker Act Cases

A.O. 6.309-8/15 - In Re: Administrative Closure Of Marchman Act Cases

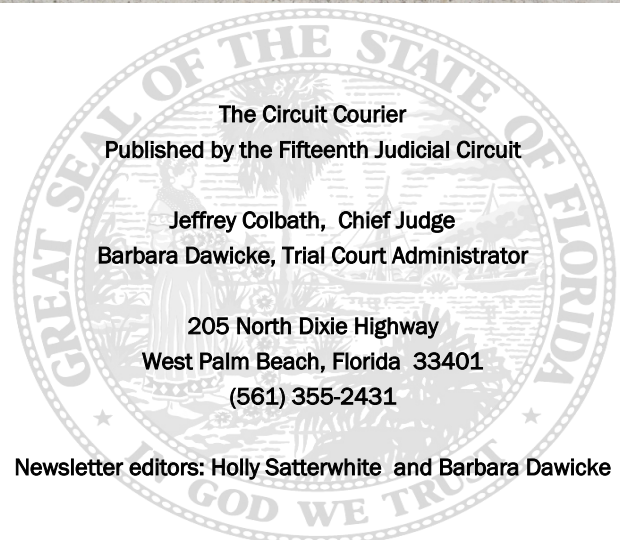
A.O. 15-12.501-9/15- In Re: Reset Of Foreclosure Sales August 31, 2015 Canceled Due To Tropical Storm Erika

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>.

## WELCOME TO THE CIRCUIT

Scott I. Suskauer	Circuit Court Judge
Dina K. Keever	Circuit Court Judge
Isabel Pereira	Magistrate Assistant
Alejandra Stelicha	Judicial Assistant
Ashlee-Amber Skipper	Law Library Associate
Kelly Squire	Judicial Assistant
Paulina Pasquarelli	HR Coordinator
Jose Pereira	Spanish Court Interpreter
Ariel Bozeman	Floating Judicial Assistant
Stuart Rimland	Trial Court Law Clerk
Kristen Farber	Trial Court Law Clerk
Alexandra Lohman	Trial Court Law Clerk
Lindsay Watkins	Trial Court Law Clerk
Saiida Johnson	Foreclosure Case Manager
Steven Toner	Senior Secretary
Claude Boisson	Creole Court Interpreter
Susan Catucci	Court Reporter II
Brittney Finley	Receptionist
Stuart Hartstone	Trial Court Law Clerk



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