

THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA

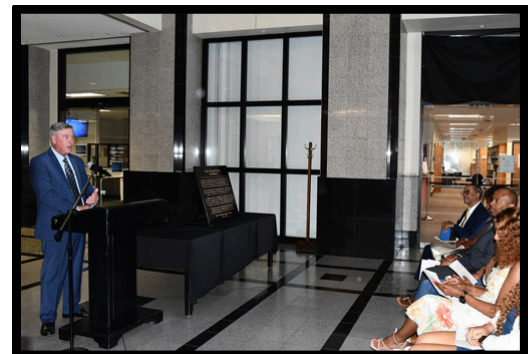
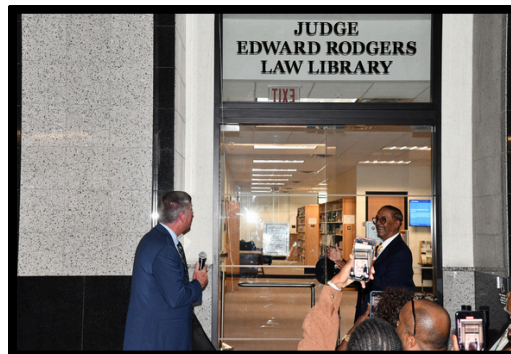
CIRCUIT COURIER

APRIL - JUNE 2025

Judge Edward Rodgers Law Library Naming Ceremony

On May 29, 2025, the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit unveiled the Judge Edward Rodgers Law Library during a naming ceremony held at the Judge Daniel T.K. Hurley Courthouse. Family members, friends, elected officials, current and retired members of the judiciary, members of the legal community as well as other dignitaries and court administration staff, attended the momentous occasion, where many shared their fondest memories of and lessons from the late Judge Rodgers.

The naming of the Law Library was approved by the Palm Beach County Board of Commissioners during their April Board meeting, at the request of Chief Judge Glenn Kelley. Judge Edward Rodgers served 22 years as a judge in the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit. He graduated from Howard University with a Bachelor of Arts degree and subsequently obtained his Juris Doctorate from Florida A&M University College of Law. Two years after graduating from law school, Judge Rodgers was appointed the first Black county prosecutor. In 1973, he was appointed to the bench by then-Governor Reubin Askew, becoming the first Black judge to serve in Palm Beach County. In 1977, he was elevated to the Circuit Court bench. Judge Rodgers later served one term as the County's first Black Chief Judge from 1983-1985.



Pictured above: Mr. Edward Rodgers, Jr. and Chief Judge Glenn Kelley

In 1991, Judge Rodgers established the Riviera Beach Civil Drug Court which serves the citizens of Palm Beach County who struggle with substance abuse issues. In 1992, he was awarded the Jefferson Award; the Nobel prize for public service, in recognition for his visionary work related to the Riviera Beach Civil Drug Court.

Judge Rodgers retired from the bench in 1995 but continued his community work, later serving as Councilman and Mayor of Riviera Beach. He passed away in 2018 and is remembered as an extraordinary jurist and community leader.



15THCIRCUIT.COM



Investiture of the Hon. Lourdes Casanova



On April 4, the Circuit held the investiture ceremony for the Hon. Lourdes Casanova, who was elected to the County Court bench in November 2024 and began her term as Judge in January 2025, filling the vacancy created by the retirement of the Hon. Ted Booras.

Many presentations and remarks were made including by Chief Judge Glenn Kelley, County Criminal Judge Stephanie Tew and Circuit Criminal Administrative Judge Daliah Weiss, as well as by many representing local volunteer Bar Associations.

Judge Casanova's brother and sister-in-law were on hand to help hold the bible during the Administration of Oath of Office, and Judge Casanova's parents helped for the enrobing.

Judge Casanova also made history as she became the Circuit's first Hispanic female to be elected to the bench.

Congratulations to Our Judges & Magistrates



Pictured: 4th DCA Judge Alan Forst, 4th DCA Judge Ed Artau, Judge James Sherman, Judge James Martz, Judge Sara Alijewicz, Judge Katherine Mullinax, Judge Rosemarie Scher, Judge Samantha Schosberg Feuer, Judge Laura Burkhart, Former Judge Jessica Ticktin, Judge Lauren Burke, Judge Melanie Dale Surber, Judge Lourdes Casanova, Judge Caryn Siperstein, Judge Luis Delgado, Judge G. Joseph Curley, Chief Judge Glenn Kelley and Retired Judge Martin Colin

Judge Laura Burkhart

The Honorable Laura Burkhart was awarded Jurist of the Year by the South Palm Beach County Bar Association on May 3 during their annual Installation Gala.

Judge Burkhart was appointed to the bench in 2020 by Governor Ron DeSantis. Prior to her judicial appointment, she served as an Assistant State Attorney with the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office. Judge Burkhart is assigned to the Family division located in the South County Courthouse.

Judge Daliah Weiss

The Honorable Daliah Weiss was awarded Jurist of the Year by the Palm Beach County Bar Association North County Section on May 22.

Judge Weiss has served on the bench since 2012, originally appointed to the County Court bench by then-Governor Rick Scott. She was elevated to the Circuit Court bench in July 2016. She currently serves as the Administrative Judge of the Circuit's Circuit Criminal Division.



Pictured: Judge Daliah Weiss with Tanique Lee, North County Section, PBC Bar President



Judge Danielle Sherriff

On April 15, the Honorable Danielle Sherriff had the pleasure of swearing in the new class of Assistant State Attorneys. Accompanied by friends and family, the newly installed attorneys were able to hear words of encouragement from Judge Sherriff.

Magistrates and Judges Attend Educational Institute

Magistrate Maxine Williams, Judge Laura Burkhardt and Magistrate Ilana Marcus attended the 2025 Educational Institute for Magistrates and Hearings Officers in Kissimmee, FL on May 15.

Magistrate Marcus presented on the Marchman Act and Judge Burkhardt and Ms. Clary presented on Evidence. The courses were well received by the attendees.

Pictured (l to r): Magistrate Maxine Williams, Meghan Clary, Judge Laura Burkhardt and Magistrate Ilana Marcus.



Juror Appreciation Day

On June 3, in honor of Juror Appreciation Day, the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, American Board of Trial Advocates - Palm Beach Chapter, the Palm Beach County Bar Association, and the Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller, Palm Beach County sponsored an event showing gratitude for the jurors.

Jurors were treated to "thank you for your service" speeches by Chief Judge Kelley, Judge Sherri Collins, ABOTA members, and clerk employees. Additionally, the Palm Beach County Bar and ABOTA donated coffee and breakfast foods for the jurors who appeared to perform their civic duty.

Around the Circuit – Highlighting the Judiciary

Judicial Community Engagement & Outreach

“Reading and Robes” Visit at Village Academy

Several judges paid a visit to Village Academy in Delray Beach to participate in another installment of the “Reading & Robes” program, which is a partnership organized by the Palm Beach County Bar Association’s Judicial Relations and Lawyers for Literacy Committee. Participating judges included: (Back, from L to R) Judges Howard Coates, Laura Burkhart, Ori Silver, Melanie Dale Surber, Samantha Schosberg Feuer, Carolyn Bell; (Front, from L to R) Judges Jeffrey Gillen, Danielle Sherriff, Sherri Collins, Daliah Weiss and Santo DiGangi.



Judge Gillen



Judge Surber



Judge Schosberg Feuer



Judge Bell

Around the Circuit – Highlighting the Judiciary

Judicial Community Engagement & Outreach



Judge Shullman Presents at Quarterly Continuing Mediation Education Training

On April 25, Judge Sarah Shullman spoke to the Circuit's Volunteer Mediators. We appreciate their service which includes mediating (gratis) for all eight small claims divisions on a weekly basis. Judge Shullman spoke on mediation issues from her perspective from the bench, along with her gratitude for their work.

The King's Academy Mock Trial with Judge Sherman

A group of middle school students from The King's Academy paid a visit to the main courthouse in April to participate in a mock trial. The mock trial, presided over by Circuit Civil Judge James Sherman, offered the students real-world legal experience, allowing them to build arguments and practice public speaking. The students were also able to enjoy a K9 Demonstration.



Around the Circuit – Highlighting the Judiciary

Judicial Community Engagement & Outreach

Judges Participate in Law Day Event

On May 1, the Palm Beach County chapter of the Florida Association of Women Lawyers commemorated National Law Day with a program held at Palm Beach Lakes High School. Judge Bradley Harper, Judge Ashley Zuckerman, and Judge Danielle Sherriff served as panelists. They discussed their career paths, the rule of law and the importance of an independent judiciary, while also offering words of advice.



Pictured: Judges James Sherman and Cymonie Rowe and Chief Judge Glenn Kelley

Carver Middle School's Annual Law Day Mock Trial Event

Each year, the Honorable Cymonie Rowe helps to lead the coordination of the annual mock trial event with Carver Middle School and their Civics Department. This year, the Historical Society of Palm Beach County hosted the students at the historical, ceremonial courthouse for the event.

The students served as prosecutors, defense attorneys, jurors and witnesses in the *Hanshee v. Fort George Board of Education*, modeled after the historical *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*. Students were able to hear from Chief Judge Glenn Kelley as well as Judge James Sherman, while Judge Lauren Burke presided over the trial.



Pictured: Judge Lauren Burke

Take Your Child to Work Day

On April 24, 85 children of judges, judicial assistants, court administration staff, Palm Beach County Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller staff, as well as members of the Palm Beach County chapter of the Florida Association of Women Lawyers, F. Malcolm Cunningham, Sr. Bar Association and the Palm Beach County chapter of the Sheree Davis Cunningham Black Women Lawyers Association, spent the day at the main courthouse for the annual Take Your Child to Work Day event.

The day was full of various activities and judicial exercises, giving the students a behind-the-scenes look at court operations. A very special welcome from Chief Judge Glenn Kelley and the Clerk's Office Chief of Staff/Chief Deputy Clerk Shannon Chessman, kicked off the day's festivities.

Students had the opportunity to speak with Judge Maxine Cheesman and Judge Cymonie Rowe, participate in mock trials with Judge Samantha Schosberg Feuer and Judge Stephanie Tew presiding; visit the jury room and evidence rooms; enjoy a K9 demonstration and finish the day with breakout sessions that included games and crafts and a panel with Juvenile judges and Palm Beach County Sheriff Officers.



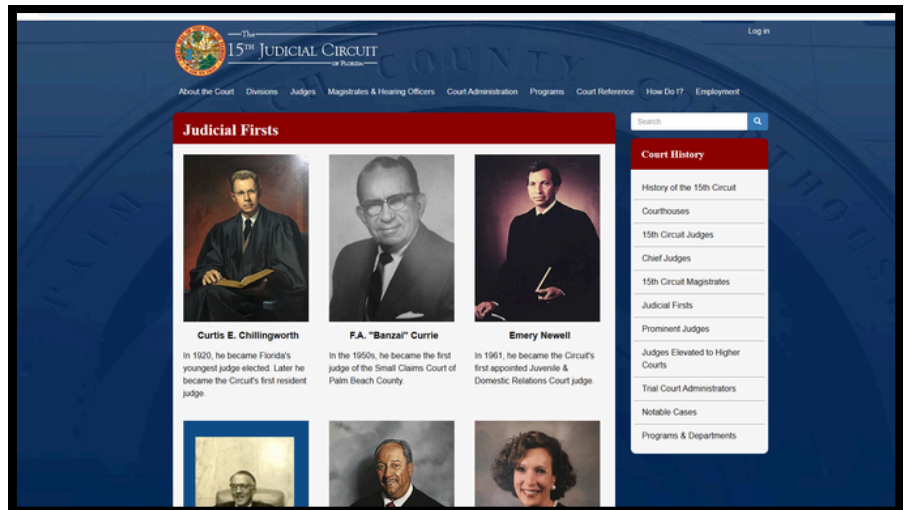
Chief Judge Kelley welcomes the students



Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Historical Project

On May 9, the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit announced the release of its Court History Project. Stemming from a larger initiative with the Palm Beach County Art in Public Places department, the Court History project, located on the Circuit's website, provides a glimpse into both the past and present. From trailblazing members of the judiciary, to notable cases and high profile trials, the history of the Circuit is one of deep and significant importance. To access the link, go to:

<https://15thcircuit.com/court-history/court-history>



Directors' Annual Training



On May 21, Trial Court Administrator Barbara Dawicke and the Court Administration Directors held their Directors' Training in Loxahatchee, FL.

The full day event was led by Erica White, General Counsel for the Office of the State Courts Administrator and Belicha Desgraves, Senior Attorney II for the Office of the State Courts Administrator. The training focused on the topic of Employment Law and Best HR Practices.

The event is one of the annual trainings held by the TCA as a team-building exercise for the Directors and training to sharpen their leadership skills.

Therapy Dogs Visit the Courthouse

On May 30, judges, JAs and court administration staff were able to enjoy a few moments of relaxation with a visit from our therapy dogs. The visits are hosted by the Circuit's Health and Wellness Committee, which regularly offers various activities and challenges to help employees stay proactive in investing in their self-care.



Summer Judicial Interns Activities

For the fourth consecutive year, judges have welcomed summer interns to the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit and provided them the opportunity to shadow judges, take various field trips and sit in on panel discussions, gaining a deeper understanding of the legal profession as well as the judicial process. During the month of June, some of the activities included a trip to the Fourth District Court of Appeals as well as a panel discussion with Palm Beach Sheriff's Office Attorney Marisa Gonzalez, Criminal Defense Attorney Leonard Feuer, Assistant State Attorney Richard Clausi. The attorneys shared with the group their professional experience, as well as provide advice on pursuing careers in the legal field. The interns were also given the opportunity to meet State Attorney Alexcia Cox.



Visit to the 4th DCA



Panel of attorneys speak with the group of interns.



State Attorney Alexcia Cox speaks with the group of interns.

Clerk's Summer 2025 Financial & Judicial Internship Program

As a part of the Clerk's Office Summer Financial and Judicial Internship Program, interns were given an opportunity to participate in a behind-the-scenes experience with our Circuit, including a mock trial and court observations. On June 23, the interns attended a luncheon with various judges, asking questions and gaining advice.



Judges Pictured (l to r): Judge Katherine Mullinax, Judge Samantha Schosberg Feuer, Judge Karen Miller, Judge Danielle Sherriff and Judge Santo DiGangi



Judge Santo DiGangi speaks to a group of summer interns



Judge Jaimie Goodman speaks to a group of summer interns



Judge Katherine Mullinax speaks to a group of summer interns

Court Administration Staff and Interns Visit PBC Jail

On June 24, Melissa Sotillo, Director of Administrative Services, organized an excursion for Court Administration staff and interns to expand their knowledge of the courts and criminal justice system. The staff and interns visited the Gun Club facility and observed First Appearance. They were also provided with a tour of the jail by Corrections deputies.



Pictured (l to r):

Rebecca Mintzer, Digital Court Reporter; Yvonne Williams, Scopist; Melissa Sotillo, Director of Administrative Services; Nathaly Gonzalez, Summer Intern; Andrew Montoya, Digital Court Reporter; Carolina Cury, Summer Intern; Logan Child, Digital Court Reporter; and Joel Figueras, Program Coordinator

New Palm Beach County Judicial Assistants Association Board



On June 25, the new Board members for the Palm Beach County Judicial Assistants Association were sworn in by Judge August Bonavita; their term will run from 2025 to 2027.

Pictured above (l to r): Violeta Woxberg, Vice President; Shakeria Hamilton-Knowles, Judicial Assistants Association of Florida Local Representative; Kenthia White, Secretary; Carey Helmes, Treasurer; Judge August Bonavita and Kimberly Wolf, President

Juvenile Division Event Recaps



**Pictured (l to r):
Dr. Rachel Lively, Family Treatment Court Coordinator and
Brandon Richardson, Juvenile Drug Court Coordinator**

Juvenile Staff Attend RISE25 Conference

From May 28–31, more than 7,000 professionals from the justice, public health, and public-safety sectors convened in Kissimmee, Florida, for RISE25, the nation’s premier conference on substance-use, mental-health, and innovative justice solutions.

Across more than 250 expert-led sessions, judges, law-enforcement officers, court teams, and treatment providers explored evidence-based strategies to reduce recidivism, support recovery, and strengthen communities. Specialized tracks, including those for mental-health courts, juvenile drug courts, dependency drug courts, and judicial leadership, highlighted the judiciary's pivotal role in addressing behavioral-health challenges.

The Circuit's Juvenile Division was represented by Dr. Rachel Lively, Family Treatment Court Coordinator, and Brandon Richardson, Juvenile Drug Court Coordinator. They joined colleagues from across the country and a record number of treatment-court alumni.

Early Childhood Court Selected as Pilot Site for State Program

The Early Childhood Court (ECC) program was one of three courts statewide selected by the Office of State Courts Administrator (OSCA) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) as a pilot site aimed at improving the timeline to permanency for children whose parents' rights have been terminated.

On June 30, 2025, representatives from OSCA and DCF conducted an all-day site visit, providing targeted training and technical assistance to the ECC Team and stakeholders. The focus was on expediting the adoption process and finalization for youth in out-of-home placements.

During their visit, they also observed the team in action during an ECC docket. ECC was honored to participate in this important pilot project and look forward to continued training and support from OSCA and DCF as we work to enhance outcomes for the children and families we serve in Circuit 15—and across the State of Florida.

Juvenile Division Event Recaps Continued

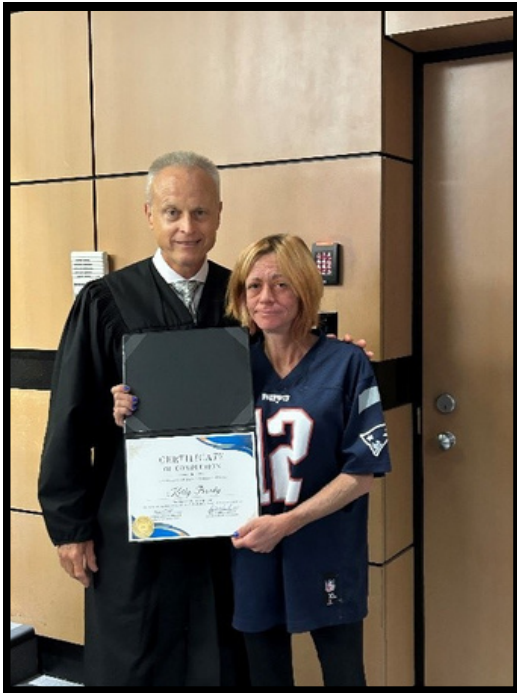
Family Treatment Court Graduations

Family Treatment Court (FTC) is a voluntary specialty court that uses a family-centered, multidisciplinary approach to serve families with substance use disorders who are involved in the child welfare system. It is the mission of the program to provide families with the support and services they need to stabilize the family in a safe and expeditious manner. By doing this, the goals are to 1) decrease the risk to the children, 2) reunite families before or around 12 months, 3) reduce the probabilities of the children being removed from the parents in the future, and 4) help the parents address their substance use.

During the second quarter, FTC held several graduations with the Honorable Kirk Volker presiding. On May 7th, FTC celebrated the first of three graduations in the second quarter. During the graduate's involvement in the program, she successfully completed detox and Triple P Parenting. Additionally, she maintained stable housing, stable employment, and continued sobriety. After graduation, she continued participating in Outpatient and Family Therapy. The Court commended the graduate on her growth, adaptability, and patience.

On May 21st, FTC celebrated another graduation. During the graduate's involvement in the program, she successfully completed Outpatient treatment and Triple P Parenting while maintaining stable housing, stable employment, and continued sobriety. The Court commended the graduate on her resilience, resourcefulness, and unwavering positivity throughout this journey.

June 4, 2025 marked the third graduation of the second quarter. During the graduate's involvement in the program, he successfully complete Outpatient while stable housing, stable employment, and continued sobriety. The Court commended him on his resilience, trust, and positivity. Although this was a long and demanding journey, he graduated as the best version of himself.



Judge Kirk Volker and graduate



Juvenile Drug Court Graduations



Parent, Graduate & Juvenile Probation Officer



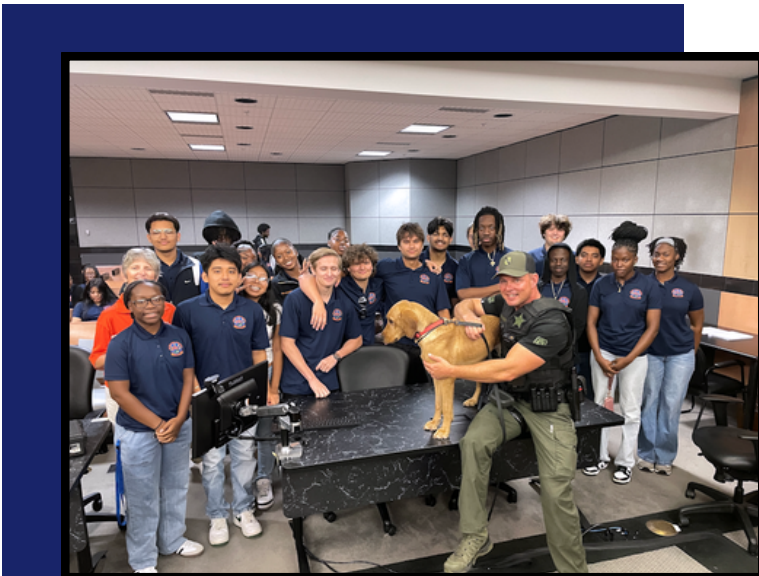
Parent, Graduate & Judge Gillen

Juvenile Drug Court continues to celebrate successes in 2025 as the program thrives under the direction of Judge Gillen and Brandon Richardson, Program Coordinator.

This year, Juvenile Drug Court is on pace to celebrate an increase in graduates for the third consecutive year. The program celebrated its latest graduation on June 10th with the sixth and seventh graduates of 2025. Juvenile Drug Court looks forward to providing support to our court-involved youth in the community.

We are proud to celebrate notable milestones over past year. One hundred percent of participants were placed in an educational setting. Additionally, the time to begin treatment remains less than 5 days for the fifth consecutive year, with a nearly 100% treatment completion rate. A special thank you to the entire Juvenile Drug Court team for their hard work and dedication to the participants.

Main Courthouse Tours



Palm Beach Gardens High School

On April 1, students from Palm Beach Gardens High School paid a visit to the main courthouse, which included speaking with Judge Scott Suskauer and Judge Bradley Harper. The students were also able to visit the Law Library and Jury Room and experience a K9 Demonstration.

Main Courthouse Tours Continued

Loggers Run Community Middle School:

On May 20, students from Loggers Run Community Middle School paid a visit to the main courthouse, where they were able to stop by the Law Library, Jury Room and a holding cell. During their visit, they also participated in mock trials, watched a K9 Demonstration and spoke with Judge Jaimie Goodman and Judge Howard Coates.



Judge Howard Coates

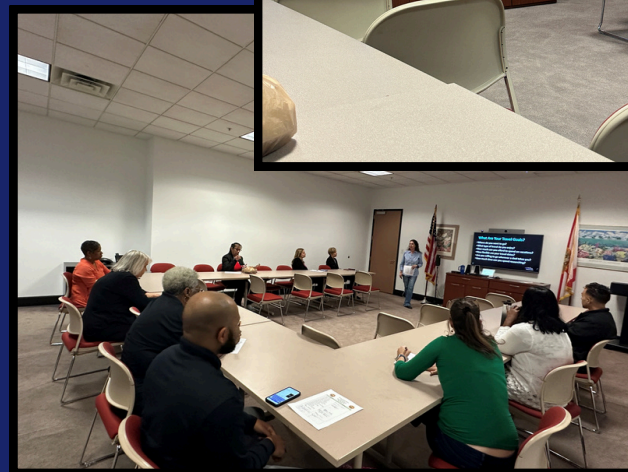
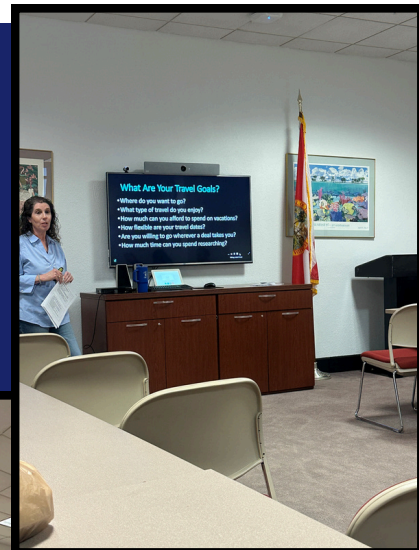
Human Resources: Lunch & Learns | New Employee Orientation

Lunch & Learn Events This Quarter:

May 30: How To Travel Inexpensively, presented by Judge Sherri Collins

On May 30, Judge Sherri Collins led a lunch and learn on “How to Find Travel Deals.” During the session, Judge Collins shared some of her own travel experiences, as well as various tips and resources others can use when looking to save on travel accommodations.

June 23: South County Courthouse First Aid, Presented by the Delray Beach Fire Department



New Employee Orientation:

Over a dozen new Court employees attended the Circuit’s employee orientation course in April and June 2025.

During the course, the employees were introduced to the Circuit’s Mission and Vision, the Circuit’s Core Competencies, the structure of the judicial branch, and their role as officers of the Court.



New Hires | Employees On the Move

Welcome to the Circuit's newest Judge and employees:

April 2025

Amanda Clarke, Civil Court Court Case Manager;
Andrew Montoya, Digital Court Reporter;
Michele West, Trial Court Staff Attorney;
Amaya Burton, Administrative Assistant II;
Mary Bode, Program Coordinator;
Christine Bruno, Hearing Officer;
Gina Thacker, Computer Specialist II;
Printania Tham, Administrative Assistant II, Court Technology

May 2025

Jonathan Jean-Francois, Haitian-Creole Court Interpreter;
Megan Jerome, Court Program Specialist;
Rodrigo Prado, Jr., Court Interpreter Scheduling Specialist

June 2025

John Abel, Court Program Specialist II, Civil;
Damien Williams, Judicial Assistant to Judge Cymonie Rowe

Employees on the Move/Position Reclassified

June 2025

Erica Alter, Program Coordinator

Employees that retired during this quarter:

May 2025

Jeffrey Kash, Mediator

Administrative Orders

The following AOs were updated or entered April - June 2025 (most recent to oldest):

Jun 30, 2025	2.312	Electronic Filing of Documents	
Jun 27, 2025	2.105A	Fifteenth Circuit Local Professionalism Panel Members	
Jun 27, 2025	11.106	Alternate Assignments	
Jun 27, 2025	11.101	Assignment of Judges	
Jun 4, 2025	5.706	Juvenile Division - Therapeutic Court	
Apr 29, 2025	3.605	County Court Civil Jury Trials - Branch Courthouse Request	
Apr 29, 2025	2.107	Deposition Rooms	
Apr 25, 2025	11.203	Appointment of Magistrates	
Apr 25, 2025	5.104	UFC Magistrates	
Apr 11, 2025	5.116	Motions for Contempt and Directions to the Clerk	



THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA

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