



# THE CIRCUIT TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE 20TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

FALL / WINTER 2016

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## Collier County Judge welcomed to bench



*Judge Brown sworn in by Judge Crown while his sister, Sandra Charest, holds bible.*

Family, friends and colleagues filled Courtroom 2A of the Collier County Justice Center on October 21, 2016 for the investiture of Collier County Judge Michael Brown.

“Judge Brown is proof that good guys don’t always finish last,” said Assistant State Attorney J.D. Miller.

It was seven years ago when Miller first met Judge Brown – in that same courtroom. Now he was speaking at Judge Brown’s Investiture. “In getting Mike Brown as a judge, Collier County is getting a man who will treat all litigants fairly and give all sides a fair shake,” said Miller.

Judge Brown was appointed by Governor Rick Scott to fill the seat vacated by the retirement of Collier County Judge Vince Murphy. Prior to his appointment, he was an Assistant State Attorney in the 20th Circuit for seven years.

“The quality of the judges that have been picked has been extraordinary,” said Chief Judge Michael McHugh as he opened the event.

Chief Judge McHugh presided over the ceremony, which included an Invocation from Joshua Griep

and the traditional presentation of gifts from local bar associations. Charlotte County Judge Peter Bell presented a desk plate on behalf of the Conference of County Court Judges of Florida. But, with his own untraditional spin. “In the interest of cost cutting we have come up with this new innovation,” said Judge Bell as he pulled out a long skinny balloon. After he blew it up, Judge Brown’s name and commission date had been written in permanent marker (*below*). Laughs consumed the entire courtroom. Then, in all sincerity, Judge Bell handed over the real nameplate.



Following presentations, remarks were made by Mr. Miller and also Judge Brown’s wife, Jennifer.

“As both a prosecutor and a private attorney he recognized that the law is shades of gray, and is very rarely black and white,” said Jennifer Brown.

The pair first met in 2005 when they interned at the State Attorney’s Office in Tallahassee. Throughout college they dated long distance. Judge Brown received both his undergraduate and law degrees from Florida State University, while Jennifer attended Tulane. Soon after graduation they were both in the same state, but Jennifer was in Naples and Judge Brown was in Fort Lauderdale.

*Cont. on next page...*

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Eventually, he moved to Collier County in 2009 to join Jennifer, who has been an Assistant State Attorney in Naples since 2007.

“(He) has reminded me on more than one occasion that the cases we deal with involve real people with real lives and they have real consequences,” said Mrs. Brown. “And our job is justice in whatever form that might take.”

Judge Brown was sworn in by his mentor, Collier County Judge Rob Crown, before saying a few words about what he has learned about his new role.

“For a judge the process is more important than the outcome and a judge must recognize that what happens in this building is such a deep impact on so many lives that everything

we say and do in our lives must serve the purpose of reminding people that when they walk through these doors they are going to get a fair shot under the law,” said Judge Brown.



*Judge Brown hugs his mother after she helps put on his robe.*

### **Eight graduate from Certified Public Manager program**



*(L to R) Trial Court Administrator Scott Wilsker, Dawn Scroggins (CJIS Project Manager), Dave Toumey (Lt. Court Security), Eric Fishbeck (Court Operations Consultant), Deborah Mravic (Civil/Family Division Director-Collier), Brenda Giessman (Court Reporting Services Manager), Chief of Personnel Services Sharon Suhar, Lois Milazzo (HR Specialist), Pamela Barger (Senior Staff Attorney-Collier), Ashley Gregory (Pretrial Officer/Case Management), and HR Assistant Manager Ginny Wegis.*

Eight people from the Administrative Office of the Courts graduated from the Florida Certified Public Manager (CPM) program in 2016. The ceremony took place at the North Collier Regional Park on September 16.

Those graduating were: Lois Milazzo, Pamela Barger, Deborah Mravic, Dawn Scroggins, David Toumey, Ashley Gregory, Christopher (Eric) Fishbeck, and Brenda Giessman.

In total, 484 new graduates were honored throughout the state. That brings the total number of CPM graduates in Florida to approximately 5,555, which is more than in any other state. Florida has one of the most successful CPM programs in the country. It is administered by the Florida Center for Public Management at Florida State University, which is part of the Askew School of Public Administration. The CPM program is a nationally-recognized leadership development program, currently delivered in 38 states. The purpose is to develop more effective public managers, thereby improving services to all Florida taxpayers.

The new graduates have completed a rigorous two-year program, including 32 days of training, plus required projects and exams. Over 100 government agencies—including cities, counties, state, and constitutional offices—have participated in the Florida CPM program.

## Circuit Court Judge named chair of Courthouse Security Workgroup



Judge Margaret Steinbeck has been named chair of the Trial Courthouse Security Workgroup. The group was formed in late August of 2016 to ensure courthouses throughout the state remain safe and secure.

Early in her legal career Steinbeck served as a JAG officer in the Army, moving into the Reserves after twelve years of active duty and reaching the rank of lieutenant colonel before retiring in 2008.

“Military service showed me that basic security is the floor that must be laid before we can begin to address these loftier questions of justice,” Steinbeck said. “Thousands of people work in Florida’s courthouses and many thousands more come to them every day. Keeping everyone safe is paramount, and the members of this workgroup will be focused on making sure that everything that can be done to ensure safety is being done.”

The other appointees include judges from Miami, Orlando, Jacksonville, Tampa, Tallahassee, Pensacola and Sanford and attorneys from Jacksonville and Tallahassee. Each has agreed to serve for two years. Chief Justice Jorge Labarga expressed the Supreme Court’s gratitude to each for their enthusiasm about the issue and their willingness to serve.

The charge given to the workgroup outlines several responsi-

bilities, including the following:

- evaluate security procedures, practices and perceptions at Florida’s courthouses;
- review national courthouse security procedures and consult with professionals and experts on model practices so as to provide the Florida Supreme Court with an evaluation of local security plans;
- identify important elements of security in trial court facilities;
- develop standards, model procedures and recommendations for appropriate training;
- jointly review security funding practices with the courts, the counties, and the sheriffs to evaluate the appropriateness of the funds used;
- propose criteria to establish a statewide reporting system for security incidents; and
- identify effective partnerships and opportunities for partnership in providing and promoting security in courthouses and establish dialogues among local governments, law enforcement and the judiciary.

“The workgroup will help advance the mission of the judicial branch and increase current levels of safety for all those who use our courthouses, from Pensacola to Key West,” Chief Justice Labarga said.

## ABOTA’s Jurist of the Year honored at annual dinner

Circuit Judge Keith Kyle has been named the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) Jurist of the Year. He along with Ken Oliver, who was named Attorney of the Year, were presented with the designation at a November 3, 2016 Judicial Dinner.

The American Board of Trial Advocates is a national association of experienced trial lawyers and judges dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the civil jury trial right provided by the Seventh Amendment to the United States Constitution.

The Southwest Florida Chapter of ABOTA covers the 20th Judicial Circuit and is 28 members strong. Each year in November, the organization hosts a judicial appreciation dinner, inviting all circuit court judges (and spouses) from the 20th Judicial Circuit. At the annual dinner, a Jurist of the Year and an Attorney of the Year, both which are voted on by their membership, are recognized.



*Attorney Ken Oliver and Judge Keith Kyle*

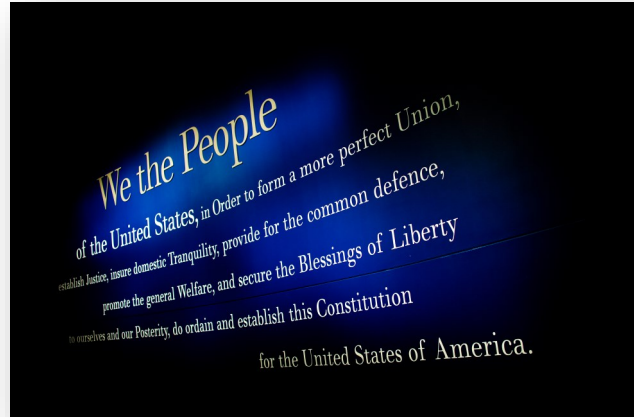
## Hendry County students schooled on Constitution

Hendry and Glades County schools celebrated Constitution Day on September 16, 2016. Attorney's visited classes in six schools, starting with early morning classes and finishing with last period at Clewiston Middle.

Judge James Sloan and Judge Scott Cupp also participated by hosting a Constitution game show between the juniors and seniors at LaBelle High School. There were more than 450 students assembled in the auditorium for the event.

"We received a lot of positive feedback from the teachers and administration for everyone's efforts. I think that our efforts show that our Bar Association cares about

this community's students and their civic education," said Steve Spence, President of the Hendry and Glades Bar Association.



## Staff says goodbye to longtime Judicial Assistant



*Kathy looks on while Judge Hayward shares his gratitude.*



*Deputy Trial Court Administrator Jim Sullivan presents Kathy with a plaque of appreciation.*

On August 26, 2106, Courtroom 5A family, friends and colleagues of Kathy Wilkinson gathered to celebrate her retirement as a Judicial Assistant.

Wilkinson began working at the Clerk of Court in 1981. From there she became a Judicial Assistant for Judge Radford Sturgis in 1990 and then with Lee County Judge Archie Hayward in 2008.

"I have loved every moment with the people that I work with and have had wonderful bosses. I am very fortunate and blessed to be able to retire at this point in my life and I'm looking forward to it," said Wilkinson.

Now that she is retired, she plans on visiting her son and his new fiancée, traveling, working on gardening skills (like - reviving her orange grove), and enjoying life with no time schedules!

## Judges share civic knowledge with community



*Circuit Judge John Carlin speaks to the Gateway Women's Group (left).*

*Circuit Judge Frank Porter talked to Bonita Springs' Leadership Class about Crime and Justice (below).*



*Circuit Judge Robert Branning welcomed students from Evangelical Christian School to Juvenile Court (left).*



## Chief Judge McHugh swears in Hendry County officials



*(L to R): Sheriff Steve Whidden, Supervisor of Elections Brenda Hoots, Judge Scott Cupp, Clerk of Court Barbara Butler, Chief Judge Michael McHugh, Property Appraiser Phillip Pelletier, and Tax Collector Patrick Langford.*



*Hendry County Judge Scott Cupp, with daughter Kaitlin, is sworn in on January 3, 2017 along with other newly elected officials.*

## Longtime Charlotte County Clerk of Court retires



Charlotte County Clerk of Court Barbara T. Scott has retired after 32 years of service. According to Florida Clerks website, she has made tremendous progress in several areas of the courts over the last many years; she is most proud of her success improving child support and domestic violence programs

throughout the State of Florida and for being instrumental in helping create a paperless courtroom, and will continue to work on projects for the betterment of her office before she leaves. Scott was first elected Clerk in 1984 and is Florida's longest-serving Clerk of the Circuit Court. She will be replaced by Roger Eaton.

Clerk Scott previously served as president of the Florida Association of Court Clerks and is a two-time recipient of the "Clerk of the Year" award from the Florida Association

of Court Clerks & Comptrollers.

"I have enjoyed the ultimate career in our community, and after over 40 years in public service, it is time for me to pass this opportunity on to someone else," said Scott. "I look forward to spending more time with my husband, children, grandchildren and great grandchildren."

During Eaton's swearing-in ceremony Judge Paul Alessandroni said of Scott, "You have been a trailblazer as a Clerk both at the local level and state level. You've been a leader in the field of technology—no one can come close to you when it comes to your leadership in that area. But, through all of your work at the local and state level and all of the committees you have served on, you have always made the citizens of Charlotte County your priority."

## New Charlotte County Clerk sworn into office

Roger Eaton was sworn in as the newly elected Charlotte County Clerk of Court on January 3, 2017 by Charlotte County Judge Paul Alessandroni. Prior to his election into office, Eaton was the Chief Deputy for Court Operations. During his 17 years at the Clerk's Office, Eaton worked his way "up the ladder", starting in the Technology Department. He was promoted on five different occasions to lead three different departments.

Eaton has a Bachelor of Science Degree and a Master of Arts Degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice, both from Eastern Michigan University.

Eaton serves on the Board for Charlotte County Unified Way, the Board of the Twentieth Circuit Unlicensed Practice of Law Committee and the Republican Executive Committee. He is an alumnus of the Charlotte Coun-



ty Chamber of Commerce Leadership Charlotte program, and an advocate and fundraiser for Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies (CARE) for the Clerk of the Circuit Court. Eaton is active in local youth organizations, serving as coach for the Port Charlotte Little League Baseball and Port Charlotte Football Bandits.



*Judge Paul Alessandroni swears in Roger Eaton*

"I have three primary goals," said Eaton at his swearing-in. "I want to strive to make this office as efficient as possible; secondly I want to continue to remain at the forefront in the state of Florida for employing innovative technology; and third and most important, I want to continue to rely on teamwork and communication to complete our first two goals because without that teamwork and communication we are not going to achieve anything."

## Security Officer presented with 2016 Eddie Swords Award



*Director Jeff Torain and CSO Luis Skolnick*

Court Security Officer Luis Skolnick is the 2016 recipient of the Hubert "Eddie" Swords Commitment to Excellence Award which is given annually by the Lee County Court Security Department. This Award is a peer to peer recognition award, which is given in memory of Court Security Officer Hubert "Eddie" Swords who passed away in November 2012. Eddie embodied excellence in service to others, which is a fundamental part of the Department's ethos. Winners are judged on collaboration, commitment and leadership.

CSO Skolnick has been with the department since 2015. He is currently attending Florida Gulf Coast University part-time to pursue a degree in Accounting. Skolnick is also a member of the United States Marine Corps. He served as a NCO Military Policeman during "Operation Enduring Freedom" in Afghanistan. He is married to his wife, Marilyn.

"I didn't know Eddie, but I always hear good things about him. I will continue to do my best to uphold what he did here in the courthouse," said Skolnick.

## International Interpreters and Translator's Day celebrated

September 30th is known as International Interpreters and Translator's Day all over the world. It has been celebrated since 1953. This celebration offers an opportunity to draw attention to the importance of translators and interpreters in the world, and specifically in our Courts. These language practitioners often remain invisible and unacknowledged, yet their work makes a huge contribution to communication, and interaction, and in the administration of justice in our society; and in all social and economic spheres in today's globalized world.

This year a luncheon was organized by the Lee County Operation Division Director, Ms. Brooke Dean and Supervising Court Interpreter for the 20th Circuit, Mr. Julio Fernandez. It was attended by all the staff interpreters, contractors, support staff, as well as several members of the judiciary, among them the Honorable James Adams, and the Honorable Zachary Gill. Also in attendance was Mr. Jim Sullivan, Chief Deputy Court Administrator for the Twentieth Judicial Circuit Administrative Office of the Courts who brought words of greeting from Chief Judge Michael T. McHugh and Trial Court Administrator Mr. Scott Wilsker.

We are truly an international department. The 20th Judicial Circuit employs six full time Certified Court Interpreters that serve in Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Hendry and Glades counties. In addition we contract with approximately 20 independent Spanish speaking contractors, several Haitian Creole Contractor, one American Sign Language contractor, and several other exotic language and Mayan dialects contractors.



*Written by: Supervising Court Interpreter, Julio Fernandez*

## Lee County Criminal Division trained in motivational interviewing

Over the course of the last two years, the Lee County Criminal Division was afforded the opportunity to bring in Mr. David Duresky through a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) grant to train both pretrial and probation officers on motivational interviewing. Motivational interviewing aligns with evidence based practice and suggests effective tools to handle resistance and changes the responsibility for behavior change to defendants. The approach is non-judgmental and non-confrontational but raises awareness to potential problems that caused consequences faced in the criminal justice system. Officers were trained to express empathy and understand from a

defendant's perspective; develop discrepancy to help defendants appreciate the value of change through exploration of how they want to live their lives versus how their currently are; roll with resistance by accepting reluctance to change as natural; and support self-efficacy by embracing autonomy and helping defendants move toward change successfully and with confidence.

Please join Ms. Liza Maldonado, Mr. Doug Jaye and Ms. Amy Kinsey in congratulating Ms. Idel Altenburg, Ms. Nicol Annis, Mr. Billie Ayers, Mr. Tom Chvilicek, Mr. William Delgadillo, Mr. Oscar Ferrer, Ms. Stacy Jarchow, Ms. Lindsay Kruta, Mr. Jeffrey

Langevin, Ms. Nancy Mandujano, Mr. Keith McGovern, Ms. Carol Reisner, Ms. Lisa Vagle, Ms. Bridget Washburn, Ms. Maria Wendel, Ms. Ashlee Whitewood and Mr. Seth Yates. After completing the two-day workshop previously, each was able to successfully demonstrate levels of proficiency in all concepts of motivational interviewing.

Additionally, Mr. Mark Cavanaugh is now able to certify those that have completed the two-day workshop but have yet to demonstrate proficiency. The plan is to have Mr. Cavanaugh teach the next two-day workshop with Mr. Duresky.

*Written by: Amy Kinsey*

## Lee County employee selected as Business Observers 40 Under 40

Amy Kinsey was recognized for the Business Observer's 2016 40 Under 40 selections.

Each year, the Business Observer selects 40 individuals under 40 years old from the Gulf Coast business community. Carefully selected from nominations and original reporting, these individuals represent the best and brightest from Tampa to Naples. In selecting this year's honorees, the paper's editors looked for candidates who are entrepreneurial, even if they don't own their own businesses.

"There are a lot of publications that do similar lists each year," says Kat Hughes, Business Observer executive editor. "We wanted our list to stand apart as a group of young professionals who aren't afraid to take charge and take risks in their business. They are willing to try new things and put their ideas into action. To us, this is what it means to be a business leader, and we feel these 40 individuals embody that spirit."

Kinsey first worked as a 9-1-1 dispatcher in Cobb County, outside Atlanta when she was 19. From there she went through police academy and became a police officer. She earned her bachelor's degree in Applied Behavioral Sciences from National Louis University. In 2005, Kinsey moved to Fort Myers to work in the AOC. She is currently the Deputy Director of the Criminal Division for Pretrial Services where she oversees 35 employees, mostly in case management.

"This is a very prestigious designation and I am beyond proud of Amy," said Criminal Division Director Liza Maldonado.



*Congratulations!*





## Christmas Toys Donated by Lee County Criminal Division

Dozens of new, unwrapped toys were donated by Lee County’s Criminal Division as part of the Children’s Network Operation Santa. Some of the children’s top wishes were Barbie’s and dress-up Clothes for girls and Ninja Turtles and trucks for boys. The toys were donated to children who have been abused and neglected in Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Hendry and Glades Counties.

## Children Receive Forever Families Before the Holidays

This year, the Children’s Network had 38 children adopted into forever families; 34 of whom participated in one of the four Mass Adoption Finalization Hearings held throughout the 20th Circuit. Adoption finalizations are typically closed hearings, but in November the Children’s Network schedules open hearings where all of the adoptive families participate together.

The first Mass Adoption Finalization hearing was held in Hendry County on Thursday, November 17, 2016 in front of Judge James Sloan with three children having finalized adoptions. On Friday, November 18, five more children were adopted into their forever families in Collier County in front of Judge Joe Foster. On Saturday, November 19, Judge Robert Branning finalized adoptions for 19 children into 14 families in Lee County. This included four sets of siblings. Two of these siblings were also in foster care for eight years before their new parents learned about them through the Heart Gallery. The 4th ceremony was held on Tuesday, November 22 in Charlotte County. Judge Leigh Frizzle-Hayes presided over seven adoptions, which included two teens.

This year, National Adoption Month focused on the importance of identifying permanent families for thousands of 15–18 year olds in foster care who are currently less likely to be adopted, often because of their age, and who all too often age out of the system without a stable place to call home. Securing lifelong connections for older youth, legally and emotionally, is a critical component of their future achievement and overall well-being. However, talking with youth about adoption or permanency can sometimes be challenging. There was one 16 year old youth adopted in November though 27 of the children waiting for families are in that age range.

*Written by: Melissa Bonner of the Children’s Network*



*Judge Branning presides over adoption events in Lee County*



*Judge Hayes smiles with a family at Charlotte County’s events*

## Be on the lookout for bogus emails

If you have an email account, you've likely received a phishing message in your inbox before. Cybercriminals use emails designed to look like urgent messages from banks, credit card companies, or even your employer. The emails may contain subject lines like: "Validate your account" or "Confirm billing information" to lure people to phony web sites that look similar to real sites of the company they're impersonating. Thinking they are on the organizations page, people may enter in their personal username and passwords—unknowingly disclosing their private information to scammers. Clicking on a phony link may even lead to malicious software being installed on your computer and thus infecting the entire network.

Below is an example of a bad email and what you should look for when determining whether or not it is legitimate. First, the wording didn't make sense, **bad grammar** was used. Second, it wasn't addressed to the recipient, it was a bcc which is a dead giveaway. Thirdly, the link, when hovered over, was an obvious bogus website.

From: Schoen, Ann [mailto:Ann.Schoen@vai.org] **Email sent to BCC recipients**  
Sent: Thursday, December 01, 2016 1:16 PM  
To: Schoen, Ann <Ann.Schoen@vai.org>  
Subject: RE: Helpdesk Email

From: Schoen, Ann  
Sent: Thursday, December 1, 2016 11:25 AM  
Subject: Helpdesk Email

When you hover over the link, the address appears to be bogus, not having to do with any legitimate address.

Your email account LOGIN Was today by Unknown IP address 232.22.88 233. click on the link below Administrator to validate your email account or your account will be temporary block for sending more messa

[Click Link To Validate Your Account](#)

Sincerely,

IT Department

Remember, if it looks the least bit suspicious, don't click, send it to the HelpDesk. Also, if you do happen to click on something, please let the HelpDesk know as soon as possible so they can, in most cases, mitigate the action before it possibly spreads.

## New carpet installed in Lee County courtrooms



Hundreds of people come in and out of the courtrooms at the Lee County Justice Center every day. After time, that foot traffic has worn out the carpet in some of the courtrooms. The carpet in courtroom 5C of Justice Center Proper hasn't been replaced since the 1990's. But, recently Lee County approved \$50,000 dollars to replace the carpet in CR-5C and CR-5G where the most damage was noticeable.



## Lee County Pretrial Officer's art benefits animals

Lee County Pretrial Officer Maureen Ganim started creating art with her mother when she was small. Now, you can find her in her office at lunch, rolling up magazines and separating them into colors in old coffee cans. Ganim is a huge Pinterest fanatic and gets a lot of ideas from the social media website.

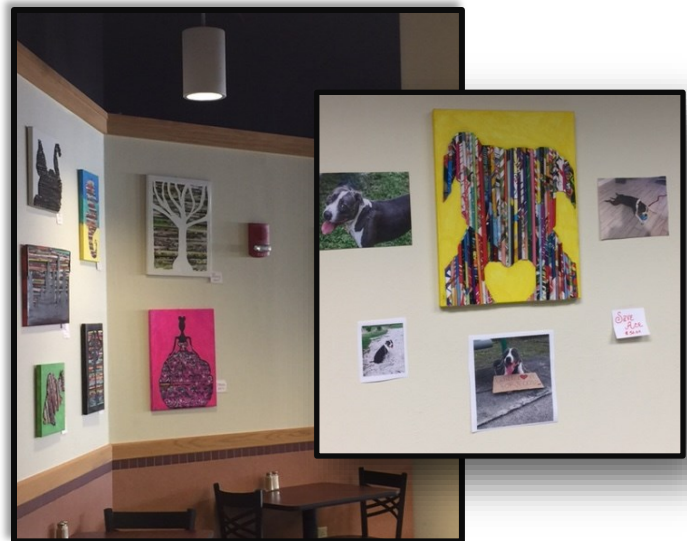
"When I find something interesting, I do different research on what type of materials they used and how I can change it into something I get inspired by," said Ganim. "I think of it as recycling the different artists work and adding my own spin and twists to it."

She uses her craft skills to create lighted bottle art and also magazine canvases, which you may have seen displayed in the Oasis 2 in the Lee County Justice Center. Some of her hand drawn art is also featured at a local yoga studio downtown.

What you may not have known is that a portion the proceeds from her artwork in Oasis 2 went to help a dog named Ace. He belonged to a shelter called PB & J and once the shelter disbanded, Ace was left with his foster parent. "The foster parent couldn't afford to take care of Ace full time and my friend who volunteered for PB & J was so scared that Ace would end up left behind or worse, euthanized, that it left me wanting to help him," said Ganim. "I thought the best way to help Ace was to try and raise money for his foster parent to take care of him, while they find a permanent home for him."

Ganim got to work on creating dozens of magazine canvases featuring cats, dogs, trees, and other scenery. The artwork was priced primarily on how much it would cost to help Ace. Not only did Ganim raise money, but she was able to find Ace a permanent home. "He is very happy with his mommy now and I couldn't have asked for more," exclaimed Ganim. "A lot of folks in the courthouse came to Ace's rescue and it made me proud that I could be a part of it."

There are a few more pictures left for sale, but more than half of them have sold. Ganim is currently working on other canvases to add to the restaurant and hopes to help another pet or shelter in need.



### Upcoming Events:

**Lee County Judge Zachary**

**Gill's Investiture**

**Jan 27th. 2017**



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For more information about the Twentieth Judicial Circuit visit our website at [www.ca.cjis20.org](http://www.ca.cjis20.org)

### Circuit Times Newsletter

**Chief Judge**

*Michael T. McHugh*

**Trial Court Administrator**

*Scott Wilsker*

**Deputy Court Administrator**

*Jim Sullivan*

**Editor**

*Sara Miles*

**Photos**

*Sam Matos*

*Sara Miles*

*Amy Kinsey*

*Brooke Dean*

**Contributors**

*Craig McLean*

*Amy Kinsey*

*Julio Fernandez*

*Melissa Bonner*