

2022

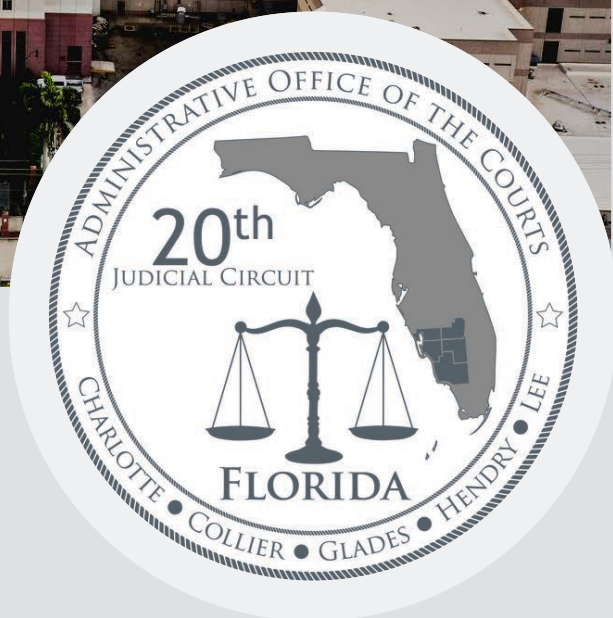
Circuit Times

Newsletter

Newsletter of the 20th Judicial Circuit

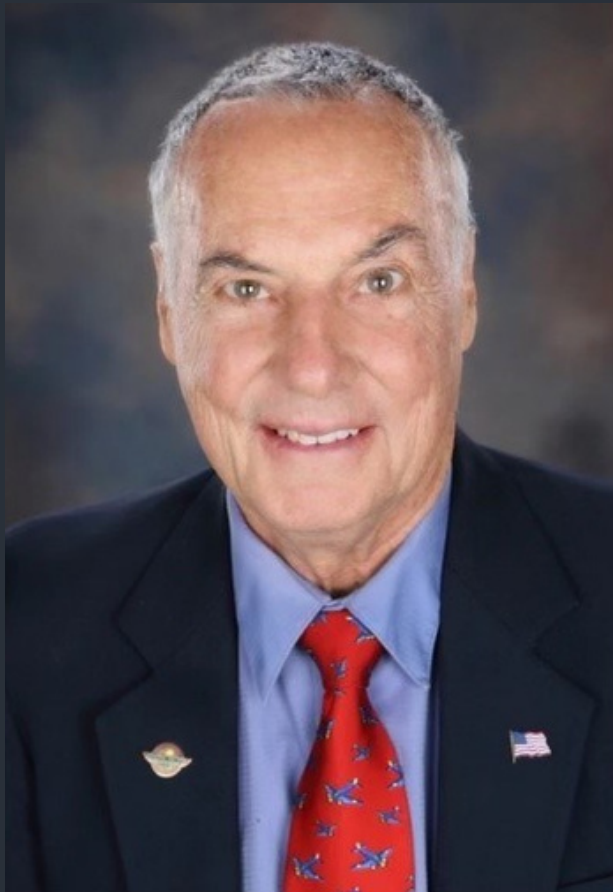
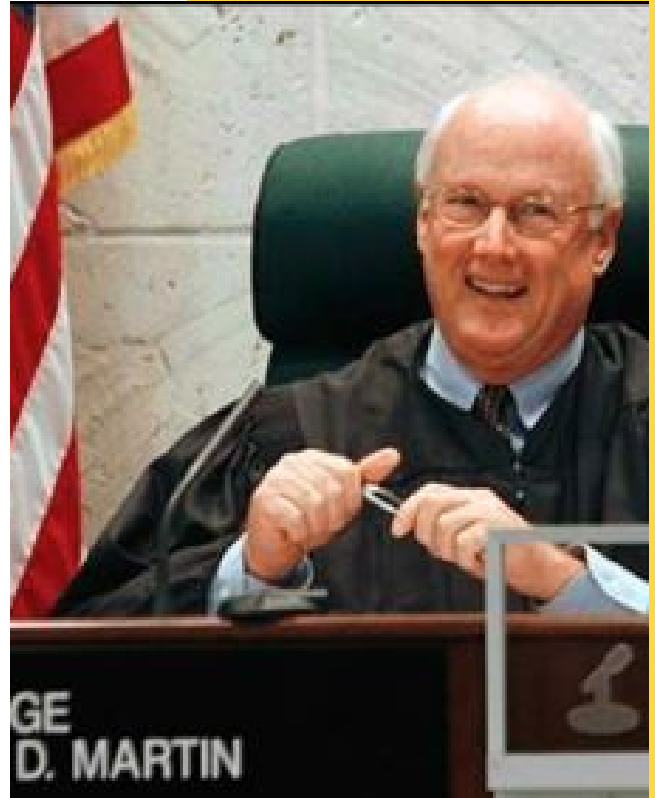
INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Investitures for Judges Cohen, Perez, Mirra, and Leontiev
- Judge Brodie receives Professionalism award
- Collier Drug Court named Mentor Court
- Mass Adoptions back in person
- Glades County updates probation office
- Charlotte County opens new courtrooms
- Hendry County holds first in-person drug court graduation
- Lee County celebrates Mental Health Court Month
- 2022 Hurricane Outlook



REMEMBERING: JUDGE LAWRENCE MARTIN

On January 4, 2022, Twentieth Judicial Circuit Judge Larry Martin passed away. Judge Martin was born in 1943 in Jacksonville, Florida. He graduated from the University of Virginia and earned his law degree from the University of Florida, College of Law, aided by the U.S. Army, ROTC. He was appointed as a County Court Judge in 1998 and in 2003 was appointed as a Circuit Court Judge until his retirement in 2009. He had the distinct honor of swearing in his daughter, Judge Janeice Martin to the Collier County bench. During his time on the bench, President of the Board during a formative period for what is today the David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health, spent many years with the East Naples Civic Association and Naples Rotary (Sunset Club), and volunteered with Angel Flight to assist persons with transport for medical purposes.



REMEMBERING: JUDGE TED BROUSSEAU

On July 16, 2021, Twentieth Judicial Circuit Judge Ted Brousseau passed away. Judge Brousseau Jr. was born in 1944 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He graduated from Stetson University where he earned a major in economics and a minor in engineering. He also earned his law degree from Stetson University. Judge Brousseau won the election for Circuit Judge in 1978 and served on the bench for 27 years. Before his time on the bench, he served as President of the Collier County Bar Association and City Attorney for the city of Everglades. He also served as Faculty for Florida Judicial College and National Judicial College and fueled the creation of the Citizen's Foster Care Review Board mission. He was also a certified private pilot and was honored by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) with the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award. The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award is the most prestigious the FAA issues to certified pilots.

INVESTITURE FOR JUDGE KYLE COHEN

"Being a judge for a year and a half has given me time to reflect on all the things I am grateful for preceding this moment," said Circuit Judge Kyle Cohen.

A year and a half after his appointment to the bench, Judge Kyle Cohen was officially welcomed to the Circuit Court bench in Collier County.

On Friday, January 28, 2022, family and friends packed courtrooms 2A and 2B at the Collier County Courthouse. Judge Cohen was appointed as a Circuit Court Judge to the 20th Judicial Circuit on May 28, 2020, and began his service on July 9, 2020, as a Unified Family Court Judge. His Investiture had been postponed due to COVID.

Prior to taking the bench, Judge Cohen served as an Assistant United States Attorney in the civil division for the Middle District of Florida in the Fort Myers Office. As the sole civil division AUSA in the Fort Myers United States Attorney's Office, Judge Cohen was responsible for all aspects of any defensive and affirmative federal civil litigation affecting the interests of the United States within a six-county radius. On the defensive side, Judge Cohen handled many different types of federal civil litigation such as Federal Tort Claims Act ("FTCA") cases, medical malpractice, employment discrimination, and bankruptcy.



United States District Court Judge Sheri Polster Chappell delivered the oath of office. Judge Chappell is the District Court judge whom Judge Cohen practiced in front of the majority of his time as an Assistant United States Attorney.

Guest speakers included Judge Cohen's father, Ed, and Randy Harwell. Mr. Harwell managed Judge Cohen during his time at the United States Attorney's Office. "He departed as a celebrated nationally renowned civil AUSA in all of our practice areas," said Mr. Harwell.

Before joining the United States Attorney's Office, Judge Cohen was an associate at Howrey in Washington D.C. where he was a member of the Global Litigation, Commercial Trial, and Insurance Recovery practice groups. He attended law school at Georgetown University Law Center and is a proud graduate of the University of Florida for undergrad.

"This position is not power, it's a privilege," said Judge Cohen. "And I am going to work as hard as I can to earn that privilege every single day and to earn the faith that each one of you has placed in me."



INVESTITURE FOR JUDGE GIL PEREZ

"The benefit of having an investiture a year and a half after my appointment is that I can stand here and confidentially tell you how much I love what I am doing," said Circuit Judge Gil Perez.



In a packed courtroom on February 25th, 2022, friends, fellow judges, family, and community leaders gathered to finally celebrate the Investiture of Circuit Judge Gilberto Perez.

"The State of Florida is fortunate to have someone as impartial caring and honest as Judge Perez," said long-time friend, Margie Amador Robinson.

Judge Perez assumed office in October 2020. However, his Investiture plans were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The benefit of having an investiture a year and a half after my appointment is that I can stand here and confidentially tell you how much I love what I am doing," said Circuit Judge Gil Perez.

Judge Perez was a family law magistrate for five years before his appointment to the bench. As a magistrate, he presided over family law, Baker Act, and Marchman Act proceedings. Fitting that he now serves as one of two United Family Court Judges in Lee County.

"It takes a very special person. All those cases are tough," said Chief Judge McHugh. "It's a hard docket and he is perfectly situated for it with his background, his temperament, and his personality and he has just done an extraordinary job."

Judge Perez started his legal career at the Miami-Dade Legal Aid Society representing low-income clients in family court. He later joined the Children's Legal Services Division of the Office of the Florida Attorney General in Fort Lauderdale, representing the State in juvenile dependency proceedings, and eventually becoming Bureau Chief.

In 2002, Judge Perez moved to Southwest Florida to serve as an Assistant State Attorney, ultimately prosecuting sex crimes and crimes against children. He later returned to the area of family law, practicing both with Henderson, Franklin, Starnes & Holt and at his own firm in Fort Myers.

"We are so lucky here in the 20th Circuit," said Kati Smith Calvo, who worked with Judge Perez when he was an attorney. "The members of our bench and of our bar are all accomplished and intelligent people but Judge Perez is ridiculously smart and he surpasses all the standards in any endeavor. He doesn't just do a good job, he excels."

Judge Gilberto Perez is a first-generation American born in Miami, Florida to Cuban parents who immigrated to the United States in 1967. "He is the epitome of the American dream," said Judge Perez's niece, Ericka Sanchez.

Judge Perez completed his undergraduate studies at Florida International University, majoring in Psychology. He later graduated cum laude from Notre Dame Law School in Indiana before returning to Florida to begin his legal career.

"I can promise you that each time I put on this black robe and take the bench... I do so without forgetting the oath to apply the law as it is written fairly and consistently, while not forgetting where I came from," said Judge Perez.



INVESTITURE FOR JUDGE NICOLE MIRRA

Friends, family, and colleagues of Judge Nicole Mirra gathered inside Courtroom 1A of the Lee County Courthouse on April 29th for her investiture ceremony.

Chief Judge Michael McHugh kicked off the ceremony by telling the crowd that he was excited to have Judge Mirra as a Lee County Judge.

"I'm very excited the Governor made this pick because the work she has done, her ability to handle her caseload, and the ability to take over a civil docket that was just created has been tremendous," said Judge McHugh. "She's already been an incredible asset to the judiciary."

On July 12, 2021, Governor Ron DeSantis appointed Judge Mirra to serve as Lee County Court Judge to fill the seat created by the retirement of Lee County Judge James Adams.

Prior to her appointment, she served as staff counsel at Allstate Insurance. Judge Mirra was also an Assistant State Attorney for 13 years. She received her bachelor's degree from Florida Gulf Coast University and a law degree from Western Michigan University School of Law. Guests in attendance heard speeches from Judge Mirra's sister, aunt, and cousin.

"She's hard-working, practical, open-minded and when she wants to do something she just sets her mind to it and does it," said Dawn Sciarrino, Judge Mirra's cousin.



During her aunt's remarks, Rosemary Provo said hard work and sheer persistence led Judge Mirra to where she is today.

"This day marks a grand accomplishment for you. You've accepted your new role with great pride and great enthusiasm," said Provo. "You've become an inspiration to your family, your friends, and your colleagues."

With Judge Mirra's husband, Vito, holding the bible, Circuit Judge James Sloan administered the oath of office to Judge Mirra. Judge Sloan had the privilege of swearing in Judge Mirra when she first became a member of the Florida Bar. Her parents then helped her with her enrobing.

Judge Mirra dedicated her speech to thanking everyone and for those who have and continue to support her.

Judge Mirra is assigned the County Civil bench for Lee County.



"You've become an inspiration to your family, your friends and your colleagues." - said Rosemary Provo, Judge Mirra's Aunt.

INVESTITURE FOR JUDGE ERIK LEONTIEV

"Here is someone who is really smart and introspective and actually thinks about things. I was struck by that," said Chief Judge McHugh.

On June 3rd, 2022 we ceremoniously welcomed Judge Leontiev to the Lee County bench. Judge Leontiev took the bench on October 8, 2021, after being appointed by Governor Ron DeSantis to fill a new Lee County Judicial vacancy effective July 2021. Before his appointment, he served 14 years as an Assistant State Attorney for the 20th Judicial Circuit. His former boss, State Attorney Amira Fox, was a guest speaker at the Investiture.

"You have made us so proud," said State Attorney Amira Fox. "He was a phenomenal trial attorney - talk about always prepared, organized, always with a winning strategy. Most importantly, the skill and personality that won over his colleagues and every single jury he appeared in front of."

While working as an Assistant State Attorney, he held positions in the Post-Conviction, Special Victims, and Economic Crimes Units, prosecuting cases in Collier, Lee, Charlotte, and Hendry Counties.

"I know you will do an absolute wonderful job serving the citizens of Southwest Florida," said State Attorney Amira Fox.

Circuit Judge Jim Shenko swore in Judge Leontiev and his wife Margo then assisted with the enrobing.



"I promise to faithfully interpret the law as written, saying what that law is and not what I think it ought to be," said Judge Leontiev. "Remembering always that as a judge, I sit on a bench and not a throne."

Judge Leontiev received his undergraduate degree from Florida International University and a law degree from the University of Miami. Judge Leontiev's sister, Lisa, also was a guest speaker at the Investiture and she dedicated much of her speech to telling everyone about their family background and where Judge Leontiev comes from.

"I think this is the legacy that he inherits and he brings with him to this new position as a judge," said Lisa Leontiev.

Born and raised in a military family, Judge Leontiev has lived in Europe, Central America, and three distinct regions of the United States. He moved to Florida in 1999 and called it home ever since. He is married and a proud father of six children.

"To my children, all of this you see is in honor of your father and it's a wonderful thing to be honored in this way; to be given the title of judge," said Judge Leontiev. "This is one of the great honors of my life and it's a lot to take in. But if you remember anything else from today, you need to remember this - that all these honors are a small thing to me compared to the honor of being called your father."



CHARLOTTE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER REMODEL PROJECT NEW COURTROOMS 2C AND 2D OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The new courtrooms on the 2nd floor of the Charlotte County Justice have been completed and are open for business. Judge Peter Bell presided over the first dockets in courtroom 2D and officially opened them up to the public.

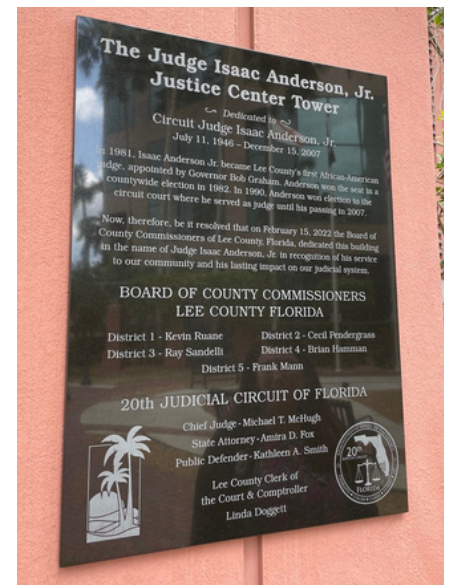


JUSTICE CENTER TOWER NAMED AFTER JUDGE ANDERSON

Chief Judge Michael McHugh, Lee County Commissioners, and other public officials dedicated the Lee County Justice Center tower in honor of the late Judge Isaac Anderson, Jr. on Tuesday, April 26, 2022.

The dedication was held in the courtyard between the Justice Center Tower and the Annex and is where the plaque dedicating the tower was unveiled. Along with local officials, people also heard remarks from Judge Anderson's wife, Audrea, and his son, Justin.

Anderson was appointed in 1981, becoming Lee County's first African-American judge. Anderson was a Fort Myers native and 1964 Dunbar High graduate. Before being appointed as a judge he served as Director of Community Affairs for Fort Myers and later as Lee County's lobbyist for state and federal funds. He then opened his law office in Fort Myers to practice civil and criminal defense. Anderson also worked for the Dunbar Coalition and the Dunbar Improvement Association, whose mission is to provide affordable housing for the elderly and people with disabilities. Anderson died in December 2007.



JUDGE LAUREN BRODIE NAMED HOEVELER JUDICIAL PROFESSIONALISM AWARD WINNER

Written by: The Florida Bar News

The Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism and the Standing Committee on Professionalism named 20th Circuit Judge Lauren L. Brodie the 2022 William M. Hoeveler Judicial Professionalism Award winner.

The award recognizes an active judge who best exemplifies strength of character, service, and competence as a jurist, lawyer, and public servant.

"Judge Brodie demonstrates the ideals of professionalism and justice while inspiring others to do the same," according to the Center for Professionalism.

Since 1991, Brodie has been a committed member of the judiciary. She was a Miami-Dade County judge from 1991-1995 and an 11th Circuit judge from 1995-1998 before retiring and relocating to Naples, serving as a senior judge from 1999-2001 until her appointment to the bench in 2001 by Gov. Jeb Bush.

"Judge Brodie not only serves the legal community but tirelessly works to improve the community of Collier County as a whole," the center said. "She received the Chief Justice's Distinguished Judicial Service Award in 2007 for her efforts in the juvenile justice area. In 2015, the Florida Association for Women Lawyers (FAWL) selected her as one of six Extraordinary Women Leaders in the State of Florida for her vision, courage, and passion in helping create 'Drug Free Collier,' a non-profit organization that aims at uniting the community to protect the children of Collier County from substance abuse. As a judge, she has witnessed

first-hand the effects of drugs and mental-health issues in many who appeared before her. The up-and-down spirals generated by drugs and mental health issues is something that many deal with in their lives — either personally or in their family."

In November 2018, Judge Brodie wrote "Suffering in Silence No More" for the News, "because she had been suffering in silence for too long. Realizing how draining the silence was and how her difficult journey as a mom of children with substance abuse and mental-health issues could benefit others struggling, she decided to speak out and share her experience."

Judge Brodie states, "I try to use everything I have learned personally and professionally to help save people from the ravages of mental illness and substance abuse."

As a result of the pandemic, coupled with other pressures, Judge Brodie has seen local attorneys themselves suffering in silence. Out of this concern, she has been a leader in the establishment of the newly formed "Attorney Wellness Initiative," that features confidential, convenient, and cost-free access to professional psychological services as well as a peer-to-peer network for all Collier County attorneys.

"It goes without saying that Judge Brodie is the epitome of professionalism and public service," according to the Center for Professionalism. "She is committed to the ideals of professionalism in her courtroom and models best practices of civility, competence, and strength of character to anyone who steps in it. She is the embodiment of professionalism in the judiciary."

The William M. Hoeveler Judicial Professionalism Award, and other professionalism awards, will be presented at Annual Judicial Luncheon June 23 at the Signia by Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek during The Florida Bar Annual Convention.



COLLIER DRUG COURT MENTOR COURT



The Collier County Adult Felony Drug Court has been named one of just 10 national mentor treatment courts by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) and the U.S. Department of Justice.

National mentor courts are exemplary treatment courts selected to serve a three-year term as model programs to assist new or growing courts. These top-tier programs follow evidence-based best practices and play a significant role in national training, technical assistance, and research efforts. This is the second consecutive mentor court appointment for Collier's Drug Court.

As part of the mentor court network for 2022-2024, Collier's Drug Court will help develop, identify, and test national best practices and provide technical assistance to jurisdictions interested in implementing or improving an adult drug treatment court, including hosting site visits by team members from other jurisdictions around the country. (All site visits will be conducted virtually in 2022.)

"It is a great honor to recognize this court as one of only 10 mentor courts in the country," said NADCP Chief of Training and Research Carolyn Hardin. "This program is a shining example of how a combination of accountability and treatment can save lives, reunite families, and make the community safer. As a mentor court, this program is helping to transform our justice system and leading countless people who might otherwise be incarcerated into lives of long-term recovery." There are now nearly 4,000 treatment courts nationwide, considered the cornerstone of justice reform.

The Collier County Adult Felony Drug Court was founded in 1999 by the Honorable William L. Blackwell, and represents a strong commitment to collaboration and partnership between the Courts, State Attorney, Public Defender, Sheriff's Office, Department of Corrections, David Lawrence Centers, County Government and several other community resources.

"Community partnerships are our super power in Collier County, and nowhere is that on greater display than in our Drug Court, where so many diverse sectors come together to assist our clients in the difficult but critical process of addressing past traumas and learning how to live life without drugs or alcohol. Recovery is real, and when one person finds recovery, the benefits extend far beyond that person to their children, their loved ones, their employers (or employees) and the entire community." Hon. Janeice T. Martin, Presiding Judge.

COLLIER COUNTY REACHES UNIFORM CASE REPORTING SYSTEM MILESTONE

Written by: Susan Emmanuel

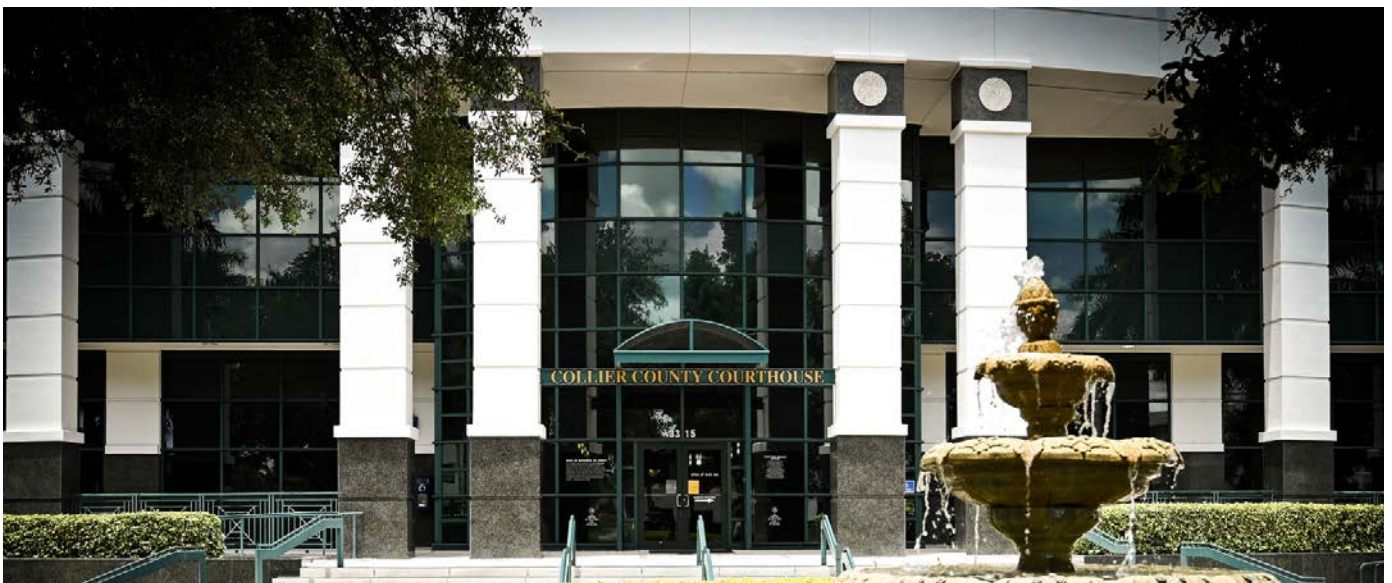
Leading the state, Collier County Clerk of Court now reports court data in near real time. Uniform Case Reporting (UCR) will provide citizens and courts alike with a clearer, more immediate view of how the judicial branch is performing, streamline case management, and improve resource allocation.

Crystal K. Kinzel, Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller in Collier County, has led the way with her staff to this milestone.

“The Uniform Case Reporting system initiative represents a significant modernization in the way Florida’s trial courts collect and analyze case information,” Chief Justice Charles T. Canady said. “Clerk Kinzel’s efforts in Collier County to become the first county to certify case activity data in the UCR is a significant first step toward enabling the judicial branch to better assess performance and determine resource needs.”

The Florida State Courts System requires timely access to accurate and reliable data to ensure the responsible use of public resources and to effectively administer justice. Direct, substantive, two-way sharing of case and court activity data is vital to the courts’ efforts to effectively manage cases and judicial operations.

The sharing of this data will be standardized across the state court system through the UCR system. Collier County is the first county in the state to transition case reporting in select divisions to the UCR system, a data exchange infrastructure that provides a robust and flexible framework for the Florida courts system to manage its data.



MASS ADOPTIONS BACK IN PERSON

Fifty-three children in Southwest Florida now have their forever homes. Ceremonies for National Adoption Awareness Month were held during November in Charlotte, Collier, and Lee counties.

The adoption finalization hearings began for ten children on Monday, November 15th, 2021 in Charlotte County with Judge Mary Evans. Among those adopted was a sibling group of four, ranging from ages 9-14. Adoption finalizations are typically closed hearings, but in November the Children's Network schedules open hearings where all of the adoptive families participate together.

"It is very exciting for us as Unified Family Court judges because this is the good stuff that we do," said Judge Evans.

Hearings continued on Wednesday, November 17th, 2021 when 11 children had their finalization hearings at the Collier County Courthouse with Judge Shannon McFee presiding.

"A child needs to have love, needs to have stability, and needs to have trust," said Judge Shannon McFee. "The story of the most successful children is having one trustworthy loving adult in their life and these children have that."

The final ceremony was held on National Adoption Day which was Saturday, November 20th, 2021, at the Lee County Courthouse with Judge Gilberto Perez. Twenty-eight children were legally adopted into 21 families. Among those adopted were a 17-year old, four sibling groups, and a toddler.

National Adoption Day is a collaborative effort with the Department of Children and Families, attorneys at Children's Legal Services, the Guardian Ad Litem Program, Lutheran Services, Children's Network, and everyone in the court system including case management, the clerk's office and the Sheriff's Office deputies.

"It was an honor and a privilege to spend Saturday morning helping 28 children officially become a part of the family in their forever home," said Judge Gilberto Perez. "For many of the families, this was the final step in a long road through the court system. I was grateful to be a part of that final step before they start their lives as a legal family."

Following the ceremonies there were receptions which included food, face painting, and gifts for the children.



Judge Mary Evans with a family in Charlotte County



Judge Shannon McFee with a family in Collier County



Judge Gil Perez presiding over adoptions in Lee County

VETERANS DAY CEREMONY HELD

In honor of Veterans Day, Lee County Judge Josephine Gagliardi held a special Veterans Treatment Court session honoring veterans on Tuesday, November 9th. Speakers offered messages of hope and support to those facing challenges here at home.

Guest speakers included Lee County Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, U.S. District Court Magistrate Judge Douglas N. Frazier, Attorney Michael Corso, Lee County Operations Division Manager Brooke Dean, Isaac Peck who was a Specialist with the US Army National Guard, and 20th Judicial Circuit Court Judge Margaret Steinbeck who was a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army.

"Veterans Court is hard, but the end result is worth it," said Judge Steinbeck. "It means a lot to me as a Judge and it means a lot to our community. I thank the support of the County Commissioners and all who work in this court. I especially thank our Veterans who are part of this court. Thank you for what you are doing for us."

Since 2014, the Lee County Veterans Treatment Court has admitted 114 veterans with misdemeanor and/or felony charges and has had a 79% successful completion rate. The program's stringent requirements and focus on individualized treatment are designed to address the unique reasons behind each participant's criminal justice involvement. When these goals are met, participants leave the program with the resources necessary to live stable, sober, and law-abiding lives.

In a study of discharges between 2017-2020, roughly 84% of all successful graduates avoided new arrests in Lee County after they left the program. Over the 2020-2021 fiscal year, 21 new veterans were admitted, contributing to an average monthly census of 20 veterans, and 12 successfully completed the program for an overall successful completion rate of 92%.

Veterans Court is designed to divert cases from the traditional court system for individuals who have served in the US military, are a current or former US Department of Defense Contractor, or are a current or former military member of a foreign allied country and are diagnosed with severe mental health and/or substance use disorders. Veterans Courts promote public safety while supporting service members and their families through a coordinated effort among veteran services, community services and the court.



HENDRY COUNTY DRUG COURT GRADUATION

"Today we celebrate our successes. When you succeed - we succeed. When you fail - we fail. So thank you for making today a success," said Judge Sloan.

In July 2021, Hendry County and Judge James Sloan held their first in-person graduation for Drug Court graduates. There have been eight graduations in total since Hendry County restarted the Drug Court Program in July of 2018. There were two graduations in 2020 and six in 2021.

The program currently has 19 Participants with two pending referrals. The program has a capacity of 20 participants.

"Drug court gave me the opportunity to do things right. I got a new start now. I've been clean for two years and have never been clean that long before," a Drug Court graduate said.



COURT INTERPRETERS GET NEW SPACE IN LEE COUNTY

Our Court Interpreters moved to a new location inside the Lee County Justice Center for better access to the courtrooms throughout the day. There are also rooms for Virtual Court Interpreting or VRI.



"The new office space and design are more conducive in allowing court interpreters to prepare for lengthy hearings and trials. It also provides space for video interpreting stations that can be utilized to provide services throughout the circuit. It makes a big difference and provides for a productive work environment," said Millie Rutkiewicz, Supervising Court Interpreter.

GLADES COUNTY OPENS NEW PROBATION OFFICE

Take a look at the new probation office in Glades County! It will serve 74 probationers and 10 people on diversion. The office is more modern and updated for our probation officer with a check-in area and private space.



The Glades County Probation Office's new location has improved officer safety and accessibility for probationers. It can be found just past the County Manager's Office on the first floor of the Glades County Courthouse.

MENTAL HEALTH COURT MONTH 2022



May is National Mental Health Awareness Month! It's a time to raise awareness of the importance of mental health. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, nearly one in five people in the US live with a mental illness. On May 3, 2022, the Lee County Mental Health Court Team observed the nationally recognized movement by wearing green for staffing and court. A green ribbon is an international symbol of mental health awareness. In addition, each team member received a Self-Care Kit in recognition for all the hard work they put in each day for the 48 active program participants, who receive mental health treatment and interventions throughout the duration of the program. The Self-Care Kit was a reminder that mental health should be a priority for everyone!

DRUG COURT GRADUATION HELD FOR DRUG COURT MONTH

In honor of "National Drug Court Month", the 20th Judicial Circuit, Lee County Felony Drug Court Program celebrated by conducting a special graduation ceremony held on May 19th, 2022. To mark the occasion, and raise awareness, the drug court team invited community leaders, dignitaries, and treatment providers to share in this commemorative event.

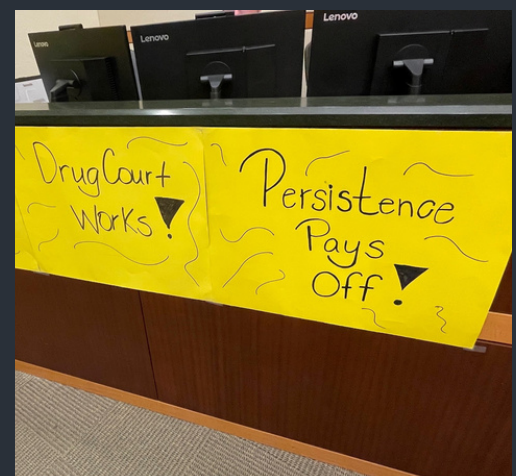
Those present for the ceremony heard from guest speakers and also testimonials from drug court participants who described how drug court has made a significant difference in their lives.

"It was a slow start, but its paying off," said one participant. "I have been an addict for 40 years and this is the only program that has worked. I'm 14 months clean and that's the longest I have ever been. Everything that was implemented into the drug court program has proved to be working really well."

Research continues to show that Drug Courts are a viable means instead of incarceration and serve as an effective strategy for reducing recidivism. On average, drug court participants are re-arrested significantly less often after the program than before the program. Overall, findings indicate that participation in a drug court program tends to reduce not only drug crimes, but also serves as a means to reduce substance abuse.

The Lee County Felony Drug Court Program was implemented in 2001 and expanded in 2006, and is presided over by Judge Leigh F. Hayes and Judge Josephine Gagliardi. The goal of the program is to divert cases from the traditional court system while helping participants recover from drug and alcohol addiction, stay in recovery and become productive members of society.

"As soon as you start doing the right thing, good things start happening," said a participant. "if you want it you can do it. You just have to want it."





#INTERPRETERAPPRECIATIONDAY

Court interpretation (and everything that goes on behind the scenes) plays a critical role in the criminal justice system. Specifically, in the administration of justice.



Our Interpreter and Translator Services Department held an Open House for Judges, staff and Court Admin. Everyone was able to meet and greet with each other and also discuss interpreting services that are provided.

LAW WEEK 2022

Congratulations to retired Judge James R. Thompson on receiving The Liberty Bell Award, the highest honor given to a citizen by the legal profession!

Judge Thompson was presented with the award at the Lee County Bar Association annual Law Week Awards Luncheon in May 2022. It was attended by several county and circuit court judges, 2nd DCA judges, dignitaries, community leaders, LCBA members, and guests. Judge James Thompson was a judge for the 20th Circuit for 45 years until his retirement as a senior judge last year.



CONGRATULATIONS TO...



JUDGE HAYWARD

Congratulations to the Honorable Archie Hayward for being awarded the 2021 LCBA Pro Bono Mentorship "Gold Partner" Award by the Lee Co. Bar Association. The award was presented at the annual Pro Bono Awards Luncheon. After the awards ceremony, those in attendance heard from all our Lee County Judges about best practices in County Court during the pandemic.

JUDGE GAGLIARDI

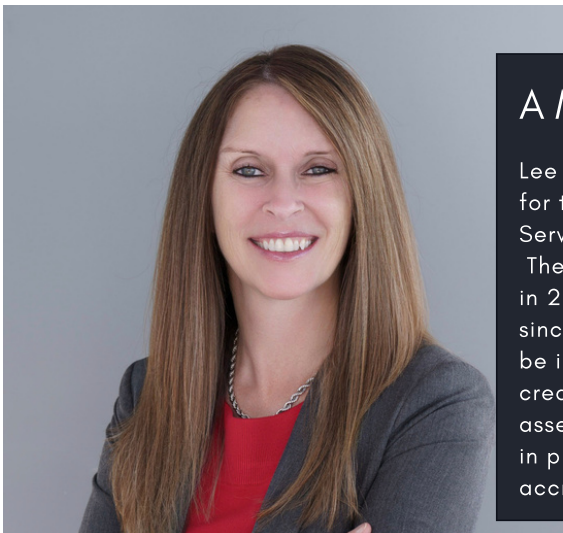
Congratulations to Lee County Judge Josephine Gagliardi who was honored at the Lee County Association for Women Lawyers annual Judicial Reception! This event honors a local judge who has made great contributions to the community and legal profession.



AMY KINSEY

Lee County's Criminal Division Director, Amy Kinsey, was selected for the 2021 Florida Corrections Accreditation's Distinguished Service Award for all of her efforts with statewide accreditation.

The Lee County Pretrial Services Department was first accredited in 2009 through the FCAC and has maintained full compliance since, later adding county probation. Amy had the opportunity to be involved in the rewrite of statewide pretrial standards and the creation of county probation standards. Amy has served as an assessor since 2009 and enjoys assessing and assisting agencies in preparation for achieving or continuing compliance with accreditation in the pretrial and probation fields.



CONGRATULATIONS TO...



ASHLEE, BRIDGET, NATHAN, AND IRIS!

Ashlee Whitewood was promoted to Deputy Criminal Division Director. She started as a secretary in Collier County in 2006 and was later promoted to probation officer in Collier. She came to Lee County probation in 2012 and was promoted to supervisor in 2018.

Bridget Washburn was promoted to Treatment Courts Manager. Bridget has worked with the AOC in Lee County since May of 2014, served as a team lead and most recently as Senior Probation Officer.

Nathan Blanco was selected as probation supervisor. Nathan has been a probation officer in Lee County since Jan 2019.

Iris McDonald was promoted to Division Systems Analyst for the Lee County Criminal Division. Her new role includes serving as the Division Accreditation Manager. Iris has been employed with the AOC as a probation officer since Feb 2017 and recently served as a team lead.

ANDREA & VICKIE

Our Charlotte County Teen Court/Juvenile Arbitration Coordinator Andrea Williams and Charlotte County's front desk receptionist Vickie Osten retired in December 2021.



DOUG JAYE

Mr. Jaye served 29 years of dedicated service to the Administrative Office of the Courts in various roles for the AOC to include deputy court administrator for alternative sanctions, probation officer, probation supervisor, and currently as deputy director for the Lee County probation department. Mr. Jaye has contributed in many ways whether project based, leadership-driven, or working with and helping probationers. His loyalty and commitment has been unparalleled.

IN THE COMMUNITY

JUDGES OUTSIDE OF THE COURTROOM



BENCHWARMERS tee off at the annual LCBA charity golf tournament!



Do the Right Thing ceremony with Judge Branning



Making Civics come alive at Punta Gorda Middle with Judge Gentile



Judge Foster and Judge McGowan joined David Lawrence Centers for the ribbon cutting of their new collaboration with Home Base Florida



TREATMENT COURTS MANAGER BRIDGET WASHBURN, THE HONORABLE JOSEPHINE GAGLIARDI & CRIMINAL DIVISION DIRECTOR AMY KINSEY PARTICIPATED IN THE FIRST SWFL VETERANS EXPO REPRESENTING THE 20TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT.



Judge Jack Lundy's family served as the Grand Marshal in the annual Chalo Nikta Parade in Moore Haven.



Circuit Judge James Sloan and Hendry County Judge Darrell Hill participated in the annual Swamp Cabbage Festival parade in LaBelle!



AROUND THE COURTS



Lee County Clerk of Court Linda Doggett retired in Feb. 2022. The Self-Help center at the courthouse was named in her honor.

Judge Joe Foster was joined by ASA Deborah Cunningham, CCWBA Past President Jamie Schwinghamer, CCWBA President Rachel Kerlek, and ASA and CCWBA Board Member Sabsina Karimi for the unveiling of the location room in September 2021.

The room is located outside Courtroom 1A. Any bailiff in the courthouse is able to unlock the room for any nursing mother.



Congratulations to our newest CIT-trained professionals from the Lee County Criminal Division! Courtney Graham, Bridget Washburn, Taylor Halperin, and Jessika Ramirez all completed the 40-hour Crisis Intervention Training at the Southwest Florida Public Service Academy this past week. The training provides intensive training on identifying and responding to persons with mental illness or those who are in crisis.



Collier County welcomed Florida's Second DCA! Judge Morris, Judge Villanti, and Judge Labrit held oral arguments at the Collier County Courthouse for three cases in the 20th Circuit.



A mini adoption event was held for six Lee County families in front of Judge Perez.

2022 HURRICANE OUTLOOK

2022 Hurricane Season Forecast Atlantic Basin

	30 Year Average	Last Year	Colorado State University
Total Named	14	21	19
Hurricanes	7	7	9
Category 3 or Higher	3	4	4

Tropical Cyclone Names 2022

Atlantic Basin

Alex	Gaston	Martin	Tobias
Bonnie	Hermine	Nicole	Virginie
Colin	Ian	Owen	Walter
Danielle	Julia	Paula	
Earl	Karl	Richard	
Fiona	Lisa	Shary	

2022 Atlantic Hurricane Expected to be Another Busy One, CSU Outlook Says

By Jonathan Belles via [weather.com](https://www.weather.com)

April 07, 2022

The 2022 Atlantic hurricane season will likely once again bring above-average activity, according to one of the first major hurricane season outlooks of the year, released by Colorado State University's Phil Klotzbach.

The outlook calls for nine hurricanes and four hurricanes that reach at least Category 3 strength. This is in comparison to the 1991-2020 average of seven hurricanes and three major hurricanes. The outlook cites neutral to cool El Niño-Southern Oscillations (ENSO) conditions and warmer than average water temperatures in the Caribbean and subtropical Atlantic as indicators for the active hurricane season.

The outlook compiled a list of hurricane seasons that might be similar to what we might expect this season and it happens to include 2021, which had 21 named storms, seven hurricanes, and four hurricanes that reached Category 3 status or greater.

Other seasons include 1996, 2000, 2001, 2008, and 2012. The average activity for those six seasons was 8.5 hurricanes and four major hurricanes. This list was built based on years that similar ENSO conditions in March and similar forecasts for ENSO during the season.

This outlook serves as a reminder that hurricane season will quickly be upon us. Over the last 10 seasons, eight have started before June 1st, including every season dating to 2015.

To assist you in planning and preparing for a storm you may find the following websites helpful. Share these with your friends and family to ensure that they're prepared.

[READY.GOV](https://www.ready.gov)

[NATIONAL HURRICANE
PREPAREDNESS](https://www.nationalhurricanepreparedness.org)

[FL DEPT OF EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT](https://www.fldepm.com)

[AMERICAN RED CROSS](https://www.americanredcross.org)

[FLORIDA SUPREME COURT
EMERGENCY ORDERS](https://www.flcourts.org)



THE CIRCUIT TIMES

Official Newsletter of the 20th Judicial Circuit of Florida



If you have pictures or a story to share, please email
Sara Miles at smiles@ca.cjis20.org



[SWFLCourts20](https://www.facebook.com/SWFLCourts20)



[SWFLCourts](https://www.instagram.com/SWFLCourts)



[SWFLCourts](https://twitter.com/SWFLCourts)



[20th Judicial Circuit](https://www.linkedin.com/company/20th-Judicial-Circuit)
[Administrative Office of the Courts](https://www.linkedin.com/company/20th-Judicial-Circuit)

Chief Judge

Michael T. McHugh

Trial Court Administrator

Scott Wilsker

Chief Deputy Court Administrator

Liza King

Editor

Sara Miles

Contributors

Brooke Dean

Liza King

Amy Kinsey

Bridget Washburn

Jon Embury

Dawn Oliver

Judge Branning

Judge Gagliardi

Judge Foster

Judge Martin

Iler Rivera-Chicas

Luanne Wolff

Dawn Whittington

The Children's Network

The Lee County Bar