



Office of the State Courts Administrator

SUSAN EMMANUEL

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

Phone: (850)922-1187 Fax: (850)488-0156

e-mail: emmanuel@flcourts.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**The Honorable Margaret O. Steinbeck Receives
the 2022 Chief Justice Award for Judicial Excellence
Due to Remarkable Trial Court Leadership During Pandemic Recovery**

Tallahassee, FL — The Honorable Margaret O. Steinbeck received the 2022 Chief Justice Award for Judicial Excellence from Florida Supreme Court Chief Justice Carlos G. Muñiz Monday, August 1, 2022, at the annual education program of the Florida Conference of Circuit Judges. Judge Steinbeck has served as a judge in Florida's 20th Judicial Circuit since 1998. She also serves as the Chair of the Trial Court Budget Commission.

At the helm of the Trial Court Budget Commission during the Covid-19 pandemic, Judge Steinbeck collaborated with the members to pinpoint what the trial courts required to remain open and functioning, including additional technology to facilitate remote hearings, personal protective equipment to ensure the safety of court staff and visitors, and updated procedures to manage a shift in court functions. "She is tirelessly dedicated to the needs of the trial courts, and she does all of this with humility and hard work," Trial Court Budget Commission members noted in their nomination of Judge Steinbeck.

Steinbeck's leadership in times of crisis and her lasting impact on Florida's trial courts made her nomination for the 2022 Chief Justice Award for Judicial Excellence one that enjoyed enthusiastic support from her peers, court leaders across the state, and family.

Judge Steinbeck began her public service career in the United States Army in 1978. She remained on active duty in several roles, including promotions from lieutenant to captain during her service. She was often the only woman and almost always the only woman officer. She said that during her time as an officer she "had to learn to give an order."

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In 1990, Steinbeck left active duty and began practicing law. She was in private practice for five years, then became an Assistant United States Attorney for the Middle District of Florida, a role she held until 1998 when Governor Jeb Bush appointed her to the 20th Judicial Circuit. Judge Steinbeck went on to serve in every division in the circuit and in every county in the circuit except Collier.

Judge Steinbeck's contributions to the judiciary extend beyond the trial courts with tributes coming in from the appellate courts, as well. Judge John K. Stargel of the Second District Court of Appeal observed that Judge Steinbeck "has a unique ability to bring people together on the most difficult issues and can diffuse potentially divisive situations with her calm demeanor and characteristic wit."

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