



# The Circuit Times

Twentieth Judicial Circuit: Navigating the Future



## Charlotte County's Courtrooms of the Future

*P. Goodpasture*

Advanced technology continues to be the hallmark of the Charlotte County Justice Center. Courtroom 4B has been expanded and upgraded with the latest state-of-the-art evidence presentation system thanks to the continuing collaboration of the Judiciary and the Clerk of Courts in Charlotte County. Five out of nine Charlotte courtrooms have videoconferencing and multi-media format video display capability and now four of those five courtrooms have advanced evidence display systems controlled by trial clerks on the bench or attorneys at the podium.

The high-tech evidence display systems are housed in special handcrafted podia, all custom designed with integrated control panels on the bench and the podia for operation of the individual components of the systems. These components include a state-of-the-art document camera; widescreen ceiling mounted plasma displays; flat panel displays for the jurors, attorney tables, judge, clerk and witnesses; DVD/VCR/cassette tape players; laptop connections; and electronic tablets for marking the video display images.

The latest courtroom enhancement primarily benefits Charlotte County Administrative Judge Donald E. Pellechia, who hears circuit civil case proceedings and trials in this courtroom. When funding shortfalls arose for the upgrade of

Courtroom 4B, Charlotte County Clerk of Courts, Barbara T. Scott, was able to provide additional support to the Judiciary and the Administrative Office of the Courts to allow the project to be finished consistent with the technology standards already in place.

Mrs. Scott, Judge Pellechia, and the late Deputy Court Administrator Bill Hayes were heavily involved in the initial design of the Charlotte County Justice Center. Mrs. Scott and her technology staff provided the vision for the technology implementations in the courtrooms. "I am very pleased with the end result of our joint effort and I want to recognize the tireless efforts of my IT staff to help design, program, and maintain the evidence display systems in all our courtrooms. I also want to thank the Judiciary, Administrative Office of Courts,



*Charlotte County Clerk of Courts, Barbara T. Scott and Judge Donald E. Pellechia at projection display.*

### COVER:

**Charlotte County's Courtroom on the cutting edge**

### MANAGERS RECEIVE CERTIFICATION

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bailiffs, Board of County Commissioners, the Capital Projects Coordinator, and Facilities Management staff for their on-going support,” Mrs. Scott said.

Clerk technology staff members support the advanced systems in the courtrooms and periodically conduct training sessions for attorneys to become familiar with the capabilities of the display systems. Attorneys may also request training and should contact the Clerk’s Office at 941-505-4848 for assistance.



*Jurors have a computer flat screen so they can view evidence as it is presented.*

*Below, citizens in the gallery can view the same information from a large flat screen display.*



## Fifteen Achieve Certification from National Center for State Courts

S. Mann

On November 16, fifteen managers and supervisors of the Twentieth Judicial Circuit graduated from the Court Management Program of the Institute for Court Management (ICM). ICM is the educational arm of the National Center for State Courts. This graduation marks the end of a challenging program designed to educate and empower its participants. In all, the participants completed five, three day long core courses in court administration: Court Performance Standards, Fundamental Issues of Caseload Management, Managing Court Financial Resources, Managing Human Resources, and Managing Technology Projects and Technology Resources. Court Managers completing the week-long concluding seminar were recognized in a ceremony held at the National Center for State Courts.

The Twentieth Judicial Circuit is very proud of these individuals for their accomplishments and is looking forward to using the skills they have acquired to continually expand and improve service to our citizens and access to justice.



*Graduates from left to right, 1st row: Lisa Kiesel, Luanne Wolff, Roseann Brown, Dolly Ballard, Sharon Suhar; 2nd row: Ken Kellum, Nancy Aloia, Liza Maldonado, Juan Ramos, Charles Rice, Belinda Smith; 3rd row: Eric Fishbeck, Bruce Waddell, Craig McLean and Jon Embury.*

## Collier County News

M. Middlebrook

### Former Chief Judge Honored

The Collier County Bar Association recognized Judge Hugh D. Hayes at the annual dinner for the Appellate Court in October. The Bar thanked Judge Hayes for his outstanding service as Chief Judge. The Judge received a commemorative pen and pencil set. The event was attended by 200 attorneys, as well as, several judges from Lee and Collier Counties.

### New Courts In Collier County

Chief Judge Cary has established two new courts, Truancy Court and Mental Health Court, at the request of Judge Monaco. Both are in the early stages and have been very well received.

### Reality Journey

Senior Probation Officer Debbie Offutt has been a leader in the Reality Journey program for several years. The program is for teenage students who participate in an inter-active experience based in a real life setting. It details the effects of teen-age drinking that result in death. Over 500 students attended this year's program.

### Public Safety Coordinating Council

A joint meeting of the coastal Public Safety Coordinating Councils took place on December 3, 2007 at the request of Collier County Commissioner Coyle. The purpose of the meeting was to look at regionalization of Twentieth Judicial Circuit's County Jail system.

## Hendry County News

S. Mann

### Jail Expansion Planned for 2008

The Hendry County Board of County Commissioners is planning to expand the jail facilities in order to accommodate a growth in the inmate population. A bid for an architect has gone out with a deadline of January 30th. The County would like to add 96 beds to the current facility. Hopefully, development of the plans will be underway in the next few months.

### New Probation Officer Position

On November 19th Sharon Elliott started as a Probation Officer in Hendry County. The County provided funding for the position due to the large volume of cases being handled there by one probation officer and an administrative assistant. It is a challenging and fun time for the department as it adjusts to the "growing pains" within the county. As the Probation Department grows too, the goal is for it to develop into a model of case management practices.

### Family Case Management

Charlotte County has been graciously sharing staff with Hendry County to provide case management and pro se assistance to the citizens of Hendry County for family law cases. This year the Twentieth received a circuit wide case management position that will be shared by Lee and Hendry Counties. The end result will be a half-time position for the county to focus on further development of a family case management system.

## Updates

Ct. Administration

### Court Receives Staff Interpreters

Four new interpreters have joined the staff of the Administrative Office of the Courts: Maxime Joseph, Marlen McDougall, Leon Fontanova and Maria Delashmet.

Mr. Joseph is a Haitian-Creole Interpreter who began his employment on October 22, 2007 and is headquartered in Collier County.

Ms. McDougall is a Spanish Interpreter who began her employment on December 3, 2007 and is headquartered in Charlotte County.

Mr. Fontanova is a Spanish Interpreter who will be headquartered in Lee County. His first day will be January 2, 2008.

Ms Delashmet is a Spanish Interpreter who will be headquartered in Collier County. Her first day will be January 2, 2008.



## Supervisors Take Instruction Human Resource Consultant Comes To The Twentieth

M. Thomas

On October 25th and 26th Lenora Bresler, a noted Human Resources Consultant, provided training to twenty-five supervisors of the Twentieth Judicial Circuit. The training was specifically designed for first line supervisors to expose them to the changing styles of management, focusing on abilities to motivate others to greater work performance. Topics covered included conflict resolution, interpersonal relationships and communication skills. Ms. Bresler incorporated skill practices, group activities and brainstorming for the specific role of supervisor. The participants were involved in a number of interactive role-playing activities that gave them first hand experience at solving realistic problems encountered in today's work environment.

Participant evaluations submitted at the close of the session indicate the training was highly successful in providing them with greater insight into management techniques that could be used immediately.



*Lenora Bresler during 2 day training presentation to supervisors.*



and deliver copies to the litigants. At the same time copies for other departments and law enforcement are made. This process saves a great deal of time, provides for more timely service of court documents and a reduction of documents being mailed out. Also, it eliminated the need for four ply carbon paper, thereby reducing paper costs.

## Domestic Violence Program and Clerk's Office Collaborate and Everyone Benefits

S. Mann

The Domestic Violence Division of the AOC and the Clerk of Courts, Civil Division worked together to streamline court document processing procedures that affected each department. Historically, after a hearing on an Injunction For Protection the parties would be asked to sign a copy of the order of final judgment and each party would be provided a carbon copy of the document. Parties to cases in which motions were heard received no copies that day, but had certified copies mailed to them. Regardless of whether or not the parties were available to receive copies, all parties received certified copies of documents from the Clerk's Office. To eliminate the need for mailing additional copies and ensure that all parties received certified copies of documents in a timely manner, the decision was made to have a Deputy Clerk at the hearings so that certified copies could be made in real time and delivered to the parties before leaving court. The Clerk's Office provided a copier on wheels that could be moved from courtroom to courtroom as needed. The DV Case Managers and Deputy Clerks work together to transfer files, and make



*DV Court staff, from left to right: first row, Case Managers Lori Connor and Diane Drinnon, Deputy Clerk Mary Maloney; second row, Deputy Clerk Crystal Cherry, Case Manager Leah Fontanez and Docket Manager Karen Przybysz.*

## Teen Court Closing in on 15 Years of Success

G. Oliva

The Twentieth Judicial Circuit's Teen Court Program is completing its fifteenth year of operation. The primary purpose of the program is to expedite the cases of first time misdemeanor juvenile offenders in order to allow the Court more time to address crimes of a more serious nature. Typical cases might include: shoplifting, vandalism, possession of alcohol, trespassing, petit theft, disorderly conduct and interference in a school function. All cases referred to the Teen Court must be referred by the Department of Juvenile Justice and must be approved by the State Attorney's Office.



*Teen Court Coordinator, Gloria Olivera (center) with volunteers Lori Connor (left) and Dineesha Edwards (right). Both Lori and Dineesha work in the Domestic Violence Division of the AOC.*

The goal of the Teen Court Program is to hold juvenile offenders accountable for their actions while preventing a criminal conviction from occurring. Successful completion of the program usually results in no further action being taken and the case being closed. The defendants must acknowledge their actions and accept the sanctions decided by the jury and imposed by the court. Teen Court is comprised of adult and juvenile volunteers. Adults from the legal or court community assist the Teen Court Coordinator and provide support and feedback to the youth volunteers. Judges, and attorneys acting as judges, preside over the hearings. The teen volunteers are recruited from local high schools or were one time defendants in the program. Defendants who have completed the program are recruited, or were sentenced to sit on the Teen Court jury. Additionally, successful youth act as prosecutor and defense counsel. Even the clerk of the court is a graduate of the program. This process of entering the program at the ground level as a defendant and "climbing" step by step to the "rooftop" as an experienced juror, is referred to as "Accountability Building". Personal responsibility is an important concept in the philosophy of the program according to Gloria Oliva, Teen Court Coordinator: "We believe that those who make the climb to the top of the 'Accountability Building' experience a change of attitude. Ideally, these young people come to understand that living within the law or violating it, getting a good education or not, having a successful future of failing to find suitable employment, all depends on the decisions you make."

As the fifteenth year nears its end almost 1000 kids have participated in the program. It has an 88% completion rate. Effective diversion of these first-time offenders away from the juvenile justice system better utilizes the court's resources, as well as, provides a unique and innovative mechanism for young people to demonstrate to society their capacity for self-government and responsible citizenship.

For more information about the Teen Court Program contact Gloria Oliva at 239-533-7100 or email at [GOliva@ca.cjis20.org](mailto:GOliva@ca.cjis20.org)



*Volunteers: Kristen Simmons and Amanda Jacobson. Ms. Jacobson is an Assistant Public Defender.*

# Q&A

## The Honorable G. Keith Cary: The Man at the Helm of the Twentieth Judicial Circuit

S. Mann



It was almost six months ago when the gavel was passed from Chief Judge Hugh D. Hayes to Judge G. Keith Cary. It has been a very busy and productive time in the life of the now Chief Judge Cary. Although July 1, 2007 marked the beginning of his tenure, the preparation for a smooth transition began months before. Judge Cary worked with then Chief Judge Hayes and Court Administration to organize and set the stage for a seamless changeover. As plans coalesced the Twentieth experienced not even a ripple.

Recently, the Chief Judge sat down to discuss his plans for the Twentieth Judicial Circuit. He talked about many things; what follows are his answers to five compelling questions.

### **How do you see your role as Chief Judge?**

My role as Chief Judge is multifaceted. I see that it is my job to establish a vision for the growth and development of the court system. I'm here to assist the other judges and provide support and guidance to them and the various court programs. Also, my job is to build, nurture, and in some cases re-define relationships with our partners in the community: Clerks of Courts, Sheriffs, Boards of County Commissioners, State Attorney, Public Defender and so forth. We must continue to work collaboratively with our partners to our mutual benefit; our needs and goals may be different, but they are not mutually exclusive. Ultimately, I am the face of the judiciary; I represent the court to the other branches of government, as well as, to the community.

### **What is your vision for the Twentieth Judicial Circuit?**

The Court's vision, my vision, is that justice be easily accessible to all our citizens, and, that it be understandable. Oftentimes the court system mystifies the very people using it because they are unrepresented or *pro se*. We need to continue to work on, and find creative ways, of assisting *pro se* litigants. Also, we must always ensure that justice is administered fairly and equitably. When

we make the court system understandable and accessible and we are responsive to those we serve, then justice is served and we have done our job.

### **What are your goals?**

Setting goals is crucial to any organization. Goal setting for the judicial system is especially interesting because plans must be formulated 2-3 years in advance. It's challenging because one must make goals today that will not come to fruition for some time, and they are based on population projections and need for services projections- it's not just what you see a need for today, but what you can expect to see a need for years from now.

My ongoing goals are to help judges with caseloads by utilizing magistrates and case managers throughout the circuit; to work with Charlie Green, Clerk of Court in Lee County towards the successful integration of E-bench for Lee County Judges; to maintain the enhancement of Family Court Services circuit-wide and the development of joint training programs for all our Probation Departments; to work with the SAO and PD towards successful implementation of the Felony Case Management system with the goal of expanding it to other counties; and, completion of the Justice Center Expansion Project in Lee County.

Also, I want to secure more judges to address the demands of growth in our circuit; establish creative ways of helping *pro se* litigants; and use technology to increase the efficiency of our services and to reach out, inform and assist the public.

### **How do you plan to achieve your goals?**

The goals we've set are ambitious, but attainable. The key to achieving them is to communicate the mission, vision and the successes of the Twentieth Judicial Circuit to our partners and to the public at large. The harder we work at educating them on what services we provide, the quality of those services and what we are doing to facilitate using those services, the greater the trust they will have in us. Sometimes people are leery of what they

don't understand, that's only natural; reaching out to them and explaining what we do is equally natural. For example, we have created a Criminal Case Management Program within Pretrial Services, and did it with existing staff through reorganization- there was a need for improved criminal case flow and we met that need through creative thinking. We need to remind our partners and the public that we are good stewards of our resources. If we do these things we will have their support and can achieve our goals.

### **What is your biggest challenge as Chief Judge?**

Managing the enormous growth in our circuit and the increased need for services and staff that accompany that growth in this fiscally challenging time. It's really quite overwhelming: Southwest Florida experienced a population increase of 22% from 2000 to 2005. Lee County alone saw an increase of 25% in that same time period. Moreover, Lee and Collier Counties are among the top ten counties projected to be the fastest growing in Florida between 2004-2010. The Court system not only needs to keep up, but to plan ahead, all while meting out justice and maintaining a high level of service.

### **Of Interest...**

Chief Judge Cary first donned a black robe in January 1989 as a County Judge. In December 1999 he became a Circuit Judge. He has been married for 24 years to wife Robbi. They have three sons: Travis a junior at UCF, Clark a freshman at FGCU, and Stuart a senior at Ft. Myers High School. Chief Judge Cary is a fourth generation Floridian, leaving Lee County only to attend the University of South Florida for his undergraduate degree and Cumberland School of Law at Samford University for his juris doctorate. He is active in the community: he has been involved in the Edison Pageant of Light Parade for 19 years. For relaxation he and his wife enjoy traveling throughout Florida. Also, he likes getting his hands dirty doing yard work or being in the woods.

### **Court Technology creates new scheduling system for Judicial Assistants**

#### **Innovations**

The court IT department constructed a scheduling system for the Judicial Assistants that will enable them to expedite schedule postings, and changes to postings, on the internet in real time. Michael Slater created the system that has been in development for over six months and was rolled out in Lee County a few months ago. It is being implemented in two phases. So far it has been very well received.

In phase one, the JA's were able to post schedules, or make changes to them with the push of the "send" button. With input from the JA's the functionality of the site has improved and efficiency has been increased in that now they can search cases by number, look at several days of the week at one time, search for available court time and track cancellations.

During phase two, information will be pulled from the system and posted on the public monitors within the courthouse, also in real time. This will be rolled out with the completion of the Justice Center Expansion Project.

Currently, most Lee County JA's have been trained on the system; Collier County JA's are being trained; and Hendry County has expressed an interest in usage as well. For more information contact Craig McLean at 239-533-1722 or at [cmclean@ca.cjis20.org](mailto:cmclean@ca.cjis20.org)



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## A Reminder from Human Resources

J. Siracusa

### 2008 Is Just Around the Corner...

### Following-Up on Your Open Enrollment

Open Enrollment for the 2008 benefit plan year took place in October for members of the judiciary, as well as, all court employees, both state-funded and county-funded.

#### State-Funded Employees

Just a reminder that your **“Insurance Premiums”** are paid a month in advance. Therefore, if you enrolled in a new benefit plan, made changes to an existing benefit plan, or cancelled a plan, it is **important that you verify the correct insurance premiums were taken from your December paycheck.**

Paycheck statements can be retrieved from the State of Florida Department of Financial Services (DFS) website <https://flair.dbf.state.fl.us> and are available for viewing and printing 5-7 days prior to payday. This website provides four years of historical payroll information also.

#### Lee and Charlotte County-Funded Employees

Just a reminder that you will receive NEW MEDICAL ID CARDS prior to January 1, 2008. Please note:

- ◆ Your PLAN and your Member ID will change
- ◆ Begin using your new card on January 1, 2008 and present it to ALL health care providers
- ◆ If used after January 1, 2008, your old card will get a response of **“no coverage”** when any health care provider tries to file a claim or confirm benefits.

The Circuit Times  
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## WEB SITES OF INTEREST

### ALL COURT EMPLOYEES

Florida Retirement System  
<http://www.myfrs.com>

### JUDICIARY AND STATE FUNDED COURT EMPLOYEES

State of Florida Employee and Employee Site  
<http://peoplefirst.myflorida.com>

EAP  
<http://capcounselors.com>

LEE COUNTY EMPLOYEES  
<http://www.lee-county.com/HumanResources>

EAP Consultants, Inc.  
<http://capcounselors.com/>

CHARLOTTE COUNTY FUNDED EMPLOYEES  
<http://www.charlottecountyfl.com>

Aetna  
<http://www.aetna.com/>

EAP  
<http://www.cignabehavioral.com>

### COLLIER COUNTY FUNDED EMPLOYEES

Collier County Risk Mgmt.  
<http://www.co.collier.fl.us/>

EAP-The Allen Group  
<http://theallengroup.com/>