



THE CIRCUIT TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE 20TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

SUMMER / FALL 2018

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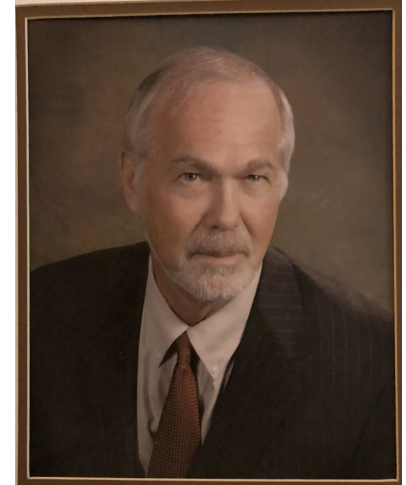
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Honorable Lynn Gerald Jr. dies at 77

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of the Honorable Lynn Gerald Jr. at the age of 77. Judge Gerald Jr. was a distinguished member of the judiciary who retired from the circuit court bench in 2011 after serving 22 years.

Judge Gerald Jr. was appointed to the circuit bench in 1989. He was the Administrative Judge for both Hendry and Glades Counties and also the Administrative Judge for the Civil Division in Fort Myers. Prior to his time on the bench he worked in private practice.

Judge Lynn Gerald Jr. was a fourth generation resident of Fort Myers whose family first came to the area in 1872. He attended what was then Fort Myers Junior/Senior High School (today it is Fort Myers High School). He received his Bachelors of Arts degree from the University of Florida in 1963 in Political Science. He also served in the United States Army as an Infantry Lieutenant. After the Army, he continued his education at the University of Florida Law School. He graduated with honors in 1968.



Administrative Judge passes baton in Charlotte County

After eight years, Charlotte County Judge Paul Alessandroni has stepped down as Administrative Judge passing the baton to Circuit Judge Donald Mason.

"I was fortunate to take over from Judge Greider as Administrative Judge several years ago upon her return to Collier County. When Judge Greider left she asked me to continue her goal of fostering collegiality among our judges and I tried my best to honor that promise. Thanks to Judge Greider's careful work, I had no trouble continuing her approach and I think we succeeded. We have had a great group of judges and AOC personnel who have been a pleasure to work with over the last few years," said Judge Alessandroni.

Judge Alessandroni has been instrumental in the expansion of the Charlotte County Justice Center including the new security measures added to the courthouse. He is also heavily involved in various statewide committees and commissions.



"The atmosphere of cooperation has allowed me to totally focus on other areas of improvement, including the creation of the Justice Center Security Committee and the annual assessment of workload and reassignments to balance that workload among all our judges and our magistrate," said Judge Alessandroni. "Instrumental was the professionalism and hard work of AOC Manager Jon Embury without whose assistance the results would have been very different."

Circuit Judge Donald Mason took over Administrative Judge duties on October 1st, 2018. Judge Mason was appointed to the Circuit Bench in 2012. Prior to his time on the bench, he was a police officer in Massachusetts for 30 years. He also worked for the State Attorney in the 16th Judicial Circuit of Florida and was the head of felony prosecution in Charlotte County.

"As I turn the keys over to Judge Mason I trust that our judicial family is still as happy and content as when I took over from Judge Greider," said Judge Alessandroni.

American Legion honors Judge Janeice Martin

Written by: Magistrate Ed Larsen

Throughout our country's history, generations of men and women have answered the call to leave their families, their jobs, and put their futures, and even their lives on the line to valiantly defend our nation and its inalienable rights. For many, that sacrifice has ended in permanent injury or death. For others, the scars are not so visible but are certainly as real.

There are 21.3 million veterans living in the United States, with approximately 1,533,306 veterans in the State of Florida alone. Each day some of these veterans will find themselves in need of assistance for addictions, mental health problems, anger issues, and criminal conduct.

In the Twentieth Judicial Circuit, Judge Janeice Martin has gained a well deserved reputation in veteran circles for applying a firm but just hand as a jurist where veterans are concerned. As the presiding Judge in Collier County's Veteran's Court, Judge Martin has witnessed firsthand the struggles of our veterans. In this respect Judge Martin is highly regarded as an advocate for veterans who need assistance, but is also equally distinguished for her no-nonsense approach to keeping veterans on

the right track to recovery and rehabilitation. For her tireless service and devotion to American Veterans and their families, the American Legion was pleased to honor Judge Martin on June 8, 2018.



Pictured L to R: Judge (Lt. Col.) James McGarity, Judge Janeice Martin, and Magistrate Edward L. Larsen, Judge Advocate of the Naples' American Legion.

New Judges welcomed in 2019

In 2019, the Twentieth Judicial Circuit will have more than a handful of new Judges presiding across our five counties.

With the elevation of Judge Scott Cupp to the Circuit bench, a spot has opened for Hendry County Judge. The Governor has yet to name his pick, but the 20th Circuit Judicial Nominating Commission has narrowed down the contenders to four area attorney's including Magistrates' Darrell Hill and Gilberto Perez.

Magistrate Carolyn Swift is set to replace Judge John Duryea as Circuit Judge. Magistrate Swift was appointed to her magistrate position in 2012. She is presiding over family law matters in Lee County. Previously she worked at the Fort Myers law firm Insignares Swift, P.A.

Recently elected to the bench are John McGowan and Tamara Nicola. Circuit Judge-elect McGowan will replace Judge Frederick Hardt who is retiring. McGowan began his legal career in 1994 with the Office of the State Attorney, 20th Judicial Circuit, serving Collier,

Lee, Charlotte, Hendry, and Glades counties. In 1997, he entered private practice concentrating on Criminal and Civil litigation. In addition to his private practice, Judge-elect McGowan has worked with the Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel, Second District.

Judge-elect Nicola will replace Collier County Judge Michael Carr who is also retiring. Nicola graduated from Ohio Northern University in 1992. She then spent the first few years practicing with her father, Richard Jones in Naples before opening her own firm, Nicola Family Law. Her practice has focused on Unified Family Court matters for the past several years. She has also practiced in the area of criminal defense, as well as family law.

Collier County Judge James McGarity will be retiring at the end of the year as well. His replacement will be decided by voters in November. Attorney Blake Adams and Attorney Jim Moon are the candidates in the running.

Nine AOC employees graduate from CPM program



Pictured L to R: Chief Deputy Liza Flecha, Amy Kinsey, Kerri Hixson, Beth Nichols, Trial Court Administrator Scott Wilsker, Lisa N. Harder, Jennifer Alvarez, Brooke Dean, Kathryn Wallace, Brianna Nelson, and Kim Cambareri

Nine people from the Administrative Office of the Courts graduated from the Florida Certified Public Manager Program this year. The ceremony took place at the North Collier Regional Park on September 14th with 64 total

graduates. Those graduating from the AOC were: Amy Kinsey, Jennifer Alvarez, Beth Nichols, Kerri Hixson, Kathryn Wallace, Brooke Dean, Brianna Nelson, Kimberly Cambareri, and Lisa N. Harder.

In total, 350 new graduates were honored throughout the state this summer. That brings the total number of CPM graduates in Florida to approximately 6,260-- 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 FSU, 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.

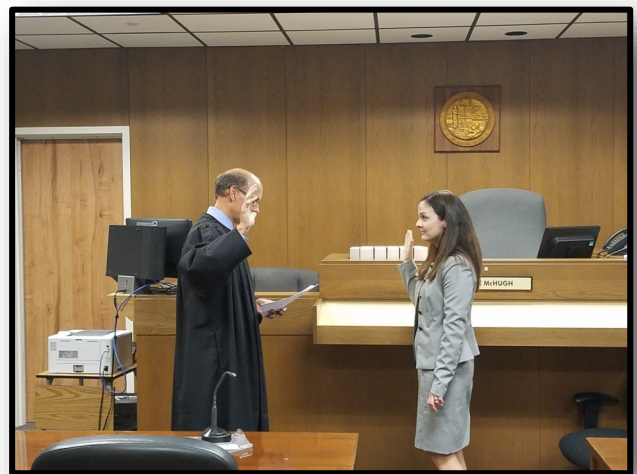
The new graduates have completed a rigorous two-year program, including 32 days of training, plus required projects and exams. Over 100 government agencies including cities, counties, state, and constitutional offices have participated in the Florida CPM program.

New Civil Traffic Hearing Officer Sworn In

Lee County's newest Traffic Hearing Officer was sworn in by Chief Judge Michael McHugh on August 20, 2018.

Amanda Levy-Reis is a life-long resident of Southwest Florida. She attended Stetson University where she obtained both her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and her Juris Doctorate.

She spent over 10 years as a staff attorney with the U.S. District Court Middle District of Florida, where she acquired invaluable insight in and working knowledge of federal practice, procedure, and litigation. While working at the District Court, Amanda focused on civil rights litigation filed under 42 U.S.C. Section 1983. She then went on to work as an attorney at Brennen, Manna & Diamond's Bonita Springs office.



International Translation Day celebrated

Written by: Julio Fernandez, Supervising Court Interpreter

Each year, thousands of court cases at County, State and Federal levels, require language interpreters or assistance for individuals with hearing loss. Thousands of pages are translated from one language to another by linguists. The ability to communicate effectively in court is a basic right of all persons in our country; thus the goal of court interpreting is to place those who use interpreter services' on equal footing within the court with those that speak the English language.

In Florida, according to a survey conducted in 2007, more than four million Floridians speak a language other than English at home. Thus the role of the court interpreter is crucial.

Unfortunately not everyone that speaks another language can serve as an interpreter. Interpretation is a skill possessed by some men and women who speak or sign in more than one language. Interpreters take the time to learn glossaries, legal terminology, and pass language and ethics tests, in order to come to court.

This year the International Translators and Interpreter's Day has an exciting development to be celebrated: it's called V.R.I. The newest trend all over Florida is Video Remote Interpreting (VRI). With this cutting edge technology, we can provide live interpretation services using certified court interpreters, to all counties in the 20th circuit from any location by means of two way television. This service can be provided in simultaneous and consecutive mode. We have already successful tested and

conducted interpretation from Lee to Glades and Hendry County. We have also successfully tested from Lee to Charlotte County. We are working on testing Lee to Collier County within the next few weeks. OSCA's idea is for all Florida Judicial circuits to interconnect in order to supply interpreting services where needed from any circuit in Florida.

At the present time VRI is limited to arraignments, docket soundings, case management, and pleas. We are sure that in the near future we will be able to provide the service to all judicial proceedings.

Therefore celebrate **International Translators and Interpreters Day** September 30th. Take this opportunity to encourage everyone for the impact of their work.



Virtual Remote Interpreting tested in Glades County

The need for court interpreting services throughout the 20th Judicial Circuit has grown. In 2017, the Court provided Spanish interpreting services for almost 12,000 court hearings across our five counties. With only five staff interpreters, it can be a challenging to provide court interpreter services across 6,500 miles.

In June of 2014, the Supreme Court of Florida proposed to study Virtual Remote Interpreting (VRI) and allocated funding for the initiation of a pilot program in the trial courts. The pilot was a success in the five circuits and has since been expanded throughout the state. With the expansion of this technology, courts have



access to qualified interpreters regardless of location. This allows courts to best utilize their resources and provide the defendant with their due process rights.

Judge Jack Lundy agreed to test the VRI system and has begun using VRI in Glades County for most hearings. "It is going very well," said Judge Lundy. "Hopefully it will save the circuit some money and man hours."

An interpreter is connected via a polycom like system (*pictured*). The interpreter and the defendant both wear a headset so they can communicate simultaneously while the defendant is before the judge.

Human Resources to host training in October

As part of the Administrative Office of the Courts' (AOC) ongoing commitment to train team members in a variety of areas aligned with the AOC's overall training plan, the Human Resources office is pleased to announce an upcoming workshop titled "*Customer Service Training for Court Team Members.*" Our guest speaker will be Dr. Lori Roth, President of Learning and Reflective Growth and a CCD Adjunct, State College of Florida.

As a result of attending this training workshop, participants will be able to discuss the importance of effective customer service and make the connection between their level of service and interaction with the public, and public's perception of Access and Fairness of the Courts. Group activities will further develop participants' abilities to protect the integrity of government and to ensure that we continue to provide access to justice and fair judicial processes to the citizens of the Twentieth Judicial Circuit.

We will be offering seven (7) three-hour training workshops and the dates are as follows: October 18th & 19th, and October 25th & October 26th.

Additional information will be posted on Court Connect.

PIO presents at National Conference

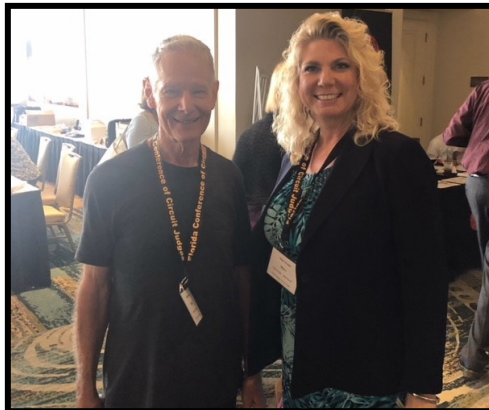


Public Information Officer Sara Miles presented at the Conference of County Court Public Information Officers' National Conference in Portland, Oregon in August. Miles spoke on two topics during the conference: Communication during a Crisis and Preparing Judges and Staff for On-Camera Interviews and Presentations. Miles is currently the President-Elect of the Florida Court Public Information Officers and made similar presentations at their annual conference this year as well. Miles joined the AOC in December 2013. She was previously a reporter for the NBC affiliate in Southwest Florida and has also worked as an anchor/reporter for TV stations in Minnesota and California. She graduated from Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School with a degree in Broadcast Journalism.

Judges at Circuit Court Conference in Naples



Senior Judge James Thompson and Senior Judge Thomas Reese



Senior Judge Hugh Starnes and Circuit Judge Mary Evans



Circuit Judge Scott Cupp

State Employees – 2019 Open Enrollment Begins Soon!

Open Enrollment begins Monday, October 15, 2018 at 8:00 am EST and ends promptly on Friday, November 2, 2018 at 6:00 pm. The South Florida Benefits Expo is on Friday, October 26, 2018 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. It will be held at the Fort Myers Regional Service Center located at 2295 Victoria Avenue, Fort Myers, FL 33901

What's New for 2019?

3 Ways to Save! The Shared Savings Program offers members enrolled in a State Group Insurance health plan three ways to save with new benefits options to shop for health care services, earn tax free financial rewards and reduce out-of-pocket health care costs.

CVS Caremark will offer an online transparency tool to allow employees to see the cost of their prescription drugs, locate generic options and get the best value for their medications.

E4 Health, the state Employee Assistance Program is launching Talkspace, an online counseling tool. Now employees will be able to access confidential therapy sessions through an online app all from the comfort of their own home.

Securian is now Securian Financial - and to celebrate, they have a special open enrollment offering for 2019. All state employees can elect up to two times their annual salary for optional life without completing an Evidence of Insurability (EOI) form, up to the maximum limit of five times their salary or \$500,000.00. This offer is available to all employees, even employees who have been denied optional life in the past as a result of medical history.

For employees with a high-deductible health plan (HIHP), the new contribution maximums will be \$3,500 for individuals and \$7,000 for families. These maximums include the state's contribution.

The Weight Management Pilot is entering its second year! Eligible members of Aetna, AvMed, Florida Blue and United Healthcare can apply to enroll in the program beginning October 6, 2018 through November 16, 2018.

Employer health insurance premiums have increased for the 2019 plan year. Early retirees, COBRA participants, dependents over 26 and surviving spouses will see an increase because they are responsible for 100% of the premium costs.

To ensure accountability in the State Group Insurance Program, DSGI will request identification documents to verify the eligibility of newly added dependents as part of the ongoing Quality Assurance Review. Please remember to review your home address to guarantee that your benefit enrollment information is received in a timely manner. Any packets that are undeliverable will be returned to the Human Resources office for distribution.

Lee County Funded Employees – Open Enrollment Coming in November!

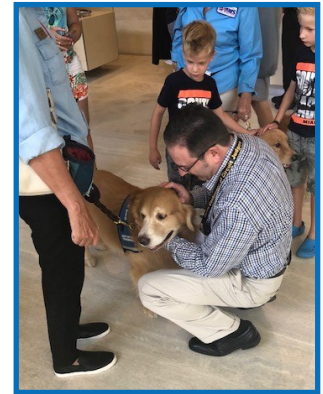
Open Enrollment begins Monday, November 5, 2018 and ends on Friday, November 16, 2018.

Be sure to check out the HR Announcements Section on Court Connect for more information on these and other upcoming employee events.

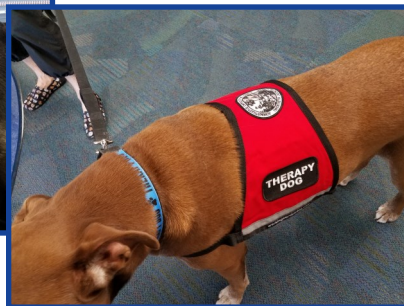
Therapy Dogs program expands



As the therapy dog program at the Lee County Justice Center expands, the dogs will now be easily identifiable when they enter the courthouse. Vests will be provided to the Children’s Advocacy Center therapy teams coming to court to comfort children who may be called to testify. The program is offered in both dependency and criminal courts. The vests will help security quickly identify the dogs and their handlers in the Circuit’s program versus others who come to court. Therapy dog providers bring the dogs to meet with the children in waiting rooms adjacent to the courtroom (CR-3A) prior to their hearing. This is the only location where the dogs are allowed in the courthouse.



Trial Court Administrator Scott Wilsker pets a therapy dog who visited the Circuit Judges Conference. The group wanted to bring awareness to the program.



HR Bulletin Board recognizes employees and support staff

Did you know recently a bulletin board was created on CourtConnect to give praise to employees who have gone above and beyond? All directors, managers, and supervisors have posting capabilities to this bulletin board. It can be used to recognize and encourage employees and judicial assistants who demonstrate the Court’s core values of integrity, fairness, and service. This can include accomplishments, achievements, recognition, and other important happenings such as a copy of a completed special recognition form, CPM certification, graduation from college, letters from probationers thanking the probation officer, etc. You can find the link on the main page under “Bulletin Board.”

CourtConnect HR Fiscal Training TCBC 20 DATA Bulletin Board

Search this site

Bulletin Board

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- Documents
- Admin Orders
- Calendars
- Main Calendar
- Events Calendar

Links

- Judicial Resources
- Events Page
- Mail Center

Bravo!

Highlighting Integrity, Fairness, & Service...

The place to highlight AOC employees' and judicial assistants' accomplishments, achievements, recognition, and other important happenings. I.E. copy of a completed special recognition form, CPM certification, graduation from college, letters from probationers thanking the probation officer, etc.

Judge Leigh Hayes holds “mini mass” adoption in celebration of Mothers/Fathers Day



2018 Mass Adoption Ceremonies

Charlotte County - Wednesday, November 7th at 2:30 pm

Collier County - Friday, November 16th at 1:30 pm

Lee County - Saturday, November 17th at 9:00 am

Lee County celebrates Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week



Lee County's Probation and Pretrial Officers were recognized during Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week. This year it took place from July 15-21, 2018 and was also recognized by County Commissioners. The theme by the American Probation and Parole Association is “Restoring Trust and Creating Hope.” It's a week to commemorate the important work done by community corrections around the nation to keep our communities safe. Community corrections professionals are in a unique position to make real differences in people's lives. Working together makes for stronger bonds between colleagues, community partners, and with those under supervision.

The Lee County Criminal Division also recognized those that volunteer and continue to make a difference with collaborative agencies and within the community:

Chief Deputy Trial Court Administrator Liza Flecha serves as a Commissioner for the Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission.

Pretrial Officer (Pretrial Supervision) Enrique Rosario volunteers at his church as a Chaplain visiting hospitals and jails as well as at their homes and at Hospice.

Pretrial Officer Keith McGovern volunteers at the Elks Club.

Pretrial Officer Lindsey Kruta (Lead—Intake & Investigations) volunteers at the Tony Rotino Senior Center helping the seniors.

Pretrial Officer (Team Lead Case Management) Candy Caughey volunteers with the North Fort Myers Key Club/ Kiwanis.

Criminal Division Director Amy Kinsey serves on the Board of Directors in her community and as an assessor for the Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission.

Pretrial Supervisor Scott Peckham serves as the Southwest Regional Director for the Association of Pretrial Professionals of Florida and is assisting with the Military Support Program at different cemeteries.

Division System Analyst Shawn Carlson serves as the Communications Director for the Association of Pretrial Professionals of Florida and as a member of the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies Communication Committee.

Probation Officer Jeffrey Langevin volunteers for the Pace School for Girls.

Probation Officer Alonzo Laster serves on the Board at his church.

Probation Officer Aimara Brooks volunteers at her church feeding the homeless.

Deputy Criminal Division Director (Probation) Doug Jaye serves on the Board of Directors in his community.

Circuit Times Newsletter

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*For more information about the Twentieth Judicial
Circuit visit our website at www.ca.cjis20.org*



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