A Message from Lisa Goodner, State Courts Administrator

I’m sure no one needs reminding that this recession is hurting everyone in Florida. And, as we all know too well, the economy is also profoundly affecting the judicial branch. Over the last two years, the court system has lost $44 million in recurring general revenue and over 280 positions. Given that the Revenue Estimating Conference recently projected a further reduction, by $1.4 billion, in general revenue collections for the 08-09 fiscal year—and given that Florida might not begin to see a recovery for another two years—anxiety about the fiscal future of the judicial branch has not been unfounded.

By examining disposition and pending case data, surveys, and anecdotal evidence, we have been able to measure some of the effects of these losses and to calculate their “true cost”—which is different from their monetary cost. We have discovered, for instance, that circuits are suffering delays in case processing due to the loss of a substantial number of magistrate, law clerk, and case manager positions. As a result of these position cuts, it takes longer to get a hearing, and hearing times have been shortened. In addition, the position cuts are hampering the court system’s ability to cooperate with community and agency partners. Agencies and providers that work with the courts are reporting delays and are stressing, among other things, that children’s and families’ access to specific services is decreasing.

The DCAs have suffered cuts to central staff attorneys and judicial assistants and reductions in senior judge days. As a consequence, some DCAs are reporting significant declines in the percentage of cases decided within 180 days after oral argument or conference. Because criminal, juvenile, and parental rights cases require priority treatment, civil appeals are less likely to be processed in a timely matter. Also, some DCAs had to decrease the number of hours they are open to the public.

From the OSCA perspective, due to staffing shortages and painful reductions in the operating budgets, the Judicial Management Council, the Task Force on Treatment-Based Drug Courts, and numerous other committees are in abeyance for the time being. OSCA is no longer able to provide prior levels of staff support to committees, nor can it pay for travel for face-to-face meetings.

In short, the court system definitely has not been able to run in its usual, efficient manner. Meanwhile, not surprisingly, the demands on the courts have dramatically increased, as they generally do in difficult economic times: real property/mortgage foreclosures are up 396%, for instance; robbery cases are up 45%; small claim cases are up 42%; contract and indebtedness cases are up 50%; and capital murder cases are up 24%.

It has become increasingly clear that, in order to maintain the timely administration of justice and to preserve the viability of our court system in times of economic hardship, the judicial branch must have a permanent and reliable source of funding. Over the last few months, Chief Justice Quince, the two budget commissions, the chief judges, and I—with much help from
a great many court staff—have been working diligently to address this issue. And the hard work has begun to pay off: during the special session, lawmakers recognized the need to stabilize the operations of the courts. As a result, they passed legislation increasing fine revenues, a majority of which will be directed into a newly-created State Courts Revenue Trust Fund. By creating this dedicated source of court funding, the legislature is putting the courts in a better position to address the immediate budget crisis and to begin developing a solution for long-term, sustainable funding stability.

If we have learned anything over the last two years, it’s that there is no such thing as “business as usual” anymore. Nonetheless, you all continue to do some amazing things to help Florida’s court system do its job: in the pages that follow, you’ll read about the nine public meetings sponsored by the Task Force on Judicial Branch Planning; this year’s outstanding Dispute Resolution Conference (which almost didn’t happen); the Mediation Week activities that flourished across the state; the well-attended drug court distance learning session; the dedicated work being done on behalf of domestic violence education; and the impressive elasticity of the JIS. You’ll also read farewell pieces about Justice Cantero and Justice Bell—and maybe learn something about them that you never knew before; and you’ll certainly learn something new from the articles about the two jurists who have taken their places, Justice Canady and Justice Polston. Our court system has sustained losses, but, with your help, Florida’s judicial branch is remaining resilient, committed to making every possible effort to fulfill its mission.

Sincerely,
Lisa Goodner

Farewells and Welcomes at the Florida Supreme Court

This fall, the composition of faces greeting one from the bench of the Florida Supreme Court has undergone several dramatic transformations. In early September, Justice Raoul G. Cantero, III, who was appointed to the supreme court in July 2002, resigned to return to private practice in Miami. And toward the end of that month, Justice Kenneth B. Bell, who was appointed in December 2002, resigned to return to private practice in Pensacola. With the help of the Supreme Court Judicial Nominating Commission, Governor Crist did not allow their seats to remain vacant for long, however: only a few days after Justice Cantero’s departure, Judge Charles T. Canady, Second DCA, joined the supreme court; and just a couple of days after Justice Bell’s parting, Judge Ricky Polston, First DCA, became the court’s latest member. As the following articles disclose, Justices Cantero and Bell have some rather poignant memories to share about their years on the court—and Justices Canady and Polston, who are swiftly transitioning into their new positions, clearly relish their opportunity to contribute to the court and to work closely with their new colleagues.

Farewell to Justice Raoul G. Cantero, III

Justice Cantero was at no loss for words when asked to share some of his favorite or most interesting memories and experiences from his six years on the bench. Not surprisingly, for this erstwhile college English major who is known for his exceptional legal writing skills, one of the judicial occupations he most treasured was writing opinions. But he described his favorite part of the job as the entire “decision-making process”—from the preparations for oral argument, to the interactions with fellow justices and attorneys during OA, to the writing of opinions. What he especially enjoyed about this process, he revealed, is its intellectually-invigorating nature: “You go into it thinking one way, but then after listening to your colleagues and the lawyers, you find yourself thinking another way.” Writing opinions can have the same effect: through the act of writing, “You often end up thinking differently.” And this—all the listening and thinking and analyzing and mind-stretching involved in “the process of trying to reach the right decision”—is precisely what inspired Justice Cantero to want to become a judge and what he believes he will miss the most now that he has left the bench.

The Terri Schiavo case, which was the first “really big case” after his appointment to the bench, also continues to figure among his most powerful memories. What made the deepest impression on him was “how the court dealt with this case.” Though clearly addressing a very controversial and “passionate subject,” his colleagues, at all times, “deliberated the case dispassionately,” maintaining their focus on their “duty under the law
They did not make the case personal, nor did they take anything personally. "I was impressed with the way the court works," he asserted, "and felt proud to be a justice."

Justice Cantero noted some of the many ways in which his time on the bench changed him and helped him grow. Foremost on the list was that he "developed interpersonal skills—especially the art of arguing dispassionately and of being able to convince my colleagues at the same time as being open to being convinced by them." He quickly realized that he had to learn how to "work together constantly and with collegiality" with his fellow justices—and once again emphasized (with appreciation and almost a tinge, still, of surprise) that any differences of opinion are "not personal" and that no one takes them personally. Being on the bench also gave him a chance to hone his leadership skills, teaching him how to work with people who look up to him because of his position and how to motivate people in a positive way. In addition, as a justice, he developed a profound gratitude for "all the people in the background who work so hard—without much appreciation and for so little pay"—to make the court system work. He specifically singled out OSCA staff and the supreme court staff attorneys for their professionalism and commitment. The dedication of our court personnel "made me proud to be associated with the judicial branch," he underlined.

Being a supreme court justice also gave him the unanticipated pleasure of discovering that he was an important role model for young people. As a justice, he had a chance to travel all around the state to speak with all sorts of different groups, especially students—law students, college students, high school students, as well as younger kids. These students "are so happy and impressed to get a chance to meet a justice of the supreme court and to learn more about the justice system." He described one particularly gratifying meeting. A group of University of Florida students was visiting the court during oral argument, and, at the midmorning break, the marshal approached Justice Cantero, saying that one of the students wanted to speak to him. The student, it turned out, was Cuban-born and had been in the States only about three years, yet he had been working hard and received a scholarship to attend UF. "This student was so proud to see a Cuban on the High Court"—an experience that made him decide that he too would like to become a lawyer and could himself aspire to become a judge some day, Justice Cantero said, adding, "This experience struck home for me how important it is for all Hispanics that we have a Hispanic on the court so that other Hispanics can know that it is within reach for everybody." As a supreme court justice, he truly relished having the ability to inspire young people to reach high, and he took this responsibility very seriously.

He also takes very seriously his responsibility to his family, which was his primary reason for leaving the court. Moreover, he indicated that he missed the camaraderie of practicing law and working on committees: "As a judge, you’re distanced from that; and as a justice, that distance is exaggerated even more," he pointed out. Being a justice, he mused, is a somewhat "lonely" profession, and he commented on "the isolation we experience here; as we only have six colleagues, there’s not much opportunity to interact with others." He admitted that he was "not comfortable being called ‘justice,’” and although he "tried hard to get people to call him ‘Raoul’ when not at the court, it was nearly impossible,” he said with an almost wistful laugh.

Justice Cantero has returned to Miami and is now a partner in the international law firm White and Case, where he heads up the Miami Appellate Practice group. He looks forward to being able to spend more time with his family—and possibly to doing some fiction writing again, a hobby he had to put aside for awhile. In fact, he confessed to having recently bought a book on fiction writing and plans "to reeducate myself about it,” naming Graham Greene, Robert Penn Warren, Ernest Hemingway, and Harper Lee as his favorite authorial role models. And although he is no longer a justice, he emphasized his commitment to remaining “an advocate for the branch” and to working to ensure that the justice system receive adequate funding so that it can continue fulfilling its weighty mission.
Farewell to Justice Kenneth B. Bell

Justice Bell’s first truly memorable experience of his nearly six years on the supreme court bench occurred within moments of the December 31, 2002, press conference at which Governor Bush announced the young circuit judge’s appointment to the High Court. After the press conference was over, the supreme court marshal, who had attended the press conference, escorted Justice Bell to the court, which is right across the street. Still an active First Circuit trial judge who was in the thick of a plethora of pending cases, Justice Bell assumed he’d have about a month to wrap up his business before taking office at the supreme court. But he quickly discovered that that was not to be. Two hours after the press conference was over, the newly-appointed justice left the supreme court laden with two ponderous boxes of files, a laptop, and instructions to be ready for conference on Wednesday and oral argument the following week. Referring playfully to his introduction to the supreme court as “the immersion method of becoming a supreme court justice,” Justice Bell said with a laugh, “Some people get wet gradually; I got thrown in!”

A second press conference incident is also a fond memory for Justice Bell. Just prior to the press conference, he and his family were in the governor’s office. The justice’s four children ranged in age from 17 to seven, and Governor Bush, wanting to entertain the kids, drew their attention to a satellite map of Florida on the wall and proceeded to give them “a tour” of the area over which he governed. He began by pointing out Key West and methodically worked his way north, going from east to west. But there was one conspicuous problem: “The governor’s map ended at the Apalachicola River—as if the rest of Florida didn’t even exist”; as a result, Pensacola, the hometown of the incoming justice and his family, wasn’t even on the map! But Justice Bell was very judicious in his response to the absence, noting, “I’m the first justice from that part of the state in over 100 years; also, people from other parts of Florida tend to forget about anything west of the Apalachicola River.” Nonetheless, at his investiture, he couldn’t pass up the opportunity to have a little fun and offer everyone a brief history lesson: handing the governor a satellite map of the rest of Florida, he reminded attendees of Pensacola’s status as the state’s very first settlement.

On a more serious note, Justice Bell declared that the aspect of the position that he’ll miss the most is “the privilege of travelling across the state and working with other justices, judges, justice system partners, and the legislature to make sure the court system is adequately funded”—an issue that he plans to continue advocating. He added, “I’ve always viewed the pursuit of justice as a team effort, and I know I will miss my teammates, especially my six fellow justices, the staff attorneys, and OSCA staff.” He also stressed that he will look back warmly at his liaisons with bar sections, committees, and the circuit and DCA conferences—as well as “the ability to work on policy issues with such a diverse, statewide group of people.”

Reflecting on his decision to return to private practice in Pensacola after his nearly 18 years on the bench, he acknowledged that, “In private practice, you have a much narrower range of contacts, so my pursuit of justice will narrow now.” Being in private practice also means that “I will miss being here in the scrum, on the frontline, of the justice system. As a justice, you are in the best position to try to make the system work, and you have a greater impact than you would in private practice.” Over the years, he has especially relished the chance to see “different people in the justice system using their talents to maintain and improve the system,” and he admitted that he’ll miss this too.

Like Justice Cantero, Justice Bell brought up the Terri Schiavo case as one of his most memorable supreme court experiences. In this case—in which the supreme court was “considering the constitutionality of a law enacted by the state,” and “the different branches were pitted against each other”—Justice Bell declared he found it “rewarding to see government work the way it’s supposed to work”: the court ruled that the law violated the separation of powers, and “the other branches respected this ruling.” Referring to recent global events that led to the wholesale arrest of a nation’s judges and lawyers, Justice Bell noted that, in the U.S., “We sometimes take for granted the peaceful resolution of disputes in emotionally-charged situations. We as Americans do have respect for the different functions of the branches, and it is compelling to see the respect that we have for our form of government. Maintaining this respect is one reason courts have to be so careful in using their judicial power,” he added.
Justice Bell, like Justice Cantero, decided to leave the supreme court bench for family reasons. Also like Justice Cantero, he noted that he tended to feel “separated” as a justice, “defined by my position,” and that he didn’t really feel comfortable “being deferred to.” On the other hand, by returning to Pensacola, where his family has resided for seven generations, he will once again be known just as “Kenny” or by his relational identity—as “Dr. Bell’s son, Brad’s dad,” and the like—which “keeps my feet on the ground,” he affirmed. Since leaving the supreme court, he has become a partner with Clark Partington Hart Larry Bond & Stackhouse, where he specializes in eminent domain and condemnation, real estate transactions and real property development, arbitration and mediation, commercial litigation, and appellate work.

Welcome, Justice Charles T. Canady

From private practice to the Florida House to the U.S. House to general counsel for Governor Bush to the Second DCA to the Florida Supreme Court—Justice Canady’s professional life has certainly travelled a remarkable and almost breathless orbit. “It means I can’t keep a job!” he joked when first asked about his rare history of having served in so many capacities and in all three branches. But, for him, being a judge is “the perfect job”: “I have always loved the law and had an interest in public service,” he revealed, and he sees being a judge as the best opportunity for marrying these two pursuits. In fact, when he began his judicial career with the Second DCA, back in 2002, he realized it was his ideal job: in his words, “I finally figured out what I wanted to do when I grew up!”

But Justice Canady didn’t always want to be a judge. When he graduated from law school in 1979 and went into private practice, being a judge didn’t even occur to him. In those days, the Lakeland-born attorney was primarily interested in real estate law. But his interests eventually grew to include legislation, which led to his service as a legislator in the Florida House from 1984-1990. Setting his sights a bit higher, he then ran for a Florida Senate seat in 1990—but was defeated. Not in the least perturbed about this loss, he quickly pointed out that “Sometimes losing is the best thing that can happen,” for, “In losing the race for the Florida Senate, it opened the door for me to run for the U.S. Congress”—a position he occupied for four terms (from January 1993 to January 2001).

While a member of the U.S. House, he served on the House Judiciary Committee, which got him interested in appellate work, and the rest of his career path unfurled with a kind of inevitability: returning to Florida after his stint in Congress, he came directly to Tallahassee to serve as Governor Bush’s general counsel for two years and, from that position, was appointed to the Second DCA, which gave him a chance to go back to his home in Lakeland. Now, six years later, here he is, back in Tallahassee—this time, of course, with the third branch. Commenting on his having served in all three branches, he reflected, “This experience has given me a different perspective on the separation of powers,” noting that “This perspective is part of what I bring to the supreme court” and that it “hopefully will be useful in my job here.” He then added, with emphasis, “I am very grateful to be here.”

Regarding his move to the supreme court from the DCA, Justice Canady doesn’t anticipate any fundamental changes in what he’ll be doing. He did name some differences, however. For instance, much of his time will now be spent on death cases, and bar discipline cases too “are within the unique province of this court.” But, for the most part, the “structure of the work” will not be particularly dissimilar: his days will continue to involve “reading briefs, preparing for oral argument, going to oral argument, writing opinions...yes, lots of reading and writing.”

Fortunately, like so many appellate judges, Justice Canady has a passion for writing—and can prove it. When asked whether he has always liked to write, magician-like, he pulled an enormous tome out from under his desk—an abridged Oxford English Dictionary (for which even the abridged version is a prodigious volume)—and indicated that that should give people an idea of how he likes to spend his time.

He can even trace his love of writing to a particular period in time: high school, specifically twelfth grade, when a certain Mrs. Clara Hirshfield was his English teacher. Mrs. Hirshfield
“understood that one of the most important things to teach students is how to write an essay,” Justice Canady recalled. For one full class period each week, in fact, she would require all her students to write an essay. After receiving that week’s topic, students were expected to spend the entire period constructing the clearest, most coherent essay they could. This was “excellent preparation for taking college exams and other writing tasks in my professional life, certainly as a judge,” Justice Canady mused, decisively adding, “I can think of nothing in my education that was more valuable than those days in that class”—sentiments that should thrill the hearts of English teachers across the globe.

These days, however, “aside from deciding cases that need deciding and keeping the docket moving,” Justice Canady’s “primary concern is funding for the courts,” calling it “a very challenging issue for the court system—and all of state government” and saying, “My energies will be devoted to doing what I can to keep the administration of justice in Florida strong as we’re going through this very challenging time.”

And when he’s not at work? Justice Canady’s favorite activities involve spending time with his two young children: “I like to read to them and take walks with them—when I can talk them into it.” He and his family loved Tallahassee when they first lived here six years ago and are excited about the opportunity to explore its many charms all over again.

Welcome, Justice Ricky Polston

While Justice Canady had to journey a few hundred miles from Lakeland to Tallahassee to pursue this new stage in his judicial trajectory, Justice Polston merely had to take a few hundred steps to embark upon his new path (for the information of those who’ve never visited Tallahassee, the supreme court is diagonally across the street from the First DCA, from where Judge Polston ventured). Justice Polston credits being able to “stay home,” literally, with facilitating his transition to the supreme court. Also making the transition relatively easy is his deep connection to the Tallahassee community (which began with his college education, for he got his B.S. and his J.D. at Florida State University) and his familiarity with many of the trial and appellate judges and the local attorneys.

As a result, Justice Polston’s physical move from the DCA to the supreme court has been only nominally disruptive for him and his family. Nor has he reason to anticipate any startling professional changes with this move: when asked about the ways in which he thinks his work will be different from his work as a DCA judge, he noted that since he has been an appellate judge since 2001, he doesn’t see “a dramatic difference in coming here.” With the exception of death penalty cases, he observed, a significant number of the kinds of cases he will be working on at the supreme court—“cases of a constitutional nature and all kinds of criminal cases”—he has already worked on at the DCA. Consequently, he said, “I expect more similarities than differences: the differences,” he imagines, “will be in nuance.”

Unlike most judges, Justice Polston did not begin his professional career as an attorney. In fact, he received his B.S. in accounting in 1977 and launched into an energetic accounting career fresh out of college. It wasn’t until nine years later that he received his law degree. “I enjoyed the practice of accounting,” he explained (in fact, he is still a licensed CPA). But he developed an interest in law while in accounting: “I’d taken business law courses in college and worked with a lot of lawyers as an accountant,” he remarked, so his burgeoning interest in law had a sense of inevitability. Although some areas of the law, like transactional work, are natural choices for someone with an accounting background, he found himself predisposed to litigation, which was quite a departure from his first career.

Therefore, after he was appointed to the First DCA in 2001, he was delighted to discover some exciting parallels between being an appellate judge and being an accountant—“They are more similar than you’d think,” he suggested. Both professions are intensely analytical, for instance. As an appellate judge,
he declared, “I enjoy having a problem presented through a case and then reviewing and analyzing the law to arrive at an answer through an analytical process. And the intellectual process you go through in accounting is very much the same,” he added: “You begin with a problem. You apply the principles of accounting to a set of facts and then present what you have concisely.”

Many people don’t grasp the parallels because they may not realize that “Accounting is more than just bookkeeping,” he pointed out. Like being a judge, being an accountant is “not an exact science; it involves a lot of theory, and accountants have to use their professional judgment in applying principles” to a situation. The writing styles are considerably different, he admitted—the writing in accounting is extremely succinct, more outline-like in form, while, in appellate writing, a judge is expected to write comprehensive, coherent narratives. Regardless, “The thought process behind the two professions is very similar,” and this is what couples them in a fascinating way for him.

Nonetheless, what becomes immediately and abundantly clear is that Justice Polston truly relishes his judicial calling: “I love being an appellate judge,” he exclaimed. He especially enjoys the “academic nature” of being on the appellate bench—the “reading, writing, researching”; the chance “to hear intellectually-challenging cases.” Although he thinks it’s still too early for him to sense how he might make his mark on the supreme court, he is grateful for this “opportunity to contribute to the court” and seeks “to do a good job by writing good opinions in a timely manner.”

And, when not on the bench, Justice Polston looks forward to savoring his usual household recreations: lots of play time at home, in the yard, with his six boys—most typically engaged in activities that involve “any kind of ball.” Also on the domestic docket will be plenty of trips to the Tallahassee Museum, a natural habitat zoo where he and his family love to spend hours exploring the wildlife and cultural history of the Big Bend.

Long-Range Planning

Nine Public Meetings Aid the Task Force on Judicial Branch Planning

On a mild Wednesday evening at the end of October, over 30 people gathered at the Suwannee River Regional Library in Live Oak for a public meeting sponsored by the supreme court’s Task Force on Judicial Branch Planning. These attendees, who ventured from all across the Third Circuit—from Columbia, Dixie, Hamilton, Lafayette, Madison, Taylor, and of course Suwannee Counties—as well as from jurisdictions beyond, included several circuit and county court judges, a clerk of court, a representative of the Florida Association of Court Clerks and Comptrollers, a city manager, attorneys, victim advocates, community college teachers, and other Floridians, some of whom were just curious and wanted to glean something about the supreme court’s development of its next long-range plan—and others who decidedly wanted to offer their input into the shaping of the new plan.

Five panelists presided over the meeting: Chief Judge E. Vernon Douglas and Court Administrator Sondra Williams, from the Third Circuit, which hosted the meeting; Chief Judge Frederick D. Smith and Court Administrator Ted McFetridge, from the neighboring Eighth Circuit; and Senior Court Operations Consultant Steve Henley, from OSCA’s Strategic Planning Unit. After Chief Judge Douglas welcomed everyone, Court Administrator McFetridge presented some helpful background so that attendees could understand the purpose of the meeting—and their role in it. This meeting, he emphasized, is “about communication”: about giving citizens an opportunity to tell the courts what they think is, and is not, working, what changes they’d like to see, and what they think the courts are going to look like in 2020. Attendees were invited to ponder and respond to two questions: “What trends or conditions in your community do you believe will impact the ability of the judicial system to fulfill its mission and vision over the next twenty years?” And “What goals or strategies do you recommend
Then, for nearly three hours, panelists heard from a diverse and expressive group of audience members who brought up a range of issues relevant to the future of the court system. Several speakers addressed the need for courts to have a stable, consistent funding source so that, in times of economic turmoil, the courts become more active and important than ever, they can still carry out their constitutional duties. Other speakers pointed out that when general revenue decreases, the pressure mounts for the counties to cover the costs of operating the courts—which presents special problems for the smaller counties because they lack the tax base and the efficiencies of scale that larger counties have.

A few speakers discussed their view that the court system needs to utilize the latest technology, like e-filing and videotechnology, to save time and money and to improve access, pointing out that the rural counties will especially benefit from emerging technologies because their constituents currently have to travel great distances to get to their circuit courts. And still other speakers beseeched the courts to teach every young person about the court system and the rule of law and to open up court proceedings more so that the general public can witness firsthand how the courts operate. Other speakers talked about probate and guardianship issues and their concerns for the aging population and vulnerable adults who are particularly susceptible to predatory guardians; about the dramatic increase in the number of self-represented litigants and the need to help these people navigate the court system; and about the need to educate young people about domestic violence.

All the while, the panelists listened attentively, sometimes asking questions, but never interrogating or challenging what the speakers had to say. As Chief Judge Smith explained, the courts “get a lot of top down information” but “don’t have nearly enough real interaction with citizens. That’s why we’re here: we want to hear what you have to say.”

This Live Oak meeting was one of nine public meetings sponsored by the Task Force on Judicial Branch Planning. Within the space of four weeks, public meetings were also held in Pensacola, Orlando, Miami, Jacksonville, St. Petersburg, Port St. Lucie, Ft. Myers, and Sanford. As the list of sites indicates, the task force sought a balance of large, medium, and small cities and small and medium towns in order to gather information that accurately reflects the state’s diversity. In fact, sites were carefully selected based on very specific criteria: taken together, the sites had to provide a fair representation of the variety of communities in Florida in terms of size of population and significant demographic characteristics (i.e., age, race, income, national origin); sites had to reflect a balanced geographic representation of the state; they had to include communities that host circuit seats, county seats that aren’t circuit seats, and towns that aren’t county seats; and they had to offer the best opportunities for attendance by supreme court justices, district and circuit chief judges, and members of the task force. Interestingly, the Live Oak meeting turned out to be fairly representational in terms of the number of people who attended, the reasons for their attendance, and the kinds of issues they raised.

According to OSCA’s Steve Henley—the only panelist who participated in all nine meetings—many common themes surfaced across the state. The most pressing issues, the issues that were brought up in all nine venues, he reflected, were the challenges wrought by the budget reductions; apprehension over the increasing workload for judges, court personnel, public defenders, and state attorneys and the subsequent need to triage categories of cases; foreboding about the stress on jails resulting from budget cuts and inefficiencies; urgency about the need to embrace emerging technologies, like e-filing and virtual hearings; concerns about self-represented litigants and about probate and guardianship issues; unease about the lack of accountability of lawyers, judges, and the appeals process; and distress about the threatened future of drug court, mental health court, and therapeutic courts generally.

These public meetings are part of the information-gathering stage of the long-range planning process, and the information collected will also include the results of a public opinion telephone survey of over 2,000 randomly-selected Floridians as well as surveys of more than 9,100 attorneys, judges, court personnel, clerks of court, and court users.
litigants and jurors, criminal defendants, victims, witnesses, and private mediators). This winter, task force member Judge Janet Ferris, Second Circuit, will facilitate a meeting with justice system partners to garner their perspectives. Then, in the spring, after all of this information becomes the basis of a summary report of findings, focus groups will assist the task force in recommending goals and strategies that the long-range plan will need to address. Finally, the task force will draft the plan and present it to the supreme court by June 2009.

Why, one might ask, must the planning process go through so many audiences and stages? Florida is undergoing colossal changes—conspicuous increases in population that will increase the number of cases entering the courts; changes in demographic and social trends that will affect the nature of the cases that the courts must resolve; emerging technological innovations that will alter the ways people interact with one another and the courts. Therefore, in order to create a strategic plan that will effectively and meaningfully address these changes over the next two decades, the task force must collect data that is as accurate as possible. In so doing, the judicial branch will be able to aim its limited resources at real needs and will be able to address successfully the highest level of priorities.

Education and Outreach

Seventeenth Annual Dispute Resolution Center Conference

It would not be melodramatic to say that “Mediation and Justice For All,” the Dispute Resolution Center’s seventeenth annual conference, had some rather inauspicious beginnings. In fact, nothing about the planning of and preparation for this year’s conference followed the usual path of familiar chaos. To begin with, the conference is typically scheduled for the third week in August, but, this year, the only time the hotel could host such a large gathering was the fourth week in August, which was the Labor Day weekend. The conference had never taken place on a holiday weekend before, and DRC staff were concerned that participation might be limited because people often plan family trips for that final pause before school begins.

Even more concerning was the possibility that the conference might not be permitted to happen at all, due to the severity of the budget cuts and the subsequent travel freeze. On July 1, her first day in her new office, Chief Justice Quince gave approval for the conference. Because of the time crunch, hard copies of the brochure and registration materials could not be mailed out, but, using the mediator database, DRC staff members Dawn Burlison and Elizabeth Roach were able to email prospective attendees immediately, letting them know the conference would take place, and to make all the necessary materials (brochure, registration information) available online. Although the registration process had been set back several weeks, Ms Burlison handled registration in record time, including instituting a new, cost-saving (and “green”) method of confirming registrations via email rather than snailmail.

These challenges could have easily doomed any conference. Yet the DRC conference ended up being a resounding success in every respect: a testament to the commitment of Chief Justice Quince, the efficiency of DRC staff, the loyalty of conference attendees, the patience of the presenters—and a dose of some good luck too, no doubt.

Another potential disaster was that staff didn’t have time to pre-register people for the workshops—but this actually turned out to be a benefit for everyone. As Conference Coordinator Kimberly Kosch pointed out, “It’s enormously time-consuming to input people’s choices and track the spaces available,” so staff were definitely not doleful that pre-registration was scuttled. And attendees were thrilled because
they had “the freedom to attend what they wanted.” After this year’s experience, it’s unlikely that the conference will ever pre-register people for workshops again.

In the end, 825 people attended the conference: a very impressive number, especially under the circumstances. As it turned out, having the conference on the Labor Day weekend also turned out to be a plus: the weekend before, which is when the conference would normally have been held, Tropical Storm Fay blasted through Florida, causing extensive flooding in parts of the state. So if the conference had been scheduled for its usual weekend, it probably would have been cancelled.

Indeed, “Mediation and Justice For All” had to overcome all sorts of unusual obstacles this year. However, not unusual was that, as always, the day-and-a-half-long event offered attendees a panoply of distinguished and engaging presenters, absorbing plenary sessions, and varied and intriguing workshops.

Opening the conference was Chief Justice Quince, who welcomed everyone to the event on behalf of the supreme court. “We cannot do what we have to do without you,” she declared; “We are really happy that you are interested in helping the judicial system,” she added, and punctuated her appreciation with three emphatic “thank you’s.”

Plenary sessions featured Professor James Coben, director of the Dispute Resolution Institute at Hamline University School of Law, who showed videoclips of some mediation “car wrecks” to demonstrate where mediation can and has gone wrong and to suggest ways to avoid this kind of “carnage”; Dr. Gregory Firestone, director of the University of South Florida Conflict Resolution Collaborative, who exhibited, through a role play, how to become more attuned to domestic violence issues lurking beneath the surface of cases in which one might not suspect it; and Dean James J. Alfini, president and dean of the South Texas College Law School, who moderated an ethics panel called “Justice, Fairness, and Ethics in Mediation.” Interspersed among these plenaries were three sets of 13 workshops on a host of far-ranging topics: choices included Consciousness and Mediation, Violence Without Hands, Condominium and Homeowner Association ADR, Emotional Communication in Mediation, Effective Negotiation Skills, Mediation and the Unlicensed Practice of Law, Mediation Gone Global, Martial Arts and Mediation, and the Neuropsychology of Conflict.

As she does every year, DRC Director Sharon Press honored some of this year’s staunchest friends: Judge Thomas Bateman, Second Judicial Circuit, received the Annual Dispute Resolution Center Award for being a “dedicated innovator, inspired teacher, and trusted colleague to the Dispute Resolution Center and the alternative dispute resolution community”; mediator Edward Clarno, First Judicial Circuit, received the Annual Dispute Resolution Center Award “in recognition of two decades of service and distinguished contributions as the county mediation coordinator for Okaloosa and Walton Counties”; mediators Danni H. Hoelfing, Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, and Christopher M. Shulman, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, received special recognition for eight years of service to the Mediator Ethics Advisory Committee; and Trial Court Administrator Mike Bridenback, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, received special recognition for chairing the Alternative Dispute Resolution Performance and Accountability Workgroup, which worked with judicial branch leaders and the legislature to facilitate the transfer of alternative dispute resolution programs from general revenue to trust funding, thereby preserving their continuing place in the court system.

Most likely, very few (if any) attendees had even a hint about the challenges to making this conference a reality—and a triumphant one, at that. One can only conclude that the DRC staff have truly mastered the art of making the difficult look easy.
Conflict Resolution Day/ Mediation Week Across Florida

To boost public awareness of conflict resolution and its abundance of benefits and advantages, the Association for Conflict Resolution designated the third Thursday in October as International Conflict Resolution Day. Since 2006, individuals, conflict resolution organizations, and local, state, and international groups have been encouraged to orchestrate events to celebrate conflict resolution—especially events that raise the profile of mediation—on this special day or during Mediation Week, the few days that surround it. This year, to honor Conflict Resolution Day, which fell on October 16, five countries (Canada, France, Israel, Nicaragua, and Portugal), various national and international organizations, and 16 U.S. states coordinated happenings on or around that day.

Of the 16 states, one was naturally Florida, whose commitment to alternative dispute resolution dates back to 1975, when the state’s first citizen dispute settlement center was founded in Miami-Dade County. This year, in a proclamation, Governor Crist championed October 12-16 as Mediation Week, and various groups around the state planned tributes to commemorate the week. What follows is a synopsis of some of the many Mediation Week observances that took place in Florida.

In Okaloosa County, First Judicial Circuit, the Emerald Coast Mediation Association held a luncheon to honor one of its longstanding mediators for his many years of service. The association also held a special two-hour meeting and educational session, and an article about mediation, authored by an association member, was published in the two local newspapers.

In Leon County, Second Judicial Circuit, the FSU Peer Mediation Club conducted a program that included cooperative games and an empathy activity for FSU elementary and middle school peer mediators. In addition, FSU’s College of Law hosted a lunch-and-learn session for law students about conflict resolution and its potential uses; attorney and mediator Steve Cheeseman and OSCA’s Sharon Press, director of the Dispute Resolution Center, were the featured speakers.

Mediation Services staff in the Eighth Judicial Circuit offered refreshments throughout the week in its Alachua County office; it also invited court administration staff, judges, magistrates, judicial assistants, and contract mediators to visit and meet the new staff over the course of the week.

In Osceola County, First Judicial Circuit, the Emerald Coast Mediation Association held a luncheon to honor one of its longstanding mediators for his many years of service. The association also held a special two-hour meeting and educational session, and an article about mediation, authored by an association member, was published in the two local newspapers.

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The Osceola County Board of County Commissioners presented a Mediation Week Proclamation to the following: (front row, l-r) County Judge Mark Yerman, Crystal River Middle School peer mediators Cheyenne Lyons and Emmy Lago, Commission Chair Joyce Valentino, and former Citrus County Mediation Coordinator Wendell Reed; (back row, l-r) Citrus County mediators Barbara Harmon and Russell Hollingsworth.

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Mediation Division staff in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit hosted a weeklong open house at the Dade County Courthouse, welcoming visitors with snacks and educational displays that explored two themes. One theme used a hurricane analogy to demonstrate the role of family mediation in a divorce situation: divorce was symbolized as an extreme weather disturbance, and mediation was likened to the shelter from the storm. The other theme was Mediation Around the World, for which

Designed by Eleventh Circuit Mediation Division staff, this invitingly-colorful sign encouraged people to attend the Mediation Week Open House at the Dade County Courthouse.
The area was decorated with flags, posters, and balloons showcasing countries that use mediation within the court system to resolve disputes. Particularly striking was the colorful sign announcing the open house: the sign pictures a globe surrounded by doll cut-outs representing various international flags; this image is embraced by the words, “Let us build bridges of communication...through the process of mediation.”

The Citizen Dispute Settlement Program of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit received Mediation Week Proclamations from the Board of County Commissioners of both Manatee County and Sarasota County. Members of the program also created an eye-catching corner sign to place in front of the courthouses in Sarasota and Venice: showing two people shaking hands, the sign exclaims, “Celebrate Mediation Week: Both Parties Win!”

To celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of its Mediation Services program, the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit planned a special festivity: a luncheon banquet for Mediation Services staff and contract mediators. Guest speakers were Thirteenth Circuit Trial Court Administrator Mike Bridenback, who was instrumental in establishing mediation in Florida, and Dr. Gregory Firestone, of the Conflict Resolution Collaborative at USF, who has been actively involved with the circuit’s mediation program over the years. Also available online, the benchbook includes a Chapter 741 Injunction Flow Chart; protocol for domestic violence injunction hearings; checklists for domestic, sexual, and repeat violence; a domestic violence colloquy; a domestic violence legal outline (addressing both civil and criminal proceedings); a best practice model on child support in domestic violence cases; a summary of relevant 2008 legislation, with overviews of its ramifications; and a comparison of injunctions under chapter 741 and chapter 39. The benchbook also includes applicable federal law and critical case law.

Because the benchbook will continue to be updated and supplemented periodically, the Office of Court Improvement is eager for comments and suggestions.
about ways to make the publication more useful to judges hearing domestic violence cases. (Contact Kathleen Tailer at tailerk@flcourts.org or 850-414-1507.)

For the second project supported by the Violence Against Women Grants Office, the Office of Court Improvement developed two informational brochures for parties in injunction for protection cases—one for petitioners and one for respondents. Civil Injunctions for Protection Against Domestic, Dating, Sexual, and Repeat Violence: Information for Petitioners covers the following concerns: what an injunction is, which of the four kinds of civil injunctions they should choose, what papers they should fill out, what happens after they file the petition, what they need to take to court, and what happens at the hearing. Civil Injunctions for Protection Against Domestic, Dating, Sexual, and Repeat Violence: Information for Respondents addresses the following issues: what a temporary injunction is, what it means in terms of their contact with the petitioner, what they should take to court, what happens if they don’t go to their hearing, what the purpose of the hearing is, under what conditions they are prohibited from possessing or transporting firearms and/or ammunition, and what happens if a final injunction for protection is entered against them.

These brochures were developed at the request of, and with the assistance of, the Domestic Violence Strategic Planning Group and statewide domestic violence coordinators. The Office of Court Improvement provided 1,000 copies of each brochure to every circuit, and brochures are also available online: follow this link for the brochure for petitioners; and for the brochure for respondents, follow this link.

In addition, the Office of Court Improvement put together a Domestic Violence Judicial Advisory Group to assist it with two other domestic violence projects. Consisting of Judge Jerri Collins, Seminole County; Judge Carroll Kelly, Miami-Dade County; Judge Peter Ramsberger, Sixth Circuit; Judge S. Sue Robbins, Fifth Circuit; Judge Elizabeth Senterfitt, Fourth Circuit; and Judge Lynn Tepper, Sixth Circuit, this advisory committee has held numerous conference calls over the past few months. For its first project, the group focused on aiding in the development of an online training program on injunctions for protection; this program for judges and court personnel is scheduled to be available next year. The second project is to assist the Office of Court Improvement in the creation of a video to help litigants navigate the injunction process.

Drug Court Distance Learning Sessions

This fall, in response to the budget cuts and travel restrictions, plans for the statewide drug court training conference had to be modified. In place of the scheduled day-and-a-half live conference, the Florida Association of Drug Court Professionals, OSCA, the Seventeenth Circuit, the Ninth Circuit, the National Development and Research Institute, and the Bureau of Justice Assistance sponsored the 2008 Florida Drug Court Distance Learning Session, an intensive, varied, six-hour educational event that took place on September 4.

The morning session, which was webcast, was hosted by the Ninth Circuit and consisted of three segments: Judge Lisa T. Munyon and Judge Jose R. Rodriguez, Ninth Circuit, gave a presentation on “How Drugs and Substance Abuse Have Influenced Our Courts,” and Paul J. Metzger, director of the Osceola County Forensic Drug Testing Lab, gave presentations on “Who We Are, What We Do, and How We Do It: Our Forensic Drug Testing Lab” and on “Dilutions, Adulterations and Substitutions.”

The afternoon session, hosted by the Seventeenth Circuit and emceed by Judge Gisele Pollack, Broward County, consisted of a videoconference featuring Dr. Andrew H. Osborne, a national expert in cultural proficiency in drug court practice. Session modules focused on an introduction to “Cultural Proficiency in Drug Courts,” “Foundations of Cultural Proficiency,” “Perceptions of Motivation, Participation, and Performance in Drug Court: Client Perspectives,” and “Women’s Issues in Drug Court.” Dr. Osborne reserved ample time for answering questions emailed by participants.

The distance learning sessions drew approximately 450 participants, among them, judges, drug court
coordinators, case managers, state attorneys, public defenders, treatment professionals, school personnel, and staff from the Department of Corrections, the Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Juvenile Justice. CJE or CLE credit was given to those who participated in the training.

Evaluations of the sessions indicate that people found them both interesting and useful. “Great session, and the information provided by the judges was very educational,” participants wrote about the morning session. Evaluations also praised the afternoon session: called “excellent” and “valuable,” Dr. Osborne’s presentation was said to be “very informative and kept my attention the entire four hours”; another participant wrote that the “Women’s Issues in Drug Court” segment was “very valuable, as it helped me as a CBC to have a better understanding of what my clients deal with on a daily basis and how to better communicate with clients to resolve these issues.” Because of the success of this training, OSCA’s Jennifer Grandal, court operations consultant and statewide drug court coordinator, said that another distance learning session is being planned for this spring.

Technology

The Judicial Inquiry System Continues to Evolve

Gathering data from 13 local, state, and federal agencies, OSCA’s web-based Judicial Inquiry System (JIS) provides the judiciary and its justice system partners with quick access to information about an arrestee’s injunctions, risk statuses, warrants, open cases, federal arrests, active concealed weapons permits, immigration violations, and the like. Through a single point of entry, the JIS enables judges to make informed, time-sensitive decisions quickly, thereby improving public safety.

Since it went into production in 2005, the JIS has undergone a number of expansions, all of which have made it more useful, efficient, and far-reaching in its abilities. For instance, in response to the requirements of the Jessica Lunsford Act, which was signed into law in May 2005, the JIS was enhanced to include a First Appearance Calendar, which allows the system to flag automatically anyone classified by the Department of Corrections as a high risk sex offender. And, in response to the Anti Murder Act of March 2007, the First Appearance Calendar was enhanced to enable courts to determine immediately whether someone is a violent felony offender of special concern. Recently, the remarkably adaptable JIS—which has over 5,000 users statewide—has been modified to broaden even further its ability to support the work of the judicial branch and its stakeholders. The two newest augmentations are the Active Warrant Alert Calendar System and, funding permitting, a Children and Youth Cabinet Agency Information Sharing System.

Lee County JIS/Active Warrant Alert Calendar System Pilot

The most recent expansion to the JIS was unfortunately spurred by a tragedy that unfolded in Lee County this summer: in June, a defendant with an outstanding warrant for his arrest in Collier County was released after his arraignment in a Lee County courtroom because the Lee County judge did not have access to the criminal database that would have revealed the outstanding warrant; then, in July, a police officer responding to a late-night domestic disturbance in Lee County was shot and killed by this same defendant.

This crucial information about the warrant was not available to the judge because, even though the judge had access to the JIS, the JIS was developed for use at the initial arrest and first appearance; it was not created to check automatically for illegal activity between first appearance and arraignment. Checking for activity within this timeframe requires that one perform manual record and warrant checks on an individual, case-by-case basis, which is both labor-intensive and cost-prohibitive (the day of the defendant’s arraignment in Lee County, for instance, approximately 1,200 people were scheduled to appear at the courthouse, with more than 300 on the felony arraignment docket—which hints at the mountainous effort that would be involved in doing manual, individual background checks on a daily basis).
In response to this incident, OSCA’s Information Systems Services, in conjunction with the Twentieth Circuit and the Lee County Sheriff’s Department and Clerk of Court, collaborated on the development of a pilot project that expands the JIS program to generate—each day and for each judge—a calendar providing a complete criminal history background for all individuals scheduled to appear in court, including whether they have any outstanding warrants. The night before defendants appear on the docket, the JIS performs an automated query on them, and any alerts and information that it uncovers are furnished to the sheriff’s department, the state attorney’s office, and the courts. The JIS draws its information from a range of sources, among them, the Comprehensive Case Information System (CCIS) database, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, and Appriss (which reveals whether a defendant is currently incarcerated in another facility).

The pilot began testing in October and went live on November 1; it is now being piloted in Collier County as well. So far, feedback has been very enthusiastic. About the ease with which the new active warrant system creates the judges’ dockets, Sergeant Lisa Bess, of the Lee County Sheriff’s Department, exclaimed, “I ran 11 judges in 10 minutes with the printing of the dockets!!! Fantastic!!!!! That would have taken ALL day for two people to run each of those dockets.” The governor’s office has expressed interest in implementing this JIS expansion statewide.

**Information Sharing System for the Governor’s Children and Youth Cabinet**

Governor Crist created the Children and Youth Cabinet in 2007 to improve the self-sufficiency, safety, economic stability, health, and quality of life of all Florida’s children. To achieve this goal, the cabinet, which comprises representatives from eight state agencies, is charged with fostering collaboration, creativity, efficiency, information-sharing, and improved service delivery within and between state agencies and organizations that provide services to children. To help address these charges, ex officio member former Chief Justice Lewis suggested that the cabinet see a demonstration of the JIS since it is an information-sharing system, which the cabinet is seeking.

After OSCA’s Christina Blakeslee, project manager for JIS, gave a demonstration of the system’s abilities, the cabinet was eager to explore implementation options. Because OSCA’s system already provides access to the kinds of critical information that the cabinet agencies solicit, the cabinet recognized it would be best served by extending this system for its own purposes. The supreme court volunteered to serve as the “hosting entity,” and the cabinet agencies will make use of the existing OSCA connections, the contract, and the system already in place—which will save the state both time and money.

By piggybacking onto the existing system, cabinet agency users will see immediate benefits: the dashboard is already built and will require very little modification to meet the needs of its new users; moreover, implementing eight additional data connections will be easy because the system is already built, highly stable, and rich in functionality; finally, because the software components already exist and simply need reconfiguring, deployment will be quick, and costs will be low (funding is required only for the necessary software and for technical support for up to 2,000 new users).

Utilizing the JIS will readily enable the cabinet agencies to access and share real-time information from multiple branches of government, multiple agencies, and multiple data sources. Thanks to the JIS, these agencies will be able to access relevant information when they need it—and will thereby be able to provide useful, high-quality services in a timely manner to Florida’s children and youth. The goal is to begin the project in February; the governor’s office is currently working with the eight cabinet agencies to determine whether the funding is available to begin implementation.

**Publications**

**The Pro Se Appellate Handbook**

In preparing *The Pro Se Appellate Handbook: Representing Yourself on Appeal*, members of The Florida Bar’s Appellate Practice Section provided an important service both to the public and to the bench. This handbook, which was published last year, provides basic assistance to litigants who cannot, or who choose not to, hire an attorney. Its goal is to help litigants who are representing themselves in appellate matters get their cases to court in the proper form—although its authors emphasize that it is not a comprehensive guide and that it is not “a substitute to retaining an appellate attorney skilled in and knowledgeable of appellate law.”

This summer, with funding from The Florida Bar Foundation, the handbook was translated into Spanish and French Creole. All three language versions are available online at [http://www.flabarappellate.org/](http://www.flabarappellate.org/)
Awards and Honors

The Florida State Courts System was one of three entities in the state that received an award for its commitment to the Americans with Disabilities Act; at a July ceremony at the Capitol celebrating the eighteenth anniversary of the ADA, the award was presented by Jim DeBeaugrine, Director of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, and Chief Justice Quince accepted the award on behalf of the court system.

Trial Court Administrator Mike Bridenback, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, was one of only two trial court administrators nation-wide to be invited to become a member of the Executive Session for State Court Leaders in the Twenty-First Century, a joint project of the National Center for State Courts, Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the State Justice Institute; this ambitious effort brings together a select group of influential state judicial leaders and academics to think expansively about the challenges facing the judicial branch and to consider strategies for addressing these challenges. In addition, Mr. Bridenback served as a court administration volunteer for the Kosovo Justice Support Program, which was created to assist the Kosovo Judicial Council in developing programs and procedures to aid the courts in fulfilling their constitutional mandate.

Judge Marion Fleming, Sixth Judicial Circuit, is one of 25 U.S. citizens selected to serve on a People to People delegation program that was designed to help South Africa implement juvenile and family justice programs; established by President Eisenhower, the People to People Foundation programs embody his idea that “ordinary citizens of different nations, if able to communicate directly, would solve their differences and find a way to live in peace.”

Florida Supreme Court Clerk Thomas D. Hall was selected to serve as president of the National Conference of Appellate Court Clerks, an organization that focuses on education and on providing appellate court clerks with the training and knowledge that will enable them to continue improving the appellate court system.

General Magistrate Robert Jones, Eleventh Judicial Circuit, received the Gavin Letts Memorial Jurist of the Year Award from the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, Florida Chapter; in the chapter’s 30-year history, this is only the second time that a magistrate was honored with this award.

Judge Lynn Tepper, Sixth Judicial Circuit, received the 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Florida Association of Community Corrections for her “dedication to providing fair and equal justice and her willingness to instruct the criminal justice community.”

Florida Supreme Court Library Staff received national recognition for two photos submitted to the American Association of Law Libraries 2008 “Day in the Life” Photo Contest; these photos were taken by Erik Robinson, library archivist.

Welcome Back

Trial Court Administrator Grant Slayden, Second Judicial Circuit, has returned from active duty as the commander of a U.S. Army air defense battalion that provided the ground-based air defense for the National Capital Region in Washington, D.C.
In Memoriam


Please forward information about judges and court personnel who receive awards or honors for their professional contributions to the branch: schwartzb@flcourts.org
January 2009
4-9  Florida Judicial College Phase I, Tallahassee, FL
14-17 The Florida Bar Midyear Meeting, Miami, FL
15-16 Court Interpreter Oral Exam Testing, Orlando, FL
16  Court ADA Coordinator Conference Call, 12:00-1:30 PM
24-28 Conference of Chief Justices Midyear Meeting, Scottsdale, AZ
26-30 DUI Traffic Adjudication Lab, St. Augustine, FL
27  Investiture for Justice Ricky Polston, Tallahassee, FL
29  Pro Bono Awards Ceremony, Tallahassee, FL
29  Florida Supreme Court Historical Society Annual Dinner, Tallahassee, FL

February 2009
5-6  Faculty Training, location TBD
6  Retirement Ceremony for Justice Wells, Tallahassee, FL
6  ADR Rules & Policy Committee Meeting (conference call), 9:00 AM-1:00 PM
11-17 American Bar Association Midyear Meeting, Boston, MA

March 2009
1-6  Florida Judicial College Phase II, Orlando, FL
3  Legislative Session Convenes (tentative)
5-6  Committee on Standard Jury Instructions in Civil Cases Meeting, Tampa, FL
8-10 National Association for Court Management Midyear Conference, Portland, OR
10-13 Dispute Resolution Center County Mediation Training, Bradenton, FL
13  Court ADA Coordinator Conference Call, 12:00-1:30 PM
16-17 Court Interpreter Orientation Workshop, Miami, FL
18  Court Interpreter Written Exam Testing, Miami, FL

Under the direction of
Supreme Court Chief Justice Peggy A. Quince
State Courts Administrator Elisabeth H. Goodner
Deputy State Courts Administrator Blan L. Teagle
Publications Attorney Susan Leseman

Written and edited by Beth C. Schwartz
Court Publications Writer
schwartzb@flcourts.org

The Office of the State Courts Administrator
500 South Duval Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1900
(850) 922-5081