A Message from Lisa Goodner, State Courts Administrator

In the last Full Court Press, I talked about the bleak budget situation and stated that, although the judicial branch faced the possibility of a 4% to 10% reduction in October, our budget was reduced by only 2%. But I also cautioned that the Revenue Estimating Conference was in the process of revising its projections because the shortfall was likely to be greater than initially predicted, perhaps by as much as $1.5 billion.

Unfortunately, since then, shortfall predictions have grown even more acute, and it now appears that the revenue shortfall is likely to exceed $3 billion between this fiscal year and the next. In response, the legislature recently reduced the court system’s current fiscal year budget by an additional 4% (about $17.2 million). Using a combination of trust fund cash reserves and non-recurring appropriations, the courts will be able to avoid furloughing employees this fiscal year. However, for the next fiscal year, more reductions are inevitable. In light of this situation, Chief Justice Lewis wants you to know that he has “personally spoken with Speaker Rubio, President Pruitt, Governor Crist, and many key members of both legislative chambers to reaffirm our commitment to working together to address the budget crisis this state is facing...Individually we accomplish little but together we can and will face and resolve all issues that may arise.”

Perhaps more than at any other time, in times of uncertainty, it’s especially crucial for the branch to keep its eye trained on the big picture, which is “to ensure that the people of Florida have the best justice system possible,” as the chief justice expressed in Horizon 2008. Therefore, despite—or perhaps because of—this budget predicament, branch leaders understand the importance of taking the time, now, to revisit the judicial branch’s long-range plan, which was last addressed ten years ago. As the first article in the newsletter explains, revising the long-range plan involves identifying the most pertinent challenges facing the branch in the next 15-20 years and then building meaningful strategies for addressing these challenges. To develop the long-range plan, the Task Force on Judicial Branch Planning has begun to seek feedback about the court system from people who work in and around the courts, court users, and members of the public. This input will enable the task force to identify and prioritize the issues on which the strategic plan must concentrate. This undertaking is emphatically important now because it supports the judicial branch’s efforts to stay focused on and to fulfill its mission, no matter what the circumstances.

I want to assure you that Chief Justice Lewis, branch leaders, and I will continue our negotiations and advocacy on behalf of the judicial branch in order to limit budget reductions so that our core mission and constitutional functions are protected. Especially in these uncertain times, I want to thank you for your fortitude and steadiness—and for all you do to make sure that Florida’s citizens do indeed have “the best justice system possible.”

Sincerely,

Lisa Goodner
Long-Range Planning
The Evolution of a Strategic Plan

"Think outside the box." "Focus on desired outcomes, not on the steps that need to be taken to achieve those desired outcomes." "Practice broad, creative, and forward thinking." "Think abstractly, aspirationally." "Aim for the big-picture ideas." "Push your thinking into the next galaxy!" These were among the heady and inspiring appeals of Eleventh Circuit Chief Judge Joseph P. Farina, chair of the Task Force on Judicial Branch Planning, as he recently encouraged members of a supreme court committee to add their voices to the brew of ideas and information being gathered for the branch’s current strategic planning initiative. In his quest to provoke and facilitate the planning process, his goal—with these committee members and with other audiences—is to spark as much participation and as many big ideas as possible.

Since the passage of a voter-driven amendment passed in 1992, all state government entities in Florida, including the judicial branch, have been required to develop and be guided by a strategic plan. After a three-year effort that included extensive outreach to people who work in and around the courts, users of the courts, and members of the general public, the Judicial Management Council produced Taking Bearings, Setting Course, the branch’s first long-range plan, in 1998. This expansive document defines the branch’s long-term vision and mission; identifies and delineates five broad, long-range issues that are of fundamental importance to the branch’s ability to fulfill its mission and work toward its vision; and identifies specific goals and strategies for addressing each of these five issues (read long-range plan online).

In brief, the purpose of the judicial branch’s long-range plan is to prepare the court system to meet the challenges and trends that lie 15-20 years ahead. Those who participated in the outreach process in the 1990s identified a wide spectrum of challenges and trends, among them, increasing urbanization; increasing levels of child abuse and neglect; growing population of elders and increased elder abuse; increasing number of people who cannot afford legal representation; increasing number of people who must, or choose to, represent themselves in court; increasing levels of economic disparity; increasing number of immigrants and non-English-speaking persons; changes in the roles and expectations of judges and courts; and decreasing levels of respect afforded the court system. However, with so many inevitable changes on the horizon—e.g., meteoric developments in technology, and demographic, political, and economic shifts—challenges and trends are bound to evolve significantly over time. Thus the Judicial Management Council saw the wisdom in regularly performing a far-reaching outreach effort and updating the long-range plan. Ten years have passed since the publication of the first plan, and it is once again time to revisit the branch’s long-range issues, goals, and strategies.

The Task Force on Judicial Branch Planning officially began spearheading this new planning effort in May 2006, when it coordinated a two-day workshop for 100 invited participants, including judges, government and private attorneys, members of executive agencies and the legislative branch, and representatives from the education, business, and non-profit advocacy communities. They came together to attend sessions about significant social, economic, and political trends in Florida, to speculate about the impact these trends are likely to have on the justice system, and to re-evaluate the five original long-range planning issues—thereby laying the groundwork for re-addressing the strategic plan.

The next stage—the “gather information phase”—began recently, and it involves a capacious outreach effort conducted on several fronts by the task force and OSCA’s Strategic Planning Unit. First is a public opinion telephone survey, which is designed to get input about Florida’s court system from the general public; the survey will involve at least 2,000 completed interviews from randomly-selected state residents. Another component of the outreach initiative is a survey of court users, available both online and as hard copy, which will seek input from parties/litigants and jurors in civil and family cases, criminal defendants, victims, witnesses, and private mediators; they too will be asked to answer questions and provide comments about the state’s court system.
Attorneys will be surveyed as well; this online survey will be advertised on The Florida Bar’s and OSCA’s websites. And judges, court staff, and clerks of court will be asked to complete online surveys. The last component of the information-gathering phase involves meetings with justice system partners to elicit their perspectives on Florida’s court system and the areas in need of change.

After all these sources of information are gathered—which the task force aims to have completed by the end of May—the information will be analyzed and synthesized into a summary report of findings; focus groups will review the data and analyze emerging trends; and the task force will select and prioritize the issues and trends that the strategic plan will need to address. This phase of the planning process should be done in mid-summer. The final phase will involve developing the strategic plan and presenting a draft to the supreme court, for which the task force’s deadline is December of this year. In addition to becoming the foundation for the branch’s second long-range plan, the information the task force gathers will serve as a baseline for gauging the court system’s performance and progress; it will also be used to design specific improvement initiatives.

When asked why so much outreach—particularly from the public—is necessary for the construction of a long-range plan, OSCA’s Barbara French, chief of the Strategic Planning Unit, was quick to point out that “Sound strategic planning methods include input from both external and internal stakeholders. However, the bottom line for government organizations is service first and foremost to the public, so it follows that public outreach is a necessary component for developing a plan that reflects public input from a variety of methods.” She also stressed that public outreach helps to build trust and confidence in the courts, referring to one of the seminal issues identified in the first long-range plan; as that plan states, “The independence and legal authority of the courts is a grant by the people. The erosion of public trust in the courts undermines judicial independence, diminishes the effectiveness of court action and reduces the ability of the courts to fulfill their function.” Therefore, building public trust and confidence is a priority, and to do this, the court system seeks to understand how it is perceived by the public—for which it must practice what the first plan refers to as “attentive, responsive listening.”

The anticipated result of all this information-gathering will be a deliberate, systematic, vibrant blueprint that can guide the court system through the challenges it will face in the next decade.

Fairness and Diversity

Local Diversity Training Initiative Surpasses Expectations

In one of the five weighty charges bundled together in a September 2006 administrative order, Chief Justice Lewis instructed the Standing Committee on Fairness and Diversity to collaborate with the Florida Court Education Council, OSCA, and the trial and appellate courts to develop local court diversity and sensitivity awareness programs; identify the components of effective diversity training, including the most favorable delivery mechanisms; begin training no later than spring 2007 and complete at least one training session in every trial and appellate court by December 2007; and determine the resources necessary for implementing ongoing local diversity trainings (read order online).

It might have been tempting to respond to such an ambitious directive with an exclamation along the lines of, “How in the world are we going to accomplish a project of this magnitude in such a short stretch of time?” Fortunately, however, that kind of thinking did not thwart the Diversity Training Subcommittee members or its chair, Judge Scott Bernstein, Eleventh Judicial Circuit, whom the chief justice selected to carry out this directive. With the indefatigable help of the 26 local diversity teams—one in every circuit and appellate court, and each comprising at least one judge and one staff member—Judge Bernstein and the subcommittee tackled their charge with such alacrity and agility that, before the final days of 2007, not only did every trial and appellate court, as well as the supreme court/OSCA, successfully orchestrate at least one training session—but some courts actually succeeded in training all their judges and court personnel.

Team members admitted to encountering a few obstacles at first. Several confessed to feeling somewhat “overwhelmed” by what they were expected to accomplish before the end of the calendar year. And others initially wondered about the need for such training.

However, after team members got over any early concerns, they eagerly embraced their charge, and, when asked how they were able to achieve success so quickly, they responded without hesitation. OSCA Human Resources Officer Karen Samuel attributed it to the passion of the team members and the support of court leadership. In her words, “It’s been such an honor to work alongside the Education/Diversity Training Subcommittee Chair, Judge Scott Bernstein, and the amazing diversity team members. All that
we’ve accomplished in such a short span of time speaks to their commitment and dedication to this initiative.” She also emphasized the importance of “the involvement and communication from the top down; enthusiastic leadership support was there from the very start, and that makes a world of difference in all that we’ve accomplished thus far and for the work that’s ahead.”

Team members also ascribed the initiative’s success to the great latitude they were given to design trainings tailored to their individual jurisdiction’s needs. Although all trainings were required to meet learning objectives developed by the Standing Committee on Fairness and Diversity and approved by the Florida Court Education Council, the teams were given much discretion to determine how and when to do the training, whether to use in-house or external trainers, which trainers to use, and how to generate interest in the training among their judges and court employees.

Also, each team was free to limit training sessions to its circuit or DCA alone or to coordinate with other jurisdictions and share the training. Two circuits decided to join forces for the training, and, as Judge Linda Allan, Sixth Circuit, said, “I’m so glad that the Sixth and the Thirteenth Circuits worked together on the training project. So many good things came from that approach. Not only was it cost effective, but drawing on a larger number of judges made the classes themselves more diverse, which, in turn, made for more interesting and often insightful exchanges between the participants. The joint training also allowed both circuits to, essentially, double the number of available class dates, and this additional flexibility helped judges fit it into their busy schedules. Selfishly, it gave me the opportunity to get to know Judge Claudia Isom from the Thirteenth Circuit. I’m sure that other judges also had the benefit of getting to know someone from the other circuit as a result of our joint training experience. All in all, it was a great approach, and I highly recommend it to others.”

Moreover, because the Diversity Training Subcommittee understands that each team is the best judge of its particular jurisdiction’s needs, teams were empowered to decide whether to train their judges and court personnel together or separately. While some teams felt that separate trainings would be more effective for their courts, others preferred joint training: for instance, because the Fourth DCA sees itself as a “close-knit family,” Chief Judge Shahood felt “We should all be trained together because this training influences how we act with one another—the judges, clerks, marshal’s office, librarians, etc.” This decision to have the training together led to what he described as “an invaluable experience.”

And, finally, the trainings were successful because, on the whole, participants, both judges and court employees, recognized that they were useful and needed. According to the evaluations, participants clearly enjoyed the training, understand its necessity, and believe they’ll do their jobs better as a result of it. As Trial Court Administrator Mark Weinberg explained, “The Seventh Judicial Circuit Court adopted a policy requiring all court administration staff to attend diversity, customer service, and discrimination prevention trainings every two to three years. We have found this to be a worthwhile endeavor that our employees and organization continually find to be beneficial. In our view, attitudes and opinions are formed over a long period of time. Likewise, it can take some time for these attitudes and opinions to adjust in a world that is constantly changing. The trainings are designed to help provide us with an understanding of the different perspectives, needs, and challenges of the public we serve and of those with whom we work. If you think about it,” he added, “increasing our understanding of one another actually makes our jobs easier.”

Regarding the benefits of this training for judges, Judge Isom remarked, “We know that it is challenging to change attitudes and beliefs that members of the judicial branch have formed throughout their lifetimes. What we hope to change, and have a right to expect to change through this process of education, is behaviors. I believe our colleagues to be committed to the fair and unbiased administration of justice. This training should assist us in understanding why the public may not perceive our rulings objectively so that we must communicate the basis for our rulings in a more effective way.” She concluded with an allusion to the famous fable by Aesop, “The Swallow, the Serpent, and the Court of Justice”: “It is my hope that when the injured fly to us for justice, they will find a safe harbor and a level playing field.”

About the responsibility of chairing the Diversity Training Subcommittee, Judge Scott Bernstein affirmed, “Of all the projects I’ve worked on as a judge, this has been one of the most exciting I have ever done.” He called it “nothing short of miraculous” that, in such a brief period of time, with a minimal budget, every court has offered at least one training
session. And, more amazing still, he projects that by the end of this spring, almost everyone who works in Florida’s courts will have been trained.

But, as significant as this accomplishment is, it represents just the beginning of the diversity training initiative: the administrative order makes it clear that the training is to be ongoing, and Judge Bernstein already has some ideas for maintaining the momentum. In particular, he stressed, the training should continue to be done at the local level because the pressing issues in a Pensacola court might not be the same as those in a court in Ft. Lauderdale, for instance. But he knows he can count on each team to put together a plan that will work best for its court. Ongoing education might include informal “lunch and learn” opportunities, printed materials and videos, online coursework, and the celebration of some calendar events (Women’s History Month, Black History Month, etc.). And the various court education programs throughout the year will offer other opportunities for training. Moreover, every few years or so, he anticipates that the subcommittee will plan another set of day-long training sessions across the state.

Most important, Judge Bernstein concluded, is that “We need to keep the conversation going, for only through ongoing conversation will fairness become engrained in the system and always at the forefront of everyone’s mind.” He concluded by underscoring that “The court system is in the fairness business; anything we do to promote fairness enables us to do our jobs better.”

Accessibility: A One-Keystroke-at-a-Time Process
By Tricia Knox and Phillip Pollock

In today’s electronic world of computers, email, and the Internet, equal access to electronic information by everyone must be a priority for all court personnel, and on July 1, 2006, it became the law.

The Mandate
To people with disabilities, all branches of government must provide access to and use of information and data, under sections 282.601 – .606, Florida Statutes. In addition, the information and data must be comparable to those provided to individuals who do not have disabilities. Also, the law requires that electronic information and information technology conform to provisions found in federal law, commonly known as “Section 508.”

While many assume that the standards found in Section 508 relate only to websites and web-based applications, they reach far beyond the web and encompass all forms of electronic information distribution.

What this Means
In a nutshell, this means that all court personnel are responsible for creating accessible electronic information.

For example, when attaching files to an email for distribution—such as meeting notes (a simple Microsoft Word document)—and/or converting the notes to a PDF for posting on a website, the document’s author needs to take steps to ensure that anyone, even those with a disability (such as a blind person using a screen reader), can access all the content contained in the document.

That First Keystroke—Become Informed
Currently, there is a great demand for information on the topic of accessibility. Most courts fear they do not have the expertise, the staff, the money, or the time to devote to making their websites and electronic documents accessible.

The court’s intranet site provides a starting point for those courts tackling the issues involved in making websites and electronic documents accessible. Information regarding first steps to take can be found under the “Where do I start” and the “Quick Fixes” sections. It may sound trite, but it is literally a one-keystroke-at-a-time process.

Then—Start in Your Basic Work Environment
Although the main focus regarding Section 508 and accessibility is placed on making websites compliant, keep in mind that websites consist of more than just coded pages. Everyday documents that stem from your own computer often end up as part of a website. As a result, Word files, PDFs, Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations, and other electronic files need accessibility treatment.
It is often difficult to predict the path a document will take. Therefore, it is wise to cope with accessibility in the authorship phase of document-building. Then, no matter what avenue of distribution it takes (email, web posting, shared common drive), everyone will be able to access it.

Not Just a Technology Job—It’s Everyone’s Job
Because court technology personnel cannot do it all, everyone must do his/her part by making documents accessible. Rightfully, document authors are on the front line in making electronic documents—and websites—accessible.

Creating an Accessible Microsoft Office Document—Designing with Accessibility in Mind
When you create new documents, it is important to adopt the mantra, “Designing with Accessibility in Mind.” By doing this, you can create a document that addresses a broad range of disabilities that includes:

• Vision (can a screen reader interpret the information?)
• Hearing (are closed captioning and/or text equivalents provided?)
• Mobility (is information dependent on someone using a mouse?)
• Cognition (is information too complex or visually confusing to be understood or dealt with?)

Here’s How to Do It
There are two primary standards found in Section 508 requirements that MUST be addressed to make any document accessible. (For exact keystroke methods, visit the intranet site).

1. Provide “alternative text” for all graphics (alternative text is a brief explanation of an image, graph, chart, or other graphic element);
2. Make data tables accessible (this is done by using coded markup on table header cells. As a result, screen readers can cross-reference the information in both columns and rows so that an intersection is made to properly identify the data found in each cell).

In addition to these two standards above, a few basic, extra steps are required to make documents truly usable. Accessibility and usability go hand-in-hand. These extra steps (or best practices) go a long way in providing easy access to information.

There are six primary best practices that should be addressed to make documents more usable. (For exact keystroke methods, visit the intranet site).

1. In Word, use Headings and Styles to create a properly formatted and structured document.
2. Position hyperlinks so that it is easy to get to the most important ones. Put the most important links first, and avoid using the words “click here” or “link.”
3. Avoid using tables for basic layout purposes. Use them for data.
4. For large documents, create a Table of Contents (which can be done if headings are used properly) that will provide clickable links and bookmarks when converted to a PDF (Word).
5. Use numbered or bulleted lists to break up dense paragraphs of text.
6. Use short, simple sentences for ease of understanding.

You’ve Done It!
Even though not all accessibility scenarios have been addressed in the article, your document will now meet most of the accessibility guidelines required by state law. In addition, your intervention will ease the burden of the web administrator in your court, should the document end up on the court website.

But most of all, you will have done the right thing. You will have helped to make your document usable to someone who has a disability, someone who might otherwise not be able to comprehend it. Remember, we are all only temporarily-abled. As a result of time and the aging process (or a serious illness or accident), we may all find ourselves on the receiving end of accessibility practices.

[Tricia Knox is the web administrator for the supreme court; Phillip Pollock is the web administrator for OSCA]
Education and Outreach

Circuit Judges & TCAs Meet in December for Education Programs

At last December’s Annual Education Program of the Florida Conference of Circuit Judges and the concurrent Trial Court Administrators’ Education Program, 452 circuit judges and 45 court administrators and staff met in Ponte Vedra for three days brimming with educational programming and committee meetings.

Sessions for the circuit judges were divided into the standard tracks—criminal, civil and general interest, probate, and unified family court—and delved into an array of pertinent topics, including jury selection, capital cases, current evidence issues, docket and case management, adoptions, guardianship, child support, judicial campaign ethics, and justice teaching.

However, one topic, in various articulations, seemed to develop a kind of ubiquity over the few days; not only was it the focus of the opening plenary, but it also had a presence in every track. That topic was privacy. The opening plenary consisted of a “conversation” about privacy among a large group of panelists—among them, a judge, a clerk of court, attorneys, a law professor, a police chief, a victim advocate, and two journalists—all of whom passionately presented a case either for or against making most, or some, court records electronically accessible. Moderated by Arthur Miller, professor at the NYU School of Law and the NYU School of Continuing and Professional Studies, this conversation was inescapably complex, nuanced, and animated, raising many provocative and necessary questions. Over the course of the next day-and-a-half, attendees interested in privacy issues could also attend sessions on “Privacy Issues in Criminal Cases,” “Circuit Civil in the Digital World: Electronic Records and Electronic Discovery,” “Privacy and Court Records: An Oxymoron,” “Family Cases in the Digital World: Digital Evidence and Electronic Discovery,” and “Privacy Protection for Probate, Guardianship, and Mental Health.”

Meanwhile, trial court administrators and their staff participated in a number of sessions focusing on the interface between the judicial world and the world at large: “I Did Not Have (Media) Relations: Planning for High Profile Cases,” “May It Please the Court: Speaking to or on Behalf of the Court,” and “Website Accessibility for Your Court Website” addressed different aspects of the issue of how the court presents itself to the public. Other sessions concentrated on matters of a more internal court administrative nature, investigating subjects like “Blending the Intergenerational Workforce,” “Designing the Future,” and “What’s Happening in Court Interpreting: Statewide Issues and Strategies.”

The goal of judiciary education is to help judges and court personnel enhance their knowledge, skills, and ethical standards and thereby to support their efforts to ensure that justice is administered fairly, effectively, professionally, and competently. These education programs for circuit judges and trial court administrators handily accomplished that goal.
Pilot Program for General Magistrates & Child Support Hearing Officers

In a typical year, the state’s newest judges attend the Florida Judicial College (headed by Judge Fred Lauten, dean, and Judge Mark Shames, associate dean)—a comprehensive training program that facilitates their transition from the bar to the bench. However, Phase One of this year’s program, which took place in Orlando in early January, was somewhat unusual in that, in addition to Florida’s new trial court judges, 20 new general magistrates and child support hearing officers were in attendance. Journeying from all across the state, the magistrates and hearing officers met in Orlando for a five-day pilot program that gave them an opportunity to learn from some of the state’s most distinguished judicial educators and to meet and study with other new colleagues on the bench.

With the goal of improving the administration of justice, the Florida Court Education Council has been responsible for overseeing and supporting judicial education in Florida since 1978. Although court administrators and appellate law clerks have been able to take advantage of some educational opportunities administered by the council, most of its educational programs have been designed for judges: since Florida judges are required to take a minimum of 30 approved credit hours of continuing education every three years, the council has largely focused on programming that enables judges to meet these requirements.

Recently, however, the council turned its attention to the educational needs of other court personnel as well. It began by performing an educational needs assessment of general magistrates and hearing officers; trial court staff attorneys and general counsel; judicial assistants; administrative services personnel; family court personnel; and case managers. Then, it hired a consultant (Ms Dee Beranek), who determined the education and training needs of these six categories of employees, presented recommendations for the most appropriate and practical delivery systems to address these needs, drafted a report, and suggested an implementation plan. After the council voted to accept the report and approved, in concept, the first two years of the implementation plan, the new magistrates and hearing officers became the first beneficiaries of this expanded court education focus.

Because none of the magistrates and hearing officers who participated in the pilot program had been serving in this capacity for more than 15 months, the curriculum for the first half of the program was perfectly suited to the needs of judicial officers still somewhat new to these positions, with sessions on topics like “General Magistrate and Hearing Officer Systems: History, Powers, Limitations, and Procedures,” “Effective Case Management,” “Making a Record and Ruling on Objections,” and “Preparation and Construction of Reports and Recommended Orders”; also in the first half was a day-long session on Evidence. These sessions were taught by three general magistrates—Robert Jones and Thomas Tilson, Eleventh Judicial Circuit, and Diane Kirigin, Fifteenth Judicial Circuit—and by Judges Thomas H. Bateman and Terry Lewis, Second Judicial Circuit. Attendees also engaged in an exercise in which they presided over part of a mock trial. For the second half of the program, magistrates and hearing officers participated in joint sessions with the new trial court judges, focusing on topics like “Mental Health,” “Judicial Immunity and Liability,” “Fairness Issues,” “Domestic Violence,” “Ethics and Ex Parte Communication,” “The Art of Judging,” and “Building Judicial Style.”

Based on the feedback he received, General Magistrate Jones, who coordinated the pilot program, declared that the program “provided, in a very effective way, much needed and very valuable judicial-related education and training for GMs and HOs serving in our state who had not had the benefit of such education and training in the past.” The program’s success, he maintains, was in part due to the opportunity for GMs and HOs to participate in joint sessions with the judges: “The program provided an excellent forum or environment within which the GMs and HOs and the judges could share information about their particular practices, procedures, case management techniques, and problem-solving approaches.” He was especially pleased with “the excellent way in which the GMs, HOs, and judges were able to professionally and constructively interact with each other in a stimulating learning environment,” concluding that joint sessions “help to reinforce the team concept, which I believe is important because we are all on the same court team.”
Judicial Campaign Conduct Forums Scheduled for May

Canon 7 of the Code of Judicial Conduct maps out the rules governing political conduct by judges and candidates running for judicial office. When judicial candidates qualify for election, they sign an oath saying that they have read and understand the code; however, they often still have questions regarding the appropriateness of prospective campaign and political activities. To address these questions, the Florida Supreme Court, The Florida Bar Board of Governors, the Judicial Ethics Advisory Committee, and the trial court chief judges partner to sponsor a series of judicial campaign conduct forums well before election day.

This year’s forums will be conducted on May 8 or 9 in every circuit in which there will be a contested judicial election. The forums, which begin at 1:00, will last about an hour. Covering the Canon 7 requirements by which candidates for judicial office must abide, the forums will emphasize the importance of integrity and professionalism among judicial candidates—and the impact of campaign conduct on public trust and confidence in the judicial system.

Both the Code of Judicial Conduct and An Aid to Understanding Canon 7 are available online. Questions regarding the forums may sent to OSCA’s publications attorney, Susan Leseman, at lesemans@flcourts.org

The Leon County Courthouse Hosts a Visit from a South Korean Court Delegation

“Who is allowed to have a jury trial in Florida?” “Do most defendants choose to have a jury trial?” “How many potential jurors are summoned for each trial?” “What percentage of them typically respond to the summons?” “How many are chosen for each trial?” “How are jurors selected?” “What is the jury’s role in a trial?” “Can jurors ask questions of the defendant and witnesses?” “What is the judge’s role in a trial?” “How are judges selected?” “What does the judge do if there’s one holdout juror?” “What if a judge doesn’t agree with a jury’s decision—can he or she override it?” “What is the appeal rate in Florida?”

A spirited, bilingual percolation of questions and answers infused the Leon County Courthouse in late November, when a delegation of South Korean judges and clerks visited the Second Judicial Circuit. Sometime later this year, South Korea will be instituting a jury trial system, and this delegation of five judges and four clerks was one of 13 such embassies travelling around the U.S. to visit different trial courts in order to study our jury system and witness the jury process at work. The National Center for State Courts coordinated the visits of all the delegations travelling through this country; the members of the group visiting Leon County hailed from the Gwangju District Court and the Seoul Eastern District Court.

The contact person for this particular delegation’s overflowing, two-day visit to the Second Circuit was Judge Thomas H. Bateman, III, and he and Chief Judge Charles A. Francis worked hard to make sure the delegates had the full panoply of
Experiences they hoped to undergo and ask questions about. At the top of the list, of course, was to give the guests a chance to observe the jury selection process and attend a jury trial, and, fortunately for them, Judge Bateman had to select a jury that first afternoon. Before the selection process began, Judge Bateman welcomed the delegates to the courtroom, handed them a copy of the questions that all the jurors would be asked, pointed out where the various players—court reporter, clerk, bailiff, potential jurors—would sit, and explained the charge against the defendant. Once the potential jurors entered the room, Judge Bateman, switching roles from gracious host to genial adjudicator, introduced the state attorney and defense attorney, administered the oath, described his responsibility in the case—“to tell you the law”—and the jurors’ responsibility—“to determine what the facts are and then apply the law to the facts provided to you as evidence”—and clearly defined the terms “not guilty,” “beyond a reasonable doubt,” and “burden of proof.”

Following these preliminaries, Chief Judge Francis led the South Korean delegates to a conference room so that they could watch the rest of the process on closed circuit TV. This move freed the visitors to voice whatever questions they had—and also gave them the chance to experience Judge Francis’ deconstruction of the entire procedure—from the point of view of the judge, the state attorney, and the defense attorney—as it was unfurling. To the palpable fascination of the South Korean guests, after potential jurors publicly answered the questions to which all the jurors had to respond, Judge Francis dexterously pointed out which of them would likely be excused by which of the two attorneys and for what reasons (e.g., several were likely to be removed because of close ties to law enforcement; several, because they had friends who had been accused of crimes). The delegates clearly were intrigued by the almost chess-like nature of the process, and to have Judge Francis editorialize while it was unfolding was truly a unique and marvelous opportunity.

In addition to observing jury selection, a jury trial, and a sentencing, the delegates were treated to an extensive tour of the courthouse: they visited and were introduced to potential jurors in the jury assembly room; they observed and asked questions of the digital court reporters, who were electronically monitoring courtrooms all over the circuit; they toured the clerk’s office and the sheriff’s office and had a chance to ask questions of representatives of those offices as well; and they viewed a hearing room and a jury room. They also lunched with the Tallahassee Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Section, which was present for “A Morning in the Courthouse”—an opportunity to learn about the policies, procedures, and geography of the courthouse. Finally, Judge Bateman serendipitously arranged for them to spend their last few hours in Tallahassee at the supreme court, where Chief Justice Lewis talked with them about the dynamics and purpose of the oral argument and about the necessity of establishing public trust and confidence in—and support for—the judicial branch; after he answered all their questions, they were taken on a tour of the supreme court before leaving for Orlando, their next stop.

Both Chief Judge Francis and Judge Bateman truly valued the experience. According to Judge Francis, “The two days at our courthouse visiting with the delegation of judges and court clerks from South Korea were the most satisfying days that I have personally encountered since becoming a circuit judge.” He especially enjoyed observing “the enthusiasm and seriousness of their quest for knowledge about how jurors function and interact with the judges and stakeholders in our system of justice. They were anxious to explore the functionality of the jury system and the day-to-day operation procedures employed. It was refreshing to participate in the process of exploring methods of adopting some of our ways to their own system of justice.”

Interestingly, although nearly every exchange required the aid of an interpreter, this intervening step did not seem to slow or impede the communication and understanding between the Second Circuit judges and their South Korean guests: it seems it would not be inaccurate to say that, at heart, all of these judicial branch leaders speak the same language.

P.S. Judge Bateman recently emailed to say that, in early February, South Korea held its very first jury trial in Daego. According to South Korean law, the findings of a jury are non-binding—the judge still determines the final verdict—but “The introduction of a jury will enhance the people’s confidence in court verdicts in our country,” declared a spokesperson for the Daego District Court.
Dispute Resolution Center Director Teaches Mediation Skills in Amman, Jordan

“It’s still a little bit of a mystery,” Dispute Resolution Center’s Sharon Press admitted with a smile when asked how she ended up being invited to travel halfway around the earth to do basic mediation training for a group of Jordanian judges and Jordan Bar Association members. Early last summer, someone associated with the American Bar Association’s Rule of Law Initiative—someone Sharon didn’t even know—contacted her, totally unexpectedly, saying she was familiar with Sharon’s work as director of Florida’s Dispute Resolution Center and wondered if she’d be interested in doing a mediation-related project in Amman, Jordan, for up to three months. Responding that she could take annual leave to commit to a week-long project, Sharon soon found herself scheduled to fly to Jordan to lead a five-day mediation training workshop in early November.

Since 2004, the Rule of Law Initiative, in conjunction with Jordan’s Ministry of Justice, has been working to help increase the efficiency of Jordan’s court system, and one strategy for doing so is to expand the role of mediation throughout the country. Toward that end, Jordan unveiled its first court mediation program in June 2006, and, since then, over 300 cases have been referred to court mediation—with a settlement rate of over 70%. The training workshop that Sharon led, which was sponsored by the Ministry of Justice, was designed to augment the use of mediation by helping judges and lawyers develop their mediation skills.

Sharon affirmed that the groundwork for advancing mediation in Jordan has been carefully laid. In March 2006, Jordan’s parliament passed a mediation law that offers litigants the option of choosing mediation over litigation. Jordan also recently established a Mediation Center. Even the location of the Mediation Center will aid in the promotion of mediation, for it’s quartered in the Palace of Justice—an enormous building that houses all of Jordan’s courts, e.g., criminal, civil, family, and sharia (a court subject to the code of law based on the Koran). And the Palace of Justice is ideally situated in Amman, a busy, population-dense, cosmopolitan city—and one of the Middle East’s safest capitals.

Jordan also has a ready supply of people who are qualified to become mediators. Unlike the court system in the U.S., in Jordan, certain judges are assigned to be mediators; under that nation’s mediation rule, mediation judges are allowed to make recommendations as part of the mediation process. In addition to the mediator judges, the rule allows for the use of private mediators—who are typically attorneys. And these are the two groups of people for whom Sharon was invited to provide training. Altogether, the group that Sharon trained included 29 people: 15 judges, 12 attorneys, and two representatives from the Ministry of Justice—among them, two women and one tribal leader.

The training mirrored the general framework of a Florida Supreme Court certified mediation training—with changes made to reflect Jordanian law and procedures as well as cultural differences. The program began with an exploration of the various ways that individuals can resolve conflict. After a segment on negotiation, the group spent the rest of the training focused on the skills of a mediator. The attendees practiced delivering opening statements and did exercises on listening skills and on assisting parties in reconsidering their positions. Before the program concluded, each attendee had an opportunity to assume the role of mediator in a complete role-play so as to experience and consider the ethical dilemmas a mediator might face.

Before mediation gets seriously underway in Jordan, however, some work still needs to be done, Sharon noted. For instance, the country does not yet have its own mediation trainers; to help address this concern, the Ministry of Justice invited Sharon to return in March to do a “train the trainer” program. The Jordanian court system also has to develop strategies for encouraging people to seek out mediation—a concern that the U.S. court system still struggles with, in fact. In order to facilitate this, one strategy that has been identified is for Jordanian mediators to begin working on the development of a professional association. A professional association could also provide continuing education programs and a mechanism for enforcing ethical conduct.

On the whole, Sharon described the experience as “enlightening and exciting,” saying, “I always learn something new when I train, and this time was no different. I believe that training in a different culture
through interpreters has improved my training skills. In addition to becoming more cognizant of and reflective about cultural norms that sometimes are unspoken, I had to think more about the essence of what mediation really is and how best to convey the concepts.” Undeniably, Sharon’s experience verifies that this kind of outreach is as rewarding to those who do the outreach as it is to the recipients.

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Save This Date

17th Annual Dispute Resolution Center Conference, August 28-30

The 2008 DRC Conference for Mediators and Arbitrators is scheduled for August 28-30 (Labor Day weekend) in Orlando, Florida. There will be a Supreme Court approved court-ordered arbitration training on Thursday, August 28, followed by a day and a half conference featuring Professor James Cobin, Hamline University; Professor James J. Alfini, South Texas University Law School; and over 30 concurrent session options. For more information, call (850) 921-2910 or email DRCmail@flcourts.org

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Court Improvement

The Tenth Judicial Circuit Establishes Florida’s First Comprehensive DUI Court

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, and MADD offer some sobering statistics:

- In 2006, more than 41% of all traffic crashes were caused by drunk drivers;
- Approximately three in every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some point in their lives;
- Each year in the U.S., the price tag for alcohol-related crashes reaches approximately $51 billion in monetary costs and over $63 billion in quality-of-life losses;
- An alcohol-related traffic fatality occurs every 29 minutes in the U.S.;
- In 2006, alcohol-related traffic accidents were responsible for approximately 17,602 deaths across the nation;
- With 1,099 alcohol-related traffic fatalities in 2006, Florida ranks third in the country (after California and Texas).

Acknowledging that between 2000 and 2004, Polk County suffered 3,155 alcohol-related crashes, leading to 2,605 injuries and 187 fatalities, the Tenth Judicial Circuit was prompted to take action. It made its first move in 2005, when Circuit Judge Randall McDonald and several Polk County Courthouse employees participated in a DUI court training program in Athens, GA—the home of one of the nation’s model DUI court programs. Soon thereafter, the circuit successfully applied for a federal grant for three-year funding to establish a DUI court of its own. After a yearlong planning effort by its DUI Court Task Force, the circuit and Polk County were ready to begin devising the state’s first comprehensive DUI court.

In September 2006, by administrative order, then Chief Judge Ronald Herring created the Polk County DUI/Drug Court (read order online). Before long, the office of Trial Court Administrator Nick Sudzina and the Polk County Probation Division hired a DUI court counselor and a DUI court probation officer; Judge McDonald, who had been the drug court judge, was selected to manage the initiative and direct its daily operations (which he did until January 2008, when Judge William Bruce Smith became the circuit’s DUI/drug court judge). In order to be admitted into the DUI court program, participants must have been charged with multiple alcohol-related traffic offenses within five years—or three or more within their lifetime. At the end of 2006, following a careful screening process, the DUI court admitted its first two participants. Six months later, it was running at almost full capacity, with 48 (it was originally equipped to handle up to 50). Speedily, the effort expanded: currently, it has 100 participants.

Once admitted into the DUI court program—which is totally voluntary, not court-ordered—offenders have to agree to abide by an incontestably exacting set of rules and regulations (the “misdemeanor client” is required to participate in this three-phase initiative for at least 12 consecutive months; the “felony client” must participate for 24 consecutive months). For instance, the Agreement, Orientation, and Rules form that participants must sign stipulates that, throughout the first phase of the program, they must make bi-weekly court appearances for status
hearsings, attend two hours/week of group and/or individual therapy sessions, attend four weekly AA/NA meetings, and submit to no fewer than three random alcohol/drug screens each week. Participants are required to work or be full-time students; in addition, they are subject to warrantless searches as well as home, workplace, and school visits by a probation officer, who checks up on them to make sure they are living up to their obligations. Moreover, they are expected to pay for the program. And, naturally, they are forbidden to use or possess alcohol or any illegal drugs.

To boot, they must fulfill all these obligations without the benefit of a driver’s license—and if they do get caught driving without a license, the sanctions are stiff indeed (penalties include jail time, community service, curfews, and additional monitoring). In fact, this might be the greatest challenge of all: to get to the great many meetings and sessions they are required to attend each week—in addition to getting to work or school—participants must rely on relatives or friends, their feet, or public transportation. Challenging too is trying to juggle work or being a full-time student with the program’s many time-demanding commitments.

On the whole, despite the rigorous demands of DUI court, participants truly appreciate the prospects with which it beckons them. As Nick Sudzina asserted, “They want this opportunity; they are intent on turning a corner in their lives, and they want this help. They’re not hardened criminals; they’re people like us…but they made a mistake, and now they really want to change the course of their life.” And the DUI program, which follows the drug court model, gives them that opportunity by helping them re-educate themselves and radically change the attitudes and patterns of behavior that led to their drinking to begin with (throughout the course of their treatment, they receive the support—psychological, emotional—they need, and, if they want additional support after they’ve graduated, they can continue participating in the program). Clearly, DUI court offers a preferable alternative to jail—which not only burdens taxpayers with the bill but also offers neither treatment nor education to offenders, which means they have a high likelihood of re-offending when they’re released.

Since DUI court is just over a year old, it’s too early to assess the recidivism rate or to conduct a meaningful program evaluation. But DUI team members—the judge, probation officers, and counselors—are decidedly optimistic. For instance, they are heartened by the retention rate, which is over 95%. And they believe the initiative will succeed because of the support the team gives the participants—and because of the team members’ close involvement in the participants’ lives: as Judge McDonald stressed, “The really dedicated probation officer and drug court counselor” help to make this program a “phenomenal success.” Another factor in its favor is that it was conceptualized using a team approach: judges, court personnel, assistant state attorneys, defense attorneys, county probation, the Polk County Sheriff’s Office, the Lakeland Police Department, the Polk County Commission, and representatives from AA as well as MADD worked together to design it and continue collaborating to make it work.

Finally, enough can’t be said about what Judge McDonald refers to as the DUI court’s “greatest strength,” which is the camaraderie that grows among the participants as a result of “the fact that we keep all the people together; we have our own county-funded treatment program, so they’re not divided up, and they form a strong bond among themselves.” This bond manifests in many ways: “They share their cell phone numbers, help each other find jobs, get each other rides back and forth to the courthouse for meetings. And if they feel they might fall off the wagon, they know they have people they can call who will help them out.” They’re so committed to making sure they all succeed that, “If one of them messes up, the next time they’re in group session together, the other members will get onto that person, really ride him, saying, ‘Why did you do that?’” As a result of this strong bond, he said, “Only one person bombed out in a whole year, while other programs of this kind have about a 25% failure rate.”

Due to the remarkable promise of the Tenth Circuit’s Polk County DUI/Drug Court, several other counties have expressed an interest in replicating it. Given that it is uniquely self-sustaining and that most of its requirements can be fulfilled in-house—since it has its own lab, its own counselors, and its own probation officers—this initiative certainly seems to have discovered a recipe for success.
Families and Children

Florida Undergoes Child & Family Services Reviews

Beyond doubt, the court system plays a pivotal role in the state’s ability to achieve the safety, permanency, and well-being of abused, neglected, and dependent children, for court actions and orders have an indelible impact on the outcomes for these children. Moreover, court decisions and timeframes directly affect the ability of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to meet child welfare goals. Therefore, although at first glance, the following issue might not seem relevant to Florida’s courts, it is, in fact, of the utmost importance and will soon have a notable effect on judges and court personnel.

Every year, the federal government, through the Department of Health and Human Services, significantly subsidizes the child welfare system in each state. Funding is administered by the Children’s Bureau, which works with states, tribes, and communities to develop programs that focus on preventing the abuse of children in troubled families, protecting children from abuse, and finding permanent placements for children who can’t safely return to their homes. In Florida, this federal funding supports initiatives that enable DCF and its contracted service providers to help the children in the state’s foster care system.

To continue receiving federal support, the agencies that serve the child welfare system must demonstrate that they are improving outcomes for the state’s most vulnerable children. The Children’s Bureau gauges this improvement—or lack thereof—by a periodic assessment process called Child and Family Services Reviews. This review is a tool that enables the bureau to establish a state’s conformity with federal child welfare requirements and to determine in detail what is happening to children and families receiving child welfare services. The review measures seven specific outcomes—such as whether children under the care of the state are protected from abuse and neglect and whether they receive appropriate and adequate services to address their physical, mental health, and educational needs—as well as seven specific “systemic factors”—such as the range of services that supports children and families. (For more information about the review, see the bureau’s Child and Family Services Reviews Fact Sheet for Courts.)

If a state fails to meet the standards measured by the review, it stands to lose or be fined millions of dollars, which could seriously jeopardize its entire foster care system. Florida had its first review in 2001 and did not fare particularly well. It recently underwent a second review—this past January—for which file reviews and stakeholder interviews were conducted in Alachua, Seminole, and Miami-Dade counties. Although the Children’s Bureau hasn’t yet issued its report, those who were privy to the review process anticipate that, yet again, Florida did not fare well. Since it must do everything possible to keep this federal funding stream, Florida will be required to construct a Program Improvement Plan to demonstrate how it intends to achieve compliance with the Children’s Bureau guidelines.

Because of the judicial branch’s critical role in protecting the state’s vulnerable children and, therefore, in making sure that DCF is in compliance with national and state child welfare standards, Florida’s court system will be required to work with DCF to develop and implement the Program Improvement Plan that outlines what Florida will do to meet these standards. The bottom line, says OSCA’s Rose Patterson, chief of the Office of Court Improvement, is that “This review is really an evaluation of the entire child welfare system, and our courts are a part of that system.”

Thus the Child and Family Services Review is something about which all judges and court personnel connected with dependency and crossover cases must be aware—and for which they will have to take some responsibility, Rose stated: “Judges and court staff can expect to hear more about Child and Family Service Reviews in the near future because there will soon be an upwelling of activity that will have an impact on judges and the court system.” Circuits will soon be contacted by the Office of Court Improvement with more information about the reviews and the Program Improvement Plan.
The Florida Courts Technology Commission is Reconstituted

In November, after a brief hiatus, the Florida Courts Technology Commission was reconstituted by Chief Justice Lewis by administrative order (read order online). After being under the helm of Chief Judge Charles A. Francis, Second Judicial Circuit, the commission is now chaired by one of its long-time members, Judge Judith L. Kreeger, Eleventh Judicial Circuit. It has some revised as well as several additional charges, and it enlists both former and new members to help it meet its goals.

Originally called the Court Technology User’s Committee, the commission was established in 1995 to advise the supreme court about issues associated with the use of technology in the judicial branch. The commission’s primary responsibility is to coordinate and review recommendations reflecting all court policy matters having to do with the use of technology. All court committees and workgroups are directed to adhere to technology policies and standards that the commission adopts.

In addition, the court charged the commission with a number of specific tasks. First, it is responsible for developing a comprehensive framework for the implementation of technology within the court system. It is also responsible for projects that followed the report and recommendations of the Committee on Privacy and Court Records (issues associated with remote access to court records in electronic form, the Manatee County pilot project, automated search technologies, and user fees). In addition, it will continue to guide and oversee the development of an electronic filing portal that will provide a common entry point for all court electronic filings in the state. It must ensure that the technology employed at every level of the state court system is fully integrated, meaning that the computers from across all jurisdictions will be networked and can communicate with each other. Finally, the court directs the commission to integrate appropriate security measures for all projects and to ensure that all court technology projects meet the requirements of federal and state laws regarding access to technology for people with disabilities.

To address these charges, the commission has expanded considerably. In its prior incarnation, it had seven members, all of whom were judges. However, the reconstituted commission has 17 members: eight judges (two county court, four circuit, and two district court of appeal judges); two trial court administrators; one court technology officer; one DCA clerk; one county clerk; one county commissioner; and three attorneys. Justice Cantero will continue to serve as its supreme court liaison, and the commission’s term will end in November 2009.

Save This Date

Statewide Drug Court Graduation, May 15
May is National Drug Court Month. For the past eight years, in celebration of this designation, Florida’s drug courts have participated in a statewide drug court graduation that is webcast live to the circuits through the court system’s videoconferencing network. The statewide drug court graduation events in the past have been a great success and have been an excellent way to highlight and recognize the success of Florida’s drug court programs. The Ninth Annual Statewide Drug Court Graduation will be hosted by the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit in Viera, Florida, on Thursday, May 15, 2008.
Awards & Honors

Justice Barbara J. Pariente was selected by Governor Charlie Crist for induction into the Florida Women’s Hall of Fame. Created by statute, the Florida Women’s Hall of Fame honors women who, through their efforts and achievements, have contributed significantly to improvements in the lives of women and all Floridians.

On January 31, at the annual Pro Bono Service Awards ceremony at the Florida Supreme Court, the following attorneys were singled out for their exemplary commitment to meeting the legal needs of the poor, the disadvantaged, and the most vulnerable:

Sylvia Hardaway Walbolt was honored with the Tobias Simon Pro Bono Service Award;
Judge Michael F. Andrews, Sixth Circuit, was presented the Distinguished Judicial Service Award;
The City Attorney’s Office/City of Tallahassee received the Law Firm Commendation;
The Cuban American Bar Association was awarded the Voluntary Bar Association Pro Bono Service Award;
Heather Pinder Rodriguez received the Young Lawyers Division Pro Bono Service Award.

In addition, the following attorneys were recipients of The Florida Bar President’s Pro Bono Service Award:

William Jemison Mims, Jr., First Circuit;
Suzanne Smith Brownless, Second Circuit;
Robert Eugene Fridley, Third Circuit;
James D. Francis, Fourth Circuit;
Jack Arthur Moring, Fifth Circuit;
Dionne Maria Blaesing, Sixth Circuit;
Debra Trevlyn Alexander, Seventh Circuit;
Theodore Mark Burt, Eighth Circuit;
John Richard Hamilton, Ninth Circuit;
Gary Randall Gossett, Jr., Tenth Circuit;
Melanie Emmons Damian, Eleventh Circuit;
Morgan Ray Bentley, Twelfth Circuit;
Danelle Dykes Barksdale, Thirteenth Circuit;
Carlotta Appleman-Moniz, Fourteenth Circuit;
Julie Hope Littky-Rubin, Fifteenth Circuit;
Patricia Ann Eables, Sixteenth Circuit;
Russell E. Carlisle, Seventeenth Circuit;
Amy Christine Hamlin, Eighteenth Circuit;
Ginger Allison Miranda, Nineteenth Circuit;
Melinda Paniagua Riddle, Twentieth Circuit;
Ross Benjamin Bricker, Out-of-State Florida Bar Member (Chicago).

When judges and court personnel receive awards or honors for their professional contributions to the branch, please send the information to schwartzb@flcourts.org
April 2008
17-18 Court Interpreter Program Oral Language Exams, Jacksonville, FL
20-24 Justice Teaching Institute, Tallahassee, FL
25 Task Force on Treatment-Based Drug Courts (via conference call)
4/30-5/3 American Judges Association (AJA) Midyear Conference, Amelia Island, FL

May 2008
2-3 Court Interpreter Program Orientation Workshop, Palm Beach, FL
4 Court Interpreter Program Written Exam, Palm Beach, FL
7 Committee on Access to Court Records Meeting (via videoconference)
8-9 Campaign Conduct Forums, 1:00-2:00 p.m., locally in circuits
15 Ninth Annual Statewide Drug Court Graduation, Viera, FL
19 Steering Committee on Families and Children in the Court (via videoconference)
28-31 National Association of Drug Court Professionals 14th Annual Training Conference, St. Louis, MO

June 2008
18-21 The Florida Bar Annual Meeting, Boca Raton, FL
27 Passing of the Gavel Ceremony, Tallahassee, FL

On the Horizon

Under the direction of
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State Courts Administrator Elisabeth H. Goodner
Deputy State Courts Administrator Blan L. Teagle
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