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In This Issue

A Message from PK Jameson, State Courts Administrator

As the daylight hours lengthen and the temperature intensifies, I am reminded that almost a year has passed since I began working in the Supreme Court Building. Looking back, I find it significant that I passed my second day on the job attending a Florida Court Technology Commission meeting. At the time, I had no idea that this meeting would be a harbinger of some of the most exciting and momentous endeavors on which I would find myself focusing this year. For I quickly learned that information technology is revolutionizing the ways the judicial branch functions and meets the needs of court stakeholders by playing an increasingly decisive role in court processes like electronic filing, case management, document management and imaging, workflow management, digital court reporting, remote court interpreting, and access to court–related materials and information.

In the past, court technology was relegated to a discrete IT unit or department. But, now, IT permeates all aspects of the court system and affects everyone within it and everyone it touches. In OSCA, for instance, each of the 14 units has a designated deputy web administrator, and, to do its job, one unit has its own information systems consultants. Moreover, technology has transformed not only what we do, but also how we do it; it informs every aspect of our work, and everyone is expected to master the technology side of his or her job.

Clearly, we are on the cusp of a whole different way of being. And that has important ramifications for judges and court personnel: we need different skill sets to do our jobs efficiently, and we need training to help us use this new technology competently. Meanwhile, emerging technologies are also animating new expectations in everyone who relies on the court system—attorneys, justice partners, jurors, court users, the public—and we must aspire to address those growing expectations.

Through the institution of IT governance structures at all levels of court, the judicial branch has been making tremendous efforts to prioritize, develop, and implement technology solutions that support efficient and effective access to justice. For example, in September 2014, OSCA established an IT Governance Board to review, order, and manage all its IT projects. In November, the supreme court established a Change Advisory Board to facilitate the continued and timely implementation of the Electronic Florida Appellate Courts Technology Solution (eFACTS), an electronic document management and workflow application that supports the adjudicatory operations of the appellate courts. And, working with the trial court administrators and chief technology officers of the 20 circuits, the Trial Court Technology Funding Strategies Workgroup recently developed a technology strategic plan to identify and prioritize the trial courts' IT needs. The strategic plan spells out three main goals: to develop an infrastructure to effectively manage court business processes; to furnish tools to perform more accurate and reliable digital court reporting and remote court interpreting; and to provide a minimum level of technology support services across the state.

Now, the judicial branch is taking the next big step, which is to request funding from lawmakers to support, maintain, and refresh the technology elements necessary to ensure that trial courts statewide are able to meet the needs of the judges, court staff, and the public they serve. Using technology to perform routine tasks frees our branch to keep its focus where it needs to be—on the individuals standing in our courts each day, seeking justice.

Sincerely,
PK Jameson

Court Access

Access to Civil Justice Commission Has Its First Meeting

"The courts shall be open to every person for redress of any injury, and justice shall be administered without sale, denial or delay." With these words, the Florida Constitution is construed to enshrine the right to access to justice for all Floridians. But in the current environment—a time of profound social, economic, political, and technological changes, in a world regulated by increasingly complex and interdependent laws and statutes—to have meaningful access to justice, one often must have help navigating the legal system.

One of the most effective ways to navigate the legal system is to engage legal representation. In criminal cases, defendants are entitled to an attorney, and the state must provide one if defendants can't afford one. However, in most civil cases (e.g., domestic violence and many other family law matters, home ownership, landlord-tenant disputes, consumer issues, and matters relating to veteran's benefits, healthcare, and other governmental services), an attorney is not provided; litigants either must pay for one themselves (which is not always an option, as attorney fees in Florida run upwards of $250 per hour), or they must represent themselves.

Karl Gray, OSCA

Chief Justice Labarga, flanked by The Honorable Nathan Hecht, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Texas (on left), and Mr. Gregory W. Coleman, president of The Florida Bar (on right), answers questions about the commission from the press.

In the past, disadvantaged, low-income, and moderate-income individuals facing civil matters could apply for free or low-cost legal help via legal aid services. But, over the last few years, federal and state funding for legal aid services has declined considerably, and the Florida Interest on Trust Accounts Program, which also provides funds in support of civil legal assistance for the poor, has experienced sharply reduced revenue as a result of historic low interest rates. Consequently, of the 3 million Floridians who live with incomes below the federal poverty guidelines, only a small percentage of those who need civil legal assistance are able to obtain it (it is estimated that less than 10 percent of the legal needs of low-income Floridians are being met). What's more, many middle-class Floridians are also effectively excluded from access to civil justice because they earn too much to be eligible for legal aid services (to qualify, an individual may make no more than $14,588 annually, and the household income of a family of four may not exceed $29,813)—yet they do not earn enough to be able to afford a lawyer.

FLORIDA COMMISSION ON ACCESS TO CIVIL JUSTICE

For many Floridians, then, obtaining legal representation for civil matters is often not feasible. In addition, while Florida's state courts have been working to develop forms, instructions, and other self-help resources, and while other entities in the Florida justice system have tried, within the scope of their authority, to improve the availability and delivery of legal services, disadvantaged, low-income, and moderate-income Floridians still encounter obstacles when seeking meaningful and informed access to the civil justice system.

Clearly, ensuring people's access to civil justice presents a critical challenge for the state—and it is a problem that deeply concerns Chief Justice Labarga. At his passing of the gavel ceremony on June 30, 2014, the new chief justice

Karl Gray, OSCA

Commission members listen intently to a presentation on the role of Access to Justice Commissions.

spoke fervently about this issue and proclaimed that one of the top priorities of his two-year administration would be Access to Justice for all Floridians. Although the dwindling funding for legal aid services brought this crisis to the forefront, the chief justice emphasizes that access to civil justice is a societal concern and that the solutions require a broad, holistic approach that depends on all segments of society, not just its attorneys and lawmakers.

At a ceremony in the Florida Supreme Court rotunda on November 24, 2014, Chief Justice Labarga signed an administrative order creating the Florida Commission on Access to Civil Justice, a body designed to "bring together the three branches of government, the Bar, civil legal aid providers, the business community, and other well-known stakeholders in a coordinated effort to identify and remove these economic barriers to civil justice." Urging the 27-member commission to "consider Florida's legal assistance delivery system as a whole," the administrative order directs members to "consider and evaluate components of a continuum of services for the unrepresented, taking into account consumer needs and preferences." Among the components suggested are "interactive forms; unbundled legal services; the involvement of court, law, and public libraries; and other innovations and alternatives." The order also bids the commission to "examine ways to leverage technology in expanding access to civil justice for disadvantaged, low income, and moderate income Floridians." (Take this link to the website of the Florida Commission on Access to Civil Justice.)

The commission had its inaugural meeting in Tallahassee on Friday, January 16. After warmly welcoming the members, Chief Justice Labarga thanked them for their "commitment to working together to develop strategies for overcoming the impediments that many of our fellow Floridians face when seeking access to civil justice." And, looking around the room, he called attention to "the remarkable skills and backgrounds and knowledge that commission members are bringing to this important endeavor" and noted that "This assemblage of leaders from across our great state offers a diversity of perspectives and expertise that will enable the commission to meet its overall goals and objectives."

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Fortunately, Florida will not have to "reinvent the wheel" in order to devise strategies for eliminating barriers to civil justice, for, as the chief justice emphasized, 32 other states, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, already have Access to Justice Commissions (the first commission in the US was established in 1994, in Washington State)—so Florida is in the enviable position of being able to examine what has worked in other states and to adapt these solutions to fit Florida's unique needs and circumstances. Vividly amplifying this point was the keynote speaker, The Honorable Nathan Hecht, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Texas, who has played a major role in the access to justice efforts in his home state (in 2001, Texas established what has become one of the leading Access to Justice Commissions in the nation).

In addition to the keynote address, commission members were treated to a presentation on the history and role of Access to Justice Commissions, an overview of the need for such a commission in Florida, and a facilitated panel session that focused on the obstacles faced by those seeking help, the most requested areas

of need, and the challenges to the justice system in responding to these needs. In the last segment of the meeting, Chief Justice Labarga announced the creation of five subcommittees (Outreach, Access to and the Delivery of Legal Services, Continuum of Services, Technology, and Funding) and named their charges and their members. He then reminded members that the commission will submit an interim report to the supreme court by October 1, 2015, and a final report and recommendations by June 30, 2016.

Thanking commission members once again for their participation in this far-reaching undertaking, the chief justice brought the meeting to a close, saying, "The commission's success will be accomplished through our collective dedication and each member's personal commitment to ensuring meaningful and informed access to civil justice for all Floridians. Our fellow Floridians are counting on us, and I am confident we are up to the challenge." The full commission will meet again on Friday, May 15, in Tampa. (To watch the video of the first meeting, follow this link.)

Governance

Preparations Are Underway for Updating the Long-Range Plan

For the last 16 years, Florida's judicial branch has benefitted from the guidance and structure conferred by its long-range plan, aspiring to reach the goals it sets and implementing the strategies it recommends. The branch's development of a long-range planning process was spurred by a 1992 voter-driven constitutional amendment requiring that each department and agency of state government, including the judicial branch, construct a long-range plan that identifies statewide strategic goals and objectives consistent with the state planning document. Subsequently, the branch underscored its embrace of strategic planning in Rule of Judicial Administration 2.225, which tasks the Judicial Management Council (JMC) with "developing and monitoring progress related to long-range planning for the judicial branch." The first long-range plan, *Taking Bearings, Setting Course: The Long-Range Strategic Plan for the Florida Judicial Branch*, was published in 1998.

But for the court system, strategic planning signifies more than just an effort to comply with external and internal mandates. For branch leaders have long recognized that having a long-range plan helps the judiciary prepare meaningfully for the future—and is therefore invaluable both for the court system and for the people it serves. Then Chief Justice Gerald Kogan, in his preface to *Taking Bearings, Setting Course*, heralded the wisdom of long-range planning when he wrote, "This plan responds to the need, articulated by many in our branch, for a clear assessment of the major challenges confronting our courts and for a sound, thoughtful, systematic approach to addressing these challenges."

Long-Range Strategic Planning Workgroup members realize that, to create a sound and useful strategic plan, they must understand and be responsive to local conditions throughout the state, so they have launched a comprehensive outreach effort to gather feedback about the court system from as broad a spectrum of Floridians as possible. Specifically, the workgroup is seeking to discover people's perceptions about the courts—what are the courts doing well; what needs improvement; and what are the most important issues currently facing Florida courts.

Long-range planning has also been shown to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the branch: it bolsters the court system's efforts to govern itself with coherence and clarity of purpose, to manage and control its internal operations adroitly, and to be accountable to the people. For instance, in the late-90s, the long-range plan inspired the establishment of the trial court and the DCA

performance and accountability commissions, which are responsible for enhancing the performance of Florida's courts and for making the most efficient use of court resources. In addition, the long-range plan prompted the 2009 creation of the Judicial Branch Governance Study Group, which offered suggestions for strengthening the governance and policy development structures of the branch, improving the effective and efficient management of the branch, and enhancing communication within the branch. One of the fruits of this study group's efforts was the re-authorization of the JMC, which, in addition to presiding over the long-range planning process, is making significant strides in branch efforts to enhance access to justice, improve the operations of the branch, and advance communication both within and outside the branch. The long-range plan has also come to play a significant role in the charges and the work of supreme court committees—the institutional mechanism established by the supreme court for developing consensus and offering recommendations on judicial branch policies affecting the administration of justice. And the way OSCA operates has also been influenced by the long-range plan: the 14 units have been usefully reconceived within interdisciplinary groups reflecting topical/policy/functional areas—a reimagining that has strengthened collaboration and efficiency within the office.

BC Schwartz

Judge Jonathan Gerber, Fourth DCA, chairs the 10-member Long-Range Strategic Planning Workgroup.

Those who regularly engage in strategic planning understand that a long-range plan is not—nor is it meant to be—an immutable blueprint. Indeed, in order to remain agile, responsive, and relevant, long-range plans must undergo periodic reviews and revisions. So eleven years after the publication of *Taking Bearings, Setting Course*, the branch released its revised plan, which was designed to shepherd the branch from 2009 through 2015. (Take this link to access the branch's first and second long-range plans.) Then, as 2014 began drawing to a close, branch leaders affirmed that the time had come once again to reassess and update the strategic plan. The chair of the JMC, Chief Justice Labarga, created a workgroup within the council to oversee the process. The 10-member Long-Range Strategic Plan Workgroup, chaired by JMC member Judge Jonathan Gerber, Fourth DCA, has already begun its multifaceted assignment.

Workgroup members realize that, to create a sound and useful strategic plan, they must understand and be responsive to local conditions throughout the state, so they have launched a comprehensive outreach effort to gather feedback about the court system from as broad a spectrum of Floridians as possible. Specifically, the workgroup is seeking to discover people's perceptions about the courts—what are the courts doing well; what needs improvement; and what are the most important issues currently facing Florida courts.

With support from OSCA's Strategic Planning Unit, the workgroup coordinated three different kinds of forums for garnering people's opinions. First, it organized six public meetings, encouraging the participation of all citizens and public officials with an interest in their state courts. The public meetings had the following schedule:

January 8	Orlando
January 21	Bartow
February 17	Panama City
February 23	Miami
February 25	Jacksonville
March 3	Lake City

All the meetings ran from 3 until 7 PM: public officials were invited to speak from 3 until 5, and citizens were invited to speak from 5 until 7. Also, in early March in Tallahassee, the workgroup held an additional meeting to hear from justice partners (public defenders, state attorneys, law enforcement, clerks of the court, state agencies, etc.).

Second, the workgroup sought comments via electronic surveys, which it designed for a variety of court audiences: judicial officers, court personnel, and clerk of the court personnel; attorneys; justice partners; jurors; and court users (litigants, victims, witnesses, etc.). Links to the surveys were sent to each of the groups above, and respondents had until the end of January to complete the surveys. Additionally, the workgroup established several different mechanisms to gather comments about the court system from the public. A public comments page, scripted in English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole, was available online through March 16. Also through March 16, people were invited to submit written comments via email or regular mail. And, third, the workgroup contracted with the Florida State University Survey Research Lab to conduct a public opinion mail survey in English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole. The mail survey was sent to 3,000 registered voters.

The workgroup expects to have all the data ready for analysis by April 2015. By fall, the workgroup aims to have a draft of the long-range plan, which it will send out for feedback. The revised plan is scheduled to be submitted to the supreme court before the calendar year is over.

Technology

Technology Strategic Plan: Working to Align Digital Efforts in Florida's Trial Courts

How people communicate, network, search for information, obtain an education, read, access music, watch movies and TV, save and share photos, endeavor to diagnose and heal their health issues, bank, shop, work—nearly every aspect of people's lives has been transformed by the deep reaches of digital technology. Indeed, people have come to expect technology-enhanced performance in all of their personal and business dealings, including their legal affairs.

photo courtesy of 8th Circuit

Chief Judge Robert Roundtree, Eighth Circuit, chairs the Trial Court Technology Funding Strategies Workgroup.

Inevitably, then, the Information Age has also been metamorphosing the courts: in processes like electronic filing, case management, document management and imaging, workflow management, digital court reporting, remote court interpreting, and access to court-related materials and information, for instance, information technology plays an elemental role. The use of online media to provide services both internally (to judicial officers and court personnel) and externally (to attorneys, justice partners, jurors, court users, and the public) has undergone a dramatic upsurge over the last five years. No longer can the judiciary view technology as an extravagance, a luxury, an extra—it has become fundamental to the way the courts do business and is inextricably implicated in their daily operations.

The judicial branch has made great advances in developing and implementing technology solutions to support efficient and effective access to justice. However, it also has faced some significant challenges, largely because funding for court technology falls under the jurisdiction of each of the 67 boards of county commissioners. As a result, technology resources differ, which means that, from one county to another, the level of information, and the services that

courts are able to provide, differ. In addition, because of the lack of state-level automation, communication between local automation systems is inconsistent, and the state court system's data collection environment is fragmented.

Recognizing these concerns, in 2013, the supreme court charged the Trial Court Budget Commission with exploring potential revenue sources to support the trial courts' future technology needs—especially for life cycle funding for judicial viewers, now referred to as the Court Application Processing System, or CAPS (interactive web-based case management applications that enable judges to view and work on electronic documents, to manage their cases electronically from any location and across many devices, and to issue court documents electronically). To most productively address the trial courts' technology needs, commission chair Judge Margaret Steinbeck, Twentieth Circuit, opined that the court system would need to establish a comprehensive funding strategy. Thus she formed the Trial Court Technology Funding Strategies Workgroup, directing it to develop recommendations that address the resources necessary to adequately fund the acquisition, support, maintenance, and refresh of technologies required to support the business needs of the trial courts, with the goal of ensuring that all circuits around the state have the necessary technology infrastructure in place to provide equal justice to all Floridians.

BC Schwartz

Ms Kris Slayden, manager of OSCA's Resource Planning and Support Services Unit, coordinated the two-day technology strategy workshop; here, she discusses the pressing need to develop a strategic plan for trial court technology.

Chaired by Chief Judge Robert Roundtree, Eighth Circuit, the workgroup, in a June 2014 status report, identified numerous challenges associated with developing a funding structure for future technology needs of the trial courts. Among them, the workgroup stressed that the branch lacks a comprehensive technology plan to address those needs, has no estimates of what those technologies might cost, and has no defined mechanism for funding those technologies.

With commission approval, the workgroup immediately began to address these issues. First, it contracted with the National Center for State Courts to facilitate a two-day technology strategy workshop with the 20 trial court administrators and trial court technology officers. The workshop, which took place in August 2014, was designed to develop an "enterprise view" of the technology needs of the trial courts to determine what business needs or new business capabilities the trial courts require or want. (By "enterprise view," the workgroup means a global approach that considers the entirety of the court system, thereby ensuring an alignment among its various components. And by "business capabilities," the workgroup means those technology resources that the courts must possess to perform "the 'business' of the court"—i.e., the branch's constitutional responsibility to adjudicate disputes promptly and fairly.)

After the workshop, the Technology Funding Strategies Workgroup prioritized the requirements identified by workshop participants and developed a strategic plan specifying technologies to support those needs. The *Florida Trial Courts Technology Strategic Plan: 2015 – 2019*, which the workgroup presented to the Trial Court Budget Commission in November 2014 and to the supreme court in January 2015, identifies three critical business capabilities and the corresponding technical capabilities that the trial courts must have in order to function effectively. The business capabilities are as follows:

> Provide a more consistent statewide level of court services by establishing and funding a minimum level of technology to support all elements of the State Courts System enumerated in section 29.004, Florida Statutes;
>
> Implement best practices for funding by incorporating full life cycle costs of all trial court technology which ensures long-range functionality and return on investment;

Sustain the systems and applications in the trial courts by 1) ensuring courts have appropriate staffing levels available to support technology demands; and b) improving training and education for staff.

These business capabilities served as the framework for developing a comprehensive trial court technology plan. The plan designed by the workgroup has three main projects. The first is the development of an infrastructure to effectively manage court business processes. The plan recommends expansion of the Court Application Processing System (CAPS), which will facilitate consistent access to and availability of data across counties and circuits to provide more complete information to judges from different data sources, thereby improving efficiency in judicial decision-making. The second project is the furnishing of tools to perform more accurate and reliable digital court reporting and remote court interpreting. And the third project is the provision of a minimum level of technology support services across the state (e.g., for dedicated IT support staff, for bandwidth, for training and education).

Because the workgroup was charged with considering lifecycle funding for these projects, it estimated the court system's funding needs over the next four years. To implement and sustain the technology projects that support these capabilities, the workgroup underscored that—in addition to existing county funding—the court system must secure adequate and reliable state funding. So the workgroup's next project was to develop, for consideration by the Florida legislature, a comprehensive funding structure to support, maintain, and refresh the technology elements necessary to ensure that trial courts statewide are able to meet the needs of judges, court staff, and the public they serve. The biggest request is for fiscal year 2015 – 16, for which $25.6 million in non-recurring funds is sought: $6.3 million for CAPS; $8.3 million for court reporting and court interpreting; and $11 million for support for minimum level of technology. The workgroup also proposed, and the supreme court approved, the concept of dedicated revenue streams to sufficiently cover the costs of maintaining and sustaining trial court technology in years to come; with dedicated revenue streams, the branch could establish a funding structure that allows the courts to be more self-sufficient.

Emphasizing the value and the importance of funding this comprehensive plan to support trial court technology, Chief Judge Roundtree said, "As the state court system transitions from a paper to digital world, technology has become a necessity rather than a luxury. Up-to-date technology is required for the court system to fulfill its constitutional responsibility to the public in the most effective and efficient manner. Without adequate technology and a stable funding source, it is impossible to provide a well-managed court system to properly and fairly serve Florida's citizens. Not only is technology critical to the prompt and efficient administration of justice, these technological capabilities must be available to every county. A comprehensive statewide funding method that is equitably allocated is the only strategy that assures that none of our 20 circuits or 67 counties are left behind."

Technology Innovations in the 15th Circuit

The Fifteenth Circuit, which serves Palm Beach County, has made remarkable progress in its technology evolution, thanks in large part to county support. Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath, Trial Court Administrator Barbara Dawicke, and court staff recently shared their inspiring story with eight OSCA staff, whom they invited for a site visit and technology demonstration last September (the idea for the visit was sparked by the lively collaboration that unfolded during the two-day technology strategy workshop OSCA coordinated for the 20 trial court administrators and chief technology officers).

The Fifteenth Circuit's technology success story has its origins back in 2007, when the circuit, in the process of developing a 20-year facility plan, sought from the county's information technology office a current list of all pending cases to use as a baseline for

Patty Harris, OSCA

For the OSCA guests, Barbara Dawicke, trial court administrator with the Fifteenth Circuit, discusses the strengths of the Fifteenth Circuit Court Viewer that her circuit developed.

future divisional projections. Ultimately, despite efforts to fulfill the court's request, the county was not able to produce the report. The court realized that, to access this kind of information about its own operations, it would need a case management system both developed by, and under the management of, the court. It then embarked on constructing a strategic roadmap to determine the elements, management, and resources necessary for its desired system.

Patty Harris, OSCA

Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath talks about the usefulness of the Fifteenth Circuit Court Viewer from the judge's perspective.

In the course of its explorations, the Fifteenth Circuit conferred with the Eighth Circuit and, in 2007, saw a demonstration of its Integrated Case Management System (ICMS)—an application developed in-house by court administration that provides judges and court staff with case-related data and performance metrics across all divisions. After reviewing ICMS, the Fifteenth determined that this system could be adapted to meet its roadmap criteria and its business needs: ICMS would be comprehensive (it would meet the court's scheduling, reporting, and case management needs); flexible (it would adapt dynamically to incorporate mandates and innovations); scalable (it would serve as a solid foundation for future applications or for use in other circuits); and economical (it would require only minimal costs to develop and sustain). In a spirit of collaboration, Ted McFetridge, then the Eighth Circuit's trial court administrator, "lent" his circuit's CTO and programmer, Fred Buhl, to the Fifteenth to help install ICMS. (In exchange, the Eighth had a chance to view some of the Fifteenth's technology initiatives and also received a transfer of videoconferencing hardware.)

photo courtesy of the 15th Circuit

The Fifteenth Circuit hosts pose for a photo with their OSCA guests (l – r): Blan Teagle (deputy state courts administrator); Kris Slayden (manager, Resource Planning and Support Services, OSCA); Greg Youchock (chief, Court Services, OSCA); Chris Blakeslee (manager, ISS, OSCA); Noel Chessman (court technology officer, 15th); Eric Maclure (deputy state courts administrator); Barbara Dawicke (trial court administrator, 15th); Fifteenth Circuit Chief Judge Jeffrey Colbath; P.K. Jameson (state courts administrator); Michelle Spangenberg (criminal court operations manager, 15th); Patty Harris (senior court operations consultant, OSCA); Jessie McMillian (court statistics consultant, OSCA); and Richard Haney (systems architect analyst, 15th).

Over the last few years, ICMS has evolved from its original functionality to become the cornerstone of a suite of in-house-developed applications that the court calls its Fifteenth Circuit Court Viewer. In addition to ICMS, the viewer now includes other enhancements to support the needs of judges, court personnel, and the public. Enhancements include the Virtual Redbook (a judicial scheduling system used by judicial assistants to keep the judges' calendars); Online Scheduling (a system that enables the public to select court dates and times); and the Outage Image Viewer (a backup for disaster recovery, this application looks at every case scheduled in every division for the upcoming five business days, retrieves every court image associated with each case, and securely delivers these images to the hard drive of each computer in the division's courtroom so that judges can view these images on their PC or tablet).

In addition to being eminently adaptable for use by other circuits, the viewer developed by the Fifteenth offers the added perk of being open source, which means that circuits do not have to rely on, or to pay, vendors when changes need to be made; nor do they have to pay yearly maintenance fees to vendors. So far, at least two other circuits have incorporated elements of the judicial viewer into their own solutions.

The OSCA visitors called the demonstration "very impressive." Said Patty Harris, senior court operations consultant with OSCA's Court Services Unit, "The Fifteenth Circuit has accomplished a great deal towards automating both case management and case reporting-related functions of their court. The progress they have made towards integrating case management-related technology for use by their judges, court staff, and local judicial system partners will no doubt serve greatly to benefit the public." And, calling the Fifteenth's CAPS judicial viewer software "visionary," Greg Youchock, chief of the Court Services Unit, added that it "combines the elements of docket management, scheduling, and case management, thereby enabling judges to fully leverage all available information to manage their dockets effectively."

Establishing a Minimum Level of Technology Support Services Through the Technology Strategic Plan

Funding for court technology is county-based, for the most part, and because the Fifteenth Circuit serves a wealthy county, it clearly has economic advantages that are not available to all of Florida's circuits. Indeed, because Florida's 67 counties are so differently-endowed, the technology resources available in the trial courts across the state inevitably differ. As a result, from one community to another, court users experience significantly different levels of court information and services.

To address this concern, the *Trial Court Technology Strategic Plan: 2015 – 2019* underlines the need to establish a consistent, minimum standard for court technology services statewide—which includes the ability to perform core technology functions (for example, server management, network services, electronic document management, audio/video services, and project management). For fiscal year 2015 – 16, the branch is seeking $4.1 million (of a total $25.6 million request) to support this effort. If the branch's proposal is funded, the courts in more prosperous counties that already meet the minimum acceptable level of court technology services would receive no allocations from the $4.1 million. However, the courts in small counties with less prosperous economies would receive funding to raise their technology resources to the minimum standards.

Deputy State Courts Administrator Eric Maclure noted that the experience of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit illustrates the statewide significance of the trial court technology strategic plan. "The plan addresses technology needs of all circuits in a comprehensive fashion. It recognizes that circuits with systems in place need resources to support and maintain them over the long term, and it recognizes that circuits with gaps in local funding need resources to enhance the level of technology-based services they offer to their court users."

For an illustration of how this funding could benefit Florida's circuits that include small counties, consider the following example. For fiscal year 2012 – 13, from the $2.00 recording fee that funds technology—and that must be shared among the trial courts, state attorney, public defender, and criminal conflict and civil regional counsel—Palm Beach County generated nearly $2.7 million. Directly to its west is Glades County, one of Florida's smaller and less populous

counties; for the same fiscal year, the revenue generated by the $2.00 recording fee in Glades County was only $10,534. If the judicial branch receives the $4.1 million it is requesting to establish a minimum level of technology support services in communities across the state, the Fifteenth Circuit, because it already surpasses the minimum level, would receive no portion of the $4.1 million. However, the Twentieth Circuit, which includes Glades County, would certainly receive funding.

Deputy State Courts Administrator Eric Maclure noted that the experience of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit illustrates the statewide significance of the trial court technology strategic plan. "The plan addresses technology needs of all circuits in a comprehensive fashion. It recognizes that circuits with systems in place need resources to support and maintain them over the long term, and it recognizes that circuits with gaps in local funding need resources to enhance the level of technology-based services they offer to their court users."

Education and Outreach

Alternative Dispute Resolution Reaches Toward New Horizons

The themes of the last three annual statewide conferences mounted by the Florida Dispute Resolution Center (DRC)—Twenty and in Transition," "Expanding Our Horizons," and "The Challenge of Change"—were unambiguous: the accents on transition, expansion, and change called resounding attention to the growth spurts that alternative dispute resolution in Florida has been undergoing these last few years.

New technologies have facilitated some of these transformations—including the DRC's significant expansion of its web presence and its automation and streamlining of many of its processes to better assist mediators, trainers, attorneys, and the public.

But some of the most remarkable metamorphoses are connected to the blossoming scope of alternative dispute resolution (ADR). In the past, when people heard the phrase alternative dispute resolution, the first concept likely to come to mind was mediation. But now, mediation is considered just one of many ADR processes. And as the number of areas in which neutrals are expected to have proficiency keeps growing, the DRC has been working studiously to ensure that its annual programs address the broadening educational needs of ADR professionals.

At the summer 2013 program, for instance, the DRC offered a half-day pre-conference training on Supreme Court Approved Non-Binding Arbitration (a process that diverges from traditional arbitration in that it is neither voluntary nor binding, and from mediation in that a decision is made). In addition, the conference had a session on early neutral evaluation (a process that occurs at the pre-trial stage and assists parties in identifying the most important issues in a case) as well as one on dispute boards (a process that brings collaboration to construction projects to minimize problems during the course of the work).

These trainings on rising ADR processes were very enthusiastically received, encouraging the DRC to build on this

BC Schwartz

Honored with Dispute Resolution Center Awards of Appreciation at the 2014 annual statewide conference were Mr. Lawrence M. Watson, Jr. (a federal, county court, and circuit civil mediator based in Orange County) and Ms Carol Williams (mediation services coordinator for the Fourth Circuit). Here, Ms Janice Fleisher, chief of the Dispute Resolution Center, presents the award to Mr. Watson.

success: in the summer 2014 program, the conference offered a session on eldercare coordination (modeled after parenting coordination, this ADR process is designed for high-conflict guardianship and mental health cases that include issues related to the care, safety, and needs of elders) and one on non-binding arbitration. Also available were two different sessions on parenting coordination (a child-focused ADR process in which mental health or legal professionals with mediation training assist parents in creating and implementing their parenting plan). As Janice Fleischer, chief of the DRC, announced, the attention to parenting coordination was particularly timely because, in July 2014, just a month-and-a-half before the conference took place, the supreme court approved a new body of rules governing parenting coordinators, setting forth standards of conduct and assigning responsibility for grievances to the DRC. (This link goes to the supreme court opinion establishing the new rules.)

In the past, when people heard the phrase alternative dispute resolution (ADR), the first concept likely to come to mind was mediation. But now, mediation is considered just one of many processes. And as the number of areas in which neutrals are expected to have proficiency keeps growing, the Dispute Resolution Center has been working studiously to ensure that its annual programs address the broadening educational needs of ADR professionals.

In order to give attendees the opportunity to learn about some of these emerging ADR processes for which Continuing Mediation Education credits are not available while still earning the same number of CME hours they had been able to obtain at past conferences, the DRC extended the length of the last two conferences by a few hours.

In addition to these sessions on budding ADR processes, the 2014 program brimmed with its usual diversity of compelling learning opportunities over the two-day event: attendees were treated to three plenary sessions that were punctuated by four sets of workshop sessions, each averaging 11 workshops from which to choose. And three awards were also presented at the 2014 event. Receiving an Award of Appreciation from the DRC were Lawrence M. Watson, Jr., Orange County, and Carol Williams, Duval County. Also presented was the Sharon Press Excellence in ADR Award; not an annual award, this honor is bestowed by a special committee upon an individual for visionary leadership, professional integrity, and unwavering devotion to the field of ADR. James Alfini was the recipient of the 2014 Sharon Press Excellence in ADR Award; currently a professor at the Southern Texas College of Law, Mr. Alfini was the Director of Education Research at the DRC from 1985 – 1991 and served on the Florida Supreme Court's first Arbitration and Mediation Rules Committee.

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After receiving the Sharon Press Excellence in Alternative Dispute Resolution Award, Mr. James Alfini (center) pauses for a photo with Ms Fleisher and with Trial Court Administrator and former award recipient Mike Bridenback, who presented the award on behalf of the committee. Mr. Alfini was the director of Education Research at the DRC from 1985 – 1991 and served on the supreme court's first Arbitration and Mediation Rules Committee.

Despite the challenges—and, of course, the exciting opportunities—wrought by any consequential upheaval, some things simply do not change, as Justice Quince noted in her welcoming comments. Specifically, she was referring to the value of mediation and of alternative dispute resolution generally, which "have become an integral part of the court system." By way of an illustration, she recalled that in the 2012 – 2013 fiscal year, 3.9 million cases were filed in Florida's trial courts—which have only 921 county court and circuit

court judges to adjudicate all cases. "Do the math!" she invited the listeners: "No judge could efficiently handle all these cases without others to help out." With the assistance of ADR practitioners, judges are able to handle cases in an efficient and timely manner, she asserted. She ended by thanking the nearly 1,000 attendees before her, emphasizing "how much the court system appreciates all you do each day."

Court Interpreter Program Update

Rule Amendments Encourage Court Interpreters to Become Certified

In response to a comprehensive study of the court interpreter program by the Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability, the Court Interpreter Certification Board proposed amendments to the Florida Rules for Certification and Regulation of Spoken Language Court Interpreters designed to improve the overall quality of interpreting services available to the courts. In a March 2014 opinion, the supreme court adopted the amendments as proposed. In the amended rules, the supreme court created a three-tier classification system for court interpreters: a certified court interpreter has achieved the highest level of expertise; a language-skilled interpreter has reached the same level of proficiency as a certified court interpreter, but in a language for which a state certification exam is not yet available; and a provisionally approved interpreter has passed the oral performance exam (though at a lesser qualifying prescribed level than is needed to achieve certification) and has satisfied the other general prerequisites but is not yet certified in a spoken language for which a state certification exam is available.

The rule amendments also require that, after achieving the provisionally approved interpreter designation, one has to complete the process of becoming certified within two years. In addition, the rules stipulate that applicants selected as employee interpreters—if they are not certified at the time of court employment—become certified within one year of being employed in a court interpreting position. Finally, the rules now specify that certified court interpreter is the preferred designation when selecting court-appointed interpreters, arranging for contractual interpreter services, and making staff hiring decisions. In offering these clarifications, the supreme court has several goals: to encourage court interpreters to become certified; to help judges select the most qualified interpreters available; and generally to strengthen the provision of interpreting services in Florida's courts. (Take this link to the opinion.)

In offering clarifications to the Florida Rules for Certification and Regulation of Spoken Language Court Interpreters, the supreme court has several goals: to encourage court interpreters to become certified; to help judges select the most qualified interpreters available; and generally to strengthen the provision of interpreting services in Florida's courts.

Since May 1, 2014, when the amended rules took effect, the Court Interpreter Certification and Regulation Program staff have noticed a surge in applications for certification: for many court interpreters who had been poised to become certified but hadn't yet taken the final steps to achieve this designation, this rule change was a compelling incentive. As of February 1, 2015, Florida has 248 certified court interpreters.

Orientation Programs

To become a court interpreter, applicants are required to fulfill a series of rigorous requirements, the first of which is to participate in an orientation program administered by OSCA or a training provider approved by the Court Interpreter Certification Board. Orientation programs are conducted in English and are open

to all foreign language and sign language interpreters. The purpose of this intense, two-day workshop is to immerse attendees in a comprehensive introduction to the courts and the justice environment. The highly-interactive format gives interpreters ample opportunity to practice their newly-learned skills, discuss shared challenges with fellow interpreters, and take part in exercises fashioned to help them build their interpreting skills. Before one can take the written and oral performance examinations, one must take the orientation workshop.

Typically, OSCA offers at least three orientation programs each year, in diverse locations in Florida, and they are invariably very well-attended. Largely because Florida's Panhandle tends to have less of a call for court interpreters than many other parts of the state (e.g., Central and South Florida), Tallahassee is rarely the locus for an orientation program. But last October, Florida's Capital City finally had a chance to host one: 60 interpreters participated in the workshop, which was held at the First DCA. It was a linguistically-rich group, with proficiency in nine foreign languages: Arabic, French, Haitian Creole, Italian, Persian, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, and Vietnamese.

The orientation was conducted by Ms Melinda Gonzalez-Hibner, a Spanish court interpreter certified by the Colorado and US courts and qualified by the US Department of State. This was the first time Ms Gonzalez-Hibner facilitated an orientation workshop for Florida's Court Interpreter Certification and Regulation Program, but her spirited (and often chuckle-inducing) presentation style and her sage, experience-driven anecdotes and advice quickly won—and sustained—the attention and admiration of the participants. The program began with a self-assessment, which gave each attendee a chance to see how much he/she knew—and just how much he/she still needed to learn—about court interpreter procedures, protocols, and ethics. Following that were sessions on topics like the role of the interpreter, ethics, modes of interpreting, criminal procedure, legal terminology, and the road to certification. To keep the strenuous program interestingly-textured, and to keep participants sharp and fully-engaged throughout the process, the agenda punctuated lecture and explanation with role plays and with small group discussions and exercises.

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At the recent court interpreter orientation program in Tallahassee, the workshop facilitator, Ms Melinda Gonzalez-Hibner (in center), engages in a role play with attendees.

For those in the audience who had never been, or needed, a court interpreter, and for those who'd never witnessed one in action, much of what Ms Gonzalez-Hibner imparted bordered on being revelatory. For instance, most people probably imagine that the function of court interpreters is to provide a word-for-word rendition of everything said in a legal proceeding. But that is emphatically not what an interpreter does, Ms Gonzalez-Hibner explained. Rather, the interpreter listens for, and interprets, the meaning of what is being said by the party rather than the words alone. And meaning is communicated in a variety of ways—through elements like the particular choice of words, language level ("register"), tone, volume, inflection, syntax, use of passive vs. active voice, idioms, culturally-bound terms, and, yes, even obscenities ("They're part of the job!" Ms Gonzalez-Hibner jested)—all of which the interpreter has to communicate, accurately and completely, to the court. In short, the skilled court interpreter not only articulates what the party says—but also reflects how the party says it.

She also emphasized that there's a lot more to being an adept court interpreter than just being bilingual and knowing how to listen to and accurately express the meaning of what is being said. One must also understand and be fluent in the legal system's highly-specialized terminology, have excellent retention skills, be fast and efficient, and embrace the ethical obligations by which the profession is bound. And she reminded participants that court interpreters are sworn in—they are considered officers of the court and are ethically bound to uphold the honor of the court: "You work for the judge and the court, not for the party," she underscored. She also urged the interpreters to remember that "You are the voice of the record—so make

sure those records are an accurate reflection of what has been said." And she added, "You can affect a legal proceeding's outcome by how you act and interpret, so you must always be mindful."

Long before the workshop ended, participants began to grasp the fundamental importance—and the weightiness of the responsibilities—of being a court interpreter: "As a court interpreter," Ms Gonzalez-Hibner pointed out, "your guiding principle is that the party for whom you are interpreting has a right to hear, in a language they understand, what is going on, so as to be on an equal footing with an English speaker." The 60 heads nodded knowingly, realizing that, for people with limited English proficiency involved in certain legal proceedings, they—as the court interpreters—would bear a significant part of the burden of ensuring that justice is achieved.

Continuing Interpreter Education Programs

In order to maintain their official designation, court interpreters must earn a minimum of 16 hours of continuing interpreter education credits every two years. While private entities have offered the bulk of the nearly 90 continuing interpreter education programs offered since continuing education was phased in, on July 1, 2010, a number of circuits have also developed trainings to meet the specific needs of their court interpreters. Over the last few years, the Seventh, Ninth, Thirteenth, Fifteenth, Seventeenth, and Nineteenth Circuits have all designed and received approval for their indigenous education events.

Most recently, in Broward County, Seventeenth Circuit Judge Ilona Holmes conducted a four-hour course on Motions in Criminal Trial Court from Start to Finish. Participants received 4 continuing interpreter education credit hours for this training, in which Judge Holmes reviewed pretrial motions, trial motions, and post-trial motions, and answered a great many questions along the way.

This program was spearheaded by two certified court interpreters, Gloria Trujillo (supervising court interpreter at the Seventeenth) and Nancy Jervis (assistant supervisor), who were seeking a way to provide free Court Interpreter Program-approved education for local interpreters. Attending the October event were 64 interpreters from the Seventeenth Circuit and several of its neighbors. The initiative was so successful and appreciated that the circuit hopes to offer another free interpreter training this year; the topic under consideration is intervention courts.

photo courtesy of the 17th Circuit

Participants in the Motions in Criminal Trial Court, a continuing interpreter education program offered in Broward County last October, gather around their instructor, Judge Ilona Holmes, Seventeenth Circuit, for a photo.

Regional "Domestic Violence Best Practices" Trainings Edify 103 Judges

Domestic violence cases typically involve many different entities—law enforcement, judges, court staff, state attorneys, public defenders, probation officers, advocates, and other professionals in the domestic violence field. In order for this complex, intricate system to operate effectively—and in order to ensure the safety of the victims, protect the due process rights of all parties, and hold perpetrators accountable—these entities recognize that they must respond as a coordinated community: all must strive to be well-informed about the numerous components of the process and to work together to help families access resources and navigate the court system.

In 2013 – 14, OSCA's Office of Court Improvement (OCI) embarked on an effort to undergird these ambitious objectives. With information gleaned from court observations, surveys tailored to each of the various stakeholder groups, feedback from a Domestic Violence Advisory Group established to draw on the wisdom and experience of experts in different domestic violence capacities across the state, and feedback from focus groups comprising diverse domestic violence professionals, OCI obtained a bounty of information about the state of domestic violence courts in Florida, identified and prioritized domestic violence issues in Florida's court system, and developed a long-range plan—*Assessing the Scene: The Domestic Violence Action Report 2014*—to address those issues.

The report describes three comprehensive action items—establish a Florida Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence; ensure a safe, efficient, and economic civil domestic violence process; and provide further education and training—detailing the components of each and offering innovative solutions to the current issues facing Florida's domestic violence courts. OCI has already begun using this report to guide its goals and initiatives. (This link goes to the Domestic Violence Action Report.)

Soon after the report was released, under the auspices of OCI, the Florida Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence was established to organize, develop, and provide continuing specialized education and training for all judges who handle matters involving domestic violence. One of the institute's principal objectives is to enhance statewide consistency and uniformity in the handling of these cases. Its first act was to facilitate a two-day training for judges who are involved with domestic violence injunctions specifically or with domestic violence issues generally. Between mid-September and early November, the Florida Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence: 2014 Regional Training Program was offered in five cities: Jacksonville, Miami, Orlando, Tallahassee, and Tampa (a sixth locale, West Palm Beach, will host the training in May). The training was designed as a statewide "best practices" approach to the manifold challenges (substantive, procedural, and other) unique to domestic violence cases, especially domestic violence injunctions.

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Judge Carroll Kelly, Miami-Dade County, and Judge Peter Ramsberger, Sixth Circuit, team up to conduct the Florida Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence 2014 Regional Training Program.

The program presenters were Judge Carroll Kelly, Miami-Dade County, and Judge Peter Ramsberger, Sixth Circuit. For 14 years, Judges Kelly and Ramsberger have worked together to provide domestic violence education to judges, attempting to create a relaxed environment in which participants can freely share ideas and concerns; their seamless transitions from one to the other and from topic to topic ensure a variegated and engaging educational experience. Even with a weighty, jam-packed agenda—this one included topics like domestic violence dynamics, the effects of domes-

tic violence on children, elder abuse, and other civil protective injunctions (dating violence, sexual violence, repeat violence, and stalking)—they work to foster a participatory learning experience, offering ample opportunity for discussion, interaction, and synergy.

For instance, after outlining the goals and the style of the program, they gave participants a chance to introduce themselves and to talk a little about their most rewarding/challenging experiences in domestic violence court. Attendees were also invited to answer the question, "If you could change one thing about domestic violence court, what would it be?"—an exercise that served both as an excellent ice-breaker and as a catalyst to some difficult, but valuable, conversations.

Judge Kelly also took participants through a deeply affecting activity called the "Choices" exercise: each participant played the same role—that of a victim of domestic violence—and as the story gradually unfolded, each had to make his/her own life-changing choices depending on his/her means (everyone was given a random number of money cards and friendship/goodwill cards to use; once the cards were gone, the choices became severely constricted). Bit by bit, as Judge Kelly developed the story, participants were instructed to make their choices silently, so as to have a chance to begin to feel, and think deeply about, what it would be like to be mired in that situation. By the end of the exercise, most of the participants had used all their money and goodwill cards and had no choice but to return home to their abuser or become homeless. Discussing the exercise afterwards, the judges talked movingly about the confusion, frustration, and fear this experience would unavoidably induce: "The victim lacked resources," one said; "The victim had no good choices," another noted; "a lack of a sense of control" and "hopelessness" were inevitable, someone else pointed out. Everyone nodded in agreement when Judge Kelly asked, "Does this exercise help you to understand why some victims fail to appear in court and why some return home to their abuser?"

The attendees' evaluations underscored the usefulness and effectiveness of this program. Asked what they found most beneficial, they responded with comments like, "The diligence and industry of the presenters made this program invaluable; excellent sessions"; "Very helpful. Interaction with other judges also helpful"; and "Great presentation which led to excellent discussion." And asked how they will use this information when they return to work, they said things like, "I have greater awareness and sensitivity to domestic violence issues"; "I'll be more mindful of the practical procedures of final hearing"; "I will be more mindful of child issues when considering visitation in custody domestic violence context"; and I will "develop compliance calendars" and "meet with community stakeholders and develop community collaboration." Several judges expressed the kind of appreciation that any dedicated teacher would be thrilled to hear. One remarked, "All of this sensitizes me as to how much I have to learn. Very valuable wake-up call to me as a judge handling Domestic Violence." Said another, "Thank you for helping us be better judges."

BC Schwartz

Judge Kelly explains the "Choices" exercise, in which each participant plays the role of a victim of domestic violence; here, she reminds them that only those with enough "money cards" can take refuge in a hotel.

The *2014 Domestic Violence Benchbook* Is Now Available Online

Recently updated to reflect legislative changes and changes in case law, the *2014 Florida Domestic Violence Benchbook* is a comprehensive resource guide for judges who are on the domestic violence bench or who may be expected to review filed petitions for protection against domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, repeat violence, or stalking. It provides information on every step of the injunction process, complete with flowcharts and checklists designed to provide at-a-glance illumination of the procedures the judge must follow. To access the benchbook, follow this link.

If you have any questions—or suggestions for changes or additions to future editions—please contact Kathleen Tailer, senior attorney with OSCA's Office of Court Improvement, at tailerk@flcourts.org or (850) 617-4007.

10th Circuit Internship Program Introduces Law Students to the Workings of the Court System

For law school students in the Polk County area, a marvelous "immersion observation opportunity" is beckoning. For the last two years, the Tenth Circuit has conducted a four-week Summer Law Student Internship Program to offer currently-enrolled law students a chance to learn about the judicial branch and witness the justice system in action. The Internship Program gives up to seven law students a chance to attend small claims, county civil, family law, and county and circuit criminal hearings and trials; first appearance hearings; street and jail arraignments; pretrial conferences; jury selections; and jury trials. Interns also meet with personnel from the state attorney's office, the public defender's office, and the sheriff's legal office and take a tour of the courthouse, the county jail, and the sheriff's command center. Through their observations of judges and court personnel, state attorneys, public defenders, private attorneys, and pro se litigants, participants gain first-hand knowledge of the inner workings of the trial courts, with an emphasis on county court.

photo courtesy of the 10th Circuit

Judge Robert Fegers, Polk County, chairs the Internship Committee.

The chair of the Internship Committee, Polk County Judge Robert Fegers, meets with the interns each morning to review generally the docket experience of the day and each afternoon after the conclusion of the day's docket. Often, the interns are also able to visit with the judge handling that day's docket and with the attorneys involved.

Sometimes the interns have a chance to do research—but their primary responsibility is to attend and observe the various processes that occur at the courthouse and the range of attorneys working in the courts—prosecutors, public defenders, defense counsel, civil attorneys, mediators, government attorneys, in-house counsel, and sheriff's counsel. Their participation also introduces them to the variety of employment possibilities that are available to attorneys and offers them networking opportunities that might serve them well in the future.

Although the law students receive neither college credit nor payment for their participation, the program is nonetheless quite rigorous. Interns "work" a 40-hour week, with each day beginning at 8:15 AM and not ending until 5 PM. And daily attendance is required.

To be considered for the program, students are asked to complete a short application. Once accepted, interns are required to read a list of materials, pass the Criminal Justice Information Services online exam, and be fingerprinted. Because interns are expected to be in Judge Fegers' chambers by 8:15 each morning, the Internship Committee—which includes Judge Fegers; Judge Robert Williams, Polk County; and Ms Crystal Hood-Lewis, general counsel to the Tenth Judicial Circuit—does take into consideration the applicants' home base during the internship period, to ensure that applicants will readily be able to participate on a daily basis for the length of the program.

Without doubt, the interns find this a fruitful learning adventure. Calling it a "fantastic experience" and an "eye-opening experience," the 2014 program interns thanked the committee "for this unique opportunity to gain an understanding of the judicial system" and "to see the judicial system from a perspective many people never have a chance to see." As one intern explained, the great value of the program was that "I was able to learn so much applicable information. I took a class called Florida Criminal Procedure, which taught me exactly what the summer program taught me. We read cases that started from First Appearance Hearing and ended at Jury Trial decisions. I was able to remember everything I saw over the summer and it made that class a lot easier for me to understand."

This summer, the Internship Committee will be offering the program once again, from May 26 through June 19. Current law students who are interested in applying are invited to contact Judge Fegers' judicial assistant, Janice Sylvain, at jsylvain@jud10.flcourts.org or by telephone at (863) 534-4088.

photo courtesy of the 10th Circuit

2014 Summer Law Student Internship Program participants pose for a photo (l – r): Judge Robert Fegers, Polk County (Internship Committee chair); Adam Kemp, Kyle Thompson, Jennifer Boyer, Marie Prisco (former intern), Nicole Reed, Stacey Premo, Rob Keller, Matt Prisco (former intern), and Judge Robert Williams, Polk County (Internship Committee member).

Turning Points

Awards and Honors

Mr. James Alfini was recognized with the Sharon Press Excellence in Alternative Dispute Resolution Award for his visionary leadership, professional integrity, and unwavering devotion to the field of ADR; Mr. Alfini was the director of Education Research at the Dispute Resolution Center from 1985 – 1991 and served on the supreme court's first Arbitration and Mediation Rules Committee.

Judge Moses Baker, Fifteenth Circuit, was honored with the William E. Gladstone Award for his judicial leadership and his service to Florida's children.

Judge Katherine Essrig, Thirteenth Circuit, was presented with a 2015 Casey Excellence for Children Award; the award, given by Casey Family Programs, honored seven people nationwide whose distinguished work, exceptional leadership, and relentless dedication have improved the child welfare system.

Judge Claudia Isom, Thirteenth Circuit, received the Judge William M. Hoeveler Judicial Award from The Florida Bar's Standing Committee on Professionalism for her work as a mentor to new judges; for her service on the Standing Committee on Professionalism, the Rules of Judicial Administration Committee, and the Rules of Civil Procedure Committee; and for reflecting in her personal and professional life "the four C's: character, competence, civility, and commitment."

Judge Ginger Lerner-Wren, Broward County, was commended with the Elected Official Service in Advocacy Award from the National Council for Behavioral Health; this award recognizes leadership in legislative or regulatory advocacy efforts on behalf of people living with mental illness and addiction.

Mr. Lawrence M. Watson, Jr. (a federal, county court, and circuit civil mediator based in Orange County) and **Ms Carol Williams** (mediation services coordinator for the Fourth Circuit) were recognized with Dispute Resolution Center Awards of Appreciation.

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On January 29, the Florida Supreme Court hosted the 2015 Pro Bono Service Awards Ceremony. In fiscal year 1993 – 94, the first year for which pro bono hours were calculated, attorneys donated just over 800,000 hours of free service to the people of Florida; in 2013 – 14, lawyers reportedly donated 1.9 million hours of free legal services to the poor for pro bono work. This year, the following attorneys were commended for their extraordinary commitment to meeting the legal needs of the poor, the disadvantaged, and the most vulnerable of Florida's citizens.

John W. Kozyak, Eleventh Circuit, was honored with the Tobias Simon Pro Bono Service Award;

Judge Ashley B. Moody, Thirteenth Circuit, was lauded with the Distinguished Judicial Service Award;

Akerman LLP was presented the Law Firm Commendation;

The Hillsborough Association for Women Lawyers, Thirteenth Circuit, was awarded the Voluntary Bar Association Pro Bono Service Award;

Sara Alpert, Thirteenth Circuit, was distinguished with the Young Lawyers Division Pro Bono Service Award.

And the following attorneys were commended with The Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Service Awards:

Kenneth Brooks, Jr., First Circuit
Elizabeth Ricci, Second Circuit
Bonnie Green, Third Circuit
Blane McCarthy, Fourth Circuit
Richard A. Perry, Fifth Circuit
Brent A. Woody, Sixth Circuit
Jimmy Allen Davis, Seventh Circuit
Michelle L. Farkas, Eighth Circuit
Frank C. Wesighan, Ninth Circuit
Samuel G. Crosby, Tenth Circuit
Elizabeth S. Baker, Eleventh Circuit
Andrew R. Boyer, Twelfth Circuit
Elizabeth L. Hapner, Thirteenth Circuit
Douglas L. Smith, Fourteenth Circuit
Anne E. Hinds, Fifteenth Circuit
Robert Goldman, Sixteenth Circuit
Jay Kim, Seventeenth Circuit
Michael G. Howard, Eighteenth Circuit
Steven A. Messer, Nineteenth Circuit
Gregory T. Holtz, Twentieth Circuit
Garrett A. Fenton, out-of-state, Washington, DC

In Memoriam

Retired Judge Marshall Ader served on the bench of Miami-Dade County from 1976 – 1999.

Retired Judge Osee Robert Fagan served on the bench of the Eighth Judicial Circuit from 1979 – 1990.

Retired Judge Robert Hewitt served on the bench of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit from 1959 – 1984.

Retired Judge Kenneth Murrell Leffler served on the bench of the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit from 1975 – 1990.

Retired Judge Charles McClure served on the bench of Leon County from 1973 – 1984 and on the bench of the Second Judicial Circuit from 1984 – 2000.

Retired Judge Guyte McCord, Jr., served on the bench of the Second Judicial Circuit from 1960 – 1974 and on the bench of the First DCA from 1974 – 1983.

Retired Judge Morton Perry served on the bench of Miami-Dade County from 1968 – 1992.

Retired Judge John Alton Reed, Jr., served on the bench of the Fourth DCA from 1967 – 1973.

Retired Judge Lynn Silvertooth served on the bench of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit from 1964 – 1988.

If you have information about judges and court personnel
who have received awards or honors for their contributions to the branch,
please forward it to the Full Court Press

On the Horizon

April

8 – 10	New Appellate Judges Program, Tallahassee, FL
9	Portraits Ceremony, Tallahassee, FL
13	Trial Court Budget Commission Meeting, Tallahassee, FL
13	Quarterly Chief Judges Meeting, Tallahassee, FL
24	Mid-Year Circuit Faculty Enrichment, Tallahassee, FL

May

1	Legislative Session Ends—Sine Die (tentative)
11 – 12	Steering Committee on Families & Children in the Court Meeting, Orlando, FL
13	Task Force on Substance Abuse & Mental Health Issues in the Courts Meeting, Orlando, FL
13 – 14	Florida Courts Technology Commission Meeting, Tallahassee, FL
13 – 15	Court Interpreter Oral Performance Examinations, Miami, FL
15	Florida Commission on Access to Civil Justice Meeting, Tampa, FL
28	Judicial Management Council Meeting, Orlando, FL

June

7 – 12	Florida College of Advanced Judicial Studies, Orlando, FL
10 – 11	Chief Judges/Trial Court Administrators Education Program, Orlando, FL
11	Quarterly Chief Judges Meeting, Orlando, FL
15 – 16	Court Interpreter Orientation Workshop, Orlando, FL
17	Court Interpreter Written Examination, Orlando, FL

Under the direction of
Supreme Court Chief Justice Jorge Labarga
State Courts Administrator PK Jameson
Deputy State Courts Administrator Blan L. Teagle
Publications Managing Attorney Susan Leseman

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