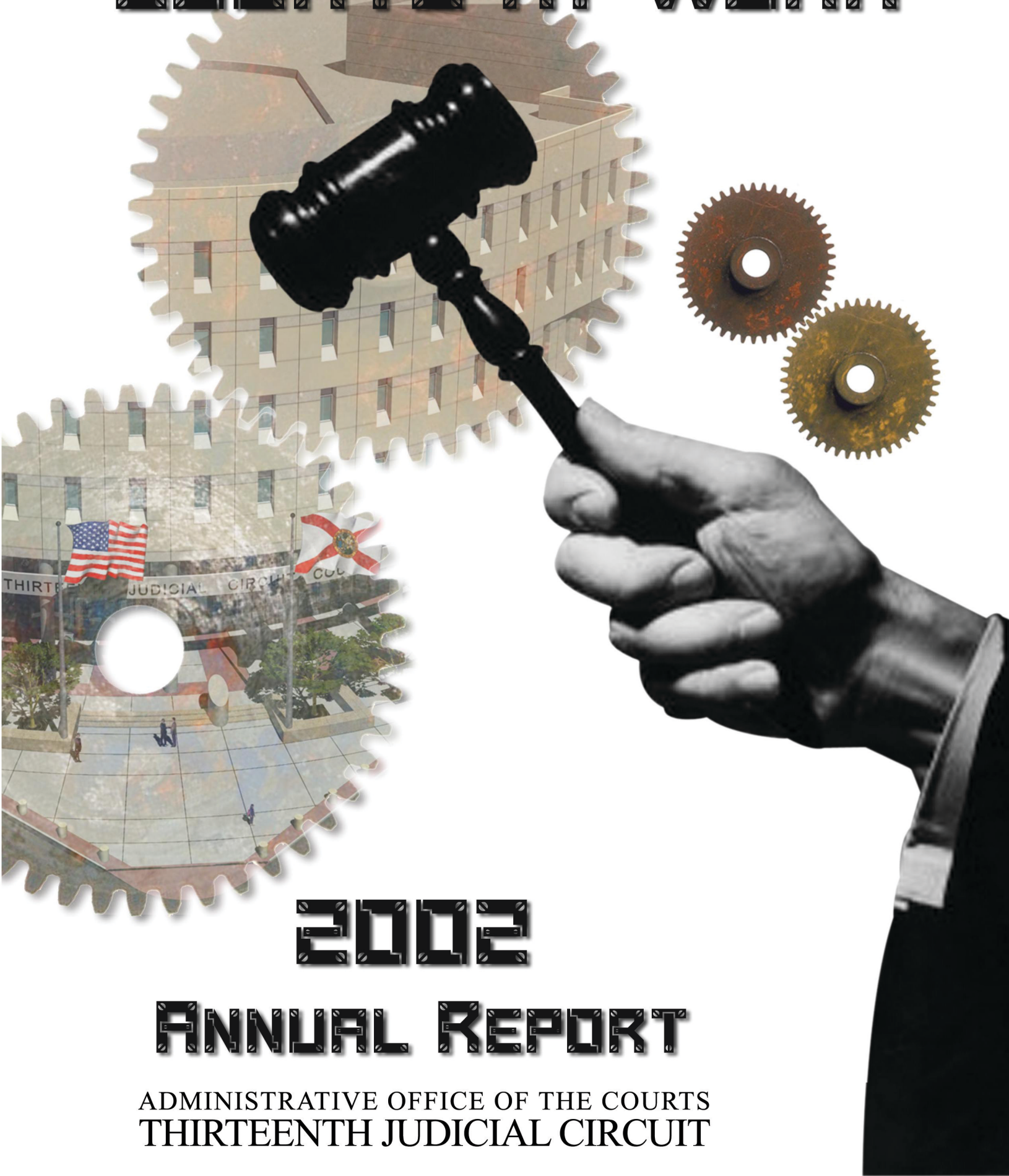


COURTS AT WORK



2002

ANNUAL REPORT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS
THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

2002 ANNUAL REPORT

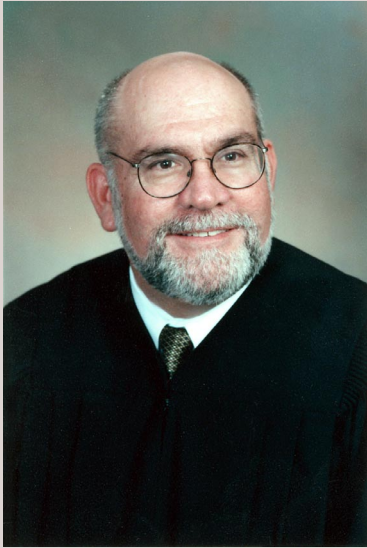


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Cover Theme

Mechanical gears rotate with the gavel serving as the driving force, illustrating the “wheels of justice” at work. The sprockets in the background bring life to architectural renderings from the new courthouse facility, which began construction in 2001.



Dear Friends,

After serving two years as your chief judge, I can tell you that the “wheels of justice” continue to grind because of dedicated public servants, whose diverse talents allow the courts to continue to fulfill their constitutional obligations to the citizens across Hillsborough County. The court system is not a machine; therefore, much of our attention in 2002 has been devoted to meeting the challenges associated with the constitutional amendment, commonly referred to as Revision 7, as we prepare for the significant fiscal demands associated with serving our constituents, guaranteeing “justice for all.”

The Thirteenth Judicial Circuit has a fruitful history of cultivating cutting edge programs and services. Yet in 2002 we began to forecast the impact that the shift in funding for courts across the state will have in our circuit. To that end, it is possible that some of the programs and services you will read about in this report will disappear by the next annual report publication. Not only will you see accomplishments chronicled throughout this report, you will also note indication of performance-based measures throughout the Administrative Office of the Courts. I am hopeful that as you peruse this summary report you will be reminded of the impact that the courts have on your life, your family, your neighborhood, your business.

The challenges we face in the coming year can be met as we work together to ensure our courts are adequately funded and that we continue to provide “justice for all Floridians.” The judges and court staff are working diligently to ensure that our justice system functions fairly, effectively and efficiently in our circuit and across the state. I encourage you to participate in the future planning of your court services. You can start by learning more about what the courts do and how they affect your family and community: review this report, log onto our website and contact us for additional information.

We look forward to working with you this year because it is an honor to serve our fellow citizens in the judicial branch of government. On behalf of my colleagues in the judiciary and the Administrative Office of the Courts staff, we are committed to serving you faithfully.

With kindest regards,

Manuel Menendez, Jr.
Chief Judge





Fifty-two judges currently serve the more than one million citizens of Hillsborough County.

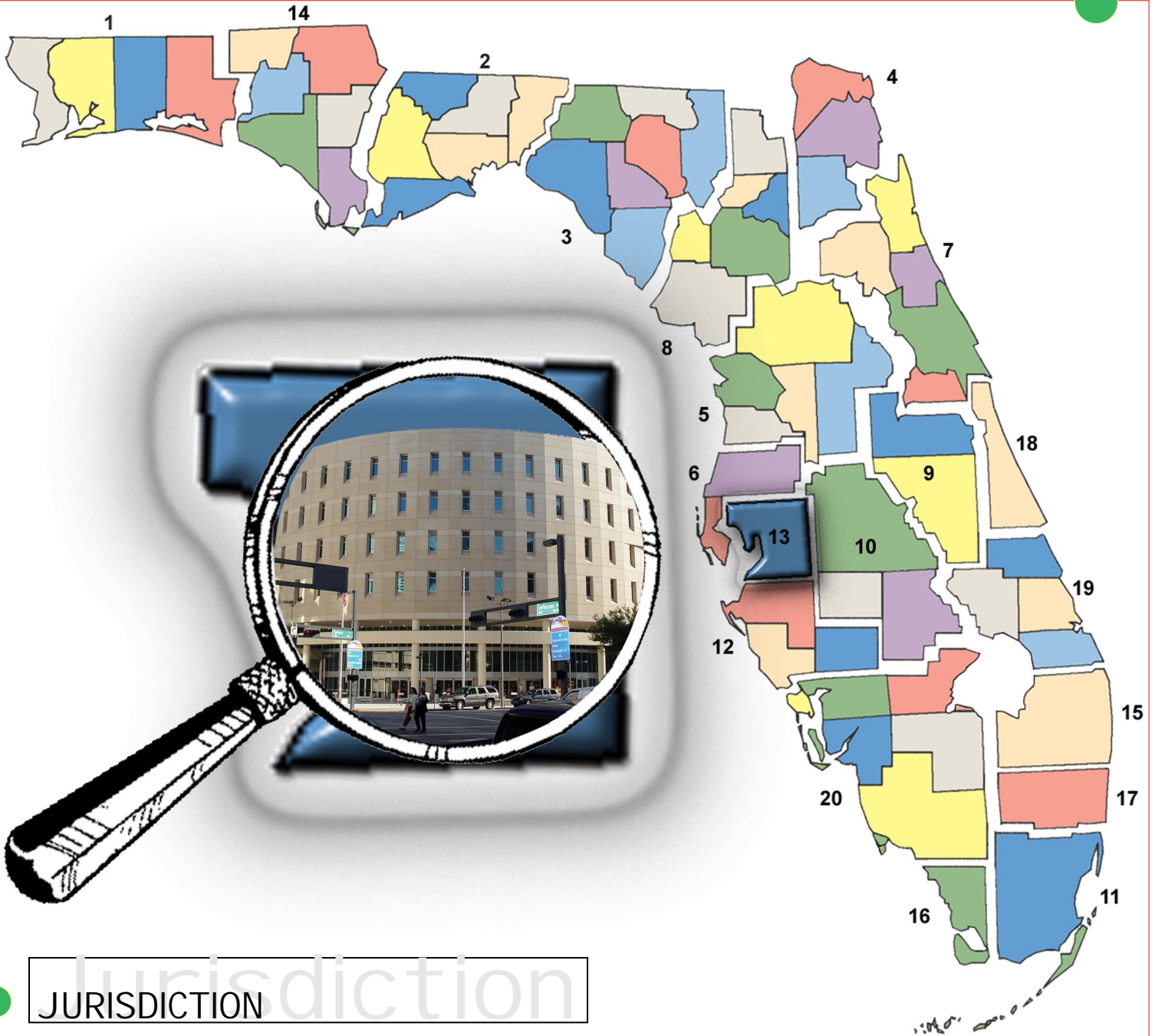
More than 340,000 cases were filed in this circuit in 2002.

The average ratio of judges to cases was 1 to 6,710.

Read inside for a glimpse of how the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit met the needs of this community in 2002.

The Wheels of Justice.....





American democracy depends on independent courts, as the public looks to the judicial branch of government as a forum of fairness and impartiality, where decisions are based on the facts and the rule of law. A key function of the rules is to prevent, or at least minimize human conflict. The law fulfills a basis of resolving disputes; therefore, the court system touches the lives of all citizens.

While there are twenty judicial circuits in Florida, citizens in Hillsborough County are served by the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, the fifth largest trial court jurisdiction in the state. The courts strive to meet the growing demand for justice related services in Hillsborough County; therefore, as the population increases, so does the caseload in the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit. In fact, while the population has grown more than 20 percent since 1994, the caseload has increased almost 60 percent.





A vibrant waterfront area, Hillsborough County is home to more than one million residents, offering a unique blend of urban and rural areas. Tampa is the third most populous city in Florida, while Hillsborough County is the fourth most populous county but is the second largest employment market in the state with over 22,500 business establishments. Tampa's port is the seventh largest port in the nation, with phosphate, shrimp and cruise lines operating today. The Tampa Bay area also serves the second largest television market in the state.

Our courts have many responsibilities to the citizens of Hillsborough County. The work of the courts directly impacts public safety, business and commerce and the welfare of our children and families.



KEY MESSAGES

The court system touches all of our lives. Several key points explain why our courts are so important to each of us.

-  **Our courts protect democracy**
-  **Our courts safeguard victims' rights, determine guilt or innocence of the accused, and impose appropriate punishment**
-  **Our courts resolve personal, business and property disputes, and**
-  **Our courts protect children, families, the elderly and the infirm**

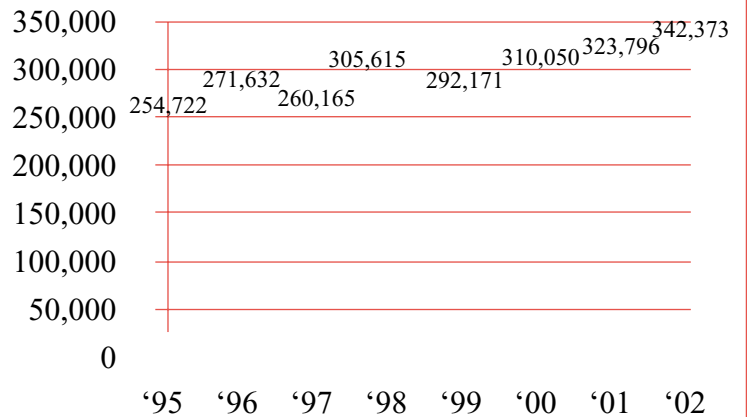
Our courts protect democracy by:

- *upholding the law,*
- *ensuring individual rights and liberties,*
- *enforcing public order, and*
- *providing for a peaceful resolution of disputes.*

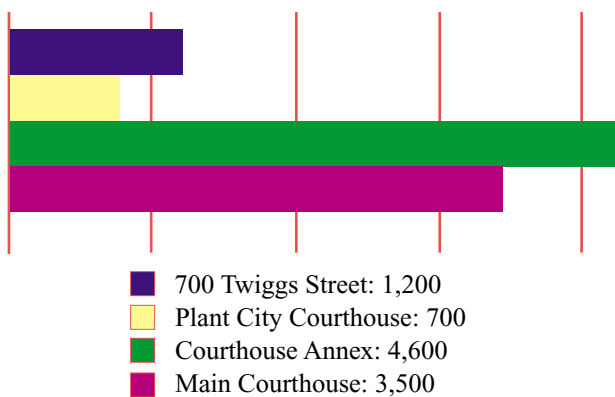
Almost 60,000 cases were filed in circuit courts in 2002; this signifies an increase of more than 7 percent in the last five years. These cases impact every aspect of modern society, ranging from juvenile and adult crime to divorce, paternity, adoption, child custody and child support cases to civil disputes. In addition, more than 280,000 cases were filed in county courts in 2002.

Hillsborough County Security reported that people passed through the magnetometers more than 3.5 million times in 2002. Each weekday average is almost 170,000 times, with almost half of the traffic occurring at the Courthouse Annex. The Administrative Office of the Courts, **Office of Public Information**, reported that people logged on the courts' website at www.fljud13.org an average of 37,000 times each month.

Filings in Circuit and County Court



Average Weekday Entrance in Courthouse Facilities



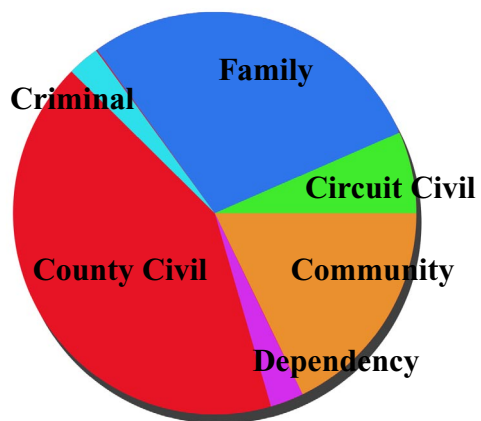
Home to the 2003 Super Bowl Champions, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Raymond James Stadium can be filled more than 2.5 times, if each seat represents each case filed in 2002.



From the bench in the Plant City courthouse, Judge Stoddard resolves cases in both Family Law and Civil divisions.

Alternative dispute resolution offered at least 25,000 litigants an opportunity for greater self-determination regarding the final outcome of their cases; the overall resolution rate for mediation was 55 percent. The County Civil division received the largest percentage of referrals (44 percent), followed by the Family Law division with 33 percent of the referrals.

Alternative Dispute Resolution 2002 Referrals



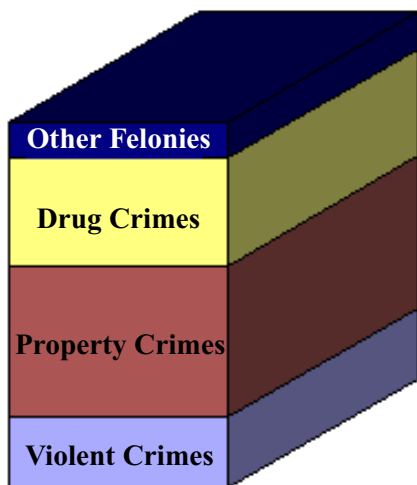
Our courts, working with other criminal justice partners, safeguard victims' rights, determine guilt or innocence of the accused, and impose appropriate punishment.



Judge Heinrich appears in jail via closed circuit television in the First Appearance Division.

More than 14,000 criminal cases were filed in circuit courts in 2002. These include felony crimes such as murder, sexual assault, robbery, burglary, theft and forgery. Almost one-third of these cases involve drug offenses. In addition, almost 11,000 complaints were filed involving offenses committed by juveniles. Moreover, almost 40,000 misdemeanor cases were filed in the County Criminal division.

Criminal Justice & Trial Division 14,302 Filings



The gateway offense for teens is shoplifting, evidenced by petit theft crimes which represented 60 percent of referrals in the **Juvenile and Diversionary Programs**. Arbitration received more than 3,000 referrals in 2002, representing 28 percent of the cases in the Juvenile Delinquency division; sanctions each month averaged 965 community service work hours. More than 500 students, representing 20 Hillsborough County public and private schools, volunteered 3,250 hours in Teen Court. SHOCK Education program received more than 230 referrals, providing first-and-second-time offenders a look at the non-glamorous side of crime and delinquent behavior.



The **Indigent Screening Unit** interviewed more than 27,000 defendants at the jails, with more than 50 percent of the interviews required for preparation of First Appearance court each day. Almost 130,000 subpoenas were issued in criminal cases. **Witness Aid Center** staff contacted law enforcement and citizens to provide information on the status of trials and court appearances; almost 12,000 individuals were placed on stand-by.

ISU staff complete affidavits for defendants in criminal court proceedings.

One out of five defendants is Spanish speaking. **Court Interpreter** staff and Freelance Professionals provided interpreting services for more than 14,000 cases in 2002. Providing services in more than forty foreign languages and dialects, the most commonly used languages in this circuit were Spanish, American Sign Language, Haitian Creole, Vietmanese and Korean.

More than 2,800 offenders received intensive judicial and community supervision, in addition to drug treatment and regular treatment while under the jurisdiction of the Drug Court Divisions. **Drug Court Program** staff completed 1,334 initial substance abuse evaluations and more than 3,000 follow-up substance abuse evaluations. To assist with judicial supervision, a Special Master heard 3,460 compliant case review hearings.

Through the **Drug Court Pre-Trial Intervention Program**, 274 new defendants had the opportunity to participate in this diversionary program. During 2002, 137 participants graduated. For the more than one-half of the participants who successfully complete the program, the recidivism rate is only 18 percent, indicating the program is successfully diverting people from the criminal justice system. Statistical reviews indicate that more than 85 percent of graduates from the **Juvenile Drug Court Program** do not re-enter the criminal justice system.



Judge Espinosa congratulates recent graduate from the PTI Drug Court Program

Almost 12,000 batterers entered the Hillsborough County Domestic Violence Intervention Program from 1995-2000, according to a report issued by the James and Jennifer Harrell Center for the Study of Family Violence, published in 2002. More than two-thirds of batterers ordered to the classes completed the programs. The overall recidivism rate was 8.9 percent for individuals who completed intervention programs in Hillsborough County as compared to an overall recidivism rate of 23 percent for those who did not complete their program. Private providers contract with the courts to administer intervention programs.



Dr. Martha Coulter consulted with the courts on Domestic Violence Programs.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROVIDERS

- Brandon Psychiatric Associates
- Western Judicial Batterers Intervention Program
- Joni C. Stewart and Associates
- Psychological Management Group
- The Spring of Tampa Bay
- Clients of Enterprise Intervention

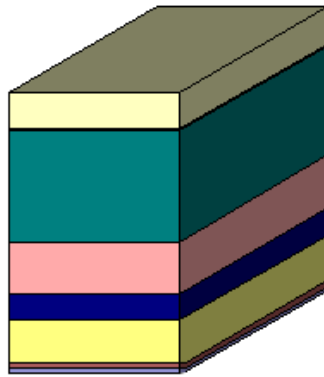


Judge Vogel dispenses justice from Plant City courthouse.

The business community is a major user of the justice system, therefore the court system is essential for business and commerce and directly affects the economy of Hillsborough County. In addition to civil traffic infractions, there were more than 44,000 civil cases filed in our court system in 2002. In the Circuit Civil division, almost half of the cases involved mortgage foreclosures and contract disputes, representing a 22 percent increase in case filings since 2001. In the County Civil division, filings in small claims cases grew almost 20 percent.

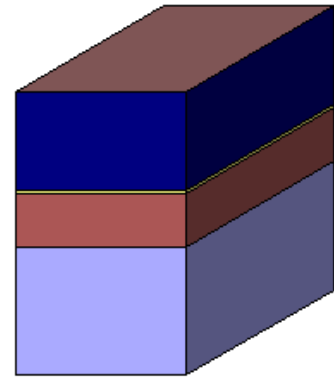
Circuit Civil Division 11,316 Filings

- Other
- Eminent Domain
- Mortgage Foreclosure
- Contract/Indebtedness
- Other Negligence
- Auto Negligence
- Product Liability
- Professional Malpractice



County Civil Division 31,165 Filings

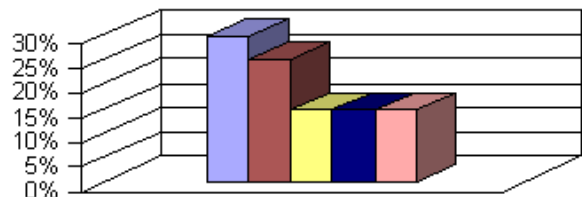
- Other Civil
- Evictions
- Replevins
- Civil
- Small Claims



One out of every 40 people in Hillsborough County had the opportunity to participate in one of the **Mediation and Diversion Services**. Almost 300 cases were referred to Circuit Civil Mediation; hearings resulted in a 48 percent resolution rate. More than 5,000 cases were referred to the County Civil division, resulting in a 43 percent resolution rate. Another 2,000 cases were referred to community mediation. These cases heard averaged a 67 percent resolution rate. Cases mediated at the South County Justice Center had the highest resolution rate at 76 percent.

Almost 48,000 hearings related to traffic arraignments and other city and county ordinances were heard by contractors in the **Civil Traffic Hearing Officer Program**. Night court offers many citizens the opportunity to resolve their cases during non-traditional hours, which do not interfere with their work schedule or other routine conflicts during the day. More than 70 percent of parking violations heard were issued by the City of Tampa. Water violations exceeded 500 cases in June, July, October and December.

County Civil Mediations



- Contract
- Miscellaneous
- Auto Repair
- Landlord/Tenant
- Recovery Money/Property



Judge Simms and HCBA President Marian McCulloch, shaped happy memories at General Master Farkas' retirement party in June 2003.

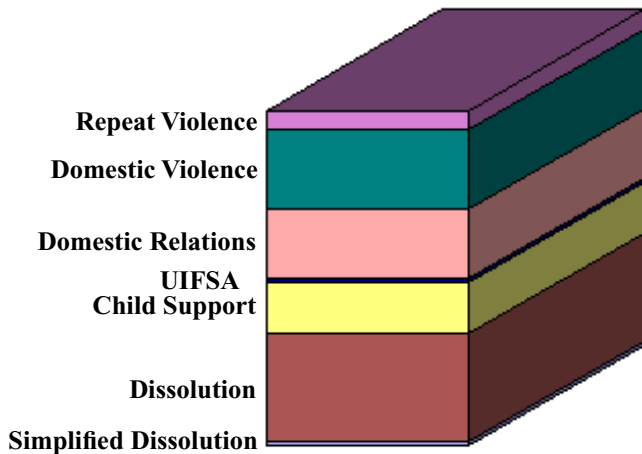
Whether a shelter petition in the Dependency division, a Guardianship proceeding or custodial dispute in the Family Law division, our courts have a responsibility to protect vulnerable citizens.

More than one-third of the case filings in circuit court were in the Family Law and the Juvenile Dependency divisions, representing almost 22,000 filings in 2002. Filings for domestic violence and repeat injunctions have increased more than one-third in five years. In addition, more than 4,400 annual reviews were heard for guardianship cases.

Mediation offered an alternative dispute resolution for parties in 4,000 cases in the Family Law division. Modifications of dissolution agreements comprised 65 percent of the cases mediated, while child support represented the second largest issue with 15 percent of the cases. More than two-thirds of these mediations resulted in agreement.

General Masters assisted Family Law judges with more than 3,000 modifications and other reopened cases related to dissolutions and domestic relations.

Filings from Family Law Division 2002



Part of the court's responsibility is to ensure that cases involving children are given adequate and appropriate attention. In 2002, there were more than 10,000 foster care review hearings in the Juvenile Dependency division; that is more than four times the amount of reviews just ten years ago.

To assist in the backlog of cases in the Juvenile Dependency division, a Rocket Docket was instituted in the winter months. Joining Chief Judge Menendez, Judges Baumann, Bergmann, Foster, and Levens presided over adjudication and termination of parental rights trials. Each judge reserved a week to hear trials, as well as preside over disposition and permanency hearings.

Most Family Law cases across the state have at least one party who is not represented by an attorney. Although Florida courts cannot offer legal advice to self-represented litigants, programs have been established to help them navigate through the legal system. The Family Intake Unit set almost 3,200 cases for pro se litigants in 2002. More than 60 percent of the cases were disposed in less than 90 days.



State Representative Arthenia Joyner and Family Intake Unit, Anaida Vizza, review standard packets of information for pro se litigants.





Assisting the judges in both the Family Law and Juvenile Dependency divisions, the **Children's Justice Center** staff supervised an average of 140 visits each month. Hillsborough County Security provided more than 2,400 escorts or assistance to children and transporters who utilized these supervised visitation services. Written reports were provided to the judges more than 200 times during 2002. Video tapes of forensic interviews and supervised visitations were viewed at the CJC more than 1,000 times. Video tapes were released as evidence almost 200 times.

The **Model Dependency Court Program** was established in 2001, as one of five pilot programs across Florida. By design, this program enhances judicial resources to improve the manner with which cases involving children alleged to be abused, abandoned, or neglected move through the courts. The program provides **General Masters** and Case Managers. Tracking was implemented in the Spring of 2002.

In 2002, 325 **Guardian ad Litem** volunteers served almost 1,700 children in the Juvenile Dependency division. They contributed an estimated 24,500 hours, which represents an almost 40 percent increase from the previous year. Based on the federal market value guideline, these volunteers donated almost \$380,000 in donated services.

Child Custody investigators closed almost 70 percent of cases within 90 days of assignment; more than half of the cases were closed within 75 days. Investigators made recommendations to the court regarding the primary residential care in more than 95 percent of the cases.



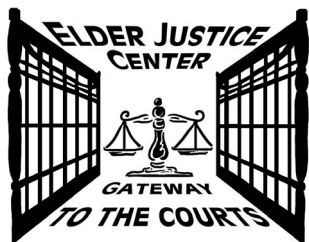
CJC staff supervise more than 1,700 visits from Dependency and Family Law Divisions.

Dependency Court Improvements

- **Attorneys are now appointed at shelter hearings, thus allowing time to become familiar with the case prior to arraignments,**
- **Case management conferences and discovery are ordered to be held prior to the arraignments,**
- **Guardians ad Litem are now appointed at the shelter hearing, for each child in foster care, and**
- **Pre-trial conferences, trial dates, and the initial judicial review are set at arraignments.**



Judge Essrig congratulates GAL Volunteer for diligent service to children in the Dependency division.



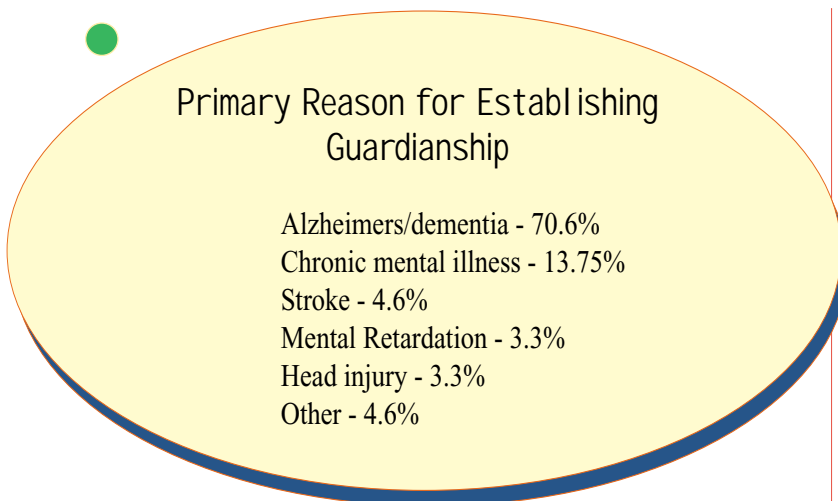
Florida currently has one of the largest proportions of older adults in the United States, and just as with children and families, the courts are also responsible for protecting the elderly and infirm. In 2002, the court held more than 4,400 Annual Reviews of cases involving guardianship.

Elder Justice Center staff reviewed more than 500 cases from the Guardianship Division in 2002 and provided recommendations to the judge for court action when deemed appropriate. One-third of the cases resulted in greater judicial scrutiny. Preliminary results of a University of South Florida study indicate 44 percent of wards had professional

guardians, while 31 percent had adult children who were appointed as guardians. Others who served as guardians included relatives, spouses, agencies, friends and attorneys.

Case management services were also provided to almost 100 victims, representing a 40 percent increase in the number of elderly served. More than 80 percent of the victims were 65 and older and more than 50 percent were disabled. The primary reason for assistance was completing the Injunctions for Protection in domestic violence cases.

Supplementing judicial resources, a General Master also hears cases involving the Guardianship and Mental Health Division. More than 2,000 cases related to mental health and substance abuse issues were also heard in this division.



The court system touches all of our lives. Several key points explain why our courts are so important to each of us.



Our courts protect democracy.



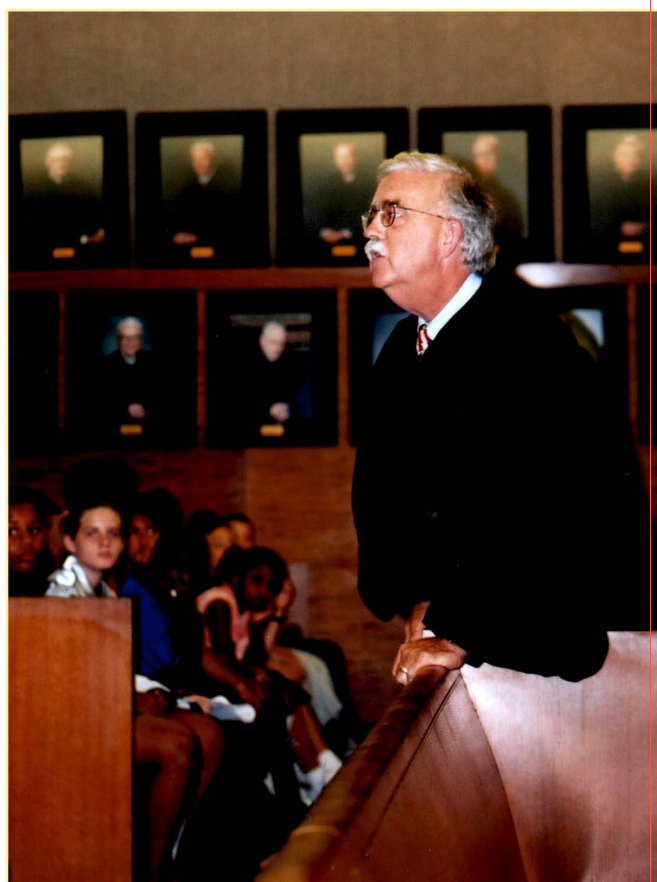
Our courts safeguard victims' rights, determine guilt or innocence of the accused, and impose appropriate punishment.



Our courts resolve personal, business and property disputes, and

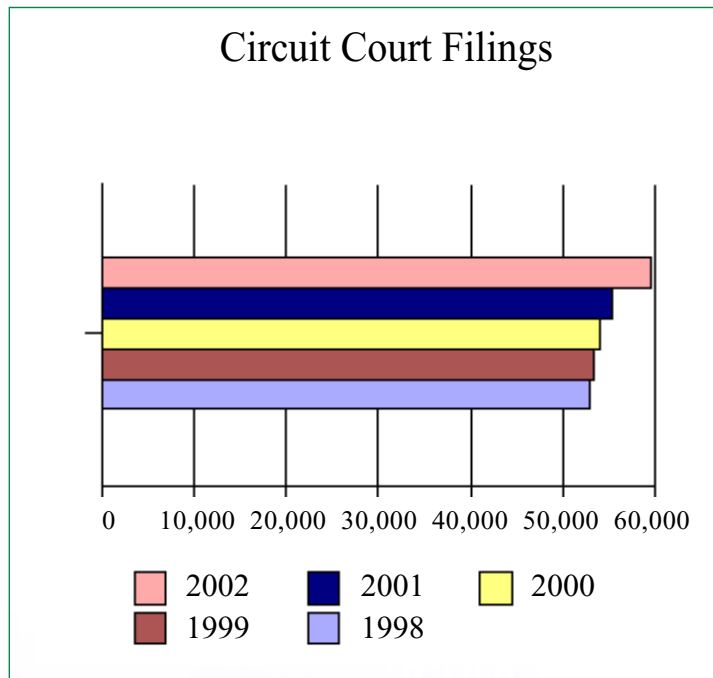


Our courts protect children, families, the elderly and the infirm.



Judge Barton explains the importance of equal justice to 5th grade students.

Circuit Court Judiciary



Circuit court judges hear all criminal and civil matters not within the jurisdiction of county courts, including matrimonial law, paternity cases, juvenile delinquency and dependency cases, as well as mental health, probate, guardianship and civil matters greater than \$15,000. They also hear appeals from some county court rulings and judgments and from some administrative divisions.

There are nine divisions within the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Courts: Drug Courts and Sexual Battery and Child Abuse Cases are included in the Criminal Justice & Trial Division. Data derived from the Florida Supreme Court Summary Reporting System (SRS) is listed for each division on page 23.

Circuit court filings have increased more than 12 percent during the last five years.

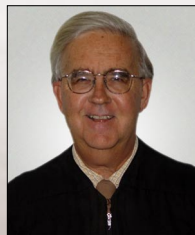
Judges serving in 2002, and at the time of publication, are included in the pictorial directory. The Florida Legislature has allocated 39 circuit court judges in the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit.



James D. Arnold



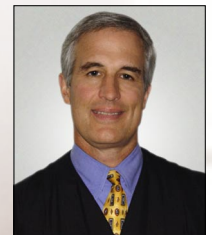
Rex M. Barbas



James M. Barton, II



Emmett L. Battles



Herbert J. Baumann



Debra K. Behnke



Charles Ed Bergmann



Anthony K. Black



Kevin J. Carey



Martha J. Cook

Circuit Court Judiciary



Marva L. Crenshaw



Jack Espinosa Jr.



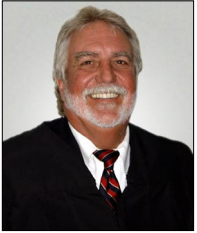
Katherine G. Essrig



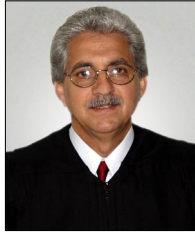
Ronald N. Ficarrotta



Barbara Fleischer



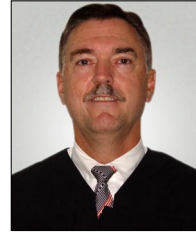
Robert Foster



William Fuente



Frank A. Gomez



Gregory P. Holder



Charlene E. Honeywell



Claudia R. Isom



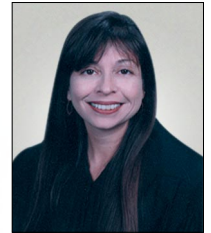
William P. Levens



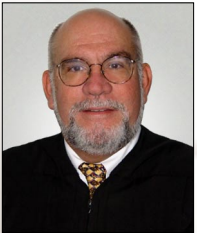
Perry A. Little



Manuel A. Lopez



Vivian C. Maye



Manuel Menendez Jr.



Richard A. Nielsen



J. Rogers Padgett



Sam D. Pendino



Daniel L. Perry



Denise Pomponio



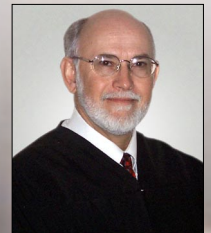
Susan Sexton



Monica L. Sierra



Robert J. Simms



Ralph C. Stoddard



Chet A. Tharpe



Wayne S. Timmerman

County Court Judiciary

County courts are sometimes referred to as “the people’s courts,” probably because a large part of their courts’ work involves citizen disputes, less serious criminal matters (misdemeanors), traffic violations and smaller monetary disputes under \$15,000.

There are four divisions within the county courts, including an Emergency division that is designed to streamline court functions related to First Appearances in both circuit and county criminal divisions. Data derived from the Florida Supreme Court Summary Reporting System (SRS) Report is listed for each division on page 27.

The Legislature has allocated 15 county court judges for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit.



Judge Nazaretian dispenses justice with a little help from his friends.



Charlotte Anderson



James V. Dominguez



Gaston J. Fernandez



Walter R. Heinrich



Paul L. Huey



Joelle Ober



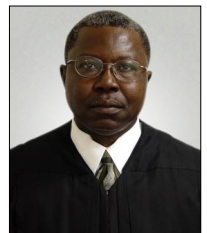
Elvin L. Martinez



Eric R. Myers



Nick Nazaretian



Art McNeil



Raul E. Palomino, Jr.



D. Michelle Sisco



Cheryl K. Thomas



Christine K. Vogel



Mark R. Wolfe

Supplemental Judicial Resources

General Masters and Hearing Officers



Michael Coffee
Child Support



Roxie Crowell
Family Law



Marshall Farkas
Family Law



Jon Johnson
Dependency



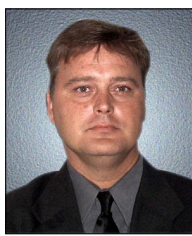
Joan Montagno
Dependency



Joe Navarra
Child Support



State Representative Sandy Murman was joined by Hillsborough Kids Inc., Jeff Rainey, as they observed judicial reviews with General Masters Jon Johnson and Joan Montagno presiding.



Martin Proctor
Family Law



Vicki Reeves
Guardianship & Mental Health

County Judges on Special Assignment

Based upon authorization of Florida Statutes, Chief Judge Menendez appointed several county court judges to serve as circuit judges to address special needs and caseload dictates.

- Judge Huey served in Family Law Division.
- Judge Myers and Judge Palomino served in Family Law Division hearing Domestic Violence cases.
- Judge Fernandez served in the Juvenile Dependency Division.

Senior Judges presided in court during vacancies more than 500 days in 2002, reflecting less than 10 percent increase from the previous year.

Civil Traffic Hearing Officers

Daniel L. Castillo
Bruce P. Cury
David A. Dee
Maurice M. Feller
William J. Foster
Donald R. Gillette
Damon C. Glisson

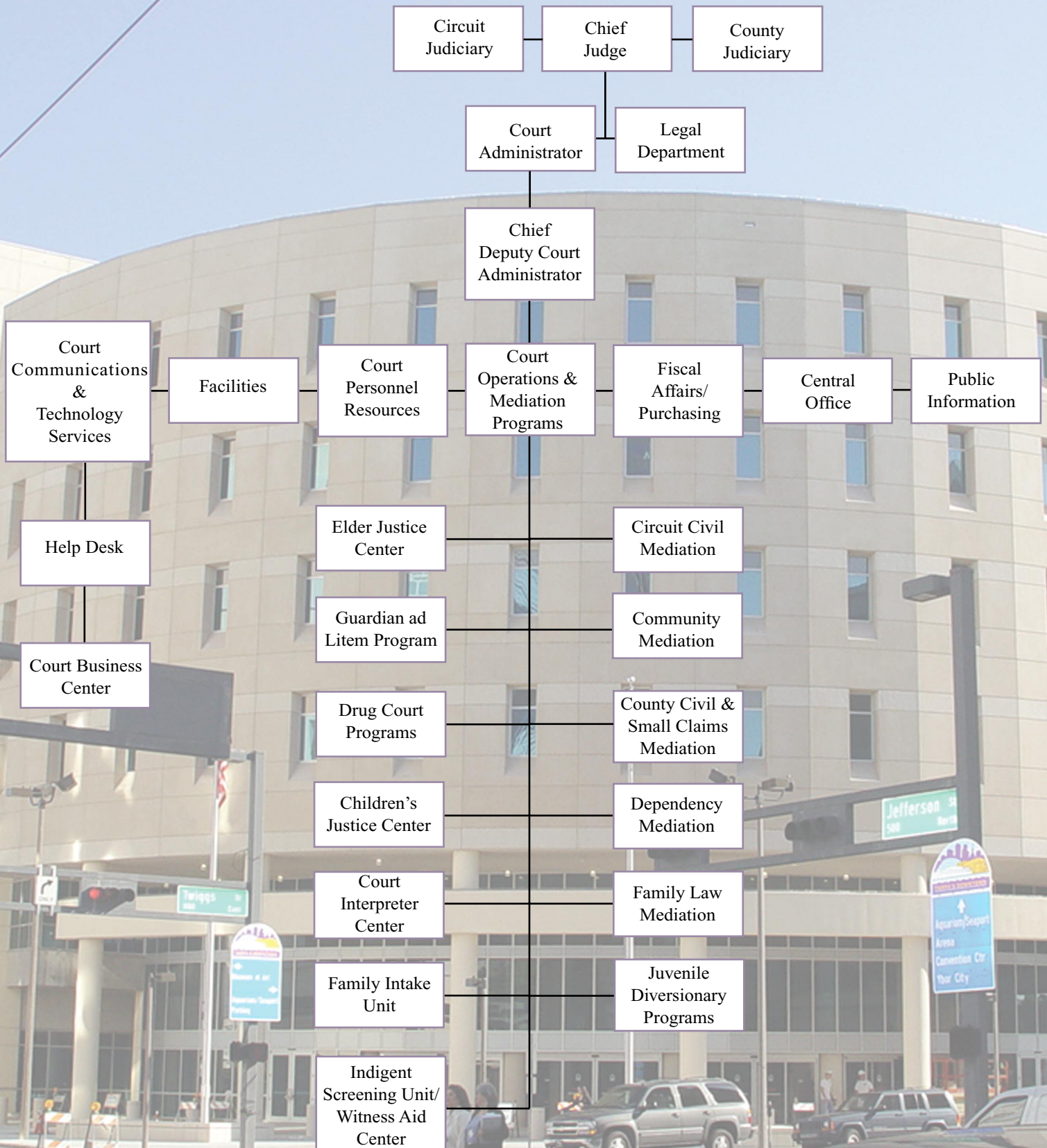
Vicki L. Kaufholz
Lawrence A. Lempert
Nancy A. Lorenzo
Kim K. Seavey
Bradley D. Souders
J. Benton Stewart, II

Senior Judges

Horace A. Andrews
Edward R. Bentley
Richard W. Carr
Frederick A. DeFuria
Daniel L. Gallagher
John M. Gilbert
Roland Gonzalez

John P. Griffin
Robert F. Michaels
William A. Norris
Robert W. Rawlings
Harry Stein
Ralph Steinberg

Organizational Chart



Administrative Office of the Courts

While review of the information presented in the Key Messages indicates some of the Administrative Office of the Courts' and the Legal Department's programmatic efforts to support the judiciary and public, it is important to recognize the labor of the infrastructure that allows judges to efficiently carry out their constitutional responsibilities to adjudicate disputes presented to them and their constitutional and statutory responsibilities for governance of the judicial branch. In addition to the Central Office, the court administrator employees seven senior managers to assist in the implementation of these statutory duties. By providing support services in the areas of executive direction, judicial operations management and general administration, the courts can develop and implement policies and practices that promote a justice system that is accessible, fair, effective, responsive and accountable to court users and to the general public.

Legal Department

While the Court Counsel represents and advises the judiciary in all legal matters, including ethics, trial procedure and judicial administration, he also provides general advice to the court administrator and court program managers. Staff attorneys are assigned to each judge to perform various legal research projects. The **Legal Department** prepared more than 100 administrative orders in 2002. The heaviest workload is derived from the Circuit Criminal division, where there is a 2:1 ratio of judges and staff attorneys. Staff attorneys in the Circuit Criminal division review all post conviction relief motions filed by defendants, research the motions, prepare proposed orders; and attend evidentiary hearings and prepare final orders.

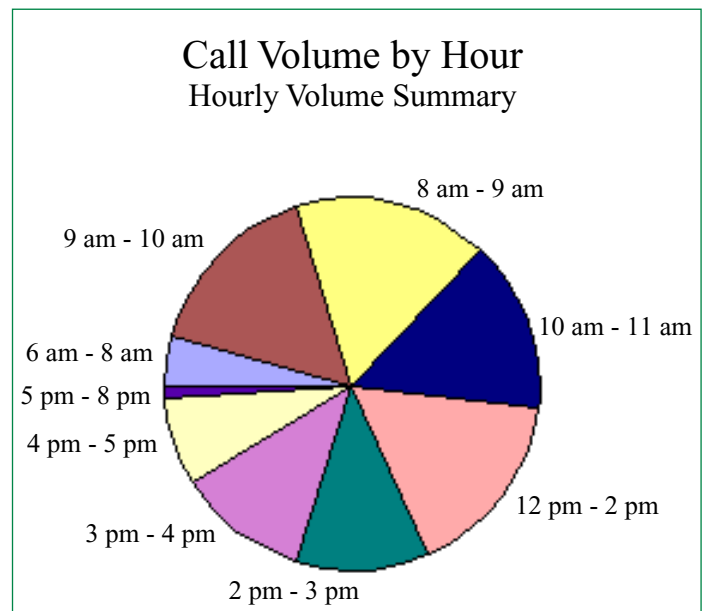
Administrative Office of the Courts

Court Communication & Technology Services staff also assisted judges and employees by responding to more than 11,400 requests through the Help Desk. Almost 40 percent of the requests were closed at the first level through telephone support.



Abdiel Ortiz introduces new technology to Judicial Automated Data System (JADS Committee).

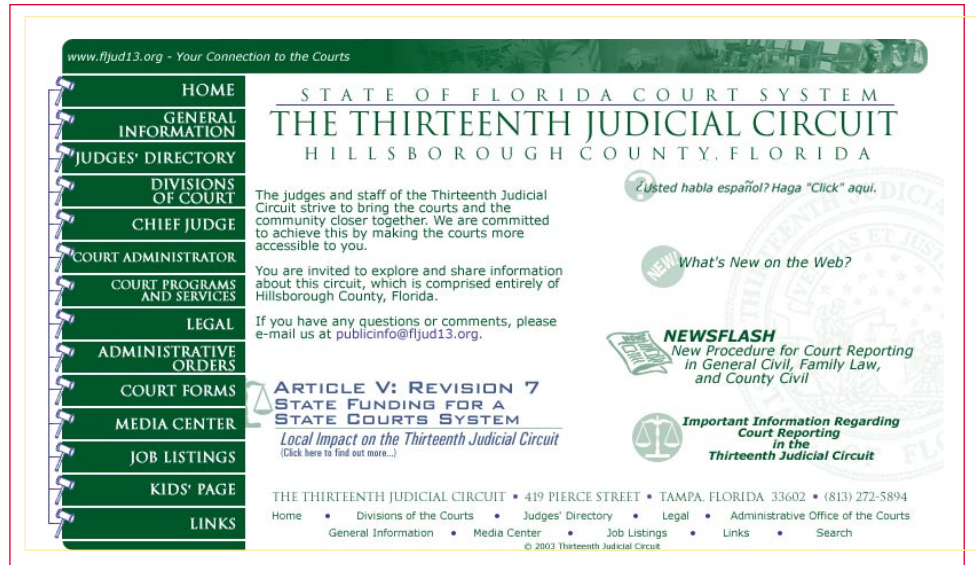
Representing 10 percent of the calls, **Court Facilities** staff responded to requests associated with maintenance issues. The other most common requests were related to printing, Corel WordPerfect 9, passwords or Groupwise. These departments must be accessible to judges and employees at all times as indicated by the chart which reveals the hourly volume summary for calls. More than 70 percent of the calls were closed within one hour. In addition, all employees were issued identification badges during 2002 to assist with security of the courthouse complex.



Court Facilities staff donned hard hats prior to touring the new family and civil courthouse.

Tallies by the Office of Public Information indicate that almost 37,000 “hits” occurred on the web page each month. A special section, Kid’s Page, was unveiled for Law Week and received more than 500 “hits” in two weeks. The most requested pages on the site were consistently:

- Information,
- Forms, and
- Judges’ Directory.



People logged onto the courts website more than 30,000 times each month to access information.



Kim Cash, Children’s Justice Center, toured the courthouse with a local Boy Scout Troop.

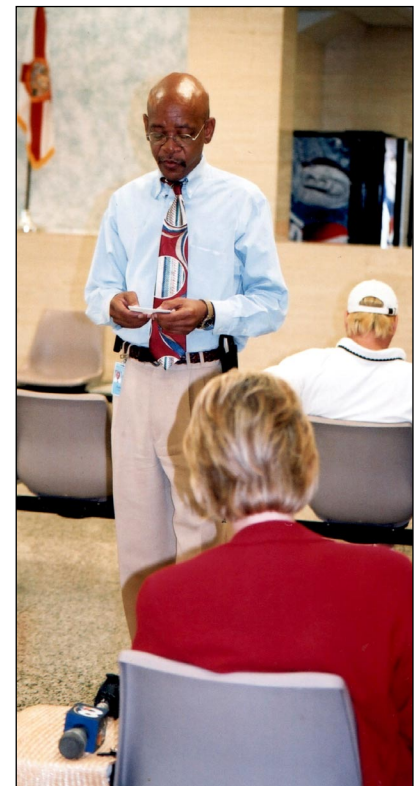
More than 2,000 students and chaperones trekked through the Halls of Justice in 2002 with the assistance of volunteer tour guides from AOC staff. While the Office of Public Information organizes this public service, twelve new volunteer tour guides were recruited from court programs to usher students around the courthouse, providing them with a “behind the scenes” look at the justice system at work. Public schools represented the majority of visitors, but other tour groups included Boy Scout Troops, private schools, the Centre for Girls, Martial Arts Schools and Girl Scout Troops.

The Office of Public Information also reports that 80 percent of the requests from media were related to cameras in the courtroom. Assistance related to coordinating interviews and to provide information accounted equally for the remaining requests. Response time to requests was almost 100 percent resolution in less than two hours.

Fiscal Affairs continued to assist individual programs with budgetary information, as well as process more than 10,000 invoices, ranging from Competency Exams to Dependency Attorneys to Court Reporters. Ninety percent of direct pay invoices were processed in less than nine days.

Central Office staff led efforts with the Performance Measures Team, which worked with program staff to develop significant measures, goals and benchmarks. In addition, staff led a project to automate administrative records for all programs.

Court Personnel Resources records indicate that 263 people were employed during 2002, serving 52 judges. During this time, Court Personnel processed more than 1,350 attendance and leave transactions, as well as almost 200 benefits requests. In addition, almost 1,000 applications were processed, which resulted in 47 new hire orientations.

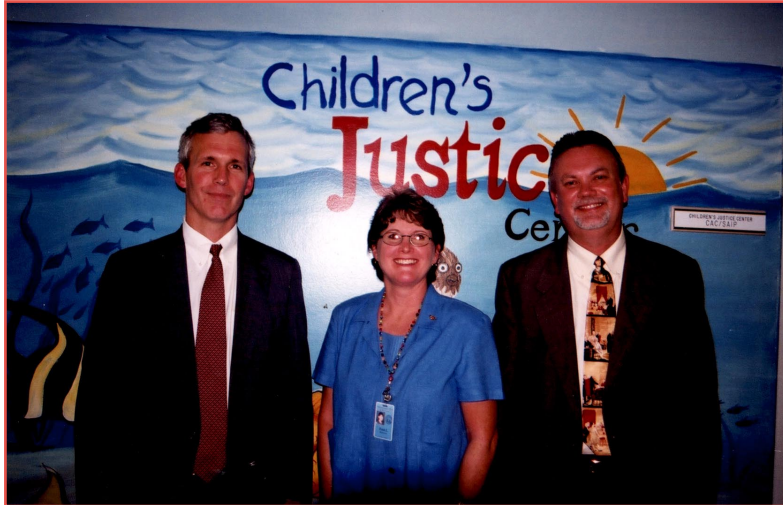


Calvin Green responded to requests from media.

2002 Highlights

U.S. Congressman Shines Light on Children's Justice Center

Surrounded by media outside the **Children's Justice Center**, Congressman Jim Davis praised the CJC as "something that is out there working." The congressman emphasized that, with much attention on the failures of the child protection system, it is important to recognize programs like this one. Program Coordinator Trish Waterman spoke to audiences across the United States when interviewed about the multi-disciplinary services of the Children's Advocacy Center on National Public Radio.



U.S. Congressman Jim Davis praised efforts outside the center with Trish Waterman and Mike Bridenback.

Mediation Week Pays Tribute to Exemplary Professionals

In November, two mediators in this circuit received awards for their contributions to this alternative dispute resolution.

Recipients of the awards embody attributes that are reflective of two mediators who had more than 30 years of service combined. Ezelle Alexander received the Joseph Klienbaum award and Ricardo Woods-Obinna received the Robert Baker award. Through various community activities organized by **Mediation and Diversion Services**, we were reminded of the value of conflict resolution.

9-11 Commemoration

More than fifty judges and staff joined the community on Bayshore Boulevard, the longest consecutive sidewalk in the world, where Tampa Bay was lined with 11,000 American flags on September 11, 2002, to show the world that no act of terrorism can diminish our patriotism or demoralize our spirit.

Great American Teach-In

Judges paused from dispensing justice in the courtrooms and walked into classrooms across Hillsborough County, along with staff members, to teach students about the court system.

Judge Espinosa	Lora Karas
Judge Essrig	Brad Kemker
Judge Evans	Edwin Lopez
Judge Honeywell	Paula MacDonald
Judge Nazaretian	Maritza Ortiz
Judge Nielsen	Maggie Pines
Judge Simms	Sara Prugh
Judge Tharpe	Jose Robles
Judge Thomas	Caryn Schiro
Gail Ellis	Pam Stokes
LeWanda Gaines	Valorie Tank
John Gleason	Rocky Valdez
Gail Holly	



Denise Nix and "Elvis" hosted judges and court staff prior to the Bayshore Patriots commemoration of 9-11.

EJC Launched Initial Guardianship Training

Guardians gathered at Hillsborough County Community College in May and again in September for the Initial Guardianship Training, which was taught by **Elder Justice Center** staff.

Russian Judges Visit Tampa

Two delegations of Russian judges met with their American counterparts at both the State and Federal levels of court. With roundtable discussions about legal practice in the Family and Civil divisions, opportunities were also expanded to include courtroom observation and tours of the facilities. The visits were part of the Open World Program at the Library of Congress, which fosters mutual understanding between people of the United States and the Russian Federation by giving young Russian leaders first-hand experience with America's democratic institutions and free-market system.

Ceremonies Mark Milestones for Graduates of Drug Courts

The first official Drug Division Graduation Ceremony was held on January 30, 2002, with Judge Donald Evans presiding. The ceremony, organized by Drug Court Program staff, was held for people who had their probation terminated early, within the past 60 days. On March 1, 2002, Judge Florence Foster recognized 20 graduates in her courtroom.



Brad Kemker and volunteer Teen Court Judge Jeff Bassett presented awards to Teen Court participants.

Teen Court Awards

Juvenile Diversionary Programs honored Teen Court students and adult volunteers, with assistance from State Attorney Mark Ober, who presented the awards. The Hillsborough County Bar Association, Young Lawyers Division, donated scholarships to two teen volunteers, Erik Wagner of Tampa Preparatory School and Brandon Bognar of the University of South Florida. Brandon and Gaither High Schools, Tampa Catholic, Tampa Prep, Sligh and Wilson Middle Schools were also noted for their local exemplary leadership in the Teen Court Program. Local attorneys receiving awards for outstanding service included Charles Inman, Public Defender's Office; Jeff Bassett, Attorney General's Office; and Ben Stewart, Stewart Law Group.

Bring Your Child to Work Day

Almost 50 children rode to work with their parents on April 27, 2002, to learn more about the role that they play in the court system. Court Personnel Resources staff organized an "up-close" view of a holding cell and tour of the courthouse, which provided the children with an overview of how the judicial system operates. Other activities included a mock trial, with Judge Vivian Maye presiding, a demonstration of the Tampa Police Department Motorcycle Unit and MADD.

United Way Campaign Yields Pledges

Organized by Court Personnel Resources, the annual drive raised almost \$7,000 through payroll deductions, one-time pledges and special efforts - Friday Jeans Day and International Coffee and Donut Sales.



Yasmin Arguelles and Tracey Wells volunteered to assist with courthouse tours.

Elves for Elders

Collaborating with Aging Solutions, Inc. who provide Public Guardianship services, the **Elder Justice Center** recruited “elves” from across the courts to help underprivileged seniors in Hillsborough County have a brighter holiday season.

Roving Administrator Arrives at Romania

The Department of Justice, Office of Overseas Prosecution, Development and Training, called on Court Administrator Mike Bridenback to join a team of experts to work with local officials in Romania to improve court management techniques in the new government. Upon his return to his traditional job, almost 80 judges and employees gathered in Courtroom 7, where he shared his observations of a country struggling with democratic principles as they establish a judicial system.

Kids’ Fest

Judge Jack Espinosa and **Drug Court Program** staff joined in the annual festivities at the Lowry Park Zoo, where thousands of children participated in drug prevention related activities.

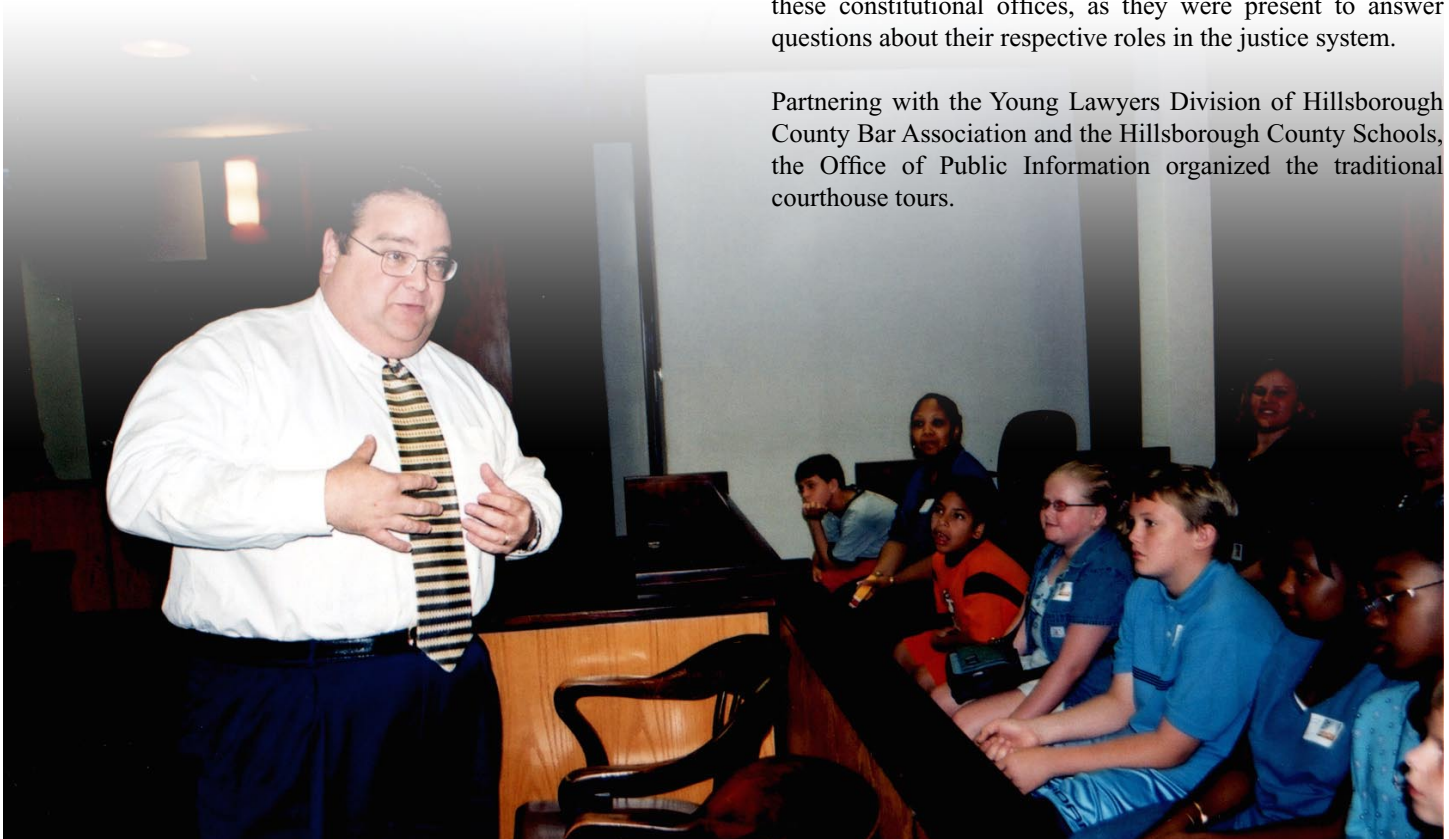


Edna McKnight displays one of the tags used to identify wards’ holiday wish lists.

Law Week Teaches Students about Equal Justice for All

Fifth grade students crowded into Courtroom 1 each day during Law Week, beginning April 30, 2002, to discuss equality of justice. Chief Judge Manuel Menendez, Public Defender Julianne Holt and State Attorney Mark Ober set the precedent for other members of the judiciary and representatives from these constitutional offices, as they were present to answer questions about their respective roles in the justice system.

Partnering with the Young Lawyers Division of Hillsborough County Bar Association and the Hillsborough County Schools, the Office of Public Information organized the traditional courthouse tours.



Like many judges, Judge Ficarrotta stepped off the bench to talk with the students, as illustrated in this photo.

HIGHLIGHTS

Justice Files Airs on Government Access Television

Collateral duty entailed both on and off camera talent by more than 100 judges and employees for the Office of Public Information's monthly production of the television magazine show, hosted by Brad Kemker, Juvenile Diversionary Programs, and Lisa Davis, Children's Justice Center. Topics ranged from small claims to jury duty to model dependency to community partnerships.



Brad Kemker and Lisa Davis hosted The Justice Files, filmed at WUSF studios.

NAB Connects to the Community

Community service work is an integral part of the restorative justice practice, which holds young defendants accountable, but connects the youth with the community. Over the summer, the newest Juvenile Diversionary Program, volunteers from the Neighborhood Accountability Board and the Home Builders' Association, constructed a wheelchair ramp for a disabled resident and cleared abandoned lots in West Tampa, in partnership with the City of Tampa's Solid Waste Department. They also prepared and distributed backpacks and school supplies for elementary school students.

Public/Private Partnership Expands Supervised Visitation Program

While basic expenditures related to technology and security were included in the budget, challenges to transform a government building into a child-friendly environment required alternative funding sources. With major contributions from the Children's Board of Hillsborough County, the Family Law Section of the Hillsborough County Bar Association, and the leadership of the Children's Advocacy Center Foundation, the community support resulted in a spectacular place at the Children's Justice Center for children and parents to interact while the court makes judgments about the child's best interests.

GAL Awards Outstanding Volunteers

Program Coordinator Charlie Nelson paid tribute to volunteers and supporters at the annual recognition ceremony. David Gerard received the Guardian ad Litem of the Year award. Each Juvenile Dependency division judge also recognized individual volunteers. In addition, several community child advocates were honored, including Pat Cook, Family Intake Unit, for her sustaining support in the initial training of volunteers each year.



Pat Cook receives tribute from GAL Program for assisting in volunteer training.

HIGHLIGHTS

Employee Recognition Ceremony Honors Accomplishments

Tradition continued with the annual recognition ceremony, which was designed to honor the accomplishments of staff devoted to serving their community. Eighty employees were nominated by their peers for the nine awards presented by Chief Judge Manuel Menendez and Court Administrator Mike Bridenback. In addition, service awards were presented to those who reached milestone anniversaries, as well as recognition of employees who volunteered in the community as mentors.



Selected by the Chief Judge and Court Administrator, Dave Rowland, Court Counsel, received the Leadership Award.



Senior Court Operations Consultant, Rick Melendi, accepted the Employee of the Year Award, because he consistently exceeds expectations in all work efforts and exemplifies the quality of the courts visions and values.

2002 Award Winners**Quality of Excellence**

Tracy Ellis, Guardian ad Litem Program

Helping Hand

Jose Robles, Court Facilities

Innovative

Trish Waterman, Children's Justice Center

Teamwork

Elves for Elders/Elder Justice Center:

Jennifer Branch, Marcia Larkin, Edna McKnight,
Kim Muga-Russo, Marla Smith and Judge Susan Sexton

Risk Taker

Rebecca Stafford, Court Communications & Technology Services

Visionary

Martha Merrell, Court Operations

Most Valuable Player

Lynn Riley, Mediation and Diversion Services

Tessie Rosete/Judicial Assistant

Denise Nix, Judge Claudia Isom

Employee of the Year

Rick Melendi, Court Programs

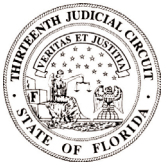
Leadership Award

Dave Rowland, Legal Department



Retired Army Sergeant Jose Robles presented the flag, while Retired Colonel Lamar Battles led the Pledge of Allegiance during the Employee Recognition Ceremony.

HIGHLIGHTS



Judges Retire from Public Service

After serving the citizens of Hillsborough County, four judges retired from the bench to return their attention to a new phase in their lives. Each of them played a pivotal role in the circuit and will be missed in the courtroom. Best wishes for a bright new future.



Judge Foster received recognition from Chief Judge Menendez for her dedication to the courts.



Judge Donald
Evans



Judge Florence
Foster



Judge Cynthia
Holloway



Judge Bob
Anderson Mitcham



Judge Tharpe, Judge Thomas and General Master Vicki Reeves and her assistant, Joy Casper, joined with newly elected judges, Sierra and Cook, on The Iron Triangle Tour at the Florida State Prisons.

New Judges Delve into Public Service

Governor Jeb Bush appointed Judge Michelle Peden to the county court and Judge Frank Gomez to the circuit court in 2002. In addition, Judge Kevin Carey, Judge Martha Cook and Judge Monica Sierra were elected to serve in circuit court in November 2002. Chief Judge Manuel Menendez instituted a new orientation program for judges, which allowed them the opportunity to become acquainted with local organizational structure and practices.

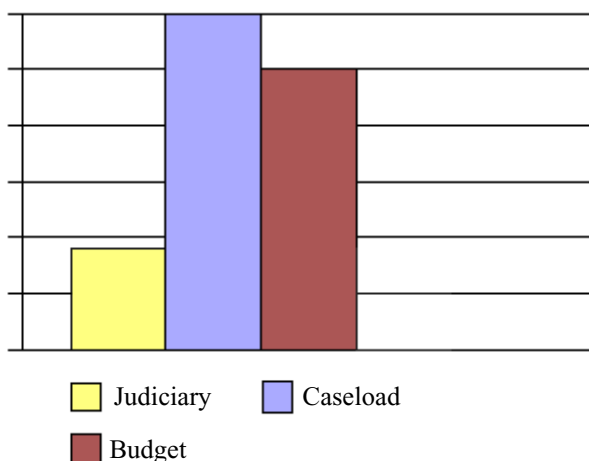
Fiscal Summary

Revenue for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit reflects a diversified budget, including funding from the State of Florida, Hillsborough County, Fine & Forfeiture funds, local trust funds and grants. In general, the state budget operates on a continuous process and the county works on a modified zero base budget. The courts must operate its budget on two fiscal years; the state operates from July to June, while the county operates from October to September. The financial summary below represents the county fiscal year 2002.

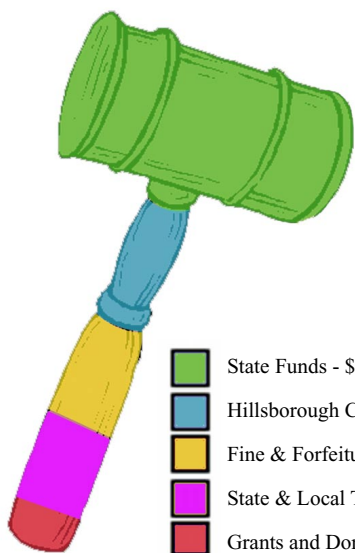
From 1994-2002, the caseload increased almost 60 percent but the entire budget increased only 50 percent. The rate of growth in judges has not matched the caseload growth, so to operate efficiently, supplemental support was provided by Hillsborough County. The county's portion of the budget increase represents a 63 percent growth, while the state's portion represents 37 percent.

While chief judges are constitutionally responsible for the administrative supervision of trial courts, they found that professional staff to assist with these responsibilities became a necessity as the modern court system became more complex, fundamental constitutional rights became more well-defined and case filings grew. For judges to focus on the resolution of disputes they must delegate administrative responsibilities to full-time specially trained professionals to assist in demonstrating accountability for improved efficiency and effectiveness.

Percent Growth from 1994 - 2002



2002 REVENUE SUMMARY TOTAL REVENUE - \$32,683,226



State Funds	- \$13,262,180
Hillsborough County	- \$6,956,860
Fine & Forfeiture/Local Criminal Justice Funds	- \$6,269,191
State & Local Trust Funds	- \$5,034,511
Grants and Donations	- \$1,160,484

State revenue accounted for almost 41 percent of funding for the circuit and county courts, while Hillsborough County provided 21 percent. Fine and Forfeiture and Local Criminal Justice Trust Funds swelled to 19 percent of generated funds, representing another increase in this category this fiscal year. State and Local Trust funds represented 15 percent of revenue, while Grants and Donations have grown to almost 4 percent.

State funding provides salaries and benefits of judges, judicial assistants, and staff attorneys, as well as positions in the Administrative Office of the Courts, including general masters/hearing officers, and juvenile and family court support positions.

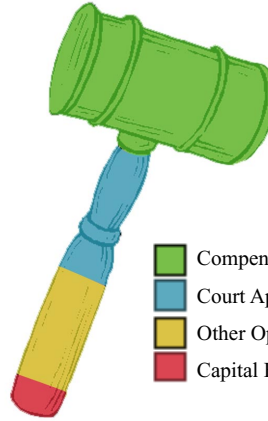
County funds provide operating expenses of judicial offices and the Administrative Office of the Courts. In addition, the county is the sole source of funding for programs, including the Court Interpreter Center and Domestic Violence.

Fiscal Summary

Compensation for judges and staff accounts for two-thirds of the budget. Court Personnel Resources reports indicate 52 judges, each with a judicial assistant, plus approximately 250 state and county employees of Administrative Office of the Courts account for personnel expenditures. More than 10 percent of expenses are applied to costs for court-appointed attorneys and court reporters. Almost 22 percent of expenses are associated with operating costs, while 1 percent of costs are associated with capital equipment and court improvements.

2002 EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

Total Expenditures - \$32,683,226



- Compensation - \$21,568,754
- Court Appointed Attorneys and Court Reporter Costs - \$3,641,167
- Other Operating Costs - \$7,148,234
- Capital Equipment & Court Improvements - \$325,071

JUDICIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS PROGRAM BUDGET

PROGRAM	TOTAL	STATE OF FLORIDA	HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY	TRUST FUNDS & GRANTS
Court Administration	4,857,671	414,737	2,348,566	2,094,368
Court Communications & Technology	2,231,892	88,832	2,045,588	97,472
Legal	1,086,601	589,010	497,591	
Children's Justice Center	927,251	200,000	291,634	435,617
Court Interpreter Center	394,152		394,152	
Domestic Violence	430,000		430,000	
Drug Court Programs	818,679	108,468	710,211	
Elder Justice Center	276,914		101,204	175,710
Family Intake Unit	513,071	156,947	356,124	
Guardian ad Litem	1,381,320	1,029,768	351,552	
Juvenile Diversionary Programs	488,529	58,009	358,956	71,564
Mediation and Diversion Services	2,071,925		23,700	2,048,225
Model Dependency	119,659	119,659		
Witness Aid/ Indigency Screening	635,351		635,351	
Contract Attorneys	2,566,900		2,216,900	350,000
Court Reporting	1,560,960		1,535,960	25,000
Evaluations	680,538	61,738	568,500	50,300
General Masters/ Hearing Officers	984,826	531,150		453,676
Judges/Judicial Assistants	10,656,987	10,296,925	360,062	5,801,932
TOTAL	32,683,226	13,655,243	13,226,051	5,081,932

Circuit Filings

FAST FACTS FOR CIRCUIT AND COUNTY COURT DIVISIONS

342,373 cases filed in 2002

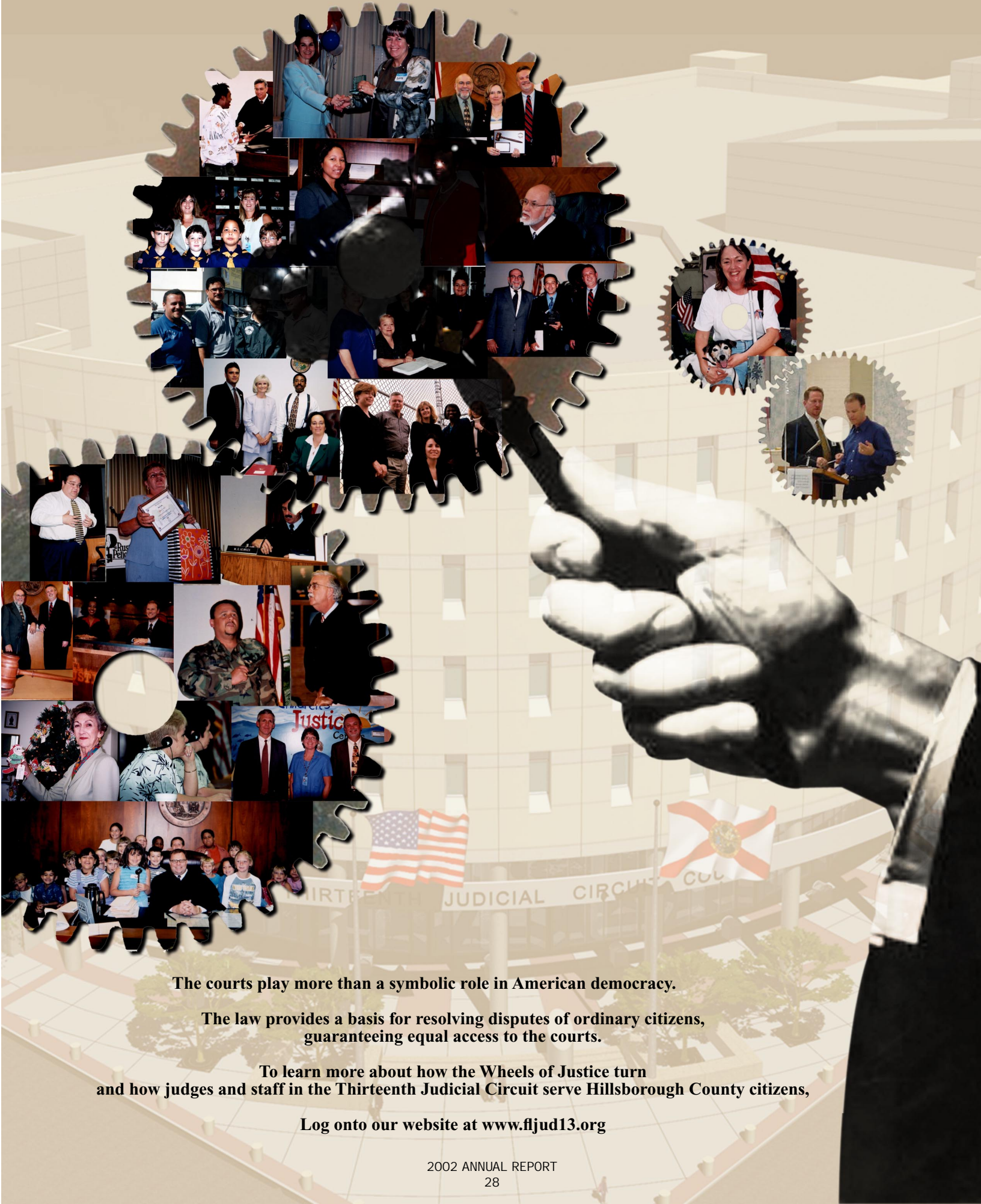
Circuit Court Fast Facts					
DIVISION	FILINGS	DISPOSITIONS	REOPENS	OTHER	
Criminal Justice & Trial	14,305	14,177	6,358	Post Conviction Relief Motions Filed	3,037
				Probation Revocation Hearings	9,837
				Bond Hearings	9,658
				Adversary Preliminary Hearings	1,058
Family Law	20,805	19,277	3,974		
General Civil	13,067	11,920	4,622	Appeals from County Court	82
Guardianship, Mental Health, Probate & Trust	5,579	5,657	4,835		
Juvenile Dependency	1,099	1,020	5,815	Foster Care Review	10,043
				Shelter Hearings	1,193
				Terminations of Parental Rights Field	222
Juvenile Delinquency	4,652	5,750	1,531	Detention Hearings	5,193
TOTAL	59,507	57,819	27,135		

County Court Fast Facts					
DIVISION	FILINGS	DISPOSITIONS	REOPENS	OTHER	
County Civil	31,165	28,324	8,494		
County Criminal	39,729	unavailable	unavailable		
County Criminal Traffic	211,972	unavailable	unavailable		
TOTAL	282,866				

*SRS data is used as a base for workload measures for judges. This data is based on information received from the Clerk of Court and is most accurate as of the run date of the report on April 9, 2003.

**The Clerk of the Court was unable to submit information on the County Criminal division to be included in the SRS data system due to difficulties with electronic transfer.

As the Wheels of Justice Turn



The courts play more than a symbolic role in American democracy.

**The law provides a basis for resolving disputes of ordinary citizens,
guaranteeing equal access to the courts.**

**To learn more about how the Wheels of Justice turn
and how judges and staff in the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit serve Hillsborough County citizens,**

Log onto our website at www.fjud13.org

2002 Annual Report Thirteenth Judicial Circuit

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