

LEGAL E-CONNECTED

of the 13th Judicial Circuit

KIDS BUSTED FOR
DOING GOOD



MIKE'S *Window*

TO THE 13TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

During the last few weeks, Judge Herb Baumann has led an initiative to develop alternatives for incarceration for juveniles in Hillsborough County. He is convinced, as I, that we can work together towards more efficient and effective programs and practices to provide innovative services to the citizens in our community. There is a better way to hold our youth accountable, help redirect their paths, but still protect our community and preserve our tax dollars.

Last year, law enforcement agencies arrested 10,885 youth here; these kids were booked in the Hillsborough County Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC). These numbers are on par with the numbers with the past five years; the highest was in 2005 with 11,332 youth booked. The Hillsborough County Sheriff Office (HCSO) reports that approximately one-half of these cases are misdemeanor cases. Our monthly average for detention costs is \$667,000; yearly average is \$8,004,000.

Spearheading a local answer to the problem, Judge Baumann gathered those in the courtroom and non-profit sector to brainstorm. Patti Pieri, Assistant State Attorney; Theda James, Assistant Public Defender; Rich Rolfes, Hillsborough County Business Analyst; Joe Clark, Eckerd Foundation; Norman Campbell, Chief Probation Officer in Hillsborough County; Judge Michelle Sisco, and others were instrumental in the development of a solution – one that could be as simple as “abc.”

ALTER. We can alter the way we currently do assessments at the JAC for youth age 12 and under. To do this we can partner with Hillsborough County Children’s Services to provide Case Management. This target population was selected because of the opportunity to reduce the overall level of crime in the community. We will look within our Juvenile Diversion Program staff to begin the assessment phase. We are working with Director Tom Papin to coordinate an initial implementation strategy, given budget limitations.

BUILD. We can build on the success of the Civil Citation Programs we have had in the schools, which has already resulted in a decline in bookings at the JAC. Under this program, youth who commit misdemeanor crimes may literally receive a civil citation. Court fees are eliminated because there are



no court appearances but sanctions are imposed, as it is a diversionary program. We are exploring the option of targeting zip codes in the spine of city of the Tampa so we can begin with existing resources.

CREATE. WE can create a specialized court division for the top 12 SHOCAP kids since these kids are the ones that literally are on the top of the list for our law enforcement agencies. Staffing a new division with a Assistant Public Defender and Assistant State Attorney will fast track these cases through the system so that these youth do not stay in detention as long. We have applied for some of the federal Recovery and Reinvestment funds to aid in this endeavor.

These are not new problems but the court can offer leadership to enhance the system and offer kids a better chance to get back on the right track. We need ideas and energy and we have a history of bringing partners together to address societal issues, such as elder justice, drug court, domestic violence. We have some challenges to go with this issue as we address how to reduce local detention cost under the current state fiscal structure. But we are grateful for Commissioner Kevin Beckner’s interest and commitment to this issue, as we work together for funding that will result in the effective use of government funds by investing in our youth but holding them accountable for their actions.

Michael B. Brubaker



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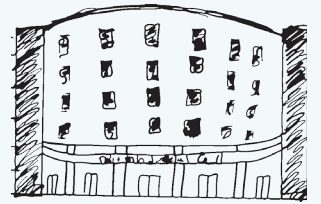
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Feature: Law Week



Hearsay



Judge Claudia Isom teaches a model Citizenship Class to Girl Scout Troup 339

LOOK WHO'S TEACHING

Chief Judge, Manuel Menendez, served on the faculty at the New Judges' College in Tallahassee, January 5th through 9th, 2009.

On February 20, 2009, Paul McGuire, Director of Mediation Services, presented a lecture during a Family Mediation Training at the University of South Florida.

Boy Scouts, working on a merit badge to become Eagle Scouts, attended a two hour Family Life course taught by Judge Claudia Isom on January 8th and February 5th, 2009. The scouts are from the Tocobaga District of the Gulf Ridge Council. On February 2nd, she read to the Pre-K and Kindergarten class at St.

Peter Clavier School. Then, on February 10th, she and others presented a CLE program to the Tampa Bay Inn of Court on Ethics & Plea Bargaining. The next day, she participated, as a panel member, at the National Business Institute's Legal Writing Seminar. Then, on February 19th, she, along with Judge Lisa Campbell, taught a model Citizenship Class for Girl Scout Troop 339. Judge Isom, on February 26th, participated in a CLE presentation on Evidentiary Privilege Issues. The presentation was sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association.

LOOK WHO'S TALKING

Judge Susan Sexton addressed the Plant City Kiwanis Club on February 1, 2009. She spoke about the issue of guardian advocacy.

Judge Claudia Isom presented the Children’s Sermon at Palma Ceia United Methodist Church on January 11th and February 26th. On January 29th, she gave a presentation at JAKE Legal Information Night. JAKE is a juvenile delinquency diversionary program. Judge Isom is a co-chair of their Advisory Board. Then, on February 13th, she participated in a Guardian Advocacy Town Hall Meeting held in the George Edgecomb Courthouse.



LOOK WHO’S MEETING

Judge Claudia Isom attended the Diversity Luncheon, sponsored by the Hillsborough County Bar Association, the Hillsborough Association of Women Lawyers and the George Edgecomb Bar Association, on January 12th. As a member of Palma Ceia United Methodist Church’s Administrative Council, she attended a meeting of that body on February 2nd. She also attended the Young Lawyers Division “Coffee at the Courthouse” on February 20th. As a Board Member, Judge Isom attended Child Abuse Council board meetings on January 27th and February 24th.

LOOK WHO’S OUT AND ABOUT

Judge Claudia Isom attended a judicial appreciation reception, sponsored by the Hillsborough Association of Women Lawyers, on January 29th.

It was a cold and rainy day, but Staff Attorneys, Kate Novinskie and Lyndy Jennings, ran and finished the Gasparilla half-marathon on Sunday, March 1st.

LOOK WHO’S CELEBRATING


Do you remember all those dollar jeans Fridays during 2008? Lots of the money collected went to Mediation and Diversion Services and was used to defray the cost of their celebration of thirty years of providing mediation services in the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit. According to Paul McGuire, the celebration luncheon on November 19, 2008 was an elegant affair. It was held at the Tampa Yacht and Country Club. “The luncheon was attended by the staff of Mediation & Diversion Services... as well as by special guests, Chief Judge Menendez, Court Administrator Michael Bridenback, Dr. Gregory Firestone from USF, and the prior program

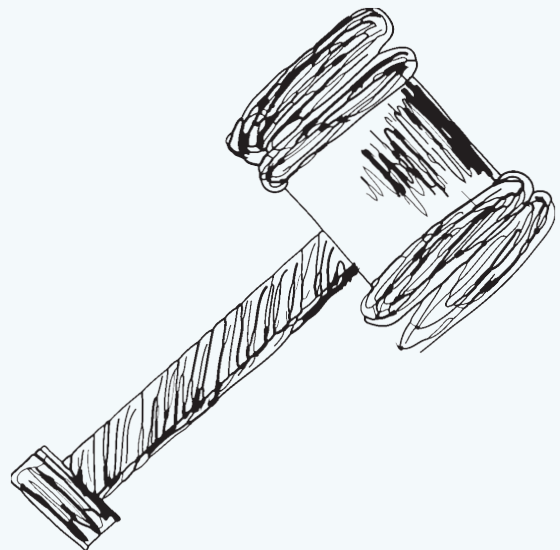
directors, Richard D. Muga, JD, Nancy Lopez, Nancy Yanez and Senior Court Operations Consultant Marty Merrell.” Mr. Bridenback spoke on the history of mediation in Florida, and Dr. Firestone addressed the group about the future of mediation.

LOOK WHO’S LEARNING

On February 27th and 28th, Lynn Meehan, Megan Duffey, Samantha Jones and Jennifer Wolfgang, all of the Family Law Case Management Unit, attended the Florida Association of Family and Conciliation Courts Conference. The conference was held in Tampa and addressed current issues surrounding recent statute changes to Chapter 61 and the requirement of detailed parenting plans in cases involving children.

LOOK WHO’S VISITING

On January 28, 2009, the American Bar Association, Center on Children and the Law, sent two reviewers to the Children’s Advocacy Center to see how their \$51,800.00 grant to the CAC had been spent. According to Court Operations Manager, Patricia Waterman, the funds were requested so that the CAC “could have a dedicated room at Mary Lee’s House so children could provide closed circuit testimony from the CAC to the courthouse.” For the ABA reviewers, a live demonstration was done, using the closed circuit system, between the CAC and Circuit Judge Tracy Sheehan’s courtroom. Taking part in the demo were, Judge Sheehan, Ms. Waterman, Abdiel Ortiz, Trial Court Technology Officer. 





Work Life Balance

City Walks

written by | David Kirby

Have you ever wondered who the first attorney in Tampa was? I have to admit, I haven't either, but nevertheless, I did find it interesting when I came upon the grave of Tampa's second attorney. That distinction went to James Gettis in 1848. He later fought for the Confederacy and what's more, it turns out he was later to become a Circuit Court Judge. I discovered this historical tidbit recently when I took a walking tour of downtown on my lunch break. Not only did I learn new things about Tampa, but I got away from my desk, out in the fresh air and sunshine and took a brisk, 1.8 mile walk around downtown. In doing so I met new people, got an hour of exercise, and since it was Friday,

and the Downtown Market was in full swing, I picked up a delicious and healthy lunch from one of the street vendors there.

The walks are sponsored by "Do the Local Motion" a fitness program which is an effort of Healthy Together, Inc. and the Tampa Downtown Partnership, both 503(C) non-profits. Walks are held twice monthly from January through April. The tours are guided and cover several routes, and you can even download podcasts to guide you along the way.

Additional information and program registration can be found at :www.dothelocalmotiontampabay.com. 🗺️

If My Friends Could See Me Now

written by | David Kirby



Wow, this is an interesting guy. See if you can figure out who he is. For clandestine purposes, I'll call him Mickey.

Mickey, while staying in a hotel in California in 1989 decided to use the hotel hot tub. As he lowered himself into the water, he glanced across the tub and knew the other man looked familiar.

Conversation ensued, and that led to introductions. Of course the other man looked familiar; it was national recording artist, George Benson! Mickey knew of one thing they had in common; they were both singers, so the conversation drifted to music and soon, deciding that talking about music wasn't nearly as much fun as

making it, they found a song they had in common and belted out I Left my Heart in San Francisco.

Singing has been a life-long love of Mickey's. In his childhood home, he, his two brothers and his father sang barbershop numbers. He sang in musicals in high school. In college, he sang with the Sacramento City College Collegians.

Along with singing, another love is baseball. He played throughout school and college and later on a semi-pro team. He also played on a softball team that made it to the World Championships in Las Vegas in 1986.

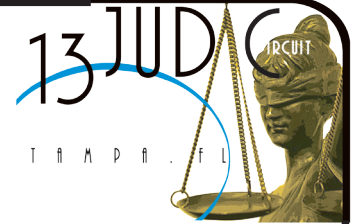
Our "Singing Shortstop", as a California journalist once dubbed him, has worked in or around theatre most of his adult life, so when he and his wife moved to Tampa in 2005, he found a job at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center. That led him to a part-time job with a business specializing in event security. In that capacity, he worked this year's Super Bowl, all the Rays home playoff games and two of the World Series games.

Mickey is married and has two daughters and five grandkids. He and his wife, Deb, live in South Tampa.

Now it's your turn; take a guess. Do you know who this person is? The answer is on page 25. 🗺️



Angie Smith: Editor's Letter



“LINCOLN’S LEGACY ENDURES AS WE CELEBRATE THIS PRINCIPLE OF THE RULE OF LAW...”

President Abraham Lincoln left a legacy of law and that’s why in this bicentennial of his birth, the American Bar Association selected this year’s Law Week theme, A Legacy of Liberty. This annual celebration evokes the sixteenth president’s spirit during Law Week, which runs April 26 through May 1. If you walk in the George Edgecomb Courthouse during this time, you’ll find the energy contagious as 5th grade students from across Hillsborough County trek through our halls of justice with tour guides from the Hillsborough County Bar Association Young Lawyers Association. Both Calvin Green and David Kirby, Office of Public Information staff, have helped to organize these activities during recent years and they are always eager for that first day to arrive as the school buses pull up to the designated entrance for the kids. Perhaps these grown men hearken back to their own days in the classroom. After all, don’t we all remember memorizing the Gettysburg address: “Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal...”

As a president, this document, along with the Emancipation Proclamation helped to fulfill the

political promise of the Declaration of Independence. Of course, Lincoln had quite a legal career before taking over the executive branch of government. He represented a range of issues, including divorce cases to fugitive slaves to debt collectors. In one of his famous murder cases, the prosecutor’s witness stated he had seen the defendant at the crime scene in the moonlight. But Lincoln came to court with an Almanac to prove that there was moonlight on that night and of course, the witness was discredited.

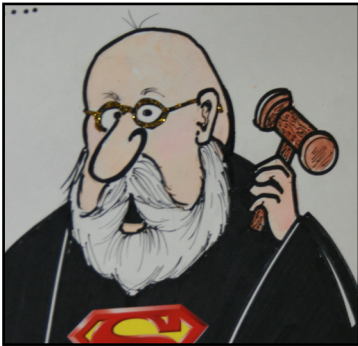
Lincoln’s legacy endures as we celebrate this principle of the rule of law and recognize the contributions of men and women who labor on behalf of this system of law and justice that is our third branch of government. To the judges, lawyers (young and those who have more experience than others), thanks for upholding the Rule of Law! May the legacy continue and fifth graders continue to bless us with their presence as inquiring minds want to know more during their courthouse tours...

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angie'.

JUDGE BARBAS



Welcome Back



Chicken and yellow rice, tossed salad, two cakes and a throng of well-wishers lay in wait in the hallway outside Judge Rex Barbas' chambers. But, let's back up. The judge was badly injured in November, 2008 when he was hit by a car while riding his Harley. A

long and difficult recuperation had brought him to the point, by March 2, 2009, that he could return to work, part-time. On his first day back, his judicial assistant, Rocky Valdez, overjoyed by his return, threw him a surprise welcome-back party. The theme of the party was "Superman", which Rocky picked to symbolize the judge's determination to get back on the job, and indeed, that persistence brought him back to work four months earlier than his doctors had predicted. 🦸

written by | David Kirby



Top | Judge Barbas & Judge Fuente
Bottom | Karen Scheidt, Sandy Duncan
& Rocky Valdez





Booker T. Washington Elementary

written by | David Kirby



Look at those faces. It's hard to believe that on February 18, 2009 these youngsters were transported to the Hillsborough County Courthouse where they all ended up in a holding cell!

Each one of them was busted at school for doing something good. Their reward was a field trip to the courthouse, and their host was Circuit Court Judge, Ralph

Stoddard, who has a longstanding relationship with their school, Booker T. Washington Elementary. The visit to the holding cell was part of their courthouse tour, after which they accompanied Judge Stoddard to his courtroom for a presentation about our legal system. Next stop was the St. Pete Times Forum where the judge's Kiwanis Club chapter sponsored a great lunch for the children. 🙏

HCBARUNANDROAST

written by | David Kirby
photos by | Simone Fallon & David Kirby



***MORE THAN 100 PRO BONO
HOURS WE'RE RAISED***

Pssst! Can you keep a secret? Want to know who the fastest judge in this circuit is? Come closer.... You can't go blabbin' this around. You know how judges are, they'll all want to race him, and we can't have these judges racing all over town. It's Judge Mark Wolfe. Yeah, I saw it with my own eyes. Let me tell you about it.

Let's start at the beginning. Since 2000, the number of pro bono hours donated by Florida attorneys has

been falling. The Florida Supreme Court noticed this. According to Circuit Judge, Ashley Moody, that court has stated that "judges have the responsibility to encourage and highlight pro bono services". So, Judge Moody and Circuit Judge Anthony Black, with the Hillsborough County Bar Association, headed up the First Annual Judicial Pig Roast and 5K Run to the Courthouse. This took place on Saturday, March 28, 2009 at the Tampa Campus of the Stetson Law School. Judicial Pig Roasts have been done before, but the



Top | Laura Schifino & Dana Caranante
Bottom | Judge Stoddard

linked 5K run, as a benefit for pro bono services, is new this year.

There were “tons” of BBQ pork; tubs of beans and bins of cole slaw and lots of other pig roast treats. Good food; a sunny, temperate day on the law school lawn by the Hillsborough River; not a bad day!

Lawyers participating in the event were asked to obtain a total of 10 hours of pro bono pledges, from

themselves and/or other attorneys. There were 104 hours donated.

While attorney pro bono services have been trending downward, state wide, over the last eight years, there is a local bright spot. In 2007, Have a Heart (Hillsborough Attorneys Volunteer Efforts), the umbrella organization for all pro bono projects in this circuit, reported that 4,088 hours were donated by 462 lawyers. In 2008, 459 attorneys donated 5,054 hours. Hopefully, this event will spur an even better response in 2009.



Judges Sheehan, Catlin, Espinosa & Behnke



Judge Moody (left) & Judge Black (right)

Okay already; back to the fastest judge; Judge Wolfe traversed the course in 28 minutes and 30 seconds. Now remember, this has to be kept close. My sources tell me that Judge Black, who didn't run because he was busy working with Judge Moody to keep things "running" smoothly, is training for his fourth Boston Marathon, and we sure don't want to stir up any match races. 🏃‍♂️



Chief Judge Menendez



Judge Wolfe



Community Bench

Law Academy

written by | David Kirby



Jefferson High School Law Academy



Judge Ober

Judge Joelle Ober is assigned to the County Civil division, a full-time job, yet she finds the time to coordinate the courthouse end of an externship program at the Jefferson High School Law Academy. She does not have to do this. When asked why she does, she had a ready answer. Working on her undergraduate degree at the University of South Florida, she, for no special reason, majored in criminology. Sensing her academic ambivalence, one of her professors insisted she “go do an internship at the courthouse”. She did, and became fascinated by the courts and the law. Ambivalence disappeared. No, she didn’t decide to become an attorney; she decided to become a judge. And, it was this transformational experience that drew her to work with the students at Jefferson. In her own words, she hopes to “influence the minds of young... students who don’t know what path to take in life”.

During the four year Law Academy, students take courses from within four areas: Legal Systems and Concepts; Law Studies; Court Procedures and Criminal Justice.

The Academy Director, Tony Rodriguez, came to teaching after a successful law enforcement career at the New York City Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

The student externship happens in the senior year and lasts ten weeks. Students are assigned to certain judges where they observe proceedings and are encouraged to interact with all court personnel. Students also have one-on-one time with judges. Judge Ober recruits her colleagues for this part of the program. She is also on the Law Studies Advisory Committee at Jefferson and has been since it was formed.

Her Law Academy connection is not Judge Ober’s only offering to the local community. She also serves on the Board of Directors of Northside Mental Health Center and the local chapter of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence. She’s on the Membership Committee of the U.S.F. Alumni Association and volunteers in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters school program, where she meets weekly with her little sister, Miranda. 🐶

TECHNOLOGYUPGRADE



Keith D'Atrio teaches a Microsoft Office 2007 class

written by | David Kirby



Jayson Schemenauer of Presidio upgrades workstations


Four hundred and eighty-eight; that's how many computers the Administrative Office of the Courts uses in its mission to assist the judiciary of this circuit in carrying out its constitutional duties. That number, 488, is also the number of computers (work stations and laptops) that have recently been replaced or received software upgrades. More specifically, there were 272 new desktops and 112 laptops installed. One hundred and four existing desktops received software upgrades. When Ken Taylor came to do the software upgrade on my computer, I got to thinking about the magnitude of the job facing those who are responsible for carrying out this system-wide technology roll-out.

Ultimately, every computer and every employee in this system has but one job – the same job, and that is to assist the judges in carrying out the administrative duties related to the operations of the court. There's nothing in that job description that says we will help them as long as our computers are operating properly. My point is; there wasn't much room for error in this hardware/software deployment.

The reason for the new technology, According to Sharon Noll, Court Technology Project Coordinator, was that

“Our current hardware is no longer supported, out of warranty, and is increasingly generating hardware-based helpdesk calls.” Maybe you've made some of those calls; I have.

The bulk of the deployment was handled by Presidio, Inc., a company contracted to provide such services to the courts. Julie Roberts is the Project Manager for Presidio. Both the planning and deployment phases have been handled by employees of: AOC, Presidio and Xerox. As it had to be, it was truly a team effort. Judges and staff attended weekly Microsoft Office 2007 training classes facilitated by Keith D'Atrio, Presidio. This interactive style of learning yielded great results.

As for the results; I'll let Sharon tell you; “The rollout has stayed on schedule. The feedback we have is that users have been very happy with having new computers that don't sound like a plane taking off when they're processing. Many users have complimented the processing speed of the new computers and the interface of the new software. This is a team effort involving a centralized project manager and a tremendous amount of planning so as to affect the users' productivity and downtime as little as possible.” 

**THURSDAY.
6 PM.
GIVE THE SOFA A BREAK.**

GO VOLUNTEER!



**ADULTS & TEENS WANTED
WWW.FLJUD13.ORG/JDP/VOLUNTEERS.HTML**



BLACKHERITAGECELEBRATION

February 13, 2009

photos by | Calvin Green & David Kirby



Tonya Muhammad



Frank Sanchez, Delia Sanchez, Nancy Yanez



Judge Espinosa & State Representative Michael Scionti



Nick Merriweather, a student at Stetson University College of Law; Judge Stoddard; Attorney Darnell Ingram



Paul McGuire & Lorraine Lundy



Larry L. Johnson & Judge Campbell



Trish Waterman & Kim Cash



Tracy Wells & Blanca Potts



Brenda Parrish, Nancy Hughes, Peter Hughes



Yvonne Romero, Yasmin Arguelles, Debbie Melms,
Heather Thullbery



Mia Carter & Adri Tasanprasert



Mona Baker & Judge Tesche

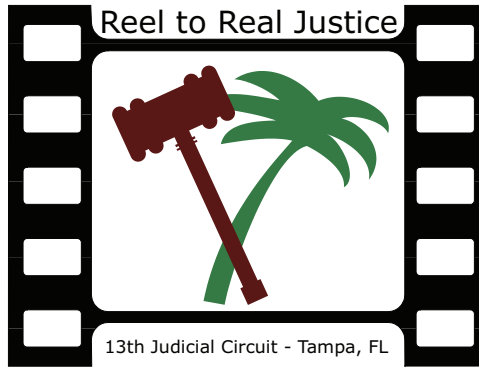
COURTTOURS

Navigating the 13th Judicial Circuit



Students from Trinity Middle School ask questions about a holding cell

Date	Group	Tour Guide
01.20.09	Keiser University	David Kirby
02.05.09	Erwin Technical Center	David Kirby
02.05.09	Everest University	David Kirby
02.09.09	Everest University	David Kirby
02.10.09	Keiser University	Blanca Potts
02.11.09	Carrollwood Day School	David Kirby
02.12.09	Everest University	D. Kirby & A. Tasanaprasert
02.18.09	Booker T. Washington Elementary	C. Green & D. Kirby
03.10.09	Classical Conversations Home Schooling	David Kirby
03.17.09	Freedom High School	C. Dunning, D. Kirby, B. Potts, A. Tasanaprasert
03.18.09	Everest University	D. Kirby & E. Lopez
03.19.09	Benito Middle School	K. Cash, D. Kirby, A. Tasanaprasert
03.24.09	Everest University	David Kirby
03.25.09	Trinity School	C. Dunning, D. Kirby, B. Potts
03.26.09	Trinity School	D. Kirby, B. Potts, A. Tasanaprasert
03.27.09	Saint Mary's School	C. Dunning, D. Kirby, B. Potts, A. Tasanaprasert
03.31.09	Durant High School	D. Kirby, B. Potts, A. Tasanaprasert



“Levels of Care Podcast”

Click the Following Link to Watch
the Levels of Care Podcast
www.fljud13.org/mediacenterpage.asp

Credits

Executive Producer
K. Angela Smith

Producer
Carlos Nieves

Studio Host
Tonya Muhammad

Cast & Special Guests
Liz Harden of DACCO

An Excerpt from the Podcast

Host Tonya Muhammad: When the court orders someone into treatment I assume that starts with an assessment. What can people expect from this assessment?

Liz Harden: They can expect to come in for a couple of hours and meet individually with a counselor. It's really a getting to know you session so they need to come prepared to answer a lot of questions, openly and honestly. That's really the only way a counselor is going to be able to help them work towards their goals. They can expect to take a drug test and learn about their course of treatment.



Liz Harden of DACCO



Tonya Muhammad interviews Liz Harden

To View an Additional Podcasts Such as “Anti-Meth Grant” Please Click on the Following Link:

www.fljud13.org/mediacenterpage.asp



Derrick Brooks

Derrick Brooks Charities

written by | David Kirby



Darryl Daniels recently attended JDP's Community Partner Recognition Dinner

Darryl Daniels has worked with Juvenile Diversion Programs for years, initially in his capacity as Director of the Youth Crime Prevention and Intervention Program at the Urban League and, more recently, in the same program, which has found a new home at Derrick Brooks Charities. The Crime Prevention/ Intervention program is twelve weeks long and is free to clients. Services are delivered in the community at locations such as Community Service Centers. Youth attending are required to take classes such as: Decision Making; Crime Prevention; Anger Management; Conflict Resolution and Peer pressure.

They also take four elective classes and participate in two Teen Summits, offering community speakers talking about their areas of expertise and about career opportunities. Other services offered in the program are tutoring and parent skills training. Parents/guardians

are strongly encouraged to participate throughout the program.

Mr. Daniels, recently singled out Juvenile Diversion Programs' Teen Court as the "best by far". He cited consistency of management and retention of staff as major reasons for his respect for this program. He also credits JDP for offering a variety of programs that Mr. Daniels sees as a holistic approach to making a difference in the lives of the children they serve.

Not only does Mr. Daniels oversee programs that seek to steer troubled youth toward success, he also volunteers his own time. When asked about this, he responded: "I'm not on the clock. Why shouldn't I take two hours to tell young folks of the pitfalls of staying in the system?" Indeed, why shouldn't he? Why shouldn't we all? 🙌



Take a ... Beach Day

win a day of
administrative leave

be the first employee to send the correct answers to smithka@fljud13.org
to win a day of administrative leave granted by the court administrator

1. How many pro bono hours were lawyers asked to donate?
2. How long does the law academy externship last?
3. Who is the 'fastest' Judge in the courthouse?
4. Who upgraded David Kirby's computer?
5. Where does a process server take a course to become certified in the 13th Judicial Circuit?
6. Which Judge spearheaded an initiative to develop alternatives to incarceration in Hillsborough County?
7. Who threw a surprise party for Judge Barbas?
8. Who is the project manager for Presidio?
9. Who is the director of Derrick Brooks Charities?
10. Who attended the Florida Association of Family Conciliation Court Conference?

JUDGE LISA CAMPBELL INVESTITURE

written by | David Kirby
photo by | Henry Ajo



Judge Lisa Campbell & Family

It was 1991 and Lisa Campbell had a new law degree, but she didn't have a job. So, she moved back to the Tampa area, and in with her parents in Seffner and started looking for work. Ms. Campbell's job search ended when she was offered a job at the Public Defender's Office. They told her they'd pay her \$22,000. Then came what would have been a deal-breaker for many people; the job came with no benefits – none. But, that was not really the case, and Lisa knew that. There was one huge benefit: it was a job! She took it, remembering what her father had told her: “if the work you do has meaning, everything else will work itself out.” And, as she was assisted into her new, black robe at her investiture on February 6, 2009, it certainly appeared that everything had indeed worked itself out.

Judge Campbell has been assigned to Unified Family: Juvenile Delinquency, Division F. Her Judicial Assistant is Cheryl Redman.

As is common at investitures, Judge Campbell received praise and advice from those close to her. Public Defender, Julianne Holt, used terms such as patient, caring and trustworthy to describe Judge Campbell. She also declared that Judge Campbell is a person who lives by her word and said also that public service has always been our newest judge's calling. Warren Dawson, local attorney, and longtime family friend, offered: “Be gentle with yourself, Judge...learn to forgive yourself”.

And so, the young woman who came home to her parents' house in 1991 to look for work, got another new job. And, while she avowed that she never intended to blaze trails, Mr. Dawson pointed out that, blaze trails she did; becoming the first African American, of either gender, to be initially elected to the bench in this circuit.

In her comments, Judge Campbell addressed her mother directly: “To my mom, who is my biggest critic and my biggest fan; I appreciate all the sacrifices you and dad made for me.”

Judge Campbell dedicated her investiture ceremony to the memory of her father, and surely she has done him proud. 🙏

JUDGESAMANTHAWARDINVESTITURE



written by | David Kirby
photos by | Simone Fallon

Public Defender, Julianne Holt, began her first term as Public Defender in January of 1993. In comments made at Judge Samantha Ward's investiture, she revealed that, shortly after taking office, she "asked, maybe begged" Samantha to move from the State Attorney's office to hers. Mrs. Holt's entreaties paid off, and Samantha spent fifteen years at the Public Defender's office, working there until she was elected to the circuit court bench in 2008. In her comments, Mrs. Holt described Judge Ward as "a very good... very compassionate person"; noting further that she "strives for excellence on a daily basis".

On a lighter note, Mrs. Holt alerted Chief Judge Manuel Mendez that, beginning on March 1st, Judge Ward will be expecting, daily "happy birthday" messages, as has been the custom for years at the Public Defender's office. The Public Defender admonished the Chief Judge: "Don't mess it up".

Former Tampa Mayor, Dick Greco, Sr., also offered comments including: "This is another step in your wonderful, young life. Samantha, you're going to do a wonderful job."

Deb Werner, Esq., of the Hillsborough Association of Women Lawyers thanked Judge Ward for the support and mentoring she has offered members over the years.

Judge Ward has been assigned to Unified Family: Domestic Relations/Family Law, Division E. Her judicial assistant is Suzanne Flowers.

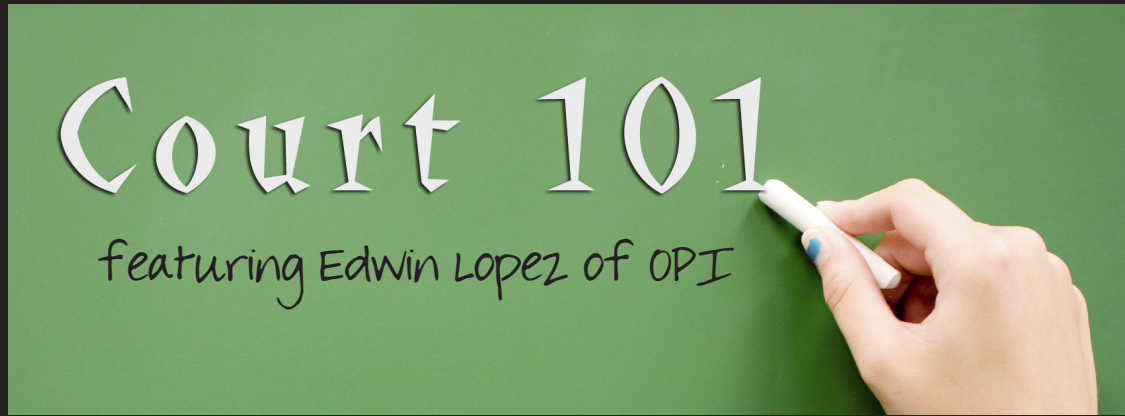
In her own remarks, Judge Ward revealed her expectations of herself, and one she voiced, echoing the Public Defender's comments, was: "As a judge, I hope to ask myself on a daily basis, what am I doing for others?" She also reminisced about her grandparents, to whom she dedicated the ceremony. Her grandmother, Dean Wollery, evidently was very proud of the young Samantha and happily informed others of her accomplishments, once parading her around and telling anyone who would listen: "This is my granddaughter, Sami, and she's the mouse in the Nutcracker." If her granddaughter's playing a mouse in a school play elicited such pride, just imagine how proud grandma would have been to see her Sami become a circuit court judge. 🐭



Judge Ward's parents hold the Bible as she takes the oath of office



Judge Samantha Ward & Public Defender Julianne Holt



Process Servers

written by | David Kirby

My Name is...and I'm Here to....

It's Friday evening, 6:30, and you just got home from work. You put down the groceries you stopped for on the way home. You're anticipating getting out of those work clothes and into something comfortable to start your weekend. And then comes the knock on the door. No, you're not expecting anyone; hmmm, who is it? Of course there are some people you'd be glad to see, even though you just walked in, but something tells you this isn't one of them. So, you look through the peep hole, and sure enough, there's a stranger on your doorstep.

I don't know about you, but I have a short-list of who I don't want rapping on my door: anyone from the Internal Revenue Service; anyone selling anything, a law enforcement officer –they seldom show up with good news; a process server – bad news too.

So you open the door and hear: "Hello, are you....?" So, you answer: "Yes; who's asking?" Then your heart skips a beat when the stranger answers: "My name is..., and I'm here to serve you with this summons to appear...."

Perhaps you didn't know that the process server who just ruined a perfectly good Friday evening is actually certified by the Administrative Office of the Courts. Edwin Lopez, of the Office of Public Information, coordinates the Certified Process Server Program in this circuit. I recently sat down with him to find out more about how the program operates.

David Kirby: Mr. Lopez, can you give me a brief overview of your responsibilities as the coordinator of this program?

Mr. Lopez: I am the contact person for the courts in this circuit, whether it's a question from an experienced process server or an inquiry about how to become certified, I'm the one they'll call. Another thing I do is function as liaison to Hillsborough Community

College which provides the thirty-five hours of training that is required of applicants. I also monitor the certification and liability insurance status of working process servers. They are all required to re-register with the Clerk of the Circuit Court and provide proof of insurance annually. In the event there is a complaint about a process server, I try to work with the parties to resolve the issue.

DK: Please walk me through the process the typical applicant goes through to become certified.

EL: There are a number of requirements. First, the course at HCC must be taken. There is a final exam that must be passed with a score of at least 75%. All applicants must pass a criminal background check. Those with pending charges or felony convictions are disqualified, and so are those with misdemeanors involving "moral turpitude" or dishonesty within the last five years. Then there is the liability insurance; before becoming certified, the applicant must provide proof that they have a current liability insurance policy with limits of \$100,000/\$300,000. Sometimes this takes them by surprise; I've heard that the cost now is around \$900.00. Oh, and there is the \$100.00 application fee that the Clerk of the Circuit Court collects on behalf of the program

DK: Do you run a background check after they become certified process servers?

EL: Yes, during the annual recertification, background checks are run again and reviewed. Just as with the initial application, process servers have the right to provide a judicial panel, made up of the administrative judges of the General Civil, Family and County Civil divisions, with other pertinent information that may help determine whether or not they can serve process in Hillsborough County.

DK: What types of documents can certified process servers serve?

“Process servers’ roles in criminal cases are very limited, but they can serve witness subpoenas.”

EL: According to Florida Statutes, they can serve initial non-enforceable civil process. That includes documents such as subpoenas, summonses, notices of hearings etc. There is also what is called “enforceable civil process”, things like a Writ of Attachment or a Writ of Possession. The difference between the two types of process is that non-enforceable process requires only the serving of the documents while enforceable process requires that additional action be taken; these can only be served by the Sheriff’s Office. One type of case that illustrates the difference would be an eviction. A certified process server could serve the summons to the tenant. There is no action required, only the delivery of the summons notifying the tenant that his or her presence in court is required. If the case ends in a judgment for the landlord, a Writ of Possession could be issued by the court, and since this writ requires that the tenant move out, and since that requirement is enforceable, this could only be handled by the Sheriff’s office.

DK: Okay, I understand the distinction. Here’s a related question: do certified process servers ever have a role in criminal cases?

EL: Process servers’ roles in criminal courts are very limited, but they can serve witness subpoenas.

DK: Mr. Lopez, I think I have a grasp of how this program works, and thank you for taking the time to educate me. Is there something we have not covered that you would like our readers to know about?

EL: Yes, there is one thing; practically everything a person would need to know about becoming a process server in this jurisdiction is available on the court’s website www.fljud13.org/process_servers there you will also find related Florida Statutes and the Administrative Order (S-1996-076) which outlines the administrative process for process servers in our circuit. 📄

If My Friends Could See Me Now



It’s Wes Cull!

Please let me introduce you to Wes Cull. Wes works in Court Facilities Management. I know you’ve seen him. He’s the fellow who delivers your mail in the courthouse. Maybe, if you ask, he’ll sing you a song. Hey, it doesn’t hurt to ask.



7th Annual Appreciation Dinner



JDP Staff Members: Valerie Parmer, Kristin Stoycheff, Jennifer Patterson-Verma, Pam Stokes

On the evening of March 3, 2009, the modest courthouse cafeteria became the setting for a very classy affair when Juvenile Diversion Programs hosted their annual "Thank You" dinner for all of those who volunteer time and energy to help JDP continue their mission of helping kids stay on the right side of the law.

Of course there were speakers, the first of which was Kim Goddard, whose company, Proper Protocol, Inc., teaches proper etiquette to juvenile, female, first-time misdemeanants. Kim's talk was followed by dinner. JDP staff worked with local businesses to put together a tempting menu. The Columbia restaurant donated food for 75, including yellow rice and chicken, their signature 1905 Salad, Cuban bread and flan. Cacciatore and Sons donated a large pan of ziti. JDP employee Pam Stokes baked cakes and cupcakes for dessert.

Adding a nice touch, JDP clients did wonderful jobs as table servers. They were trained by Ryan Pines, who is a waiter at a local, upscale, Italian restaurant. Ryan is the son of Maggie Pines of JDP.

There was music in the air too. Six students from Blake High School of the Performing Arts performed several numbers, including Stars from Les Miserables and Stepsister's Lament from Cinderella. Then Kristen and Jon, brother and sister, and students at Orange Grove Middle School of the Performing Arts sang four numbers.

The keynote speech was by Darryl Daniels, Director of Derrick Brooks Charities. His forceful talk covered diverse topics, such as the importance of using a variety of approaches to address the needs of children from widely diversified backgrounds. 🌍



Kristin & Jon Corpuz of Orange Grove Middle School of the Performing Arts perform a duet



Kassandra, a JDP graduate serves a parent



Lora Karas giving direction to Luis Herrera, a Performing Arts Student from Blake High School



JDP Court Operations Manager Lora Karas with Kim Goddard, founder of Restart



Ciara Angol, Kim Goddard, Krystal Sanchez



Assistant State Attorney Patti Pierri, Richard Rolfes of Hillsborough County, Tony Julian of the State Attorney's Office & Lily McCarty of the Public Defender's Office of Hillsborough County