

# LEGAL E-CONNECTED

*of the 13th Judicial Circuit*

The Office of Public Information  
& High Profile Cases



# MIKE'S *Window*

TO THE 13TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

## BUDGET REDUCTIONS IMPACTS OUR CIRCUIT

A downward turn in Florida's economy and changes in our constitutional property taxes cause us to expect budget cuts in the courts because in fact, the situation of dealing with the budget crisis at the state level is at best "daunting" and certainly "precarious" depending on where those cuts are targeted. The cuts for the court system are estimated anywhere between 4.2% and 10%, so we have to be prepared for actual reduction in services to people in our community that we serve everyday.

As our legislators go into special session, we are facing a difficult cut as we are in the last quarter of our fiscal year. Positions have been frozen. Travel and training have been suspended. We are in negotiations with the Legislature on the amount of the additional budget reduction our branch of government will sustain this year and we are ever cognizant of the impact it has on the employees because you are the face of the courts. But we also have to consider budget cuts in the upcoming regular legislative session too which you should also be aware of.

Budget cuts across the board in the state will be newsworthy in the coming weeks so to give you a better idea of what that means to us here, I'll review some numbers for you:

For every 1% the state court budget is reduced, the 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit's budget is reduced \$119,586.00 77.4% of our state court budget is exempt from cuts because of constitutional requirements (due process issues, judges and law clerk salaries)

The remaining functions and programs funded by the state would incur a 2.2% reduction for every 1% cut mandated; i.e., meaning a 2% cut would be a 4.3% cut and a 4% cut would be 8.6% cut

That means we do have some vulnerabilities for targeted budget cuts as I have told you before.

- Mediation – 5,214 mediation sessions were conducted
- Civil Traffic Hearing Officer Program – 69,617 hearings were conducted in 2007



- Magistrates – 13,421 cases were handled in 2007
- Drug Courts – 4,301 cases were supervised in FY2007 with between a 60-88% success rate
- Case Management- 9,365 family and dependency cases coordinated in FY2007
- Court Administration- 9,537 fiscal transactions; 10,447 personnel actions; 88,536 requests for information; 395,766 hits on the website; 2,725 requests for assistance from judges and staff; 44,880 requests for document services

Some have said this is the worst revenue situation since 1974. Many of you had not yet joined the workforce at that time so that means very little to you but it is safe to say that these are times we will look back on in years to come and say that we too made it through. I realize things are tough and that costs are rising and I am sad to report that the light is dimming for salary enhancements. I am working with your Executive Team to develop and implement other strategies that will change the way some of you report to work. Meanwhile, my commitment lies steadfast in working with our Chief Judge to ensure we take every precaution to be good stewards of the resources we have and anticipate where we can to protect our employees who provide those essential services to the public.

*Michael D. Brinkman*



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p. 2  
Mike's Windows

p. 4  
Hearsay

p. 5  
New Hires

p. 6  
Editor's Letter

p. 7 - 8  
Work Life Balance

p. 9  
Program Brief

p. 10  
Community Bench

p. 11 - 13  
Feature: OPI & the Media

p. 14  
Court Tours

p. 15  
Behind the Scenes

p. 16  
Elves for Elders

p. 17 - 18  
Court Community  
Connections

p. 19  
Feature: Public Art

p. 20  
Feature: You're a Star of  
the Courts

p. 22  
Court 101 with  
Judge Stoddard

## Next Issue



16th Annual Black Heritage Celebration



If My Friends Could See Me Now

1. Name one reason the court may call a bench conference, according to the article, Court 101.



@ the



### Look Who's Talking



**Judge Tom Barber** and **Judge Lawrence Lefler** taught a trial advocacy course at the Gulfport campus of Stetson Law School. The course began on August 18<sup>th</sup>, and the final exam was December 12<sup>th</sup>.



On January 17, 2008, **Myra Gomez**, **Shelley Cridlin** and **Lisa Pride** conducted a training for the Hillsborough County Bar Association. Ms. Gomez is Judicial Assistant to **Judge Richard Nielsen**; Ms. Cridlin is a Staff Attorney in our Legal Department, and Ms. Pride works in the Circuit Civil division of the Clerk's office. The training was on Judge Nielsen's new Complex Litigation division.

**Yvette Boatwright** and **Selena Schoonover**, of the Case Management Unit, participated in the Hillsborough Kids, Inc. Resource Fair for new employees. They provided training on Unified Family Court divisions M and I on January 7<sup>th</sup>. Also of the Case Management Unit,

**Christine Shields** spoke at the Hillsborough County Bar Association CLE Seminar on January 11<sup>th</sup>. She provided training and information on the Family Court Services program.

### Look Who's Singing

**Judge Claudia Isom** and **Judge Emily Peacock**, members of the community chorus, Tampa Bay Singers, participated in several concerts throughout the past holiday season. Additionally, both judges were members of a quartet that sang the National Anthem on December 1, 2007, for the St. Andrew's Society, "a club dedicated to enjoying all things Scottish."

### Did You Know?



**Judge Claudia Isom** serves as president of Tampa Bay Inn of Court, a voluntary bar dedicated to mentoring and improving professionalism within the legal profession. Also, Judge Isom reports, with more than a hint of pride, that she is "now grandma to two beautiful little girls, Clara and Adele"



**Kathy O'Connell**, of Court Facilities Management, recently completed training to become a

teacher of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Since her students may come from Central and South America, Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe or the Pacific Rim, her training included cultural fluency, along with teaching methods. Her first students are a mother and daughter who arrived in Tampa from South Korea in December.



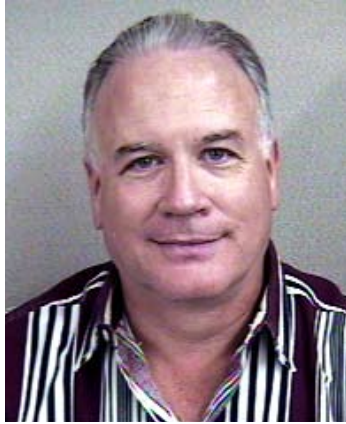
**Judge Charlotte Honeywell** participated in the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. parade on January 21,

2008. The judge also took part in a roundtable discussion at the Ybor City Campus of Hillsborough Community College after the parade.

# NEWHIRES



**Theresa (Janie) Gibbs**, Court Reporter II was hired on January 7, 2008. She had worked here before, and originally came here, with three other Court Reporters, from the 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, in July of 2003. Janie says her top three passions are quilting, playing piano and her two grandchildren; Tyler, age two and Morgan, age three.



**Kirby Jungers** worked in the AOC for a little over ten years, ending in January of 2007. Now, he seems to have decided where he really wants to be and was rehired, as Director of Facilities Management, on December 27, 2007. Welcome back Kirby! When not at work, Kirby enjoys playing acoustic guitar.



**Brenda Parrish**, Senior Secretary in the Office of Public Information spends her work week providing information and directions to the public from our two information booths. Brenda owned her own home-based business for fifteen years before coming to the courthouse. She said "it was nice going to work in her pajamas." Brenda's favorite movie is *Steel Magnolias*.



**Daniel Ringhoff** is the first person hired for this circuit's developing Mental Health Court. Before coming to the AOC, Dan worked for Northside Mental Health Center as a Forensic Social Worker in the Hillsborough County Jails. The population he worked with in the jail was severely mentally ill defendants awaiting transfer to a state hospital. This program is new to both the jail and to Northside. Dan

helped develop the program. Dan is currently working on his doctorate in the College of Social Work at USF. He says that academically and professionally he is interested in establishing a true continuum of care to prevent recidivism in the population of mentally ill individuals who become involved in the criminal justice system. It sounds as if he has landed in the right place.

When asked why she decided to become a lawyer, **Irina Hughes** responded with "I like to argue." Irina is in her second year of law school at Stetson University. She is employed here part-time and provides case management



services for Judge Richard Nielsen's Complex Litigation division. As if law school doesn't provide her with enough to read, she is currently reading and enjoying *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, by Gabriel Garcia Marquez.



Angie Smith: Editor's Letter

## A DYNAMIC TEAM IS LIKE A BRACELET

A couple of years ago I stumbled upon an art festival in New York and one of my friends pointed out a bracelet she thought I would like. She was right; it was perfect for me in every-way, save one. This bracelet was crafted from antique typewriter keys, not pearls or rubies yet the price reflected something different so I passed on it and every time after that we would go to another local art festival I would look for that bracelet I admired. Last fall I returned to New York to look for it again to no avail. When I was in New Orleans recently I looked again to no avail but one of my friends, a jewelry aficionado, knew how to discover it and now I am the owner of the long coveted bracelet.

A dynamic team is like a beautiful bracelet...no matter how exquisite the jewels may be, they become a bracelet only when each gem is securely linked. A pile of gems is worth far less than a piece of hand crafted jewelry. Most of you get the analogy right off - that individuals in the workplace are gems and worthy in their own right but far more worthy when working as a team. (If you are one of those islands in the stream and think you work better alone and don't need people or team mates, then others are thinking you are the weak link in that bracelet right now.) But I would like for you to think of the bracelet analogy as programs throughout court administration because as I walk through the halls of the courthouse it has become my observation that sometimes individual programs see themselves as isolated and apart from court administration.

As you leaf through the pages of our new publication, I hope you are reminded that we are all linked together, which provides us strength - much like the bracelet analogy. No doubt you are reading the newspapers, watching the local news, surfing the net and are in tune to the tough fiscal times ahead for our state fiscal economy. It is a time for us to be thankful for our court administrator because our leader is not one that is on the sidelines; on the Trial Court Budget Commission, Mike Bridenback

plays a critical role in advocating for our best interests as employees in the court system. Both he and Judge Menendez are on the forefront of meeting with legislative leaders to educate them of the impact of budget cuts in our circuit. As court employees not as "program" employees, during the next few weeks and months, we will come to appreciate their role more than ever.



I challenge you to look around and expand your horizons of whom you view as your colleagues in the workplace. Your bracelet may be bigger than you had previously recognized. Do you experience camaraderie here? May I suggest three simple practices?

- Acknowledge each other
- Acknowledge each other's work
- Say thank you

And now I digress a moment to say thank you to those who contributed to this inaugural edition of Legal e-Connected with no idea of what to expect. A special thanks is also owed to David Kirby who jumped in with both feet and actually with his heart and soul. And thank you to Simone Fallon as her talents are amazing and her quiet strength and a vision for this project. Hopefully, you find this newsletter reflects information useful about work and acknowledges your life away from this courthouse, as individuals.

You can recognize your co-workers in your daily lives without a lot of effort. We can help you do this through the use of Legal e-Connected also because we want to acknowledge you, after all we do have some gems, and some diamonds in the rough, and even some typewriter keys so we need to be securely linked together to become a bracelet...it's far more worthy!



# Work Life Balance

stories by: David Kirby



This column, Work – Life Balance, is new to the Legal Pad. In it will be highlighted practices and strategies that have brought some increased degree of balance to the often conflicting demands of our busy home and work lives.

This first column will offer a few ideas

that have, in some way, made this balancing act a little more manageable.

First, any job can be stressful at times, but the drive to and from work is all but guaranteed to be stressful. Stress does not just go away when the stress producing event is over; it tapers off over hours. So the daily commute can set the tone for our first few hours at

In the “anyone can change” category: Jim Downum, of the Juvenile Drug Court, found out that his cholesterol had skyrocketed, even though he was on medication. Or, to be more accurate, his wife found out about his alarming levels. So, Jim, with some enforcement from his spouse, Regina, has drastically modified his diet. He has all but excluded fat and cholesterol from his meals, and he has eaten no sweets. This has been going on for about seven weeks now with very few departures into the kill-zones of cholesterol and fat laden foods. Jim says he feels fine, he has lost weight and has had little trouble with the new regimen because he enjoys almost all foods, so he is able to create interesting and tasty meals and stay within his low fat and low carb diet. Here is one of his favorite recipes.

Fish, Grilled Vegetables, Asparagus Salad and Rice Pilaf

The Fish: Choose a filet of your favorite fish. It is ok to leave the skin on the fish if grilling, unless the fish is Snook. If someone gives you some Snook, remove the skin. Season with lemon juice and Tony Chachere’s Original Creole Seasoning. If the skin is left on, the meat will separate from the skin easily when done. If

work and our first few hours after we leave work. And stress reduction is one of the reasons Roger Allen, of the Drug Court Programs Office, made the decision to begin using public transportation for his daily commute. Other reasons Roger said motivated him to make this change are the environmental effects of commuting in a private vehicle and the costs of operating and parking his truck each day. Roger estimates that he is saving (on parking and gas alone) about sixty dollars a month.

About once a month, he walks to the County Center and pays \$12.50 for a 31 day pass which allows him to ride as much as he needs to for a month. This is a much reduced fare available to county employees.

Roger says the bus is on time, clean and not crowded. Using public transportation gives him a chance to read rather than battle with traffic, so he arrives at work, and at home after work, in a much more serene frame of mind. Even though the commute takes a little more time than driving, to Roger, this one disadvantage is far outweighed by the cost savings, environmental benefits and the reduction in stress. 🐦

the skin is removed, place the fish on aluminum foil. Cook over medium heat until the fish flakes. Do not overcook, as the fish will dry out and lose its flavor.

The Vegetables: (Egg Plant, Yellow Squash, Zucchini, or Carrots do well on the grill). Cut the vegetables in spears about the size of French Fries. Toss the vegetables in olive oil and wrap in aluminum foil. Place on the grill until they get to the desired texture, turning every 5 minutes or so.

The Salad: Cut the Asparagus into bite size pieces and place in a steaming basket. Steam the Asparagus for 3 – 4 minutes and immediately place in cold water. This will keep the spears crisp and prevent them from getting mushy. Slice the tomatoes and cut the slices into bite size pieces. Slice the red onion into slivers and mix with the tomatoes and asparagus. Toss with red wine or balsamic vinegar and olive oil. Season with Tony Chachere’s Creole Seasoning, or lightly salt and pepper.

The Rice: Wild Rice or Brown Rice, according to directions on the box.

The Dessert: Forget it. Go for a walk!! 🐦



# Work Life Balance

## If My Friends

## Could See Me Now



Ok, go ahead and guess – who is this pensive beauty, and what in the world is she pondering?

I think she’s considering career options. Yeah, I know, she’s a little kid, and it’s more likely she’s imagining riding a pony or playing with a friend. But, you see, I know more about her than you do. For instance, I know that:

- At the age of three, she actually joined the Future Teacher’s Association and did later become an educator. Hmm, this tells us that she can make decisions and follow through on them.

- As for thinking about riding a pony – yes, she may have been, since as a teen she raised, bred and showed championship Arabian horses and, at one time, owned and showed a National Champion Arabian -- Ah, she’s a country girl.

- She was born in South Tampa but was raised in Brandon. •She attended school in Brandon and graduated from the USF College of Education.

That seems like plenty of hints; now it’s your turn -- Who is this little equestrian?  
ANSWER ON PAGE 13.

## Show Us Your Skills



Got an idea for a story?

Love to write?

Do your friends call you a photog?

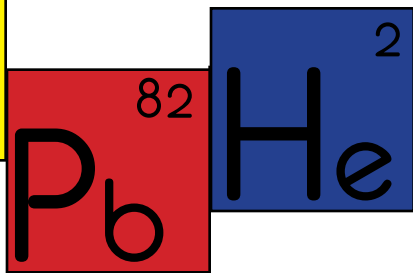
Maybe you’re just good at the grammer?

## We Need You!

Contribute to Legal e-Connected Today

by sending an e-mail to [kirbydv@fljud13.org](mailto:kirbydv@fljud13.org)





program.briefs

## MEDIATION DIVERSION SERVICES FAMILY MEDIATION PROGRAM

story by: Paul McGuire



**“ABOUT 2,800 FAMILY CASES WERE ACTUALLY MEDIATED IN 2007 WITH ABOUT A 60% SETTLEMENT RATE.”**

The Family Mediation Program, a part of Mediation & Diversion Services, began in 1984 when an administrative order was issued that required mediation for post-judgment child custody and visitation disputes. A couple of years later another order added the issues of child support and alimony for mandatory mediation and the program was really off and running. Staff mediators were hired to conduct the mediations and the volume of cases grew at a fast rate over the ensuing years. Eventually the staff mediators were replaced with contract mediators and today there are sixteen contract mediators performing family mediations.

The family program aids parties in pre-judgment cases, post-judgment cases, and temporary relief cases where parties need to work out arrangements for what will happen during the pendency of their case until a final judgment is issued. The issues addressed in family mediation include child custody, visitation and parental responsibility; child support and alimony; distribution of real and personal property; responsibility for debts and medical expenses; and other matters affecting families who split up. In 2007, more than 4,500 cases were referred to the family program and the cases were processed by the fifteen person staff of Mediation & Diversion Services, along with numerous other programs administered by them.

Most of the cases that are referred to the family program are court ordered in one way or the other. All post-judgment and temporary relief cases are required by an administrative order to participate in mediation before a court hearing can be scheduled. Pre-judgment cases are not subject to such an order, and are handled by the trial judge on a case by case basis. The judges frequently order the parties to mediate in those cases, and the parties often desire to go to mediation without a court order because they know it is an excellent way to work out their problems.

Family cases are normally scheduled several weeks in advance, but sometimes the judges send parties to mediation directly from their courtrooms. Often there is a mediator available who can conduct the mediation; otherwise the case is scheduled for another date. On the days each month that the judges have case management hearings, the program provides mediators who have no scheduled cases and are free to mediate with parties who are sent from the hearings. The parties' mediation fees are set by state statute, and depending upon their combined monthly income, they pay a flat fee of either \$40 or \$80. Quite a bargain for parties who are receiving the services of some of the most experienced mediators in the state! 🙌



# Community Bench

Volunteer

Mentor

Leader

Judge Eric Myers

story by: David Kirby



Shriner's National Officer, Judge Eric Myers

**“Judge Myers’ parents stressed the importance of helping others.”**

**T**o talk to Judge Eric Myers, it sounds as if he has never even considered whether or not to be of service to his community. To him, it just seems to be the way things are done.

Born and raised in Haines City, Florida, both of his parents worked in the public schools. His mother was a high school guidance counselor, his father a school principal who, by the way, was young Eric’s teacher in the seventh grade.

Judge Myers says that his mother and father did much more than parent him though; they were dedicated mentors, and they hard-wired him for service. It didn’t hurt either, that he was an only child. Because of this, his parents encouraged him to get out and become involved with others, and he took their advice. Growing up, he played football and several other sports and also served as a lifeguard. Service clubs caught his eye too; he belonged to several. He has always been drawn to others, and says that being involved with others is a great way for him to learn.

The judge’s desire to be involved and to serve his community has been a constant in his life, and, as his life circumstances have changed over time, he has had even greater opportunities to impact his community. Whether on his own or as a member of an organization, a great deal of his outreach is focused on helping disadvantaged or at-risk African-American youth.

Here is a sample of Judge Myers’ efforts in the community:

- Current national officer in Shriners and is on-track to become national president
- Current member of Harram Temple #23 - efforts and

accomplishments too numerous to list

- Thirty-third degree Mason – numerous awards and memberships on committees - serves as liaison to
- Shriners Hospitals for Children, Tampa unit
- Mentor - Urban League Youth Trust
- Member - Tampa Community Relations Committee
- Member - Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity
- Member- NAACP
- Ask - A - Lawyer volunteer
- Volunteer reader - Mom’s Day Care Center
- After Hurricane Katrina, traveled to New Orleans to paint damaged houses
- In league with Judge Michael F. Andrews, of Clearwater, Judge Myers, and several other African-American judges from around the state have created a “Judicial Forum.” This effort brings African American judges and at-risk black children together, in an informal situation, to talk about how to deal with peer pressure or how to persevere in the face of prejudice. For this, Judge Andrews received the 2006 Florida Supreme Court Chief Justice’s Distinguished Judicial Service Award. It was Judge Myers who nominated him for the award.
- October 4, 2007 - offered words of inspiration and presented diplomas to graduates at commencement exercises of the Academy of Dreams, in Tampa
- On March 15, 2008 - will be volunteering, with his Masonic Lodge, at the Special Olympics, to be held at USF.

While he was growing up in Haines City, Judge Myers’ parents stressed the importance of helping others; of being self-reliant but also being willing to ask for help; and being goal-focused and staying true to that goal. These are the messages he carries to those he serves. 🌟



## Have You Seen Me on TV?

### The Office of Public Information and High Profile Cases

story by: Simone Fallon

After a long day at the office you arrive home, kick off your shoes, sink back into your beloved easy chair and reach for the best invention know to man – the remote. The news is on and all of the sudden, a flash on the screen, it's a Judge from the 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit on national television. Did you ever wonder how this all happens? Do you know what constitutes a high profile case?

High profile cases garner the attention of the national media. There are approximately three high profile cases in one calendar year for the 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit. These cases range from County to Circuit and from Criminal to Civil. While high profile cases are rare they stir up quite a bit of attention. It's the responsibility of the Office of Public Information to facilitate cameras in the courtrooms and monitoring media representatives from television producers to reporters to camera operators.

It all starts with the media liaison, Calvin Green. As soon as a court date is set Calvin's phone begins to ring. While he receives numerous requests from television producers to "reserve" a spot in the courtroom for their camera, it is on a first-come first-serve basis. An Administrative Order provides specific guidelines for the media while recording in the courtroom, most especially while court is in session. The number and placement of cameras in the courtroom is subject to the Judge's discretion. Usually, only one video camera is allowed in the courtroom. At any point a Judge may ask the camera crew to leave. Cameras have the potential to distract or intimidate so limiting the number of



Judge Daniel L. Perry During a High Profile Case



Administrative Order S-2007-038 details regulations for Digital Cameras and Video Cameras in the Courtroom

CNN correspondent, Beth Karas goes live on television and the internet from outside the Annex during a high profile case.



On Camera

Behind the Scenes





A producer, audio technician, and cameraman set-up and test their equipment before a live broadcast.



The Office of Public Information's Calvin Green and David Kirby speak with Aletse Mellado, the Florida Bureau Chief for Court TV in preparation for a high profile case.

cameras inside the courtroom aids in promoting the sanctity and integrity. By maintaining the regulations as outlined in the Administrative Order and the preference of each Judge, Calvin Green contributes to a safe and orderly courtroom.

Approximately two weeks before a hearing Calvin will contact the Judge to obtain permission to film within their courtroom. Upon obtaining permission the producer will visit the courthouse and tour the courtroom to determine where they will set-up their equipment.

During the day of the trial or hearing, Calvin will meet the member of the crew, escort the producer, photographer and sound technician to the courtroom and supervise the set-up and assist with any questions or special requests.

National Broadcasters such as Court TV, NBC, ABC, CBS, CNN and many more convene on the courthouse during a high profile case. The lucky broadcaster that has the privilege of filming in the courtroom must make their video coverage available through a pool feed. The pool is then distributed to members of the broadcast

pool who are free to edit and broadcast it as they see fit. Once edited, the tapes are then broadcasted from large satellite trucks that line the streets outside of the Annex.

In addition to the 'nationals' local broadcasters have the same opportunity as the national broadcaster to make the first request to have their cameras in the courtroom. If a local broadcaster is chosen to film in the courtroom then the same rules apply. All footage must be made available through a pool feed. Mark Zewalk of Fox13 is the media pool's coordinator. His employer compensates him for his services.

Mark and Calvin work together to make sure that no one impedes the process and that the court functions properly. "Calvin has spent many years in television as a photographer and is well versed in the judiciary, we haven't had any problems in twenty-five years or longer," exclaimed Zewalk.

The next time you kick back and flip on the tube you'll know from start to finish how it gets from your local courtroom to your living room and all around the world. 🌐

### Answer to "If My Friends Could See Me Now"



Meet Martha Kempgens who is the Dependency Court Program Manager in the Case Management Unit. She lives in Darby (the boondocks); she is married and has two grown children, a son and a daughter; she retired from the school system after twenty years of teaching elementary and pre-school students; her husband and son build race cars and compete in them; and, not the retiring type, Martha once drove a '55 Chevy race car in competition on the dirt track at East Bay Raceway. So, when you see her around the courthouse, tell her hello and challenge her to a race or just tell her you're happy to see her.

Judge Essrig with Martha Kempgens

# COURTTOURS



*Girl Scout Troop 324 Rides the Elevator During Their Court Tour*

## 6. What are the simple practices for camaraderie in the workplace?

Date	Group	Tour Guide
12.04.07	Everest University	Blanca Potts
12.13.07	Dowdell Middle Magnet School	Blanca Potts/David Kirby
01.15.08	Faith Outreach Middle School	Blanca Potts/David Kirby
01.24.08	Girl Scout Troop 324	David Kirby
01.31.08	RCMA Academy Charter School	Blanca Potts
02.06.08	Everest University	David Kirby
02.07.08	Everest University	David Kirby
02.18.08	Hope of Shiloh Community Church	David Kirby



## *of* The Justice Files "Truancy Court"



Some are surprised to learn that legally parents are held responsible for unexcused absences in school. What's more – that responsibility, if not upheld can land both the child and parent in front of a judge. In this edition of Justice Files FLA, you'll learn about what happens when your child is not in school when the bell rings and how Truancy Courts have a way requiring school progress reports. Plus, Juvenile Diversionary Programs offer alternative sanctions to the traditional court process. Check out upcoming podcasts about SHOCK, Juvenile Arbitration, Neighborhood Accountability and Restart. If you want access to justice, then this is the place to be! 🎧



Pilar Ortiz



Jenifer Patterson Verma



Judge Ashley B. Moody



Judge Herbert J. Baumann, Jr.



Lora Karas

## *Credits*

### *Executive Producer*

K. Angela Smith

### *Producer*

Carlos Nieves

### *Writers*

K. Angela Smith

Carlos Nieves

Martha Bone

### *Studio Host*

Pilar Ortiz

### *Cast & Special Guests*

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David Kirby

Mel Ortiz

Ginger Schechter

Jenifer Patterson Verma

Alina Cuervo

Dpty. Colin Jones

Tonya Muhamad

Calvin Green

Linda Rivero

Marie Anna Gagliano

Pat Crosby

Dpty. Glen J. Scharfeld

Hon. Ashley B. Moody

Hon. James S. Moody, Jr.

Laurel F. Moore

Irma Moody

Anne Haywood

Wayne Shuff

### *Consultant*

Lora Karas

# ELVESFORELDERS

story & photos by: David Kirby



An 'Elf for Elders' delivers a gift to Jason George an EJC Court Counselor

Every holiday season since 2002, the Elder Justice Center, along with Aging Solutions, has conducted a gift drive, Elves for Elders, that benefits elderly or disabled wards of the state.

Aging Solutions is the Public Guardian in Hillsborough County. As such, they act as guardian for indigent citizens who have been found, by a court, to be incompetent. The Elder Justice Center (EJC) is a court program that, among other missions, monitors guardianship cases in this circuit.

The holiday collaboration between Aging Solutions and EJC has been successful from the beginning. According to Jennifer Branch, Court Counselor in EJC, each year has been more successful than the last.

This was General Magistrate Sean Cadigan's first year at the helm of the Elves for Elders campaign. Mr. Cadigan, in addition to his duties as a General Magistrate, is the Director of EJC, and he steered the 2007 drive to a new high.

While the final figures are not yet available, enough data has been collected to assure that the 2007 Elves for Elders gift drive was, by far, the most successful ever. Here are the figures that are in:

Over 500 gift cards, ranging from five dollars to seventy-five dollars, were donated for the wards.

Almost \$10,000 in cash donations to the Ward's Gift Fund

Every single ward under public guardianship was adopted by multiple elves.

Congratulations to the team at EJC and to everyone at Aging Solutions for making the 2007 Elves for Elders the very best yet. 🎁



Attorney Paul Riffel representing the Carrollwood Bar Assoc. presents a \$500 check to Tamara Cribben of Aging Solutions and Judge Susan Sexton





## Goodwill & The 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit

story by: David Kirby



*Marcy Lippincott*



**M**arcy Lippincott, Outpatient Services Program Manager, for Goodwill in Tampa, volunteered that she has seen the effects of substance abuse in her family, which is not an uncommon phenomenon in those who work in this specialty or in the courts. She went on to say that she believes this experience has given her insight into the complexity of the challenges that individuals, families, employers and communities face in dealing with the problem(s) of substance abuse.

Notwithstanding Goodwill's stated mission "to help people achieve their full potential through the dignity and power of work", Marcy sees a much more elemental mission - "We're in the business of saving lives." Well, what does it mean to save lives? Literally, it means doing what one can to keep people from expiring, but anyone who has personal or professional experience with substance abuse knows that "saving lives" means more than seeing that people continue to breathe. If some type of intervention does not occur, substance abusing individuals may spiral deeper and deeper into addiction and thus further into

despair, isolation, hopelessness and, eventually, helplessness and death.

However, this descent does not happen in isolation; families too are damaged in many ways. But, just as families and individuals suffer, so do communities, which suffer from the loss of potential and productivity of the substance abusing individual. Communities also suffer from the enormous medical, legal, and mental health costs of substance abuse, to name just a few. And this is where Marcy, Goodwill and their connection to the courts comes in.

Goodwill's Juvenile Substance Abuse Intervention Services runs a six-month program focused on intervention and education for adolescents who have been deemed "at risk" for developing substance abuse problems. Goodwill does all the assessments of juvenile offenders referred to treatment by our Juvenile Drug Court. If the results of the assessment indicate that the defendant is in need of intervention and substance abuse education services, Goodwill will provide those services. However, if the adolescent is in need of more intensive treatment, he or she will

be referred to one of several other agencies or programs. Marcy and her staff provide active case coordination with the courts by attending hearings and meeting regularly with the Juvenile Drug Court Program Specialists. This program also receives referrals from the Administrative Office of the Courts' Juvenile Diversion Programs and from Hillsborough County schools when students violate the zero-tolerance policy.

Goodwill also works with clients referred from the Drug Pre-trial Intervention Program. Another treatment agency in the community is the primary provider for this court; however, if for some reason, Goodwill's services are a better fit, the referral will be made to Goodwill. All of the referrals from the DPTI Program are willing participants without prior felony convictions. These defendants have chosen to participate in the program rather than face the possibility of a felony conviction in another court. All program participants are supervised in the community by the Florida Department of Corrections. The department dedicates four officers to this program. Each case is coordinated among Goodwill,

## 8. What areas of the court's budget are vulnerable for reductions?

Goodwill Industries-Suncoast, Inc  
10596 Gandy Blvd.  
St. Petersburg, FL 33702  
Phone: 727.523.1512  
Toll-free: 888.279.1988  
Fax: 727.563.9300  
Hearing Impaired: 727.579.1068  
[www.goodwill-suncoast.org/index.cfm](http://www.goodwill-suncoast.org/index.cfm)



the Department of Corrections and the Drug Court Programs Office.

According to Goodwill's website, "This...program provides intensive, short-term substance abuse treatment for adult offenders who are in need of a more structured environment and assistance to deal with their substance abuse problems than traditional outpatient treatment, but who are not in need of residential treatment or prison confinement." This is a six month, rigorous, three phase program that, in phase one, provides four hours of counseling four times weekly. Treatment frequency lessens in each phase so that by phase three, clients attend treatment twice weekly. The Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners provides the funding to Goodwill for this program.

The Adult Post-adjudication Drug Court also refers defendants to this six month treatment program. As the name of the court suggests, defendants have been adjudicated prior to being assigned to a drug treatment program. In this court defendants may be referred to any one of several treatment providers, depending on factors such as substance abuse and criminal histories as well as the defendant's prior treatment experiences.

The most recent collaboration between Goodwill and the courts is in the Family Dependency Treatment Court. Marcy said she is excited

about this because they have the opportunity to work with the whole family. She went on to describe how the program works. In this court, at least one parent has been identified as having a substance abuse problem, and the child, or children, have been removed from the home. Hillsborough Kids, Inc. (HKI) is the third part of this treatment triad. The goal of treatment and of the court is family reunification. The first phase of treatment is twenty-two weeks of substance abuse treatment for the parent. During this time, the parent also is required to participate in "nurturing parenting classes." After the twenty-second week, the kids are brought into the mix so that treatment involves the whole family. The parents continue to participate in substance abuse treatment, and the child now receives counseling as well. In addition, skill-based parenting classes begin in this phase. Marcy described these classes as "very active and hands-on." Families learn skills such as effective communication and appropriate nurturing skills.

This article began by providing a few internet links to some of Goodwill's services, but the internet only connects with information that already exists or with tools to help create and store more information. The connections that truly matter are the ones that facilitate offenders becoming productive members of society; that reunify children

with their parents; and families with their communities. As we have seen, Goodwill's outpatient substance abuse treatment services are a link in that chain, as is the Florida Department of Corrections; the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners; Hillsborough Kids, Inc; the schools; the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit's various drug court programs and the Juvenile Diversion Program as well as the judiciary. These are the links that have been mentioned; however, there are many, many more: law enforcement, the Office of the State Attorney, the Public Defender's Office and on and on. But, the basic element of these links is people; people like Marcy Lippincott -- you may have seen her around the courthouse. She has a wonderful smile and red hair -- not your typical red hair, but **really red hair!** And she is not satisfied with the connections as they exist. She wants more collaboration with other treatment providers. She said she has seen how well the Juvenile Drug Court works with a mix of treatment providers, and she hopes for more collaboration in the future. So, if Marcy has her way, these chains of connections among Goodwill, the courts and the rest of the community will become stronger than the chains that bind individuals and their families in the repetitious and damaging cycles of behavior generated by substance abuse disorders. 🙏



## Unveiling a Legacy The Honorable George E. Edgecomb, 01.22.08

story by: David Kirby  
photo by: Simone Fallon

Judge George E. Edgecomb was the first African American attorney to practice law in the State Prosecutors Office. When that office became the State Attorney's Office, he was their first black prosecutor, and later he became this jurisdiction's first black judge, invested on August 13, 1973. Tragically, he passed away on January 22, 1976, after less than three years on the bench.

His life was memorialized on January 24, 2004 when the George E. Edgecomb Courthouse was dedicated in his name. Judge

Edgecomb's life was again commemorated on January 22, 2008 when a bronze bust of his likeness was dedicated in the lobby of the building bearing his name. The likeness is dramatic, seeming will itself out of living rock. It was created by artist, Harrison Covington, who was present at the dedication, along with members of the Edgecomb family, many members of the judiciary and members of the public. Mr. Covington expressed gratitude for the opportunity to craft a tribute to a hero. Of public art, the artist said that it "should challenge viewers

to think about topics of universal importance."

Judge Edgecomb lived a short life; however, his memory lives on among those who knew him – his family, church, friends and the legal community. One of those remembering him is Judge J. Rogers Padgett, who recalls that Judge Edgecomb was quite aware that he was in uncharted waters, both as a prosecutor and as a judge.

Prior to becoming judges, Judge Edgecomb and Judge Padgett worked together in the State Prosecutors Office and later in the Felony Division of the State Attorney's Office. Judge Edgecomb eventually became the Chief of that division.

After both assumed the bench, they continued to work together, each assigned to traffic divisions. At that time, traffic hearings were held in the old Tampa Police Department building that stood where Stetson University Law School now stands. Judge Padgett remembers Judge Edgecomb as "serious, intense and inquisitive" about how others reached certain conclusions. In describing how Judge Edgecomb, as a new judge, gained respect from the attorneys practicing before him, Judge Padgett said, "Once you had dealt with Judge Edgecomb, it was obvious that he was an honorable man."

In this building that bears his name, in his likeness in its lobby, and in the minds of those who held, and still hold his memory dear; Judge Edgecomb's legacy of honor, courage, perseverance and accomplishment is thus perpetuated. 🐦



Allison & Doretha Edgecomb at the Unveiling Ceremony

# YOUR'RE A STAR OF THE COURTS



Chief Judge Manuel Menendez,  
Dominic Ford of Mercedes Benz of Tampa Bay, Employee of the Year  
Chris Nauman ,  
Court Administrator Mike Bridenback



Mark Bianchini & Travis Moll of  
Reeves Import Motor Cars,  
Judge Anthony K. Black, The Tessie Rosete Memorial Award  
Recipient - Susan Anders,  
Chief Judge Manuel Menendez,  
Court Administrator Mike Bridenback

## 2007 AWARD WINNERS

**Employee of the Year**  
Chris Nauman

**Tessie Rosete  
Memorial Award**  
Susan Anders

**Most Valuable Player**  
Wagner Pena

**Quality of Excellence**  
Brenda Monzon

**Risk Taker**  
Maritza Lopez

**Synergy Award**  
Murdock Team:  
Julie Roberts,  
Keith D'Atrio,  
Bob Pavlovici

**Chief Judges' Award**  
Pat Bean

**Helping Hand**  
Diane Williams

## EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION & HOLIDAY BASH 12.05.2007



This year's bash was indeed that, with glittering decorations, imaginative costumes, rockin' tunes and great dancing. Oh, and the food—it was abundant and it was great. All of the departments and programs stepped up to provide the wide assortment of dishes.

And, did I mention the dancing? Mike Bridenback fulfilled a promise to his wife, Margie, and cut the rug with her in the public debut of Mike's new dancing skills – Mike's got moves!

Following the swinging couple, came the AOC's version of the Ike and Tina Turner Review with Ike (Janice Albury) and Tina (Tracy Wells), along with backup singers and dancers, Jessie Luke and Adri Tasanaprasert.

They rocked the house with the Ike and Tina hit, Proud Mary. Those ladies rock!

Twelve performance awards were presented, as well as service awards. In addition, special appreciation was extended to volunteer talent appearing in Justice Files productions.

The awards for table decorations went to: First Place – The team of Central Office, Fiscal Affairs and Court Facilities

Second Place – Office of Public Information and Court Personnel Resources

Thanks go to the hard working team that put this all together. They were led by Tracy Wells and Elvira Pisacane with Adri Tasanaprasert handling the publications. 🍷



Mike & Margie Bridenback

**Innovation Award**  
Susan Matthey

**Leadership Award**  
Sean Cadigan

**Teamwork Award**

Indigent  
Services  
Committee  
Support Staff:  
Deb Tracy,  
David Rowland,  
Rick Melendi,  
Janice Albury



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

**GO VOLUNTEER!**



**ADULTS & TEENS WANTED  
[WWW.FLJUD13.ORG/JDP/VOLUNTEERS.HTML](http://WWW.FLJUD13.ORG/JDP/VOLUNTEERS.HTML)**





# Court 101

featuring Judge Ralph Stoddard



## Bench Conferences - What are they all about?

story by: David Kirby

**H**ave you ever wondered what attorneys and judges talk about when they meet at the bench and talk in hushed tones during proceedings? Well, according to Judge Ralph Stoddard, "They could be talking about anything, from when to break for lunch, to discussing how to handle an issue that may be particularly sensitive to a witness."

One of the most common reasons for bench conferences is for the attorneys and the judge to air out evidentiary matters before they are introduced in open court. This keeps the jury from being exposed to evidence that could influence them but that might not, ultimately, be admitted as evidence.

Of important note, bench conferences must always include the attorneys for both sides of the case. If the conference will be brief, it will take place at the bench, with the jury in place. However, if the matter will take some time, the judge might excuse the jury for whatever time it takes to resolve the issue at hand.

So, what triggers a bench conference? Judge Stoddard explained that an objection by one of the attorneys often generates a conference. But, the court also may call for the conference. The court may have noticed something that is going on during proceedings that needs to be addressed but, as yet, should not be heard by the jury. For instance,

- A particular line of questioning may be leading to testimony that has already been objected to and has been disallowed.
- Another reason the court may call the attorneys to the bench might have to do with inappropriate

behavior by an attorney or one of the parties in the case.

- A party in the case might be using facial expressions or body language to communicate with jurors or witnesses. Intimidating stares toward jurors or witnesses could cause the court to bring the attorneys to the bench for the judge's admonition that counsel gain control of his or her client.
- A witness may look to someone else in the courtroom for indications as to how to answer questions. These "indications" might take the form of subtle head movements, facial expressions or hand gestures. To illustrate, Judge Stoddard described the following hypothetical situation: In a case of alleged corporate misbehavior, a lower level employee, on the witness stand, might look to his or her corporate superiors for gestures communicating how to answer questions. If these behaviors are noticed by the court, a bench conference would be called.

When asked to recall a particularly memorable bench conference, Judge Stoddard had no difficulty coming up with one. During a trial, Judge Stoddard noticed that one of the jurors had been constantly dozing off. So, the judge called counsel to the bench to discuss how to handle the issue. One of the attorneys responded quickly with a sense of comic irony, "If you don't mind judge, I prefer them that way."

So, to summarize, bench conferences may occur for any number of reasons, but in the broadest sense, they happen so that the lawyers and the judge can discuss matters that the jury may not or should not be privy to at that time. 🙌

# JUDICIAL DIVERSITY TRAINING

58 Judges, 7 General Magistrates, 4 Hearing Officers & 21 Legal Staff Members



*Judge Ronald Ficarrotta; Judge Jack Espinosa Jr.;  
Judge J. Rogers Padgett*



*Judge Christopher C. Sabella*



*General Magistrate Jon Johnson &  
Judge Elizabeth G. Rice*



*Judge Debra Behnke &  
General Magistrate Joan Montagnone*

story by: Judge Claudia Isom & Heather Thullbery

Over thirty judges, magistrates and staff attorneys from the Thirteenth Circuit, Sixth Circuit and Second District Court of Appeal participated in a diversity training session on October 26, 2007, at the Tampa campus of Stetson University School of Law. The Thirteenth Circuit has teamed up with the Sixth Circuit to offer six training sessions in compliance with Chief Justice Fred Lewis' administrative order requiring all judges to participate in diversity training by year's end. The October 26th session was facilitated by Wilhelmina Tribble, a professional trainer and member of the Supreme Court Commission on Fairness and Diversity, and

featured a luncheon speech by Lansing Scriven, past president of the Hillsborough County Bar Association. As of the last session, November 16, 2007, a total of 58 judges, 7 general magistrates, 4 hearing officers and 21 members of our legal staff have completed the one day training. Additional training for our remaining court staff is being scheduled for the spring. Funding for six additional training sessions for Court Staff has been requested from the OSCA.

Note- Judge Claudia Isom and Heather Thullbery serve as the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit's Diversity Team. 🌈

# Wake Up

*...and go to school!*

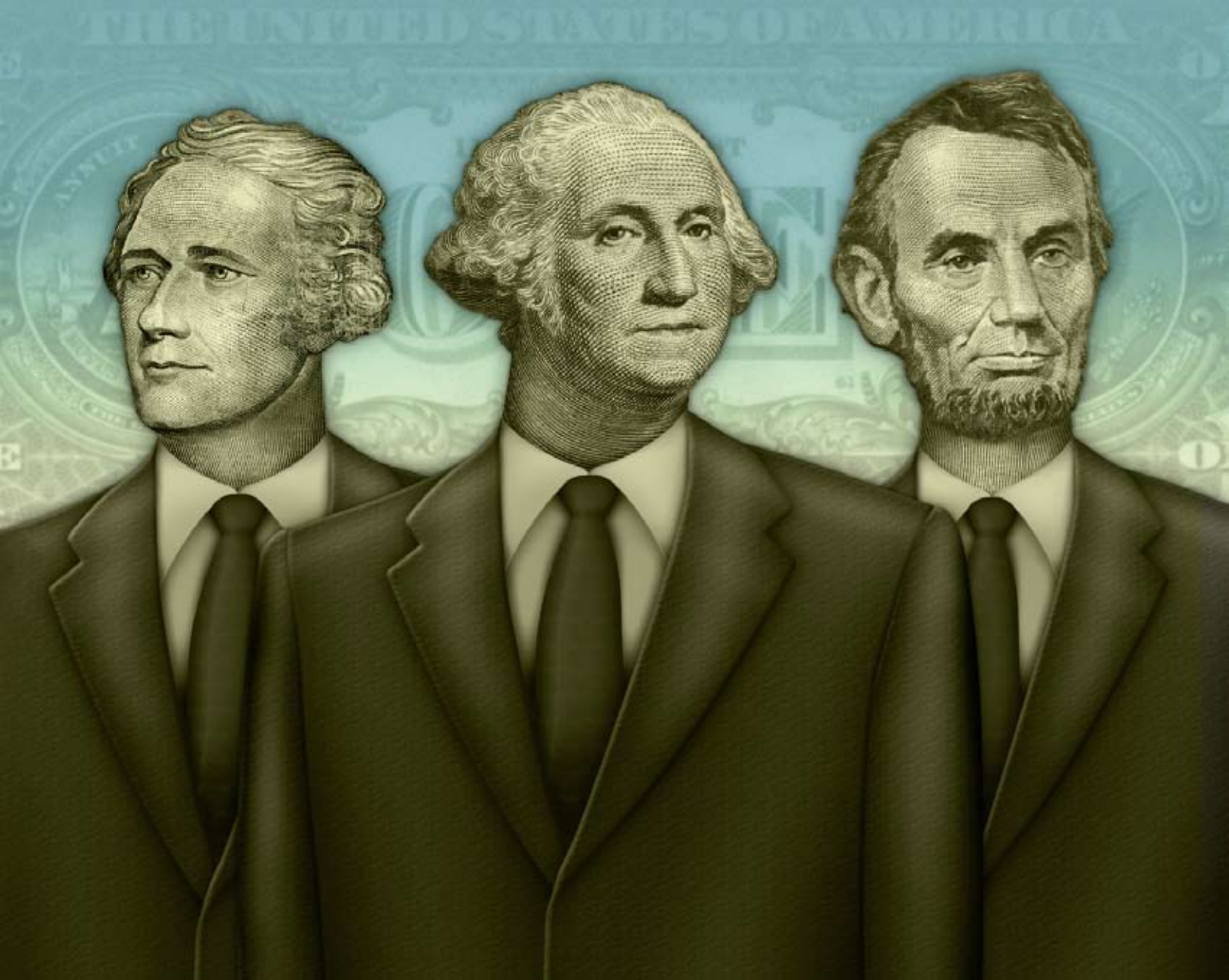
Justice Files FLA  
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"Truancy Court"

For Air Times & Channels Please Go To  
[www.fljud13.org/mediacenterVideoPage.html](http://www.fljud13.org/mediacenterVideoPage.html)







# **THESE GUYS MIGHT PAY YOU A VISIT**

Locate ten questions throughout and be the first employee to locate the questions, answer them correctly and then submit them to [smithka@fljud13.org](mailto:smithka@fljud13.org) and you will win a prize.

Note- In this first edition, all mistakes are ours, as we worked without an editorial staff so that each employee would have the opportunity to answer the challenging questions.