



Administrative Office of the Courts  
Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**BAR ASSOCIATION HONORS COURT ADMINISTRATOR WITH ‘LIBERTY BELL AWARD’**

**Tampa, FL.** (May 8, 2012) — Michael L. Bridenback, the 13th Judicial Circuit’s court administrator, received the Hillsborough County Bar Association’s “Liberty Bell Award” in appreciation of his layman’s service to the legal profession and the judicial system.

The award is presented annually here and around the country in conjunction with Law Day to honor a citizen who does not practice law but who has worked to preserve and strengthen the justice system.

Hillsborough Chief Judge Manuel Menendez Jr. gave a rousing introduction surprising Bridenback, who thought he was attending the Law Day luncheon to give another presentation. “Obviously I was preparing the wrong speech,” Bridenback joked in accepting the award.

Bridenback joined the Hillsborough circuit in 1994 after a 17-year stint with the Office of State Court Administrators in Tallahassee, where he devoted much of his time to the statewide development of mediation services, which is now an integral part of the court system. Today he oversees a 62-judge trial court and 200 state and county court funded employees, and he administers a \$35 million state and county budget.

Bridenback has served on the National Association of Court Management Board of Directors, the National Commission on Community Justice National Task Force on Court Mediation Program Standards and as co-chair of the National Joint Technology Committee. He also has been a member of the Harvard Kennedy School’s Executive Session for State Court Leaders in the 21st Century — a group of judges, court administrators and academics who gather to discuss the challenges facing the judicial branch — since its inception in 2008. Through the Department of Justice and the National Center of State Courts, Bridenback has also used his experience internationally to help strengthen governance and democracy in both Romania and Kosovo.

To learn more about Florida’s 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit please visit [www.fljud13.org](http://www.fljud13.org).