

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF THE  
STATE OF FLORIDA

**IN RE: 1998/1999 Administrative Plan for the  
Fourteenth Judicial Circuit  
JUDY MARKHAM PITTMAN, CHIEF JUDGE**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NUMBER 98-09**

**WHEREAS** the Chief Judge of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit, pursuant to Rule 2.050, Florida Rules of Judicial Administration, has the responsibility to develop an administrative plan for the efficient and proper administration of all courts within the circuit, and

**WHEREAS** the Chief Judge, through the plan, ensures the administrative organization of the circuit to effect the prompt disposition of cases and effective use of court resources,

**NOW THEREFORE it is ORDERED AND ADJUDGED** that the following 1998/1999 Administrative Plan for the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit will be in effect from the date of signature of this order until another plan is developed:

**PURPOSE**

This administrative plan outlines the administration of the courts for the circuit as established by Rule 2.050, Florida Rules of Judicial Administration, and describes the organizational structure of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit.

**ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHIEF JUDGE**

The Chief Judge of the circuit, the Honorable Judy Markham Pittman, exercises administrative supervision over all courts with the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit and is empowered with judicial and administrative authority over the judges and officers of the court of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit. The Chief Judge is responsible to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Florida, the Honorable Major Best Harding.

The Chief Judge also oversees trial court administration as outlined in Rule 2.050, Florida Rules of Judicial Administration, and shall ensure an appropriate and sound organizational structure for the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit. In this capacity, the Chief Judge shall directly supervise the Trial Court Administrator and the Guardian ad Litem Director.

In support of the administrative responsibility, the Chief Judge shall sign all Fourteenth Judicial Circuit administrative orders. Moreover, administrative orders originating from an administrative judge or committee chairperson shall be signed by both the administrative judge or chairperson, and the Chief Judge.

If the Chief Judge is absent from the circuit or is otherwise unavailable, the Honorable N. Russell Bower will be appointed acting Chief Judge. Should he and the Chief Judge be absent during the same period, the Honorable Dedee S. Costello will be appointed acting Chief Judge.

#### **BOARD OF JUDGES**

The nine circuit and eight county judges make up the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit Board of Judges.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE APPOINTMENTS**

The Chief Judge shall appoint administrative judges to ensure efficient and effective management of the circuit's various divisions. The administrative judges for each division are responsible for the general administrative duties circuit-wide in the particular subject matter area of the division. They are also responsible for monitoring time standards for their divisions. Each administrative judge should report to the Board of Judges at each Board meeting. All matters that need resolution before the next Board meeting should be brought to the attention of the Chief Judge, who will call a meeting of the Advisory Committee for immediate resolution. These appointments and specific duties related to the division are as follows:

*Criminal Law Division* — Judge Don T. Sirmons (specific duties also include monitoring the Bay County Drug Court Committee)

*Civil/Family Law Division* — Judge Michael C. Overstreet (specific duties also include monitoring the mediation programs)

*Juvenile Law Division* — Judge William L. Wright (specific duties also include monitoring the Teen Court Programs)

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Administrative Advisory Committee, a committee agreed upon by the Board of Judges, is created to advise the Chief Judge on administrative affairs of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit. This committee will be responsible for but not limited to the following specific duties:

- ▶ Trial court staff attorneys' employment procedures, supervision, and assignments; and
- ▶ Annual review of the certification report of the circuit's caseload statistics which calculates the need for new circuit and county judgeships.

The committee membership, shall be appointed by the Chief Judge, and includes the following:

- ▶ The Honorable Judy Markham Pittman, Chief Judge;
- ▶ The Honorable Glenn L. Hess, Administrative Circuit Judge for Bay County;
- ▶ The Honorable William L. Wright, Administrative Circuit Judge for the remaining five counties;
- ▶ The Honorable William A. Cooper, Jr., Administrative County Judge for Bay County; and
- ▶ The Honorable Woodrow W. Hatcher, Administrative County Judge for remaining five counties.

As determined by this committee, the Honorable Glenn L. Hess shall provide direct supervision to the trial court staff attorneys.

#### **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATOR**

The Trial Court Administrator of the circuit, Jennifer Dyer Wells, exercises administrative supervision over all court programs (except for those specifically denoted in this plan) for and on behalf of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit. Appointed by a majority of the judges of the circuit, the Trial Court Administrator is an "at will" employee of the Florida State Courts System and serves at the pleasure of the judges of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit. The Trial Court Administrator reports directly to the Chief Judge of the circuit.

The Trial Court Administrator provides direct supervision to all state and county court employees assigned to the circuit on behalf of the judges. Also, the Trial Court Administrator develops the circuit's budget requests for each of the counties and the state and coordinates the circuit's response to American with Disabilities Act requests.

#### **OTHER COURT COMMITTEES AND RELATED APPOINTMENTS**

For purposes of circuit-wide input and decision-making, the following circuit-wide committees are created. Each court committee chairperson should report to the Board of Judges at each board meeting. All matters that need resolution before the next board meeting should be brought to the attention of the Chief Judge, who will call a special meeting of the Advisory Committee for immediate resolution. These committees and appointments are as follows:

*Circuit Division Assignments* — This committee will present proposals to all sitting judges for division assignments by May of even number years for their vote and approval. The members of this committee shall include the most senior circuit judge, as chair, (the Honorable N. Russell Bower); the Chief Judge (the Honorable Judy Markham Pittman); and the most recent circuit judge (the Honorable William L. Wright).

*Court Technology* — This committee shall present to the Board of Judges proposals related to the advancement and improvement of court technology, when appropriate. Members of this committee include the Honorable Woodrow W. Hatcher, chair; the Honorable Michael C. Overstreet; the Honorable Elijah Smiley; the Honorable Robert M. Moore; and Jennifer Dyer Wells, trial court administrator.

For purposes of input related to Bay County courthouse and community needs, the following Bay County Court committees and appointments are as follows:

*Courthouse Security* — This committee is charged to develop plans to improve and monitor courthouse security. Members of this committee include the Honorable Glenn L. Hess, the Honorable Thomas F. Welch, the Honorable Judy Markham Pittman, the Honorable Guy Tunnell, the Honorable Harold Bazzel, and Jennifer Dyer Wells, trial court administrator.

*Bar/Bench* — This committee shall address Bar/Bench issues and concerns and help foster open communication between the Bar and the Bench. Additionally, this committee should research the feasibility of expanding to a circuit-wide basis. Members of this committee include the Honorable Dedee S. Costello, chair; the Honorable Elijah Smiley; President of the local Bar; representative Bar members as appointed by the Bar President to include members from the Family Law Section, Criminal Law Section, Juvenile Law Section, and Civil Law Section.

*Pro Bono* — This committee should continually encourage and promote an active Pro Bono Plan for Bay County. Members include the Honorable Don T. Sirmons, chair; the Honorable Thomas F. Welch; and at least three active members of the Florida Bar as appointed by the Chief Judge.

*Law Library* — This committee reviews and ensures that the needs of the Law Library are communicated to the Board of Judges and, when possible, provides that such needs are met. Members include the Honorable Don T. Sirmons, chair; the Honorable Thomas F. Welch; at least three active members of the Bar (Mr. Robert A. Pell, Ms. Laura Roesch, and Ms. Rebecca Daffin); and Ms. Carol Hoots, the Law Librarian.

*Public Safety Representatives* — The following judges are appointed to their county's Public Safety Committee which reviews and monitors inmate populations, community control, and diversion programs and recommends enhancements to these programs so that public safety remains paramount:

Bay County —       The Honorable Judy Markham Pittman, Chief Judge  
                          The Honorable Dedee S. Costello  
                          The Honorable Don T. Simons  
                          The Honorable Elijah Smiley

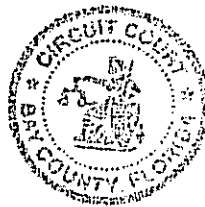
Jackson County —   The Honorable Judy Markham Pittman, Chief Judge  
                          The Honorable William L. Wright  
                          The Honorable Woodrow W. Hatcher.

**AMENDMENTS TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN**

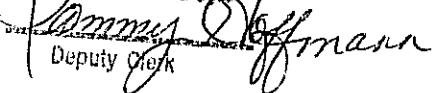
Amendments, deletions, or additions to this administrative plan shall be made as needed and provided to the Board of Judges.

**DONE AND ORDERED** in Chambers, at Panama City, Bay County, this 22 day of October, 1998.

  
JUDY M. PITTMAN, CHIEF JUDGE



A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY  
HAROLD BAZZEL, CLERK  
OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

By   
Deputy Clerk