

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUDGE
FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

A TRUE COPY

Attest:

SID J. WHITE, Clerk

Supreme Court of Florida

By *Robert Causseay*

Chief Deputy Clerk

October 26 94

LOCAL RULE

92 - 04

WHEREAS the report of the Commission on Family Courts, established by the legislature in Chapter 90-273, Laws of Florida, has stressed the importance of developing procedures for coordinating the delivery of services so as to prevent persons from one family being involved in family law matters before two or more judges; and

WHEREAS the Florida Supreme Court, by Order 77,623, has ~~required each judicial circuit to adopt a local rule to accomplish~~ this objective; and

WHEREAS the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit is ranked second in the state of Florida in caseload per judge; and

WHEREAS the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit is comprised of six counties, mostly rural and semi-rural, and is served by seven circuit judges; and

WHEREAS due to the geographic size of the circuit and the various caseload assignments between all seven judges to maintain an equal caseload and recognizing that the same judge already hears all family law cases involving the same family in five of the six counties of this circuit, it is impractical to develop a "Family Division" either for the entire circuit or a portion of this circuit; and

WHEREAS there is available a means to coordinate family law matters that affect one family to be heard by the same judge, without the need for a "Family Division", it is therefore

RESOLVED that the Rules of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit for procedure in all Courts of the Fourteenth Circuit in which family matters are being assigned shall be amended to adopt the following procedures for insuring that when practicable family law matters involving one family in a county within the circuit be heard by the same judge in that county.

1. Throughout the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit, all family law matters involving or affecting one family in a county shall be heard when practicable by the same judge in that county. To accomplish this result, if there is a pending family law matter in a county assigned to the circuit judge serving that county in this circuit, then any additional family law matters involving that same family that is filed while such action is pending shall be assigned to and heard by that same judge unless excepted as follows.

If there is a juvenile dependency case that is filed, then all other pending family law matters involving that same family shall be transferred to the judge assigned to the juvenile dependency case for disposition. Immediately upon such transfer, the Clerk of Court shall then cause the next similar type family law case to be filed that is assigned to the juvenile judge's division to be reassigned to the division that transferred the original case.

The existing assignment of child support enforcement and paternity cases filed by HRS shall remain in effect. Any paternity and child support enforcement cases filed by HRS shall be heard by the judge assigned for that purpose. However, any modification requests filed by any party seeking other forms of relief besides paternity and enforcement shall be transferred back to the original division the case was assigned to for disposition or, if there is no existing case, the clerk shall assign it as a new case to a division under the regular domestic assignment system for disposition.

If there is a pending dissolution action, any enforcement of a domestic violence injunction order which was entered prior to the dissolution case being filed shall be heard by the judge handling the dissolution case.

2. For purposes of this rule "family law matters" shall include:

Dissolution of Marriage; Simplified
Dissolution of Marriage; URESA; Domestic
Violence; Name Changes; Adoptions;
Paternity Suits; Dependency Proceedings
and Modification Proceedings.

3. "Pending" means a case is shown as active on a court docket.

4. The Court Administrator's Office of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit will monitor the assignment of these cases and make monthly reports to the Chief Judge in order for the Chief

Judge to make appropriate adjustments in the caseload assignments to maintain approximate equality between the judges.

DONE AND ORDERED this 6th day of February, 1992 at Panama City, Bay County, Florida.

Don T. Sirmons

DON T. SIRMONS, Chief Judge

W. Russell Bove
Circuit Judge

Thomas F. Welch
County Judge

Judy M. Pittman
Circuit Judge

Thomas E. Williams
County Judge

Nedee S. Welch
Circuit Judge

County Judge

Clinton Foster
Circuit Judge

County Judge

Circuit Judge

William W. Hatcher
County Judge

John E. Roberts
Circuit Judge

County Judge

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

By *Dan Campbell*
Deputy Clerk