



Benchmark

Fond farewells in the coming year

As the new year approaches, so do the retirements of Circuit Judge Allen L. Register, Holmes County Judge Owen N. Powell, his Judicial Assistant Cheryl Hammond, and Trial Court Administrator Jan E. Shadburn. With the departure of these members of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit judiciary and staff, leaves a wealth of experience, but it is with fondness we wish them well in this new chapter of life—you all have most certainly earned it!



CIRCUIT JUDGE ALLEN L. REGISTER

Judge Register has served as a Circuit Judge in the Fourteenth Circuit since being appointed by the Governor in 2002. Prior to his Circuit Judgeship, he served as Washington County Judge for 10 years, where he was first elected without opposition in 1992 and had the good fortune to never face opposition during his tenure.

Judge Register graduated from Poplar Springs High School in Holmes County and Chipola Junior College in Jackson County before furthering his education at the University of Florida, where he received his Bachelor of Science degree and his Juris Doctorate. Upon completion of his education, he served as an Assistant State Attorney in the Fifth Circuit until returning to the Panhandle to serve as an Assistant State Attorney with the Fourteenth Circuit until his election in 1992. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 3**

HOLMES COUNTY JUDGE OWEN N. POWELL CHERYL HAMMOND, JUDICIAL ASSISTANT

Owen N. Powell was first elected Holmes County Judge in 2004, coming to the office after being in private practice serving his local community for over 30 years. When Judge Powell came into office, he brought his long time legal secretary, Cheryl Hammond, with him. Together they will retire at the end of this year.



Judge Powell is a native of Holmes County. He graduated from Florida State University with his undergraduate degree and then earned his Juris Doctorate from Stetson University. He is married to his wife of 27 years, Deborah, and he has two sons, John and Mason, and one grandson, Silas. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 3**



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FACTS ON THE 14TH CIRCUIT

- The Circuit is one of the largest geographic circuits in the State of Florida.
- The Circuit stretches from the Emerald Coast of the Gulf of Mexico to the Alabama and Georgia state lines.
- The Circuit has county seats in the Central Time Zone as well as the Eastern Time Zone.

COMING SOON TO A BENCH NEAR YOU

Newly elected judges to begin January 2017

Circuit Judge-Elect Timothy Register

The newest Circuit Judge to take the bench in the Fourteenth Circuit is Timothy Register. Judge-elect Register was elected without opposition and will fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Circuit Judge Allen L. Register, his father.

Register is a native of Washington County, where he graduated from Chipley High School. He earned his Associate of Arts degree from Chipola College in Marianna and furthered his education at the University of Florida where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science and his Juris Doctorate.



Upon completion of his education Register worked for two years in the Fifth Circuit as an Assistant State Attorney. He returned to the Panhandle in 2007 as an Assistant State Attorney for the Fourteenth Circuit. While with the Office of State Attorney, he has practiced in all six counties in the Fourteenth Circuit.

Timothy Register is married to his wife, Sara, and they have two daughters, Laura age six and Rebecca age three. In his spare time he likes to fish and follow University of Florida sports. When asked about goals he has once he takes the bench, he replied, "Having practiced throughout the Circuit, as well as in other parts of the State, my primary goal for the bench is to uphold the high standards that have been set forth by the other judges in the Fourteenth Circuit."

In January when Register takes office his assignment will cover 100% of the Washington County Circuit assignment, 25% of Bay County Domestic Relations cases, and Bay County Drug Court. Patty Kelly, who currently serves as Judge Allen L. Register's JA will assume the duties of Judicial Assistant for Judge-elect Timothy Register.

Holmes County Judge-Elect Lucas Taylor

Holmes County Judge-elect Lucas Taylor will also be taking the bench in January and will be filling the vacancy created by the retirement of County Judge Owen N. Powell.

Taylor is a native of Holmes County, where he graduated from Holmes County High School. He earned his Associate of Arts degree from Chipola College in Marianna and furthered his education at Florida State University and Mississippi College School of Law where he earned his Juris Doctorate.



Upon completion of his education Taylor has maintained a private law practice in Bonifay, FL since 2006. In addition, he has had the opportunity to work with the State Attorney's Office for the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit for almost 10 years and during that tenure he handled felonies, misdemeanors and juvenile delinquency cases in both Holmes and Washington Counties. He has also had the opportunity to represent criminal defendants across the Circuit and has served as the attorney of record for the City of Bonifay, Holmes County School Board, and Town of Noma.

Lucas Taylor is married to Meg Taylor and has three children— Eli, Abram and Lilly. He is the son of Cody and Brenda Taylor. His in-laws are Randy and Sandy Spear. His siblings are Zach Taylor, an attorney with Manuel and Thompson in Panama City, Whit Taylor, a pharmacist in Tampa, and Hilary Whitaker, a dentist in Bonifay.

"I would like to thank everyone for their kind words of encouragement. I am very grateful for the opportunity the people of Holmes County have given me, and in return I commit to do my best for them. I understand this is a very important position, and I am excited to get started," said Taylor when asked about his upcoming term.

UPCOMING CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Mark your calendars for the Circuit's Annual Christmas Luncheon to be held on **Friday, Dec. 2, 2016** from 11:30 am—1:30 pm at the St. Andrews Bay Yacht Club located at :

**218 Bunkers Cove Road
Panama City, FL.**

The menu choices are:

- Grilled Salmon with Key Lime Beurre Blanc
- Crab Cake with Remoulade Sauce
- Roasted Pork Tenderloin
- Gluten Free Vegetable Selection

Please RSVP to Amber Baggett by Friday, November 18, 2016 with your attendance and meal choice. You may email her at baggetta@jud14.flcourts.org or call her at 850-482-9844.



We look forward to seeing everyone at this fun event!!

FOND FAREWELLS CONTINUED...

Judge Register Continued...

When asked what he felt was most rewarding in his service, Judge Register responded, "While several of my assignments have been fulfilling, none more so than Drug Court. Watching participants in this program struggle to overcome addictions and find new life and sharing their journey with them is something I will never forget."

While Judge Register does not have any immediate plans, he says he plans to enjoy his grandchildren, his new-found free time, and catching up on his reading. Judge Register wishes to thank Joyce Hughes, Terri Wengert, and Patty Kelley, who all served as Judicial Assistants during his terms as Washington County Judge and Circuit Judge. He credits his success to the support of his family, but most especially his wife Mary Ann and had this to say, "Mary Ann's support, love, and selfless dedication to our family have made my career choices possible. For that, I express to her my gratitude and love."

Powell/Hammond Continued...

Mrs. Hammond came to the United States with her late husband William T. Hammond (US Navy) in 1967 from her native Australia. She went to work as a legal assistant in 1977 for then attorney Owen N. Powell. When Powell was elected as Holmes County Judge, Cheryl joined him to serve the citizens of Holmes County. Cheryl has two sons, Darren and Richard, one stepdaughter Kelly, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Judge Powell says that he is very fortunate to have served his community for his entire career - first as an attorney and later as their County Judge. He was raised in a small community, had the opportunity to represent his teachers and coaches, including his 4th grade teacher, friends and family and then had the honor to serve them on the Holmes County bench. Cheryl says she has enjoyed working in the Judge's office and serving the citizens of Holmes County. Both Judge Powell and Mrs. Hammond plan to travel following their retirement. Judge Powell wants to explore the Western United States and Central America, while Cheryl has plans for trips to Arkansas, Alaska, and hopes to one day return to visit Australia.



Judge Powell and Judicial Assistant Cheryl Hammond. This team has worked together for 39 years.

A Wealth of Experience

As of December 31st, 2016 the retirees of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit will take with them a combined **127 years** of experience in the legal field.

This equates to:

- 63 Olympic games
- 31 Presidential Elections
- 46 Blue Moons.

ALSO OF NOTE:

Judge Register celebrated the 47th Annual Possum Day this past August.

Judge Powell marked the 70th Annual Northwest Florida Championship Rodeo in October of 2016.



JAN E. SHADBURN

TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATOR

July of 2008 marked the beginning of Jan E. Shadburn's career with the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit, but he brought with him a wealth of professional experience to his role of Trial Court Administrator.

Mr. Shadburn is a resident of Jackson County and is married to his wife of 52 years, Frances. They have one son, Jayson, and three grandchildren, Olivia, Jack, and Mia.

Jan graduated from Chipola Junior College and Florida State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance and Accounting. He began his career in the banking field amassing 33 years of experience. He also served seven years as the USDA-Florida State Director and Administrator of Rural Housing and Community Facilities. He has served the last eight years of his career with the Fourteenth Circuit as Trial Court Administrator.

When asked what has been the most rewarding part of being TCA for the Fourteenth Circuit, Mr. Shadburn replied, "Having the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit be recognized as one of the leading Circuits in the State." He further added, "I would like to thank the Judges, JA's, Managers, and Staff of the Fourteenth Circuit for allowing me to join your team and work together with each of you over the past six years. I am proud of what we have accomplished as a team."

Upon his retirement at the end of the year, Jan plans to relocate to Monroeville, Alabama to be closer to his son and grandchildren.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?



Good listening is a key component in effective communication.

Here are some DO's and DON'Ts to make sure you are an

effective listener.

DO....

- Face each other and maintain eye contact.
- Be interested and attentive.
- Listen patiently, act as if you have plenty of time.
- Ignore distractions.
- Be respectful and open minded.
- Let the other person finish what they are saying.
- Have a positive attitude.
- Watch non-verbal clues (body posture, facial expressions, tone of voice).
- Take notes and write down important points.

DON'T...

- Turn your back or look at your feet.
- Yawn or flip through notes.
- Answer the phone or talk to people as they pass.
- Interrupt or change the subject.
- Act like you do not care about the subject.
- Dismiss non-verbal cues as irrelevant.
- Trust your memory with important details.

Listening Tip

Being a good listener means more than just lending an ear. You have to demonstrate, using body language, that the person whom you are speaking with has your full attention. Make sure your listening techniques are effective.



In the Spotlight

EARLY CHILDHOOD COURT

Contributed by David Holland

In July of 2015 the Fourteenth Circuit began accepting cases into an Early Childhood Court program in Bay County. This program differs from traditional Dependency Court in that it utilizes a multi-disciplinary team approach. This team is comprised of numerous community providers, child welfare professionals, child advocates and mental health professionals. The program focuses on children under the age of five with an emphasis on children under three. Bay County's program is one of only five sites in Florida, and one of 10 sites in the country to be designated as a "Zero to Three" demonstration site. Currently the program has a total of 10 families in the program serving 17 children.

The Early Childhood Court (ECC) team comes together to review each case in depth at least once a month, connect families with services, work to overcome barriers to success, share accomplishments, and promote permanency.



ECC changes the way infants and toddlers are handled within the judicial system. The program utilizes evidence based approaches to treating trauma. Childhood trauma, if unresolved or untreated, reaches far beyond the child and can impact society as a whole.

Early Childhood Court has a dedicated Community Coordinator for the Fourteenth Circuit, Maria Avila. Ms. Avila is employed by Children's Home Society with funding for her position provided by Big Bend Community Based Care. General Magistrate Shannon Lord presides over the proceedings and Family Court Manager, David Holland, helps facilitate the Court's time and facilities among other duties.

ECC proceedings are normally held on the first Thursday of each month in the Juvenile East Courtroom at the Bay County Juvenile Justice Courthouse. Anyone interested in further information on this program may contact David Holland at 850-747-5497 or email at hollandd@jud14.flcourts.org.



L-R: General Magistrate Shannon Lord; David L. Holland, Family Court Manager; and Maria Avila, ECC Community Coordinator.

It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.

- Frederick Douglass

CHIEF JUSTICE VISIT

Contributed by Robyn H. Gable

On August 25th, Chief Justice Jorge Labarga of the Florida Supreme Court visited the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit in Bay County. After Chief Judge Smiley gave the Chief Justice a tour of the new courthouse addition, Chief Justice Labarga met with judges, staff, the local bar, and the media. Chief Justice Labarga expressed his appreciation to each for their hard work and dedication in making the court system accessible and efficient. In addition, Judge Smiley presented an Award of Appreciation on behalf of the judges to Chief Justice Labarga for his efforts to ensure that justice in Florida is accessible, fair, effective, responsive, and accountable to all citizens.



THERAPEUTIC JUSTICE COURT

Contributed by Circuit Judge Michael C. Overstreet

“Be kind to everyone you meet, for each person bears some heavy burden” - Plato

There have been many mental health courts operating throughout the State of Florida during the past several years. The need for one in our community became obvious once we ascertained that a significant percentage of inmates at the Bay County Jail were dealing with a documented DSM-V diagnosis. In other words, inmates who we could say with some certainty that, but for their mental illness, their crime or their violation of probation probably would not have occurred.

People with mental health challenges present our felony courts with a unique set of problems. In a nutshell, I think it is fair to say that when compared to an average inmate, the mental health defendant has a dramatically smaller chance to move through our criminal justice system with a positive outcome. This is not because they are more inclined toward criminal behavior, but instead because they have difficulty processing and accomplishing what is expected of them. This difficulty is directly related to whether they are being properly counseled; whether they are properly medicated; whether they are taking their medications; and the problems they have meeting the simplest of daily needs given their depressed socio-economic status which is often the result of a lifetime of mental illness.

We named our mental health court Therapeutic Justice Court for a very good reason. At TJC, we are engaged in a process of assisting and encouraging our “clients” during probation to learn life skills which will enable them to be law abiding citizens. Our program’s goal is to successfully terminate our defendants from supervision once they have demonstrated an abiding understanding of how to manage their ongoing mental health challenges in a way that does not run afoul of our criminal justice system.

When evaluating the progress of our program so far, I am certain of one thing: on their own, our participants would have had almost no chance to successfully navigate their way through their probation sentence. Without the collaborative effort of our staff of professionals who unselfishly dedicate their time free of charge, these people would have ultimately ended up incarcerated with no hope for anything different once their sentence was served.



L-R: Amber Jones, Life Management Center Case Manager; Amanda Clark, Life Management Center Counselor; Jean Johnson, VA Substance Abuse Counselor; Sarah Pearce, TJC Coordinator (TJCC); Tangi West, AWARE Addiction Counselor; Deidre Keckler, MSW and interim TJCC; Judge Michael C. Overstreet; Laura McCarthy, APD; Bob Pell, ASA; Jo-Anne Gilpin, Clerk; Meghan Williams, Probation Officer.

ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL

Facilities Updates from Around the Circuit

Contributed by Jan Shadburn

Updated, efficient, functional and safe facilities in the Fourteenth Circuit are vital to the operation of the Courts. By December 2016, through the hard work of the Courts and our partners, we will have completed the most aggressive construction of new facilities and renovation of existing facilities ever undertaken in the Fourteenth Circuit. When completed, in excess of \$22 million will have been spent on these projects with funding supplied by the Florida Legislature, local Board of County Commissions, Court generated fees, and other revenue sources—and there is more planned in 2017!



In May of this year we moved into the new courthouse addition in Bay County which added six new courtrooms and seven Circuit Judge/JA offices and chambers. In addition to the new addition, we remodeled the 3rd floor offices and relocated the Bay County Judges and JA's to these offices. Also relocated to the main Courthouse were the Drug Court offices, Bay County Work Program and Pretrial Release. At the same time, both the East and West Courtrooms on the 2nd floor were completely remodeled.

We were also able to renovate the Annex Courtroom and convert it to a Judges' meeting room and training room. Prior to the renovations, there was not adequate space to hold Judges' meetings or other large training sessions.

In Washington County, the new courthouse is scheduled to be completed and open for business on Monday, November 7, 2016. This new facility is a tremendous addition to the community. The courthouse will contain two courtrooms, Circuit/County/Visiting Judge offices and chambers, the Clerk of the Court offices, as well as offices for the State Attorney and Public Defender for the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit. The building boasts secure transport of inmates through a sally port system and dedicated elevator, a controlled access system to the building and security cameras throughout, as well as much needed additional parking and work space.



In completing these projects we are already turning our attention to the projects being considered for 2017. In 2012 there was a \$1.75 million facelift to the exterior of the Jackson County Courthouse, and now plans are under way to remodel the two courtrooms and restroom facilities among other items in the interior of the facility. Holmes County is considering the addition of holding cells as well as other upgrades to the security of that facility. Calhoun County plans to add a secured screening at the front door and an access control system. Gulf County is currently adding an ADA accessible ramp to their entrance.

So as you can see, there is a lot going on in our facilities in the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit. We are very fortunate to have the cooperation and support of the Chief Judge, all other judges, the staff of the Circuit, the respective Board of County Commissioners and many others who have been vital in achieving so much so far and for all the plans in the coming year.

News Letter Committee

Amber Baggett
Sarah Pearce

If you have any information you would like to have included in the next issue of Benchmarks, please contact Amber Baggett at baggetta@jud14.flcourts.org

