Benchmarks

THE FOURTEENTH CIRCUIT WELCOMES ITS NEW TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATOR

On February 16, 2017, Chief Judge Elijah Smiley was pleased to announce that Robyn H. Gable had been selected to serve as the next Trial Court Administrator for the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit. Mrs. Gable began the position officially on March 1, 2017 as the sixth trial court administrator in the history of the Circuit. She has been with our Circuit for more than 22 years, serving in various capacities while gaining knowledge of the court process and experience in the administrative needs of the Circuit. As Trial Court Administrator, Mrs. Gable oversees a variety of areas within our Circuit including providing support to the judges and staff through budget, personnel, and facilities management, interpreter and technology coordination, courtroom scheduling, ADA compliance, program development and much more. Mrs. Gable’s goals for the Circuit include ensuring that our staff provide outstanding customer service to the judges, judicial assistants, other staff, related agencies, community stakeholders and the public; (Continued on pg. 2)

CIRCUIT JUDGE WILLIAM L. WRIGHT RETIRES

The Honorable William L. Wright retired from the bench on December 2, 2016. Most recently serving the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit as a Circuit Judge in Jackson County, he has served as a Circuit judge since his election in 1997, including a two-year term as Chief Judge. Speaking of his 20 years of service to the community, he said the most rewarding part was that he was able to help so many individuals. “I loved helping people - whether it was the victim of a crime getting justice or giving a first offender a break. I also enjoyed looking out for the best interests of children,” stated Judge Wright. When asked of his greatest achievement while serving on the bench, Wright said that one important achievement was the establishment of the Jackson County Drug Court and that he was fortunate to have had the help of staff and community resources. (Continued on pg. 2)
THE FOURTEENTH CIRCUIT WELCOMES ITS NEW TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATOR (CONTINUED)

making sure that our courthouses are secure for judges, staff, and the public; and facilitating training and encouraging education for our staff so they are be able to gain additional skills that may enable them to advance in their career. She also wants to promote teamwork and communication among staff to better meet the needs of the judges and the public.

Mrs. Gable is from Jackson County and graduated from Marianna High School in 1983. She attended Chipola College and received her AA degree from Tallahassee Community College in 1985. She attended the University of West Florida and received her BA Degree from Florida State University in 1987. She resides in Grand Ridge with her husband, Pastor Gary Gable, and two sons, Zac Hatcher and Ric Gable. In her spare time she enjoys participating in church activities and spending time with her family.

CIRCUIT JUDGE WILLIAM L. WRIGHT RETIRES (CONTINUED)

Looking back at his 20 years on the bench, Judge Wright states that it has been a pleasure to work with such professional staff, “I could not have performed my job without such great help, including my long serving Judicial Assistant, Debbie Burch. I really enjoyed serving as Circuit Judge. We have great lawyers in our area who really care about their clients. We also have a great court staff in Marianna and the clerk’s office who take care of a lot of issues so that judges can focus on the important decisions.”

Judge Wright has been married to his wife of 20 years, Tina, with whom he has two children - Carter Wright and Nikki Gray. Daughter Nikki and her husband Ricky recently welcomed a daughter in May 2016, Lucie. Judge Wright’s plans for the future include traveling with his wife, golfing, relaxing, and enjoying their grandchild.

HEALTHY EATING LEADS TO A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE

By Capital Regional Medical Center, provided in the March issue of The Wellness Wire from the Division of State Group Insurance

Eating healthy is one of the best ways to improve your lifestyle and sustain good health. What we eat affects our weight and can reduce our risk of developing chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease and even some cancers. By developing good nutritional habits, we can live a longer and much healthier life.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an astounding 33 percent of adults in the United States are obese. However, you don’t have to be overweight to suffer from the effects of bad nutritional habits. At Capital Regional Medical Center, providing nutritional counseling is one of many approaches taken to help patients get on the healthiest path possible.

“We incorporate a discussion about healthier eating into every visit with patients,” says Elisa Case, advanced registered nurse practitioner. “We want them to create better habits and we encourage them to start with small steps that build to a healthier diet.” Case said that trying to make sweeping changes at once can lead to failure. “I tell them to change one thing, like limiting soda to one per day, or for diabetes patients to cut down on the amount of carbs they eat daily—then add another good habit like having a salad once a day. Small steps create long-term habits that can dramatically improve their health. It’s a matter of thinking about what we consume and making an effort to incorporate healthy foods like fruit and vegetables and cutting back on empty calories like sugared drinks.”

Case says that making sure people eat the right foods in the right amount is critical to their ability to live well. “We have patients that need counseling on what to cut out of their diet in order to lose weight, and we have patients who aren’t consuming enough calories. Eating well-balanced meals at least three times a day helps people stay vital and active. Maintaining a good diet is a fairly simple way to stay in good health.”
A MEMO FROM TECHNOLOGY: FAKE EMAILS

We live in an area known for some of the best fishing in the world. But this article is about another type of “phishing.” Phishing is when someone sends a fraudulent email that masquerades as a real email from a legitimate source. The sender is attempting to trick the reader into giving up personal information or compromise their computer with spyware or viruses. While filtering and security continue to improve, unfortunately, no matter how effective the security, some phishing emails will always make it to the user’s inbox. Just because an email has convincing logos, language, and a seemingly valid email address does not mean that it’s legitimate. Be skeptical when it comes to your email messages—if it looks even remotely suspicious, don’t open it. If something looks “fishy”, there’s probably a good reason why. If you receive a message that seems suspicious, it’s usually in your best interest to avoid acting on the message. One trick used is to spoof the display name of the sender. Spoofing simply is changing the “from” field of an outgoing message to show a name or address other than the actual one from which the message is sent. One way to detect if the display name is spoofed, is to see where the “reply to” message will be sent. If the email address is different than the address from the sender, then you know it’s a fake email. Clicking links in emails is inherently risky – you don’t know where a button, link or video will actually send you. But, if you hover your mouse over any links embedded in the body of the email, you can see the raw link. If it looks strange, don’t click it – there’s a good chance the email is fraudulent. If an email has spelling mistakes or requests personal information, you should be suspicious. So remember...when opening an email, trust your instincts. Don’t simply trust the display name and hover before you click on that link.

“If something looks “fishy”, there’s probably a good reason why.”

INVESTITURES OF THE HONORABLE JUDGES TIMOTHY REGISTER AND LUCAS N. TAYLOR

The Honorable Timothy Register, Circuit Judge, and Lucas N. Taylor, Holmes County Judge were invested on January 20, 2017, and January 27, 2017, respectively. They were joined by family, friends, and supporters who gathered to share in the ceremony and celebrations.

Circuit Judge Christopher N. Patterson presented both judges with a Bible and Chief Judge Elijah Smiley administered the Oath for Judge Taylor, while retired Circuit Judge Allen L. Register administered the Oath to his son, Judge Timothy Register.

Both judges were presented with a gavel by Bay County Bar Association President, Robert L. Thirston, II, Esq. and were also honored by their children who gave the Pledge of Allegiance during their investitures. Following the ceremonies, receptions were hosted by the Register Family and the Taylor Family.
Drug Court is one type of problem-solving court in our circuit used to help drug addicted offenders get off drugs, successfully complete probation, and become productive members of our society. This program is one of several drug treatment programs utilized by the Court where defendants are ordered to complete the program as a condition of probation. Drug courts operate on a team approach where a prosecutor, defense attorney, treatment provider, probation officer, and court staff meet weekly with the drug court judge and work together to help offenders overcome their drug problems. Working closely with this team of professionals in a non-adversarial manner, the Court monitors the progress of individuals in drug court, providing motivation for success but also imposing swift, behavior-specific sanctions for non-compliance. Participants are required to attend intensive outpatient treatment, submit to frequent drug testing, meet with probation once a week, and attend court sessions with the judge. After completing a year in the program, graduates are presented with a brick with their name inscribed on it. The brick symbolizes laying a solid foundation for their future.

Drug Courts have been around since 1989 when Miami-Dade County, Florida, implemented the first one to combat the crack epidemic and recidivism. This started a movement which spread throughout the nation and the world. Today, there are over 2,700 drug courts operating in every state and territory.

Florida has 94 drug courts operating in the felony, misdemeanor, juvenile, and family dependency divisions. The success of drug courts spawned a new generation of problem-solving courts such as DUI Courts, Veterans Courts, and Mental Health Courts.

Bay County’s Adult and Juvenile Drug Courts were implemented in January 1997 with Circuit Judge Don T. Sirmons presiding over them for 13 years before he retired. Judge Sirmons came up with the idea of presenting a brick at graduation—an idea that was eventually copied by many drug courts throughout the country. Jackson County’s Adult Drug Court was started by Circuit Judge William Wright in November 2002 and provides treatment services for the rural counties in the Fourteenth Circuit.

It takes teamwork
Implementing a drug court averages two years of hard work and dedication. Most drug courts are started with federal grants which require teams to attend planning workshops, training conferences, and find match money for grants and long-term funding to sustain the program. Many thanks go out to all the volunteers from the Circuit Judges, Court Administration, Department of Corrections, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Children and Families, State Attorney’s Office, Public Defenders Office, clerk’s offices, local law enforcement, and treatment providers, whose dedication make the programs work.

Bay County Drug Court Team from L to R: Honorable Tim Register, Circuit Judge; Erica Jackson, Court Program Specialist II; Susan Rodger, ASA; Linda Burd, Drug Court Manager; Blair Daffin, APD; Sharise Mitchell, CARE Counselor; Clara Blanquet, DOC probation officer. Missing—James Blanchet, DJJ probation officer. Upper Left Photo: Judge Gay addressing a Jackson County Drug Court participant.
BAY COUNTY HOSTS THE 1ST DCA

On Wednesday, February 15, 2017, the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit had the honor of hosting oral arguments for the appellate judges of the First District Courts of Appeal. The Honorable Judges Bradford L. Thomas, Timothy Osterhaus, and Ross L. Bilbrey heard arguments in the new annex of the Bay County Courthouse regarding two local cases.

The purpose of holding these oral arguments was to provide the opportunity for thoughtful review of the decisions made by the lower tribunal court. District courts are essential in their role of ensuring that all decisions made are consistent with our rights and liberties, correcting any errors that may occur. This process contributes to the development, clarity, and consistency of the law.

In 1957, the Florida Legislature created three (3) District Courts of Appeal to assume a portion of the appellate jurisdiction of the state courts system. It located the headquarters of the First District in Tallahassee and gave the Court a territorial jurisdiction which encompassed thirty-seven counties. Today there are five (5) District Courts of Appeal in Florida, located respectively in Tallahassee, Lakeland, Miami, West Palm Beach and Daytona Beach. The Fourteenth Judicial Circuit along with the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 8th Circuits of Florida are all under the jurisdiction of the 1st District Court of Appeal in Tallahassee.

District Court of Appeal judges must meet the same eligibility requirements for appointment to office, and they are subject to the same procedures and conditions for discipline and removal from office, as Justices of the Supreme Court. Like Supreme Court Justices, district court judges also serve terms of six years and will be eligible for successive terms under a merit retention vote of the electors in their districts.

As a general rule, decisions of the District Courts of Appeal represent the final appellate review of litigated cases. A person who is displeased with a district court’s express decision may ask for review in the Supreme Court of Florida or in the Supreme Court of the United States, but neither tribunal is required to accept the case for further review and the overwhelming number of requests are in fact denied.

You can find more information on the 1st District Court of Appeal at www.1DCA.org which provides current information including: recently released and archived opinions, their online court docket, court calendars showing their oral argument schedule, administrative orders, videos of oral arguments (live stream and archived) and other useful facts regarding Florida’s First District Court of Appeal.
STAFF APPRECIATION DAY!
A Party Just for You!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **A Court Staff Appreciation Lunch** will be held on **Thursday, July 6, 2017 from 11:30-1:30 CST** in the 3rd floor break-room.

- **The employee suggestion and input forms** should be handed out already. Be sure to submit your suggestions to help improve our Circuit to Robyn Gable, by mail or interoffice mail by **April 28, 2017**. Your suggestions do not have to be signed and can be anonymous.

CIRCUIT JUDGE ASSIGNMENT CHANGES

On January 10, 2017, Chief Judge Elijah Smiley signed a new Administrative Order changing the assignments for all Fourteenth Judicial Circuit circuit judges and even the headquarters of some, beginning April 1, 2017. Some of the larger changes included: Honorable John L. Fishel moving his headquarters to the new Bay County Circuit Annex building and taking on 25% of Bay County’s Circuit Civil cases in place of the Domestic Relations cases. Judge Patterson’s headquarters have also changed. He is at the Jackson County Courthouse and his assignments now include 100% of Jackson County’s Circuit proceedings. Judge Gay’s headquarters have moved to the new Bay County Circuit Annex building where she is picking up 25% of Bay County’s Domestic Relations cases and is keeping 100% of Calhoun County’s Circuit proceedings. There is also an awaiting assignment for a new circuit judge who will be headquartered at the Bay County Juvenile Courthouse and whose assignments will include 50% of all Bay County Domestic Relations cases and 100% of all Bay County Child Support proceedings. For a full listing of the new assignment changes please see Administrative Order 17-00-01 that has been posted to our Circuit website at [www.jud14.flcourts.org](http://www.jud14.flcourts.org). This Administrative Order lays out not only the assignments for April 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017, but it also puts in place assignment plans for January 1, 2018 - July 1, 2019.

INVITATION

The Fourteenth Judicial Circuit
Bench-Bar and Professionalism Committee &
The Judges of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit

Cordially invite you to attend

THE 2017 JUDGE LARRY G. SMITH
PROFESSIONALISM AWARD CEREMONY

Presenting The Larry G. Smith Award Recipient

Thursday, May 4th, 2017
3:00PM CST
Bay County Courthouse Annex,
Courtroom D
Panama City, Florida

Reception provided by Manuel and Thompson Following The Ceremony

The Larry G. Smith Professionalism Award Committee Members:
Ross McCloy (Chair), Devin Collier, Maria Dykes,
Matthew Fuqua and Tim Warner

News Letter Committee
Amber Baggett
Sarah Pearce

If you have any information you would like to have featured in the next issue of Benchmarks, please contact

Amber Baggett at baggetta@jud14.flcourts.org