



THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF FLORIDA

CHAMBERS OF
JEFFREY J. COLBATH
CIRCUIT JUDGE

PALM BEACH COUNTY COURTHOUSE
205 NORTH DIXIE HIGHWAY
WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA 33401
561/355-7845

May 20, 2019

Office of Governor Ron DeSantis
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor DeSantis,

It is with mixed emotions that I am formally notifying you that I will be retiring from the bench effective 5:00 PM on September 30, 2019. I am giving you this advance notice so that you can activate the 15th Circuit's Judicial Nominating Commission and timely find a suitable replacement.

I say that this announcement is with mixed emotions because I have loved serving as a judge for the last 27 years. I very much look forward to the next chapter in my personal and professional life, however serving as a judge has been the highest honor and a privilege. It has been meaningful and rewarding work.

I leave the bench knowing that it is in excellent hands. The judges as well as all of the support staff here in the 15th Judicial Circuit/Palm Beach County are smart, hardworking, dedicated, exemplary public servants. I have proudly served with them and want you to know that our community is well served by them.

Please remember that the men and women who served in the judicial branch do so at a financial sacrifice. As you probably know, of Florida's \$88.7 billion budget, less than 6/10 of one percent goes to supporting the entire Judicial Branch (that's right and hard to believe--Florida's entire Judicial Branch runs about half of 1% of the State's budget); that number is appallingly low. Many of our staff positions go unfilled because we are not able to offer competitive salaries. Many of our employees work side jobs to make ends meet. There is loss of productivity due to higher than necessary turnover. These salaries are not only not competitive with the private sector but are not competitive with similarly situated employees in the executive branch and the legislative branch. I have worked alongside these men and women for nearly three decades and can tell you they are hard-working dedicated employees and deserve competitive salaries. Please advocate for them.

In closing, I wish you and your administration all the best in taking on the challenges that come your way.

Warmest Regards,



Jeffrey Colbath
Circuit Judge
15th Judicial Circuit
Palm Beach County, Florida
205 N. Dixie Hwy
West Palm Beach, FL 33401
561-355-7845

cc: Honorable Chief Judge Krista Marx

Gregor J. Schwinghammer, Jr., Chair of 15th Circuit JNC