

Judicial Nominating Commission Selects 6 Nominees for Vacant Circuit Judge Position

CLEARWATER – A Pinellas County judge, a family law magistrate and four private practice attorneys make up the list of nominees from which Gov. Charlie Crist will fill a circuit judge's position that became vacant when Sixth Judicial Circuit Judge Nelly Khouzam was appointed to a vacancy on the Second District Court of Appeal.

Peter Meros, chair of the Sixth Judicial Circuit Nominating Commission (JNC), said the nominees are:

- Michael Berry, whose firm is Michael C. Berry & Associates of Clearwater;
- Jack Helinger, a sole practitioner attorney in St. Petersburg;
- Belinda Lazzara, a principal at Meros Smith Lazzara & Olney P.A. in St. Petersburg;
- Pinellas County Judge Paul Levine, who sits in the Criminal Division of Pinellas County Court;
- Joe Lovelace, general magistrate in the Sixth Judicial Circuit's Family Law Division;
- Tom Minkoff, an attorney with Deeb & Durkin, PA in St. Petersburg.

The six were selected from a list of 18 applicants, who were interviewed by the JNC.

Once he receives the names, Gov. Crist has 60 days to name one to fill the vacancy.