

Circuit Judge Lynn Tepper Honored For Promotion of Community Justice

DADE CITY – Sixth Judicial Circuit Judge Lynn Tepper, who presides over Family Court cases in East Pasco County, is the recipient of the 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award, presented by the Florida Association of Community Corrections (FACC), a professional organization whose members include federal, State, county, and juvenile probation officers.

Judge Tepper, who has been a judge in Pasco County since 1985, was selected because of her “dedication to providing fair and equal justice and her willingness to instruct the criminal justice community,” according to FACC President John McMahon. “Judge Tepper’s commitment to the betterment of the community and profession” made her the unanimous choice of the FACC’s Board of Directors, McMahon said. The award was announced during FACC’s recent annual training conference, which was in St. Petersburg this year.



Judge Tepper

FACC was established in 1992 to provide county probation organizations with a means “to identify, develop and promote effective programs . . . increasing the professionalism of personnel . . . increase public awareness of the benefits of these programs.” The group also initiates and support legislation aimed at the prevention, reduction and deterrence of criminal and delinquent behavior. In addition to private and public probation organizations, membership now includes representatives of correctional agencies, such as Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Florida Department of Corrections, sheriff’s offices and private providers of substance abuse and other rehabilitative services.

McMahon cited Judge Tepper’s “visionary programs, such as ‘One Court–One Family’ and Drug Court.”

Judge Tepper’s career on the bench began after she won a 1984 election to become a Pasco County judge. After one term, she was elected unopposed to a seat on the circuit bench and has held that position since 1989. She is a graduate of Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, and earned her Juris Doctorate degree at Stetson University College of Law in Gulfport. Prior to election as a judge, she was in private practice, clerked in U.S. Bankruptcy Court and was an assistant public defender.

As a Family Court judge in Dade City, she oversees domestic relations cases. Prior to the funding and formal establishment of Pasco County Drug Court last year, Judge Tepper – without financial support or staff – began and presided over a similar, scaled-down and successful version of the specialty court that emphasizes treatment for people with drug problems. She also had informally presided over a “One Court–One Family” concept for about a decade before the Florida Supreme Court began establishing Unified Family Courts in circuits around the state.

Her innovative handling of domestic relations matters has lead to televised appearances on *Nightline* ("Is Abuse an Excuse"), *CNN's Crier & Co.* ("Norplant: Is It Constitutional?"), *Oprah Winfrey* ("Shame: Does it work?"), and *Montel Williams* ("Troubled Teens").

She serves or has served on the Florida Gender Bias Study Commission, the Florida Bench/Bar Commission, Florida Domestic Violence Implementation Task Force, Florida Bar Legal Needs of Children's Commission, Steering Committee on Families and Children in Courts, Supreme Court Committee on Alternative Dispute Resolution, Task Force on Treatment Based Drug Courts, Gov. Lawton Chiles' Domestic Violence Clemency Review panels, the Pasco Family Law Advisory Group, the American Bar Association's Law and Literacy Committee, New Port Richey Marine Institute and the Board of PEG/PAC (a family literacy organization).

Previous awards have included "Public Citizen of the Year" from the Florida Literacy Coalition; the ACE (Adult and Community Education) of Florida's Public Official of the Year; and "Humanitarian of the Year" from the Florida Animal Control Association.