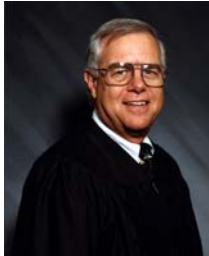




Administrative Office of the Courts  
**The Sixth Judicial Circuit of Florida**  
14250 49<sup>th</sup> Street North, Suite 2000  
Clearwater, Florida 33762  
(727) 453-7176  
Suncom: 8-525-7176  
Fax: (727) 453-7166

**Gay Lynne Inskeep**  
Trial Courts Administrator

**Public Information Office**



*Judge Baird*



*Judge Demers*



*Judge Helinger*



*Judge Schafer*

## **Bar Associations Honor 4 Judges During Annual Law Day Programs**

**CLEARWATER** – Four judges who preside over cases in the Sixth Judicial Circuit were honored during Law Day programs conducted annually by Bar associations in the Tampa Bay area.

- On May 3, Circuit Judge Walter “Skip” Schafer, Jr. received the West Pasco Bar Association’s Justice Award, presented “to recognize and appreciate individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the cause of justice in Florida.
- Two individuals – Circuit Judges W. Douglas Baird and David A. Demers – shared the John U. Bird Distinguished Jurist Award, presented on May 4. Each year, the Clearwater Bar Association presents the award to recognize outstanding service by a sitting judge. Judges Baird and Demers, whose combined experience totals more than 53 years on the bench, are both retiring at the end of the year.
- Circuit Judge Jack Helinger is the recipient of the Judicial Appreciation Award, presented by the St. Petersburg Bar Association on May 11.

Judge Schafer, a circuit judge since being appointed to a newly created judgeship in 2005, currently presides over Probate Division cases in both New Port Richey and Dade City and mortgage foreclosure cases in New Port Richey.

Judge Demers, who served as Sixth Circuit’s chief judge for six years, has been on the bench since 1981, when he was appointed by then-Gov. Bob Graham to fill a county judge vacancy. In 1994, he was appointed to the circuit bench by the late Gov. Lawton Chiles. He currently presides over Civil Division cases – including mortgage foreclosures – at the St. Petersburg Judicial Building.

Judge Baird, who presides over Civil Division cases in the Clearwater Courthouse, has served as a local judge since being appointed by Gov. Bob Graham to the Pinellas County bench in 1986. In 1988, he was

appointed by Gov. Bob Martinez to a vacant circuit judgeship. At various times in his judicial career, he has served as Administrative Judge in both the Civil and Criminal Divisions.

Judge Helinger, on the bench since being appointed to a vacancy in 2009, is Administrative Judge of the circuit's Family Law Division and presides over Family Law cases in St. Petersburg. He is former president of both the Pinellas County Trial Lawyers Association and the Federal Bar Association – Tampa Bay Chapter.