



**Gay Lynne Inskeep**  
Trial Courts Administrator

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

**Public Information Office**

## **Sixth Circuit Welcomes Six New Judges**

**CLEARWATER** – A half dozen new judges have begun presiding over cases in the Sixth Judicial Circuit, including a former sheriff's deputy, a U.S. Army veteran and a partner in a prestigious Clearwater law firm.

Phil Matthey was once a deputy sheriff in Orange County. After law school, he worked at the Pinellas-Pasco State Attorney's Office, prosecuting, among other types of cases, murders.

He was elected to a circuit judge position in August, and is handling domestic relations cases, such as those involving divorce, paternity issues, and adoptions. Judge Matthey is based at the Robert D. Sumner Judicial Center in Dade City.

Alicia Polk was also elected a circuit judge in August, and also formerly worked as a prosecutor in the state attorney's office. More recently, she worked for a private firm in Dade City representing a large bank, a car dealership and other businesses.

Polk is currently presiding over civil cases in the West Pasco Judicial Center in New Port Richey.

Susan St. John, a U.S. Army veteran, also worked at the Pinellas-Pasco State Attorney's Office, where she distinguished herself as a supervisory prosecutor overseeing cases involving gang members.

Elected to the circuit bench in August, St. John is now handling civil cases at the St. Petersburg courthouse.

Kimberly Sharpe was a partner at the respected Clearwater law firm, Johnson, Pope, Bokor, Ruppel & Burns. Like Matthey, Polk, and St. John, she won a circuit judge position in the August primary.

Sharpe has been assigned to the judicial center in New Port Richey, where she is overseeing civil cases and probate matters.

Unlike the other new circuit judges, James R. Stearns faced no opposition after deciding to run for a position left open by the retirement of Circuit Judge R. Timothy Peters, so his name did not appear on the ballot.

After working as an assistant public defender in the circuit for three years, Stearns entered private practice, where he garnered experience in a wide range of areas, including family law, traffic and crime. He has been assigned to handle civil cases and probate matters at the courthouse in New Port Richey.

Finally, Holly Grissinger, another former prosecutor with the Pinellas-Pasco State Attorney's Office, was appointed a county judge by Gov. Rick Scott last year after longtime incumbent Patrick Caddell died of cancer. Judge Grissinger handles criminal matters.