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Seven Judges Honored For Their Expertise, Legal Acumen and Contributions To the Community

CLEARWATER - Six judges in the Sixth Judicial Circuit, and one retired judge, were recognized over the last several months for their professionalism, high standards of conduct, and contributions, both in and out of the courtroom.



Judge Ramsberger

On Tuesday, Sept. 12, 2023, the Barney Masterson American Inn of Court presented its William J. Castagna Award for Judicial Excellence to Pinellas-Pasco Circuit Thomas Ramsberger, who presides over civil cases at the downtown St. Petersburg courthouse.

For the award, named after a distinguished federal district court judge, members of the Florida Bar cast votes for the person they believe displays the highest standards in all aspects of judicial performance, including knowledge of the law, ethics, civility, professionalism and demeanor. Judge Ramsberger was given the award at a St. Petersburg Bar Association luncheon at the St. Petersburg courthouse.

Pinellas-Pasco George Jirotko was given the John U. Bird Judicial Excellence Award by the Clearwater Bar Association at its Annual Law Day Luncheon at Ruth Eckerd Hall on May 19. The award was created to recognize honor, high ideals, personal character, judicial competence and service. Judge Jirotko presides over civil cases in the downtown Clearwater courthouse



Judge Jirotko



Judge Ellis

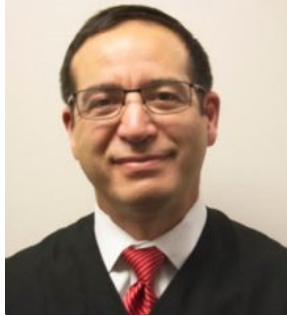
Three weeks before that, on April 27, the Canakaris Inn of Court gave its annual award for judicial excellence in family law to Pinellas-Pasco Circuit Judge David Ellis, who presides over a family law division in the downtown Clearwater courthouse.

The Canakaris Inn of Court in Clearwater was founded in 1993 by a group of judges and lawyers who wanted an inn specifically for family law practitioners in Pinellas and Pasco counties, the two that make up the Sixth Judicial Circuit. Typically, the award is based on a tally of votes among its membership.

Three weeks before that, Pinellas-Pasco Circuit Judge Lauralee Westine, who presides over Unified Family Court cases in New Port Richey, was awarded the 2023 Judicial Professionalism Award by the group, the Women Lawyers of Pasco, at a ceremony on April 4. The group recognized Judge Westine's continuing efforts to foster a relationship between the bench and the bar, and to encourage those who practice law to maintain high ethical standards and to present themselves as models of civility and patience for others to emulate.



Judge Westine



Judge Berlin

The week before, on March 29, the Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Tampa Bay gave its Jurist of the Year award to Pinellas-Pasco Circuit Judge Steve Berlin, who presides over a family division in the downtown St. Petersburg courthouse. Judge Berlin, who also serves as the association's advisor, also swore in the board's officers and board members at the event at Yummy House in Tampa.

Two weeks before that, on March 16, Retired Pinellas-Pasco Circuit Judge Dee Anna Farnell, who for years presided over cases in Adult Drug Court, was awarded The Lifetime Achievement Award from the St. Petersburg Women's Chamber of Commerce, which is a women's organization designed to bring together women to work together for effective change throughout the community. They honored Judge Farnell for being a "Fierce Defender of Women".



Judge Farnell



Judge Todd

Finally, on Feb. 16, Pinellas-Pasco Circuit Judge Kimberly Todd, who is currently the Adult Drug Court judge, was given the annual Judicial Appreciation Award by the St. Petersburg Bar Association, at its annual judicial reception, which this year was held at the James Museum in St. Petersburg.

A local jurist typically wins the award after the bar solicits nominations. Among the factors considered are a nominee's courtroom demeanor, his or her judicial experience, helpfulness to lawyers and litigants, and activities off the bench that promote the administration of justice and civic participation.