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Anthony Rondolino Re-Elected to a Fourth Term as Chief Judge

CLEARWATER – Pinellas-Pasco Circuit Judge Anthony Rondolino by acclamation won a fourth term as the chief judge of the Sixth Judicial Circuit. The election took place Feb. 17, 2021. The new term begins July 1, 2021, and ends June 30, 2023.

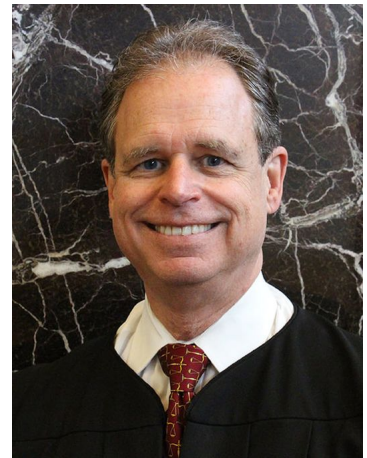
Judge Rondolino drew no opposition.

The monumental event between the last chief judge election, in 2019, and this one has, of course, been COVID-19, which has affected businesses, schools, households, and all three branches of government, including the judiciary.

“That’s been the Number One thing – getting the court through the pandemic and whatever our transition is to the new normal,” Judge Rondolino said.

To that end, Judge Rondolino has kept an eye on all relevant data weekly – the number of COVID-19 cases, the positivity rates, and hospitalizations, to name just three types – as he worked with the other stakeholders in the circuit to decide how to continue administering justice while keeping his staff, his fellow judges, attorneys and members of the public safe.

Indeed, his handling of the pandemic was one of the things mentioned when Judge Rondolino was given the John U. Bird Judicial Excellence Award by the Clearwater Bar Association in September, 2020. The award was created to recognize honor, high ideals, personal character, judicial competence and service.



Chief Judge Anthony Rondolino

Judge Rondolino does not envision a complete return to the pre-pandemic status quo. For one, there’s been a proliferation of remote hearings, whether by teleconference or the video-conferencing tool, Zoom, which many attorneys, judges, and parties now prefer over in-person hearings.

The trick, Judge Rondolino said, is to figure out what works and what does not – and to keep what does.

“It’s never going to be the way it was before,” Judge Rondolino said. “What will the new court look like in the future?”

At the same time, Judge Rondolino has had to monitor significant construction projects in Pinellas County – the remodeling of the downtown St. Petersburg courthouse, and the construction of a four-story annex at the County Justice Center in Clearwater. And it has not been lost on him that such projects are also needed in Pasco, the other county in the circuit.

“There’s the ongoing issue of the huge growth in Pasco County and the antiquated facilities we have there for the court,” Judge Rondolino said. “That’s an ongoing concern.”

The chief judge is constitutionally responsible for the administrative supervision of the courts and court staff within the sixth circuit, which serves almost 1.5 million residents in the two counties. Forty-five circuit judges and 24 county judges preside over court proceedings in seven locations and are supported by an administrative staff of approximately 235.