

**Hale R. Stancil**  
**Circuit Judge**  
**Fifth Judicial Circuit**  
**110 NW 1<sup>st</sup> Ave.**  
**Ocala, FL 34475**  
January 11, 2016 ©

## **A little history of Florida, the Florida Supreme Court And Judges of Florida's Fifth Judicial Circuit**

President James Monroe on 10 March 1821 appointed Andrew Jackson, Military Governor of East and West Florida. West Florida was transferred to the United States at Pensacola on 17 July 1821. East Florida was transferred at St. Augustine, through Pensacola on 21 July 1821. By executive order General/Governor Jackson on 21 July 1821 divided Florida into two counties, Escambia and St. Johns. Escambia County extended from the Pedido River to the Suwannee River and St. Johns County included the territory East of the Suwannee River. He established a judicial system in the two counties in the same executive order. In 1822 Duval and Jackson Counties were created.

Florida's Constitution of 1838 provided "for the term of five years from the election of the Judges of the Circuit Court, and thereafter until the General Assembly shall otherwise provide, the powers of the Supreme Court shall be vested in, and its duties formed by the Judges of the several Circuit Courts within this state, and they, or a majority of them, shall hold such sessions of the Supreme Court, and at such times as may be directed by law."

Judges were elected by the legislature for terms of five years. Later by amendment the term was eight years. Four Judicial Circuits were established; the Eastern, Middle, Southern, and Western Circuits. Although four Judicial Circuits were initially established the legislature did possess the power to establish additional judicial circuits. Florida's State Government had its beginning in June of 1845 and on 25 July, 1845 Wm. D. Mosely, Florida's first Governor signed the legislative act wherein the four judges of the four Judicial Circuits constituted the Supreme Court of Florida. The four Justices elected. Thomas Douglas was the first Chief Justice. The members of Florida's first Supreme Court were:

Thomas Douglas of the Eastern Circuit

Thomas Baltzell of the Middle Circuit

George S. Hawkins of the Western Circuit

Two judges who were appointed resigned their appointments and accepted instead appointments to the Federal District Courts in Florida. Isaac H. Bronson who was originally appointed to the Eastern Circuit resigned as did William Marvin who was appointed to the Southern.

George McCrae was appointed and served part of a term for the Southern Circuit. He was succeeded by Joseph B. Lancaster. Isaac H. Bronson was succeeded by Thomas Douglas on 27 September, 1845. Under Chapter 371 of the Laws of Florida the Florida Supreme Court was established consisting of one chief justice and two associate justices. The Supreme Court on 11 January, 1851 consisted of Chief Justice Walker Anderson, and associates justices Leslie A. Thompson and Albert G. Semmes. Walker Anderson served two years before resigning on 24 May, 1853. He was succeeded by Benjamin D. Wright. A Constitutional amendment soon provided for an elected Supreme Court and on 1 October, 1853, Thomas Baltzell was elected Chief Justice with Thomas Douglas and Charles H. DuPont Associate Justices. Florida's first constitution was adopted in 1838.

When Florida became a state in 1845, the state was divided into four circuits<sup>1</sup>. The four circuits were; the Eastern Circuit, the Western Circuit, the Middle Circuit and the Southern Circuit<sup>2</sup>. Marion County was a part of the Eastern Circuit.

Although each circuit had one judge, the judges of the several circuit courts were authorized to hold court for each other. The law also provided for rotation of the circuit judges between the four circuits, providing that "no Judge shall preside oftener than once in two years in the same circuit, unless in the case of sickness or death of the Judge whose duty it would have been to preside in said circuit."

All circuit judges of the four circuits at one time or another held court in Marion County. iiThe following individuals have served as Circuit Judges and presided in Marion County. Circuit Judges could be called to sit as Supreme Court Justices when a justice is disqualified.

Thomas Douglas<sup>3</sup>, Jacksonville                      1845

---

<sup>1</sup> The 1838 Constitution created a Supreme Court without justices who just served on the Supreme Court. The powers of the Supreme Court were vested in the judges of the circuit courts who also served as Justices of the Supreme Court from 1846 until 1851. It is interesting to note they heard the appeals from the trial court upon which they sat.

<sup>2</sup> Florida's Constitution was amended in 1847 to provide for the election of circuit judges.

Born 27 Apr 1790  
Died 11 Sept. 1855

Isaac H. Bronson  
Born 16 Aug. 1802  
Died 13 Aug. 1855

Originally appointed Judge of the Eastern Circuit, but resigned to accept an appointment to U.S. District Court (Florida District) which he held from 8 Aug. 1846 through 23 Feb. 1847 and as a Northern District Judge 23 Feb. 1847-13 Aug. 1855

William Marvin<sup>4</sup>

Born 14 April 1808  
Died 9 July 1902

Dec. 1845-Feb. 1846 (Judge of the Southern Circuit) held office for only three months before being appointed U.S. District Judge (Circuit) Held office for only three months before being appointed U.S. District Judge 3 Mar 1847. Held office to 2 July 1863,. Was a Judge of the U.S. Admiralty Court in the

---

<sup>3</sup> Judge Thomas Douglas, a resident of Jacksonville and Judge of the Eastern Circuit of Florida, was born in 1790 in New Haven County in Wallingford, Connecticut. He purchased the second block north of the square in Ocala, Marion County In 1846. He was appointed Florida's First Supreme Court Justice in 1846. From 1826 to 1842 he was the U.S. District Attorney for the Eastern District of Florida. He twice served on the Florida State Supreme Court, i.e., from 1846 to 1850 and again from 1854 to 1855. His father was a shoemaker and farmer. He married Hannah Sanford September 26, 1814. He moved to Indiana in 1815, but the financial Panic of 1819 left him deeply in debt. In 1822, He was elected judge in Jefferson County, Indiana two years before admission to bar. He arrived in Florida around 1824 having followed his mentor, Judge Davis Floyd to Florida. President John Quincy Adams appointed him District Attorney for East Florida in 1826. In 1845 he was named to the Florida Supreme Court. During reorganization of the courts in 1851 he became a circuit judge. He was elected to the Supreme Court in 1854. He died of pleurisy in 1855.

An anecdote of his work as a judge tells of his admonishment of an attorney who felt his client should be freed of a charge of horse-stealing because his name had been misspelled on the indictment. He asked the lawyer, whose name was Westcott, if he thought that should he be arraigned on a charge of murder he would be freed if his name was spelled Waistcot or Waistcoat. "You should hang, sir!" thundered the judge. When the disgruntled attorney replied that perhaps there were those who might wish to spell the judge's name D-o-u-g-l-ass, he was promptly fined \$50 for contempt of court.

<sup>4</sup> Appointed U.S. District Court Judge

Southern District of Florida 1839-1847, Served as a provisional Governor of Florida in 1865-1866.

George Sydney Hawkins 1846-1850  
Born abt 1800  
Died 15 Mar 1878

Thomas Baltzelliii 1846-1851  
Born 1July 1804  
Died 14 Jan 1866

George W. McCrae<sup>5</sup> 1847-1848

Joseph Bradford Lancaster<sup>6</sup> Jan. 1848-1853  
Born  
Died 25 Nov 1856

In 1848 the Florida Constitution was amended to provide for terms of eight years for both Supreme Court justices and circuit court judges.

In 1850 Florida's Constitution was amended to provide for six year terms to be filled by election and gave the governor the power to appoint vacant positions. In 1853 the Florida Constitution was amended to provide for popular election of Supreme Court Justices for six-year terms but not circuit judges.

Thomas Douglas Eastern Circuit 1851-1852  
Born 27 Apr 1790  
Died 11 Sept. 1855

William A. Forward<sup>7</sup> Eastern Circuit 1853-1857  
Born 1812  
Died 19 Oct. 1865

---

<sup>5</sup> Served part a term as a Supreme Court Justice

<sup>6</sup> Succeeded George W. McCrae as judge of the Southern Circuit, and was the last elected circuit judge to sit on the Florida Supreme Court by "right of law."

<sup>7</sup> Supreme Court Justice from 1860-1865

B. A. Putnam	Eastern Circuit	1858-1869
J. Wayles Baker	Middle Circuit	1851-1867
Alex McDonald	Middle Circuit	1868-1869
Joseph B. Lancaster Born Died 25 Nov 1856	Southern Circuit	1851-1853
Thomas F. King Born 18 Nov. 1812 Died 6 Nov. 1904	Southern Circuit (elected 1 October 1853 replacing Joseph B. Lancaster-1865)	
James Gettis Born 4 May 1816 Died 14 Dec 1867	Southern Circuit 1865-1867	
	1868-1869 Southern Circuit Vacant	
J. M. Baker	Suwannee Circuit <sup>8</sup>	1860-1861
J. B. Dawkins <sup>9</sup> Born 14 Nov. 1820 Died 12 Feb. 1883	Suwannee Circuit	1862-1865
Thomas T. Long	Suwannee Circuit	1865-1869
George S. Hawkins Born abt 1800 Died 15 Mar 1878	Western Circuit	1851-May 1853 Resigned 1 May 1853

---

<sup>8</sup> The Suwannee Circuit came into being on 15 Jan. 1859 and was made up of the counties of Alachua, Levy, Lafayette, Suwannee, Columbia, New River and Nassau.

<sup>9</sup> James Baird Dawkins, practiced law in Gainesville, FL. Dawkins, James Baird (1820-1883) — of Florida. Born on 14 November, 1820 in Hancockville, Cherokee County, S.C. Delegate to Florida secession convention, 1861; Representative from Florida in the Confederate Congress, 1862; state court judge in Florida, 1863-65, 1877-83; died in office in Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida on 12 February, 1883. Interment at Gainesville Cemetery, Gainesville, Fla. Represented Alachua County, Florida, at Florida's Secession Convention \*Signed Florida's Ordinance of Secession



Article XVI Section 3. The several Judicial Circuits of the Circuit Courts shall be as follows: The First Judicial Circuit shall be composed of the counties of Escambia, Santa Rosa, Walton, Holmes, Washington, and Jackson; the Second Judicial Circuit shall be composed of the counties of Gadsden, Liberty, Calhoun, Franklin, Leon, Wakulla, and Jefferson; the Third Judicial Circuit shall be composed of the counties of Madison, Taylor, Lafayette, Hamilton, Suwannee, and Columbia; the Fourth Judicial Circuit shall be composed of the counties of Nassau, Duval, Baker, Bradford, Clay, and St. Johns; the Fifth Judicial Circuit shall be composed of the counties of Putnam, Alachua, Levy, Marion, and Sumter; the Sixth Judicial Circuit shall be composed of the counties of Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Polk, and Monroe; the Seventh Judicial Circuit shall be composed of the counties of Volusia, Brevard, Orange, and Dade.

The Legislature in 1868 replaced the geographical circuits, i.e., Eastern, Western, Middle and Southern with seven numbered circuits.

James B. Dawkins, Ocala Born 14 Nov. 1820 Died 12 Feb. 1883	13 Jan.1877-1883
---	------------------

George B. Sparkman <sup>13</sup>	July 1882
----------------------------------	-----------

Thomas F. King Born 18 Nov. 1812 Died 6 Nov. 1904	22 Feb. 1883-1887
---	-------------------

James J. Finley	1888-1902
-----------------	-----------

In 1870 Article III by Amendment abolished the previously created sixth and seventh circuits and providing that the limits of the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Judicial Districts would be defined by law.

In 1874 Article III of the 1868 Constitution was amended to provide for five judicial circuits and the counties assigned to each circuit. The Fifth Judicial Circuit was composed of the counties of Marion, Sumter, Hernando, Hillsborough, Polk, Manatee, and Monroe.

---

<sup>13</sup> Was a sixth Judicial Circuit Judge who serve in the Fifth, probably by temporary assignment.

William Adam Hocker<sup>14</sup>  
Born 5 Dec. 1844  
Died 17 July 1918

Jun 1893-1902

iv) In 1901 Section 8 or Article V of the Florida Constitution was amended to provide: "The Governor may, in his discretion, order a temporary exchange of circuits by the respective Judges or order any Judge to hold one or more terms or part or parts of any term in any other circuit than that to which he is assigned. The Judge shall reside in the Circuit of which he is Judge."

W. S. Bullock<sup>15</sup>, Ocala  
Born 16 May 1856  
Died 28 May 1935

2 Sept. 1901-May 28, 1935

In 1902 the eight judicial circuit was created by constitutional amendment.

In 1922 by amendment the legislature was given authority to increase the number of circuit court judges in each circuit. Prior to this amendment each circuit was limited to one circuit judge.

Robert L. Anderson<sup>16</sup>, Ocala  
Born 11 Dec. 1856  
Died 26 July 1935

June 7, 1935-June 23, 1935

James C. B. Koonce<sup>17</sup>, Tavares

July 1935- 15 Sept 1948

---

<sup>14</sup> Supreme Court Commissioner 1899-1901 until he was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court.

<sup>15</sup> Admitted to the bar in 1879.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Lochridge Anderson was president of the Florida State Bar Association (Predecessor of the Florida Bar Association) in 1907. He was born on 11 Dec. 1856 in 11 Dec 1856 in Mayfield, Graves, Kentucky and died 26 July 1935 in Ocala, Florida.

<sup>17</sup> James C.B. Koonce, a former Sumter County and circuit judge in the 16th Judicial Circuit, moved his practice to Eustis in the 1920s. He was first circuit judge chosen in Lake County. He was 65 years of age at the time of his appointment in 1935. It was through the efforts of Judge Koonce that the Dade Battlefield Park was established in 1908. He was elected four times to the Florida House of Representatives and served as a judge for more than 30 years.



Born 12 Mar. 1870  
Died 15 Sept.1948

F. R. Hocker<sup>18</sup>, Ocala  
Born 12 July 1891  
Died Nov. 1964

May 1935-(Retired Sept. 1956)

Truman Gaskin Futch, Jr.<sup>19</sup>, Leesburg  
Born 1 Oct 1891  
Died March 1960

Feb. 1948-1960

Wallace E. Sturgis<sup>20</sup>, Sr., Ocala  
Born 8 Nov. 1898  
Died May 1966

Sept. 1956, June 1957(replaced Judge Hocker who retired; resigned upon appointment to the First District Court Appeals which started on at 12:00 Noon July 1, 1957.

D. R. Smith<sup>21</sup>, Ocala  
Born 18 Jun 1913  
Died 9 Dec. 1995

Jul. 1957-1978 (replaced Wallace E. Sturgis, Sr. upon his appointment to the First District Court of Appeals) Retired from the bench 1978

Carrol W. Fussell, Bushnell  
Born 2 May 1903  
Died 16 Oct. 1990

Jan. 1957-Jan. 1967 (retired)

W. Troy Hall<sup>22</sup>, Leesburg  
Primarily assignment Lake County  
Born 31 July 1915  
Died 30 Jan 1976

Jan. 1960 (Replaced Truman G. Futch)

John W. Booth<sup>23</sup>, Bushnell/ Leesburg

Jan. 1968 -1996 (retired Dec 1996 (Continues

---

<sup>18</sup> Frederick Rochet Hocker.

<sup>19</sup> Truman Gaskin Futch was known for whittling wood carvings while on the bench back in the 1940s and 1950s.

<sup>20</sup> Wallace E. Strugis, Sr. was president of the Florida Senate in 1951) and was appointed to replace Judge Hocker.

<sup>21</sup> Elected County Judge of Marion County 1940, took office January 1941. Appointed Circuit Judge in July 1957. Was appointed to preside over the Pitts and Lee, Port St. Joe murder trial.

<sup>22</sup> Served as County judge of Lake County

Primarily assignment Sumter County to serve as senior judge)  
Born 13 Jan. 1924

L. R. Huffstetler, Tavares/Brooksville Jan. 1973 - 1988 (resigned in 1988)  
Primarily assignment – Hernando County  
Born 1939  
Died 19 June 2009

John W. McCormick, Mt. Dora Jan. 1973 – 27 Apr. 1977  
Primarily assignment Lake County  
Born 10 Mar 1919  
Died 27 Apr 1977

24E. R. 'Dick' Mills, Jr., Ocala Jan. 1973 (Rather than run for re-election to the  
Primarily assignment Marion County circuit bench in 1974 he resigned his  
Born 15 Aug. 1919 position, qualified for and was elected to  
Died 27 Feb. 1996 serve on the First District Court of  
Appeals serving until he retired in 1988.  
County Judge William T. Swigert,  
qualified and was elected to fill the  
judgeship vacated by Judge Mills)

Wallace E. Sturgis<sup>25</sup>, Jr., Ocala Jan. 1973-1990 (Defeated in 1990  
Primarily assignment Marion County by William "Jack" Singbush)  
Born 10 Aug. 1928  
Died 15 Jan 1992

William T. Swigert, Ocala Sept 1974-3 Jan. 2005  
Primarily assignment Marion County (Retired in Jan. 2005)<sup>26</sup>  
Born 24 May 1936  
Died 26 April 2014

Ernest C. 'Buddy' Aulls, Tavares Jan. 1975-1991<sup>27</sup> (Replaced W. Troy Hall)

---

<sup>23</sup> Served as County judge of Lake County from 1966 until his appointment to the circuit bench in 1968.

<sup>24</sup> Elbert Richard Mills, Jr. was born in Marion County, Florida. He served on the First DCA from 1 July 1975-30 June 1988.

<sup>25</sup> Judge Sturgis was one of the original three judges appointed to the newly created First District Court of Appeals when it was created in 1957. He was its first Chief Judge.

<sup>26</sup> Continued to serve as a senior judge after retirement until his death.

Primarily assigned to Lake County  
Born 1934  
Died 25 Aug. 2009

William F. Edwards, Inverness Jan. 1977-1993 (Retired in 1993)  
Primary assignment Citrus County

C. Welborn Daniel, Clermont Apr. 1977-1988 (Resigned in 1988 upon  
Primary assignment Lake County (appointment to the Fifth District Court  
Born 1926 of Appeals where he served until he  
retired in 1990)

Carven D. Angel<sup>28</sup>, Ocala Jan. 1979 -2007 (Retired Jan. 2007)<sup>29</sup>  
Primary assignment Marion County

Jackson O. Brownlee, Brooksville 22 Oct. 1979-22 Oct. 1984 (Resigned)  
Primary assignment Lake County

Raymond T. McNeal<sup>30</sup>, Ocala Jan. 1983-2007 (Retired Jan. 2007)  
Primary assignment Marion County

Jerry T. Lockett, Leesburg 15 Oct. 1984- (Resigned) (Reapplied and was  
Primary assignment Lake County Re-appointed in June 1991  
Born Feb. 11, 1942  
Died Sept. 13, 2010

John Thurman, Dunnellon Jan. 1985 (Defeated in 1996 election by Michael  
Primary assignment Citrus County Blackstone)

Victor J. Musleh<sup>31</sup>, Ocala Jan. 1988-2 Jan 2007 (Retired 2 Jan. 2007)<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> After retirement served as a mediator.

<sup>28</sup> Elected County Judge Marion County in 1974, took office November 1974. Took position held by William T. Swigert who was appointed to the Circuit Court in August 1973.

<sup>29</sup> Continued to serve as a senior judge

<sup>30</sup> Elected County Judge of Marion County in 1978, took office January 1979.

<sup>31</sup> Appointed County Judge of Marion County in 1983, took position held by Clyde G. Trammell who died July 1983.

<sup>32</sup> Continued to serve as a senior judge

Primary assignment Marion County

Earle W. Peterson, Leesburg June 1988 (Resigned upon appointment to the Fifth  
Primary assignment Lake County District Court of Appeals)

Richard Tombrink, Brooksville 1 Dec. 1988  
Primary assignment Hernando County

Thomas D. Sawaya<sup>33</sup>, Ocala Jan 1991 (Resigned in February 2000 upon  
Primary assignment Marion County appointment to the Fifth District Court of  
Appeals)

Jack Springstead<sup>34</sup>, Brooksville Jan 1991 (Retired Nov. 30, 2010)  
Primary assignment Hernando County

William 'Jack' Singbush Jan .1991 (Retired Dec. 31, 2013)

Mark J. Hill<sup>35</sup>, Tavares Jan 1991  
Primary assignment Lake County

G. Richard Singeltary, Tavares Jan. 1991  
Primary assignment Lake County

Don F. Briggs, Tavares Jan 1991  
Primary assignment Lake County

Patricia Vitter-Thomas, Inverness Sep. 1993 (Replaced William "Bill" Edwards who  
Primary assignment Citrus County resigned/retired in 1993  
<sup>36</sup>

Hale R. Stancil,<sup>37</sup> Ocala Jan. 1994-Dec. 2015 (Retired Dec. 31, 2015)<sup>38</sup>  
Assigned to Hernando County 1994-1995  
Assigned to Citrus County 1995-1996  
Assigned to Sumter County 1997-2004

---

<sup>33</sup> Elected County Judge of Marion County in 1986, took office in January 1987.

<sup>34</sup> Served as County Judge of Hernando County.

<sup>35</sup> Served as County Judge of Lake County.

<sup>36</sup> Continued to serve as a senior judge.

<sup>37</sup> Appointed by Gov. Childs

<sup>38</sup> Continued to serve as a senior judge

Assigned to Marion County 2005-2015  
Born 3 Jan. 1946

William "Bill" Law, Tavares	Jan. 1995	
T. Michael Johnson, Bushnell	Oct. 1995	(Retired Dec. 31, 2011) <sup>39</sup>
Michael Blackstone, Inverness	Jan. 1997	(Resigned
Barbara Gurrola, Inverness	Jan. 1997	(Retired 2008) <sup>40</sup>
David B. Eddy, Ocala	Jan 1998	
Daniel B. Merritt, Sr., Brooksville	Jan. 1998 – Dec. 31, 2012	(Retired 31 Dec. 2012) <sup>41</sup>
Curtis J. Neal, Inverness	Feb. 2000	
Brian D. Lambert, Ocala	Mar. 2000 – 6 June 2014	(Resigned as circuit judge upon appointment to the Fifth District Court of Appeals in 2014))
Sandra Edward-Stephens <sup>42</sup> Primary assignment Marion County	18 May 2000	(Retired Oct. 31, 2013) <sup>43</sup>
Richard A. Howard Primary assignment Citrus County	Dec. 2000	
S. Sue Robbins <sup>44</sup> Primary assignment Marion County	1 Jan 2002	
Lawrence Semento Primary assignment Lake County	8 Mar. 2002-	
William H. 'Bud' Hallman, III Primary assignment Sumter County	May 2003	(Replaced Hale R. Stancil in Sumter County in January 2005)

---

<sup>39</sup> Continued to serve as a senior judge

<sup>40</sup> Continued to serve as a senior judge

<sup>41</sup> Continued to serve as a senior judge

<sup>42</sup> Elected County Judge of Marion County in 1990, took office in 1991.

<sup>43</sup> Continued to serve as a senior judge

<sup>44</sup> Appointed County Judge of Marion County 15 August, 2000.

Willard Pope	May 2003	
Primary assignment Marion County		
Stephen D. Spivey	Jan. 2005	(Resigned Dec. 31, 2006))
Carole Falvey	Nov. 2005	
Primary assignment Citrus County		
Stephen O. Rushing	Nov. 2005	(Retired March, 2011)
Primary assignment Hernando County		
Mark A. Nacke,	2 Jan. 2006	
Primary assignment Lake County		
Michelle Morley	Jan 2007	
Primary assignment Sumter County		
Edward L. Scott	Jan. 2007	
Primary assignment Marion County		
Frances S. King <sup>45</sup>	Jan. 2007-Dec. 31, 2012	(Retired 31 Dec. 2012) <sup>46</sup>
Primary assignment Marion County		
Jonathan D. Olhman <sup>47</sup>	1 May 2007-	
Primary assignment Marion County		
Daniel B. Merritt, Jr., Brooksville	Jan 2007	
Primary assignment Hernando County		
Robert W. Hodges, Ocala	Dec. 2007	
Primary assignment Marion County		
Michael Takac	Jan 2007	
Primary assignment Lake County		
Sandy Kautz	Jan. 2009 – Dec. 2014	Replaced by Mary Hatcher
Primary assignment Citrus County		
Heidi Davis, <sup>48</sup>	1 Dec. 2010	(Replaced Jack Springstead,

---

<sup>45</sup> Elected County Judge of Marion County in 1994, took office in 1995.

<sup>46</sup> Continued to serve as a senior judge.

<sup>47</sup> Served as Work Comp. Judge from 1992 until appointed to the Circuit Bench.

Primary assignment Lake County	in Hernando County. Upon the retirement of Judge Michael Johnson, Judge Davis was re-assigned to Lake County to fill Judge Johnson's position)
Anthony Tatti <sup>49</sup> Primary assignment Marion County	Mar. 2011 (Replaced Stephen O. Rushing who retired. Judge Tatti presided in Hernando County until the retirement of Judge Sandra Edward-Stephens at which time he was re-assigned to Marion County)
Lisa Herndon <sup>50</sup> Primary assignment Marion County	3 Jan. 2012 (Judge Herndon was appointed to fill the position left vacant by the retirement of Judge Michael Johnson and was assigned to Hernando County to fill the position left vacant by Judge Davis who was re-assigned from Hernando County to Lake County. Judge Herndon served in Hernando County until the retirement of Judge Singbush at which time she was assigned to Marion County in Feb. 2014)
Stephen Rogers Primary assignment Marion County	8 Jan. 2013 (Replaced Frances S. King)
Stephen E. Toner Primary assignment Hernando County	8 Jan. 2013 <sup>51</sup> (Replaced Daniel B. Merritt, Sr.)
Thomas R. Eineman Primary assignment Hernando County	30 Jan. 2014 (Replaced William J. Singbush)
Ann Melinda Craggs Primary assignment Marion County	3 Nov. 2014 <sup>52</sup> (Replaced Judge Brian Lambert who was appointed to the Fifth District Court of Appeals)

---

<sup>48</sup> Appointed by Gov. Bush

<sup>49</sup> Appointed by Gov. Scott

<sup>50</sup> Appointed by Gov. Scott

<sup>51</sup> Appointed by Gov. Scott

<sup>52</sup> Appointed by Gov. Scott

Mary Hatcher  
Primary assignment Citrus County

3 Jan. 2015

Jennifer Bass  
Primary assignment Marion County

3 Jan. 2016<sup>53</sup> (Replaced Hale R. Stancil  
who retired Dec. 31, 2015)

---

<sup>i</sup> The Eastern Circuit of Florida terms were as follows: Spring Terms – For the Counties of Orange and St. Lucie, at the Court-house at Mellonville, on the third Tuesday of April; for the County of Marion, at Ocala, on the fourth Monday of April; for the Counties of Alachua and Levy, at Newnansville, on the first Monday of May; for the County of Columbia, at Alligator, on the second Monday of May; for the County of Nassau, at Nassau Court-house, Wednesday before the fourth Monday of May; for the County of Duval, at Jacksonville, fourth Monday of May; for the County of St. Johns, at St. Augustine, on the second Monday of June. There was also a Fall Term beginning in November. The Counties of Orange and St. Lucie were consolidated for judicial purposes and it was the duty of the several judges of the Circuit Courts to hold Courts for both counties in Mellonville.

<sup>ii</sup> Article V of Florida's 1838 Constitution Section 5. The State shall be divided into at least four convenient Circuits, and until other Circuits shall be provided for by the General Assembly, the arrangement of the Circuits shall be the Western, Middle, Eastern and Southern Circuits, and for each Circuit there shall be appointed a Judge, who shall after his appointment, reside in the Circuit for which he has been appointed, and shall, at stated times, receive for his services a salary of not less than two thousand dollars per annum, which shall not be diminished during the continuance of such Judge in office; but the Judges shall receive no fees or perquisites of office, nor hold any other office of profit under the State, the United States, or of any other power.

An amendment adopted in 1847 provided for the election of circuit judges for a term of eight years.

In 1848 Section 2 of the Constitution was amended to read:

Be it further enacted, that the Judges first appointed under this amended Constitution, shall be divided by lot into four classes. The first class shall hold his or their office or offices for the term of two years, the second for the term of four years, the third for the term of six years, the fourth for the term of eight years.

In 1850 the Constitution was amended to provide for six year terms to be filled by election and gave the governor the power to appoint vacant positions.

Section 4 of Article V of the 1861 Constitution states:

The State shall be divided into convenient Circuits; and for each Circuit there shall be a Judge, who shall, after his election or appointment, reside in the Circuit for which he has been elected or appointed, and shall at stated times receive for his services a salary of not less than two thousand dollars per annum, which shall not be diminished during the continuance of such judge in office; but the judges shall receive

---

<sup>53</sup> Appointed by Gov. Scott



---

no fees or perquisites of office, nor hold any other office of profit under the State, the Confederate States, or any other power.

Section 7 of Article VI of the Florida's 1868 Constitution states:

There shall be seven circuit judges appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, who shall hold their office for eight years. The State shall be divided into seven judicial districts, the limits of which are defined in this Constitution, and one judge shall be assigned to each circuit. Such judge shall hold two terms of his court in each county within his circuit, each year, at such times and places as shall be prescribed by law. The chief justice may in his discretion order a temporary exchange of circuits by the respective judges, or any judge, to hold one or more terms in any other circuit than that to which he is assigned. The judge shall reside in the circuit to which he is assigned.

Amendments to the 1868 Constitution in 1870 abolished the previously created sixth and seventh circuits.

In 1874 the Constitution was amended to provide for five judicial circuits.

Section 3. The several Judicial Circuits of the Circuit Courts shall be as follows:

The First Judicial Circuit shall be composed of the counties of Escambia, Santa Rosa, Walton, Holmes, Washington, Jackson, Calhoun, and Franklin.

The Second Judicial Circuit shall be composed of the counties of Liberty, Gadsden, Leon, Wakulla, Jefferson, Madison, Taylor, and Lafayette.

The Third Judicial Circuit shall be composed of the counties of Hamilton, Suwannee, Columbia, Baker, Bradford, Alachua, and Levy.

The Fourth Judicial Circuit shall be composed of the counties of Nassau, Duval, Clay, St. Johns, Putnam, Volusia, Orange, Brevard, and Dade.

The Fifth Judicial Circuit shall be composed of the counties of Marion, Sumter, Hernando, Hillsborough, Polk, Manatee, and Monroe.

Chief Justice was given authority to order a temporary exchange of circuits.

In 1901 under Chapter 4905 the Supreme Court appointed Supreme Court Commissioners and Judges W. A. Hocker, E. C. Maxwell and James F. Glen were commissioners until three additional justices were added in 1902 by Constitutional Amendment.

In 1902 by Constitutional Amendment three additional justices were added to the Supreme Court bring the total to six. Opinions by the Supreme Court Commissioners adopted by the Supreme Court are contained in Vols. 43 and 44 of the Florida Reports.

In 1910 by amendment the legislature was given the power to create judicial circuits from time to time as needed.

Legislation in 1911 increased the number of judicial circuits to eleven

First judicial circuit composed of Escambia, Santa Rosa and Walton counties.

Second judicial circuit composed of Gadsden, Leon, Wakulla, Franklin, Jefferson and Liberty counties.

Third judicial circuit composed of Madison, Taylor, Lafayette, Suwannee, Hamilton and Columbia counties.

---

Fourth judicial circuit composed of Duval, Nassau, Clay and St. Johns counties.

Fifth judicial circuit composed of Marion, Citrus, Hernando, Sumter and Lake counties.

Sixth judicial circuit composed of Hillsboro, Pasco and Pinellas counties.

Seventh judicial circuit composed of Orange, Osceola, Volusia, Brevard, Seminole and St. Lucie counties.

Eighth judicial circuit composed of Alachua, Bradford, Levy, Putnam and Baker counties.

Ninth judicial circuit composed of Washington, Holmes, Jackson, Bay and Calhoun counties.

Tenth judicial circuit composed Polk, Manatee, De Soto and Lee counties.

Eleventh judicial circuit composed of Palm Beach, Dade and Monroe counties.

In 1901 Section 8 or Article V of the Florida Constitution was amended to provide: "The Governor may, in his discretion, order a temporary exchange of circuits by the respective Judges or order any Judge to hold one or more terms or part or parts of any term in any other circuit than that to which he is assigned. The Judge shall reside in the Circuit of which he is Judge."

In 1922 under Section 43 the constitution was amended to authorize the Legislature to appoint additional circuit court judges to a circuit.

In 1949 by amendment the 16<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit was added which included Monroe County.

The 1968 Constitution empowered the legislature to create up to twenty judicial circuits.

<sup>iii</sup> The State's first elected Chief Justice was elected in 1853.

<sup>iv</sup> Disqualification of Judges. Under section 1078, Rev. St. (1893) when a judge was disqualified it was the duty of the judge of any other circuit upon application of a party to such cause to hear and the case as though the judge was assigned to that particular circuit. Could this lead to judge shopping?