

Historical Review

FALL / WINTER 2022

A Publication of THE FLORIDA SUPREME COURT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

COURT'S LONG-TIME COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR RETIRES AFTER 35 YEARS



**CELEBRATING
CRAIG WATERS**
PAGE 7

**WATERS AFTER
THE COURT**
PAGE 13



**20 YEARS SINCE JUSTICE
RAOUL G. CANTERO'S
APPOINTMENT**
PAGE 21

**THE SURPRISING
ORIGINS OF
JUDICIAL REVIEW**
PAGE 25

Contents

<p>6 MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE Under the Dome: Chief's Message <i>Chief Justice Carlos G. Muñiz</i></p>	<p>13 FLORIDA SUPREME COURT NEWS Life After the Court <i>Aimee Clesi</i></p>	<p>21 FLORIDA LEGAL HISTORY Celebrating 20 Years Since Raoul G. Cantero Was Appointed as the First Cuban American Justice <i>Emily Plakon</i></p>
<p>7 FLORIDA SUPREME COURT NEWS Celebrating the Career of Craig Waters <i>Paul Flemming</i></p>	<p>15 FLORIDA SUPREME COURT NEWS Justice C. Alan Lawson Retires <i>Lindsey Lawton</i></p>	<p>25 FLORIDA LEGAL HISTORY The Surprising Origins of Judicial Review Living in the Court's Library <i>Julia Logue</i></p>
<p>11 FLORIDA SUPREME COURT NEWS Waters Receives the First Amendment Foundation's Highest Honor <i>Bob Shaw</i></p>	<p>17 FLORIDA SUPREME COURT NEWS Justice Francis Joins the Court as the 92nd Justice <i>Nora Bailey</i></p>	<p>27 HISTORICAL SOCIETY EVENTS William Falck Donates Supreme Court Artifacts to Historical Society <i>Hala Sandridge</i></p>
	<p>18 FLORIDA SUPREME COURT NEWS A Historic Acquisition: FSCHS Facilitates Donation by Monsignor Robert C. Gibbons <i>Joseph H. Lang, Jr.</i></p>	<p>29 FLORIDA LEGAL HISTORY Ask The Archivist: Why Are There So Many British Common Law Books in the Library's Collection? <i>Erik Robinson</i></p>

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the Fall/Winter 2022 issue of the *Historical Review*. This issue celebrates Craig Waters, who recently retired from the Court after a successful career leading the Court's public information office. Craig was a pioneer in making the Supreme Court of Florida a leader in court accessibility. Most notably, he led the Court through the proceedings surrounding the 2000 Presidential Election, most commonly known as *Bush v. Gore*. We celebrate his wonderful achievements at the Court and check in with Craig about life after the Court.



Photo by The Workmans
wearetheworkmans.com

In addition, this issue includes an article on Justice Lawson's retirement from the Court as of August 31, 2022. We then welcome Justice Renatha Francis to the Court; she succeeds Justice Lawson. In late November 2022, we at the Historical Society were saddened to hear of the unexpected passing of Justice Francis's husband, Phillip Fender. Our thoughts are with Justice Francis and her family through this difficult time.

In this issue, we also highlight the 20th anniversary since Justice Raoul G. Cantero was appointed to the Court, making him the Court's first Cuban American justice. Finally, we have a few interesting articles on some of the Historical Society's recent acquisitions.

While every issue is uniquely exciting for me, this issue is bittersweet, as it is my last as Editor of the *Historical Review*. It has been my pleasure to serve in this role and to shepherd the magazine through a period of tremendous growth. I am so proud of the issues we have produced and the history we have recorded. Thank you to each author who contributed, each editor who provided feedback, and each reader. Also, a special thank you to Steve Leacock for his design brilliance in making each issue come to life.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "MKalmanson".

Melanie Kalmanson, Esq., *Editor*
QUARLES & BRADY LLP • TAMPA, FLORIDA

DISCLAIMER

The Florida Supreme Court Historical Society is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that supports free speech and the expression thereof. The views and opinions expressed in this magazine are solely those of the original authors and contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the officers, trustees, and staff of the Historical Society, the Florida Supreme Court or any affiliated entity.



Florida Supreme Court Historical Society

FALL/WINTER 2022

EDITOR
Melanie Kalmanson

EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE
Sophia Akel • Patrick Hagen
David Melito • Patsy Palmer
Francine Walker

DESIGN & LAYOUT



PUBLISHED BIANNUALLY BY THE
**FLORIDA SUPREME COURT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Mark A. Miller, Executive Director

1947 Greenwood Drive, Tallahassee, Florida 32303
www.flcourthistory.org • admin@flcourthistory.org

The Florida Supreme Court Historical Society works to save and maintain for future generations the records of the people and events that have shaped the evolution of Florida's court system from the early 1800s, through the 21st Century, and beyond. The Society is committed to making sure people understand the importance of a strong, independent judiciary in our governmental balance of power. The Society's two-fold mission is to (1) educate the public about the critically important work of the courts in protecting personal rights and freedoms, as well as in resolving the myriad of disputes that arise within the state, and (2) preserve the rich history of Florida's judicial system.

This publication has been sponsored by the members of the Florida Supreme Court Historical Society.

CONTRIBUTORS

Nora Bailey



Nora Bailey is an insurance defense litigation attorney in the Stuart office of Luks Santaniello, a statewide defense firm. The vast majority of her experience has been in the fields of medical malpractice and general liability insurance defense, as well as family law litigation. She received her J.D. degree from the Florida State University College of Law.

Aimee Clesi



Aimee Clesi is a graduate of the University of Florida. As UF's first woman to be named a Rhodes Scholar, she is currently reading for an MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Oxford. While at UF, she interned with the Supreme Court of Florida's Public Information Office. She also worked with the Conviction Integrity Unit at the State Attorney's Office in Jacksonville and at the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida.

Paul Flemming



Paul Flemming joined the Florida courts in 2016 as the public information officer for the Office of the State Courts Administrator. He succeeded Craig Waters as director of the Florida Supreme Court public information office in March 2022. He previously worked for over 10 years as a reporter and editor in Tallahassee covering state government for newspapers and television stations around Florida.

Joseph H. Lang, Jr.



Historical Society Trustee Joseph H. Lang, Jr. is a shareholder with Carlton Fields, P.A. in Tampa. He is board certified by The Florida Bar in appellate practice and a member of the American Law Institute. He received his J.D. degree from the University of Florida College of Law and his LL.M. degree from the Georgetown University Law Center. He served as a law clerk at the Florida Supreme Court for Justice Ben F. Overton from 1995 until 1997.

Lindsey Lawton



Lindsey Lawton is an appellate attorney and the founder of Lawton Law, PLLC in Tallahassee. She is also a former law clerk for Judges Stephanie Ray and Joseph Lewis of the First District Court of Appeal and a former staff attorney for former Florida Supreme Court Justice C. Alan Lawson.

Julia Logue



Julia Logue is a third-year law student at the Georgetown University Law Center and is an editor of the *Georgetown Law Technology Review*. Upon graduation, she will work in the litigation department at Paul, Weiss in New York City. She holds a B.A. from Vanderbilt University.

Emily Plakon



Emily Plakon is a commercial litigation associate at Quarles & Brady LLP in Tampa. She received her J.D. degree from the Stetson University College of Law and her B.S. degree in political science from Florida State University.

Hala Sandridge



Historical Society Trustee

Hala Sandridge is an appellate attorney with Buchanan Ingersoll Rooney in Tampa. She has 38 years of appellate experience and has handled hundreds of civil appeals in state and federal courts. Hala is one of the original Florida Bar board certified attorneys in appellate practice (1994) and is a frequent lecturer on state and federal appellate topics. She chairs her firm's Appellate Practice Group and is a past chair of The Florida Bar Appellate Practice Section. Hala has been a commissioner on the Florida Supreme Court Judicial Nominating Commission since 2016.

Bob Shaw



Bob Shaw spent 48 years as a journalist, most of them in Florida. He joined *The Miami Herald* in 1968 and was, among other postings, its Tallahassee bureau chief and Washington correspondent. He was also managing editor of the *Tallahassee Democrat* and a senior news executive at the *Orlando Sentinel*. He is a former chairman of the First Amendment Foundation and has served on its board for 31 years.

From the President

The November 2022 edition of the *Historical Review*, the Florida Supreme Court Historical Society's semiannual magazine, reflects the noteworthy events that have occurred this year, as it draws to its close. This edition features long-time Florida Supreme Court senior staff member Craig Waters, who retired after a distinguished career of devoted service and public acclaim. As the Court's public information officer, Craig's duties included advising the public at large of significant pronouncements and events that occurred at the Court, as well as raising the Court's profile throughout Florida and beyond. During the Presidential Election in 2000, when the Florida Supreme Court was at the center of the *Bush v. Gore* controversy, Craig assumed the mantle of press secretary, giving near-daily briefings to the worldwide media, which had descended on Tallahassee. His many other achievements, less globally conspicuous but all deeply impressive, are detailed at length in this issue of the *Historical Review*.

The Court itself has seen historic changes in 2022. Outgoing Chief Justice Charles T. Canady has passed the gavel to Chief Justice Carlos G. Muñoz, who assumed the role on July 1, 2022. Justice C. Alan Lawson retired from the Court after decades as a distinguished jurist of both trial and appellate public service in the State. With the vacancy created by his retirement, Governor Ron DeSantis appointed the Court's newest justice, Renatha Francis, who took her seat on the bench this year. The Historical Society, in concert with other organizations and the families of the justices, participates in celebratory events

related to these points in history, including a tribute to Justice Lawson's tenure on the bench held this fall. In addition, the Historical Society is assisting with the planning of Justice Francis's Investiture.

In addition, this issue reflects on the 20th anniversary of the appointment of Justice Raoul G. Cantero as the first Cuban American and first justice of Hispanic descent to serve on the Court. The article also clarifies a point in history that has been unclear, which is that Justice Rosemary Barkett was the first Hispanic American (and first woman) to serve on the Court.

The Historical Society has also added to its growing collection of written and physical artifacts, as detailed in this issue of the *Historical Review*. And as 2022 winds down and we look ahead to 2023, it's also time to anticipate the Historical Society's biggest event of the year, A Supreme Evening, which will be held in January.

As president of the Florida Supreme Court Historical Society, I truly hope that you enjoy reading the current edition of the *Historical Review* as much as all of us at the Historical Society are pleased to report on these events.

On a sad note, after this issue went to press and in the immediate past, we learned that Justice Francis's husband, Phillip Fender, has passed away. All of us at the Historical Society join with the Court in sending condolences to Justice Francis and her family.

Sincerely,



Scott R. Rost, *President*
FLORIDA SUPREME COURT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Under the Dome: Chief's Message

By Chief Justice Carlos G. Muñoz



It's been a time of transition at the Florida Supreme Court since the last edition of the *Historical Review*. In September, we were pleased to welcome our newest colleague, Justice Renatha Francis, who joined the Court after having served most recently as a judge of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit in West Palm Beach. All of us already on the Court have enjoyed getting to know Justice Francis, her husband, Phillip Fender, and their beautiful children. We look forward to serving with Justice Francis for many years to come.

Before Justice Francis's arrival, we celebrated the distinguished career of former Justice C. Alan Lawson, who retired from the Court at the end of August.

Justice Lawson is a dear friend to all the justices, and he was an exceptionally warm and engaging colleague. The qualities of Justice Lawson that I most admire are his boundless energy and curiosity, his life of active Christian charity, and his dedication to the judicial branch. In whatever endeavors he pursues next, Justice Lawson will excel, and he will serve others, as he always has.

Finally, July marked the conclusion of Justice Charles T. Canady's most recent service as the chief justice of our Court. I have been blessed to count Justice Canady as a friend and mentor for over two decades, and it is an honor to succeed him in this role. All Floridians benefited from Justice Canady's steady, prudent stewardship of the judicial branch, especially as he guided us through the COVID pandemic. We could not have had a better leader in such difficult times.

Thinking about my past and present colleagues as I write for the *Historical Review*, I am reminded what a great privilege it is to serve an institution that stands for enduring principles and transcends its individual members. All of us come to the Court from different backgrounds, with different strengths, weaknesses, and personalities. What we share—with each other, with our predecessors, and with all members of Florida's judiciary—is the common goal of pursuing justice, as that concept is embodied in our laws, and consistent with our institutional role in a government of separated powers. Though the composition of our Court inevitably changes over time, our purpose and mission do not.

If you're reading the *Historical Review*, undoubtedly you care about the Court as an institution, just like we do. On behalf of our entire Court, I thank you for that. I'm especially grateful to those who produce this publication and to the members and staff of the Historical Society more generally. Your hard work to preserve the Court's historical identity reminds us that we are members of an institution far greater than ourselves.



Craig Waters addresses the audience at his retirement celebration reception in February 2022 in Tallahassee, Florida.

 FLORIDA SUPREME COURT NEWS

Celebrating *the Career of* Craig Waters

By **Paul Flemming**

Craig Waters's 26-year career leading the Florida Supreme Court's Public Information Office—indeed, his full 35 years at the Court—embodies the directive of the State's voters to make government open and transparent. The entirety of his working life evidenced a commitment to justice and the rule of law, and to seeing it carried out in Florida.

Before the Court

Before joining the Court, Waters worked as a reporter, covering court cases and government corruption in his native Pensacola and Tallahassee. He then attended law school at the University of Florida and went on to practice First Amendment law. He came to work at the Florida Supreme

Court, where his background in open government and the First Amendment converged.

Waters began his career at the Florida Supreme Court as a staff attorney for Justice Rosemary Barkett in 1987. He then worked as a staff attorney for Justice Gerald Kogan. While serving in that role, he created the Court's first website.



LEFT: Waters smiles for a photo in his office at the Supreme Court of Florida in 1998. **RIGHT:** Waters stands with Justice Rosemary Barkett for a photo circa 1988 at a staff party after hours at Justice Barkett's home in the Lakeshore Drive area of Tallahassee.

Pioneering Public Access to Courts

In 1992, Floridians overwhelmingly voted to amend Florida's Constitution to explicitly include what was already a statutory right in Florida: that people have a right to see public records and to attend public meetings. The amendment guaranteed openness in all branches of Florida's state government.

In this environment, Waters had the skills, training, and approach to meet the demands of the moment. His work showed him to be an innovative advocate for public trust and for confidence in the judiciary, a fierce warrior for government in the Sunshine State, and the public face of the Florida Supreme Court when the world spotlight shone most brightly upon it.

In 1996, Waters started the Public Information Office at the Florida Supreme Court and was named to the newly created post of Public Information Officer by then-Chief Justice Kogan. He led the office until his retirement in 2022. Waters's career at the Court led Florida's judicial branch to the forefront of transparency and openness in the nation. Among his accomplishments:

- **1994:** He advocated the then-novel idea of placing public court records online for the first time, after creating the Court's first website.
- **1997:** He organized the first statewide broadcast and worldwide livestreams of Florida Supreme Court oral arguments, making the Court a leader in televised oral arguments.
- **2003:** He began hosting the annual Reporters' Workshop in collaboration with The Florida Bar and the Florida Supreme Court. Since that time, hundreds of reporters have come through the program and scores of justices, judges, attorneys, reporters, elected officials, and others have participated as panelists at the Workshop. Members of the Bar's Media & Communications Law Committee have supported the Workshop with their expertise and experience with contemporary cases.
- **2005:** He founded and served as the initial president of a statewide non-profit, educational, and professional organization for court public information officers around Florida, known as Florida Courts Public Information Officers, Inc. (FCPIO).
- **2009:** He introduced the use of social media to distribute the Court's news and information, positioning Florida at the vanguard of judicial communication around the country.

"Craig Waters is the gold standard. No Court spokesman has ever done so much to open the Supreme Court's doors to Floridians. Craig came up with the online access to the Court's decisions in the midst of the 2000 Presidential Election recount. It was sheer genius and made Florida one of the most accessible courts in the nation."

Lucy Morgan
Longtime reporter for the
St. Petersburg Times and the *Tampa Bay Times*

Waters's leadership was not just within the Court. It was statewide, national, and even global. Waters is most recognized for his role during Florida's recount of the 2000 Presidential Election vote and the litigation surrounding it. The world's attention was focused on the outcome in Florida for 36 days before the U.S. Supreme Court halted recounts in the case known as *Bush v. Gore*. At his retirement, Waters said he is proudest of the public transparency created as the world watched Florida's 36-day presidential election lawsuits in the fall of 2000. "The two main ideas of open government I had advocated—placing court documents on the web and livestreaming oral argument broadcasts worldwide from start to finish—were on full display during that period," Waters said. "And they were a clear success. We often



On December 8, 2000, Waters announced to the crowd of members of the media and the public who had gathered outside of the Supreme Court of Florida that the Court had ordered a statewide recount in the *Bush v. Gore* litigation. For more on *Bush v. Gore*, see the Fall/Winter 2020 issue of the *Historical Review* available at www.flcourthistory.org/HistoricalReview.

forget today that these ideas were not widely accepted by American courts beforehand.”

Then, in 2016, under Waters’s leadership, the Florida Supreme Court adopted the Court Communication Plan for the Judicial Branch of Florida and charged FCPIO with implementing it so that information put out by the courts would be widely available, easily accessible, and understandable. The Communication Plan proved its effectiveness during emergency circumstances like tropical storms and the COVID-19 pandemic. Courts throughout the State relied on social media during the pandemic and noted the Communication Plan’s effectiveness. According to the Florida State Courts Annual Report 2020-2021: “Nearly all 20 circuits use social media to communicate and share information. Public information officers find it

“It has been an honor and privilege to have had the opportunity to know and work with Craig Waters who came to the Supreme Court as a law clerk and is now leaving as a national leader in court media, technology, and communications.”

Justice Major B. Harding (*retired*)

effective for communication between Florida courts, the public, and even across state lines. These robust social communications allow courts to learn from one another, continue innovating, and to support each other during significant moments.”

In His Own Words

By **Aimee Clesi**

“The root of [journalists’] discontent with the Court was that it was hiding things,” says Waters, whose experience working inside the Court had taught him that there was no deliberate effort to conceal information, but simply a lack of procedure to govern a more efficient distribution of legal information to the public. “I don’t think it had dawned on people that we could put briefs on the website.”

“I had to go out on the front steps of the Supreme Court building and make announcements on television. Today, I could do the same thing with a tweet. But in 2000, there was no social media ... [and] at that point, the Web had not reached its whole promise. It took me, probably, about 3-4 weeks into the [*Bush v. Gore*] controversy to get reporters to understand they didn’t have to stand in line to get paper documents. They could get them on our website,” Waters recalls.

He credits a disastrous printer malfunction as the final straw for the reporters who queued outside the Supreme

Court of Florida in 2000. “We had hundreds of reporters lined up to get their paper copies of the decision, and of course our main high-volume copying machine crashed and burned. By the time they finally got their paper copies, they discovered their home offices in New York, Paris, Moscow, or Tokyo had already downloaded it from our website and distributed it [for coverage by] one of their local reporters,” Waters says. “This was a big eye opener.”

On December 8, 2000, before Waters announced the final decision in *Bush v. Gore* from the steps of the Supreme Court, “large and restive crowds had formed outside the building and police were nervous,” he says. They urged him to wear body armor, but a vest would not fit under his suit jacket, and Waters did not want to project an image of fear. Nevertheless, it was “very spooky” to make this announcement in front of a crowd that had completely packed the area. “Whatever I said would make half the audience mad,” Waters says, adding that the experience gave him another reason to value online information as “an effective method of crowd control.”



Before law school, Waters served as a reporter covering cases in the Panhandle. Here, he smiles for a photo taken by his lifelong friend, Mike Suchcicki, in front of his typewriter in 1976—when he worked as a student journalist at Pensacola State College.

Campaigns that provided information about health requirements at courthouses highlighted how courts remained open and operated remotely. These efforts further provided continuous updates on the status of court operations and the procedures in use in each jurisdiction. The information offered followed protocols envisioned in the Communication Plan and documented in its annual summary of accomplishments. Another example is provided by statewide bulletins marking how Florida's courts were readying for and recovering from the devastations wrought by Hurricane Irma in 2017 and Hurricane Michael in 2018. This tradition has continued since Waters's retirement, with bulletins about 2022 Hurricanes Ian and Nicole.

2022 Retirement

Waters retired in late February 2022 after more than 2 decades serving as the Court's Public Information Officer (PIO). As PIO, Waters worked for 10 different chief justices and with 25 justices—more than a quarter of all justices who have served on the Florida Supreme Court since statehood and nearly a fifth of the State's chief justices.

"I never could have planned this career," said Waters, 66. "Open government always was a strong interest of mine from my days as a journalist. But the web-based technology I have used didn't even exist when I was in law school. I learned it as it came along and adapted it to create transparency and openness in the courts."

At ceremonies marking his retirement, Waters said the creation of and continuing work of the FCPIO is his most valued legacy. He praised its members' dedication to the cause of openness in the courts. The FCPIO board recognized his contributions as founder, inaugural president, and executive director of the non-profit professional organization by naming its highest honor the "Robert Craig Waters Lifetime Achievement Award."

"Craig and the work he has done in support of the Florida Supreme Court put us in a leadership position around the country and globe. I appreciate his service to the Court and the innumerable ways he has contributed to the mission of the judicial system," said Justice Charles T. Canady, who was chief justice at the time of Waters's retirement.

"During my over two decades on the Supreme Court, Craig was invaluable both as the spokesman for the Court and for helping to organize all ceremonial sessions of the Court. His brilliance as both a journalist and a lawyer was the perfect combination for the position of public information officer. He helped lead the Court as it expanded its public presence through the televising of oral arguments and then with other social media platforms. The press respected and relied on him. While *Bush v. Gore* remains his most public achievement, that series of oral arguments and opinions showed to the world what we at the Court already knew—we were fortunate to have Craig to speak for the Court!!!"

Justice Barbara J. Pariente (*retired*)

Waters Receives the First Amendment Foundation's Highest Honor

By **Bob Shaw**

This article is adapted from remarks given by the author at a retirement ceremony for Craig Waters on February 9, 2022, in the Florida Supreme Court Library.

More than 25 years ago, I was sitting in my office at the *Tallahassee Democrat* when my phone rang. It was Barbara Petersen, then the president of the First Amendment Foundation (FAF). She said she wanted the two of us to go to lunch with a guy named Craig Waters, the recently named public information officer (PIO) at the Florida Supreme Court.

My initial reactions were *Who?* And *Why?* The Court was probably the most opaque institution in Florida government. Other than hosting attorneys and reporters for oral arguments a few times a month, and producing a stack of decisions most Thursdays that reporters were free to rifle through in search of news, the Court sat on South Duval Street behind closed gray doors, still seemingly haunted by scandals of the 1970s that saw half its justices resign.

But Barbara assured me Craig was serious in wanting to hear ideas about how to open up the Court to the public—and public access is what FAF is all about. So we went to lunch. Our “big idea” was to urge Craig to start posting the Court’s decisions and docket on what was then the still-new internet. Putting them out there, we argued, would mean that any interested member of the public—not just reporters and Tallahassee-based attorneys—could read a decision the day it came out.

We were amazed when—not long afterwards—the Court, in fact, began posting its decisions on the web. With the backing of then-Chief Justice Gerald Kogan—who himself was given a Friend of the First Amendment



Waters listens to Bob Shaw's remarks as he is given the First Amendment Foundation's "Friend of the First Amendment Award" at his retirement celebration in the Supreme Court Library.

Award in 1998—Craig then began a new era of public outreach by the Court.

In 1997, with the help of then-FSU President Talbot “Sandy” D’Alemberte, Craig pioneered live-streaming of oral arguments. (He recalls that, on the first day, when Justice Kogan announced they would be live on television for the first time in history, one unnerved attorney fainted. The Chief was heard on statewide television asking, “Is there a doctor in the house?”)

Then came the post-election chaos of 2000. By then, Craig and his staff had become proficient at posting not just orders but briefs and other information online. And the whole world watched on live television as the justices heard a series of lawsuits in what’s now generally known as *Bush v. Gore*. Reporters—as well



TOP: Bob Shaw (left) visits with Neil Skene (right) at Waters’s retirement ceremony in the Supreme Court Library. Joshua Doyle, The Florida Bar Executive Director, is pictured in the background.
BOTTOM: Waters (left) poses with the late Justice Gerald Kogan (middle) and then-Florida Court Public Information Officers, Inc. President Michelle Kennedy in August 2019 as Justice Kogan received the FCPIO’s Lifetime Achievement Award, which was recently renamed after Waters.

as attorneys and judges around the nation—expressed amazement at the openness of the Florida courts. CNN did a story about it; so did Fox News. And Craig’s was the human face the Court showed to the world.

No one who was here then can forget the cluster of satellite TV trucks, the horde of reporters, and the waves of demonstrators who crowded outside the Court’s front steps. My favorite memory is of Craig poking his head outside the doors to check on the size of the crowd, looking like a high school actor peeking out from behind the curtain to look at the audience.

Craig, more seriously, remembers being told by law enforcement that he should don a bulletproof vest before going out to tell the crowd that the Court

had decided to order a statewide recount. But Craig refused: “That was not an image I wanted to project—an image of concealment” in front of 50 million television viewers, he said later.

After 2000, the rest of the country realized Craig was onto something. He traveled to train others. He worked with the so-called Wells Commission on court crisis management to update and extend the Court’s communications efforts. In 2003, along with The Florida Bar, he set up a media training program for roughly 25 reporters a year that continues, even bigger, today. And in 2004, with a grant from the Florida Bar Foundation, he began setting up—and training—a network of public information officers throughout the state’s 20 judicial circuits and 5 appellate court districts (which will soon be 6). That morphed into the creation of the Florida Court Public Information Officers, Inc. in 2007 with Craig serving as its first president.

Two years later, Craig was again a pioneer; he began using social media to distribute Court-related public information. Lots of judges—and even the U.S. Supreme Court—turned up their noses; Twitter and Facebook were too “Wild West,” too undignified. But Craig persisted. And judges began to realize the benefits of real-time communication—to alert the public about high-profile cases; to broadcast hurricane-related emergency measures like court closures and the cancellation of jury pools. During the pandemic, social media has been the primary tool for communications about court operations.

In 2017, the Florida Supreme Court began streaming oral arguments on social media. Today, the Court has 19,500 Twitter followers (the most of any court in the nation) and nearly 21,000 Facebook friends, plus a YouTube channel. No other court system in the country can match Florida’s use of technology to communicate with the public.

Back in 2016, as Florida was implementing the State Courts Communications Plan crafted by Craig and his team, then-Chief Justice Jorge Labarga wrote about it in *The Florida Bar Journal*. Here’s how he started the article: “One of the bedrock principles of the legal profession is a maxim ... often summarized in a brief phrase: ‘Not only must justice be done. It also must be seen to be done.’”

For the past 35 years, Craig Waters has lived by that principle—and lived up to it. Because of him, justice in Florida is seen, heard, and accessible to all. He’s the true definition of a “public servant.” And for all he’s done—from that lunch invitation a quarter-century ago to the robust court PIO system that flourishes today—the First Amendment Foundation is proud to award Craig its highest honor: the Pete Weitzel Friend of the First Amendment Award.

Life After the Court

By Aimee Clesi

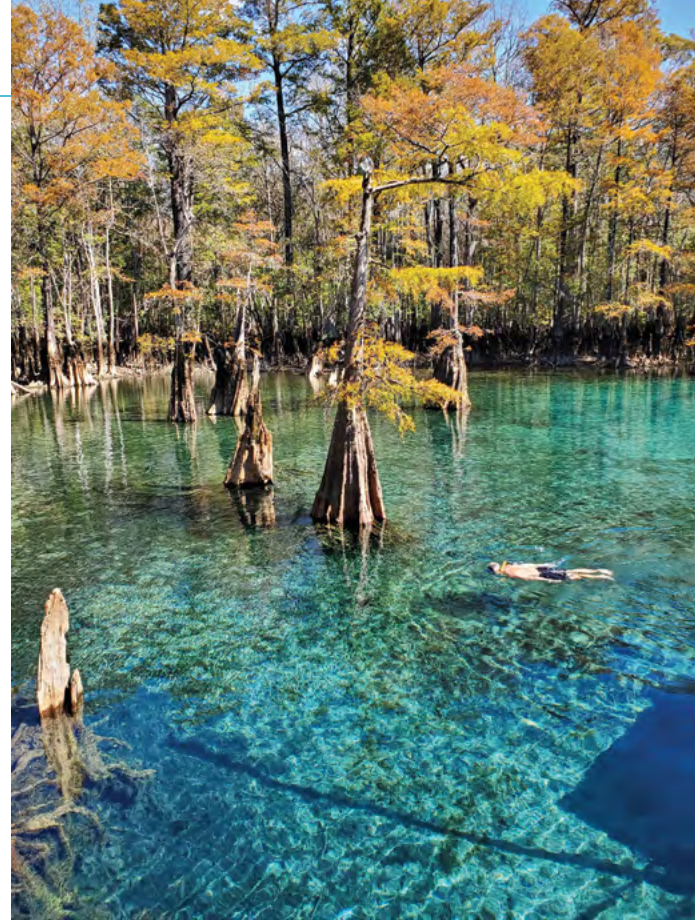
Examining unusual weather events over the Gulf of Mexico has become one of Craig Waters's favorite pastimes in retirement, but weathering storms was one of his chief priorities as Communications Director for the Supreme Court of Florida.

The biggest judicial storm, of course, was *Bush v. Gore*, the 2000 Presidential Election dispute. Crowds outside the Court grew so big and potentially combustible during Waters's regular news briefings that law enforcement officers urged him to wear a bulletproof vest when announcing the final opinion. (He refused.)

But even his work championing cameras in the courtroom and building a website that provides consistent, online access to dockets, documents, and other court data drew controversy. At a conference in the 1990s, where Waters was trying to convince legal professionals from across Florida of the value and potential of technology in the courts, one appellate judge exclaimed, "Craig, this is just a passing fad!"

Though he retired in February 2022 after 35 years at the Court, Waters has not entirely left that world behind. A former newspaper reporter, he intends to return to journalism; he also has committed himself to additional public service. He recently was appointed by The Florida Bar to serve a 3-year term on the board of The Florida Bar Foundation. He has also joined the board of the Florida Center for Government Accountability.

But now he relishes the chance to travel, as well as to test his culinary acumen. The homegrown Pensacolan says his "happy place" is Blue Mountain Beach, which he frequents with his partner, Jim Crochet, and brother-in-law, Glen Crochet. "When I want to go to the beach, that's where we go. [Blue Mountain Beach] is nicer, and it's less crowded. Walking on an empty beach is really



nice and the sunsets on the coast of Florida there are just stunning during the winter months. I post a lot of pictures of how the changing sunlight affects the beach," says Waters.

Waters became familiar with the region as a reporter for the *Pensacola News Journal*, which then circulated across the Panhandle to Panama City. One of his first assignments was to write about a cinéma vérité film called "Vernon, Florida." Visiting the remote town of Vernon led Waters to develop an appreciation for

rural Florida. “I really think the Panhandle is the undiscovered part of Florida,” he says. “There are still huge parts that are rural, which is hard to find elsewhere in Florida. . . . I kind of fell in love with that, this quirky little place, with these country people. My family’s roots are from rural Alabama, and it was something I really related to.”

There are many other little towns sprawled along State Road 30A, but Waters is quick to note how much beach development in Walton County was funded by the Netherlands Antilles Corporation. “One of my assignments [for the *Pensacola News Journal*] was to go to DeFuniak Springs [the county seat of Walton County] and look at these unusual transactions, where I found myself pouring over deeds written in Dutch,” he says. “I learned that there was a lot of international money pouring into south Walton County to develop the beautiful white sand beaches [that we see today].”

A Seaside wine festival in 1999 led Waters to rediscover Blue Mountain Beach, where he enjoys observing unusual weather events, including storms, heat lightning, and anvil-shaped clouds.

He also appreciates Walton County’s efforts to preserve the freshwater dune lakes, since so many were obliterated during the development of Pensacola Beach. He considers them an essential element of Florida’s natural beauty, and says Oregon is the only other state with these rare geological features. “One of the most interesting things I find [at Blue Mountain Beach] is going out to the mouth of a dune lake when it is breaching the dunes and starting to empty, and it’s just amazing seeing the tannic-colored water flowing out into the blue waters of the Gulf,” Waters says. “You’ll

see all kinds of birds coming in because they’re looking for whatever morsels they can find in the lake water, because it’s freshwater. So, there’s different kinds of critters that will be there. One way you can tell that a dune lake is emptying into the Gulf is because of all the birds.”

The beach is not just home for the pelicans. It is often frequented by paddleboarders, porpoises, fishermen, and kite surfers. But it is the pacing beachgoer, likely conducting business on vacation, that reminds Waters of the tumultuous pace and demands of the career he just retired from. “That’s not such a good thing,” Waters says of the pacing (or the business-while-on-vacation), “and too many of us do it.”

If not visiting the beach, Waters can be found exploring Florida’s natural springs or the Eden Gardens State Park, which features a Victorian house built by a lumber baron who exported timber to Europe from the late 19th to early 20th Centuries. Waters explains that a newspaper woman named Lois Maxon used her family fortune to purchase the house in 1963, and converted it into a Southern plantation home. In 1968, Maxon donated the property to the state of Florida, and although Waters likes the pictures of the Victorian home better, he appreciates Maxon’s considerable effort to develop ornamental gardens and raise camellias. He relates how the nearby Choctawhatchee Bay makes for a pleasant walk. “In Florida, an amazing thing is being able to go to a full blooming garden in winter,” says Waters.

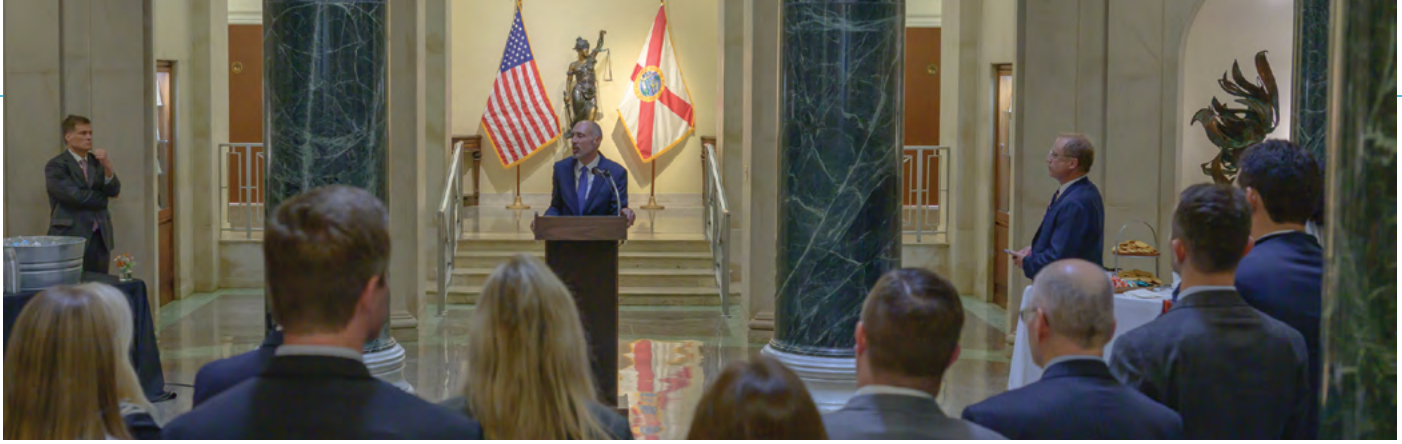
Beyond touring rural Florida, Waters says he and Jim Crochet would like to visit Germany, where Crochet attended high school when his father served in the military.

When he is not traveling, Waters enjoys preparing different meals and desserts in his Tallahassee home. “During my 35-year career, I never had much time for sustained culinary adventure,” he says. “I’ve got into preparing the old dishes you find in New Orleans, which has so many different cuisines that [over time] started bleeding into each other. Something quintessentially New Orleans might have actually started out as an Italian dish, for example.”

Waters has tried his hand at preparing two different remoulade sauces, especially during the pandemic. But “one of the things I always marveled at,” says Waters, “was the bread pudding that New Orleans restaurants make.” “I tried to find recipes that could emulate that,” reflects Waters. “My current recipe is very labor intensive,” he jokes.

The photos in this article were taken and provided by Craig Waters.





Justice C. Alan Lawson addresses those in attendance at his retirement celebration in the Rotunda at the Supreme Court of Florida on August 31, 2022, which was his last day in office.

 FLORIDA SUPREME COURT NEWS

Justice C. Alan Lawson Retires

By **Lindsey Lawton**

Justice C. Alan Lawson retired from the Supreme Court of Florida on August 31, 2022. His 35-year legal career spans private practice to public service and includes 22 years of judicial service across three levels of the Florida Court System. During this time, Justice Lawson earned a reputation for being humble, kind, and helpful as well as hard-working, principled, and intelligent.

After graduating from the Florida State University College of Law in 1987, he began his legal career at the law firm of Steel Hector & Davis, where he practiced for eight years and became a partner. From there, Justice Lawson went on to the role of general counsel for Verses Wear, Inc. Later, he entered public service as an assistant county attorney for Orange County. During that time, Justice Lawson and his colleagues at the County Attorney's Office earned an American Bar Association award for the best public law firm in the country.

In January 2002, Justice Lawson began his judicial career when Governor Jeb Bush appointed him to the Ninth Judicial Circuit. The current chief judge of the circuit, Lisa T. Munyon, calls Justice Lawson "a judges' judge" and recalls her experience working alongside him as a "privilege." She says, "Although he had no reason to do so, he took me under his wing when I was a newly appointed circuit judge and gave me the benefit of his experience. He was always willing to answer any question that I had." Judge Munyon remembers that Justice Lawson was skilled at "mov[ing] cases efficiently while giving everyone their day in court," a skill she says was appreciated by attorneys and juries alike. For his service on the trial bench, Justice Lawson received the Central Florida Counsel on Crime and Delinquency's Outstanding Jurist Award in 2005.

In 2006, Governor Bush named Justice Lawson to the

Fifth District Court of Appeal, where he served for 11 years, including a term as chief judge. The Fifth District's current chief, Brian D. Lambert, remembers that Justice Lawson was "always on top of his work" and "wrote exceptionally well" but says that what stood out the most was Justice Lawson's "graciousness." As an example, Judge Lambert notes a time early in his tenure at the Fifth District when then-Judge Lawson advised him in a kind way about a change in the law, leading Judge Lambert to revise his legal analysis in an opinion. Judge Lambert was struck by Justice Lawson's gracious approach and grateful for his guidance.

Governor Rick Scott appointed Justice Lawson to the state's highest court in 2016. Former Justice Barbara J. Pariente remembers her time working with Justice Lawson on the Florida Supreme Court fondly: "I always found [him] to be an excellent colleague. Even when we disagreed on the ultimate outcome of a case, he was always agreeable to work with and enthusiastic about our work. I also had great admiration for the volunteer work he and his wife performed in Honduras." Justice Charles T. Canady recalls, "Justice Lawson was a model jurist and a wonderful colleague. He made enduring contributions to our law and to the administration of justice." In 2019, the Central Florida chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates recognized Justice Lawson as its Jurist of the Year.

When asked if any one case he worked on during his judicial service stands out as having the most impact on him, Justice Lawson says he cannot identify just one: "There are so many that had a big impact, particularly on the trial bench—seeing people's lives upended, whether it was a criminal case or a civil case. The courts deal with such important issues for individuals. And the appellate courts deal with issues of broad impact."

Throughout his career, Justice Lawson has prioritized service to others—within the legal profession and beyond. He has worked on numerous committees, boards, and commissions to promote quality, professionalism, and efficiency in the legal profession and court system. As a judge, he often accepted speaking engagements, educating lawyers not only on the practice of law but on the judicial branch, the rule of law, and the importance of mental health and living a full life beyond the office and courtroom.

Justice Lawson practices what he teaches. All who have worked with him know he prioritizes his faith and his family, takes care of his health, constantly studies to learn new things, and volunteers his time and energy in concrete ways. While serving as a judge on the Fifth District, Justice Lawson finished



LEFT: Justice Lawson and his wife, Julie (right), pose for a photo with Chief Justice Carlos G. Muñiz (left) and Justice Jamie Grosshans (second from left) at his retirement celebration. **RIGHT:** Justice Lawson and his wife, Julie, traveled to Honduras with a group of lawyers and judges. Here, they are pictured in front of a house that the group had just completed building for the single mother and children pictured in the photo. From left to right: Jacksonville lawyer James “Jim” Keenan, The Florida Bar President-Elect Scott Westheimer, Julie Lawson, then-Justice Alan Lawson, Orange County Judge Steve Jewett, Orange County Judge Mike Murphy, Tallahassee Attorney Steve Metz, Ninth Circuit Chief Judge Lisa Munyon, and retired Ninth Circuit Judge Julie O’Kane.

the 2008 Boston Marathon. He also volunteered time locally, mentoring and tutoring young people and helping in other service programs.

Judge Munyon connects Justice Lawson’s extra-judicial work with his success as a judge, noting, “His life experience is broad and contributed to his excellence as a judge. . . . The justice system is diminished by his well-deserved retirement.” Justice Lawson has spoken of how his international travels have deepened his respect and appreciation for the American legal system and its effects on everyday life for people living in the United States.

Justice Lawson and his wife, Julie, have traveled frequently to Honduras since 1999 to engage in numerous humanitarian service projects. They have helped build houses for Honduran natives, assisted surgeons with cleft lip and palate reconstructions, and even arranged several trips to Honduras with attorneys, judges, and legal professionals.

With Justice Lawson’s support and participation, Mrs. Lawson has always had a passion to help educate and train Honduran women living in poverty. She not only offered her time in teaching but also remained on the board of a non-profit organization called *Mi Esperanza*—meaning “My Hope” in English—for many years. Through *Mi Esperanza*, the Lawsons have provided free skills-based training, helped place women in internships, and donated to a “micro loan” program to help women start businesses in Honduras. They have also contributed to other organizations, including *Hope for Honduras*, which has a variety of programs focused on providing education, relieving food insecurity, and meeting medical needs. Justice and Mrs. Lawson both plan to continue their service to that country.

These themes—Justice Lawson’s dedication to the rule of law, his faith, his thirst for knowledge, and his service to the public, his family, and others—were prevalent in the remarks Chief Justice Carlos G. Muñiz gave at Justice Lawson’s retirement ceremony on the day he stepped down from the bench. Chief Justice Muñiz also described Justice Lawson as kind, generous, and “always thinking about something important.” Chief Justice Muñiz commented, “We’re part of an institution that exists over time that is committed to certain ideals. Everybody appreciates that to some extent, but there are some who appreciate it more than others, and I put Alan in [that] category.”

After Chief Justice Muñiz’s speech, Justice Lawson addressed the crowd of friends, family, and court personnel gathered in the Supreme Court Rotunda. From his demeanor, it was clear

that he meant it when he said the occasion was bittersweet and that he would miss being a part of the day-to-day operations of this institution, even while looking forward to his next adventure. Reflecting on his service at the Court, Justice Lawson said, “Public service at this level is an extraordinary sacrifice, and it’s never not on your mind. And yet, that sacrifice, for those of us who have had the privilege of doing it, is self-rewarding because any time we serve beyond ourselves, the rewards just flow in.”

He gave special recognition to his former judicial assistant, Deborah Riddell, who worked with him for almost 12 years. When asked for a reflection on her tenure with Justice Lawson for this article, Ms. Riddell said, “It has been my honor and privilege to work with Justice Lawson and see firsthand all that he has done not only for those in the legal profession, and the people of this great state, but also for those who live abroad in impoverished communities. He truly has that same compassionate, kind and generous spirit for all that he encounters. I have no doubt that we will hear about him again, doing something great!” She and his former law clerks remember his principled approach to judicial work and his mentorship. His longest-serving staff attorney at the Florida Supreme Court, Jessica Slatten, said, “Justice Lawson set an example in chambers to think deeply and act kindly. His dedicated approach to his work and deep concern for others permeated everything he did and made it an extraordinary honor to serve on his staff.”

In an interview for this article, Justice Lawson said he had not decided whether he would return to law practice but that he does plan to continue teaching, speaking, and writing in support of the legal system and the rule of law—and to continue his volunteer efforts.

He said what he will miss most about being a judge is “close and consistent contact with others who have chosen that path of service.” When asked what advice he has for newer lawyers, Justice Lawson counselled, “To consciously set out to hold yourself to the highest standards of conduct and professionalism. As Lincoln said, it should be our goal as lawyers to earn the respect of our peers by conducting ourselves in a manner that is worthy of respect.”

For more about Justice Lawson’s work in Honduras, see Justice Alan Lawson’s Commitment to Service Runs Deep by Kimberly Kanoff Berman in the Fall/Winter 2019 issue of the Historical Review, available at www.flcourthistory.org/Historical-Review.

Justice Francis Joins the Court as the 92nd Justice



By **Nora Bailey**

Renatha Francis is the 92nd justice of the Florida Supreme Court, and the first Caribbean American in the history of the Court to serve in this role.

Previously, she served as circuit court judge in the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit in Palm Beach County, where she successfully retained her seat for a six-year term in 2022. Before that, had served as both a county and circuit court judge in Miami-Dade County. She was only the second Black female in the history of Miami-Dade County to be appointed to the Circuit Court, her appointment coming some 25 years after the first.¹

During her combined tenure as a trial court judge in Miami-Dade and Palm Beach Counties, Justice Francis presided over large dockets, conducted numerous bench trials, and resolved hundreds of cases in family, county civil, probate, and first-appearance criminal law.

As a lawyer, she served as an appellate attorney at the First District Court of Appeal, in Tallahassee for almost 7 years, where she reviewed hundreds of cases and extraordinary writs, varying in complexity and novelty. And she also served Of Counsel at Shutts & Bowen, LLP, in Miami as a member of the Class Action and Mass Litigation Practice Group, representing large corporate clients.

Prior to her legal career, Justice Francis was a small business owner in Jamaica, which she did while attending college full time and raising a younger sibling. A native of Kingston, Jamaica, she was widowed shortly after joining the Court and has two young sons.

In announcing her initial appointment on August 5,



On September 1, 2022, Justice Francis was sworn in as the 92nd justice since Florida's statehood was granted in 1845. She was administered her oath by Chief Justice Carlos G. Muñoz in the Courtroom of the Supreme Court Building in Tallahassee, Florida. She was accompanied by her husband, Phillip Fender, and their two sons. Mr. Fender passed away unexpectedly in late November 2022.

2022, Governor DeSantis praised her work ethic and determination: “Judge Francis’s story demonstrates that anyone who comes to the United States has an opportunity to make the most of their God-given talents.”

In response to Governor DeSantis’s announcement of her appointment, Justice Francis stated that she was honored and “in awe of this country’s respect for the rule of law and the freedoms guaranteed in the text of the United States Constitution.” In speaking after her swearing-in ceremony, Justice Francis stated that she was “looking forward to doing the great work of the courts.”

¹ The first was Melvia Green.

A Historic Acquisition

FSCHS Facilitates Donation by Monsignor Robert C. Gibbons of Original Correspondence from Justices of the Supreme Court of Florida to his Grandfather, Melville Gordon Gibbons

By **Joseph H. Lang, Jr.**

Monsignor Robert C. Gibbons of St. Petersburg recently discovered numerous letters from various justices of the Florida Supreme Court, a Florida Attorney General, and a Florida Secretary of State to his grandfather, Melville Gordon (“Mel”) Gibbons from the 1930s. Monsignor Gibbons graciously donated the letters to the Society. Monsignor Gibbons, is one of many in his family across generations who have been members of The Florida Bar. In 1974, he graduated first in his class from the University of Florida College of Law.

His grandfather, Mel Gibbons, migrated with his family to Florida in 1884 from Southwest Virginia. Once in Florida, Mr. Gibbons and Edward R. Gunby established a law partnership in Tampa in 1890, under the name Gunby & Gibbons. In 1906, the *Tampa Tribune* described the firm as “the oldest law-partnership in Tampa.” Thereafter, in 1911 and 1912, he served two terms as president of the Hillsborough County Bar Association.

Mr. Gibbons and Mr. Gunby were both very active in the Republican Party at a time when the Democratic Party dominated politics in Florida. Mr. Gibbons held a federal appointment to the Customs House at one point and unsuccessfully ran for election to the Supreme Court of Florida on the Republican ticket in 1898. In 1912, he attended the Republican National Convention in Chicago as a delegate and supporter of Theodore Roosevelt. When Roosevelt left the party for the Progressive (“Bull Moose”) Party, Mr. Gibbons served as state chairman for the Bull Moose Party and ran unsuccessfully for Attorney General of Florida on that Party’s 1912 ticket. Times change, of course, and it is notable that his

eldest grandson, Sam Melville Gibbons, served 44 years in elective office at the state and national level as a member of the Democratic Party after winning a Bronze Star for his Army service at Normandy in World War II. The Sam M. Gibbons United States Courthouse in Tampa is named after him.

Over the years, Mel Gibbons maintained close personal friendships with many of the justices of the Florida Supreme Court. The correspondence unearthed by Monsignor Gibbons captures a glimpse into those friendships and provides insights into the legal, cultural, and social mores of those times.

The correspondence includes letters, many handwritten, from Justices W. Glenn Terrell, James B. Whitfield, and Armstead Brown, as well as from Attorney General Cary D. Landis and Secretary of State R.A. “Bob” Gray.

Some of the correspondence is in the spirit of political back-and-forth between friends in different parties. In one letter from 1930, Justice Whitfield shared that “I wish I had an army of real friends like you. What a noble Democrat you would make!” In another letter, Justice Whitfield (a native of North Carolina), observed, “I often think of you and of what a good Democrat you might have been if you had been born in North Carolina.”

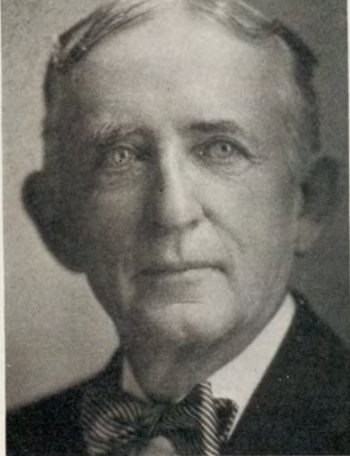
In a similar vein, Justice Terrell penned the following to his friend:

I thank you for your letter but don’t you think it’s time for ‘Cracker democrats’ and ‘Virginia republicans’ to get together as a matter of self preservation. There never has been any difference in our objective, the difference has been in the road we traveled to it but with all the foolisms there have been lately let loose on the country it looks to me that we will have to get in the same road to survive.

Around that same time, when justices of the Supreme Court were still elected, Justice Brown wrote to Mr. Gibbons in 1934 and said the following:

I understand your personal position and respect it. I am also glad to know that I will have the vote and support of other members of your Firm. While I do not expect you of course, to vote in the coming Democratic primary, I believe that I will have your good will, and I assure you that I will in the future as I have in the past do my best to deserve it.

Similarly, Secretary of State Gray wrote to Mr. Gibbons, saying, “[w]hile your good Democratic friends wonder why



MELVILLE G. GIBBONS

Melville G. Gibbons, born Washington County, Va., 1862. Admitted to bar 1887, Florida. Practiced, Orlando, Fla., 1887-89; Tampa, Fla., since 1889. Member Gibbons & Gibbons. Member Tampa, Hillsborough County and Florida State Bar Associations. Married, four sons and two daughters. Office, Tampa, Fla.

you being such a fine fellow would over look the splendid association in the Democratic ranks we give you full credit and praise for raising those stalwart sons of yours to be good democrats.”

Not being limited to political banter, the correspondence also sheds light on legal events of the day. In one letter, Justice Whitfield responds to a question from Mr. Gibbons about the recording of mandates by the Supreme Court: “I can only say if the mandate of the court is not duly filed and recorded you have your remedy by due course of law.”

Another letter, this one from Attorney General Landis, picks up on that issue and explains that “[y]ou have convinced me that the mandates of the Supreme Court should be recorded. I will draft an act and recommend to the next Legislature for their consideration that these mandates should be recorded. Even though you started it as a joke, I really believe there are merits in your contention.”

On another occasion, Justice Whitfield corresponded with Mr. Gibbons, opining that “[p]erhaps this court will have to interpret the Homestead Exemption amendment before it can be put into force.” In one of the final letters in the donated collection, Justice Terrell writes to Mr. Gibbons “with reference to the opinion [he] wrote in the Pottinger [v. State, 165 So. 276 (Fla. 1936)] case” and observes that “this might be a good doctrine to call to the attention of both the Democrats and the Republicans at this time.”

The final piece of correspondence included in the donated collection is a Western Union Telegram sent to Mr. Gibbons’s wife on March 6, 1939, reacting to his death and tendering “heartfelt sympathy in your bereavement.” It was signed by all of the justices of the Florida Supreme Court and the Clerk of Court.

The Society expresses its gratitude to Monsignor Gibbons for this generous donation, which will help to illuminate the history of the 1930s Florida Supreme Court for current and future Floridians.

SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA

DIVISION A
OLEN TORRELL, CHIEF JUSTICE
WILLIAM H. KELLS
ARMSTEAD BROWN

TALLAHASSEE Nov 6/30

DIVISION B
JAMES B. WHITFIELD, PRESIDENT JUSTICE
LOUIS W. STROM
HOWARD BUFORD

Hon M G Gibbons
Tampa Florida

My dear friend
You have delighted me with your letter and have given my family something to talk me about. I wish I had an army of real friends like you. What a noble Democrat you would make! Be assured of my appreciation of your kindly thought of me and of your friendship which I value

Most sincerely
J B Whitfield

ARMSTEAD BROWN

CANDIDATE TO SUCCEED HIMSELF
AS
JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA
TALLAHASSEE, FLA.

April 16, 1934.

Mr. M. G. Gibbons,
Gibbons & Gibbons,
Attorneys at Law,
Tampa, Florida.

Dear Mr. Gibbons:

I have thoroughly enjoyed reading your letter of the 13th inst, and I also read it to your old friend, Judge Whitfield, who thinks a great deal of you, and he read it with much relish.

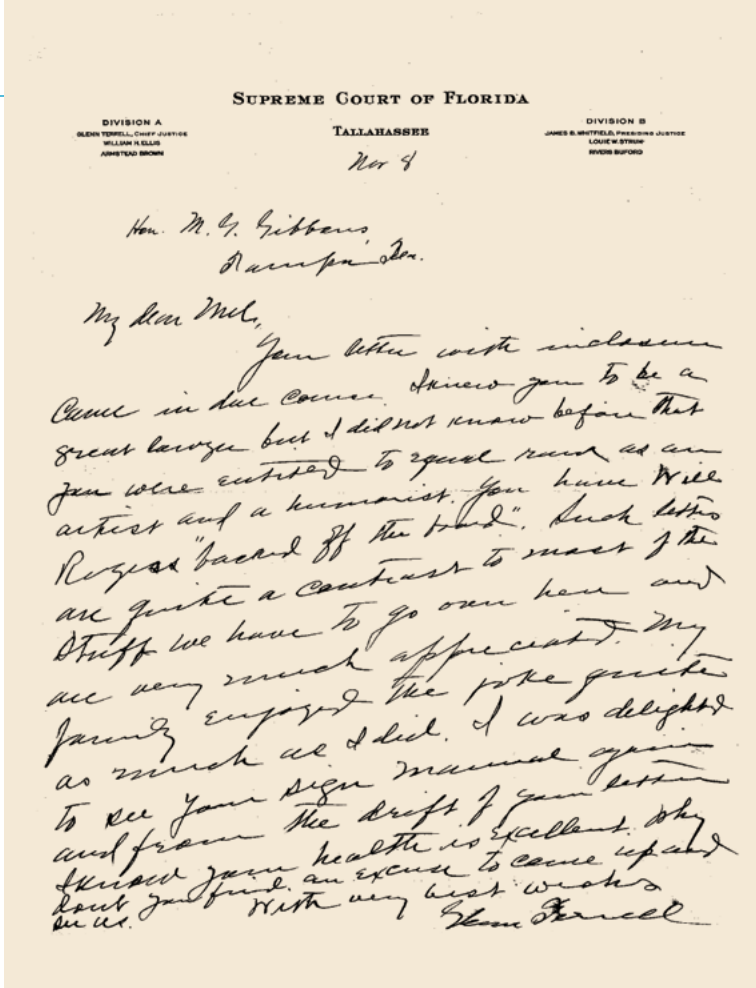
I understand your personal position and respect it. I am also glad to know that I will have the vote and support of the other members of your Firm. While I do not expect you of course, to vote in the coming Democratic primary, I believe that I have your good will, and I assure you that I will in the future as I have in the past do my best to deserve it.

With kindest regards and best wishes,

Very truly yours,

Armstead Brown

AB/adw



Earlier Historical Gift Pictures Melville Gordon “Mel” Gibbons

The article reprinted below highlights a donation the Historical Society received in the early 1990s of an 1899 Florida Bench and Bar composite photo. The original article featured these images of six notable Tampa attorneys. Among them is Melville “Mel” Gordon Gibbons, the recipient of personal correspondence from Florida Supreme Court justices and other Florida leaders in the 1930s—which were recently donated to the Historical Society (see separate article) by Mel’s grandson, Monsignor Robert C. Gibbons of St. Petersburg, Florida.

Gifts for The Society’s Collection

Reprinted from the 1991-94 issue of the Society’s Review newsletter, Vol. IV, No. 2

The Society has been given two framed composites of the bench and bar of Florida. They will be restored and displayed for visitors to enjoy, thanks to the generosity of Jeanine Sasser and Claude Mullis.

The larger one, “Bench and Bar, State of Florida, 1899,” contains 277 oval photographs of lawyers and judges with the name and city or town printed below each picture. This interesting and rare item was donated to the Society by Jacksonville attorney Jeanine Sasser and a former owner of the composite, Martin Kennelly. Ms. Sasser has also offered a generous donation toward the cost of restoration.

Jacksonville is represented in 1899 with sixty-nine members of the bench and bar. Tampa and Pensacola each have twenty-eight; Ocala and Gainesville fifteen and fourteen, respectively, and Orlando and Palatka, eight. Miami and Jasper each show five lawyers. Two women lawyers, Alice Johnson, Live Oak, and Louise Pinnell, Bronson, are pictured.

Jacksonville attorney Claude Mullis donated the other composite, “Bench and Bar of Florida, 1929-1930.” It presents an interesting contrast with the increase of lawyers in Miami and other areas of South Florida and the decrease in the smaller towns. No restoration work is needed on this composite, but archival matting will be added to avoid glass contact.

Pictured in the 1899 Bench and Bar composite, which is on display in the Supreme Court Library, are six Tampa attorneys.

TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Melville G. Gibbons is the recipient of the letters from the justices that were recently donated to the Historical Society; Hugh C. Macfarlane is considered the father of West Tampa and is the namesake of Tampa’s Macfarlane Park; Thomas M. Shackelford served on the Florida Supreme Court from 1902-1917. **BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT:** George P. Raney, Jr. is the son of Florida Supreme Court Justice George P. Raney (1885-1894); Peter O. Knight (banker, businessman, second mayor of Ft. Myers) is a namesake of the Holland & Knight LLP law firm; Thomas Palmer (developer, mayor of Brooksville) served as Florida Senate President.





Former Justice Raoul G. Cantero (left) and then-President of the Cuban American Bar Association, A. Dax Bello (right), stand for a picture with Justice John D. Couriel (center) in the Courtroom of the Florida Supreme Court on October 7, 2021, following Justice Couriel's Investiture.

 FLORIDA SUPREME COURT NEWS

Celebrating **20 YEARS** Since

RAOUL G. CANTERO

Was Appointed to the **SUPREME
COURT OF FLORIDA** as the **FIRST
CUBAN AMERICAN JUSTICE**

By **Emily Plakon**

Former Justice Raoul G. Cantero was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court by Governor Jeb Bush on July 10, 2002, replacing Justice Major B. Harding. Justice Cantero was the first justice of Hispanic descent to sit on the Court.

He was born to Cuban parents in Spain. His family moved to Miami when he was 9 months old. He grew up there and learned both the Cuban and American cultures while attending

an elementary school that equally embraced both cultures. At home, his family spoke Spanish and proudly taught him about the Cuban culture.

After graduating from Florida State University with dual bachelor's degrees in English and business, Justice Cantero received his law degree *cum laude* from Harvard Law School. After serving as law clerk to United States District Judge Edward B. Davis, he obtained a Fulbright Scholarship and spent a year in Panama writing



Just before the Florida Supreme Court Historical Society Board of Trustees meeting in April 2022 at the Florida Supreme Court in Tallahassee, Florida, four graduates of Christopher Columbus High School in Miami gathered for a photo. From left to right: Historical Society Trustee Dr. Steven Maxwell (class of 1980), former Justice Raoul G. Cantero (class of 1978), Historical Society Trustee Edward Guedes (class of 1981), and Justice John D. Couriel (class of 1996).

fiction and studying Latin American literature and history. He then returned to Miami, where he was active in the community.

Before Governor Bush appointed him to the Supreme Court, Justice Cantero was a shareholder and head of the appellate division of the Adorno & Yoss law firm in Miami. During Justice Cantero's Investiture, Governor Bush regarded Justice Cantero's reputation as "one of the finest appellate advocates in the state." After retiring from the Court in 2008, Justice Cantero and his family returned to Miami, where he currently resides with his wife, Ana Maria. The Canteros have three children, Christian, Michael, and Elisa. Today, he is a managing partner of the Miami office of White & Case, LLP, where he focuses on appellate law and complex commercial litigation.

Bringing His Cuban influence to the Court

In his application to the Florida Supreme Court, Justice Cantero explained that his heritage would benefit the Court: "As an American whose family escaped a totalitarian regime, I have learned to appreciate and defend democratic values and the rule of law. I know the price a society pays when it lacks freedom to speak, freedom to worship, freedom to dissent."

As a proud Cuban American, Justice Cantero made it a point to bring his Cuban culture into the courthouse.

For example, Justice Cantero brought his long-time family friend and fellow Cuban American, Lillian Dominguez, with him from Miami to Tallahassee to work as his Judicial Assistant during his tenure on the Court. Lillian is not only Justice Cantero's wife's best friend but also the godmother of their first son. (When Justice Cantero left the Court, Lillian did too. Lillian is now Justice Cantero's legal assistant at White & Case.)

Soon after joining the Court, Justice Cantero also began hosting a 3:00 Cuban Coffee Hour in chambers with his fellow Justices and the Court's law clerks. Lillian quickly became the barista for the Cuban Coffee Hour because everyone agreed that she made the perfect Cuban coffee. Lillian's secret recipe was using authentic Cuban coffee that she brought with her from Miami, adding a little sugar to the coffee, and then rapidly mixing in the sugar to create bubbles. The Cuban Coffee Hour was a big hit in the courthouse; if the clerks and other justices failed to receive an email that coffee was ready by 3:00 sharp, they would reach out to "check-in."

Justice Cantero also made it a point to hire a Cuban artist to paint his Supreme Court portrait—and he searched high and low to make this happen. Hiring a Cuban artist was extremely important to Justice Cantero, who was on a mission to spread awareness of the success stories of Cuban immigrants. Eventually, he found the perfect artist—Luis Soler.

Luis, who escaped Cuba by raft with his daughter in 1994, was the epitome of a Cuban success story. While

fleeing to the United States, Luis came down with a 104 fever and a severe infection in his leg. Luis was eventually picked up by the U.S. Coast Guard after days of floating in the dissipating raft with his daughter and barely survived the escape. The Coast Guard brought Luis to a hospital in Key West, where he was almost sent back to Cuba until a group of altruistic Cuban Americans got him out of the hospital. Luis was the last Cuban admitted to the United States before the Clinton Administration's "wet-foot, dry-foot" policy was enacted. The "wet-foot, dry-foot" policy requires those fleeing to America to set foot on American soil to avoid being sent back to their native country.

On March 14, 2006, Justice Cantero unveiled the portrait painted by Luis in a room full of Guayabera-wearing members of the Cuban American Bar Association and, of course, the artist. Luis tearfully thanked Justice Cantero for trusting him to paint his portrait. Justice Cantero in turn emphatically thanked Luis for his painting and explained that Cubans are some of the most patriotic people, as they know exactly what it is like to be deprived of the basic freedoms that we enjoy as Americans.

Justice Cantero's Influence on the Cuban Community

As the first Cuban American justice, Justice Cantero had a major influence on the Court in a short period of time. Justice John Couriel, a fellow Cuban American appointed to the Florida Supreme Court in 2020 who attended the same high school as Justice Cantero, explained that Justice Cantero was a legend in the Miami community because he devoted himself to public service and the rule of law. Justice Couriel believes that these purposeful choices made by Justice Cantero and others paved the way for Justice Couriel's appointment.

In fact, Justice Couriel stated that "it is very difficult to imagine how [he] wind[s] up on the Court without Justice Cantero's prior service." Although Justice Couriel did not have the chance to serve with Justice Cantero, Justice Couriel still honors Justice Cantero's legacy by attending Cuban Coffee Hour when Justice Couriel is at the courthouse, as the legacy lives on. However, the Cuban coffee is now made with a Nespresso machine, which Justice Couriel jokingly states is just as authentic because Justice Labarga dips his finger in the coffee before serving.

Justice Jorge Labarga, who was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court in 2009, was Florida's first Cuban American chief justice. Justice Labarga stated that Justice Cantero's appointment to the Court was very meaningful to and very well-received by the Hispanic community. He explained that Justice Cantero "was a big deal," as a well-respected litigator and partner in Miami with a lot of experience and an amazing academic pedigree. Justice Labarga thoroughly enjoyed reading Justice Cantero's opinions. Justice Labarga continued that Justice Cantero was known for asking a lot of questions on the bench, but only very pointed questions that were crucial to understanding the dispute.

His Experience as the First Cuban American on the Court

Justice Cantero said he was welcomed kindly by his colleagues on the Court. However, the move did require some cultural adjustments. As the only Cuban American on the Court at the time, he felt a special obligation to make his community proud. Justice Cantero consistently felt internal pressure to set a good example for future generations of Hispanic Americans

A Hispanic Precedent

Importantly, while Justice Cantero is the first Cuban American to sit on the Florida Supreme Court, he is not the first Hispanic American appointed to the Court. Justice Rosemary Barkett, who was born in Mexico to Syrian-born parents and spoke Spanish as her first language, was the first Hispanic American appointed to the Court upon her appointment in 1985. She was also the first female justice.

There has been some confusion about whether Justice Barkett was the first Hispanic American justice to sit on the Florida Supreme Court. This Article seeks to resolve this discrepancy and clarify that Justice Barkett is the first Hispanic American justice to sit on the Court, while Justice Cantero is the first Cuban American justice and first justice of Hispanic descent.



that aspire to be on the Court and to demonstrate to Governor Bush that he picked the right person for the job. He also felt a heavier demand for giving speeches and was often invited to speak at or attend events hosted by the Hispanic community and Hispanic bar associations.

Justice Cantero's Resignation

On April 11, 2008, Justice Cantero announced his resignation from the Florida Supreme Court. His last day on the Court was September 6, 2008. During Justice Cantero's tenure, justices were required to live in Tallahassee full time. This requirement forced Justice Cantero to move his entire family to Tallahassee, leaving his extended family in Miami. Although Justice Cantero felt very welcome in Tallahassee, he and his family longed to be back with their big extended family—especially his children, who grew up during the rise of social media and were constantly reminded what they were missing. Eventually, Justice Cantero and his family made the difficult decision to move back home.

Since Justice Cantero's resignation, Florida has lifted the requirement that justices must reside in Tallahassee full-time. In fact, several justices currently reside in their hometowns while serving on the Court, including Justice Couriel who resides in Miami with his family and travels to Tallahassee for oral arguments and other matters. Justice Cantero stated that this change would have made a huge difference for him and his family.

In his current role as a partner at White & Case in the firm's Miami office, he stays involved with the Hispanic community as an appellate attorney who also focuses on cross-border disputes relating to Latin America.

How He Gives Back & Advice to Aspiring Judges

Justice Cantero regularly mentors law students and young lawyers both in and outside his law firm. Typically, he grabs breakfast or lunch with his mentees, who often want to discuss the Florida or Miami legal market or the law in general. He also regularly participates in a diverse range of pro bono work, including work for Cuban Americans. For example, Justice Cantero represented an association for human rights in Cuba as amicus curiae in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, in favor of a Cuban dissident who was denied entry into the United States after being persecuted in Cuba.

When asked whether he has any advice to give to aspiring judges, Justice Cantero stated the following: "If you aspire to be a judge, make sure you work hard and develop a reputation for excellence and professionalism. When you are applying to the Court, you will have to list judges you practiced in front of and lawyers you have practiced against. If you have ever acted unprofessionally, there's a good chance the JNC will find out. But whether or not you want to be a judge, govern your life as if you were going to apply."

Justice Cantero brought vibrance and excitement to the Court and even convinced some fellow justices to dress up for a court conference that took place on Halloween. Back row (left to right): Justices Barbara J. Pariente, Raoul G. Cantero, Kenneth Bell, and Peggy A. Quince (right). Front row (left to right): Justices Charles Wells, R. Fred Lewis, and Harry Lee Anstead.



The Surprising Origins of Judicial Review Living in the Court's Library

By **Julia Logue**

In the Rare Books Room of the Florida Supreme Court's Library live two near-sacred legal texts that reveal a little-known secret regarding the American tradition of judicial review. These books are Lord Edward Coke's *Institutes of the Laws of England* and Sir William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*.

Most American lawyers have heard of Blackstone. He published his great treatise *Commentaries* in the decade leading up to the American Revolution. In the tradition of the first encyclopedias, it organized the sprawling body of common law. This treatise—of which the Library owns an 1899 copy—played a critical role in the legal education of our nation's founders.

During the United States' formative years, "nearly as many copies of *Commentaries* were sold on the American as on the English side [of the Atlantic.]" Chief Justice John Marshall read *Commentaries* 4 times by age 27. Later in the 1850s, Abraham Lincoln advised law students to begin their studies by reading *Commentaries* at least twice. And in present day, Justice Charles T. Canady (then a member of Congress) has described Blackstone as someone "whose work James Madison said was in every man's hand during the creation of the Constitution."

When Justice Canady—speaking on the floor of the U.S. Senate as one of the House prosecutors during the impeachment trial of President Bill Clinton—needed to establish that perjury had long been classified as one of the "offenses against the public justice," he cited to an unimpeachable source: Blackstone. Indeed, the Florida Supreme Court has cited Blackstone 18 times in the past 21 years.

What is surprising then—given Blackstone's outsized influence on American law—is that he forcefully and expressly rejected the concept of judicial review, the cornerstone of America's legal tradition.

In *Commentaries*, Blackstone wrote that "to set the judicial power above the legislature . . . would be

subversive of all government." He went on to claim that Parliament "hath sovereign and uncontrollable authority in the making, confirming, enlarging, restraining, abrogating, repealing, reviving, and expounding of laws, concerning matters of all possible denominations." The unwritten English Constitution, he wrote, vested sovereignty in Parliament and accordingly granted it "absolute despotic power."

Blackstone's work was the product of England's so-called Glorious Revolution, which solidified the supremacy of Parliament over the crown. So in Blackstone's view, no king—nor judge—could set aside an act of Parliament.

So where did the American tradition of judicial review originate? Surprisingly, it stems from Lord Edward Coke—more than a century before Blackstone—who lived in the mid-1600s during a power struggle between Parliament and the Stuart kings. In this great struggle, Coke reinvented the Magna



LEFT: Justice Charles T. Canady stands in the Rare Book Room of the Florida Supreme Court Library with Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. RIGHT: The Florida Supreme Court Library displayed Coke's *Institutes of the Laws of England* for Coke's 470th birthday.

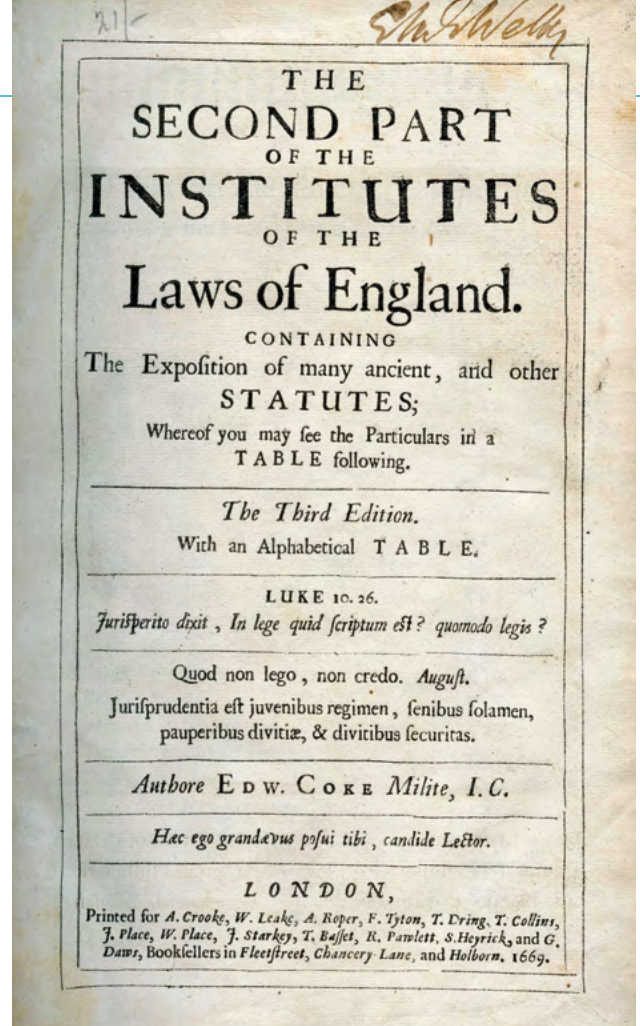
Carta, placing the King and even Parliament under the reasoning reflected in the common law.

Coke's argument for judicial review took shape in *Dr. Bonham's Case*, which was decided in 1610 by the Court of Common Pleas, where Coke was serving as Chief Justice. An act of Parliament had given the Royal College of Physicians the power to fine any doctor in London and to keep half of the fines levied. Coke noted that the law made the College both a judge and a party to the case, which was "against the common right and reason;" and in such circumstances "*the common law will control Acts of Parliament, and sometimes adjudge them to be utterly void.*" This sentence laid the foundation for what would become American judicial review.

With the advent of Parliamentary supremacy, Coke's view of judicial review died out in Great Britain. Blackstone, writing about 130 years after Coke, went so far as to reject the holding of *Dr. Bonham's Case*: "if a cause should arise in which he himself is a party," and "if we could conceive it possible for the parliament to enact [this], *there is no court that has the power to defeat the intent of the legislature.*"

But before Coke's judicial review waned in England, it was transplanted to the United States via *Institutes*, where it flourished on American soil. *Institutes* is considered the first textbook of English common law. Thomas Jefferson once claimed it was the "universal law book of students." In 1761, James Otis cited Coke to argue against writs of assistance imposed on the colonists of Boston, which granted British officials the authority to search anyone, anywhere. Otis pointed to *Dr. Bonham's Case* for the principle that "if an act of Parliament should be made in the very words of this petition, it would be void."

And years later, Alexander Hamilton's *Federalist* 78 persuaded colonists to ratify the Constitution by discussing judicial review as a safeguard to balance the



branches of government. Hamilton derived his vision for the proposed government from Coke, declaring that "it belongs to the judges to ascertain [the constitution's] meaning, as well as the meaning of any particular act proceeding from the legislative body." This in turn led to Chief Justice Marshall's great pronouncement that "an act of the legislature, repugnant to the Constitution, is void." By asserting the power to declare acts of Congress unconstitutional—a concept established by Coke—the chief justice positioned the Court as the interpreter of the Constitution.

"Our edition of Coke's *Institutes* is from 1669. It's older and rarer than the Library of Congress's," explained Teresa Farley, the Court's librarian. The copy was purchased in 1926 in Chancery Lane, London, and was donated to the Library in 1929 upon the election of Justice W. Glenn Terrell.

Coke and Blackstone's legacies paved the way for the foundation of America's democratic balance of power—a sacred influence which lives on in the Rare Books Room of the Florida Supreme Court's Library.

For ease of publication and reading, footnotes have been removed from this article. The full version, with footnotes, may be viewed on the Historical Society's website at www.flcourthistory.org/Historical-Review/Extended-Articles.



William Falck Donates Supreme Court Artifacts to Historical Society

By **Hala Sandridge**

Photos and documents from as early as the 16th Century, collected by a Jacksonville attorney, are the most recent additions to the archives in the Florida Supreme Court Library.

The donated artifacts were given to the Florida Supreme Court Historical Society by William E. Falck, who acquired them early in his legal career.

Following his 1969 graduation from the University of Florida's law school, Falck clerked for Florida Supreme Court Justices Wade L. Hopping (1968-69), Vassar B. Carlton (1969-74), and James C. Adkins, Jr. (1969-87). Falck also served as executive assistant to Justices Carlton and Adkins.

While in Tallahassee, Falck became close friends with Dempsey Mayo, who was the Florida Supreme Court Marshal from 1945-75. As justices retired, Marshal Mayo removed abandoned materials from their offices and allowed his young friend to go through them. Falck saved items earmarked for destruction that he believed were of historical value. He later framed many of the items for his Jacksonville home office. None of the donated items has ever been on display publicly.

The artifacts include documents and photos highlighting Florida history, information related to cases and events outside Florida, and even documents originating in England. Some documents are quite old—several originating in the 16th Century. The more modern of the documents reflect the business of the Florida Supreme Court, including communications between justices about specific cases.

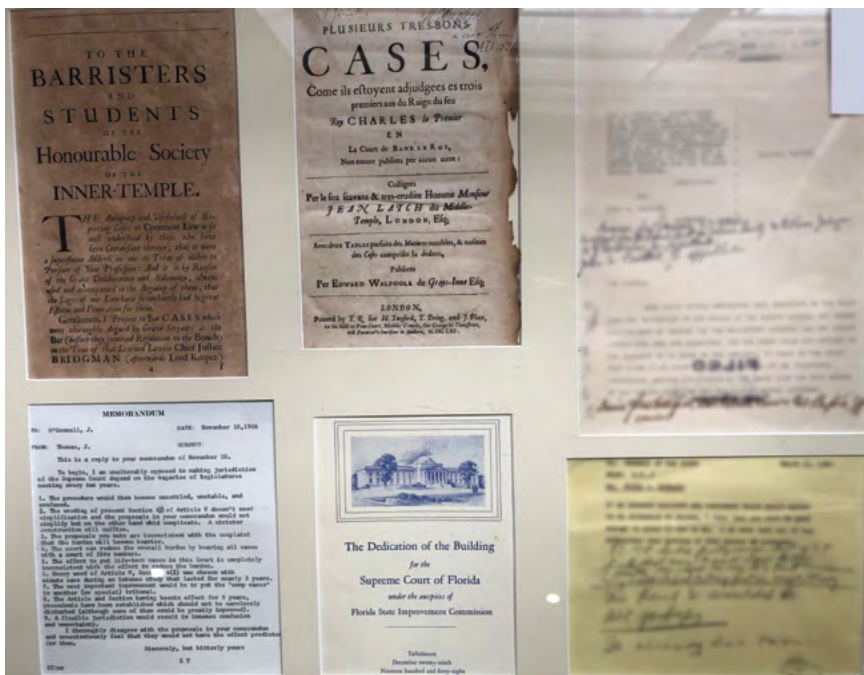
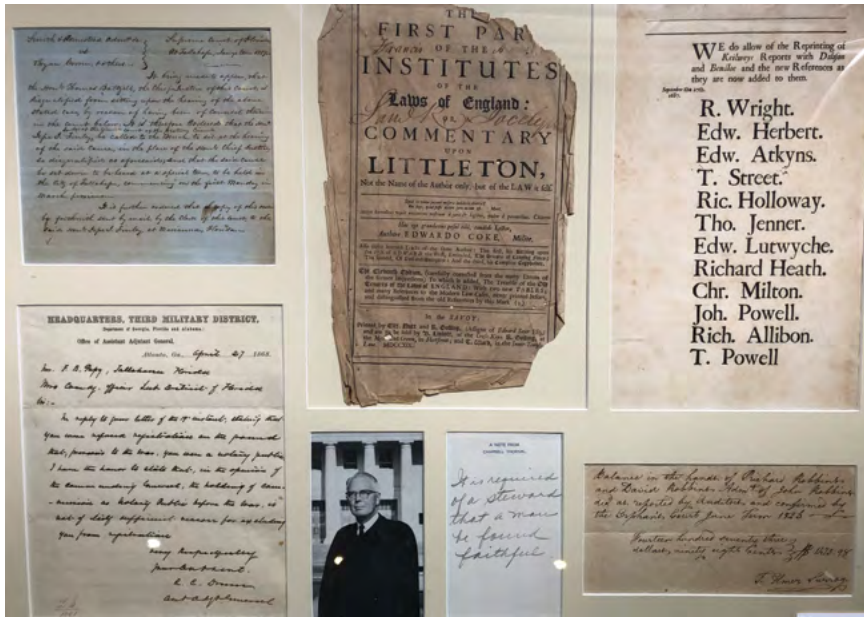
One entertaining item is a 1966 memo from Justice Elwyn Thomas (1938-69) to Justice Stephen O'Connell (1955-67). The subject involved the Court's jurisdiction, and the two justices apparently disagreed on the resolution. Not only did Justice Thomas outline in detail his dispute with Justice O'Connell's jurisdictional position, but he also signed his memo "sincerely, but bitterly yours."



William Falck (right) is pictured sitting with Justice James C. Adkins, Jr. (left), who served on the Florida Supreme Court from 1969 to 1987, as they review documents. Falck served as a law clerk to Justice Adkins.

Falck's donation includes 16 black and white photographs of justices from his time serving as a clerk and assistant at the Court in the early 70s. Many of these images were not previously in the Court's collection.

Another unexpected artifact in his collection is a December 1945 blueprint copy of the preliminary



TOP: Artifacts donated by Jacksonville attorney William Falck include these items. Clockwise from upper-left corner: (1) 1857 order regarding a Florida Supreme Court judicial disqualification; (2) 1719 commentaries by Lord Coke regarding basic English law pronouncements; (3) lawyers jointly approved printing of case reports in which they were involved, circa 1687; (4) an order issued during Union Troops 1868 Florida occupation, discussing qualifications of an officeholder prior to Civil War and declaring previous status not disqualification from proposed office; (5) picture of Justice Thornal with a note found in his Bible after his death; (6) 1826 acknowledgment of \$1,473.98 payment confirmed by Orphan's Court (worth \$44,111.61 today).

BOTTOM: Artifacts donated by Jacksonville attorney William Falck include these items. Clockwise from the upper-left corner: (1) notice to English Barristers and Students of the Inner Temple from the 1680s; (2) report of cases at a time when many English publications published in French, printed in London in 1661; (3) copy of a decision circulated to Florida Supreme Court justices; (4) memorandum from Justice Thomas to Justice O'Connell regarding jurisdictional matters; (5) 1948 program commemorating the dedication of new Florida Supreme Court Building; (6) memorandum from Justice B. Campbell Thornal (1955-1970) as part of a jurisdictional dispute.

drawings for the first- and second-floor plans of the Supreme Court Building, prepared by Jas. Gamble Rogers, Architects, of New York, New York. Construction of the Court began in 1947 and was completed in December of 1948.

In addition to the many photos and papers, Falck donated a circa-1874 .45-70 Springfield Army rifle used by Justice Carlton's grandfather, father, and other relatives to feed the Carlton family when they lived in a remote area near Island Grove, Florida (an area immortalized in the writings of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, who lived just up the road at Cross Creek). The family name for the rifle was "The Provider." According to Falck, Justice Carlton claimed, "if you missed the target, everybody missed dinner."

Falck recalled that when Justice Carlton was preparing for retirement, he told him "you've been very helpful to me and I want to give you something—this rifle or my Rolex watch." Although his friends teased him about not taking the watch, Falck said he chose the rifle because it had far greater sentimental value.

After practicing law for more than 50 years, Falck is retired and recently moved to North Carolina to be near family. His generous contribution furthers the Historical Society's mission to celebrate, honor, and preserve the rich history of the Florida Supreme Court and its justices. The donation is very much appreciated.

Supreme Court archivist Erik Robinson said the artifacts are a valuable donation to the Supreme Court Library's collection. The Historical Society and the Library will begin using many of the photographs as well as the historic printed and handwritten documents to illustrate articles in the *Historical Review*, and also for display in the Court Building and on social media. Robinson said a published biography of Justice Carlton is already available in the Library's collection for readers and researchers.

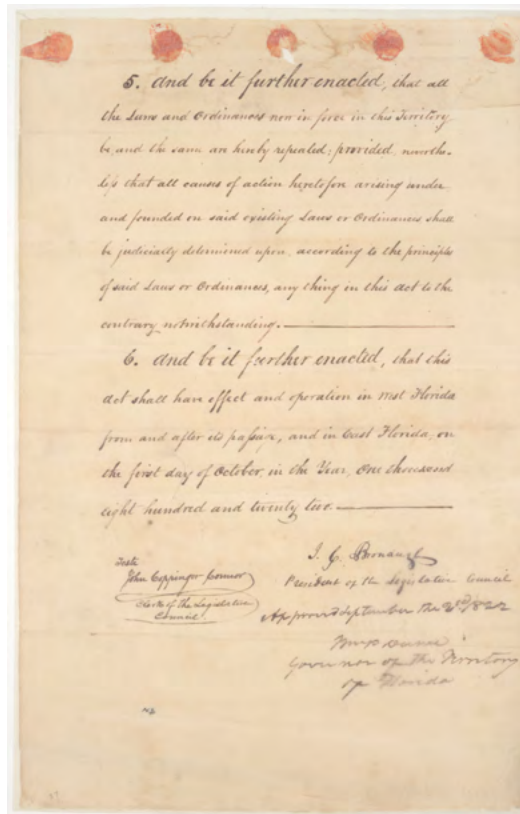
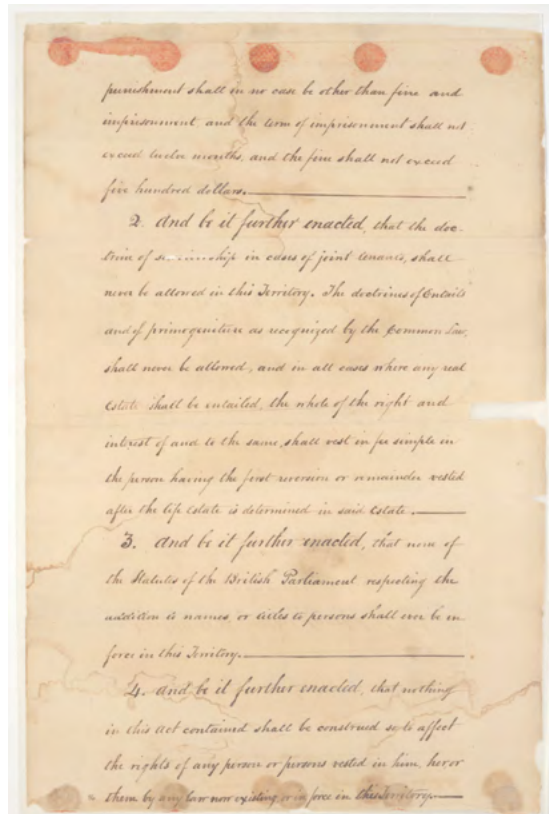
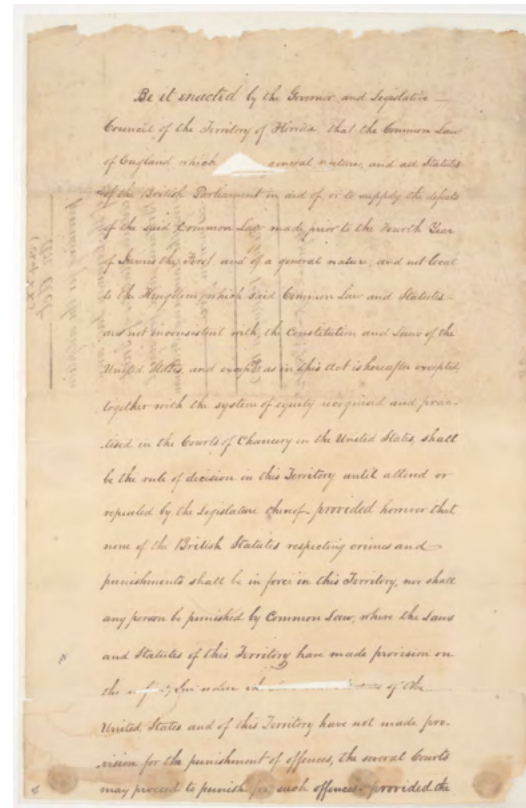
All of the valuable artifacts Mr. Falck provided in his donation, including the Springfield rifle, are greatly appreciated. While the Court cannot physically accept or display firearms for security reasons, the Historical Society is actively searching for an appropriate home for this rare and valuable artifact of Florida's history.

Ask *the* Archivist

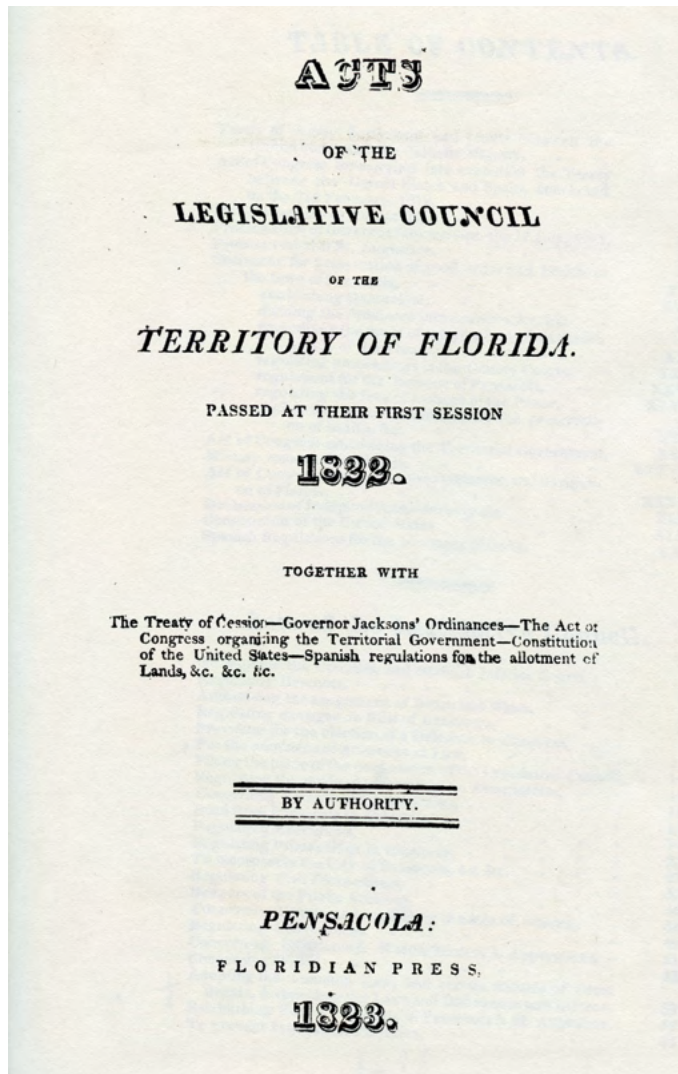
By Erik Robinson

Q: Why are there so many British common law books in the Library's collection?

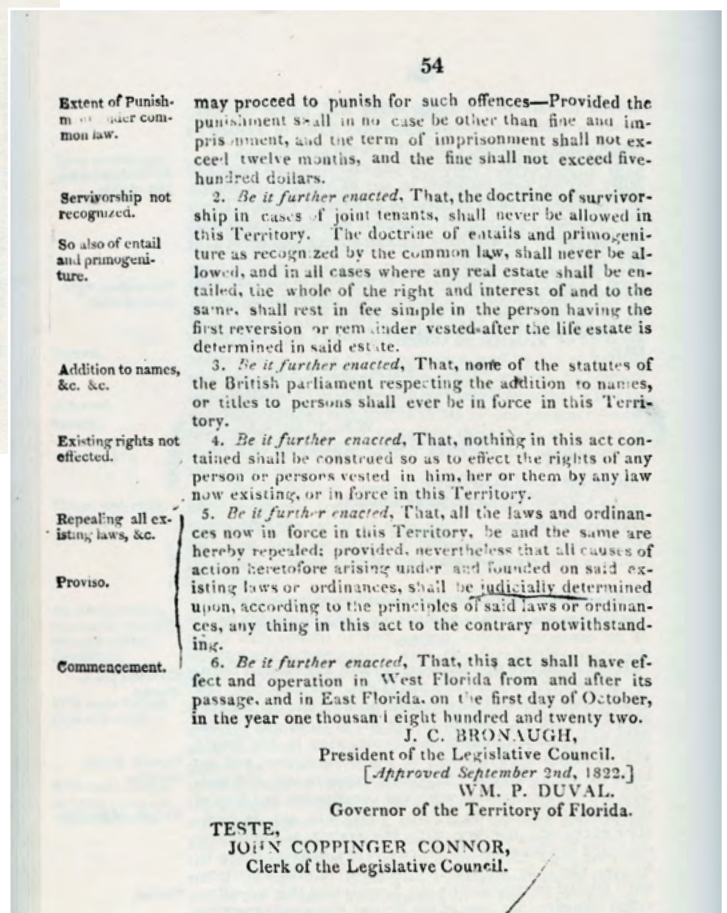
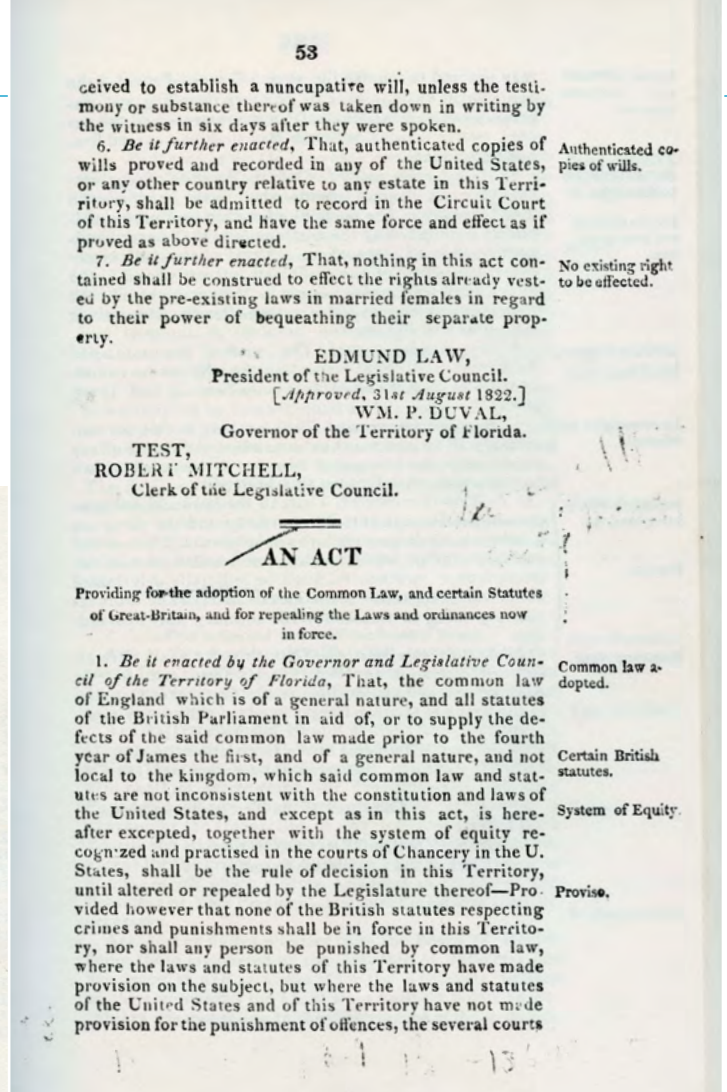
Florida's first American Territorial Legislative Council met for a month from mid-August to mid-September 1822 in Pensacola. During that session, the Council adopted British Common Law as the law of the new territory on September 2, 1822. That year, they specified the common law as it was in 1607, the fourth year of the reign of King James I (known for commissioning a new English translation of the Bible) and the year the first English colony in North America started in Jamestown, Virginia. By doing this, the new Territory of Florida went from having literally no laws to a complete set of usable and functional laws with hundreds of years of wisdom behind them.



A later Territorial Council (in 1829) changed the date of Florida's adoption of English common law to July 4, 1776, the date the United States declared its independence from Britain—perhaps as a way for the legislature to “modernize” with over 150 additional years of common law. Florida still recognizes a combination of British and Florida common law, though it is subordinated now to the many statutory laws that have been passed by the Legislature since Statehood in 1845.



Erik Robinson
Erik Robinson received his M.A. in Historical Administration (Museum and Archive Studies) from Eastern Illinois University. He directed two historic Illinois courthouses where Abraham Lincoln practiced law in the 1840s. In 1984, he became curator at the Museum of Florida History, where he directed restoration of the Supreme Court chamber in the Old Capitol. In 2005, he became Archivist for the Florida Supreme Court Library.



Historical Society Membership Acceptance

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP *Check one, please*

- \$25 Student Members
- \$50 Young Lawyer Members
- \$100 Individual Members
- \$60 Judicial Members (*Active & Retired Judges*)

SPECIAL RECOGNITION LEVELS

- \$250 Sustainer Member
- \$500 Contributor
- \$1,000 Patron
- \$5,000 Life Membership (over a five year period)

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		
NAME	ORGANIZATION		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
EMAIL	PHONE	FAX	

THREE CONVENIENT WAYS TO RETURN YOUR MEMBERSHIP ACCEPTANCE FORM

ONLINE: FLCourtHistory.org *All Major Credit Cards accepted online*

BY CHECK: Please make payable to: **FSCHS • 1947 Greenwood Dr. • Tallahassee, FL 32303**

BY CREDIT CARD: MasterCard Visa AmEx Discover

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
CARD NUMBER	EXPIRATION DATE	CV CODE

Your credit card information will be utilized for a one-time transaction marked "SUP CT HIST" or "FL SUPR CT HIST SOC" on your statement. I authorize the use of my card for the Society to conduct this transaction.

AUTHORIZING SIGNATURE

RETURN YOUR MEMBERSHIP BY:

EMAIL: Admin@FLCourtHistory.org **FAX:** (850) 289.2898

US MAIL: FSCHS • 1947 Greenwood Dr. • Tallahassee, FL 32303

Dues and contributions to the Florida Supreme Court Historical Society, Inc., are tax-deductible for charitable purposes to the extent allowed by law, and 100% of each dues contribution is received by this organization. The Society's IRS tax identification number, for your records, is 59-2287922.





**Florida Supreme Court
Historical Society**
1947 Greenwood Drive
Tallahassee, Florida 32303-4825

 [FLCourtHistory](#)
 [FLSupremeCourtHistoricalSociety](#)
 flcourthistory.org

NON PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TALLAHASSEE, FL
PERMIT #801



YOU'RE INVITED

A Supreme Evening

JANUARY 26, 2023 | TALLAHASSEE, FL
AT THE FSU DUNLAP CHAMPIONS CLUB

MORE DETAILS & REGISTRATION INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT:
www.flcourthistory.org/SupremeEvening2023