

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,  
IN AND FOR MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER: M-2022-19**

**ORDER REGARDING MARION COUNTY COURT ASSIGNMENTS,  
(This order rescinds Administrative Order M-2022-04)**

**WHEREAS**, Rule 2.215(a) of the Florida Rules of Judicial Administration fixes administrative responsibility for ensuring the efficient and proper administration of all courts within the circuit in the Chief Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit, and other judges he may designate;

**WHEREAS**, the Chief Judge designated the undersigned judge to be the Administrative Judge for Marion County, pursuant to rule 2.215(b)(5), and Administrative Order Number M-2019-52 ordered that all administrative oversight of the County Courts in Marion County will be provided by the Administrative Judge of Marion County; and

It is, therefore, **ORDERED AND ADJUDGED** as follows:

1. **Marion County Court Assignments:**

- A. The intent of this Order is to divide the County Court judicial assignments into two divisions in which two county judges are assigned to the criminal/traffic division and two county judges are assigned to the civil division. These new assignments will start on **July 5, 2022**.
- B. The assignments are as follows:
  - Judge Jim McCune - Criminal/traffic division;
  - Judge Robert Landt - Criminal/traffic division;
  - Judge Lori Cotton - Civil division;
  - Judge Tommy Thompson - Civil division.
- C. The following judges will continue to be the presiding judge for the following alternative courts:
  - Judge Cotton – DUI Court;
  - Judge Thompson – Mental Health Court; and
  - Judge Landt – Pre-Trial Diversion Drug Court.
- D. To equitably divide the cases and assignments into two divisions, the cases shall be assigned as follows:

**Judge Jim McCune** will keep his criminal and traffic cases and shall be assigned the criminal cases currently assigned, or would be reassigned, to Judge Cotton.

**Judge Robert Landt** will keep his criminal cases and shall be assigned the criminal cases currently assigned, or would be reassigned, to Judge Thompson and the traffic cases currently assigned to Judge Cotton.

**Judge Lori Cotton** will keep her civil cases and shall be assigned the civil cases currently assigned, or would be reassigned, to Judge McCune and the eviction cases currently assigned to Judge Landt.

**Judge Thomas Thompson** will keep his civil cases and shall be assigned the civil cases currently assigned, or would be reassigned, to Judge Landt.

E. **CRIMINAL DIVISION – All MM, CT, MO, CO, TR, IN cases:**

- (1) County court criminal cases shall be assigned by date of first appearance or arraignment hearing. The Clerk shall assign cases based on an alternating two-week rotation starting on June 27, 2022. The Clerk shall assign cases to Judge McCune for the first two-weeks. Judge Landt's rotation will begin on July 11, 2022.
- (2) Civil infraction cases shall be assigned by date of citation. These cases shall be assigned in two-week rotations with Judge McCune being assigned cases for the first full two weeks starting on June 27, 2022.
- (3) If a case is reopened for any reason after sentence is imposed, the case shall be heard by the assigned judge. However, all motions for a new trial or rehearing shall be heard by the judge who presided over the trial or hearing regardless of assignment. If there is no current assigned judge, the case will be reassigned on a rotating basis.
- (4) If a judge already has a case pending, or the defendant is on misdemeanor probation, or the judge has issued a failure-to-appear (FTA) bench warrant, the judge who is assigned the lower-case number or who has the defendant on probation or who issued the FTA bench warrant will be assigned any new cases the defendant may receive.
- (5) If a judge is recused at some point before disposition, any further matters will be handled by the judge appointed thereafter. All criminal recusals will first be assigned to the other judge in the criminal division.

F. **CIVIL DIVISION – CC and SC cases (including Small Claims Eviction cases)**

- (1) All County Court Civil Cases will be assigned to Judge Thompson and Judge Cotton by the Clerk on a rotating basis.
- (2) If a case is reopened for any reason, the case shall be heard by the assigned judge. However, all motions for a new trial or rehearing shall be heard by the judge who presided over the trial or hearing regardless of assignment. If there is no current assigned judge, the case will be reassigned on a rotating basis.
- (3) If a defendant has not been served for the initial small claims pretrial conference, the judge may continue pretrials two times, but if the defendant has not been served by the third small claims pretrial date, the judge shall dismiss the case without prejudice to refile.
- (4) If a judge is recused at some point before disposition, any further matters will be handled by the judge appointed thereafter. All civil recusals will first be assigned to the other judge in the civil division.

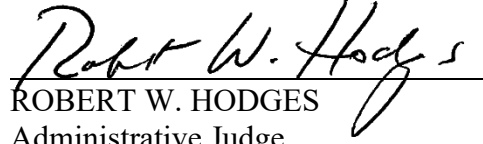
G. Any county judge who reschedules a court event once cases have already been scheduled and noticed by the Clerk's Office shall be responsible for preparing, filing, and serving an order rescheduling that court event, including mailing service copies to all parties who do not receive service via the Portal.

2. **First Appearances, Arraignments, and Small Claims Pretrials:**

- A. On a four-week rotating basis, each county judge shall cover one week of first appearances, arraignments, and small claims pretrials starting on July 5, 2022.
- B. Regular weekday first appearances will be held every weekday morning beginning at or around 9:00 a.m., per the four county judges' respective, preferred start times.
- C. Regular county court arraignment sessions for out-of-custody defendants will be held every Wednesday (non-traffic), and Thursday (traffic) beginning at 1:00 p.m. In custody arraignments are to be scheduled by each judge.
- D. This order shall not apply to holidays and weekends.
- E. This order shall not preclude the judge responsible for presiding over any first appearance or county court arraignment session from deviating from the provisions of this order to accommodate holidays or other special circumstances.
- F. This order shall not preclude any judge from accepting a plea and imposing a sentence during first appearances or arraignments.

3. This Order shall take on **July 5, 2022**, and will remain in effect unless amended by Administrative Order.

**DONE AND ORDERED**, in chambers at Ocala, Marion County, Florida, this 28th day of March 2022.

  
ROBERT W. HODGES  
Administrative Judge  
Marion County