

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER: A-2023-05**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER ESTABLISHING  
THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
SPECIALTY COURTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Article V, Section 2(d) of the Florida Constitution, and Section 43.26, Florida Statutes, the Chief Judge of each judicial circuit is charged with the authority and the power to do everything necessary to promote the prompt and efficient administration of justice; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Fifth Judicial Circuit has established and maintains multiple problem-solving courts throughout the Circuit which require ongoing monitoring and coordination; and,

**WHEREAS**, Section 397.334(9), Florida Statutes, empowers the Chief Judge to appoint an advisory committee for treatment-based drug court programs; and,

**WHEREAS**, it is reasonable and appropriate for the prompt, effective, and efficient administration of justice within the Fifth Judicial Circuit to form a "Specialty Courts Advisory Committee" for the purpose of promoting collaborative and constructive discussion, dialogue, and potential recommendations for improvements to the specialty courts of the Fifth Circuit and to provide for a reasonable measure of uniformity throughout the specialty courts of the Fifth Circuit, where practical or required by rule or law, with an understanding that the various Counties may have differing resources and/or stakeholder involvement and abilities unique to their respective county which could affect the reasonable and practical ability to do so; and,

**WHEREAS**, while being philosophically aware of individual and personal responsibility and accountability for one's own actions, the establishment of the Fifth Judicial Circuit Specialty Court Advisory Committee shall have laudatory and aspirational goals, including but not necessarily limited to, the following:

- leveraging the expertise of all Court Administration Specialty Court personnel from each county throughout the Circuit where possible;

- enhancement to existing programs and consideration given to the expansion of programs, if reasonable and appropriate and when government funding, whether local or state, may become available in conjunction with local county resources and stakeholder involvement;

- adherence to Best Practices Standards (BPS) which have been, or may be, developed by the Office of the State Court Administrator (OSCA);

- coordination of State and Federal grant funding that may be available which could alleviate local source funding ultimately paid by local citizen tax dollars; and

- continued statistical success of specialty courts in reducing criminal thought process and recidivism thereby improving local community safety and reducing local taxpayer costs of recurrent and repetitive incarceration;

**IT IS THEREFORE,**

**ADMINISTRATIVELY ORDERED** as follows:

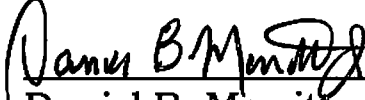
1. The Fifth Judicial Circuit Specialty Court Advisory Committee is hereby established and shall be comprised as follows: The Honorable **Robert E. Landt**, County Judge, Marion County, who is

*DBMJA*

hereby appointed as *Chairperson*; The Honorable **Don Barbee**, Circuit Judge, Hernando County; The Honorable **Lori Cotton**, County Judge, Marion County; The Honorable **Kristie M. Healis**, Circuit Judge, Marion County (soon to be Citrus/Sumter); The Honorable **Charles Helm**, County Judge, Citrus County; The Honorable **Gary L. Sanders**, Circuit Judge, Marion County; and the Honorable **Brian Welke**, Circuit Judge, Lake County.

2. This Order shall be in full force and effect from the date of its execution until it is amended or otherwise superseded, vacated, or rescinded.

**DONE** and **ORDERED** in chambers at Brooksville, Hernando County, Florida this 10<sup>th</sup> day of March 2023.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel B. Merritt, Jr.  
Chief Judge  
Fifth Judicial Circuit