

# Fifth Judicial Circuit

# JUDICIAL MOVES

MARCH 9, 2026

## SHANAE L. PICKENS

### MARION COUNTY CIRCUIT JUDGE

Shanae Pickens brings to the bench more than a decade of experience as a prosecutor, where she handled a broad range of criminal matters. She also practiced in the private sector, focusing on Probate and Guardianship cases. Her years as an attorney have given her a strong command of the law and a deep respect for the responsibilities of the judiciary. Outside the courtroom, Judge Pickens enjoys spending time with her family and cheering on UF athletics."



## BENJAMIN BOYLSTON

### LAKE COUNTY CIRCUIT JUDGE

Ben Boylston has been a resident of Florida's Fifth Judicial Circuit for more than forty years. He attended Lake County public schools, completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Michigan, and earned his Juris Doctor from Florida State University. During law school, he prosecuted cases as a certified legal intern.

Ben began his legal career in 2005 practicing criminal law in Tavares with Graves and Spivey, P.A. He later went on to practice civil law at Stoney and Gerken, P.A. in Mount Dora.

From 2013 until his appointment to the bench, he owned and operated his own law practice. In addition to his private practice, he served as the special magistrate for the City of Tavares, presiding over hearings and adjudicating city code violations.

He is a past president of the Lake County Bar Association, a former chair of a Florida Bar grievance committee, a volunteer with Lake County Teen Court, and a published law review author on Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law. Ben remains active in the community through service on various boards in Lake and Sumter Counties and is a 2015 graduate of Leadership Lake County.

## JASON SMITH

### HERNANDO COUNTY JUDGE

Jason Smith was born and raised in Ocala, Florida. He completed his undergraduate studies at Flagler College in St. Augustine before earning his Juris Doctor from Regent University School of Law in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Following his admission to the Florida Bar, Smith served as a prosecutor for six years, gaining extensive courtroom and litigation experience. For the last ten years, he has dedicated his practice to private-sector work, concentrating on estate planning and probate matters.

