



Supreme Court of Florida

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Former Monroe County Judge Lester A Garringer, Jr., Appointed Executive Director of the Florida Innocence Commission

TALLAHASSEE – Following up on his creation of the Florida Innocence Commission on July 2, Chief Justice Charles T. Canady today announced the appointment of former Monroe County Judge Lester A. Garringer, Jr., 65, as its executive director.

Garringer is a longtime resident of Tallahassee, where he has worked as a lawyer in a number of government offices.

“I am very pleased that we have someone with Les’s experience and ability,” said Canady, “to take on this important responsibility. I know that he will provide valuable assistance in the work of the Innocence Commission.”

Garringer has extensive experience in both private and government legal practice. For the last seven years he has worked in the state courts system advising on developments in criminal law, including serving as staff attorney to the Supreme Court Criminal Court Steering Committee and the Supreme Court Committee on Standard Jury Instructions in Criminal Cases.

“Public confidence in the criminal justice system,” said Garringer, “rests on the premise that individuals who commit unlawful acts are punished for their criminal conduct. This confidence is seriously eroded when innocent persons are convicted for crimes they did not commit.”

Garringer said that his goals as executive director will be those set forth in the Chief Justice’s administrative order creating the Commission.

“I applied for the position of executive director,” he said, “because of my longstanding commitment to the justice system and a never ending desire to see that the innocent are exonerated, the guilty are convicted, and the victims of crimes protected. This is an extraordinarily challenging position and I am honored to serve the courts in this capacity.”

An Army veteran of the Vietnam War, Garringer is a 1972 graduate of the Florida State University College of Law. He began his legal career as an assistant Monroe County solicitor the year of his graduation, and later served as a Monroe County judge from 1977 to 1980.

Garringer worked for many years in the Florida Department of Legal Affairs with much of his work focused on economic crimes, such as antitrust and RICO violations and consumer and Medicaid fraud.

The Florida Innocence Commission currently is funded with a one-time legislative grant of \$200,000. An additional grant of about \$115,000 has been provided by the Florida Bar Foundation.

The current website for the Innocence Commission is at:

http://www.floridasupremecourt.org/pub_info/innocence.shtml

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