



Supreme Court of Florida

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Florida Supreme Court
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Chief Justice Labarga Presents Award for Excellence to Broward Judge

PONTE VEDRA BEACH – Broward County Judge Robert Lee is an excellent trial judge who is extremely active in helping other judges excel, Florida Chief Justice Jorge Labarga said Tuesday as he presented Judge Lee with the Chief Justice Award for Judicial Excellence.

In nearly two decades on the bench, Judge Lee has built an inspiring record of activities and accomplishments, Chief Justice Labarga said, praising Judge Lee for his exceptional commitment to the judicial branch as well as his energy and his creativity.

Judge Lee mentors new judges, compiles comprehensive resource materials to help judges handling small claims and civil traffic infraction cases, and created innovative programs to hold jury-duty scofflaws accountable and to correct teen traffic misconduct. He also frequently writes articles for publication in legal journals, teaches at universities and, of course, handles his caseload.

The chief justice presented the award during the annual education program for Florida's 322 county judges. A second award will be presented to a circuit judge next month at the annual education program for circuit judges. A selection committee of two county judges and two circuit judges, appointed by their respective judicial conferences, recommended both award recipients from nominations made by judges.

Gary Cowart, a retired judge, wrote in support of the nomination of Judge Lee: "He is always trying to make things better, not only for his colleagues, but the legal system and the public as well."

Judge Lee currently serves as chair of the Civil Division of the Broward County Court. He was appointed a county judge in 1997 by the late Gov. Lawton Chiles. Judge Lee has served in the criminal and civil divisions, as well as on temporary assignment to the circuit.

While some of Judge Lee's accomplishments might be characterized as "behind the scenes," he has first-hand experience of being called upon to perform his duty in the white-hot glare of national scrutiny: In 2000, he was the chair of the three-member Broward County Canvassing Board and presided over the historic recount in Broward in the disputed presidential election.

As a judge, he has published more than a dozen articles in various legal publications. He has presided over more than 335 jury trials and has more than 500 published legal decisions. He has also taught at Florida International University and Barry University. In 2011, the Broward County Bar Association honored Judge Lee with its Stephen R. Booher Memorial Award.

Before becoming a judge, he worked in private practice, primarily involving commercial litigation. However, he received the Individual Attorney Support Award from Legal Aid of Broward County for pro bono work involving mental health issues. He was active in the community, working with the Broward Education Foundation, Broward United Against Discrimination, the Broward Human Rights Initiative and the Broward County Hispanic Bar Association.

Judge Lee earned his law degree in 1985 at the University of Florida, where he served as a senior editor on the Law Review and was awarded a teaching fellowship. He has a master's degree in History Humanities from California State University at Dominguez Hills and a bachelor's degree from Jacksonville University.

Chief Justice Labarga created the Chief Justice Awards for Judicial Excellence in 2015; this is the second year awards have been presented.



From left to right the attached photo shows Broward County Judge Robert Lee, Judge Augustus Aikens, president of the Conference of County Court Judges of Florida; Florida Chief Justice Jorge Labarga and State Courts Administrator PK Jameson.