



Supreme Court of Florida

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Florida Supreme Court

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86th Justice Alan Lawson Formally Joins Florida Supreme Court Next Wednesday

TALLAHASSEE – Lakeland native Alan Lawson, 55, a lawyer who received much of his education in Tallahassee and went on to be an Orlando judge, will be formally invested as the 86th Justice of the state’s highest court starting at 3:00 p.m. on April 5 at the Florida Supreme Court Building amid unprecedented pageantry.

For the first time in its history, a Judicial Processional of more than 50 black-robed judges from throughout Florida will be formally seated in the Tallahassee courtroom by the Supreme Court Marshal. These judges will witness one of their own ascend to the high bench.

Processionals – where judges solemnly enter the courtroom in their robes at the start of the ceremony – are more common in other courts. They have never been used by the Florida Supreme Court – whose Justices famously eschewed the formality of wearing any kind of robes for more than a century after statehood in 1845 until their courtroom first was air conditioned in 1949.

The highlight of the ceremony will come when Governor Scott formally presents Lawson’s credentials to Chief Justice Jorge Labarga. Legislative leaders also are expected to attend.

The processional and investiture will be broadcast live statewide by the Florida Channel and will be open to the public on a space-available basis. Overflow crowds are expected.

Overflow rooms with closed circuit video of the ceremony will be available elsewhere in the Supreme Court Building once the courtroom reaches capacity.

Lawson was an honors student at Tallahassee’s **Leon High School**, where he was a student journalist. He went on to attend **Tallahassee Community College** before leaving town for Clemson University. In 1984 he returned to attend **FSU College of Law**, graduating second in his class in May 1987.

The very next month he married Julie Carlton – they would go on to have two children, Caleb and Leah – and started working as an attorney in the Tallahassee and Miami offices of Steel Hector & Davis. He would practice law there until moving to Orlando in the mid-1990s.

After working in the Orange County Attorney’s Office in Orlando, Lawson was appointed to the Orange County state circuit court in 2002. In 2006, he joined the Fifth District Court of Appeal based in Daytona Beach and later served as its chief judge starting in 2015.

Florida Gov. Rick Scott placed Lawson on the Florida Supreme Court starting on December 31, 2016. Lawson replaced former Justice James E.C. Perry from Sanford, who had reached mandatory retirement age.

For the April 5 ceremony in Tallahassee, the Florida Supreme Court will waive its usual rules requiring the use of the Florida Channel’s pool camera arrangement. However, video and still camera operators should check with the Court’s Public Information Office beforehand to make sure they will have space in the crowded courtroom.

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