Florida Chief Justice Expresses Branch Condolences on Passing of Second District Court of Appeal Clerk James Birkhold

TALLAHASSEE – Speaking on behalf of the entire judiciary, Florida Chief Justice Jorge Labarga paid tribute to the service of James Birkhold, Clerk of Court for the Second District Court of Appeal, who was fatally injured earlier this month in a traffic crash.

After earning his law degree at Boston University in 1975, Mr. Birkhold, a native of Chicago, began a distinguished legal career that spanned four decades in Florida, beginning with service as a VISTA volunteer and staff attorney with the Prison Project in Gainesville and ending with more than 16 years as Clerk of Court for the Second District Court of Appeal.

Chief Justice Labarga’s statement:

It was with great sadness that we in the Florida Supreme Court heard the tragic news of Jim Birkhold’s death. As Clerk of Court for Florida’s Second District Court of Appeal, Jim held a crucial position in Florida’s courts system. He performed his duties with distinction and was known as a man who perceived the dignity of everyone he encountered and who, consequently, treated everyone he encountered with courtesy and respect.

However, Jim’s contributions to the cause of justice in Florida began long before his appointment as Clerk 16 years ago. He began his legal career as a VISTA volunteer and staff attorney with the Prison Project in Gainesville. He later served as an assistant public defender in Jacksonville and Bradenton. He worked in private practice and then joined the Second District as a senior staff attorney and manager. I’m sure the colleagues he worked with and the clients he served throughout his 40-year career are all mourning his loss. As chief justice, I must add the condolences of the entire judiciary, which Jim served with such compassion and commitment.