



Supreme Court of Florida

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 5, 2019

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Miami Circuit Judge Scott Bernstein presented Judicial Excellence Award

NAPLES – Eleventh Judicial Circuit Judge Scott M. Bernstein is the 2019 recipient of the Chief Justice Award for Judicial Excellence, honoring his service to and leadership within Florida’s judicial branch. Chief Justice Charles T. Canady presented the award to Judge Bernstein during a ceremony at the Conference of Circuit Court Judges of Florida.

Bernstein was first elected to the bench in 1998. He now serves as administrative judge in the Family Division of Miami-Dade’s Eleventh Judicial Circuit. He earned his law degree from the University of Florida College of Law.

Judge Bernstein “has tremendous respect for the law and tremendous respect for the lawyers and litigants who appear in court. He is truly a Judge's Judge, a natural leader, and a model of excellence,” according to one of the letters in support of his nomination submitted by a fellow judge.

Judge Bernstein has held many leadership positions for Florida’s courts. He was education chair of the Conference of Circuit Court Judges for 6 years and was chair of the full Conference of Circuit Court Judges as well. While serving in the Juvenile Delinquency Division he instituted a case-management system shortening time to trial. For more than a decade, Bernstein has served on the Supreme Court Standing Committee on Fairness and Diversity, including as chair for 9 years.

Judge Bernstein was appointed to the Standing Committee on Families and Children in the Courts and he chaired the Delinquency Subcommittee from 2004-08. He has shown his commitment to judicial education by teaching at the Florida Judicial College, the Florida College of Advanced Judicial Studies, the Conference of Circuit Court Judges, the Conference of County Court Judges, and The National Judicial College.

A dozen of his colleagues signed a letter recommending Judge Bernstein for the award. “He has an amazing knowledge of the law,” his fellow judges wrote. “Whenever we have questions on a new or novel issue, or if we just need advice on how best to handle a difficult situation, Scott is the Judge we call. Scott always makes the time to consider our needs. He is also a superb administrator. He brought Family Court into the 21st century.”

The Chief Justice Awards for Judicial Excellence, established in 2014, recognize one county court judge and one circuit judge who demonstrate exceptional commitment to the judicial branch and who personify judicial excellence. The county judge recipient, Judge David Denkin, was announced in July.

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