

**STATE OF FLORIDA**  
**SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**  
Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns & Volusia Counties  
Volusia County Courthouse  
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**NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Judge Grimes' Retirement Celebration to include Judicial Convocation**

January 31, 2014 marks the end of the judicial career for Circuit Judge Hubert Grimes, the first African American judge in Volusia County history.

Judge Grimes will be retiring from the bench after twenty-five years of judicial service. As part of his retirement celebration, the Latimer Hawkins Judicial Council, the group of African American judges which he leads, will host a judicial convocation and retreat on the campus of Bethune-Cookman University on Friday, January 31<sup>st</sup> at 1 p.m.

Members of the council will be sitting en banc as part of the judicial convocation being held at the Performing Arts Center on the historic campus where the organization was first conceived in 2001.

Florida Supreme Court Justice Peggy Quince, Chief Judge Belvin Perry of the Ninth Judicial Circuit, Bethune-Cookman University President Edison Jackson, and Chief Judge Terence Perkins of the Seventh Judicial Circuit are among the invited speakers.

The council is named after former judge and prominent attorney, Henry Latimer and Virgil Hawkins, a Bethune-Cookman alumnus, who successfully sued to open the doors of Florida law schools to blacks in the mid 1950s, even though he never got to enjoy the fruit of his efforts. More than 120 African Americans have served or now serve as judges in Florida.

Judge Grimes, who has served as the president of the judicial council since its formation in 2002, will also be stepping down from that position as part of the event. The Retirement Celebration has been aptly named as "Retiring the Robe." Students, members of the legal profession and the general public are invited to attend and celebrate the conclusion of Judge Grimes' judicial career.

**JUDICIAL CONVOCATION**  
OF THE  
LATIMER HAWKINS JUDICIAL COUNCIL

**CELEBRATING THE RETIREMENT OF THE HONORABLE HUBERT GRIMES AS CIRCUIT JUDGE OF THE SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT AND PRESIDENT OF THE LATIMER HAWKINS JUDICIAL COUNCIL**



PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

**BETHUNE COOKMAN UNIVERSITY**

DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA

JANUARY 31, 2014

1:00 P.M.

DR. EDISON O. JACKSON  
PRESIDENT, BETHUNE COOKMAN UNIVERSITY

THE HONORABLE HUBERT L. GRIMES  
PRESIDENT, LATIMER HAWKINS  
JUDICIAL COUNCIL

## **HISTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN JUDGES IN FLORIDA**

The first black judge in the State of Florida was Judge James Dean who served as a Monroe County (Key West) Judge from 1888 to 1889. On the northern extreme of the state, Judge Joseph E. Lee served as a Jacksonville Municipal Judge in 1889. More than 60 years elapsed before there was another black judge. The Honorable Lawson E. Thomas was inducted as a Municipal Judge in Miami in 1950. As of January 2014, more than 120 African Americans have served or now serve as judges and judicial officers on Federal and State Courts in the State of Florida.

While working as the Public Relations Director for Bethune-Cookman College (BCC) in 1948, at the age of 41, Virgil Hawkins, an alumnus of BCC, sought to enroll at the University of Florida Law School but was denied because of his race. He sued the State of Florida seeking the right to attend law school at the University of Florida. In March 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that he should be admitted to UF law school, but the Florida Supreme Court refused to accept the ruling and further blocked his admission. Mr. Hawkins continued his efforts to integrate Florida law schools, and as a result, W. George Allen became the first Black student to graduate from the University of Florida School of Law in 1962. Mr. Hawkins never gave up his pursuit to become a lawyer and, in 1965, graduated from the New England School of Law, in Boston, Mass. He was finally admitted to the Florida Bar by order of the Florida Supreme Court in 1976, at the age of 69. He died in Leesburg in 1988, at the age of 81. Because of the sacrifices of Attorney Virgil Hawkins, numerous black students have graduated from Florida public law schools and now practice law throughout the country.

In September 2001, approximately 50 black judges attended a judicial retreat at Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach hosted by Judge and Mrs. Daisy Grimes. From that gathering, former judge, Attorney Henry Latimer took the initiative and incorporated the group as the Virgil Hawkins Florida Chapter National Bar Association Judicial Council. Judge Grimes was elected to serve as the president of the organization. He had previously served as the President of the Florida Conference of County Judges, from 1996 to 1998, the first African-American to do so.

In 2006, the name of the organization was modified to Latimer-Hawkins Judicial Council in honor of former judge, Attorney Henry "Lat" Latimer. Judge Latimer, who served one term as a circuit judge in Broward County from 1979-83, was widely respected for mentoring numerous lawyers and judges. He was in line to become the first Black President of the Florida Bar but his life was tragically interrupted by an automobile accident following the 2005 Mid-year meeting of the National Bar Association in Aruba. The Florida Bar has named its Center for Professionalism in his honor. The legacies of Judge Henry Latimer and Attorney Virgil Hawkins continue to live on through the work of lawyers and judges around the state.

In addition to the 2001 retreat, a judicial retreat was also held at BCC in 2003. Once again, the judicial council has re-convened on the historic campus of Bethune Cookman University to discuss matters of mutual interest, renew acquaintances, set an agenda for future activities and celebrate the retirement of Judge Grimes from the bench and in his role as President of the Latimer Hawkins Judicial Council. Let us join in their efforts to recognize one of our own.

JUDICIAL CONVOCATION  
of the  
LATIMER HAWKINS JUDICIAL COUNCIL

**“RETIRING THE ROBE”**

**Celebrating the Retirement of Judge Hubert Grimes as Circuit Judge of the Seventh Judicial Circuit**

MUSICAL PRELUDE	BETHUNE COOKMAN MUSIC DEPARTMENT
JUDICIAL PROCESSIONAL	MEMBERS OF THE LATIMER HAWKINS JUDICIAL COUNCIL (EN BANC)
COLOR GUARD AND NATIONAL ANTHEM	BETHUNE COOKMAN UNIVERSITY ROTC
PRAYER/INVOCATION	REVEREND DAVID ALLEN, DEAN OF THE CHAPEL
THE OCCASION	THE HONORABLE SHEREE CUNNINGHAM, PALM BEACH COUNTY JUDGE
MUSICAL SELECTION	BETHUNE COOKMAN UNIVERSITY CONCERT CHORAL
GREETINGS	
	BETHUNE COOKMAN UNIVERSITY DR. EDISON JACKSON, PRESIDENT
	SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT THE HONORABLE TERENCE PERKINS CHIEF JUDGE
	VIRGIL HAWKINS FLORIDA CHAPTER NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION ATTORNEY BRUCE MOUNT, PRESIDENT
	HATCHETT BAR ASSOCIATION ATTORNEY STEPHANIE BAPTISTE, PRESIDENT
MUSICAL SELECTION	BETHUNE COOKMAN UNIVERSITY CONCERT CHORALE
REMARKS	THE HONORABLE BELVIN PERRY CHIEF JUDGE, NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
REMARKS	THE HONORABLE PEGGY QUINCE JUSTICE, FLORIDA SUPREME COURT
MUSICAL SELECTION	BETHUNE COOKMAN UNIVERSITY CONCERT CHORALE
RETIRING OF THE ROBE	THE HONORABLE HUBERT L. GRIMES
CLOSING REMARKS	DR. EDISON O. JACKSON

BENEDICTION

REVEREND KENYA LOVELL, UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN

RECESSIONAL

SPECIAL THANKS TO EACH OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THIS EVENT AND TO DR. EDISON O. JACKSON AND THE BETHUNE-COOKMAN UNIVERSITY FAMILY. ADDITIONAL THANKS TO VOLUSIA COUNTY SHERIFF BEN JOHNSON AND HIS DEPUTIES, SODEXHO FOODS, JUDICIAL ASSISTANT BELINDA MCELVEEN, BAILIFF CHRISTY CHAVES, CASE MANAGER, MELISSA JAMES, MRS. DAISY GRIMES AND THE STAFF OF THE BETHUNE COOKMAN UNIVERSITY OFFICE FOR ADVANCEMENT AND OTHERS WHO HELPED TO MAKE THIS EVENT A SUCCESS.