

STATE OF FLORIDA
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Circuit Judge Hubert L. Grimes announces his retirement

DeLand - The Honorable Hubert L. Grimes has announced his retirement from the Seventh Judicial Circuit, effective Jan. 30, 2014.

Judge Grimes was first elected to the bench in 1988, winning a seat as Volusia County Court Judge. He was the first African-American to serve in that capacity.

After serving 11 years in county court, he was appointed to the circuit bench in 1999. He has presided over juvenile delinquency, juvenile dependency, dependency drug court and family court cases. He currently hears family court cases at the Volusia County Courthouse in DeLand.

Before becoming a judge, he received his undergraduate degree from Kentucky State University and his law degree from the University of Georgia. He worked as an attorney for Central Florida Legal Services, worked for Central Florida Community Development Corp. and had his own private law practice.

Judge Grimes said he is proud of his role as a trailblazer for the local court system. "It hadn't been done before and there were some people who tried to dissuade me from running. They thought it was futile," he said. "But with faith in God, encouragement from family and friends, along with the support of the voting public, I accomplished my dream."

"I was excited to undertake the challenge," he said. "I thought I could make a contribution to the judiciary and hopefully open a door for other persons of color to pursue their dreams."

Looking back on his 25-year career, and the 100,000 cases he's handled, Judge Grimes said he is particularly proud of his work with juveniles. He authored his own book, "How to Keep Your Child from Going to Jail," in 2010 to encapsulate his insights and ideas for parents. He also works as an adjunct law professor at the FAMU College of Law in Orlando as a part of their Academic Success and Bar Preparation program.

"Working with young people has been a constant passion of mine," he said. "I have tried to guide them and inspire them to avoid the pitfalls of trouble and to fulfill their dreams."

He recalled one court hearing when a young Marine Corps officer came to court in his dress blues. The officer had once been a juvenile in the judge's courtroom, and he returned to thank the judge. "He told me, 'You gave me some powerful words, words that shook my world.'" Judge Grimes then asked the Marine to address a courtroom full of families and juveniles and to tell his own story for the young people having hearings that day. "There was not a dry eye in that courtroom," he recalled.

Chief Circuit Judge Terence R. Perkins said of his colleague: “Judge Grimes is one of our most experienced judges having presided over county court and then circuit court for almost 25 years. He is best known for his keen intellect, compassion and sense of humor. He was a trailblazer being our first African-American jurist and is deeply involved in his community and church. He has positively influenced so many lives in our community and his kindness and quiet competence will be missed by his colleagues, the attorneys that appeared before him and the members of our community he served.”

Judge Grimes said of his decision to retire: “I have done what I came here to do. The time has zipped by. Now I feel like it’s time for me to move on and pursue some other dreams while I am still young enough to do so.”

He added: “I still hope to be an advocate for young people and the court system. I’m not leaving on a sour note by any stretch of the imagination. No one is forcing me out. I have enjoyed my work and the people I have worked with have been phenomenal. But, for me, there are other battles to fight, other assignments to pursue, and other dreams to fulfill, while I am young enough to do so.”

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