

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
IN AND FOR SARASOTA, MANATEE AND DESOTO COUNTIES, FLORIDA**

**Administrative Order No. 2008-13.2**

**(This Order rescinds and supersedes Administrative Order 2007-8.2)**

**IN RE: MODIFICATION OF “DIVISION H” CASE ASSIGNMENT;  
SOUTH COUNTY JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF SARASOTA COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, Florida law permits the establishment of geographic divisions of the Court by administrative order; and

**WHEREAS**, the “South County Judicial District” was created as a special judicial district in Sarasota County pursuant to Administrative Order 88-54-2, effective January 1, 1989; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215, it is necessary for the proper administration of justice to re-establish and maintain this judicial division in Sarasota County and to designate a full-time Circuit Court Judge to preside therein; and

**WHEREAS**, the circuit is experiencing dramatic increases in case filings in the South County Judicial District which are straining the capacity of the court to efficiently manage; and

**WHEREAS**, reductions in judicial branch funding in the State of Florida have resulted in the elimination of support and administrative staff in the circuit necessary to efficiently maintain circuit family and civil workloads in the R. L. Anderson Administration Center; and

**WHEREAS**, to minimize docket congestion the efficient administration of justice requires that the case load of the circuit court in the South County Judicial District be attenuated;

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that:**

1. The geographic division of the Court in Sarasota County, known as the “South County Judicial District,” shall be defined as that land lying south of a line running east and west along Blackburn Point Road.
2. The geographic division shall continue to be known as the “South County Judicial District of Sarasota County.” The physical location of the courthouse shall remain at the R.L. Anderson Administration Center, 4000 South Tamiami Trail, Venice, Florida 34293.
3. Division H, the circuit civil division created by the Court pursuant to Administrative Order 88-54.2 has been re-established as the South County Judicial District of Sarasota County, pursuant to prior Administrative Orders 2003-11.02, 2006-2.2, and 2007-8.2. However, it has become necessary to restrict new filings in Division H to family cases.
4. A full-time circuit judge shall be appointed to preside over all family law cases filed in Division H. Except as otherwise provided in this Order, circuit civil cases pending in the South County Judicial District as of **December 1, 2008**, will cease to be heard or tried in Division H. On or before **December 1, 2008**, all pending circuit civil cases in Division H shall be transferred

by the Clerk of the Circuit Court to Divisions A and C and assigned on a rotating basis to the circuit judges presiding in Divisions A and C. All new circuit civil cases filed in Sarasota County thereafter will be assigned to Divisions A and C. Family law cases meeting the geographic requirements of the South County Judicial District shall continue to be assigned to Division H.

5. The Division H judge is authorized to select certain pending circuit civil cases to be retained in Division H after **December 1, 2008**. However, jury trials in such cases shall be heard exclusively in a north Sarasota court facility. On or before **November 14, 2008**, the assigned judge shall advise the Clerk and the parties of the circuit civil cases that are being retained in Division H.

6. Hearings scheduled in Division H on or after **December 1, 2008**, shall be deemed cancelled by this Order, unless expressly exempted from cancellation by order of the Division H judge. Cancelled Division H hearings or trials shall be rescheduled by the parties on the calendar of the assigned judge in Sarasota. It is the responsibility of the party who originally noticed the cancelled hearing or trial in south county to reschedule the matter in either Division A or Division C in accordance with the Clerk's reassignment designation.

7. The judge assigned to the "South County Division" of county court shall continue to hear all matters within the jurisdiction of county court filed in that judicial district; except civil traffic hearings may be re-assigned or divided by the Chief Judge between all county judges.

8. In accordance with this geographic division establishing the South County Judicial District of Sarasota County, the Clerk is directed to the following procedures for filing and docketing of cases:

**Traffic and Misdemeanor Cases:** The Clerk shall continue to docket all traffic and misdemeanor cases arising within the South County Judicial District of Sarasota County at the R.L. Anderson Administration Center.

**County Court Civil (South County Division) and Family Law (Division H) Actions:** Parties shall file county court civil actions and family law actions at the R.L. Anderson Administration Center when:

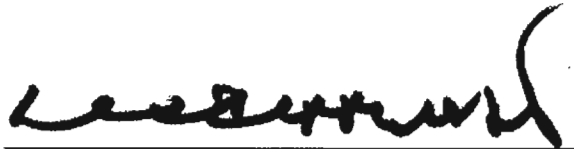
1. The Defendant/Respondent resides within the South County Judicial District of Sarasota County; or
2. The cause of action arose within the South County Judicial District of Sarasota County; or
3. The property in litigation is within the South County Judicial District of Sarasota County.

In addition, venue for filing of any other county civil and family law actions shall be controlled and determined, at the option of the plaintiff, by Sections 47.021, 47.041, 47.051 and 47.061, Florida Statutes, and any other applicable statutory and common law venue limitations. If a party files an action in Sarasota and the action properly belongs in the South County Judicial District, the Clerk may transfer the filings to the R. L. Anderson Administration Center.

**Probate & Guardianship, Felony, and Juvenile Cases:** Probate and guardianship, felony, and juvenile cases shall continue to be filed and heard at the Judge Lynn N. Silvertooth Judicial Center in Sarasota, Florida. Probate matters may be filed in the South County Judicial District, but will then be transferred to Sarasota for all further proceedings.

9. Upon good cause shown, the Chief Judge or the presiding Circuit Judge in Division H may order that Family Division matters assigned to Division H be transferred or re-assigned to another division of the Circuit Court.

**DONE AND ORDERED** in Chambers in Sarasota County, Florida, on this 25th day of September, 2008



Lee E. Haworth, Chief Judge  
Twelfth Judicial Circuit

Original: Clerk of Court – Sarasota County  
Copies to: Clerk of Court – Manatee and DeSoto Counties  
All Judges, Twelfth Judicial Circuit  
Court Administrator, Twelfth Judicial Circuit  
Sarasota Bar Association  
Manatee Bar Association  
Venice Englewood Bar Association