



# BALLOT BOX

AUGUST 2024

## Sixth Judicial Court judge candidates will appear in panel



When standing in a voting booth or pondering a mail ballot, some of the most difficult decisions on who to vote for involve those running for seats on the bench. It is difficult to know the qualities and capabilities of judicial candidates, particularly given the rules and regulations they must follow when running for office. First of all, judicial races are non partisan, meaning no party affiliation is given or publicized. Secondly, candidates for the bench are prohibited from making predictions or promises about issues that could arise once they are on the court. Who is most knowledgeable? Who has the best temperament? Who will be the most impartial?

In Florida, trial courts of general jurisdiction are aligned in 20 circuits with the Sixth Judicial Circuit serving citizens of Pasco and Pinellas counties. The circuit is comprised of two county courts, which have jurisdiction only in their home county, and a circuit court, with jurisdiction in both counties. The Sixth Judicial Court is the third largest in the state and has 69 total judges, 45

at the circuit level and 24 in county courts. Fifteen circuit judges and seven county court judges preside over cases in Pasco County, and 30 circuit court judges and 17 county court judges preside over cases in Pinellas County. Cases are assigned to one of 13 court divisions, nine at the circuit level and four at the county level.

Judges are elected to six-year terms with judicial races appearing on the primary ballot. This is the case so, if necessary, a second round of voting for a judicial position can be held during the ensuing general election should no candidate receive a majority of votes in the primary.

In 2024, five judges for the Pinellas County Court have been re-elected to the bench after no challengers filed to run against them by the deadline last April. Also, 15 incumbent circuit court judges are unopposed for re-election. There are, however, two circuits with contested races appearing on the August 20

Primary ballot, and it is those judges who have been invited to speak as part of a panel at the August BWRC luncheon. Florida election laws require that all judges for a position must be invited, and their appearance in no way implies an endorsement by BWRC.

The contested judicial races and candidates are:

District 9

Nicole Pearlman  
Kate Spurlock

District 14

Cornelius Christopher Dempo  
Jenn Dubbeld  
Nick Fiorentino

Pre-approved, allowed questions will be directed to each candidate by moderator Sara Molloy.

The August 2nd BWRC luncheon will take place at Belleair Country Club, 1 Country Club Lane, Belleair. Check-in begins at 11:30 am, with lunch starting at noon followed by the judges panel. The cost to attend is \$37 per person with reservations and payment due by Thursday, July 18.

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## **AUGUST MEETING INFORMATION**

**Friday, August 2**

**Belleair Country Club  
1 Country Club Lane  
Belleair, FL 33756**

**Luncheon Fee: \$37**

**Registration & networking  
begin at 11:30am.**

**Event begins  
at 12 pm**

**To RSVP:  
A \$37 check made  
payable to BWRC is  
due by July 18.**

**Mail check to:  
BWRC  
P.O. Box 1117  
850 E. Lime Street  
Tarpon Springs, FL 34688**

**If paying at the luncheon,  
please no \$100 bills.**

**Alternate meal must  
be requested  
with your RSVP.**

**No substitutions  
may be made  
the day of the luncheon.**

**Reservations required.  
Please ,no walk-ins.**

## **AUGUST MENU INFORMATION**

**Belleair Salad**

**++++**

**Huli Huli Chicken  
Grilled Chicken Thighs  
w/ Hawaiian BBQ Sauce**

**++++**

**Truffle Mashed Potatoes  
Broccoli Cauliflower Mix**

**++++**

**Rolls & Butter**

**+++**

**Chocolate Silk Pie**

**+++**

### **ALTERNATE VEGETARIAN PLATE**

**Quinoa, asparagus, spinach,  
Thin-sliced red onion, pepperoncini,  
olives, cucumbers, tomatoes and aru-  
gula w/ lemon vinaigrette**

BWRC is privileged to host meetings and social events at Belleair Country Club. Members and guests must comply with BCC's dress and conduct code. Dresses, skirts, blouses, dress slacks and pantsuits are appropriate for women. Men must wear shirts with sleeves and remove caps in the dining room. Blue jeans are not permitted



# FROM THE BWRC PRESIDENT

There are basic three kinds of people—those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who say, “What happened?”

Over the next few coming months, we will address today’s issues by educating ourselves so we can vote with intelligence and understanding. At the July BWRC luncheon, FL Senator Ed Hooper reported on issues the State Legislature has been dealing with and gave insight to the future. He is such a valued speaker, and he and his wife Lee are treasured by our club. On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, BWRC leaders have arranged for a special panel of judicial candidates to speak at the luncheon. Due to restrictions placed on judicial candidates, in order to get this special opportunity we will need to allow only questions from the event moderator, Sara Mollo.

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, BWRC will hold another special event, this time at at Bon Appétit Restaurant in Dunedin, to provide club members with an opportunity to meet local candidates. Heavy hors d’oeuvres will be served at no charge to attendees, and there will be a cash bar for drinks. On September 6<sup>th</sup>, BWRC will host a very special speaker at the club’s luncheon. More information on this singular presenter will be provided closer to the event.

It is time to do all we can to ensure our country’s future is safe. The opportunities for volunteers include the following:

- ★ Helping people properly register to vote
- ★ Driving voters to polls
- ★ Volunteering to work with a favorite candidate
- ★ Poll watching
- ★ Monitoring school board and county commission activities
- ★ Volunteering to work with BWRC or Pinellas County GOP

As BWRC Past President Deb Walker always says, “We each only need to do one thing.”

*Dianne Blum*  
BWRC President



## BWRC OFFICERS

President  
Dianne Blum

First Vice President  
Sara Mollo

Second Vice President  
Claudia Walker

Treasurers  
Jessica Reed  
Louise Davis

Hospitality  
Candace Gardner

Ways & Means  
Corinne Steinhardt

Corresponding  
Secretary  
Jessica Reed

Recording Secretary  
Carol Abernathy

Historian  
Deb Walker

Chaplain  
Patricia Wagner

Parliamentarian  
Renatta Cochran



# CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS ON THE 2024 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT

## **#1 PARTISAN ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARDS** — Sponsor: The Florida Legislature

Proposing amendments to the State Constitution to require members of a district school board to be elected in a partisan election rather than a nonpartisan election and to specify that the amendment only applies to elections held on or after the November 2026 general election. However, partisan primary elections may occur before the 2026 general election for purposes of nominating political party candidates to that office for placement on the 2026 general election ballot.

## **#2 RIGHT TO FISH AND HUNT** — Sponsor: The Florida Legislature

Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to preserve forever fishing and hunting, including by the use of traditional methods, as a public right and preferred means of responsibly managing and controlling fish and wildlife. Specifies that the amendment does not limit the authority granted to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission under Section of Article IV of the State Constitution.

## **#3 ADULT PERSONAL USE OF MARIJUANA** — Sponsor: Smart & Safe Florida

Allows adults 21 years or older to possess, purchase, or use marijuana products and marijuana accessories for non-medical personal consumption by smoking, ingestion, or otherwise; allows Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers, and other state licensed entities, to acquire, cultivate, process, manufacture, sell, and distribute such products and accessories. Applies to Florida law; does not change, or immunize violations of, federal law. Establishes possession limits for personal use. Allows consistent legislation. Defines terms. Provides effective date.

## **#4 AMENDMENT TO LIMIT GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE WITH ABORTION** — Sponsor: Floridians Protecting Freedom

No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's healthcare provider. This amendment does not change the Legislature's constitutional authority to require notification to a parent or guardian before a minor has an abortion.

## **#5 ANNUAL ADJUSTMENTS TO THE VALUE OF CERTAIN HOMESTEAD EXEMPTIONS** — Sponsor: The Florida Legislature

Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to require an annual adjustment for inflation to the value of current or future homestead exemptions that apply solely to levies other than school district levies and for which every person who has legal or equitable title to real estate and maintains thereon the permanent residence of the owner, or another person legally or naturally dependent upon the owner is eligible. This amendment takes effect January 1, 2025.

## **#6 REPEAL OF PUBLIC CAMPAIGN FINANCING REQUIREMENT** — Sponsor: The Florida Legislature

Proposing the repeal of the provision in the State Constitution which requires public financing for campaigns of candidates for elective statewide office who agree to campaign spending limits.

## PINELLAS GOP ENDORSEMENTS

The Executive Board of the Pinellas County Republican Executive Committee offers the following list of Republican candidates for Pinellas GOP support/endorsement under RPOF Rule 8:

- Former President Donald Trump, President
- Senator Rick Scott, US Senate
- Congresswoman Anna Paulina Luna, CD13
- Representative Adam Anderson, HD 57
- Representative Kim Berfield, HD 58
- Representative Berny Jacques, HD 59
- Ed Montanari, HD 60
- Representative Linda Chaney, HD61
- Chris Sherer, County Commission At Large
- John Tornga, Mayor of Dunedin
- Erika Picard, School Board – District 4
- Danielle Marolf, School Board – District 3
- Nicole Pearlman, Circuit Judge – Seat 9

\*Any races missing are because they cannot be addressed until after the August elections pursuant to RPOF rule 8.

## WELCOME TO THE NEWEST BWRC MEMBERS

Annette Howard  
Lori Yontz-Lenhardt  
Kim Minder  
Marie Ross  
Cyndi Scott



# **PAINT THE COUNTY RED RALLY**

*Conversation, candidates and fabulous food!  
Free event for BWRC members and one optional  
guest each. Heavy hors d'oeuvres. Cash bar.*

**Thursday, August 8**

**4:30—7:00 pm**

**Bon Appétit Restaurant**

**148 Marina Plaza, Dunedin**

**Reservations required, and space is limited.**

**RSVP to [dpblum@mindspring.com](mailto:dpblum@mindspring.com) (Ignore the spam filter).**

**Reservations must be completed no later than July 13th.**

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# PICTURES FROM THE JULY BWRC LUNCHEON



(To see more pictures from BWRC events, visit [bwrc.us](http://bwrc.us) > Photo Gallery)