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AT THE TIME AND DATE NOTED
PAUL F. HARTSFIELD
CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
SECOND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUDGE

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 79-40

IN RE: Appreciation of the Services of Frances Thigpen, Official Court Reporter, Second Judicial Circuit, 1949-1979.

1. The judges, court support personnel, fellow court reporters, and all others involved in the judicial processes of the Second Circuit, have, for a period of three decades, witnessed and been involved with the superb services of Frances Thigpen. She first began her service when appointed by Governor Fuller Warren on March 24, 1949, on the nomination of Circuit Judge W. May Walker, endorsed by Circuit Judge Hugh M. Taylor. She was commissioned to serve "at the pleasure of the Governor." This meant that she would continue as Official Court Reporter until resignation, retirement, or she committed some conduct so displeasing to the Circuit Judges that she would be replaced. As was always anticipated, her services terminated only when she herself elected to retire, effective July 1, 1979.

2. When Frances was first commissioned there were only two Circuit Judges, and she was the sole Official Court Reporter. Only the Circuit Court was classified as a court of record, and it was most unusual for any proceedings in County Court or County Judge's Court to be recorded. Even in the Circuit Court, it was only the testimony in the trial itself and the judge's instructions to the jury that were recorded routinely.

3. However, changes over the years brought about expanded needs of reporting. The Supreme Court of the United States, under Chief Justice Earl Warren, rendered a number of landmark decisions which practically mandated that a full record be made of

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almost all proceedings involving the processing of any criminal case in which incarceration was a possibility. Also, the Supreme Court of Florida adopted rules which, in both civil and criminal matters, greatly expanded the availability and use of depositions, and various motions and hearings in pretrial proceedings. All of this required accurate recording and reporting. What had previously been a somewhat leisurely and, to a degree, a seasonal activity centered about the statutory spring and fall terms of Circuit Court, became a massive operation.

4. Until 1957 there were only two Circuit Judges. In that year one additional judge was authorized and appointed, and in 1960 another was added. These judges rotated in holding the statutory terms, and for many years Frances "rode the circuit" to do all of the reporting as the terms came up in each of the six counties in the circuit. In 1972 an amendment to Article V of the State Constitution was adopted, which greatly restructured the trial court system by enlarging the jurisdiction of both the Circuit and County Courts, and increasing the number of judges.

5. All of this expansion, both in volume of court business and in the involvement of court reporting, made it necessary that additional Court Reporters be appointed. A number of those appointed had been associated with Frances and had attained experience and expertise under her guidance and tutelage.

6. This Circuit is very proud of its corps of Court Reporters, whose members practice and produce a very high and admirable quality of accuracy and neatness. Such a state of excellence is to a large degree due to the high standards which Frances established and practiced until her retirement.

7. For the long, useful and dedicated service of Miss Thigpen and the high standards she espoused for this essential and important function of the system, the bench, the bar and

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other court-related personnel of the Second Judicial Circuit are deeply indebted to her. Her retirement brings a well-earned rest from her labors, and the opportunities to pursue her interests without the burdens of the office she so ably bore for thirty years.

8. To her, the Circuit speaks in one voice the simple but fully expressed accolade of "Well done." That God may bless and keep her is our constant prayer.

9. A signed copy of this Order shall be delivered to the Clerk of Court of each of the six counties of the Circuit, with directions that it be filed and recorded in the minutes of the Circuit Court of each county. A signed and sealed copy shall be delivered to Miss Thigpen.

DONE AND ORDERED this 10th day of August, 1979.

Ben C. Willis

BEN C. WILLIS, CHIEF JUDGE

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