Ita M. Neymotin
Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel
Second District Court of Appeal

2020 Champion of Professionalism Award

The Honorable Julianne M. Holt, Hillsborough County Public Defender for the 13th Judicial Circuit



On June 25, 2020, the Honorable Public Defender Julianne M. Holt of the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit was awarded the 2020 Champion of Professionalism Award presented by Ita M. Neymotin, Regional Counsel for The Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel for the Second District Court of Appeal. This award was created by Regional Counsel, Second District last year to recognize an individual who has shown exemplary professionalism and ethical qualities in his/her work environment and in his/her interactions with the other members in the legal profession, as well as community partners. Ita M. Neymotin, in conjunction with the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, hosted the annual Champion of Professionalism Award ceremony (by Zoom). In attendance were distinguished speakers and guests including judges and elected officials.

During this award ceremony, the speakers had wonderful things to say about the Honorable Public Defender Julianne M. Holt.



Ms. Ita M. Neymotin, Regional Counsel, Second District Court of Appeal

Ita M. Neymotin, Regional Counsel for The Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel, Second District Court of Appeal, introduced The Honorable Julianne Holt as this year's award recipient of the 2020 Champion of Professionalism Award. Ms. Neymotin further went on to outline Ms. Holt's distinguished qualifications over the years. Ms. Holt has served the community for 5 years as a special court-appointed Public Defender and for 28 years as the elected Public Defender for The Thirteenth Judicial Circuit. She went on to say that Ms. Holt was always available to work on any issues that have come up and is a very hands-on Public Defender. She also stated that Ms. Holt participated in Regional Counsel Second District's Tampa Professionalism and Ethics Interactive Seminar on 6/27/2017.

Ms. Neymotin further stated that Ms. Holt also participated in Regional Counsel Second District's Hillsborough Diversity Training Seminar on 08/22/2018. Additionally, Ms. Holt's office participated in Regional Counsel Second District's Health & Wellness, Mental Health, Well-being, and Professionalism Educational Seminar in Tampa, Florida on 8/30/2019. Ms. Neymotin went on to further state that despite Ms. Holt's very busy schedule as the Public Defender, she has always been willing to participate in educational seminars. Ms. Neymotin also stated that she is very grateful for their friendship that has developed over the years.



Honorable Chief Judge Ronald Ficarrotta

The Honorable Chief Judge Ronald Ficarrotta, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, said he was pleased to be present to honor their Honorable Public Defender, Ms. Julianne Holt. Judge Ficarrotta went on to say Ms. Holt is a champion of professionalism and that is reflected and carried forward by the people who work in her office, which has an outstanding reputation, and that she is respected statewide for her leadership. Judge Ficarrotta further stated that Ms. Holt's zealous advocacy in representing her clients is well known. Judge Ficarrotta stated he is most proud to have her as a partner in the justice system, and as a friend.



Honorable Judge Samantha L. Ward

The Honorable Judge Samantha Ward, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, stated that she has had the pleasure of knowing Ms. Holt in many different roles over the years including as an adversary when Judge Ward was a prosecutor, as a boss when working for Ms. Holt, as co-counsel, as a criminal justice partner, and as a friend. Judge Ward stated that Ms. Holt's true commitment to professionalism shines in every role she performs. Judge Ward further stated that Ms. Holt has been a true friend to Judge Ward over the years.



Honorable State Attorney Andrew Warren

The Honorable State Attorney Andrew Warren, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, said Ms. Holt will do everything she can to make sure the system functions appropriately. She does not take shortcuts and is a true believer in our criminal justice system. State Attorney Warren went on to say he appreciates the friendship they have developed throughout the years. Mr. Warren said he could not imagine working with a better Public Defender, and he congratulated Ms. Holt on a lifetime of achievements.



Mr. John Schifino, Esq

John Schifino, Esq., The Past President of the Hillsborough County Bar Association, said the Hillsborough County Bar Association's mission statement is to inspire and promote respect for the law and our justice system, and they succeed because of community partners and leaders like Ms. Holt. Mr. John Schifino serves on the Florida Bar Standing Committee on Professionalism with Ms. Ita M. Neymotin, and one of the ways they promote professionalism is by encouraging mentoring. Mr. Schifino stated that an excellent lawyer is a person of strong character who practices with civility and professionalism, competency, and is committed to his/her client. Mr. Schifino further stated that Ms. Julianne Holt is all of these things, and she will always be a mentor to him.



Mr. Henry Lee Paul, Esq

Henry Lee Paul, Esq., The Florida Bar Student Education and Admissions Committee member and recipient of the first Champion of Professionalism Award in 2019, reminisced about the first time he met Ms. Holt. Mr. Paul stated that right from the start he was impressed with Ms. Holt's dedication, intelligence, diligence, and fearlessness, when it comes to practicing law. He further stated that Ms. Holt is a true professional, and is very deserving of this award.



Mr. Rocky Brancato Felony Bureau Chief

Mr. Rocky Brancato, Esq. Felony Bureau Chief for the Office of the Public Defender, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, said Ms. Holt is a true champion of professionalism and leads by example. She is one of the few elected Public Defenders who actually tries cases. Mr. Brancato also pointed out that Ms. Holt tries the difficult cases. Ms. Holt is very hands-on, and deals with issues personally. He stated that despite her busy schedule, she still travels to Tallahassee every year to advocate for her office with the legislature. Professionalism is of the utmost importance and is part of the day to day workings of the office.



The Honorable Pat Frank, Clerk of Court & Comptroller, 13th Judicial Circuit

The Honorable Clerk of Court & Comptroller Pat Frank, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit stated that working with Ms. Holt has opened her eyes to the tremendous responsibility Ms. Holt has and how well she has handled it. She stated that currently, we needed good people like Ms. Holt. Ms. Frank said that she respects Ms. Holt's character, integrity, and devotion to duty. She further stated it has been truly delightful working with her.



The Honorable Julianne M. Holt, Public Defender, 13th Judicial Circuit

The Honorable Julianne M. Holt, who was very humbled by this award, thanked Ms. Ita M. Neymotin for bestowing this honor upon her, adding that Ms. Neymotin has been a great partner in the judicial system. Ms. Holt stated she is happy they have become friends over the years. Ms. Holt thanked everyone in attendance and expressed how much she loves her job and treasures the friendships and memories, and that she will continue to work hard.

Distinguished guests at this event:

Rebecca Bandy, Director of the Henry T. Latimer Center for Professionalism; The Honorable Judge Catherine Catlin, The Honorable Judge Melissa Polo; Mr. Scott Swartz, Assistant Regional Counsel; Mr. Jonathan Jenkins, Assistant Regional Counsel; Mr. Daniel Raysin, CIO/ Accounting Finance Director for the 13th Judicial Circuit Public Defender's Office, as well as other guests were in attendance. The Honorable Judge Katherine Essrig and The Honorable Senator Jeff Brandes could not attend but sent their well wishes and congratulations to Ms. Holt on receiving the 2020 Champion of Professionalism Award.



Rebecca Bandy, Director of the Henry T. Latimer Center for Professionalism



The Honorable Judge Catherine M. Catlin



The Honorable Judge Melissa M. Polo



Mr. Scott Swartz, Assistant Regional Counsel, Second District



Mr. Jonathan Jenkins, Assistant Regional Counsel, Second District



The Honorable Judge Katherine G. Essig



Honorable Senator Jeff Brandes

