



**STATE OF FLORIDA**  
**SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**  
Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns & Volusia Counties  
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**News Release**

January 29, 2024

Seventh Judicial Circuit Judge James R. Clayton is retiring effective April 1, 2024.

Judge Clayton received his undergraduate and law degrees from Stetson University. He was admitted to The Florida Bar in 1978 and was first elected Circuit Judge in 2002. He was subsequently reelected without opposition in 2008, 2014, and 2020. As a Circuit Judge, Clayton served in the Juvenile, Felony, and Probate/Guardianship divisions. He served as Chief Judge of the Seventh Judicial Circuit from July 1, 2021 until June 30, 2023. Before joining the Court, Judge Clayton worked in private practice for over 20 years, most recently with former law partner Mike Teal.

Chief Judge Leah Case remarked: "On one hand, I'm happy for Jim in that he can now enjoy a well-earned retirement and focus his energies on personal pursuits. However, on the other hand, it's a sad day for the Seventh Judicial Circuit and its citizens. We're losing a jurist who approached the job as a true public servant, always willing to lend a hand or ear to a colleague, lawyer, or litigant. I hope he'll consider returning as a senior judge."

Judge Clayton's position will be filled by gubernatorial appointment.

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