



Judge Eddy to retire in May, after 18 years on the bench

Wednesday Posted Mar 9, 2016 at 5:03 PM

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By Nicki GornyStaff writer

Circuit Judge David Eddy will retire at the end of May, after more than 18 years on the bench in Marion County.

“It’s been an honor and a privilege to have served as a circuit court judge,” Eddy said Wednesday, echoing a statement he made in his resignation letter to Gov. Rick Scott. “I’ve enjoyed the experience.”

Eddy is currently the administrative judge for Marion County, which means he is responsible for assigning each of the county’s 11 circuit judges their dockets. Eddy has handled a wide variety of cases himself, since former Gov. Lawton Chiles appointed him to the judiciary in 1998.

While Eddy currently handles juvenile delinquency cases, as well as a portion of the county’s mental health and mortgage foreclosure cases, among other responsibilities, he has spent much of his career overseeing a criminal docket.

In that role he has handled such high-profile cases as the murder of 15-year-old Seath Jackson, for which four young people are currently serving life sentences and one, Michael Bargo, is appealing a death sentence. Bargo’s case was one of two death penalty cases Eddy has overseen.

The other death row defendant, William Kopsho, is set to appeal his sentence in

front of the Florida Supreme Court on Thursday.

Eddy completed his undergraduate education at Florida State University. He graduated from Nova Law School in Fort Lauderdale in 1981. He started his legal career in Ocala, with the law firm Green, Simmons, Green, Hightower and Gray, PA. He stayed with the firm for about two years, he said, before seeking more litigation experience at the local state attorney's office.

He opened his own law firm, David B. Eddy, PA, after about four years with the state attorney's office. He then returned to his previous office after another four years, this time taking on the title of supervisor. From that position, he applied to be a circuit judge. He assumed his new role in January 1998.

Eddy said he plans to serve as a senior judge after he retires and that his retirement is voluntary.

At 63 years of age, he would not be forced out of the position under age restrictions in Florida's Constitution for at least seven more years.

Although he and his wife, Ann, will continue to call Ocala home, Eddy said he hopes to travel in his retirement. He and Ann have two children, Jennifer and David, and are expecting their first grandchild in July.

David Ellspermann, Marion County Clerk of Courts, said Eddy would be missed at Marion County's courthouse.

"I'm happy for him," said Ellspermann, who said he began working alongside Eddy while the two were at the state attorney's office, "but I'm sad to see him go."

The 5th Judicial Nominating Commission, which is tasked with recommending candidates for Eddy's replacement to the governor, is accepting applications through Mar. 28.

Applicants must be members of the Florida Bar for at least five years and be residents of one of the five counties that comprise the 5th judicial circuit by the time they assume office. Applications and additional information are available through the Florida Bar website, www.floridabar.org.

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