

Honorable JAMES O. SHELFER, Retired

Personal:

James O. Shelfer is a 1971 graduate of Stetson University. He was born in Quincy on February 5, 1949, and grew up in Havana. He has been married for 44 years to Kathy, also a 1971 graduate of Stetson. They have twin sons and three grandchildren. Jim graduated from the Deland campus with honors with degrees in history and political science. He obtained his J.D. degree from Stetson College of Law in St. Petersburg in 1974.

Professional:

Jim began his legal career in 1974 as an associate in the Tallahassee law firm of Cotton, Shivers, Gwynn and Daniel. From 1976 to 1978 he practiced as a sole practitioner. In 1978, he co-founded a firm that became Gardner, Shelfer, Duggar, Bist and Weiner, P.A. He practiced with his firm as a senior and managing partner from 1978 until his appointment to the bench in May of 2001.

As a practicing attorney, Jim was Board Certified by the Florida Bar in the practice area of real property. He was also Certified by the Florida Supreme Court as a Circuit Court Mediator. The American Arbitration Association listed him as a Member of its Panel of Arbitrators. Jim served as chairman of the Board of Directors of Attorney's Title Insurance Fund. He was a member of and past chairman of the Second Judicial Circuit Grievance Committee and a member of the Florida Bar Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee. He is a former member of the Board of Directors of Turn About, Inc. In 1999 he served as President of the Tallahassee Bar Association. He achieved an "AV" rating from Martindale Hubbell. He is a member of William H. Stafford American Inns of Court. As a judge, Jim was the representative from the Second Judicial Circuit to the Florida Conference of County Judges and served on the Civil Rules Committee, Chairman of the Single Tier/Concurrent Jurisdiction Committee, and was co-chair of the Legislative Committee.

Jim's twenty-seven years of active law practice in Tallahassee were a mixture of civil litigation and an office transactional practice. Especially in the later years, he specialized in mediation and arbitration. As a judge, he served on both the civil and criminal bench in Leon, Wakulla, Gadsden and Liberty counties.

Lectures and Teaching:

Jim has lectured for the Florida Bar at its "Bridge-the-Gap" and "Practicing with Professionalism" seminars. He has taught at FSU in the "Law School for Laymen" programs. He is member of the Florida Bar Speakers' Bureau and has been a guest speaker to the FSU Student Bar Association; the Leon County Association of Landlords; the Second Judicial Circuit Defense Lawyers Association; and numerous civic organizations. He has served as a visiting judge for FSU's Moot Court Team Competition. For many years he served as an adjunct professor at Florida State University College of Law, teaching Real Property.