

100 Years of the 11th Judicial Circuit

By Scott J. Silverman

In 2011, the 11th Judicial Circuit will celebrate its centennial. Nearly 100 years ago, on May 27, 1911, Florida's legislature created this southern most jurisdiction consisting of Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach counties. At the time of its creation, Broward County had yet to be established by law. Today, the 11th Judicial Circuit is comprised solely of Miami-Dade County, and with every day that passes we are one day closer to our circuit's 100th birthday.

A centennial committee, chaired by attorney Joseph H. Serota (who was largely responsible for raising the funds to restore the Dade County Courthouse's lobby and more recently the restoration of courtroom 6-1), has been established. With the slogan, "The Path to Justice, Celebrating 100 years of our Court," the committee is spearheading a yearlong series of memorable events that will appropriately honor our circuit and all those who work within its borders.

The committee is far along in the planning stages of an ambitious series of programs, but it is always seeking volunteers and ideas. For example, on February 13, 2010, internationally acclaimed artist, Romero Britto, along with 24 Miami-Dade public school students, created the centennial artwork which will adorn the lobby of the Dade County Courthouse during the year long celebration. Their creation will be unveiled in the coming months, but for those who want a sneak preview go over to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeT9nlpYzrU> and you will see just how Mr. Britto and the students created their masterpieces.

Here are just a few things to expect from the committee:

- A book about the history of the 11th Judicial Circuit authored by noted historian, Dr. Paul S. George;
- A mock trial reliving the 1930 trial of Al "Scarface" Capone charged with perjury. The actual words Capone originally spoken in courtroom 6-1 will be heard again for the first time in over 80 years;
- Four symposia -
 - History of Trial Techniques – Evolution of the 21st Century Trial
 - History of Diversity in the Judiciary & Bar
 - History of Civil Rights and the 11th Judicial Circuit
 - History of Trial Coverage by the Media in the 11th Judicial Circuit
- A centennial dinner;
- A special United States Postal Service stamp cancellation in recognition of the circuit's 100th anniversary;
- A special Miami-Dade County Public School classroom curriculum about our court system;
- Lighting the courthouse with festive colors, banners, and bunting;
- A poster contest in which Miami-Dade public school students will compete to have their artwork featured on a centennial poster;
- An invitation to the Florida Supreme Court to hold a special session of the court in Miami in honor of the centennial;

The centennial committee is also considering the following:

- A three day weekend bench and bar centennial cruise in which continuing legal education will be interspersed with relaxation and fun.

Since many of these programs are dependent upon adequate funding, the centennial committee has established a Committee of 100 and other sponsoring opportunities.

With CABA's energetic support of the 11th Judicial Circuit's centennial, there is no doubt that our court's first centennial will be its most memorable. For more information, go to CIRCUIT100.com or contact Joseph Serota at jserota@wsh-law.com.