

17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF
FLORIDA
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Judge Who Supervised Broward's Historic 2000 Presidential Vote Recount to Retire on 25th Anniversary of Bush v. Gore

Fort Lauderdale, Fla - It was the year 2000 and the outcome of the Presidential election hung by a chad. Retiring Broward County Judge Robert W. Lee, then Chair of the Broward County Canvassing Board and a judge for just three years - suddenly found himself in the thick of a controversial hand recount that would vault him into the international spotlight and result in one of the most bitterly contested Presidential elections in American history.

Coincidentally, Judge Lee's retirement in December after 27 years on the bench comes on the 25th anniversary of Bush v. Gore, the controversial Supreme Court case that determined who won the election and sent George W. Bush to the White House instead of Al Gore.

The historic recount in Florida generated death threats, worldwide media coverage and late night talk show spoofs about hanging chads before it landed in the U.S. Supreme Court. As Canvassing Board Chair, Judge Lee had a front row seat.

"We had to go through more than a half million ballots," Judge Lee recalled. "At one point, they insisted I have two Broward Sheriff's Office deputies with me 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for two weeks," Judge Lee said. "It was awkward."

Now Judge Lee is mulling what to do with the vintage election memorabilia he saved from the historic 2000 recount. His collection includes piles of news clippings, invalidated punch ballots, a calculator someone sent him to ensure accurate ballot counts, personal notes he made as the ballots were tallied, handwritten cards and letters from critics and fans as well as special ink pens the Supervisor of Elections requested the Canvassing Board use to sign any kind of document that was deemed official.

The Honorable Robert W. Lee, Administrative Judge of the County Court for the 17th Judicial Circuit, is available to discuss the following topics and more:

- His role as Broward County Canvassing Chair during the contentious 2000 recount
- The memorabilia he retained that bears witness to this contested election
- How much has changed in the way ballots are counted today so history cannot repeat.

Please let me know if you are interested in speaking with Judge Lee. I can help you coordinate.

Thank you,

Sallie James
Public Information Officer

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ABOUT THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA

The Seventeenth Judicial Circuit Court of Florida is the court for Broward County, headquartered in Fort Lauderdale, FL. It is the second largest circuit court in the state. Broward County has 90 judges. Of those, 32 are county court judges and 58 are circuit judges. Four

courthouses comprise the 17th circuit and include the Broward County Courthouse in Fort Lauderdale, and three satellite courthouses: the North Regional Courthouse in Deerfield Beach, the West Regional Courthouse in Plantation and the South Regional Courthouse in Hollywood.