

Governor Rick Scott  
C/O Daniel Nordby, Esq.  
General Counsel  
Executive Office of the Governor  
State of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

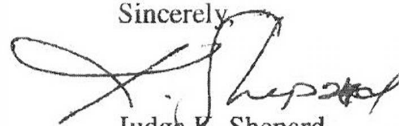
Dear Governor Scott,

I write to inform you of my intention to retire from the office of Circuit Judge for the Ninth Judicial Circuit effective at 6:00 p.m. on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018. I would ask you to keep this retirement confidential until that time to allow me the courtesy of informing my colleagues of my decision. I will follow this with a formal hard copy of this letter at that time.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the people of the of the ninth circuit in this important role, and I will always be grateful to the voters who insist on an independent judiciary and who provided me with this extraordinary opportunity. I came to the bench after serving the business community in an effort to bring that experience eventually, to what I hoped would be an expanded business court that had been established in our circuit. Unfortunately, due to a lack of available funding coupled with the rapid population growth in our area, the need for more family law and criminal divisions outstripped the ability to give proper and deserved attention to the business community. As a result, our Chief Judge had to close the business court just this year.

Now, it appears that it might be years before that court could be reestablished and I might be able to preside in a division that would fully utilize the legal and business acumen I originally sought to bring to the bench. At the same time, I have been presented with a unique and substantial opportunity that I could not pursue while in judicial office and that requires a prompt decision. After much soul searching, I have concluded that the new opportunity presented would not only allow me to fully utilize my accumulated business skills and knowledge, it would also provide a better platform to address these concerns and advocate for their resolution. Please know, I will continue to advocate for the independence of our judiciary and seek new ways to continue serving my community and our state. I thank you and all of the citizens of the ninth circuit for the privilege of serving as their circuit judge.

Sincerely,



Judge R. Shepard

CC: Honorable Frederick Lauten