

Judges Kelly and Covington Join Second DCA

by Susan W. Fox

Two women jurists have joined the distinguished Second DCA: Judge Patricia J. Kelly and Judge Virginia M. Hernandez Covington.



Judge Virginia M. Hernandez Covington was born in Tampa, Florida, on July 12, 1955. She is married and has three children.

Judge Covington graduated *cum laude* with a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Tampa in 1976, where she received the Outstanding Female Graduate Award, Class of 1976-77. In 1977, Judge Covington received the degree of Master of Business Administration, also from the University of Tampa. Judge Covington then attended Georgetown University Law Center, where she was elected to The Tax Lawyer law review and received her Juris Doctor degree in 1980. After graduation, Judge Covington was a trial attorney for the Federal Trade Commission and thereafter became an Assistant State Attorney for Hillsborough County, Florida. Judge Covington joined the United States Attorney's Office in 1983.

From January 1989 until September 24, 2001, she was Chief of the Asset Forfeiture Section of the United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida. Judge Covington received an award for outstanding contribution to the asset forfeiture program by the Executive Office for Asset Forfeiture in 1993. She also received Director's Awards in 1990 and in 1996, as well as numerous commendations from law enforcement agencies. Judge Covington has lectured extensively on asset forfeiture, money laundering, and complex prosecutions to prosecutors and law enforcement personnel throughout the United States. She also has lectured to prosecutors, law enforcement personnel, and judges in Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Honduras on trial advocacy

practices and procedures. In addition, she served as a liaison between the Department of Justice and the Bolivian Government, assisting the Bolivians with their asset forfeiture program.

She is the 1999 winner of the Raymond E. Fernandez Award given by the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Hispanic Advisory Council to the individual who has made outstanding contributions to the criminal justice system. In October 2001, Judge Covington was honored to serve as the keynote speaker at the Orange County Bar Association's Hispanic Heritage Celebration Luncheon. Judge Covington has long been active in community affairs. She served as Chair of the Board of Counselors of the University of Tampa; President of Tampa Hispanic Heritage; Regional President of the National Hispanic Prosecutors Association; and Chair of the Government Law Section of the Hillsborough County Bar Association. She also has been a member of the Hispanic Needs and Services Council; the Hispanic Professional Women's Association; and the Hispanic National Bar Association, as well as numerous other community and professional organizations. Additionally, Judge Covington is a founding member and has been elected to the Executive Board of the Herbert G. Goldburg Criminal Law American Inn of Court.

Governor Jeb Bush appointed Judge Covington to the Second District Court of Appeal, and she began her service on September 25, 2001.



Judge Patricia J. Kelly was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on December 25, 1956. She has two children, Megan and Patrick. She received her B.A. degree in political science, *cum*

laude, from the University of South Florida, and her Juris Doctor degree, *cum laude*, from the University of Florida College of Law.

After graduating from law school in 1986, Judge Kelly practiced law with firms in West Palm Beach and Tampa before leaving private practice in 1989 to serve as a staff attorney to the Honorable James E. Lehan at the Second District Court of Appeal. In 1993, she returned to private practice, limiting her practice to appellate matters. In 1998, Judge Kelly obtained board certification in appellate law from the Florida Bar. She is a member of the Appellate Court Rules Committee and is active in the Appellate Practice and Advocacy Section of the Florida Bar where she has served on the CLE and Publications Committees. She is also a member of the Justice William Glenn Terrell Inn of Court, the Hillsborough County Bar Association, and the Catholic Lawyers Guild. In addition, she has been a writer for Florida Jurisprudence and has lectured on appellate practice and ethics.

Judge Kelly also serves her community and her children's school in various capacities, including leading a Girl Scout troupe, serving on the parent's board at the Academy of the Holy Names, and volunteering at her church.

Judge Kelly was appointed to the Second District Court of Appeal by Governor Jeb Bush and began serving as a member of the Court in December 2001.

Susan W. Fox is a Florida Bar Certified Appellate Lawyer who practices in the Appellate Division of Macfarlane Ferguson & McMullen in Tampa. A former editor of The Record, she is on the Executive Council of the Appellate Practice Section and the Rules of Judicial Administration Committee of The Florida Bar.

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