IN THE TWENTIETH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR THE STATE OF FLORIDA LEE, COLLIER, CHARLOTTE, HENDRY, AND GLADES COUNTIES

IN RE:	UNIFIED FAMILY COURT) ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 12.4)
794 So. 2d 5 implementing	518 (Fla. 2001), directed each circuit to subm	Report of the Family Court Steering Committee, it revised local rules or an administrative order commendations approved by the Florida Supreme
794 So. 2d 5	IEREAS, the Florida Supreme Court in Re: I 518 (Fla. 2001), directed each circuit to make ient, and cost effective manner;" and	Report of the Family Court Steering Committee, every effort to resolve family disputes in a "fair,
WH Supreme Co	•	esirous of meeting the mandates of the Florida
WH intra and int family; and	IEREAS, the Twentieth Judicial Circuit is deer-related family issues to avoid conflicting of	esirous of assisting litigants with cases in volving Elecisions and minimize inconvenience to the
WH available to	IEREAS, the Twentieth Judicial Circuit is deassist with resolving familial related case liti	SHOUS Of maximizing all resources leading.

WHEREAS, in an effort to facilitate open and effective communication between court staff, judges, attorneys and social service providers and to better serve the litigants of the court community,

NOW, **THEREFORE**, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Chief Judge of the Twentieth Judicial Circuit of Florida under Fla. R. Jud. Admin. 2.215, it is hereby ordered that:

Effective January 2, 2008, the unification of family court shall be implemented and shall operate as a pilot program in Lee County, and may later be formally expanded to Collier, Charlotte, Hendry and Glades counties by further order of the Court. Such implementation shall be in accordance with the recommendations of the Florida Supreme Court, the Twentieth Judicial Circuit's FLAG (Family Law Advisory Group), the Twentieth Judicial Circuit's Unified Family Court Implementation Committee, and meetings with community stakeholders. The Unified Family Court shall function as set forth:

I. Unified Family Court Jurisdiction

A. The Unified Family Court shall consist of two components, Unified Items and Unified Family Court/Juvenile.

¹ Prior to formally expanding the program to Collier, Charlotte, Hendry and Glades counties, no court shall be prohibited or discouraged from informally taking steps to effectuate the intent of this Administrative Order as it relates to resolving intra and inter-related family issues, provided that those steps do not conflict with any provision of this Administrative Order, the Florida Supreme Court's opinion in Re: Report of the Family Court Steering Committee, or any other rule of court or law.

- B. All related Unified Family Court/Domestic Relations case types will remain in the Unified Family Court/Domestic Relations, except as otherwise provided in section I.D. of this order, and shall be linked upon order of the Court. If a family has a pending dependency case, and subsequently, a member of the family files for a dissolution of marriage (DOM), the Unified Family Court/Juvenile judge handling dependency cases shall decide all issues in the DOM action, including those involving children and financial matters, unless the Unified Family Court/Juvenile judge handling dependency cases files a good cause order as described below in section I.D. If a good cause order is entered, the Unified Family Court/Juvenile judge handling dependency cases may preside over issues in the DOM action involving children, while the Unified Family Court/Domestic Relations judge presides over financial issues, or the Unified Family Court/Juvenile judge handling dependency cases may elect to refer the entire DOM action back to the Unified Family Court/Domestic Relations judge. However, if a family has a juvenile delinquency case(s) and a DOM case, but no other cases pending, the provisions of this Administrative Order shall not be applicable and the cases shall be heard individually in the respective divisions of the Court.
- C. All related Unified Family Court/Juvenile case types will remain in the Unified Family Court/Juvenile, except as otherwise provided in section I.D. of this order. If different judges are assigned to related juvenile delinquency and dependency cases, the juvenile delinquency judge shall preside over the adjudicatory hearing portion of the delinquency case. However, the juvenile delinquency case will subsequently be reassigned to the dependency judge for the dispositional hearing portion of the delinquency case.
- D. The preferred resolution of related cases is a "one family, one judge" model. However, after receiving a recommendation from a case manager, the courts shall retain discretion to resolve cases in a manner that promotes the best interest of the family and children (if any). If a court determines that following the preferred "one family, one judge" model is not in the best interest of the family and children (if any), the court shall file an order finding good cause for not following the preferred model. The case managers shall maintain the responsibility of sharing information concerning related cases with the various judges presiding over those related cases.
- II. Unified Family Court jurisdiction shall consist of and include the following elements:

A. Case Types:

- dissolution of marriage
- division and distribution of property arising out of a dissolution of marriage
- annulment
- support unconnected with dissolution of marriage
- paternity
- child support
- URESA/UIFSA
- custodial care of and access to children
- adoption
- name change
- declaratory judgment actions related to premarital, marital, or post marital agreements
- civil domestic and repeat violence injunctions
- juvenile dependency
- emancipation of a minor

- CINS/FINS
- truancy
- modification and enforcement of orders entered in these cases
- juvenile delinquency
- Marchman and Baker Act

B. Components of Unified Family Court:

- 1. The Unified Family Court bench shall consist of judges who have received training and have extensive experience in Family, Juvenile, and County Criminal Court.
- 2. Magistrates to conduct quasi-judicial hearings and maximize judicial resources.
- 3. Case management to coordinate and assist litigants and the judiciary with various court processes and to link all case types as defined in Section II.A.
- 4. A social service component to assist litigants and the judiciary by providing prompt linkages to applicable court and community resources.
- 5. An Alternative Dispute Resolution component to assist families and children with resolving disputes in order to promote long term family stability.
- 6. A technology component to provide technological services and systems for the purposes of accessing databases essential to case management.

III. General Unified Family Court Operations:

- A. At the time of filing any case type delineated in Section II.A., parties should provide the Clerk with a fully executed Unified Family Court Related Case Information Sheet along with the initiating action. The Clerk of Courts shall forward to the UFC case management division of the Administrative Office of the Courts a copy of the filing and the original Unified Family Court Related Case Information Sheet. The Clerk shall not file the Unified Family Court Related Case Information Sheet in the court file. In the event that a Unified Family Court Related Case Information Sheet is not provided with the initiating action, the judge or case manager shall inquire of the attorneys at each court hearing as to whether they are aware of any related cases.
- B. In the event parties request assistance with completion of the Unified Family Court Related Case Information Sheet, the Clerk of Courts shall refer parties to the UFC case management division of the Administrative Office of the Courts.
- C. The case manager shall review the filing and Unified Family Court Related Case Information Sheet and shall submit an appropriate proposed draft order(s) for Court review.
- D. Upon order of the Court, the Clerk of Courts shall enter related case information into the Odyssey or Reflections programs.
- E. The Court shall initiate steps to have full access to the databases of all Unified Family Court stakeholders and agencies to ensure open and effective communications. The

Clerk of Courts shall notify the presiding judges and the UFC case managers when they identify UFC related cases. The Clerk of Courts shall also designate a case as a UFC case by placing a visible UFC stamp on the outside of the file and by attaching a copy of this Administrative Order and the attached forms to the inside cover of the UFC related case.

- F. The Unified Family Court shall be evaluated routinely by the Chief Judge or the Chief Judge's designee to determine its effectiveness in implementing this circuit's goal of addressing family law matters in a comprehensive, coordinated manner.
- G. The Twentieth Judicial Circuit's FLAG (Family Law Advisory Group) and the involved stakeholders shall continue to provide input regarding the Twentieth Judicial Circuit's Unified Family Court.
- H. The Court shall determine the appropriate schedule/dockets and coordinate with the Clerk of Courts.
- IV. Unified Family Court Case Managers' Ability to Access Juvenile Court Records
 - A. Unified Family Court Case Managers of the Administrative Office of the Courts have a proper interest in juvenile delinquency and dependency official court records in order to implement a Unified Family Court that addresses the multiple legal issues facing families pursuant to Fla. Stat. §§ 985.045(2), 985.04(1), 39.0132(3) and 39.0132(4)(a)1.
 - B. Accordingly, the Unified Family Court Case Managers shall have access to and may inspect the official juvenile delinquency and juvenile dependency court records in the Twentieth Judicial Circuit.
 - C. Pursuant to Fla. Stat. § 985.04, all information obtained from juvenile delinquency court records in the discharge of official duty by any judge, any employee of the court, any authorized agent of the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Parole Commission, the Department of Corrections, the juvenile justice circuit boards, any law enforcement agent, or any licensed professional or licensed community agency representative participating in the assessment or treatment of a juvenile may be disclosed to the Unified Family Court Case Managers.
 - D. Pursuant to Fla. Stat.§ 39.0132, all information obtained from juvenile dependency court records in the discharge of official duty by any judge, employee of the court, authorized agent of the Department of Children and Family Services, correctional probation officer, or law enforcement agent may be disclosed to the Unified Family Court Case Managers.
 - E. Any information the Unified Family Court Case Managers obtain concerning a juvenile delinquency case and/or juvenile dependency case may only be provided to a judge or a magistrate presiding over a unified family court related case and any information in written form must be sealed if it is filed in any unified family court related case file.
- V. The following forms are attached hereto and are approved for use in accordance with this Administrative Order:
 - A. Unified Family Court Related Case Information Sheet

- B. Notification of Unified Family Court Related Case
- C. Order Identifying Unified Family Court Cases and Transferring/Assigning them to Unified Family Court
- D. Order Setting Unified Family Court First Mandatory Case Conference
- E. Order Finding Good Cause for Deviation from Preferred Model

VI. General Provisions

- A. This Administrative Order is not intended to grant public access to confidential court records. Court records deemed confidential and exempt from public access pursuant to any law, statute or rule shall remain so, unless otherwise ordered by the Court.
- B. To the extent that any provision of this Administrative Order may be construed as being in conflict with any law, statute or rule, the law, statute or rule shall prevail.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers in Fort Myers, Lee County, Florida, this 3/ day of

December , 2007.

Seed lany Chief Judge

History. – New.

ATTACHMENT A

TWENTIETH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA UNIFIED FAMILY COURT RELATED CASE INFORMATION SHEET

Section I: INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THIS FORM

The information contained in this form will be utilized to notify the Unified Family Court Division of related cases (i.e. multiple cases in the judicial system involving one family), pursuant to Administrative Order No. 12.4 of the Twentieth Judicial Circuit of Florida.

THIS FORM IS FOR THE INTERNAL USE OF THE UFC CASE MANAGEMENT DIVISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS ONLY. PARTIES SHOULD PROVIDE THE CLERK WITH THIS FULLY EXECUTED FORM ALONG WITH ANY INITIATING ACTION, AND THE CLERK SHALL FORWARD IT TO THE UFC CASE MANAGEMENT DIVISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS. THE CLERK SHALL NOT FILE THIS FORM IN THE CASE FILE. IF THIS FORM CONTAINS INFORMATION THAT IS CONFIDENTIAL PURSUANT TO STATUTE OR RULE, IT SHALL BE EXEMPT FROM PUBLIC DISCLOSURE.

	Section II:	
Name of Person Completing this For	m (please print)	
Department:	Date:	
Address:	Phone No ·	
Section III: COM	PLETE ALL INFORMATION BELO FILED IN THIS CIRCUIT (includi	
FAMILY ID#:		
() DOMESTIC RELATIONS		
Case Name: Case N	lo: Judge:	Case Status: () Open () Closed
Case Type: () Dissolution of Marriage	lo: Judge:	
Petitioner:	Respondent:	
Attorney:	Attorney:	
Court ordered services:	Respondent: Attorney:	
Next hearing date (if any):	Hearing type:	
The state of the s	. Hearing type.	
() CIVIL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	INJUNCTION	
Case Name: Case N	o: Judge:	Case Status: () Onen () Closed
Case Name: Case N Petitioner: Attorney: Injunction Issued: () temporary () perm	Respondent:	Case Status. () Open () Closed
Attorney:	Attorney:	
Injunction Issued: () temporary () perm	Attorney: anent Date injunction entered through:	
Next hearing date (if any):	Hearing type:	
rearing date (if dity).	ricaring type.	
() JUVENILE DEPENDENCY		
Case No. Index.	Cons Status / \ \) Cl1
Case No: Judge: _	Case Status: () Open (Ciosea
GAL Atty:	Moiner's Atty.:	
TPP order in effect: () was () = s ()	Mother's Atty.: Father's Atty.:	
Perent's (s') sourt ordered semiliar	пкномп	
Nout begins date (if any)	Hearing type:	
Next hearing date (if any):	Hearing type:	
Case No.	0.0	
Judge: Judge:	Case Status: () Open () Closed
JJJ Caseworker.	Case Status: () Open (J:
Next hearing date (if any):	Hearing type:	
CDIMINAL		
) CRIMINAL		
Case No	D: Judge:	_ Case Status: () Open () Closed
OOB of defendant:		
D/Aity.:	SAO:	
re-trial Officer:	Probation Officer:	
Court ordered services:	The state of the s	
Vext hearing date (if any):	Hearing type:	
) OTHER CASES PENDING OUT	SIDE OF THIS CIRCUIT	
Vature of Case	Case Name: Case M	o: Judge:
laintiff/Petitioner	Defendant/Respondent:	o suage
) OTHER CASES PENDING OUT Nature of Case:	Attorney:	
Court ordered services:	Attorney:	
Journ Ordered Scryrees.		

ATTACHMENT B

TWENTIETH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA NOTIFICATION OF UNIFIED FAMILY COURT RELATED CASE

If this form contains any information concerning a juvenile delinquency or dependency case, this form and the information contained herein may only be provided to a judge presiding over a unified family court related case and the form must be sealed if it is filed in any unified family court related case file.

To:		
From:		, UFC Case Manager
	Unified Family Court Division, 1700 Monroe St., Ft. Myers, FL (239) 335-2247 (telephone)	Administrative Office of the Courts, Lee County Justice Center
Date:		
RE:	Your Case No(s).: Your Case Name(s):	
The following the your division.		tified as a related case(s) to that referenced above, which is open and pending in
FAMILY	/ ID #:	
() D	OMESTIC RELATIONS	Cons Status () Closed
Case Nan Case Typ Petitioner	e: Case No:	Judge: Case Status: () Open () Closed rnity () Child Support () Other: Respondent: Attorney:
Attorney:	ered services:	
Next hear	ring date (if any): Hearin	g type:
() CIV	VIL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INJUNC	TION
Case Nan	ne: Case No:	Judge: Case Status: () Open () Closed
Petitioner		Respondent: Attorney: Date injunction entered through:
Attorney:		Attorney'
Injunction	ered services:	
Next hear	ing date (if any): Hearin	g type:
/ \ T T15	WHILE DEDENDENCY	
() JUV Case No:	VENILE DEPENDENCY Judge:	Case Status: () Open () Closed
DCF Attv	.:	Mother's Atty.:
GAL Atty		Father's Atty.:
TPR order	r in effect: () yes () no () unknown	
Parent's (s	s') court ordered services:	
Next hear	ing date (if any): Hearin	g type:
an a	ENILE DELINOUENCY	
Case No:	Judge:	Case Status: () Open () Closed SAO: g type:
DJJ Casev	vorker: PD:	SAO:
Next hear	ing date (if any): Hearing	g type:
() CRI	MINAI.	
		Judge: Case Status: () Open () Closed
DOB of de	efendant:	
PD/Atty.:		SAO:
Pre-trial O	officer:	Probation Officer:
Court orde	ered services:	
Next heari	ng date (if any): Hearing	3 type:
() 0	THER CASES PENDING OUTSIDE O	F THIS CIRCUIT
	Case:	Case Name: Case No: Judge:
Plaintiff/P	etitioner:	Defendant/Respondent:
Attorney:		Attorney:
Court orde	red services:	
Notes:		

ATTACHMENT C

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWENTIETH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR $_$ COUNTY

IN RE: THE MATTER OF:		DOMESTIC RELATIONS CASE NO.:			
Petitioner,		JUVENILE DIVISION CASE NO.:			
	Respondent,	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DIVISION CASE NO.:			
		PROBATE DIVISION CASE NO.:			
		OTHER: CASE NO.:			
	ORDER IDENTIFY TRANSFERRING/ASS	ING UNIFIED FAMILY COURT CASES AND GIGNING THEM TO UNIFIED FAMILY COURT			
,	THIS CAUSE came for review before	the Court pursuant to Administrative Order No. 12.4 as a cross over matter			
with Unif	fied Family Court Jurisdiction.				
1	A. The Unified Family Court case manager identified cases listed above and they have met the criteria as				
	defined in Administrative Order No. 12.4 to be designated as Unified Family Court cases.				
]	B. Unified Family Court cases shall be coordinated in a manner to avoid conflicting decisions, enhance				
	judicial decision making and minimize inconvenience to the family.				
THERE	FORE, IT IS HEREBY				
ORDERI	ED AND AJUDGED as follows:				
D 1	. The Clerk of Courts is directed to tr	ansfer these cases to Unified Family Court division, the			
Honorable	e, presently p	presiding over all cases, except as otherwise provided for herein:			
	2. If different judges are assigned to re	elated juvenile delinquency and dependency cases, the juvenile delinquency			
judge shal	l preside over the adjudicatory hearing	g portion of the delinquency case. However the juvenile delinquency case			
will subse	quently be reassigned to the dependen	cy judge for the dispositional hearing portion of the delinquency case.			
□ 3	. The Clerk of Courts is directed to fi	le this order in each case listed above, as the cases currently lie in the			
correct Di	vision of the Court.				
□ 4	. The Clerk of Courts is directed to lin	nk each of the above cases in the "Related Cases" filed in the Odyssey or			
Reflection	s System.				

	5. The Clerk of Courts is directed to forward all of the above Court files to the Unified Family Court Case
Manage	er in Division
	6. All previous Orders entered in these cases will remain in effect until further Order of the Court.
	7. All previously scheduled hearings will need to be reset (Attorneys contact divisional J.A., self-represented
parties	will receive an Order Setting Hearing by mail), with the exception of the following hearings:
	8. Counsel and/or those persons who are self-represented are directed to continue to use the appropriate divisional
style an	d case number when filing pleadings, motions, notices of hearing, etc., in a specific division despite the status of
this as a	Unified Family Court Case. The Clerk of Courts is directed to forward all UFC related case files to the Judge for
hearing	or Case Manager for case management purposes, as appropriate.
DONE .	AND ORDERED in County, Florida this day of, 20
	Circuit Judge

Copies Furnished:

ATTACHMENT D

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWENTIETH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR _____ COUNTY, FLORIDA UNIFIED FAMILY COURT DIVISION

CASE NOS.

	Petitio	oner,			
vs.					
	Respo	ondent/			
		ORDER SETTING UNIFIED FAMILY COURT FIRST MANDATORY CASE CONFERENCE			
	THIS	CAUSE having come before the Court, sue sponte, and the Court having duly determined	that the above		
referenc	ced case	es meet the criteria for assignment to the newly created Unified Family Court Division, it is	hereby,		
	ORDI	ERED AND ADJUDGED as follows:			
	1.	A Mandatory Case Conference is hereby scheduled before this Court on the	day of		
		, 20, at am/pm., Courtroom,			
			Attendance by all		
	attorneys and parties is mandatory. Further, attendance is also mandatory for the Unified Family Court				
		Case Manager assigned to these cases.			
	2.	Prior to the Case Conference, it is suggested and/or recommended that each attorney and	1/or party review		
	The Twentieth Judicial Circuit's Administrative Order 12.4 and <i>The Report of Family Court Steering</i>				
	Committee, 794 So. 2d 518 (Florida Supreme Court 2001).				
	3.	At the Case Conference, the parties shall be prepared to discuss, inter alia, the following matters:			
	a. The status of all pending matters, including but not limited to, all pending and unresolved motions;				
	b. The possibility or possibilities of mediation and settlement;				
	c. Discovery related issues;				
	d. The scheduling of hearings and/or trials;				
	e. Case management related issues;				
		f. All issues related to the safety, health and welfare of the minor children involved in the	nese matters.		
DONE A	DONE AND ORDERED in County, Florida, this day of, 20				
		Circuit Indo			
		Circuit Judge			

Copies Furnished:

ATTACHMENT E

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWENTIETH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR ______ COUNTY, FLORIDA

	•		,
IN RE: THE MATTER OF	? :		
Petitioner/Plaintiff,	,	Case Nos.:	
Respondent/Defend	ant,		
	/		
	ORDER FIN FOR DEVIATING FRO	DING GOOD CAUSE OM PREFERRED UFC	MODEL
THIS CAUSE came	before the Court pursuant to	Administrative Order 1	2.4 as a cross over matter with Unified
Family Court jurisdiction. Ha	ving reviewed the recomme	endation of the UFC case	manager and having considered the best
interest of the family and child	lren (if any), and having be	en being fully advised in	this matter, the Court finds and orders as
follows:		•	
1. The Court finds go	ood cause for deviating from	n the preferred "one fami	ily, one judge" model.
2. As an alternative t	o the "one family, one judg	e" model, the UFC case	manager shall continue to share
information concerning related	I cases with the various jud	ges presiding over those	related cases.
DONE AND ORDE	RED in Chambers in	······································	County, Florida, this
day of	, 20		
		Circuit Judge	
Copies Furnished:			