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## Law Day celebrated in Gilchrist County



**(on the ground, from left) Eighth Judicial Circuit Public Defender Stacy Scott, Eighth Judicial Circuit State Attorney William Cervone, Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz and Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum, (and on the stairs, from left Gilchrist County Court Judge Sheree Lancaster and Levy County Court Judge Tim Browning are seen during the opening ceremonies.**

### Story and Photos

**By Jeff M. Hardison © May 6, 2014 at 12:07 a.m.**

**LEVY COUNTY** -- The 17th Annual Levy-Gilchrist Law Day on Friday (May 5) gave many people a chance to enjoy tradition, honor, food and fun next to the Suwannee River at the home of Gilchrist County Judge Sheree Lancaster and Howell E. Lancaster Jr.

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**Eighth Judicial Circuit Court Senior Judge Joseph Smith speaks about (ret.) Judge Ed Philman having health issues that precluded him from attending.**

This was the second time it was held near Hart Springs in Gilchrist County, upriver from the Fowlers Bluff house and pavilion of the late Judge W.O. Beauchamp Jr.

The son of the honorable Judge Beauchamp -- Levy County Undersheriff W.O. "Brett" Beauchamp III -- was among the cooks, again, as he has served in that capacity many times.

The annual event was again a who's who in relation to the law within the two counties and stretching out into the Eighth Judicial Circuit, and reaching with that long arm of the law farther out into the state of Florida, and even farther into the federal realm of law enforcement.

There were no international law enforcement officers noticed, but one never knows about some of those folks.

Representatives from the Levy County Sheriff's Office, Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office, the Levy County Emergency Management Department, Gilchrist County Fire Department, Florida

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Highway Patrol, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the U.S. Marshal's Service and other agencies were at the 17th Annual Levy-Gilchrist Law Day.



**Levy County Undersheriff Brett Beauchamp wraps deep-fried mullet in aluminum foil.**

The top stars of the day this year were the traditional hosts -- Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum, Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz, Levy County Judge James T. "Tim" Browning, Gilchrist County Judge Sheree Lancaster, Eighth Judicial Circuit State Attorney William Cervone and Eighth Judicial Circuit Public Defender Stacy A. Scott.

Eighth Judicial Circuit Senior Judge Joseph Smith asked everyone to keep (ret.) Gilchrist County Judge Edward Philman (Gilchrist County Court Judge, 1989 - 2012) (Senior Judge, 2012 - 2014) and his family in their prayers.

Judge Philman, who also has been a longtime and avid Rotarian, is currently dealing with relatively severe health issues, Judge Smith said.

The short speeches this year before the meal of fried mullet, hush puppies, coleslaw and beans was given by Judge Browning, Judge Smith, Sheriff McCallum, Judge Lancaster and Public Defender Scott.

The event on Friday, Browning said, is to memorialize a great man – the late Judge W.I. Beauchamp Jr. He described Judge Beauchamp as "down to earth." Browning was the keynote speaker.

And while some hungry listeners might have thought his pronouncements went a moment or two long, those folks should have seen when Senior Judge Smith was Levy County Judge Smith. Now, there were some outstanding speeches.

The Law Day celebration for Levy and Gilchrist counties, Browning said, is to express appreciation for the work done by people involved in law enforcement and matters that come before the court.

This day is to socialize with colleagues too, Judge Browning said.

Judge Browning assured that the audience gave a round of applause for the cooks of the day. This year, all of the cooks are from the Levy County Sheriff's Office including one honorary, short-term specially-accepted LCSO member.

The cooks in addition to Undersheriff Beauchamp were LCSO Col. Mike Sheffield, Lt. Scott

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Tummond, Lt. Todd Horne, David Rogers, Gary Sache and former County Commissioner Billy Ray Sharp.

Lt. Tummond said that for the purposes of helping as a member of the LCSO Law Day Cook Team, former Levy County Commissioner Sharp is always specially appointed to be an honorary member of the LCSO.

As he has in some years past, Sharp has maintained the title as the oldest man on the LCSO Law Day Cook Team at the age of 85 years.



**Billy Ray Sharp -- Cook Extraordinaire**

There were many judges at the event again this year.

In addition to the hosts of honor – Gilchrist County Court Judge Lancaster and Levy County Court Judge Browning -- and the aforementioned honorable Senior Judge Smith, the other

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judges included Florida Eighth Judicial Circuit Chief Judge Toby S. Monaco, Eighth Judicial Circuit Court Judge Monica J. Brasington, Eighth Judicial Circuit Court Judge James M. Colaw, Eighth Judicial Circuit Court Judge Stanley H. Griffis III, Eighth Judicial Circuit Court Judge Phillip A. Pena, Alachua County Judge Denise R. Ferrero, Alachua County Court Judge Susanne Wilson Bullard (who has been appointed by Gov. Rick Scott to become an Eighth Judicial Circuit Court judge on July 1 to replace a retiring circuit court judge), and Bradford County Court Judge D. Tatum Davis.

The Eighth Judicial Circuit includes Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy and Union counties. There are five Alachua County Court judges. All of the judges in this circuit, by the way, are honorable.

Among the private attorneys at the event were Norm Fugate and his son W. Blake Fugate.

Blake arrived in the same car as Senior Judge Smith and former Sheriff Glass as they drove to the site from Williston.

Attorney Norm Fugate came alone in his vehicle from Cedar Key, where he has one of his offices.

"Cedar Key is my home on Fridays," Norm Fugate said, "and Saturday, too, if I can work it."

He is the city attorney for Cedar Key and Chiefland. Both Norm Fugate and his son Blake are active Williston Rotarians.

Among the many elected officials celebrating Law Day at Judge Lancaster's River House were Cedar Key Mayor Heath Davis, Chiefland Mayor Betty Walker, Chiefland Vice Mayor Chris Jones, Fanning Springs Mayor (and a son of the judge) Howell E. "Trip" Lancaster III, Gilchrist County Commissioner Todd Gray, Gilchrist County Commissioner Sharon Langford, Gilchrist County School Board Member Deen Lancaster, Gilchrist County Clerk of the Court Todd Newton,.

Judge Lancaster mentioned that two of her sons helped arrange the cooking area by parking vehicle to block the high wind.



**Gilchrist County Judge Sheree Lancaster walks down the stairs to join the people as Colt William Brewer holds the flag.**

A son of a different mother who was put to work that day was 7-year-old Colt William Brewer,

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the son of Public Defender Scott. Young Mister Brewer held the American flag during the recital of the *Pledge of Allegiance*.

During her brief speech at the outset before serving the meal, Public Defender Scott said she is thankful to the men and women who perform their duties as law enforcement officers.

“I know sometimes folks think we’re on the opposite side of law enforcement (because she and her assistants defend people accused of crimes),” Scott said, “but we’re not. We support you and we do like to work with you; and to make sure justice is done in our circuit. So thank you very much.”

As noted earlier, law enforcement officers from the GCSO, LCSO, United States Marshals Service, Florida Highway Patrol, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Chiefland Police Department, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice and other municipal, county, state and federal agencies were present.

At least one representative from the Guardian Ad Litem service was at the event as well. And there were members from both State Attorney Cervone’s Office and Public Defender Scott’s Office present to hobnob with their colleagues and cohorts.

(And since attorneys are known to parse sentences and even define words, here “cohort” means “a group of people banded together or treated as a group;” for instance, “a cohort of civil servants patiently awaiting deep fried mullet.”)

## **ISHIE DAY**

While Law Day is now established to have originated in the year 2000 for Levy and Gilchrist counties, the roots of the foundation for this event go back to 1969, when there was the first Ishie Day.

Norwood Ishie passed away in November of 1979.

Ishie Day, former Levy County Sheriff Ted Glass has told HardisonInk.com, was first on a Thursday in decades past.

As avid readers of *HardisonInk.com* know, Ishie was an outstanding man. He had only a sixth grade education, but he would write a weekly column in the Levy County Journal for Cameron Asbell’s uncle – Elton Cobb, who owned the newspaper at that time. Ishie was best known as the courthouse custodian, but he later became a bailiff.

Ishie worked with inmates on the chain gang for a period, but eventually became the courthouse custodian.

One thing about Ishie Day is that it shows that a person can impact lives for several generations after he is gone, and he need not have gained some sort of earthly riches, fame or glory.

In consideration of Ishie Day and Law Day, there are common threads to weave the fabric of civility and civilization. It’s all about service to fellow humans, as well as respect for each other and the equal protection under the law.

Ishie Day was said to have gone dormant in the late 1980s.

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## LAW DAY

Law Day sprung from the same roots as Ishie Day, although it is more based solely on people who protect life and property, and constitutional rights, as their main service to humanity.

During some Law Day events of the past decades, there have been long declarations presented by the now-Senior Judge Smith when he was Levy County Judge Smith.

At the very first Ishie Day, former Levy County Sheriff Pat Hartley was in office, and at the time, the hush-puppy cooker was Chief Deputy Bubba Castell.

Deputy Castell and some other frequent flyers of Law Day were not present this year. However, there were first time visitors as well.

Sheriff Glass provided some answers about Law Day previously. He said Judge W.O. Beauchamp Jr. would emcee the event that started with Levy County law enforcement officers. Beauchamp and Glass hosted those first events. Beauchamp's Judicial Assistant Debbie

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Beckham would send the invitations. Glass's crew of deputies would cook, and they were led in that effort by the late C.W. Dias.

Serving the food were all of the hosts – Sheriff Shultz, Sheriff McCallum, State Attorney Cervone, Public Defender Scott, Judge Browning and Judge Lancaster.

Once again this year, the food was delicious and there was a big cake for dessert, and a good time was had by all.

