

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup>  
JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF THE STATE OF  
FLORIDA IN AND FOR MONROE  
COUNTY

LOCAL RULE 2

IN RE:

CONSOLIDATION OF  
RELATED CASES IN  
FAMILY LAW MATTERS

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WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of Florida Order Number 77,623 requires each judicial circuit to submit a means to coordinate family law matters that affect one family if the circuit is of such limited size that is it unable to administratively justify a family division; and

WHEREAS, the unique geographical composition of the Florida Keys coupled with the limited number of judges serving the circuit prohibits the creation of a family division;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority conferred by Rule 2.050(b), Fla.R.Jud.Admin., it is

ORDERED that the following procedures shall be observed in the Circuit and County Courts of the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit:

1. The Clerk of the Court shall establish a procedure whereby all matters affecting one family are assigned to a single judge. Any new family law case filed where a previous filing exists affecting that family in the Circuit shall be assigned to the judge handling the initial filing regardless of category.
2. The coordination of related cases in family law matters shall be established for dissolution of marriage, child custody and support, URESA, domestic violence, name changes, adoptions, paternity suits, and modification proceedings.
3. For the purpose of avoiding disorder and of ensuring the unobstructive operation of the circuit, juvenile dependency and juvenile delinquency proceedings, which are optional under the Supreme Court of Florida rule, are exempt under this local rule, except where a Chapter 744 Guardian of the Minor has been appointed. Said guardianship shall be consolidated into the juvenile proceedings.

4. All persons filing any case pertaining to a family law matter (as defined above) with the Clerk of the Court shall certify in writing whether any other case affecting said family has been previously filed and/or is currently pending in the circuit. In the event that previously filed or pending cases exist, it shall be so indicated including the type of proceeding, the filing date and the presiding judge.

By virtue of Rule 2.050(e), Fla.R.Jud.Admin., this Local Rule shall be submitted to the Supreme Court for approval and shall become effective on the approval date.

DONE and SIGNED in Chambers at Plantation Key, Florida, this 13 day of December, 1994.

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J. Jefferson Overby  
Chief Judge

APPROVED by the Supreme Court of Florida on the 21 day of March, 1995.