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NEAL R. SONNETT

May 29, 2020

American Bar Association  
Judicial Division –  
321 N. Clark St.  
Chicago, IL 60654

**Re: Nomination of Harvey Ruvin for ABA Robert B. Yegge Award**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my distinct pleasure to nominate my friend and colleague, Harvey Ruvin, for the Robert B. Yegge Award for Outstanding Contribution in The Field of Judicial Administration. I submit this nomination on behalf of myself and the following distinguished Miamians:

**Dori Foster-Morales**

President-Elect  
The Florida Bar

**Gilbert K. Squires**

President  
Dade County Bar Association

**Stephen Zack**

Past President, American Bar Association Past  
President, The Florida Bar

**THE NOMINEE**

Harvey Ruvin has served as the elected Clerk of Circuit and County Courts of Miami-Dade County, Florida, since 1992. He has been re-elected six times, leading the ballot in 2016 with the largest vote total in South Florida's history.

The Miami-Dade County Clerk is a duly elected constitutional officer as mandated by Article V, Section 16 of the Constitution of the State of Florida. The Clerk is elected to a four-year term by the electorate of Miami-Dade County. The responsibilities of the Clerk are established by the State Constitution, the Florida State Statutes, County Ordinances and Regulations and Judicial Orders.

Harvey Ruvin's record as Clerk of the Courts has been nothing short of transformational; moving a cumbersome paper driven system into an efficient, cost saving, access enhancing, electronic process benefitting judicial administration immeasurably.

In this capacity he not only serves as Clerk of the Courts, but also as Ex-Officio Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, County Recorder, County Auditor, Custodian of all County Funds, and Custodian of all records filed with the Court.

The Miami-Dade County Courts Divisions include Civil Court, Criminal Court, Family Courts, Juvenile Services, Probate and Mental Health Court, Small Claims Court, and Traffic Court. The Clerk is assisted in fulfilling his duties by Senior Deputy Clerks, Division Chiefs, and a staff of more than fourteen hundred full and part-time employees. The Clerk's Office is dedicated to providing support to the court system and professional service to the public, the judiciary, the legal community and the County Commission.

The Clerk's Office has a proven record of enhancing the level of efficiency in its services and access to the public. In facing the confines of limited resources, an ever-increasing emphasis has been given to new innovative technologies enabling staff to perform in a more cost-effective manner.

Harvey Ruvin is widely respected for his outstanding contributions to the Court system of Miami-Dade County, particularly his efforts to modernize the courts, improve the technology of Judicial Administration, and improve services to the citizens of Miami-Dade County.

### **ALONG CAREER OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

Mr. Ruvin's outstanding service as Clerk of the Courts to the citizens of Miami-Dade County is a continuation of a lifetime of public service, for which he has received many well deserved honors. He graduated from the University of Florida in Industrial Engineering in 1959, and received his Juris Doctor from the University of Miami Law School in 1962.

He was first elected to public office in 1968 at the age of 30. Serving as Mayor of the City of North Bay Village, he became one of the youngest mayors in Miami-Dade County history. In 1972, Ruvin was elected to the Metro-Dade County Commission where he served for twenty years, focusing on environmental and technology issues. In 1987, elected by his peers, he served as President of the National Association of Counties, representing America's 3200 County Governments. He chaired separate NACo Task Forces on Immigration, Environment and Energy, and the Liability Insurance crisis.

Mr. Ruvin is a past Chairman of the technology arm of the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, and the International City/ County Management Association. In 1989, he was named "County Leader of the Year" by American City and County Magazine.

Mr. Ruvin has also made significant contributions to local, regional, and State entities. He was a member of the Metro-Miami Action Plan Executive Board, a Board established in the early 1980's to deal comprehensively with the racial and economic disparities in Dade County, including the justice system and its courts. He served on the Miami-Dade Criminal Justice Council, chairing its Juvenile Justice Subcommittee.

### **EXEMPLARY SERVICE AS CLERK OF THE COURTS**

Since his election, in 1992, to the Office of Miami-Dade County Clerk of Courts, Harvey Ruvin has continued his exemplary community involvement, and he has performed a leadership role within scores of civic, cultural, environmental and charitable organizations. He has been the recipient of numerous awards including the prestigious Washington-based Public Technology Institute award naming him the "2003 Public Technologist of the Year" in America, citing his highly successful efforts as Clerk of Courts to employ emerging technologies to reengineer court processes, eliminating paper, achieving fiscal savings and efficiencies. The goal: serving more and more of the public "on-line rather than in-line."

Under his leadership, the 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit (the 4<sup>th</sup> largest in the nation) was the first in the Country to implement a paperless court. It was also the first large county to move foreclosure sales from the courthouse steps to the internet. He has also been a leader in providing an on-line process for notification and registration of Jurors, all of which has benefitted attorneys, jurors, judges and the public in general, generating efficiencies, cost savings and accessibility.

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As early as 2004, he won Computerworld Magazine's "2004 Medal of Achievement" for utilizing technology to achieve massive savings and enhancing the public's accessibility to records. Mr. Ruvin, having made an effective transition from a county legislator to an extensive administrative role, received the much coveted "2004 Public Administrator of the Year" awarded by the South Florida Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) and in 2016 earned ASPA's coveted award as South Florida "Elected Official of the Year," the only person to have been recognized in both capacities.

In 2008, he received the "Defender of the Everglades Award" by the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Friends of the Everglades. In 2009, he was named the Inaugural Recipient of the "Reitmeister-Abess Award" for Environmental Advocacy by the University of Miami Abess Center for Ecosystem Science and Policy.

Some of his other many awards include the 1987 Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce "Man of the Year Award," the coveted Tropical Audubon Society Conservation Award (in 1981 and 1985, the only person ever to have been named twice).

Mr. Ruvin has said that one of his greatest honors came in September 1990, when "Naples," a rescued West Indian manatee, gave birth to a male calf and Sea World named the newborn "Harvey" in recognition of the then Commissioner's work on behalf of the endangered species.

He chaired the County's Climate Change Advisory Task Force (CCATF) as well as its Sea Level Rise Task Force (SLRTF), missioned to advise the County regarding Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Adaptation Planning.

The Clerk's Office Mission Statement reflects his commitment to service:

We are agents of change and advocates of innovation. We apply appropriate strategic, technological, process and people solutions. Our focus includes:

Optimizing our ability to provide quality service to the Public. Meeting the expectations of everyone who utilizes the services of the Miami-Dade County Clerk's Office.

Increasing access to public information. Building a technical architecture for the future.

Enriching work, challenging and empowering the workforce to more freely initiate improvements.

Ensuring all those who are part of the updated processes understand the process and technological changes and are well-trained in those changes.

Maintaining a balance between realizing benefits and all guiding principles.

### **EXEMPLARY SERVICE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Judicial Administration, like all other aspects of civic, business and private life, has had to react resourcefully to the demands of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Having already been a transformative leader in the development of an award winning paperless court system and many other technology-driven innovations, the Miami Dade Clerk of Court's Office, with its core of experienced "change agents," was ready.

Ready for ramping up technical solutions to enable and enhance employees working remotely, AND especially ready to work collaboratively with the Judiciary, the Bar and all Justice partners on a series of important efforts critical to maintaining access to the courts in a remote/working and virtual world.

These initiatives continue to be successfully implemented and are so successful that many of these efforts are now serving as models around Florida and will have continuing value as we emerge from this Pandemic era.

Some of the technology initiatives of interest that have been implemented in direct support of the COVID-19 pandemic operation included:

Sustained, successful Clerk of Courts Technical Services Division (TSD) and Innovation Office Remote operations;

Use of Microsoft Teams to continue unit/team collaboration and IT project advancement;

Configured the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal to advance State Attorney's Office (SAO) requests of Criminal, County and Juvenile operations with the introduction of new documents filed such as SAO Information's, etc.;

Manage the provisioning of Virtual Private Network (VPN) requests with the county's Information Technology Department, including weekend support to Operations staff;

Manage the provisioning of equipment, with the county's Information Technology Department, in support of remote operations, including virtual courtrooms;

Developed Criminal Filing application (CFA) to allow remote Florida Courts E-Filing Portal document and data entry processing, by unit, (with possible expansion to County Criminal and Juvenile);

Enhanced the Electronic Document Processor (EDP) application for processing of Civil case evidence, in the form of electronic documents, through the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal, as well as introduced other document types for operational processing;

Implementation support to the 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit's Traffic Online Dispute (Case) Resolution pilot project;

Enhancement of COC Integrated Voice Response (IVR) systems to (1) allow the introduction of new call flows for COVID-19 related inquiries; and (2) provision for the expansion of call center operations through the addition of overflow call volume through remote telephone operators;

Developed method to capture FACS by COC telephone operators to utilize for trends analysis and operational and/ or technical service delivery enhancements;

Developed graphic representation and metrics analysis of Integrated Voice Response system statistics;

Deployed newly designed Clerk of Courts Portal applications accessible via the Internet, Mobile site, and Clerknet;

Modified the COC's Internet Marriage Appointment System to allow for new operational protocols for the future scheduling of applications for a marriage license;

Developed COC new Portal Page for COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions and Answers by key service inquiry.

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Thus, Harvey Ruvins public career continues to be hallmarked by his commitment to improve the lives of the citizens of Miami-Dade County, and to use his technological expertise and environmental sensitivity to help solve the problems of providing needed services to the people in a cost efficient way while protecting the environment and our quality of life.

Harvey Ruvins has dedicated his life and career to public service, and his contributions to Judicial Administration cannot be overstated. He richly deserves to receive the Robert B. Yegge Award for Outstanding Contribution in the Field of Judicial Administration, and we hope the Selection Committee will give him its favorable consideration.