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MARCH 11, 2009

**CONTACT:** GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE  
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**Governor Crist Names James E.C. Perry to Florida Supreme Court**

*~ Praises Judge Perry's compassion, dedication to justice and equality ~*

TALLAHASSEE – Governor Charlie Crist today named longtime jurist James E.C. Perry to the Florida Supreme Court. Judge Perry, 65, is Governor Crist's fourth appointment to the seven-member high court. He is the fourth African-American justice to serve on the seven-member state Supreme Court.

"I have given much thought to appointing Judge Perry to Florida's highest court," said Governor Charlie Crist. "Our seven Supreme Court justices make precedent-setting decisions on important matters. I am confident Judge Perry will rule with restraint, fairness and humility. He has shown, throughout his personal and professional life, the ability to balance justice with humanity."

Judge Perry has served as a judge for the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit serving Seminole and Brevard counties since 2000, when then-Governor Jeb Bush appointed him as the circuit's first African-American judge. At the time of the appointment,

Governor Bush said: "James brings a high level of professionalism, knowledge and skill to the bench. I am confident that his expertise, strong commitment and dedication will continue to be an asset to the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit and the state."

A North Carolina native, Judge Perry has lived in Florida for nearly four decades. He served as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in the United States Army from 1966 to 1969 and decided, on the night of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, to seek equality and justice by becoming a lawyer. He graduated from the Columbia University School of Law in 1972. He served as vice president and general counsel for the Seminole Employment and Economic Development Corporation from 1974 to 1976. He then went into private practice for 21 years, serving as a partner and senior partner at various Central Florida law firms.

"Judge Perry's breadth of legal experience and civil rights record make him an ideal choice for this post," said Governor Crist. "I trust he will have the courage to make decisions that preserve the integrity and equality of our justice system."

Judge Perry lives in Sanford with his wife of 37 years, Dr. Adrienne M. Perry, a Stetson University professor. They have three grown children. Judge Perry was named the 2006 Outstanding Jurist by the Seminole County Bar Association, and in 2005 he received the Martin Luther King Jr. Drum Major Award for Social Justice. He received the NAACP Humanitarian Award for Seminole County in 1995 and for Orange County in 1998. He is founder and president of the Jackie Robinson Sports Association, a baseball league that serves approximately 650 at-risk children and is the largest of its kind in the nation.

"I am honored and grateful for the support and confidence of Governor Charlie Crist in naming me to the highest court in our state," said Judge Perry. "I believe the strength of the justice system lies in its checks and balances, and a strong and independent judiciary is the cornerstone of our democracy. I will work every day to maintain the integrity of the Florida justice system and of our state Constitution."

Judge Perry will fill the vacancy left by the retirement of Justice Charles Wells, who served on the Florida Supreme Court since 1994.

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