



**Light at the End of the Tunnel?**  
**By: Hon. Caryl E. Delano, Chief Judge**

I recently looked back at my column in the April 2020 issue of the Court Connection, which I wrote when we were deep in the “shut down” phase of the pandemic. Looking back, I was really quite naïve about how long we would be living—and working—under restricted conditions. I really thought that businesses and the Court would reopen by May or June and that perhaps a wave of COVID-19 cases in the fall would result in another shutdown.

A year later, most of us are still affected by the pandemic, and many of us have family members or friends who have been ill or who have passed away due to COVID-19. If you have lost a family member or friend this year—whether due to COVID-19 or other causes—you have my heartfelt sympathy. Many of the attorneys who practice in our Court, and their staffs, have suffered financially, in part, because of decline in bankruptcy filings. With vaccines now available for all age groups, let’s hope that we have turned the corner and life will be back to “normal” soon. Our judges have all been vaccinated and we hope you have (or soon will be) too.

My April 2020 column ended with these remarks from Chief District Judge Timothy Corrigan about the pandemic:

This is a time for the professionalism, civility, and collegiality of the bar to shine through. Disagreements over scheduling or other minor matters seem especially unimportant at the moment. We are all in this together. Let them say at the end of this that both the bench and bar performed in the highest traditions of our profession.

While we are not quite at “the end of this,” with rare exception, I believe that our bench and bar have performed during this past year in the highest traditions of our profession.

**Court Connection**  
**Volume No. 10 -- Issue No. 2**  
**April 2021**

We have all learned that it is possible to work remotely and that the Court can effectively conduct many hearings and trials by telephone or video. I have heard mediators report that, in some ways, they actually prefer conducting mediations by video. Our shared experiences over the past year have reminded me of the saying “out of crisis, comes opportunity.” As we slowly resume our normal lives, one of our challenges will be to incorporate the lessons we have learned during the pandemic into our post-pandemic home and work lives.

On another note, the one thing in life that remains constant is that things are always changing. Here at the Court we are anticipating some significant changes in the next year, with the November 2021 and February 2022 retirements of Judge Funk and Judge Jennemann, the appointment of their successors, and the appointment of a judge to fill our Orlando “temporary” judgeship. Late 2021 and 2022 promise busy times ahead for our Court and we look forward to celebrating these milestone events with many of you!