

# Sheriff

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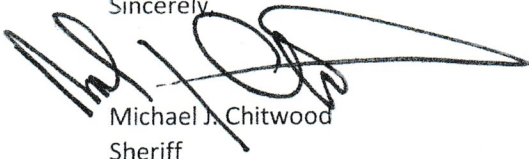
To the Chair Mydock and The Judicial Nominating Committee,

I am writing in support of Sarah Thomas being the next Circuit Judge in the 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit. I have had the pleasure of working with Sarah for roughly 8 years. While Sarah has prosecuted hundreds of cases in Volusia County, I personally got the chance to work closely with Sarah when Mr. Larizza assigned her a case where I was the victim. I quickly understood why my agency relies on and enjoys working alongside her. She is truly a go-to person for my deputies. Sarah called me early in the case and remained in contact with me for every step of the process. She followed up with me often until we reached a favorable outcome for all involved. Sarah made certain that I felt comfortable with the resolution in the case while also remaining fair and impartial. I was able to see first hand her work ethic, professionalism, and demeanor that my deputies and administration have all praised. All of which I think makes her an exceptional candidate for the bench.

Sarah and I worked closely together on a nationally publicized media case, *State v. Nicole Jackson*. A 14-year-old female shot at deputies after breaking into a house in Deltona. This case was a very litigious case. One which required Ms. Thomas to file countless motions, hearings, and have many meetings with my deputies. Through the course of this case the VSO developed an even closer relationship with Sarah due to the criticism and backlash that both endured from those trying to find the SAO or the VSO at fault. Sarah remained professional, yet firm when it came to negotiations and the ultimate resolution of the case. This case was also highly televised. Sarah demonstrated maturity beyond her years in the manner in which she conducted herself in the courtroom. It is clear she is comfortable in the courtroom and working with the citizens of Volusia County.

It was apparent, from the onset that Ms. Thomas has a deep respect for law enforcement and our judiciary. Sarah has given her time to my agency assisting in training and agreeing to speak to new officers on various topics whenever asked. Sarah possesses exceptional legal skills as well as the unique ability to foster true relationships with her victims, witnesses, and law enforcement on her cases. It is critical prosecutors can make the right decisions for the right reasons. I am aware of Sarah's unique background in law enforcement and I think it makes her all the more qualified to serve the citizens of Volusia County. It would be amazing to have Sarah on the bench.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Chitwood  
Sheriff

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