

Meek v. Dade County, 1986 Federal Lawsuit

South Florida Chapter Hosts a Forum Discussion
By Bill Solomon and Terry Murphy

The South Florida Chapter hosted a well-attended forum on February 8 2006 to review a historic 1986 federal lawsuit, Meek v Dade County. The panel included retired Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek, as well as the primary counsel in the case, Stephen Cody. Additional members on the panel included Florida International University (FIU) professor Dario Moreno, a contributing witness in the lawsuit; former NAACP chapter president Bradford Brown; attorneys Robert Holland, Reggie Clyne and Judge Peter Adrien. The panel was moderated by author and commentator, now with CBS Channel 4, Jim Defede.

As a result of this successful lawsuit, the political landscape of Miami-Dade County was forever altered. The Miami-Dade County Commission elections were changed from at-large, countywide to single member districts. This enabled minority candidates to be elected from their districts, which was more reflective of the county's demographics. Panel members discussed their part in the lawsuit and what they felt were the result of the ruling twenty years later. A major result was that citizens were able to more effectively communicate with a Commissioner from their own area of the community and seek improvements for their respective areas. Commissioners elected from single member districts are more accountable to the people that elected them and thus tend to be more proactive. Participants had an opportunity for questions and answers and a box lunch was provided to all attendees.