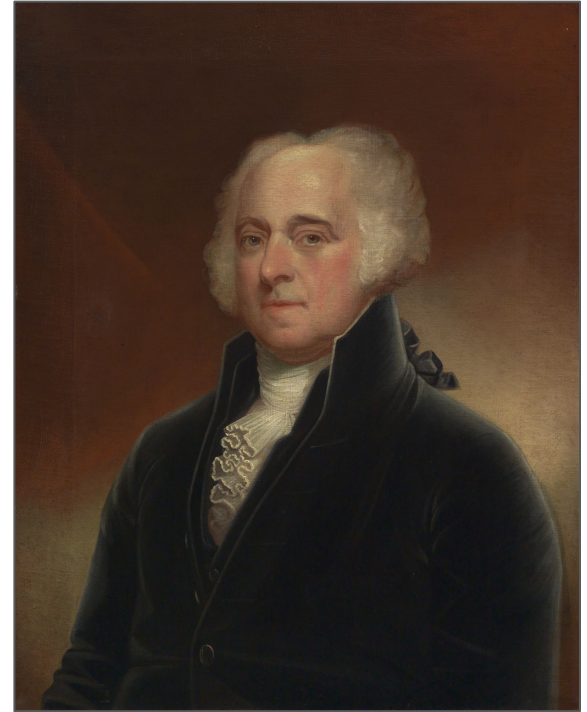


John Adams

In describing his role in the Boston Massacre trial John Adams said it was:

“The greatest service I ever rendered my country”



What does the judicial branch do?

- Hear cases
- Settle conflicts
- Interpret the law
- Determine if laws are constitutional
- Protect individual rights
- Ensure fair procedures are followed



What is the highest federal (U.S.) court ?

- **Article III** of the **U.S. Constitution** outlines the structure and powers of the U.S. judicial system. It states that the nation will have one supreme court. Congress has the power to create additional lower courts.



What is the highest state (Florida) court?



- **Article V** of the **Florida Constitution** outlines the structure and powers of the state's system. It states that Florida will have a supreme court, district courts of appeal, circuit courts, and county courts.

HOW THE COURTS COMPARE

Florida Supreme Court v. U.S. Supreme Court

Florida Supreme Court

- 7 justices
- Governor must appoint from a list of nominees chosen by an independent panel with no confirmation required
- Serve 6-year terms with retention vote
- Mandatory retirement at age 75
- Jurisdiction is limited, can't pick and choose issues
- Sits continuously throughout the year (except for mid-summer)
- Final authority on matters of Florida law



Florida Supreme Court

V.



U.S. Supreme Court

U.S. Supreme Court

- 9 justices
- President can nominate anyone but confirmation by the Senate is required
- Appointed for life
- Has broad discretion to hear cases but takes only a very small percentage of appeals filed
- Begins year in October, ends in June
- Hears and decides cases by end of its year
- Final authority on federal constitutional issues



A losing party can appeal a Florida Supreme Court ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court if federal law or the U.S. Constitution was interpreted in the decision.

Article VI, Clause 2-The Supremacy Clause

- This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any state to the Contrary notwithstanding.

Sources

1. ["The Florida Supreme Court Building in Tallahassee, the capital city of Florida, located in the "Panhandle" portion of the state above the Gulf of Mexico"](#) from the Library of Congress has no known copyright restrictions
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