

Profile of Judge William Berger  
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Those of you who attended the university of Miami Law College of Law between 1972 and 1975 might remember a student that kept looking scruffier and scruffier. He never cut his hair or shaved throughout his three years, which is why some of you might not recognize him today as recently minted Circuit Court Judge, William J. Berger.

While Judge Berger considers himself a mainstream jurist, who will follow precedent and convention, while bringing innovative improvements to the system he serves, he also defines himself by his idiosyncratic past and his present interests outside the mainstream. On the one hand he shares a passion for fishing offshore with many of his contemporaries on and off the bench. Few, however, have been a cartoonist for the old Tropic Magazine of the Miami Herald, and author of a book of cartoons, as has Judge Berger.

The Judge has, however, taken like a fish to water, since he was elected to the Bench. He was first assigned to Circuit Civil, which covered an area of his greatest expertise, as a lifetime commercial and labor civil litigator with some of the most prestigious law firms in South Florida.

He was the third person in the then young Greenberg Traurig firm's litigation department in Miami after graduating, having been passed over for a clerk's position by then justice Arthur England of the Florida Supreme Court. Less than ten years later he was a partner of the former Justice at the Fine Jacobson Firm. Judge Berger has had the "solo" experience on two occasions, once in his practice on Miami Beach and,

more recently, in Boca Raton. Judge Berger has also served as an adjunct professor at Nova Law School in Broward County.

Berger feels that he has been welcomed to the 15<sup>th</sup> Circuit Bench with open arms by his fellow judges and especially appreciates the help of his assigned mentor Judge Jorge Labarga,, his former suitemate, Judge Thomas H. Barkdull III, Judge David F. Crowe and Judge Jeffrey A. Winikoff.

Judge Berger wants to experience all of the divisions and looks forward to his turn in Domestic Relations court in Delray, where he hopes to instill a rule of reason in the litigants and attorneys who practice before him. Judge Berger hopes that all parties and attorneys will utilize methods available through the court system, such as mediation, to reduce the issues in cases before him before taking a case to a temporary hearing or trial.

After a year at Syracuse University, during which he admits to being tear gassed during a student “Rites of Spring” celebration, he finished his undergraduate work at the University of Florida before attending the UM Law College of Law. He has been married to his wife Linda for thirty-four years. The Bergers have three daughters, a Palm Beach County Drug Counselor, a promotion director for a Jacksonville rock radio station WAPE, and a student at Boca High.

Some of his additional long time interests include baseball history and statistics, with a sub-category of Japanese Baseball. He visited some of the Japanese teams during a trip in 1988. He collects older novels and is especially fond of authors P.G. Wodehouse and Robert Howard, who's novel Conan The Barbarian, was a precursor to The Lord of The Rings trilogy.

Judge Berger looks forward to many years on the bench in Palm Beach County.