

Judge Amy Smith

Published December 2009

by David Greene

You probably already know a little bit about Judge Amy Smith. For instance, you may know that she has been a Circuit Court Judge since 2005; that she practiced insurance defense law for 15 years with Walton Lantaff Schroeder & Carson LLP; and that she began her legal career as a Palm Beach County Assistant State Attorney. You might even know that Judge Smith received her undergraduate degree in English, with a minor in Journalism, from Mercer University; that she attended graduate school for Secondary Education from the University of Florida; and that she received her J.D. from Nova Southeastern Law School. Here's an opportunity to learn some things about Judge Smith that you probably never knew.

Judge Smith was born in North Florida. However, as a "navy brat", her family promptly moved to Washington where they were stationed before moving to Japan. She enjoyed life on the base in Japan, where there was a sense of equality that did not yet exist in the civilian world. Her father's navy career also took Judge Smith to San Francisco and Cocoa Beach. After he left the navy, Judge Smith's family moved to Palm Beach County, where her father and his brother operated Billy Smith Wheel Alignment and Brakes, which still operates today as one of downtown's oldest businesses.

Her first job after college was as an English teacher at Forest Hill High School, where she worked for 5 years. After obtaining her law degree, she worked as an Assistant State Attorney, where she had the opportunity to work many lawyers who are now judges. Even then, she knew that she wanted to serve as a judge some day. Today, she gets to work with some of the very same people who worked at the State Attorney's Office and the Public Defender's Office when she was an Assistant State Attorney.

Judge Smith was involved in skydiving for about ten years. In fact, she met her husband Patrick, who was an instructor, when she was learning to "jump". She was on a national skydiving team and even jumped into the Florida Bar Convention in Orlando with Judge Rob Carney. These days, as her picture shows, she enjoys paragliding off mountains and cliffs.

In her free time, Judge Smith enjoys reading, scuba diving, white water rafting, horseback riding and kayaking. She also loves to travel. She has recently visited Thailand, Vietnam, the Far East, and has even gone bear-watching in the Alaska wilderness. She's hoping to take a trip to Polynesia and Tahiti in the future. A current neck injury has slowed her pace but she plans to resume her active lifestyle very soon.

Interestingly, Judge Smith is a foster parent ... for Yorkies. She is involved with United Yorkie Rescue, Inc. and has fostered as many as two Yorkies at a time. This is in addition to Precious and Velcro, the two of her own. She would love to see the end of puppy mills and irresponsible breeding of dogs.

Judge Smith has also served the local and state bars. She served as President of the Palm Beach County Bar Association. She also served as a member of The Florida Bar Board of Governors.

Judge Smith loves her job and described her transition the bench as "heavenly". She enjoys the constant interaction with people. While she has rotated divisions every two years, having experienced the circuit civil and family divisions, she plans to spend longer in the criminal division where she finds that everyone is friendly and gets along she believes because money is not involved. Her only frustrations are budgeting issues, such as concerns that valuable and worthwhile programs and job positions have been cut. In the end, one can see that Judge Smith truly loves being a Judge and serving the public.

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