

# Judge Jack Cox

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Published June 2010

by Terry Resk

If you see someone who looks like Judge Jack Cox cruising behind the wheel of a '65 Mustang or '67 Sunbeam Tiger, it could very well be him on his way to his getaway on the Steinhatchee River. There, and at his Hobe Sound home, he enjoys the hunting, fishing and boating he has done his entire life. With his fleet of vintage automobiles, riverboats, airboats and kayaks, he is a true Florida outdoorsman.

There is, however, an image of the judge with which the members of the bar have become more familiar. Buried behind a stack of files, he is the epitome of a man who loves his work and delves into each case with zeal and commitment. He even has an apartment in West Palm Beach so that he will be closer to the courthouse. For someone who did not have any attorneys in his family, or even know any attorney as a youngster, he is now firmly entrenched in the legal system.

Judge Cox was born in Jacksonville, and had an early lesson on life's injustices. When he was three, his father died of polio – just one year before the vaccine was made available. He lived in Georgia with his grandmother for a short time before moving to Palm Beach Shores with his mother, stepfather, sister and stepbrother. There, he attended Riviera Beach Elementary School, Howell L. Watkins Junior High, and Rivera Beach High School, and concluded his undergraduate education studying math and social sciences at Florida State University. After graduation, he returned to the Palm Beaches and taught math at one of the local public schools he had attended.

Judge Cox did not even consider law as a career until some friends in the local Bar urged him in that direction. Due to their persuasiveness, he applied to law school and attended Cumberland School of Law in Birmingham, Alabama before returning to Palm Beach County. Back home, he practiced with the well regarded firm which was then known as Levy Plisco. His primary focus for many years was construction litigation, and he particularly enjoyed his role of handling the firm's appeals. It was this strong interest in the appellate process which led to his decision to become a judge.

In September of 2009, Governor Crist appointed Judge Cox to the circuit court bench. Since assuming this position, Judge Cox has been impressed – though not surprised – by the quality of preparation and level of professionalism exhibited by the members of our bar. There are many aspects to his career which he finds rewarding. He relishes the opportunity to learn new things with each case, and enjoys the camaraderie among his fellow judges.

Pressed to identify anything about his current job which he would like to change, it would be the volume of work. Since his goal is to analyze everything presented to him, he would like to be able to devote even more time to certain issues.

Mary, the judge's wife of approximately 25 years, continues the nursing career she has had at Good Samaritan Hospital since they met on a blind date. Now that their son, Michael, an administrative hearing officer in Tallahassee, and their daughter, Katlin, a student at Indian River Community College, have their own children, he and Mary may find more time for their boats and classic cars. Having spent a little time with the judge, however, I suspect that he will use any additional time he may have to work his way through those files.

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