

Judge Jeffrey Winikoff

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by Michael Gora

It seems perfectly natural that Circuit Judge Jeffrey Winikoff assumed his circuit court seat in January of 2003 as the result of an election, by nature he is a very political animal. Having served for years as the President of the West Boca Raton Community Council from 1997 until his election, Judge Winikoff was used to exercising the political muscle of that organization for the benefit of unincorporated West Boca in such a way that the rest of Boca, South County and Palm Beach County had to sit up and take notice.

He tells you that what he misses the most about being a judge is the political hurley burley of community and party politics, but he says it in such a genuine heartfelt way that you know that he has truly left that world behind when he donned his black robes.

He speaks of his new role with great respect for the office and his fellow judges, who are schooling him. He speaks especially fondly of his suite mate at the courthouse, Judge David Crowe, but agrees that all of the other judges have gone out of their way to be friendly and helpful.

At lunch he insists that he be called Jeff, and states that there is really only one rule in his courtroom, "that the lawyers act professionally to the bench and to one another." As a long time securities litigator Judge Winikoff knows that being prepared is an important part of professionalism, and reports that he has not been surprised or disappointed by the Palm Beach County Bar.

When asked if he thinks that he will have a favorite division, he denies the thought, stating that he looks forward to, eventually, doing all of it. He is sure that he will not mind being reversed, and is comfortable that he will always have a panel of experienced judges backing him up. "Getting it right," he states, "is more important than being right."

He loves the work but claims that he is spending more time in the office than when he was in practice. He hates the commute from his West Boca home that he says is "long, even for an ex-cab driver." When he arrives home Judge Winikoff is well met by his wife Ellen, a long time teacher in the Palm Beach County School System and his two sons. Although he loves his job he states that his favorite title is not Circuit Court Judge, but husband and father.

Judge Winikoff comes to the bench from his law firm, Stein, Rosenberg, & Winikoff, P.A. where he specialized not only in securities law but in condominium and home owners association law.

Born in The Bronx, New York and raised in Spring Valley, New York, Winikoff has a Bachelor of Arts degree in American Civilization from Brandeis University, and MBA from Babson College, and a Juris Doctor, with high honors, from Cleveland State University. While a civil prosecutor for the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in Washington, D.C. he did post graduate work in securities at Georgetown University Law Center.

Judge Winikoff looks forward to serving the people of Palm Beach County for many years to come.

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