

Judge Laura Johnson

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by Marianne Rantala

When you walk into the courtroom and see Judge Laura Johnson on the bench, you see a cool, calm and collected member of the judiciary. She is very thoughtful about the cases before her and tries to do the right thing. Judge Johnson believes that the defendants appearing before her in county criminal court are “mostly good people who’ve made mistakes.” She is frustrated by the insufficient good mental health services available for those people, particularly the indigent defendants. Judge Johnson states that this is especially frustrating when young adult “kids” are admitting they have problems, are asking for help and the court is limited by these insufficient referral resources. Judge Johnson is very reflective and states, “and we wonder why people come back” to the courts time and time again.

Judge Johnson feels fortunate to be in the position of judge. She learns something new every day from the great people around her, including her staff and court personnel, as well as the lawyers appearing before her. Judge Johnson feels like her “job here is to serve the needs of everyone who is here” and always “appreciates constructive criticism and input from attorneys.”

Although Judge Johnson was born and lived in Atlanta until the tender age of two or three, she was essentially raised here in Palm Beach Gardens. She attended the Palm Beach County public school system, along with her brother and sister, and ultimately moved an entire eight miles north to Jupiter! Her parents still live in Palm Beach Gardens and recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Her sister, however, moved on to Atlanta and her brother to Seattle.

Judge Johnson is married to local personal injury attorney, Bill Johnson, to whom she has been married for 20 years. It sounds like they’re following the great example of her parents! The Johnsons have three teenagers: Robert (“Burr”), Julianne, and Caroline. Their oldest child, Burr, just started at Florida State University. Burr appears to be following in the footsteps of his parents, both of whom are Florida State University alumni. Two of Bill’s brothers are also attorneys. So was his father, who had previously been the elected state attorney, as well as a circuit court judge. Maybe the Johnson children will follow along into the practice of law!

The Johnsons' lives revolve around their kids and family. That includes attending football and soccer games, dance recitals, playing tennis, and constantly having a "houseful of rambunctious teenagers!" The family lives on the Loxahatchee River and they enjoy boating, fishing and snorkeling. They also travel quite a bit. When Judge Johnson gets a chance, she even sneaks in some yoga and working out at the gym.

The beginning of Judge Johnson's legal career started even before she attended the law school of FSU, while she was still an undergrad majoring in finance. She acquired a job working with the clerk at the Florida State House of Representatives. There she met many house staff attorneys. That job led to another job with the Ways and Means Committee. Judge Johnson found it a great experience to be exposed to many lawyers at those jobs and found it so interesting that she continued working there even through law school. After graduation, Judge Johnson worked briefly at the Office of the Attorney General. Then she moved on to the State Attorney's Office where she worked for 19 years. There she tried hundreds of cases and became chief of the domestic violence unit while overseeing numerous county court cases.

The Palm Beach County Court bench is lucky to have a judge with such a wealth of experience and we wish her well in the coming years!

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