

Judge Leonard Hanser

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A history buff is an easy way to describe Judge Leonard Hanser. A Floridian since birth, Judge Hanser's roots reach all the way back to Miami in the 1920's, as his grandfather ran a clothing store on Flagler Street in Miami. Thus, it is not surprising that his love of history began early. As a youngster, he would read anything that had to do with World War II and readily admits that this era is still his favorite topic to delve into. Judge Hanser's family also shares his love of history. His wife, Lisa, who was his high school sweetheart, teaches civics to seventh graders. He has two children. His son, Daniel, has a degree from the University of Florida in history and is pursuing a career in radio sports broadcasting. His daughter, Jessica, is a graduate of Yale University having obtained her doctorate in history. Her area of specialty is British commerce; specifically, commerce between Britain and China in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In addition, she speaks fluent Mandarin Chinese. Jessica also recently received a Fulbright Scholarship to study at the University of Hong Kong.

While in Asia, Jessica will also be teaching at the University of Singapore as an assistant professor. As expected, Judge Hanser is proud of his children's accomplishments, including the fact that they both graduated from Florida public high schools. Judge Hanser graduated high school in West Palm Beach and then obtained a degree in political science from the University of Florida. He went straight to law school, completing his juris doctorate at the University of Virginia in 1977. Upon graduation from law school, Judge Hanser returned to Florida, where he eventually opened his own private practice working primarily in civil law where he practiced real estate and bankruptcy litigation and drafted wills and trusts. After sixteen years in private practice, Judge Hanser was looking to do something different and saw an advertisement in the local newspaper for a magistrate. He applied, and the rest is history. In 1993, he became a magistrate for the Circuit Court. Thereafter, in 2009, Judge Hanser was appointed to the County Court where he presides over criminal matters. Judge Hanser is also actively involved with the Palm Beach County Chapter of the American Inns of Court, where he served as President. The American Inns of Court was established in 1985 by Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court Warren Burger. The Inns of Court consist of a group of judges, practicing attorneys, law professors and students who meet to discuss and promote legal ethics and professionalism. Currently, there are over 400 Inns of the Court chapters through-out the country. Outside of the legal realm, Judge Hanser is still an avid reader of non-fiction. He is currently reading a book by Associate Justice Stephen Breyer regarding Justice Breyer's view on interpreting the United States Constitution. Although he has retired from running marathons, Judge Hanser is a dedicated runner,

chalking up twenty-three miles a week. He enjoys playing classical piano pieces, such as Mozart and Beethoven, and is currently working on a duet with another attorney who is a cellist. He also enjoys traveling, having recently visited London and Eastern Europe. Judge Hanser's favorite part about being on the bench is having the ability to interact with lawyers and having the opportunity to contemplate legal issues in criminal court. He wants to put people at ease in his courtroom, so that he can get the best out of each attorney appearing before him. He is a staunch believer that the court need not make an attorney nervous any more nervous than he or she already is, because better legal arguing leads to better judging. Judge Hanser is concerned about reductions to the state budget for the judiciary and how that impacts people's access to the courts. Judge Hanser is also puzzled over the attacks on public employees, and has found the quality of work performed by public sector employees as good as the quality of work performed by private sector employees. Finally, the best advice that Judge Hanser can give attorneys is to be prepared to argue your case, to listen to the questions that the judge asks you, and to answer the specific questions asked. When asked how he would want attorneys to remember him as a judge, Judge Hanser stated that he wanted to be remembered for allowing each party the opportunity to argue their cases before him and that he had ruled reasonably and fairly.

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