

Judge Timothy McCarthy

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by Yvette Trelles

Born and raised in freezing temperatures in Buffalo, New York, Judge Timothy McCarthy is more than happy to call West Palm Beach, Florida his home now. Judge McCarthy is the middle son of five children born to a father of Irish decent and mother of German decent.

Tim, along with his brothers and sister attended a parochial grade school and then he went to a Jesuit High School. Both his parents were born into poor families and forced to quit school and go to work before they could finish high school. They were both hard workers that Judge McCarthy learned to follow at a young age. In high school, Judge McCarthy played hockey and football. As a result, he subsequently had two knee surgeries making him ineligible for the Vietnam era draft. He states he didn't concentrate much on high school academics and therefore, when it came time for college, he barely made it in. His grades were no better in his freshman year. In fact, he dropped out of college to work as a millwright helper in the open-hearth furnaces at the Bethlehem Steel Plant in Lackawanna, New York.

Judge McCarthy will tell you the steel mill job was the nastiest job he has ever had. He was exposed to all types of iron, steel and chemicals heated to about two thousand degrees. Watching so many tragedies of workers getting killed at the steel mills or dying from lung diseases helped Judge McCarthy get his priorities in order. He returned to college where his grades improved drastically. Judge McCarthy's father's dream was for one of his children to attend Notre Dame and so being the good Catholic Irishman that he was, he decided law school was for him and Notre Dame was the place to be. He paid his way through Indiana State and Notre Dame Law School with student loans and worked in just about any job he could find which would fit into his class schedule. He worked as a construction laborer, carpenter, roofer, waiter, short order cook, dishwasher, bar tender, cab driver, hotel clerk, professional pall bearer, gas station attendant, in fact, the list is almost endless. While in law school, Judge McCarthy was roommates with none other than Mike Burman. It was through this friendship that Judge McCarthy would later come to Florida.

Following law school in 1971, Judge McCarthy began working as an Assistant US Attorney in South Bend, Indiana. In 1972, Judge McCarthy traveled to West Palm Beach to his old friend's, Mike Burman's, wedding and two months later was offered a job in sunny Florida. He recalls (then Executive Assistant State Attorney) Dan Hurley calling on a blustery February day in South Bend and asking him to work for David Blutworth. Three months later, Tim married Kathleen whom he had met in law school. They decided the weather was much better in Florida and moved to Palm Beach County. Judge McCarthy soon became a

felony division chief in Judge MacIntosh's division under state attorney, David Blutworth. "Judge Mac was a very strict Judge. He was tough on all the lawyers," recalls McCarthy. Judge McCarthy attributes his ability to handle cases so comfortably on the bench to his many years as a criminal prosecutor as well as civil trial lawyer.

While working for the U.S. Attorney's Office in Indiana and the State Attorney's office in Palm Beach County, Judge McCarthy tried many state criminal cases. Finally, in 1975, Judge McCarthy made the jump to civil cases and began working for the firm Levy, Plisco and Reiter, where he worked on matrimonial cases as well as personal injury defense under Joe Reiter. Judge McCarthy later became a partner at Perry, McCarthy, and Cox as well as Merola, McCarthy and Cox. Finally, in 1991, Judge McCarthy went to work with Boose, Casey, et al where he was a partner until his selection as a Palm Beach County Circuit Judge in 1998.

His life revolves around his daughters, Amy (26), Meghan (23), and Kate (18). Judge McCarthy and Kathleen McCarthy were divorced in 1990, however, he stayed very close with his daughters. In fact, his middle daughter, Meghan, currently lives with him. He is very proud of all three girls and spends every minute that he can with them. When asked about his hobbies, he says his daughters are his hobbies and his life. "I had children so that I would have someone to play with when I grew up!" He goes scuba diving often with his youngest daughter, Kate, and enjoys learning about "costume design" from Kate who is currently a senior at the Dreyfoos School of the Arts. Judge McCarthy says he is still waiting for that "Armani Suit" which he knows Kate will one day make for him!

Judge McCarthy has enjoyed being on the bench immensely. He says the stress level as compared to a civil trial lawyer is about ten percent. He was initially in Delray Beach in family court where he said it is tough to make rulings because the cases are so emotional and fact intensive. His mission of having to divide silverware, pots/pans as well as children proved to be a difficult task. He is much happier making rulings in the Circuit Civil division and relies heavily on his twenty three years of civil practice which has enabled him to feel so comfortable on the bench.

Judge McCarthy is very proud of each of his daughters and their accomplishments. He is looking forward to the upcoming years of watching them flourish as well as his continuing his dedication and compassion of serving us on the bench.

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