

## **Judge Sarah Shullman Profile**

*Written by Megan Wegerif who is a member of the Judicial Relations Committee. She is a civil litigation attorney with Reid Burman Lebedeker Xenick and Pepin.*

Although 2020 has been a tenuous year, one reason for the Palm Beach County community to celebrate is the appointment of Judge Sarah Shullman to the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit. With her stellar education and diverse background in private and public practice, Judge Shullman is a great and valuable addition to our bench. Possibly even more important, especially given this precarious time, we will all benefit from Judge Shullman's character, demeanor, optimism and heart for public service – all of which are exemplary.

The qualities that have (and will continue to) make her a great judge – commitment to hard work, enjoyment of learning, and independence of thought – are the same qualities Judge Shullman has carried since childhood. Ironically, these same traits nearly stole her away from the legal field altogether. As a child, the important adults in Judge Shullman's life were convinced, and constantly attempting to convince her, that she would make a great lawyer one day. Given her fierce desire to forge her own path, Judge Shullman set out to prove them all wrong, and to prove to herself that a life in business was where she was meant to be.

Judge Shullman was highly successful in her earlier pursuits, obtaining her business degree with honors from the University of Florida. Immediately upon graduating, she joined one of the prestigious “Big Four” professional firms (PricewaterhouseCoopers). It was at this time, and in the midst of starting out in her new and successful career, that Judge Shullman finally accepted her true calling was in the law. So, while working full-time, she studied for the LSAT. She was accepted to Georgetown Law, where she graduated *magna cum laude*.

Judge Shullman met her husband, Alan, while at UF. They stayed together while Judge Shullman attended Georgetown Law in Washington D.C. Afterwards, they decided that Palm Beach County, and Wellington specifically, is the place they wanted to call home. Since that time, they have added two girls, now both teens, to their family. In speaking to Judge Shullman, it is obvious that her daughters and family are the grounding beacons of love, light, joy and respite in her otherwise very demanding life and career.

Upon moving to Florida after law school, Judge Shullman practiced at Steel Hector & Davis (later merged into Squire Sanders & Dempsey) where she focused on complex business litigation matters. After seven years in private practice, finding herself once again at a crossroads, Judge Shullman made the jump into public service, joining the Florida Office of the Attorney General. For the next several years she investigated and prosecuted the rampant deceptive trade and telemarketing practices plaguing Floridians. Unsurprisingly, Judge Shullman quickly rose through the ranks, first becoming Assistant Bureau Chief and, within a couple years of that, becoming the South Florida Bureau Chief, where she managed approximately 35 staff including attorneys and investigators.

Likewise, since relocating to Palm Beach in the early 2000s, Judge Shullman has been a pillar of the community and spent countless hours working and volunteering for legal and non-legal

causes she holds dear. The positions she has held and accolades she has received are far too numerous to expound upon here in deserving detail. They range from being a long-term board member with the Boys and Girls Club of Wellington, to her time on the Consumer Protection and Grievance Committees of the Florida Bar, as well as serving on the Board of Directors of the Florida Association for Women Lawyers, Palm Beach County Chapter. She served as a Volunteer Advocate on the Palm Beach County Commission on Ethics before being appointed as a Commissioner, and eventually, the Chair of that Commission. Not one to shy-away from a heavy schedule or learning something new, prior to starting her career with the Florida Office of the Attorney General, Judge Shullman served as Co-Chair of the 2014 Bench Bar Conference and as Co-Chair of the Committee for Diversity and Inclusion and the Membership Committee of the Palm Beach County Bar Association. She currently serves on the Judicial Relations and Professionalism Committees.

In closing, it is abundantly clear that Judge Shullman is exactly the type of jurist the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit needs at this time. To the community members that will appear before her, Judge Shullman will be compassionate, respectful and willing to listen. Judge Shullman's advice to the legal community – be courteous to one another, as unprofessional behavior can drown out a strong legal argument. One final recommendation to the lawyers – take pride in your work and submissions to the court. It is Judge Shullman's intention to review everything that is submitted to her, and there is no doubt that she will meet that goal!