

Submitted by Gerardo J. Rodriguez-Albizu on behalf of the Judicial Relations Committee

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The appointment of Judge Robert Panse to the Palm Beach County Court Bench marks a new chapter in his dedicated career to public service. A product of public school education, Judge Panse believes strongly in serving his community, exudes enthusiasm for serving on the County Court Bench, and promotes civility among the Bar, the community, and judicial personnel.

Judge Panse and his two brothers were raised by his Mom and Dad in Westhampton, Long Island, New York. Since the Sixth Grade, Judge Panse knew that he wanted to become a lawyer, recognizing at an early age the importance of knowing one's legal rights and obligations, and having been raised with a strong sense of fairness and standing up for what is "right."

He graduated from Westhampton Beach High School as Salutatorian (second in class). In 1979 Judge Panse earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and a Minor in Business Administration from the State University of New York at Albany. Judge Panse paid his way through school, holding an array of jobs from cutting lawns and landscaping to building maintenance, parking cars, bartending and other restaurant work, and serving as an ocean life guard (his strong work ethic was exhibited as a youth, as one summer job he had for years required him to ride his bicycle 15 miles each day). Of the many jobs he held early in life, his proudest accomplishment was training for and passing the New York State Civil Service lifeguard exam in 55 degree water (one of the most rigorous life guard exams in the country, second only to California).

In the late 1960's the Judge and his family moved to Merritt Island, Florida, where his father took a job with NASA (Grumman Aerospace) building the lunar module used to land Apollo astronauts on the moon. Judge Panse vividly recalls as an elementary school boy seeing the night sky light up bright orange and the ground shaking as the Saturn V rockets took flight. Upon returning to Long Island, New York in 1968, he set his goal to become a lawyer and return to Florida where he envisioned enjoying the warm Florida sunshine.

Judge Panse returned to Florida in 1979 enrolling at the Florida State University, College of Law. He became the first lawyer in his family after graduating with his law degree in 1982. Judge Panse moved to Palm Beach County as a new lawyer where he worked as an Assistant State Attorney in the Economic Crimes Division prosecuting numerous high profile cases and then in the Felony Division, trying 35 cases in three years while at the State Attorney's Office.

In 1985 Judge Panse left the State Attorney's Office and joined Paxton, Crow, Bragg, Smith, and Keyser where he handled personal injury and wrongful death cases. Paxton Crow proved to be an incubator for Judges having spawned five active judges, including Judge Gregory Keyser, Judge David Crow, Judge Sandra Bosso-Pardo, Judge Robert Hawley (Circuit Judge, St. Lucie County), and Judge Robert Panse.

After working in private practice for seven years, Judge Panse became in-house counsel for the South Florida Water Management District. There, Judge Panse litigated cases throughout the sixteen counties in South Florida comprising the South Florida Water Management District's jurisdiction. His experience covered a wide variety of issues, including personal injury, wrongful death, eminent domain, inverse condemnation, environmental enforcement, public records litigation, breach of contracts, discrimination

and employment law. Judge Panse worked at the South Florida Water Management District for nineteen years before being appointed to the County Court Bench by Governor Rick Scott.

Judge Panse's diverse education and employment background prepared him well for serving on the County Court Bench, which is affectionately called the "People's Court." He strongly believes in the importance of all parties, lawyers, and court personnel being treated fairly and with respect and dignity. Judge Panse possesses a keen ability to identify important factual and legal issues without undue delay, while at the same time allowing the parties to appreciate that they have been heard and had their day in court. He works tirelessly with his excellent judicial assistant and is proud of the case management system they have implemented. Judge Panse understands the importance of the role he serves in the judicial system and every day strives to fulfill his responsibilities with honor, dignity, and integrity.

Judge Panse has three children (college, high school and middle school) of whom he speaks very fondly. He is also proud of their accomplishments to date. He believes it is important to stay physically fit and tries to work out five days a week, alternating weight and cardio training. In his spare time Judge Panse enjoys golfing, fishing, boating, and traveling.