



Judicial Profile-Howard C. Berman

By: Esther A. Zaretsky

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Howard C. Berman was invested as County Court Judge on December 5, 1986. A resident of Lake Worth, Florida, Judge Berman was former Chief of Economic Crime and Felony Division of the State Attorney's Office. He was assistant Dean at Nova University law Center from 1977 through 1979 and taught civil and criminal law courses at the Palm Beach Junior College Policy Academy and Criminal Law Center.

Judge Berman received his J.D. from Nova University Center for the Study of Law in 1977; his B.A. in Political Science in 1973 from Tulane University with a Masters from Indiana University. His published articles include, "Warrantless Entries and Searches of Hotel-Motel Rooms", the Advisor, Nov.-Dec. 1981; and Florida Bar, Criminal Law Section Newsletter, Vol 5, No. 1, Sept. 1982. He is a member of the American Bar Association, Florida and Palm Beach County Bar Associations, Chairman Robing Committee, American Trial Lawyers Association, National District Attorney's Association and Board of Directors Nova Law Center Alumni Association. Judge Berman is also on the committee for Sunfest '87.

WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR INITIAL IMPRESSIONS ON THE BENCH?

Basically, my first impression is the large volume of cases that are moved through the Court system. A major concern of mine is that each litigant gets the time and the justice that is required for the lawsuit.

WHAT DEMANDS HAVE DIFFERED FROM YOUR EXPECTATIONS AS JUDGE?

Question 2.

'Since I have been involved in the Criminals Justice System for the past 7 years, I knew what to expect. In County Court, the litigants are not as prepared to know what is going on, and therefore I feel that more of my time should be devoted to explaining to them the rights that they are entitled to. This is especially true in criminal matters when the defendants are not represented by an attorney. I make an extra effort to make sure that before they enter a plea of guilty, they know exactly what all the ramifications are. One of the differences in being a Judge as opposed to being an advocate, is that decisions need to be made immediately.

WHAT IMPROVEMENT CAN YOU RECOMMEND FOR THE COURT?

I suggest the Court needs more Judges. I also want to impress upon the attorneys to be more prepared in talking with their clients before coming into Court.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

To continue the quality of the judiciary here in the Palm Beach County and hopefully continue to be part of that by being a good judge.