

Judicial Profile: Judge Paul Damico
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October 2002

Celebrating the first anniversary of his appointment to the bench, Judge Paul Damico considers himself a "baby judge." Instead of wanting to be a fireman when he grew up, he was intrigued by television shows about lawyers and the courtroom. A 1986 graduate of Florida State University School of Law, Judge Damico grew up being told that becoming a lawyer or doctor was an incredible goal. Fortunately for those of us in Palm Beach County, he had the fortitude to press on and reach his goals. He is the youngest of two children and the first lawyer in the family.

After graduating from Florida State University, he went to work for the State Attorney's office under the leadership of David Blutworth. He continued to work there once Barry Krischer became the State Attorney. Judge Damico has tried all types of criminal cases from misdemeanors to first degree murders. He states that the State Attorney's office was a great place to learn to litigate and to learn to be a professional. While there he became board certified as a criminal trial lawyer.

In preparation for seeking a judgeship, Judge Damico left the State Attorney's office and joined the staff of the Public Defender's office. He believes that having had the opportunity to practice as a prosecutor and defense lawyer he is now better equipped and more effective as a neutral judge sitting on the criminal bench. Having been a litigator he knows what the attorneys are going through in preparation for trial, during trial and after trial.

Outside the courtroom, Judge Damico continues to be an adjunct professor at Barry University teaching two civil courses and five criminal courses. He enjoys teaching the classes and interacting with the students. He views county court as a training ground for young attorneys and feels that his teaching experience assist him in his day to day interactions with the new attorneys. He is always willing to offer constructive criticism to any young attorney who requests it after a trial.

There is one very simple rule, which applies to everyone who enters Judge Damico's courtroom, "give due respect to everyone." This is his life philosophy and he believes that it is important that everyone has mutual respect for each other. It doesn't matter if it is the inmate sitting in the jury box waiting for their case to be called, the prosecutor, defense attorney, corrections officers, general public or himself. He understands that some of the people who will appear before him are there just because they made a mistake and no matter what, they deserve to be treated with respect because they are human beings.

Judge Damico is very involved in civic activities. He has served as President of the Kiwanis- Central and belongs to numerous other organizations. Professionally, he is admitted to practice before the Northern, Middle and Southern District Courts in Florida, Washington, D.C., and the United States Supreme Court. He says that he joined every bar that he could, just in case he needed it in the future.

For the past ten years, he and his family have worshiped at Palm Beach Community Church where he is an active member. His spiritual experience had a tremendous impact on his life both professionally and personally. When asked what was the hardest decision he has ever had to make, Judge Damico talks about trying death penalty cases and having to make the decision on whether or not to seek the death penalty and how to handle the case.

Ten years ago, Judge Damico married his best friend and soul mate, Jennifer. His face lights up when he speaks about her qualities as a woman, wife and mother. He describes her as a great woman, who works hard running the household and caring for him and their children. They are the proud parents of Alec who is 7 and Kyle who is 5.

When asked what are his future aspirations, Judge Damico laughs. He says that he never thinks about his future aspirations until asked that question. His response is simply that he

intends to continue to work on being the best county court judge that he can be. He sees this as a God given opportunity that he prays about a lot. He's just going to continue to enjoy the work and the people he gets to work with everyday.