

JUDICIAL PROFILE OF JUDGE KENNETH STERN
by Yvette Trelles
April 2002

The Honorable Kenneth D. Stern was raised in Philadelphia and moved to Cleveland, Ohio as a teenager. He is an only child and was very close to his parents growing up. The most important thing to his parents was for Judge Stern to attend college and therefore, he fulfilled that dream for them. . . and then

Judge Stern attended
majored in Government and
State University. When asked
school, he smiled and stated, “It
people’s rights.” During
Stern was a Legal Aide in the



some!

Ohio University where he
received his JD from Cleveland
why he wanted to attend law
was important to fight for
undergraduate studies, Judge
Ohio Attorney General’s office

in Cleveland, Ohio. Because his parents were not well off, Judge Stern worked his way through law school by clerking in a law office. In fact, he chose Cleveland State University to attend law school because it was one of the few law schools in his area that he could attend at night in order to be able to work full time during the day. His dedication and perseverance allowed him to stay focused and committed to his goals of finishing law school.

Throughout the four years of night law school, not only did Judge Stern clerk in a law office but he also worked as a reporter for the Daily Legal News (which is much like the Daily Business Review). Judge Stern has an impressive employment background in that he has tried the gamut of cases starting with civil all the way through criminal, large and small. Right out of law school, Judge Stern was a law clerk to the Honorable Judge Joseph Silbert for the Court of Appeals of Ohio, Eighth Appellate District. Following his two-year clerkship, Judge Stern began working for the United States Department of Justice in the Antitrust Division. He states his work through those five years at the Department of Justice was fascinating. With the antitrust work he found a new respect for business and joined a corporate law department. However, he stated the life of a corporate attorney would not allow him the ability to do extensive courtroom work that

is where his passion lay.

So, after continuing to do anti-trust work as well as securities and other corporate legal matters with Dorr-Oliver, Inc. from 1974-1978, Judge Stern finally took the initiative to enjoy the sunny climate of Florida.

He was offered a job with the Office of the United States Attorney, Southern District of Florida as an Assistant US Attorney. His job in Miami initially was to be a civil litigator, and he eventually became a criminal prosecutor.

While at the US Attorney's office, Judge Stern handled a wide variety of cases. He found his work to be exciting and stimulating, as he was constantly in the courtroom facing new challenges. He handled anything from Federal Tort Claims including a medical malpractice defense, injunctions and representing various governmental agencies to prosecuting criminal cases involving drugs, bank robberies, firearm violations. . . you name it, Judge Stern prosecuted it!

With his wide variety of experience, Judge Stern finally made it to Boca Raton where he had wanted to practice from the beginning. He was hired by the law firm of Lavalle, Wochna, Rutherford and Brown in 1981 where he specialized in commercial and tort litigation as well as criminal defense. After two-and-a-half years, he opened his own solo law practice doing both criminal and civil litigation. His most famous (or most amusing) case was a copyright infringement case which he tried in Federal Court famously named the "Miami Mice Case" in 1985. He defended people who satirized the Miami Vice Television show with tee shirts picturing two cartoon mice with a Miami skyline in the background and the words "Miami Mice". Universal City Studios sued for an injunction, and with less than 24 hours to prepare, he won the case. The case is reported at 622 F. Supp. 201 (D.C. Fla 1985). His tenacity and intelligence won him that case and soon after he went into solo practice. Judge Stern will tell you he loved his practice. The cases were so eclectic because he handled state and federal as well as civil and criminal cases.

Since 1988, Judge Stern had desired to be a judge in Palm Beach County. He was twice nominated to Governor Chiles for the Circuit bench. Finally in 1999, his aspirations came true and he became a County Court Judge in the Criminal Division. One thing is certain when

speaking with Judge Stern...he loves his job! In fact, like in his practice, he enjoys the eclectic nature in that each case is just a little different. In the Bar's 2000 Judicial Evaluation submitted by the County's lawyers, Judge Stern was ranked high in all categories and joined Judge Barry Cohen as highest among County Court Judges in enforcement of professionalism. If you have ever watched him or practiced in the courtroom before him, you would have to agree, his professional nature as well as intelligence, commands all lawyers, jurors, and public admire his ability to be a just and good judge.

Judge Stern finds it very gratifying to be a judge. He states he appreciates the good and the bad he has to deal with while on the bench. As a County Court Judge, Judge Stern disliked when attorneys did not provide the law and unfortunately found it happened too often. What he liked the most about County Court was the ability to affect people's lives. Many defendants who are new to this system and capable of being turned around gave Judge Stern the ability to make a positive impact on them.

In January, 2002, Judge Stern was elevated to the Circuit Court where he sits in the Criminal Division. As for Circuit Criminal, he loves it! The level of lawyering is phenomenal. Not only does he appreciate the lawyers' skill, but he states the sophistication of the issues and the challenges he faces daily make his job exciting every moment. When asked what he least likes about Circuit Criminal, Judge Stern paused and stated, "there isn't anything not to like....yet."

Judge Stern feels blessed to be married to Pamela Farthing Stern whom he married 6 1/2 years ago. She is a financial planner with Lincoln Financial Advisors. Pamela has two daughters from a previous marriage, Shelly and Laurie, whom Judge Stern loves dearly. In addition, Judge Stern has two sons, Oren, who is 29 living in Las Vegas and Adam, 27, living in Houston. Judge Stern's hobbies include tennis, golf, and reading as well as spending as much time as possible with his family.

Congratulations on your elevation to the Circuit Court, Judge Stern. We wish you much success and hope you enjoy the many years to come!