Judge Reid Parker Scott II is a local success story. He grew up in Palm Beach County, attending Lantana Elementary School, Lantana Middle School, and Atlantic Community High School. He then went to Gainesville to attend the University of Florida where he studied Clinical Psychology. He enjoyed performing research through UF’s Center for the Study of Emotion and Attention and explored various programs to obtain a Master’s or PhD degree. However, none of those programs felt like the “right fit” so he then began visiting law schools. During his visit to Stetson Law School, he gravitated towards the close-knit environment and beautiful campus in the Gulfport area.

As a law student, Judge Scott initially thought he would practice corporate or bankruptcy law, but then received some pivotal exposure to the courtroom aspect of the law through his Trial Advocacy and Evidence courses at Stetson. An internship had him considering a career as a litigator focused on family law, and he had a memorable lunch with an experienced family law practitioner, Ky Koch. Mr. Koch recommended three years as a prosecutor as a foundation to any career as a litigator. The Palm Beach County community is lucky that Judge Scott followed that advice and began the application process to become a prosecutor.

At that time, Judge Ted Booras led the committee that interviewed candidates for prosecutor for Palm Beach County, and Judge Scott was thrilled he eventually received the opportunity to serve the community he grew up in. While working as an Assistant State Attorney, Judge Scott fell in love with being a litigator and prosecutor. He quickly moved up the ranks prosecuting sex crimes in the Special Victims Unit and serving as the S.V.U. Chief.

In 2014, he was promoted to the Homicide Unit, where he prosecuted hundreds of homicide cases through 2023. He learned a lot from other prosecutors, including Andrew Slater, Aleathea McRoberts, Terri Skiles, Jill Richstone, and (now Judge) Cheryl Carracuzo. Judge Scott ultimately served at the highest levels in the Palm Beach County criminal justice system, working as both the Homicide Unit Chief and Grand Jury Chief. When speaking to Judge Scott about his time as a prosecutor, it is clear he is proud of his accomplishments making the Palm Beach County community safer and grateful for the leadership of the various State Attorneys he served under.

In 2023, he recognized an opportunity to expand on his public service due to a number of open seats in the judiciary resulting from various retirements and promotions. Judge Scott is grateful that he followed in the footsteps of other former prosecutors such as Judge Lauren Burke, Judge John Parnofiello, Judge Luis Delgado and Judge Daliah Weiss, who were each instrumental in answering his questions about the potential career change.

After braving the judicial appointment process, he was appointed by Governor Ron DeSantis to the Circuit Court of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit on May 17, 2023. Judge Scott currently serves the community in the Circuit Civil Division. Having only practiced criminal law before his appointment to the bench, the new subject matter of his Circuit Civil caseload has added an additional twist to the inherent challenge of shifting from advocate to neutral.

It is clear that Judge Scott works hard in Division AH, adding various comforts of home to his Chambers. A lifelong Miami Dolphins fan, his office has Dolphins memorabilia adorning the walls. He also has a simple, but impressive, exercise equipment set up in his Chambers, including heavy kettlebells, a pull-up bar, and a yoga mat. He often skips lunch and uses his lunch break for a quick workout to clear his mind and boost his energy. Judge Scott is a fitness enthusiast, competing in Brazilian jujitsu and practicing yoga on nights and weekends. At home, he has a wife, three children, and a dog, Pepper, an Australian-Labradoodle mix who sometimes quietly spends her days on the couch in Judge Scott’s chambers.

When practicing before Judge Scott, it pays to submit the materials well in advance. He firmly believes that if a motion is important enough for a lawyer to charge his or client to draft it, then it is important enough to give the judge a fair opportunity to carefully review it in advance of the hearing. Therefore, Judge Scott will postpone a hearing if either side submits materials without complying with the deadlines within the Divisional Instructions or the order specially setting the hearing. The Divisional Instructions can be found at https://www.15thcircuit.com/division/ah/instructions#special-set

Judge Scott is passionate about fairness in the litigation process. While he appreciates it is an adversarial system, he wants lawyers to avoid gamesmanship on discovery issues. And he urges lawyers to always pick up the phone for a good faith “meet and confer” since phone conversations and face-to-face communication are more productive than sending yet another email. Overall, Judge Scott works hard to ensure that his preparation and rulings are fair to both sides to avoid disenfranchising any litigants who appear before him.

From Lantana Elementary School to the Circuit Court bench, Judge Scott’s story is impressive, but his high energy and dedication to public service gives you a sense that his story as a judge has only just begun.

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