

## JUDICIAL PROFILE: JUDGE SANTO DiGANGI

By: Lauren Johnson\*

In this fair Circuit, where we lay our scene,  
From ancient lawyer break to new jurist,  
A lover of family and music,  
Intends to make civil practice, civil.

Judge Santo DiGangi loves living a life of service. Serving as a loving husband and father to his family, serving as great support for his friends, serving as a judge to the community of Palm Beach County, and sometimes even serving as comedic relief when necessary (or not necessary)—hence, the iambic pentameter opening.

Judge DiGangi was born to Sicilian immigrant parents in Queens, New York, as a first generation Italian-American. His family moved to West Palm Beach when he was only 9 years old, and as he grew up in Florida, he fell in love with it. For high school, Judge DiGangi attended Dreyfoos School of the Arts, focusing on music and rising to become an All-State trombonist. Wanting to continue his “music career,” he went on to join the Fightin’ Gator Marching Band—the Pride of the Sunshine—at the University of Florida, where he continued to play the trombone and also received his Bachelor’s degree.

When Judge DiGangi knew he finally had to hang up the brass, he turned to law school at the University of Florida Levin College of Law to pursue his lifelong dream of becoming a lawyer. This aspiration came from his father Giuseppe who had been a practicing lawyer in Italy. After immigrating to America, with a different legal system, Giuseppe’s ambition was to eventually become a lawyer in the United States, but he tragically passed away before he could do so—when Judge DiGangi was still a young boy in New York. From that point forward, Judge DiGangi made it his goal to carry on his father’s legacy and fulfill his dream of becoming an American lawyer.

After law school, Judge DiGangi began his legal career in the public sector, first as a trial court law clerk with the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, and then as an assistant state attorney at the Miami-Dade State Attorney’s Office. Judge DiGangi then moved to the private sector in 2013 when he joined Critton, Luttier, & Coleman (CLC) practicing complex business and commercial litigation, land use, and personal injury law. Because CLC was very supportive of his interest in serving a larger community, Judge DiGangi was able to join a wide array of organizations over the years. But chief among them was the Board of Governors for The Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division. As an organization that encourages the participation of Florida’s young lawyers in legal programs, community leadership, and the purposes of The Florida Bar, it made perfect sense that Judge DiGangi thrived in this position and eventually worked his way up to President.

Shortly after joining CLC, Judge DiGangi met his future wife at the only place that felt right—a Florida Gators football tailgate. When they hit it off right away, he had to quickly accept the fact that she was a fourth-generation Auburn University graduate. And for her part, she had to quickly get used to a large Sicilian family that rotated Sunday family dinners among their three houses on a five-home cul-de-sac. But it seems they formed a perfect union, especially considering all three of their sons are Gators fans.

While Judge DiGangi loved his “work family” at CLC and the various clients he assisted there, he felt a call to go back to public service. And so he applied for a judgeship, and in January 2024 was appointed as a Palm Beach County Court Judge by Governor Ron DeSantis. Now as part of the judiciary, his journey of public service has come full circle, and he strives to be the type of judge that he wanted to practice in front of as a lawyer. While Judge DiGangi reflects fondly on his past artistic life and what could have been of his music career, he wouldn’t trade anything for the life of service he leads now to his family and to his community.

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