

### **Judicial Profile of Judge Michael Barnett**

Judge Michael Barnett was appointed to the County Court of Florida's Fifteenth Judicial Circuit on December 2, 2025 by Governor Ron DeSantis and was commissioned on December 15, 2025. Shaped by family, civic service and faith, becoming a judge was a lifelong dream; one he is more than honored to accept.

Judge Barnett was born in Queens, New York to Betty Schiro and William Barnett; his father sadly passed when Judge Barnett was five. Judge Barnett grew up in Queens with his younger brother Robert, and sister Monique until moving to Utuado, Puerto Rico for about a year and a half. While there, Judge Barnett suffered from asthma attacks in part due to the high altitude and the rainy environment; on one occasion the attacks were so severe he thought that he was going to die.

As beautiful as Puerto Rico is, at nine years old he was ready to move back to the mainland when his mom decided to relocate the family to Boca Raton, Florida to be closer to her parents. From there, he and his siblings were raised by his mom and maternal grandparents, Sabina and Tony.

As a single mom, Betty showed Judge Barnett the value of hard work, persistence, and resilience. She worked two jobs most of her life and never quit, even when times were tough. She worked in the medical field as a transcriptionist for an orthopedic surgeon and was also skilled in medical billing.

He acquired a love of American and world history from his Grandfather. A war hero who reenlisted after Pearl Harbor, Tony was injured when he attacked a German tank in the European Theater after the Allies took Normandy. He was awarded two Purple Hearts and the Bronze Star, having saved the lives of his men. Because of Tony, and as a child of the 80s, Judge Barnett was patriotic from a young age. He remembers seeing Ronald Reagan drive by his elementary school in a motorcade, which inspired him to love and respect his country even more. He even tried to enlist in the Army but, because of his history of asthma attacks, he could not. So, Judge Barnett chose to serve his country in another way, through civic service.

But it was not a direct road. While knowing that he wanted to be a judge, he initially enrolled at FAU, but withdrew before completing his degree. He began working. He was a pizza delivery driver, worked at a grocery store, and then the midnight shift as a gate attendant. But his love for learning continued, so he decided to go back to school.

It was while working at the grocery store that he learned the motto "don't stop because it's harder to restart than to keep going." So, when he enrolled at Palm Beach State College, he didn't stop. PBSC showed him that he could excel in college. After obtaining his associate's degree, he enrolled at the University of South Florida and then applied for law school. When he opened his

acceptance letter to his dream law school, University of Miami, this otherwise reserved man literally jumped for joy – he was elated. He is a life-long Miami Hurricanes football fan who has tried never to miss watching a game.

Since law school, Judge Barnett worked as a personal injury lawyer, chaired the Palm Beach County Republican Party, served on the PBSC District Board of Trustees, on the Medical Examiner's Commission, and on the governing board of the Palm Beach County Solid Waste Authority.

It is his work representing the people of District 3 as a Palm Beach County Commissioner that he is proudest. Having grown up in Boca Raton, Judge Barnett was new to the District upon his appointment from Governor DeSantis, but he wanted to make a difference in his new community. District 3 is proudly multicultural but is a District in tremendous need of community support. The District includes Greenacres, Lake Worth Beach, Palm Springs, and the southern portion of West Palm Beach. Constituents of this District experience higher rates of poverty, addiction, health issues, mental health issues, and homelessness, which create a greater need for services. He and his staff worked directly with families and individuals on the ground, connecting them to the services each needed such as housing, employment, and small business support to name a few. It is this kind of real life difference he hopes to continue making as a County Court Judge.

This judicial profile is submitted by Alison Brown on behalf of the PBCBA's Judicial Relations Committee. Ms. Brown is a senior attorney at the South Florida Water Management District.