

Judge Marci Rex

Judicial Profile: A Lifelong Commitment to Public Service

By: Jean Marie Middleton, Esq.

A Legacy of the Law

For Judge Rex, the legal profession is a family tradition. A "Double Gator" who graduated from the University of Florida in 2001, she follows in the footsteps of her father, also a UF alumnus and a criminal defense attorney. Her path to the bench began early; she recalls the formative experience of watching her father deliver a closing argument when she was only in the third grade. This background, combined with the influence of her mother, a dedicated teacher for 30 years, instilled in her a deep-seated "heart for public service".

Two Decades in the "Well"

Before her appointment to the bench, Judge Rex has been an attorney for 25 years. However, she is proud of the five years she spent at home raising her children. Her entire years of practice were all served as an Assistant State Attorney in Palm Beach County. During her tenure at the State Attorney's Office, she handled nearly every type of case, eventually rising to leadership roles including Felony Division Lead, Chief of Public Corruption, Chief of the Special Victims Unit (SVU), and finishing her career in the Homicide Unit.

Her work in the Homicide Unit was particularly demanding; as one of only seven homicide attorneys in the county, she was on duty 24 hours a day every seven weeks. In her final year as a trial attorney, she remarkably tried 12 homicide cases. Throughout her career, she found the most impact in seeking justice for victimized children and families affected by homicide, viewing herself as a vital voice for those who had been victimized.

The Journey to the Bench

The decision to seek a judicial seat came recently, at a time when Judge Rex felt she had mastered every division and tried every type of case. With both of her children now in college, she felt it was the "perfect time" both personally and professionally to take the next step. Despite the competitive nature of the process, she was appointed on her first application which is a testament to her extensive trial experience and commitment to the community.

A New Perspective from the Bench

Since her appointment on May 18th, Judge Rex has been presiding over a county court civil division. After spending 20 years in the "well" of the courtroom, she describes the transition to the bench as "surreal," noting the unique experience of walking through a different door to take her seat.

While her practice was exclusively criminal law, she is currently embracing the challenge of learning the specific language, standards, and procedures of civil litigation. She has noted some logistical adjustments, such as the challenge of juggling cases without the constant presence of a courtroom clerk, which is less common in civil proceedings than in criminal ones. Despite the learning curve, Judge Rex is enjoying her new role, particularly the opportunity to interact with the community and speak with *pro se* litigants.

Her family remains "very thrilled" and proud of her transition to this new chapter of her career.

Jean Marie Middleton is a Sr. Attorney for the Palm Beach County School District where she practices primarily employment and labor litigation.