

# HONORABLE CHERYL CARACUZZO

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## **By Karen E. Terry, on behalf of the Judicial Relations Committee**

A native Floridian, Judge Cheryl Caracuzzo was born in Sebring and moved to West Palm Beach when she was four years old. After graduating from Twin Lakes High School, Judge Caracuzzo became a Seminole at Florida State University. She excelled academically and earned a Bachelor's Degree in 1992. Judge Caracuzzo then earned her Juris Doctorate from Nova Southeastern School of Law in 1996.

Growing up, Judge Caracuzzo's mother taught her the importance of a strong work ethic. Instead of relaxing during her summer vacations from college, Judge Caracuzzo worked at the Palm Beach County State Attorney's Office as a secretary and data entry clerk. Even when she started law school at Nova Southeastern, Judge Caracuzzo was determined to work at nights and on weekends, even with a full time school schedule. She attended classes during the day in Fort Lauderdale and then drove up to West Palm Beach to work.

Upon graduating from law school, Judge Caracuzzo was offered a position as a prosecutor in the State Attorney's Office's County Court division. Due to her confidence and tenacity, she quickly rose up the ranks, first earning a position in the Felony division and, shortly thereafter, accepting a coveted spot in the Crimes Against Children Unit. This assignment was particularly meaningful to Judge Caracuzzo, as she always had a passion for protecting those who could not protect themselves.

While in the midst of a thriving career as a prosecutor, Judge Caracuzzo and her husband received the blessing of a baby boy, Kyle, who was born in 2002. Kyle became the light of Judge Caracuzzo's life and she made it a point to spend as much time with him as possible while he was young. As a result, she took a break from the courtroom and accepted a position in the Felony Intake division, where her work schedule was more flexible.

Once Kyle began attending school, Judge Caracuzzo shifted back into a trial role in the Homicide division. From there, she transitioned to Deputy Chief of Felony and then to the Chief of the Gang and Gun Unit. Although each area of the State Attorney's Office holds special significance to her, some of Judge Caracuzzo's fondest memories were advocating for the victims of homicides. Consequently, Judge Caracuzzo followed her heart back to the homicide division, where she remained until her appointment to the bench.

Judge Caracuzzo worked at the State Attorney's Office under five State Attorneys—Bludworth, Krischer, McAuliffe, Antonacci and Aronberg. She is an extremely talented and experienced trial attorney, who has prosecuted well-over 100 cases. Her long and impressive career as a prosecutor has earned her a great deal of respect amongst her peers, opposing counsel, and the judiciary.

Kyle, now twelve years old, attends Jupiter Middle School and is an active fisherman. When not spending time with Kyle or handling the over 1,300 civil cases in her division, Judge Caracuzzo enjoys skiing and running. We warmly welcome Judge Caracuzzo to the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit!

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