

Judge Bradley G. Harper

By Jean Marie Middleton

A true “Native Son”, Judge Bradley Harper is a sixth generation native of Palm Beach County. He comes from a family of firsts; his great- great-great grandmother, Millie Gildersleeve, was the first midwife in Palm Beach County. Hence, it is no surprise that Bradley Harper would be the first African American elected to the Palm Beach County judiciary without first having been appointed by a governor.

Judge Harper feels that his success in the recent election to the bench and his career is attributed to the fact that “the foundation for everything in my life is my faith which has allowed me to remain rooted and confident in the fact that seeking election to the judiciary was the right thing to do at the right time.” His faith was evident throughout his campaign as was noted by his Campaign Manager, Davicka Thompson. She states that “I was able to witness his faith first hand during some of the tough spots in the campaign.” Lawonda Warren, President of the F. Malcolm Cunningham, Sr. Bar Association, stated that “we are extremely proud of our Past President. He ran a strong campaign and appealed to all voters in Palm Beach County.”

Judge Harper has a lifelong record of community service that dates back to his youth when he was a dancer and worked the camera at the church he attended. His community service continued while he studied at Morehouse College where he earned his degree in Accounting with honors. Judge Harper’s passionate advocacy for justice began while he was a law student and scholarship recipient at the University of Florida College of Law. He was a member of the trial team and a two-time moot court/mock trial champion for both writing briefs and arguing cases.

Judge Harper continued his community service to the citizens of Palm Beach County after graduating from law school. Upon his return, he immediately became involved in community service. He served as President of the F. Malcolm Cunningham Sr. Bar Association along with various leadership positions within that organization. He also served as a leader on numerous boards and committees such as the Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County and Leadership Palm Beach County; just to name a few. He is actively involved in education serving on the Northboro Elementary School, Advisory Council (SAC) and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and West Riviera Elementary School, Advisory Council (SAC).

As a member of the judiciary, it is Judge Harper's hope that he can reflect the best of our community and the people that have helped him throughout his life. He further believes that "it is important that we have justice for all people; that all who come into my courtroom trust and believe, no matter the outcome, they were treated with dignity and respect. My daily goal is to be consistent with the goals of our justice system and the bar: to treat people fairly and to carry out the rule of law."

Asked to describe her son, "an old soul" is what his mother had to say. She further described him as "a kind spirit". It is no surprise that Judge Harper credits his parents, Henry and Gail Harper, as his inspiration. Family is very important to him. When Judge Harper is not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Chanelle Harper, and their four children: Matthew, Isabella, Olivia and Ada.

© 2013-2018 Palm Beach County Bar Association.