

Judge Meenu Sasser

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By: Adam Rabin

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On July 6, 2019, our legal community was devastated to learn that we lost Judge Meenu Sasser to esophageal cancer at 48 years of age. Since her appointment by Governor Charlie Crist in 2009, Judge Sasser was a beacon of judicial talent, professionalism and compassion for all who entered her courtroom.

As a new judge, Judge Sasser worked incredibly hard to be excellent at her job. Her first assignment was the foreclosure division at the height of the foreclosure crisis with 80 motions to read daily for the next day's motion calendar. Within months of taking the bench, because of the speed in which she processed thousands of cases and digested volumes of information, some of her colleagues nicknamed her "the Rocket."

Judge Sasser later transferred to the civil division, her wheelhouse, where she trailblazed and changed the trajectory of civil judging. Nobody had the combination of her intelligence, quick study, diligence, preparation, organizational skills, efficiency, and professional demeanor and respect towards lawyers, parties, staff, and jurors. Jurors would send her notes thanking her for respecting their time and giving them a new appreciation for their role and the judicial system.

Notwithstanding her extraordinary judicial acumen, Judge Sasser's impact outside of the courtroom was equally exceptional. She proactively offered mentorship to new judges and lawyers alike. She was also a "professor" of the law and judicial practice, rising to Associate Dean of the Florida Judicial College and becoming a prolific author and nationally-recognized speaker on law, technology and innovation.

Judge Sasser was passionate about mentoring women and minority lawyers and encouraging them to improve their legal experience, qualify for board certification, and apply for judgeships and other esteemed positions. She was, likewise, tireless in supporting young and less experienced lawyers to develop their skills, judgment, and professionalism through a variety of innovative programs, including the Young Lawyers Section's "Side Bar Series."

Judge Sasser was creative, focused, and relentless all at the same time. She was always trying to improve herself and encourage others. She had a particular gift for making those around her feel important and valued.

For me personally, she was an incredible, supportive, and loyal friend, whom I will miss dearly.

Most importantly, Judge Sasser was a present and committed wife, mother, sister and daughter. She loved above all else her husband, attorney Thomas Sasser, her children Andrew, Caroline, and William, and her family.

On the eve of Judge Sasser's service, there were hundreds upon hundreds of people waiting in line at the funeral home, out the door, and the down the sidewalk, to pay their respects to Judge Sasser's family. It was like nothing I have ever seen.

It is also exceptional for a Governor to order that the American and state flags be flown at half-staff in honor of a judge. Governor Ron DeSantis did just that in memory of Judge Sasser. I cannot think of any person more deserving of such a tremendous honor.

Rest in peace, Judge Sasser. We will miss you.

Adam Rabin joined the PBCBA Board of Directors when Judge Sasser began her term as President in 2007. They served together on the Board until 2009, continued to work together on various bar programs, and remained good friends.

Judge Sasser Was a Source of Inspiration for our Legal Community

Since the news of her passing, the outpouring of respect and admiration for Judge Sasser from our legal community reflects the quality of person she was and the everlasting impact she had on people's lives. Here are just a few of the many:

"Judge Sasser inspired many women to have confidence and believe in themselves. She wasn't afraid to go after opportunities for which she was qualified, and if she did not succeed at first, she tried again. She was a true leader." – Robin Bresky, Florida Bar Board of Governors

"Judge Sasser was my friend and colleague for more than 20 years. She never let obstacles stand in the way of what was right. She possessed a rare force of will...genuine grit...the kind that overwhelms adversity. When I would tell her that she set a hard pace to follow, she would just smile and continue her mission of serving and supporting others. Her example and legacy will continue to inspire me." – Judge Joseph Curley

"Through the YLS Sidebar Series and her Young Lawyers Initiative, Judge Sasser always wanted young lawyers to gain more experience and succeed in their practices. She epitomized what it meant to be a mentor, role model, and judge." – Scott Perry, President, PBCBA YLS

"Judge Sasser was a steadfast supporter of the advancement of minorities and women in the legal field. Always known for her grace, professional demeanor, and her uncompromising ethical standards, Judge Sasser will be missed dearly." – Danielle Sherriff, President, F. Malcolm Cunningham, Sr. Bar Association

"Judge Sasser was a loyal mentor, devoted to the cause of supporting other women and minorities, not just through her words but action. Her spirit will eternally inspire us to lift each other up and aim high." – Sarah Shullman, South Florida Bureau Chief, Office of the Florida Attorney General

"Judge Sasser always encouraged me and other minority attorneys to apply for judgeships and the JNC. She recognized how important it was to have our diverse community represented and included in these important positions" – Grasford Smith, President, Virgil Hawkins Bar Association

"Judge Sasser was an icon, as one of the most brilliant and professional jurists we have ever known. She was a loyal and dedicated friend and a mentor like no other. May we all live by her example of selflessness and kindness to others, and carry on her mission to improve our community." – Judge Jessica Ticktin

"Judge Sasser was a passionate, tireless and innovative leader in judicial education around the state. Her ideas and programs will continue to advance Florida's judiciary for many years to come." – Judge Daliah Weiss

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