

Florida Bar
Judicial Candidate Voluntary Self-Disclosure Statement
Overview

Through the Judicial Candidate Voluntary Self-Disclosure Statement, The Florida Bar provides judicial candidates, both sitting judges and others, with the opportunity to provide information about themselves and their backgrounds to the public in preparation and anticipation of an election. **The Florida Bar does not attest to the accuracy of the content of the voluntary self-disclosure statements, although each candidate must execute the statement under oath, nor should the disclosures be viewed as endorsements by The Florida Bar.** The self-disclosure statement is intended to give all candidates the opportunity to share information about their history, credentials, and other relevant information, with the voting public.

The self-disclosure statement was developed to provide a means by which the public could gather information about their judicial candidates. It came to the attention of the Bar that voters felt they did not have sufficient information to make educated decisions on judicial candidates.

In the self-disclosure statement, judicial candidates can provide biographical information including education, work history, special honors or awards, community involvement, public service, and other historical data. The candidate is also allowed to provide a brief statement about why a voter should support that individual and why he or she would make a good judge.

Candidates' statements are governed by Canon 7 of the Code of Judicial Conduct. The code bars judicial candidates from making statements that appear to commit them on legal issues likely to come before them in court. The Canons also specify that a candidate may not knowingly make misleading or untruthful statements and require that each candidate execute a statement that the candidate has read and understands the obligations of the Florida Code of Judicial Conduct. Candidates who violate Canon 7 are subject to discipline.

The information collected from candidates in the voluntary self-disclosure statement will be made available to the press. The information about local candidates may also be made available to the public, provided to local bar organizations, and may be made available at courthouses, post offices, and voting stations throughout the state. The information will also be available online at The Florida Bar's Web site and can be obtained upon request to the Bar.

FLORIDA BAR
JUDICIAL CANDIDATE
VOLUNTARY SELF-DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

***PLEASE BEAR IN MIND YOUR OBLIGATIONS UNDER JUDICIAL CANON NO. 7
IN PROVIDING ANSWERS TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.***

***THE FLORIDA BAR DOES NOT ASSUME ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR ANSWERS NOR WILL THE
BAR MAKE EDITS TO YOUR ANSWERS TO COMPORT WITH THE CANONS. THE BAR DOES RESERVE
THE RIGHT TO REDACT OBSCENE LANGUAGE BEFORE DISSEMINATION.***

Name: Judge Flora Seff

Date Disclosure Statement Completed: July 12, 2010

Judicial Position Sought: County Court Judge, Group 11

Jurisdiction: Miami-Dade County

Jurisdiction(s) in which admitted to practice law:

Jurisdiction	Date Admitted
The Florida Bar	1980
Southern District of Florida, United States Dist. Court	1980
United States Supreme Court	2006

Florida Bar No. 294705

Years admitted to practice law: 30

Years in the legal profession: 30

Prior Candidacy in Judicial Election(s):

If you have run in an election for judicial office before, please list the position, court, and relevant date(s):

Court	Relevant Dates	Position

FLORIDA BAR JUDICIAL CANDIDATE
VOLUNTARY SELF-DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Prior and/or Current Judicial Experience:

If you have held judicial office, please state the Courts involved, the dates of service, and the Court:

Court	Relevant Dates	Office
County Court	July 2008 - present January 2010 - December 2010	County Court Judge - criminal division Acting Circuit Judge - Domestic Vio

Number of evidentiary hearings, trials and/or oral arguments over which you have presided:

0-5 6-15 16-30 31-50 51-100 101-200 201+

These include domestic violence injunction hearings, criminal misdemeanor and traffic trials, pre-trial motions and post conviction motions. I am not including motions to set aside warrants which are handled in a few seconds and I handle at least 20 of them a week.

Additional comments: _____

Please identify the number of jury trials 9 and the number of bench trials 40+ over which you have presided.

Additional comments: _____

Current judges may respond to the following questions regarding legal practice only with reference to pre-judicial legal experience.

Area(s) of Practice:

Civil Criminal Government Other _____

Please list the primary areas in which you have specialized or have legal expertise and allocate a percentage of your practice to each area.

I was an assistant state attorney for 28 years. For the majority of those years I prosecuted homicide and violent crimes. Many of the cases I handled involved the death penalty. In the cases in which the death penalty was imposed as a sentence, I handled the post-conviction hearings in State and Federal Court. 100% of my practice over the 28 years was litigation in the Criminal Division of the Circuit Court, occasionally Federal Court, and Juvenile Court (1 year - 1980).

Number of evidentiary hearings, trials and/or oral arguments in which you have participated as legal counsel:

0-5 6-15 16-30 31-50 51-100 101-200 201+

Additional comments: _____

FLORIDA BAR JUDICIAL CANDIDATE
VOLUNTARY SELF-DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Please identify the number of jury trials 125+ and the number of bench trials 50+ in which you have participated.

I spent the first year as a prosecutor in the Juvenile Division where there are only bench trials. I was then promoted to the Felony Division where I spent my remaining 27 years as an assistant state attorney prosecuting felony cases before a jury. Prior to being assigned homicide cases I was in trial almost every week. The trials became less frequent when I was promoted to the

Additional comments: Major Crimes Division.

Number of arbitration hearings in which you have participated as legal counsel or hearing officer:

0-5 6-15 16-30 31-50 51-100 101-200 201+

Additional comments: _____

Number of administrative hearings in which you have participated as legal counsel of hearing officer:

0-5 6-15 16-30 31-50 51-100 101-200 201+

Additional comments: _____

To the extent applicable, please quantify any additional alternative dispute resolution/negotiation experience:

As a prosecutor I was involved in plea negotiations with opposing counsel in almost every case.

Have you ever been Board Certified in any area(s) of practice, if yes please identify:

The Area(s) of Practice: _____

When you were certified in each Area of Practice: _____

Whether you are currently certified in those areas: _____

Please provide the percentage of your practice that has involved representing plaintiffs 100% and the percentage that has involved representing defendants 0%.

Undergraduate Education:

Name of Institution: Florida International University.

Degree received/Major: B.A. 1976

Academic awards, recognitions, honors, leadership roles and participation in academic organizations:

I entered college immediately after high school. After one year I left school and spent the next 2 years travelling and working. During the time I was completing my undergraduate education at MDC and FIU I worked full time and went to school at night, a schedule that did not allow time for extracurricular activity involvement.

Law School Education:

FLORIDA BAR JUDICIAL CANDIDATE
VOLUNTARY SELF-DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Name of Institution: University of Miami

Degree received: J.D., 1980

Internships/in-school clerkships, academic awards, recognitions, honors, leadership roles and participation in academic organizations (e.g., law review, moot court, legal clinics):

ABA Mental Disability Law Project - 1977 (intern), Georgia Ethics Commission - 1978 (intern); Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office(intern) 1978 - 1980

Number of hours devoted to public work while in undergraduate unable to recall or law school 20 hours per week as an unpaid intern in the State Attorney's Office during my third year of law school.

Additional Educational History (if applicable):

Name of Institution	Degree Received	Special awards, recognitions, honors, or leadership roles (if any)
Miami-Dade Community College	A.A.	
Warnborough College, Oxford England	none	

Employment:

Present employer: 11th Judicial Circuit of Florida

Number of years with present employer: 2

Present position: County Court Judge

Explain relevant experience or skills gained that you will bring to the bench:

Seasoned litigator with extensive knowledge of the law, court system and county-wide resources for offenders and victims. Broad experience with substance abuse, drug addiction and mental health problems and their impact on criminal behavior, issues that bring many defendants to county court. Calm under pressure and able to effectively manage crowded court dockets.

List All Prior Employers and Occupations, Legal or Non-legal, for the Last Ten Years:

Employer: Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office

Number of years employed with this employer: 28 years

FLORIDA BAR JUDICIAL CANDIDATE
VOLUNTARY SELF-DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Position/specialty: Assistant State Attorney / Senior Trial Counsel

Explain relevant experience or skills gained that you will bring to the bench:

Many of the cases I dealt with as an active trial lawyer representing the State of Florida for 28 years involved complex social and ethical issues that deeply affected the Miami-Dade County community. I have had the opportunity to work with people at their best and their worst and to develop the skills needed to fairly uphold the law while recognizing the human concerns for defendants, victims and the family members of both. I learned to listen, organize my thoughts, solve problems and communicate with people who were often in great distress. I often have the need to apply these skills in my courtroom. Both a student and judicial instructor at Advanced Judicial College. Course work has included domestic violence, civil law, criminal law, drug and alcohol diversion programs, mental health and neuro-science seminars.

Employer: _____

Number of years employed with this employer: _____

Position/specialty: _____

Explain relevant experience or skills gained that you will bring to the bench:

Employer: _____

Number of years employed with this employer: _____

Position/specialty: _____

Explain relevant experience or skills gained that you will bring to the bench:

Law Organizations:

Please list legal organizations in which you have been an active member for more than two (2) years and all legal organizations in which you hold a leadership position or which required nomination to join:

Organization Name	Dates of Participation	Office Held (If applicable)
The Florida Bar	2004 - present	Member/Judicial Nominating Procedures Committee
Dade County Bar Association	2004 - present	Member of Professionalism Comm., Criminal Law Committee, Board of Directors

FLORIDA BAR JUDICIAL CANDIDATE
VOLUNTARY SELF-DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

League of Prosecutors	2004 - 2008	Board of Directors
Cuban American Bar Association	2004 - present	
Florida Association of Women Lawyers	2006 - present	
Wilkie D. Ferguson Jr. Bar Association	2008 - present	

Honors and Publications:

Please list any published articles or books that you have authored, any speeches or lectures you have given, and any honors, prizes or awards you have received:

Title	Date	Additional Information
Prosecutor of the Year	2008	Miami-Dade Chiefs of Police and Law Enforcement Officers
Law Enforcement Officer of the Year	1995	United States Marshal Service
Certificate of Appreciation	1992	Department of the Treasury
Lecturer and Panel Discussion Participant	2005	FBI Academy, Quantico VA
Lecturer - Demystifying Cyber Crimes	2010	Advanced Judicial Studies Program
		Coordinated and team taught day long course for judges throughout the State of Florida
Keynote Address - International Association of Toolmark and Firearm Examiners Meeting	2009	
Sir Richard May Seminar on International Courts - "The Hague, Netherlands" scholarship recipient -	September, 2010	
Luncheon Speaker - Miami Beach Bar Association	May, 2010	

Public Service – Pro Bono, Volunteer Work or Military Service:

Please provide the dates, activities and any special accomplishments, honors or leadership roles you have played in volunteer, public or military service organizations or in providing pro bono, volunteer, public or military service:

One of the first organizations I volunteered with, other than my children's schools, was Hands on Miami. I joined the organization over 10 years ago and worked on many different community projects through them. For 2 years I headed a monthly project at the McClamore House children's shelter. Several years ago I was honored to received the Presidential Points of Light award for my work as a Hands on Miami volunteer. During the past six years I focused my volunteer work on mentoring children, particularly teens, through my involvement with Women of Tomorrow, the HoneyShine Mentoring Organization and Miami-Dade Teen Court. I also mentor law students through CABA and the local law schools. During my assignment at the South Dade Justice Center I enjoyed hosting school groups in my court and talking to young people about the criminal justice system.

Health:

Do you currently suffer from or have you suffered from any of the following ailments in the last three years:

- Dependence on narcotics, drugs or intoxicating beverages
- Pathological or compulsive behavior
- Memory loss or impaired judgment

Yes No

If yes, please identify the ailment and provide full details, including the relevant dates, including dates of diagnosis, if applicable, the treatment received and any additional relevant information:

not applicable

Discipline:

If you have ever been found, either involuntarily or by consent, to have committed a violation of The Florida Bar Disciplinary Rules, the Florida Rules of Judicial Administration or the Florida Code of Judicial Conduct for which the discipline imposed was one of the following: (a) public reprimand; (b) suspension; or (c) disbarment, please provide the following information:

Date of charge: not applicable

Date of Disposition: _____

Rule(s) found to have violated: _____

Discipline imposed for rule violation(s): _____

Date reinstated to the Bar or bench: _____

Any conditions imposed for reinstatement (e.g., disgorgement, probation or public service):

If you have been found to have committed a violation of the ethical or discipline rules, please explain the circumstances surrounding your discipline:

not applicable

For current or former judges:

Has the Florida Supreme Court, or a similar body in another state, ever ruled against you on a Notice of Formal Charges by the Judicial Qualifications Commission? If so, please explain the circumstances surrounding the charges and include a description of any discipline imposed:

No

Military Discharge:

If you served in the military and your discharge was anything other than honorable or you received a court martial, please provide that information here:

Not applicable

Criminal Convictions:

Have you ever been convicted or pled no contest to a crime involving dishonesty or moral turpitude? If so, provide the following information:

Date of Conviction or Plea of No Contest: not applicable

Crime for which you were convicted or Pled No Contest: _____

Sentence: _____

Any additional conditions imposed: _____

If you have been convicted or pled no contest to a crime involving dishonesty or moral turpitude and would like to explain the circumstances surrounding your criminal conviction, you may do so here:

Not applicable

Personal Statement:

In 100 words or less, without discussing any particular issue which may come before you if you become a judge, explain why you believe you would be a good judge:

As a prosecutor, I learned the law, legal defenses, the court system, and how to relate to community members facing terrible circumstances. As a spouse, parent and community volunteer I learned about challenges faced by residents of all ages and available resources in our schools, service programs and government agencies. I fought for justice for victims and defendants as an assistant state attorney. Today, as a County Court Judge, I am committed to judge fairly with impartiality while upholding the law. Integrity, patience and experience help me do the best possible job for the residents of Miami-Dade County.

FLORIDA BAR JUDICIAL CANDIDATE
VOLUNTARY SELF-DISCLOSURE STATEMENT