



Judges on the ballot

Official Biographies and Merit Retention Scores

The Florida Bar Association and Merit Retention

The statewide merit retention judicial poll for **Florida Supreme Court justices and District Courts of Appeal** judges is conducted every two years by The Florida Bar. In-state members are asked to rate judges and justices who are up for retention and of whom they have direct knowledge. The merit retention poll is supervised by the Constitutional Judiciary Committee of The Florida Bar.

Effect of a Not Retain Vote: If the majority of voters vote to Not Retain a judge, he or she will be removed from office and another judge will be appointed. The governor appoints judges for these courts from lists submitted by Judicial Nominating Commissions, which screen candidates and make recommendations based on their merits. Newly appointed judges go on the ballot for the first time within two years after appointment. If the voters retain them, they then go on the ballot again every six years.

Florida Supreme Court Justice

Judge Alan Lawson



PERSONAL: Born in Lakeland, Florida, 1961. Married to Julie Carlton Lawson. Two children, two grandchildren.

DEGREES: J.D., Florida State University, 1987, with Highest Honors; B.S., Parks, Recreation & Tourism Management (with emphasis in Natural Resource Management), Clemson University, 1983, with Highest Honors; A.A., Tallahassee Community College, 1981, with Highest Honors.

LEGAL OFFICES & POSITIONS: Justice, Supreme Court of Florida, 2016 – present; Chief Judge, Fifth District Court of Appeal, 2015 – 2016; Judge, Fifth District Court of Appeal, 2006 – 2016; Judge, Ninth Judicial Circuit, 2002 – 2005; Assistant County Attorney, Orange County, Florida, 1997 – 2001; General Counsel, Verses Wear, Inc., 1996; Associate & Partner, Steel Hector & Davis, Miami & Tallahassee, 1987 – 1995.

STATE COURT SYSTEM ADVISORY COMMITTEES:

Budget Oversight Committee, 2017 – Present;
Trial Court Budget Commission, 2017 – Present;
Standing Committee on Fairness & Diversity, 2017 – Present;
Code & Rules of Evidence Committee, 2017 – Present;
Probate Rules Committee, 2017 – Present;
Space Planning Committee, 2017 – Present.

BAR & EXTRAJUDICIAL OFFICES & ACTIVITIES:

Florida District Court of Appeal Budget Commission, Chair, 2013 – 2016;
Appellate Courts Technology Committee, Member, 2008 – 2016; Florida Conference of District Court of Appeal Judges, Legislative Chair, 2011 – 2013;
Appellate Practice Section, Fifth District Representative, 2006 – 2014;
Appellate Court Technology Committee, Fifth District Representative, 2006 – 2016;
Rules of Criminal Procedure Committee, 2004 – 2009;
First Central Florida Inns of Court, 2002 – 2007 & 2016 - Present; Orange County Bar Association,

1996 – Present; Former Test Writer (Evidence) and Grader, Florida Board of Bar Examiners; Code and Rules of Evidence Committee, Past Member.

HONORS AND DISTINCTIONS:

Martindale-Hubbell “A.V.” attorney rating; Florida Council on Crime and Delinquency, Outstanding Jurist Award (2005); University Graduate Award and Fellowship, Florida State University; O’Kelly Civil Trial Practice Award and Scholarship, Florida State University; Book Awards in Evidence and Legal History, Florida State University; Rhodes Scholarship Nominee, Clemson University; Hartzog Award and Scholarship, Clemson University; Order of the Coif.

CIVIC ACTIVITIES: Orthodox Church of St. Stephen (Member); First Presbyterian Church of Orlando (Member); Vision Orlando (Board Member); House of Hope (Former Board Member and Volunteer); Surgical and Medical Assistance Relief Teams (Volunteer); Hope for Honduras (Volunteer); 2008 Boston Marathon Qualifier and Finisher.

Merit Retention Score: Retain: 87% Not Retain: 13%

Appellate Judges, Second District Court of Appeals

Judge Anthony Black

Born in 1961. Hometown: Lakeland, Florida.

Family: Married, two children, two grandchildren. Judge Black graduated magna cum laude from Arizona State University in 1978 with a bachelor’s degree in accounting. While in college, he was a member of the Phi Eta Sigma and Beta Gamma Sigma Honor Societies. Following graduation, he worked for two years for the Chicago, Illinois, office of Price Waterhouse where he earned the designation of certified public accountant.



In 1983 Judge Black graduated from the University of Illinois College of Law and thereafter enjoyed nineteen years of private practice. While in private practice, Judge Black became a shareholder with the Macfarlane, Ferguson firm, and later with Black & Jung, P.A. He also became board certified in Civil Trial Law and earned an AV rating from Martindale-Hubbell, which is the highest rating given to attorneys. He also served as a certified mediator, and he represented several NFL football players as a Certified National Football League Player Agent.

In 2002 Judge Black was appointed to the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Court by Governor Jeb Bush. He was reelected to the circuit court bench in 2004 without opposition where he served until April 2010 when Governor Charlie Crist appointed him to the appellate bench. Judge Black was retained by the electorate in 2012. Since his appointment to the appellate bench, Judge Black has served on the Supreme Court Committee on Standard Jury Instructions in Criminal Cases and the Subcommittee on Post-conviction Relief as appointed by the Supreme Court. He is currently serving on the Commission on District Court of Appeal Performance and Accountability.

Judge Black has authored several articles for The Florida Bar Journal, and is a past president of the Tampa Bay Inn of Court. He is currently a member of the William Reece Smith, Jr. Litigation American Inn of Court and the American Board of Trial Advocates (A.B.O.T.A.).

Judge Black is married with two children. His hobbies are spending time with his family and long-distance running. He has competed in numerous road-racing events, including 10 Boston Marathons.

Merit Retention Score: Retain: 90% Not Retain: 10%



Judge Darryl Casanueva

Judge Casanueva attended the University of South Florida, where he received his B.A. degree in political science. He received his J.D. degree from Loyola University School of Law in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1976. While at Loyola, he was a member of the International Moot Court Team. In 2001 he received his Masters of Laws in Judicial Process from the University of Virginia.

Following law school, he served as an assistant state attorney in the Twentieth Judicial Circuit from December 1976 through June 1978. He then entered private practice and became a partner in the Port Charlotte law firm of Olmsted, Schwarz, Kahle & Casanueva. In 1990 he was elected circuit court judge and served primarily in Punta Gorda from January 8, 1991, through February 16, 1998, when he was appointed to the Second District Court of Appeal where he has served since. Judge Casanueva served as the court's chief judge from July 2009 through June 2011.

From 2016-2017 Judge Casanueva served as President of the Conference of District Court of Appeal Judges.

While in private practice, Judge Casanueva served in various offices of the Charlotte County Bar Association, including president and chair of the Law Day Committee. Since joining the judiciary, he has served in a number of capacities including: on the Education Program Committee for the Conference of District Court of Appeal Judges, initially as a member and later as chair (2002-06); as a member of the Supreme Court Committee on Standard Jury Instructions in Criminal Cases (2005-09); and as a faculty member of the Florida Judicial College, Phase I, and as a faculty member of the Florida Judicial College Appellate Program (2007 to present). He has also been a presenter at legal educational seminars. In 2000 the Lee County Bar Association honored him with the Liberty Bell Award.

His prior civic activities included service as president of the Port Charlotte Rotary Club; member of the Arts & Humanities Council; committee member of the Charlotte County Constitution Bicentennial Committee; member of the Mote Marine Advisory Committee; member of the board of directors of St. Joseph/Bon Secours Foundation; member of the board of directors of the University of South Florida Law Alumni Society; and coach of youth baseball and soccer. Judge Casanueva has taught, as an adjunct professor at Edison Community College (now known as Florida Southwestern State College), the subjects of American National Government, American State and Local Government, and Constitutional Law. He and his wife endowed a scholarship there for Charlotte County students.

Judge Casanueva is married, and has two sons, and two grandchildren. He is a native Floridian.

Merit Retention Score: Retain: 90% Not Retain: 10%

Judge Edward LaRose

Judge LaRose was born in Putnam, Connecticut, in 1955. He is married and has three children. He received his undergraduate degree, summa cum laude, in 1977 from Boston College. He received his J.D. degree, cum laude, from Cornell Law School in 1980.

He began his legal career with Howrey & Simon in Washington, D.C., where he practiced extensively in the area of antitrust law. He joined Trenam Kemker Scharf Barkin Frye O'Neill & Mullis as an associate in 1983 and became a shareholder in the firm in 1987. While at Trenam Kemker, he practiced in the areas of commercial litigation, antitrust, and employment law, and he headed the firm's employment law practice group.

Governor Jeb Bush appointed Judge LaRose to the Second District Court of Appeal, and he began serving as a member of the court in February 2005. Judge LaRose was board certified in Antitrust and Trade Regulation Law by The Florida Bar Board of Legal Specialization and Education from 2001-2016. He is certified as a circuit-civil mediator and served as an arbitrator for the American Arbitration Association and the National Association of Securities Dealers, has



been AV rated by Martindale-Hubbell, and has been recognized in Chambers USA and Best Lawyers in America. He serves as an adjunct professor of law at Stetson University College of Law.

He is an active member of the Hillsborough County Bar Association and The Florida Bar. He served as the chair of the Unlicensed Practice of Law Committee (13th Judicial Circuit "A"). He was a member of The Florida Bar Antitrust & Trade Regulation Certification Committee. He has served on The Florida Bar Business Law Section Executive Committee and has been active on various Business Law Section committees. He is a member of the Ferguson-White Inn of Court in Tampa. Judge LaRose has written and spoken frequently in the areas of appellate, antitrust, and employment law.

Judge LaRose served as a trustee for Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Petersburg, Inc., and he remains active as a Catholic Charities volunteer. He was a member of Leadership Tampa (1999) and Leadership Tampa Bay (2002). He was an advisory board member of the University of Tampa Center for Ethics, and a distinguished past president of the Kiwanis Club of Carrollwood. He is active in his church and is a member of the Knights of Columbus.

Merit Retention Score: Retain: 90% Not Retain: 10%

Judge Susan Rothstein-Youakim

A Sarasota native, Judge Susan H. Rothstein-Youakim graduated from Pine View School in 1987. She graduated in 1990 from Duke University with a B.A. in Russian, *cum laude*, and in 1993 from the University of Florida College of Law, where she was an Executive Articles Editor on the *Florida Journal of International Law*.

After law school, Judge Rothstein-Youakim moved to Tampa and began her career as a law clerk to the Honorable Charles R. Wilson, United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, who was then a federal magistrate judge.

In January 1995, Judge Rothstein-Youakim joined the Appellate Division of the United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida. There, she represented the United States and its client agencies in criminal, civil, and post-conviction appeals in the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, personally drafting more than 600 briefs and presenting approximately 60 oral arguments. She also served as an instructor at the Department of Justice's National Advocacy Center in Columbia, South Carolina.



In May 2016, Governor Rick Scott appointed Judge Rothstein-Youakim to the Second District Court of Appeal, and she began her service on the court on July 5, 2016. She is active in the Bruce R. Jacob-Chris W. Altenbernd Criminal Appellate American Inn of Court and received its Altenbernd Award for Excellence in 2015. She also serves as a mentor to students in elementary school, college, and law school.

Merit Retention Score: Retain: 86% Not Retain: 14%

For more information on judges and judicial elections, visit the Florida Bar Association, "*The Vote's in Your Court*" at: www.floridabar.org/public/faircts/votes010



*Prepared as a public service by the League of Women Voters of Manatee County
For more information about candidates and elections, visit; www.lwvmanatee.org*