

TO MY CLIENTS

I am delighted to announce that Governor Ron DeSantis has appointed me to serve for 3 more years as a member of the Judicial Nominating Commission for the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit, which encompasses Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River, and Okeechobee Counties. This Commission is responsible for providing the Governor with a list of 3-6 recommended nominees to fill judicial circuit and county court vacancies or openings occurring well before the next election. Although the Governor and I may not see eye to eye on other issues, we agree that the most important qualities for a judge are temperament and knowledge of and application of the law.

Judges have extreme power over a person's life and property, and so should be humble in wielding that power. Judges are charged with enforcing the laws made by the legislature. Only where a law is ambiguous is there a need for judicial interpretation. Fortunately, in my 15 years of practice in the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit, I have practiced before only a very few judges who clearly do not have that temperament and/or do not apply the unambiguous law, to the detriment of the people before them. As a member of the Commission, I will do my part to assure that nominees for judgeship will be properly and thoroughly vetted for the characteristics appropriate to the honor of appointment to a judgeship. This appointment will not otherwise affect my legal practice.

The Florida Judicial Nominating Commissions are 26 separately constituted bodies responsible for providing the governor of Florida with a list of possible appointments to the various state courts. There is a separate judicial nominating Commission for the supreme court, for each of the five district courts of appeal, and for each of the 20 judicial trial court circuits. When a vacancy occurs in a judicial office to which election for retention applies, the governor fills the vacancy by appointing one of three to six persons nominated by the appropriate judicial nominating Commission. This provision applies to Florida Supreme Court justices and Florida District Court judges. For Florida Circuit and County Court judges, positions are normally filled in elections, and the governor may only step in where there is a vacancy or new judgeship opening well before the next election.

The Florida Constitution requires that each Commission be composed of three members appointed by the Board of Governors of the Florida Bar from among Florida Bar members who are actively engaged in the practice of law with offices within the territorial jurisdiction of the affected court, district or circuit; three registered voters who reside in the territorial jurisdiction of the court or circuit appointed by the governor; and three registered voters who reside in the territorial jurisdiction of the court or circuit and who are not members of the bar of Florida, selected and appointed by a majority vote of the other six members of the Commission.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barbara Cook". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.