

9<sup>TH</sup> UNPLUGGED

HONORABLE CHRISTIE COLLINS

CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

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HOSTED BY: HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Latimore.

JUDGE COLLINS: Hi, I'm Judge Collins.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And you're listening to 9<sup>th</sup> Unplugged.

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: So welcome, Judge Collins. And would you please tell our audience what is your current assignment, what's your position with the Ninth Judicial Circuit.

JUDGE COLLINS: Thank you for having me, Judge Latimore. My current assignment is I'm on the domestic violence bench I guess for the next year and a half or so.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. And you are a circuit court judge who was elected by the people, is that correct?

JUDGE COLLINS: I was, graciously, thank you.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes, and so what was that experience like, running an election campaign and becoming a judge in the Ninth Circuit?

JUDGE COLLINS: It was a lot. It was so surreal in that I think when we were kids, most people, you have all these dreams and aspirations. And sometimes those dreams are like a little bigger than I guess what your current reality is at the time and what you dreamed for yourself. And to see that come full circle still blows my mind to this day. It's just crazy, like I'm living it, I'm walking in it, but sometimes I have to step back and look at it like wow, like wow, God, you actually allowed this to happen. Like I talked about this, I remember when I was thinking about it. I remember writing about it in my journal. I remember just mentioning it to my husband or thinking about it when I was fifteen, or just thinking about it at various times in college. And to

see it actually happen, I wish I could go back to my younger self and say, hey, in this many years, this is going to happen. So you know keep your head up. And I actually do things like that. I counsel quite a few people and I ask them, I give them a little assignment. I say make a video or journal like what it is that you're trying to do right now. So when it actually comes to pass, you can look back at it. I've made so many videos. Even when I worked in my jobs --

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE COLLINS: - I made videos about things that I wanted to do in the future.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So before you became a judge, what kind of jobs did you hold?

JUDGE COLLINS: I was a teacher for about 14 years.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What type of teacher?

JUDGE COLLINS: I taught all different levels but I was primarily music education.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE COLLINS: I did elementary and I did middle school.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. And so music is a big part of your life and your experience.

JUDGE COLLINS: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: How is that?

JUDGE COLLINS: I was actually a voice major. I was a double major for a little while, voice and piano, but the piano is a bit much, it controls your life.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE COLLINS: It's a part that's like six, seven hours a day and I just wasn't willing to give up all of that time.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So you stuck with the voice part of it.

JUDGE COLLINS: Yes. And I still played the piano but it was not my major anymore.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And so what was a great experience you had being a voice major?

JUDGE COLLINS: I loved it. We got to travel, tour. I got to sing at the White House at the National Prayer Breakfast.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Really, when was that?

JUDGE COLLINS: President Clinton. In the group that I was in so we got to travel all over. We toured during the summers. We did tour during spring break so we were on the road for like a month or two.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And I see here you sang with the Orlando Philharmonic.

JUDGE COLLINS: I did. I auditioned through my vocal teacher when I was in college and I got the part and I got to sing with them, a duet and that's probably, you know, people who know me know that I sing. They just don't realize there's an operatic side.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, let's hear something, just real quick. We don't have a lot of time, Judge, go ahead.

JUDGE COLLINS: Really. You want me –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Just go ahead for our audience, just you know –

JUDGE COLLINS: For the people to hear me –

JUDGE LATIMORE: For the people.

JUDGE COLLINS: - sound horrible singing opera music after 20 years.

JUDGE LATIIMORE: If you sang with the Orlando Philharmonic, you do not sing horribly.

JUDGE COLLINS: That was years ago.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, well, let's go ahead.

JUDGE COLLINS: No, I'll do it.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You'll do it. All right. Let's go.

JUDGE COLLINS: I got to think about it. (Singing)

JUDGE LATIMORE: She's standing up. (Judge Collins singing) Listen, our judges are talented. Okay, so tell me, what is the hardest lesson you've learned in life?

JUDGE COLLINS: I think the hardest lesson is that when you have a dream or you have something you want to do or something that's so near and dear to your heart that you can't always share it, because sometimes dreams and aspirations are in its incubation stage. And then people, even well-meaning people, friends, family, even out of concern, they can damper or somehow you know extinguish this dream. You know even when I was running for judge a lot of people didn't think it was, you know, I should do it this way or it was the time or you know maybe you shouldn't do it this way. And you have to guard things that mean something to you. You can't tell everybody. And there's even a scripture about it. The Bible says, don't cast your pearls before swine. It just means things that are precious to you, you can't share with everybody, at least not while it's so fragile.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. What question, let me ask you this, what question would you most like to know the answer to?

JUDGE COLLINS: I guess it depends on what scale. I'd love to ask God quite a few questions.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. Just one, I just want to know one that you have, whether it's God or anyone else. Do you have one?

JUDGE COLLINS: I do. I think I already know the answer to it though. Why are we all here?

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. All right. That's a good question.

JUDGE COLLINS: And what was he thinking about when he created us, or is there life on other planets? That too.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, three. You got three in there. Look at there. All right. There you go. All right, so let me ask you this. What do you do for fun? When you're away from work and you're not considering your docket and what you have to do the next day, what do you do for fun?

JUDGE COLLINS: I try to spend time with my family. I have three children and I try to spend time with them.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What do you do?

JUDGE COLLINS: We may go to the beach or – all of my kids sing and so we may sing. Even my husband attempts to sing. He's okay. He's a musician. So we do a lot of things. We'll

go bowling, or we'll go riding, you know, something that's family oriented. That's usually what we do at this stage.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you ever travel?

JUDGE COLLINS: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And where do you like to travel? Or where is your favorite place to travel?

JUDGE COLLINS: I don't know if I have a favorite place but I do have a – my family loves to cruise. My kids, they think they're professional cruisers, they want to cruise. They want to go to multiple places. They want to get on the boat and do all the activities. And they want to look and so that's probably the primary way in which we cruise. We'll occasionally take a flight somewhere but primarily, if we're going on vacation, they want to go on a cruise.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, that's nice.

JUDGE COLLINS: Probably for the kids club too.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. Going on a cruise and travelling, that's always a very fun opportunity for everyone to be involved in as a family, correct?

JUDGE COLLINS: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. So with that I have some really quick questions for you and just interested – if you could just share with us. A pretty fast pace, so let's see if you –

JUDGE COLLINS: Okay, I'll try to keep up.

JUDGE LATIMORE: If you had to choose, are you extraverted or introverted?

JUDGE COLLINS: I'm a mix.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE COLLINS: Most people think that I'm extroverted, but I work to be that way. I would probably classify myself, at least in my younger years, as an introvert. I have worked – put in some work to be an extrovert.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Same way, introvert but a forced extravert when necessary.

JUDGE COLLINS: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. Zoo or aquarium?

JUDGE COLLINS: Zoo.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Small groups or big crowds?

JUDGE COLLINS: Small groups.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Meat or vegetables?

JUDGE COLLINS: Meat.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh. What's your favorite meat?

JUDGE COLLINS: Probably chicken, no steak. Now, it's steak but when I was younger, it was chicken. I could live without steak until I became a real adult and I'm like oh, this is what I've been missing all these years.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, sports or cinema.

JUDGE COLLINS: Cinema.



JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you like any sports?

JUDGE COLLINS: I do.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What sports do you like?

JUDGE COLLINS: I played sports. I played basketball.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Did you.

JUDGE COLLINS: I played softball, fast pitched softball.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, fast pitch, okay.

JUDGE COLLINS: Did a little cheerleading. I did a little bit of everything but mainly because somebody told me I couldn't do it.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE COLLINS: So it wasn't that I really kind of wanted to do it. I just don't like being told I can't do something.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, you have proven that when you put your mind to something, you get it done. So thank you, Judge Collins, for being unplugged with me today.

JUDGE COLLINS: Thank you for having me. I enjoyed myself.

(Music)