

OPEN NINTH:

CONVERSATIONS BEYOND THE COURTROOM

RE-RELEASE: A LEGAL PIONEER

FEATURING FORMER CHIEF JUDGE BELVIN PERRY, JR.

EPISODE 169

JULY 5, 2021

HOSTED BY: CHIEF JUDGE LISA T. MUNYON

(Music)

NARRATOR: Welcome to another episode of “Open Ninth: Conversations Beyond the Courtroom” in the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court of Florida.

And now here’s your host, Chief Judge Lisa Munyon.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: Hello and welcome to Open Ninth. I’m here today with practicing attorney and former Chief Judge of the Ninth Judicial Circuit, Belvin Perry. An accomplished lawyer, he was a prosecutor with the State Attorney’s Office where he served as the chief of the felony division, the chief of the criminal intake division and the chief assistant state attorney, a position he held until 1989 when he became the first African-American to join the bench at the Ninth Judicial Circuit through the election process. Belvin served as Chief Judge for nine terms, and gained national acclaim as the presiding judge for the Casey Anthony trial. He is also my long-time friend and mentor. I am thrilled to have him here in the studio today. Thanks for joining me, Belvin.

MR. PERRY: And thanks for having me, Judge Munyon, soon to be and if not Chief Judge Munyon.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: So I know a lot about you because we’ve known each other for decades. You were my first boss at the State Attorney’s Office so I’m going to ask you a lot of questions. So I hope you’re here with me for a while. You grew up in Orlando. You are a native Orlandoan. That’s pretty rare. So I want to find out all about that. What was it like growing up in Orlando?

MR. PERRY: I was born in Orlando in 1949.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: So that was pre-Disney.

MR. PERRY: That was long before Disney. I was born at home on what was Holden Street, which is now Anderson Street. My mom was an elementary school teacher. And my dad along with Richard Arthur Jones, the two of them became the first two black police officers for the City of Orlando, going to work on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1951. So I grew up in the era of segregation. And my world was somewhat confined. But it was a world that exposed me to a lot of good things with my parents but also my community.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: Well, having grown up with a dad who broke barriers as a police officer and a mom that was a teacher, how did they shape your life and your career?

MR. PERRY: A couple of ways. Number one, my parents always believed in the following principles: family, community service, faith, and hard work. And those were the things that shaped me and my siblings. Growing up, walking to Holden Street Elementary School, I could not walk three blocks without someone stopping me or saying I know your dad, you shouldn't be throwing rocks; you shouldn't be playing in the street, and things that kids would do on their way to school and back. My parents had this way of teaching excellence without really teaching it. They led by example. They taught perfection in everything that we would do at home, from your chores in terms of when you got out of bed, before you left your room, you had to make your bed and guess what, you did not get back in your bed again until it was time to go to sleep. And those little minor lessons of discipline, you know, helped shaped me.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: I think many of us in Central Florida and certainly, the younger people do not realize how close we are to a shameful history of segregation. How did that affect you growing up?

MR. PERRY: Well, I hate to say it, but that was your life, you were used to it. You were used to the white/colored bathrooms. You were used to the racial slurs that you would receive. You were used to, when you were in elementary school, we got to use hand-me-down books from the other schools. And sometimes there would be ugly things written in the books that were not very pleasant. You were used to living in your own little bubble. I can remember, you were instructed not to go to certain areas. I vividly remember downtown Orlando Woolworth's and the restaurant there at the lunch counter where they had the best-looking hotdogs and that grilled bun. And I used to walk by there when I was seven, eight years old and I wanted one of those so bad and I couldn't get one. And I was not able to get one until probably when I was in the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and that had to be the best tasting hotdog I ever had. You go to Kress Restaurant, what most folks don't know is, there were two sides to that Kress Restaurant, that building. There was a side that you would enter on Church and there was a side that you entered on Orange Avenue. The so-called colored entry was on Church Street, and if you went in that store, that was the way that you had to go into it. If you caught the bus, you had to sit on the back of the bus and if you accidentally sat below the line, you were scolded and there were certain N words that they would tell you. But you know that was life. That was the South. And that was the era that I grew up in.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: I'm sure with a mother as a teacher that you did well in school. Would I be right about that?

MR. PERRY: For the most part, yes, I did fine in school.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: So why did you ultimately choose the law?

MR. PERRY: There were two things that I wanted – that I considered as career options. It was either law or a doctor. I got my impetus for law probably around age seven when I went to city court with my dad who had to testify. And it peeked my interest in watching the lawyers and marveled, watching the judge. I also had a keen interest in biology, but when I got to 12<sup>th</sup> grade and there was a thing called analytical chemistry. And that just did not suit me well so I thought the better part of valor at that time was to choose law and take that route. The interesting thing was my dad had a wish. He wanted one of his sons to be a lawyer and he wanted one of his sons to be a doctor. And my brother ended up being an orthopedic surgeon and I ended up being a lowly attorney.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: You did not go to law school in Florida. How did you choose the law school that you wanted to go to?

MR. PERRY: In 1977, the opportunities for going to law school in Florida, to be honest with you, were not as open. Admission was limited, and I ended up going to the Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University in Houston, Texas. Not that I did not want to go to school here, but you know you go where you can go.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: And law schools were still segregated then?

MR. PERRY: Yeah, they were segregated. You know, theoretically, they were integrated but really, they were not. And you know I am really glad that I ended up having that experience in going to the Thurgood Marshall School of Law because I had professors that wanted to be where they were and they really cared about you. You know, I had an opportunity, when the schools were integrated, and my parents tried to get me to switch from Jones High

School to go to Edgewater, or Boone, and I just basically said, I did not want to go because I really didn't want to deal with being at a place where nobody wanted me to be, where I would be treated as less than them. You know, I would never get the experience when one summer job, when I was going into the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, I was working at Harper's Neon and my job taking a blowtorch, dismantling and cutting old signs up. And as you know, it's kind of hot in Florida, being outside with no shade trees with a blowtorch in the middle of summer. And I will never forget on one of the breaks, one of the guys that worked there, he was a machinist, asked me, what did I want to be and I told him I wanted to be a lawyer. And he looked at me and laughed, and said, the only thing you will ever be in life is somebody else's helper. And that sort of stuck with me and – but, you know –

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: Yeah, I'd like to know where he is now.

MR. PERRY: I don't know. But you know, that was the reality of it and my father always used to tell us, don't let anyone define you. You should define yourself.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: That's great advice.

MR. PERRY: And don't listen to the outside noise, and don't ever grow a false sense of your own importance. My dad used to emphasize I don't care whether you become a Ph.D., a professor, teacher, lawyer, doctor, you're no better than a mechanic, you're no better than a maid, you're no better than a plumber, it's just that that's your vocation. And you shouldn't look down on people because they are not "at a similar station in life that you may achieve." That every human being has dignity and grace.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: So when you left law school, became a lawyer, you went to the State Attorney's Office. What drew you to the State Attorney's Office?

MR. PERRY: It's interesting because the State Attorney's Office was not where I wanted to be. I went to law school in Texas and the day that I finished taking the Texas bar, which was in July, packed up, jumped in the car with my family and drove back to Florida. I had turned down a job in Houston with one of my law professors, who I had worked part-time with, and he wanted me to come work in his office full-time, to come back to Orlando and I was happy. I wanted to come back home. And I sent out my resume and I heard nothing. And by the end of August, I had become frustrated. I worked part-time serving parties as a bartender. I pumped gas at a gas station. I did substitute teaching. And so after a month of that, I told my dad that I would probably pack up and move back to Houston where I had a job and my dad said, well, settle down, you've only been back a month. And my dad picked the phone up and he called Robert Eagan. My dad knew Robert Eagan since my dad was a police officer and he arranged for me to have an interview with Mr. Eagan. And I went and I interviewed with Mr. Eagan. Now, I want to set the picture for that. Here's someone fresh out of law school with a gigantic big afro, with tinted lenses and a goatee. And that was the militant look of the time and here I am who didn't believe in the death penalty, who was as liberal as the days were as long in the summer, and I interviewed with Mr. Eagan. And Mr. Eagan did not look at my appearance but we talked and he looked at the inner me. And after we talked for about 45 minutes, he told me to follow him. We don't have any openings now but as you may know, people leave from time to time and he said when there is an opening, you will be my first hire. And I thanked him and that gave me time to do several things. That interview was the mid part of September. I started December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1977. That gave me an opportunity to study for the Florida bar because I took the bar here in October, was able to transfer my score from Texas. You could transfer your multistate score. And so it worked out fine for me. By that time, I became wise enough to get

rid of the afro, and to get rid of – kind of trimmed down the goatee. And the rest is history in terms of the State Attorney's Office.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: Mr. Eagan was a remarkable man. He hired me. A short little – short little girl who was younger than most of the other lawyers that he had ever interviewed. What are your vivid memories about – I still call him Mr. Eagan?

MR. PERRY: My – I will always call him Mr. Eagan, but I still refer to him as boss. I saw Mr. Eagan about five or six weeks ago. I was over at his home. Mr. Eagan had the uncanny ability to recognize talent. He had the ability to let you spread your wings and provide guidance and I can truly say that Bob Eagan was gender blind and color blind. All he wanted was the best, and he entrusted me as I earned it to do various things in that office and ended up, you know, running the office. So I will always be thankful for Bob Eagan and if you look at the history of this circuit and you look at the number of judges that came from that office under Bob Eagan, that became county and circuit judges, his mark on the criminal justice system and justice system here in Orange and Osceola County is remarkable.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: And not just judges. If I'm thinking correctly, Emerson Thompson was chief judge and came from that office. You were chief judge and came from that office. Fred Lauten was chief judge and came from that office. And now, I'm chief judge and I came from that office.

MR. PERRY: Right.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: And there may be more that I'm not remembering. But that's a remarkable legacy that he left.

So when you were at the State Attorney's Office, what challenges did you face as a prosecutor? And how did you overcome them?

MR. PERRY: The first challenge I really faced was being accepted. Strangely enough, not by my peers and fellow lawyers. I can remember my first day in traffic court and I went up to a witness who was an elderly black lady. And I introduced myself and she said, boy, stop playing with me. They don't have any colored prosecutors. I had to go get the court deputy to come to tell her that I was in fact the prosecutor. And gaining the trust of law enforcement because they were – from some agencies, they were somewhat skeptical. Other agencies, particularly the Orlando Police Department, most of the folks I had encountered had worked with my dad. So it was a lot easier there and – but Mr. Eagan gave me the freedom to do a lot of things. And he backed me 110 percent and – but the real challenge was not in the State Attorney's Office, but it was outside breaking down barriers. And you know, once you got in the room, people learned who you were and what you were, what you stood for so really I did not face a lot of obstacles that I knew about. You know, as you know, I always spoke my peace. Quiet but when it was time to speak up, I would speak up.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: When you prosecute, there are always some cases that stay with you. What cases from your days as a prosecutor have stayed with you?

MR. PERRY: Oh, my goodness. I mean, I prosecuted so many cases but these are the cases that sort of stick up in the back of my mind. There was a young lady by the name of Valerie Devault. She was abducted along Primrose Drive by a guy by the name of Joseph Alan Marter. He abducted her by a social club. Took her out in east Orange County, raped and murdered her. He also abducted another young lady, raped her but for some unknown reason did not kill her. He also, even though he was not prosecuted because of the lack of evidence because

there was one fingerprint up under a bumper and that was all the evidence. They didn't have DNA then. We suspected that he was responsible for the abduction and murder of that young lady because the car was in the middle of a field nowhere. So I prosecuted him; he received the death penalty. And I prosecuted the sexual assault. The difficult part about the sexual assault was, when the victim had an opportunity to leave, she did not leave. As a matter of fact, she drove him to a store because the car needed gas. He put gas in her car, then he went inside of the store. She had the car keys. He was more than 70 feet away from her and she waited. And the defense tried to say it was consensual and the most difficult part of that trial was getting the jury to connect with her to understand why she did not leave. And I asked her that question. And it almost brought tears to my eyes with her explanation and the same happened to the jury.

The other case that sticks out in my mind is Jerry Correll. Ray Sharp and I prosecuted that case. They used to call us salt and pepper because we used to prosecute a lot of the cases together.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: I remember that case. I don't know if you remember, I was a brand new lawyer in the intake division. And you asked me to do some research on that case.

MR. PERRY: Yep.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: I can remember thinking how brilliant you were and that I hoped one day that I knew as much law as you had probably forgotten.

MR. PERRY: Yeah.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: Jerry Correll was a very interesting case.

MR. PERRY: What was interesting about that case was we kept that crime scene for about 60 days. And every afternoon Ray Sharp and I would go out along with the evidence folks and we got down on our hands and knees and went over every inch of that house. There were bloody fingerprints that were hidden; that we called Dr. Fisher that helped bring those out. And Jerry Correll butchered his ex-wife, his own child, his ex-mother-in-law, and his ex-sister-in-law. And we tried that case in Sarasota on a change of venue. That case stands out in my mind.

The other case that stands out in my mind that I prosecuted was Judy Buenoano who was the black widow that we did an exhumation on her husband and determined that ten years – after he had been dead ten years that he had in fact been murdered through the use of arsenic poisoning. And I had the best investigator in the world, Dusty Rhodes, who put that case together. And that was one of the cases that the State Attorney's Office did the entire investigation and put it together. She was convicted, sentenced to die and Dusty and I went and witnessed her execution in Florida's electric chair.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: What do you consider your greatest professional achievement at the State Attorney's Office?

MR. PERRY: You know, when I look back I would have to say the change that we made to be more compassionate with victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and children. You remember we created a system where you didn't change – you had a prosecutor that would intake the case and also prosecuted the case. We created separate space for children where they could come in and feel comfortable. I think really just humanizing and making it easy for victims. I really enjoyed that because it used to trouble me in how victims were treated.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: You did create the child abuse and sex crimes unit --

MR. PERRY: Right.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: -- at the State Attorney's Office. And I was one of the three initial prosecutors in that unit.

MR. PERRY: Yep.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: That was an amazing change for victims and children in the system.

MR. PERRY: Yeah. And you all did a tremendous job. You know, the good thing about the State Attorney's Office, they had many talented people like yourself. And you know, as a team we did great work. And one of the things that you learned from Bob Eagan, there's no I in the word team. And we were just a well-oiled unit that worked well together and we built on each other's strengths in that office.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: So why did you decide that you wanted to go to the bench? Because being a prosecutor -- I mean that office was a lot of fun. It was a lot of work, but it was a lot of fun.

MR. PERRY: It was a lot of fun. We had -- well, Mr. Eagan was retiring. And I can remember my last two or three years going to court, trying cases, also the administrative part. And as you know, there were some very good judges and there were some judges that were fair. And I had always, since I was seven, eight years old from going to court with my dad, marveled at the judge. And I always wanted to be a judge, and I just made that decision. And you have to remember back during those times, I applied seven times and never could get out of the committee. Because I was known as a hardnosed no nonsense prosecutor, which you know the cases that I did for the office, there were no plea-bargaining and Mr. Eagan finally told me one

day that the only way that you're going to ever be a judge is to run. Other than that, you're never going to get appointed.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: Were there challenges considering running for elected – an elected position as judge to a predominately-white bench at that point?

MR. PERRY: There were challenges in the sense that campaigns during that time were largely funded by the legal community. And suddenly for someone who was not rated too highly as a judge, the legal community sprang into action on behalf of my opponent who was a judge, but I knew that I had a chance because of the work that I had done. And I put my faith and belief in the voters. So with my opponent raising about \$54,000 and I only raised \$18,000, I had to craft a very surgical campaign. Depended a lot on volunteers that, particularly from the State Attorney's Office, that would give me two or three hours a week and we just went door to door in every prescient in Orange and Osceola County and through a lot of hard work, and a lot of faith, I prevailed which kind of shocked a lot of people. But that was the path that the good Lord had for me.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: You and Judge Thompson and Judge Dorothy Russell, and Judge Janis Halker broke barriers back then because there weren't women on the bench, pretty much. There weren't African Americans on the bench. Today more than 50 percent of the people serving in the Ninth Circuit are women. Does that surprise you?

MR. PERRY: No, it does not. You asked me one of the things that I'm proud of, that I forgot to mention, when I became chief judge, I did something that was unheard of. I named Judge Alice Blackwell as administrative judge over the civil division, which created some discomfort for some of our older judges who were firmly entrenched into the seniority system.

I've also had the distinct pleasure of you know naming more of my sisters to an administrative judge division. And so it doesn't surprise me. To be frank with you, talent rises to the top and we did not look upon gender. And I think that's reflected now by the composition of the bench. And I was, to borrow a phrase from Nat Ford, I was tickled pink when I heard of your election without opposition as chief judge.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: Thank you. I was honored as well. Why did you decide to be chief? What drew you to that?

MR. PERRY: I never intended to be chief judge and I can tell you how it came about. As you know, Dick Conrad was not only my best judicial friend, he was my best friend. And Mike Cycmanick and a number of other judges that were in that small group, the lunch group, and they sort of took me under their wing. They were sort of dissatisfied with the way that the circuit was going at the time. And I was just like a – I was just hanging on. I was just glad to be in the room. And they were discussing who should run for chief judge. And one of that group actually wanted to run for chief judge. And they looked at that person who we will remain nameless and they told him not only no, but h no and they told him why. And then they looked around the room and then they – and it was Dick Conrad said, well, Belvin, why don't you run? I said, me, I said, I just got here. You know, I had just completed my first term as a judge. I think it was in year seven or eight of my judicial career. I said I'm kind of wet behind the ears. They said, well, you know, you ran the State Attorney's Office so they sort of pushed me out on a plank. And I didn't have enough sense to walk back.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: Well, you served nine terms as chief judge. You will be our longest serving chief judge from now on unless the rules change because now we're limited to eight years. What do you believe is your biggest accomplishment as chief judge?

MR. PERRY: The biggest accomplishment I think was convincing the judges to move away from my court to our court, where we were there to serve and not being served. Where we had structured things that were convenient for the people that we served rather than what was convenient for us. Where we had uniform orders; that procedures were the same in every division so lawyers wouldn't have to guess. And getting people to believe in the mission and getting people to work together and not to be afraid of innovation and not to be afraid of thinking outside of the box. I think we had the right chemistry. We had the right individuals who became judges, who would buy into the vision. And I think that was the reason why we excelled and really became the leading circuit in the entire state of Florida.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: One thing that the citizens probably don't fully appreciate is that this circuit has been a leader in technology and in many other areas, not just around the state but also around the nation. A lot of that is due to your vision. What made you so passionate about innovation and technology?

MR. PERRY: When we were in the process of finishing construction on this building, and looking at the technology that we had in our other courthouses, I started reading a lot. Reading materials from the National Center for State Courts, and I knew that we would never get enough money to buy our way out of things, to solve our problems, and that technology would be the key to our success. That you could do more with less. And it was because of that I pushed technology. I was blessed to have a judge that was interested in technology by the name of Lisa Munyon. And I was able to hand that off to you and, you know, our court administrator Matt Benefiel, one of the reasons he was selected was because of his knowledge of technology. And it was a matter of having the vision and a matter of having people like you who could take a vision and make it a reality. And when you look at the technology we had, it was far superior

than anywhere else because if you can remember, when we were going through revision seven, we produced the videos that were shown throughout the state of Florida, for TV commercials. That was the quality of work that the Ninth Circuit was able to do. Going from centralized court reporting to centralized interpreting, you know, you pioneered the first hearings in business court where people didn't have to come to the courthouse, you know, long before this Zoom age now.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: Long before a pandemic.

MR. PERRY: And long before a pandemic so we were just blessed to have people who bought into the vision and also contributed to the vision.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: What do you wish people knew about the role of chief judge?

MR. PERRY: I don't think people really realize the responsibilities of a real chief judge. How much is on that judge's plate and how much you have to balance it. In order to have a successful circuit, your chief judge must be respected throughout the state and have a voice in Tallahassee and be respected by legislators. Someone that's respected by the State Court Administrator's Office, someone that is respected by the other chief judges, someone that can make the connection with the county commissions here and the businesses and other power brokers, but someone who also understands what the court system is all about, someone that can go in court and try a case. Because if he can't go in court and try a case, you're going to lose the respect of your colleagues. Someone who is willing to roll their sleeves up and work and unfortunately someone who's willing to be practically available 24/7. You know, my idea was a good vacation was 48 hours without a phone call from his office.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: Yeah, I remember, you were always on call. And very rarely can I ever remember you being out of touch, either by phone or email regardless of what you were doing or where you were in the world, which I'm sure – has left its impact on your life.

MR. PERRY: Yeah, it did.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: So why did you leave? Why did you leave the bench and begin practicing law?

MR. PERRY: I had spent 25 years on the bench. And in the year 2013, we hadn't gotten judges in a long time. They were drowning in Osceola County and going into 2012, Judge Bronson had announced his retirement. And we had to take his position and ship it to Osceola County because they were a couple of steps away from that place collapsing in terms of criminal. And foolishly, besides everything else I was doing, I took back probate, guardianship, mental health. That year except for 27 days, I worked seven days a week. I was generally in the office by seven in the morning. Did not leave the office until about seven at night. And usually between ten and midnight, I would dial in and do my probate work for the next day. I did trials. I still went to Tallahassee and that summer I took a long hard look at my life. I realized that I had no life. And I realized that things were changing and it was time for me to move on to the next chapter of my life. You know, I never wanted to practice criminal law. As a matter of fact, I hated criminal law. I always wanted to do one of two things, P.I. or taxes.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: Which is personal injury.

MR. PERRY: Yeah. personal injury. I never had that opportunity. And you know, Morgan had been trying to get me to come over for about ten years.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: You're good friends with Jon Morgan of Morgan and Morgan?

MR. PERRY: Right. And I was not interested in going someplace for billable hours and I made the decision that it was time for me to leave after 25 years. We had built an excellent reputation. We had the right people in place. There's always more to do, but I think the Circuit was well situated and I asked myself one question, was the place better than I found it? And I could sincerely answer the question and say, yes, it was. And once I did that even though I miss the people, I don't miss the pressure and I – it was time for a change. I've enjoyed what I've been doing for the last six years. And so that was the reason why. There comes a time in life where you have to make changes.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: And did you enjoy practicing law for the last six years?

MR. PERRY: I've enjoyed it. It opened my eyes to a lot of things that I did not know. But I got a chance, and most people don't get a chance to go back and realize their dreams. It was a dream deferred that I had an opportunity to have and I'm blessed for that.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: So what's next for you? You are a person that I can't ever imagine standing still.

MR. PERRY: Well, believe it or not, when I do retire and that's not too far, I have a lot of things that peek my interest. I am on the Board of Trustees for Florida A&M University. I'm the Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Bethune-Cookman. I'm very proud of the work. When I took over, the school was on the verge of being closed. And we have turned that around. I'm on the Orlando Magic Youth Foundation. I'm still not as active as I was in the past, but I still do my work with 100 Black Men of Orlando. And so I will have, when I finally hang it up, I will

have more than enough to do but I'm looking forward to those times where I wake up and I have nothing to do. I have no schedule to keep.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: Well, you will still be on my speed dial so I hope you know that. Well, I want to thank you my friend, my mentor for being here with me today.

MR. PERRY: Thank you for having me and I'm not going to wish you the best of luck because I know you. And I have watched you over the years and I know that you will do a tremendous job, not only leading this circuit but leading the judicial branch throughout the state of Florida. The judges here have chosen wisely.

CHIEF JUDGE MUNYON: Well, thank you. And I look forward to the future as I'm sure you do too.

NARRATOR: Thank you for listening to "Open Ninth: Conversations Beyond the Courtroom" brought to you by Chief Judge Lisa Munyon and the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court of Florida. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram @ninthcircuitfl for updates on new episodes and subscribe to Open Ninth on your favorite podcast service.

(Music)