



Erika Quartermaine

County Court Judge
in Sarasota

**Judge
Erika N. Quartermaine**

The Sarasota native was appointed Sarasota County Judge in 2013 at age 35, fulfilling a career goal she made early in life. All walks of life appear in her court and most, she observes, are good people who made poor choices or mistakes.

She strives to give everyone his or her just due in court as well as having everyone understand what is happening in court.

Judge Quartermaine serves in the County Civil/Criminal Division where four of the five judges are female.

The 12th Judicial Circuit serves Sarasota, Manatee, and DeSoto counties.



Few people identify their ultimate career goal in their early 20s and then implement a plan to reach that goal by age 35, but that is exactly the manner in which Judge Erika Nikla Quartermaine attacked her career planning. After interning for a judge in Miami during her first year in law school, Erika decided that she would shape her work experience in order to qualify for a county judgeship.

She spent three years at a law firm gaining civil law experience, became Court Counsel in Sarasota where she developed a liking for criminal law, and became an Assistant State Attorney as a criminal law prosecutor to gain trial experience. With the required five years of law experience in both civil and criminal law, she applied to become a county judge to the Judicial Nominating Committee that is appointed by the Florida Governor and the Florida Bar Association. In a pool of 30 applicants, her name was one of three forwarded to the Governor. She was appointed Sarasota County Judge in November 2013 at age 35.

Explaining her positions leading up to her appointment, Judge Quartermaine says, "In March 2013, I was promoted to the White Collar Prosecutor in the Sarasota office of the State Attorney. I spent two years in the misdemeanor division and two years in the felony division. Prior to being a prosecutor, I spent almost three years working as Court Counsel for the Twelfth Judicial Circuit where I assisted both County and Circuit Judges with research and writing orders. During my time as Court Counsel, I worked in both the civil and criminal areas. As Court Counsel, I had the opportunity to draft hundreds of orders and work on numerous significant cases. Prior to being Court Counsel, I worked at a civil litigation firm for over three years representing individual and institutional clients in commercial litigation."

Judge Quartermaine believes that county court is a place where she has the ability to affect a person's life and she sometimes finds herself providing guidance to people in her court. All walks of life appear in her court and most, she observes, are good people who made poor choices or mistakes. The jurisdiction of a county court includes criminal misdemeanors, civil cases of less than \$15,000, DUI cases, battery, prostitution, driving offenses, and civil cases such as evictions and small claims. County court does not deal with felony cases.

Erika is adamant about giving everyone his or her just due in court, about having everyone understand what is happening in court, and treating everyone fairly. Her frustration comes from unprepared litigants and/or attorneys. Judge Quartermaine notes that the County Civil/Criminal Division where she serves is an anomaly in that four of the five judges are female. The 12th Judicial Circuit serves Sarasota, Manatee, and DeSoto counties since each of Florida's 67 counties has a county court. Thirty judges serve in these three counties.

"I seek the best resolution for cases before me. I see a lot of smaller drug and substance abuse crimes. I want to aid in helping the person before it gets out of control. I sometimes tell the person the significance of criminal behavior pattern. I had a young man brought in for possession of drug paraphernalia. I talk to people such as him when it is appropriate. I am a good listener.

I study the law diligently. I remain unbiased and fair. I think my temperament is well suited to treating each and every person in the courtroom fairly and with respect."

Charles E. Williams, Chief Judge, 12th Judicial Circuit, addresses Erika's commitment to offering alternatives to jail for the mentally ill by saying, "Judge Quartermaine has shown a great amount of compassion and understanding for our most underserved population, the mentally ill. Her initiative with Comprehensive Treatment Court will be a game changer in how the courts deal with these defendants. Her hard work as a judge reflects her upbringing and her commitment to our community both in and out of the courtroom. She truly has earned the title of public servant and our judiciary is much stronger with judges who recognize their role in serving all of the public, including those who often are voiceless."

Judge Quartermaine is a fourth generation Floridian whose family has been in the Sarasota area since the 1930s. She was born and raised in Sarasota County and attended the now-closed McClellan Park School and Pine View High School. "My family built numerous small businesses here and established many friendships along the way. I grew up working in restaurants. I washed dishes, garnished entrees, and filled pastries. I am thankful for this experience because I worked alongside people from varied backgrounds (many of whom I still consider friends) and I gained a strong work ethic. My late great-aunt Martha Cameron developed real estate and there are streets here that bear my family's names as a result: Cameron Lane and Nikla Lane. I am especially proud of this because my great-aunt actually had to obtain permission from the Court in order to become a 'free dealer' so that she could own property as a single woman. She went on to be one of the first successful businesswomen in this community."

Raised by a single father with support from her grandmother and aunts, Judge Quartermaine majored in economics with a minor in French at Stetson University where she was exposed to human rights laws. She initially applied to the Peace Corps, but her grandmother was so opposed that she offered to help financially for her to attend law school. She received her law degree from the University of Miami College of Law. Her father is a Vietnam veteran who, at age 60, changed careers and became a psychologist.

Erika is married to Dr. Sam Quartermaine whose family has also been in the area for a long time. They have two children: ten year-old Ethan and seven year-old Cameron who attend Southside Elementary School. She and her husband were active in the Sarasota Ski-A-Rees, a local water ski show team that offers free performances near Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium. As a former professional water skier, Erika enjoys the sport as well as boating with her family and baseball and tennis with the children. She is a current or past supporter of SPARCC, the Junior League of Sarasota, Designing Daughters, and others.

With deliberate interpretation of the law, compassion, and fairness, Judge Quartermaine serves the people and legal community of Sarasota County as a dedicated public servant 🍷

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