



**Candidate Questionnaire - Circuit Judge  
August 2024 Primary Election**

Your name: Michael Colombo  
Your email address: [Michael@bsrlegal.com](mailto:Michael@bsrlegal.com)  
Your phone number: (239) 821-9678  
Your age: 52  
Today's date: 07/03/2024  
Updated: 08/13/2024

**What forms of voluntary professional and community service have you been involved with in Southwest Florida in the past? Currently?**

As an attorney, I currently serve on the Florida Bar Professional Ethics Committee, which is a volunteer position. I attended the annual Florida Bar conference in Orlando on June 20, 2024, to meet with the committee and discuss matters pertinent to the professional regulation of lawyers in Florida.

As a father, I have been involved in coaching youth baseball and youth wrestling in SWFL, for years. I currently volunteer at Three Oaks Park and Estero High School, assisting the baseball programs in the concession stand, during season.

As an attorney, here is a list of prior professional service, where I volunteered to be involved, speaking and/or conducting training:

- "Krimes Against Kids" Conference (Orlando, FL), presenter & speaker – Motion Practice & Case Law, September 2022
- Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), presenter & speaker, September 2021
- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Training, presenter & speaker, Fawcett Memorial Hospital, July 2021
- Human Trafficking Symposium (Florida Gulf Coast University), presenter & speaker, March 2017
- Children's Advocacy Center, Fort Myers, training & roundtables, 2017-2019
- Child Abduction Response Team (CART) training, Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE)

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no later than July 6, 2024.*

**What has been your greatest accomplishment in your legal career?**

I have been blessed to have so many wonderful experiences as an attorney. I have fought significant legal battles in a courtroom, from my time as a prosecutor and plaintiff's attorney, to my time as a defense attorney. Each legal battle has taught me lessons and made me wiser. I have had so many big cases over time, which were reported in the media or were a published legal opinion/appeal. It would be unfair to coin one case, as all cases were in the pursuit of justice.

Therefore, I would have to say that my greatest accomplishment is staying true to my eldest's son's middle name, while raising my three children with my wife and working as a Federal Agent, as well as an Attorney, over the years.

My oldest son's middle name is "Justice". Yes, that is his middle name on his birth certificate. My brother-in-law, Daniel Galfond (attorney in Miami), died of leukemia and we named our oldest son, after him; Daniel. I choose the middle name of "Justice", to represent what Daniel and I stand for, as we lived our lives for the pursuit of justice. I will continue that pursuit in any role that I have in the legal system.

**Which of the various types of matters that have or would come before you as a Circuit Judge would present the least challenge for you? Why?**

I have been a trial attorney for over two decades, and therefore, presiding over a trial would come very easy and naturally to me. The knowledge of the rules of evidence and applicable case law is paramount to conducting a fair and impartial trial, which would expediate a trial for all the parties, including a jury. I am in Court on a regular, almost daily basis, participating in the various phases and hearings, prior to trial. Therefore, I have decades of knowledge on how a court docket should operate to move matters along for all the parties. The knowledge I have gained over the years has taught me how to effectively and efficiently use Judicial resources to hear all cases and controversies before the court.

**Which of the various types of matters that have or would come before you as a Circuit Judge would present the greatest challenge for you? Why?**

In Florida, Circuit Courts have the power to issue the extraordinary writs of certiorari, prohibition, mandamus, quo warranto, and habeas corpus, and all other writs necessary to the complete exercise of their jurisdiction. These types of legal actions are not within the regular, daily controversies before the Court, and therefore, I believe would require more research and time than the routine matters before the Court.

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## **Who are your judicial role models? Why?**

One role model is Justice Sonia Sotomayor because she was known as a fearless trial judge, who did not allow others to bully her into departing from the rule of law. She is known for her commitment to community, integrity, fairness, being polite, caring, and thoughtful. She is known to be tough on ill-prepared lawyers.

Additionally, Justice Antonin Scalia is a role model that I followed in law school and beyond. Justice Scalia was known fierce protector of the Constitution, as an “originalist” and “textualist”. Justice Scalia was not afraid of writing a “dissenting” opinion, making his opinion known, regardless of the majority opinion of the Court.

I admire Justice Antonin Scalia and look at him as a mentor. There are only portions of interviews online. The case law written by Scalia, protecting the 4th Amendment is fundamental to every citizen’s privacy rights. Justice Sotomayor concurred on important 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment decisions written by Scalia. Two significant U.S. Supreme Court cases that affect our privacy rights were authored by Scalia. Please read *United States v. Jones* (2012) and *Florida v. Jardines* (2013). Scalia wrote decisions to protect the rights of our citizens from government overreach. Sotomayor agreed and concurred on those two important decisions that affect privacy rights. One case was only a 5-4 vote, with Scalia and Sotomayor both writing decisions to protect privacy rights.

I believe these role models and I would share the same judicial philosophy as independent thinkers, respecting and complying with the rule of law, protecting the Constitution, and acting at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary.

## **What are the pros and cons of serving as a judge as compared to practicing law?**

Very simple. As a Judge, your role is to adhere to the Constitution, the laws of the State of Florida, and ensure equal justice under the law. Matters must be decided with impartiality, free from outside influence or an agenda. As a lawyer, your role is zealous advocacy on behalf of your client, in accordance with the law. There is a difference. Practicing law requires advocacy and being a Judge requires neutrality. I do not see “pros and cons”, just different roles. I love the law. I have fought for justice for over two decades, so being a Judge is just a different role in serving the law.

## **Have you ever been disciplined by the Bar Association or any other authority on attorney or judicial conduct?**

No

## **Why should voters support you rather than your opponent?**

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I will not comment on my opponent. Voters can research a candidate and/or their background to make an informed decision. I would only advocate for myself and my diverse experience.

I have over two decades of trial litigation experience in the courtroom. I have conducted over 100+ trials in my career.

Prior to moving to SWFL, I was a Federal Special Agent (Post 9-11) and worked on a variety of cases including, human trafficking, child exploitation, & terrorism.

I am bar licensed in three (3) different States. I practiced criminal, civil, family, & employment law in Connecticut and argued to the Connecticut Supreme Court [see *Stiffler v. Continental Insurance Company*, No. 17761 (July 2008)]

I was also the lead trial attorney in *CHRO ex. Rel. Lenotti v. City of Stamford*, a landmark decision (April 2008); see 49-page opinion online; Connecticut Human Rights & Opportunities (CHRO) ruled in favor of a firefighter for disability discrimination committed by the City, holding that learning & mental disabilities must be accommodated on promotional tests.

After moving to SWFL, I worked in the State Attorney's Office & Special Victim's Unit, handling a variety of crimes against children, adults, & the elderly. In over a decade as a prosecutor, I handled thousands of cases that affected the lives of many. I have also defended hundreds of individuals charged with a variety of crimes, protecting rights & advocating on behalf of my clients. I am currently in private practice, handling criminal and civil matters for my clients in SWFL. Many of my cases have been reported by the local news.

In my younger years, I was a college athlete, with a leadership role in my senior year as the captain of my college baseball team and college wrestling team. I coached high school sports for five (5) years, was a high school wrestling referee for five (5) years while practicing law. I qualified for Nationals in the 1996 Olympic Trials, in wrestling.

I have lived my life with a foundation of hard work, dedication, integrity, and responsibility toward others. I am currently raising three (3) children with my wife.

Common sense and life experience is important. I will support and defend our Constitution and the rule of law. I will ensure that justice is always blind.

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