

JUDGE JOHN BADALAMENTI JOINS THE SECOND DISTRICT

Appellate Practice Section

Chairs: Jared Krukar - Butler Weihmuller Katz Craig, LLP; and Mariko Outman - Florida Second DCA



In April, John L. Badalamenti was appointed to the Second District Court of Appeal by Governor Rick Scott, filling the seat vacated by retiring Judge Charles A. Davis Jr. Judge Badalamenti, 41, of Tampa, comes to the post from the Appellate Division of the Office of the Federal Public Defender, Middle District of Florida, where he had served since 2006. The appointment to the court is the culmination of a calling that he first heard long ago.

As a boy, Judge Badalamenti occasionally took the train from his home in Brooklyn to lunch with his mother, a bookkeeper working in the Southern District of New York courthouse. Afterward, he would sit in the courtrooms and watch criminal trials. That early fascination with the law eventually

led him to the University of Florida law school.

After graduation, the U.S. Attorney General Honors Program called and awarded him a one-year counsel position with the Federal Bureau of Prisons at the Southeast Region Headquarters in Atlanta. There, he was an advocate and advisor to the bureau, handling a variety of constitutional and civil matters and post-conviction proceedings.

The Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals was the next to call, offering a clerkship with the Hon. Frank Mays Hull. Working with



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Judge Tuttle.

Following that clerkship, Judge Badalamenti returned to Florida and entered private practice. He found his professional home at the

Judge Hull in the grand Atlanta courthouse, Judge Badalamenti learned the intricacies of appellate practice. Judge Hull herself had been a law clerk to the Honorable Elbert P. Tuttle, for whom the historic courthouse is named. To this young lawyer, Judge Hull passed on a tradition of mentorship that she herself had received from

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St. Petersburg office of Carlton Fields. There, his practice included a mix of securities and class-action trial work and civil appeals. The firm's offices were just a few floors away from the private office of the Hon. Paul H. Roney, judge at the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals. Judge Roney, needing an experienced law clerk temporarily to assist with a backlog of cases, reached out to his colleagues on the court. Judge Hull responded that such a candidate was working just a few floors away from him.

Judge Roney was the next to call on Judge Badalamenti. Judge Badalamenti's firm was amenable to what was originally intended to be a six-month stint but turned

into a three-year senior law clerk experience. Judge Badalamenti was struck by Judge Roney's deep love of the judicial process, the respect he showed the parties, and the exquisite care he used in his legal writing.

His enthusiasm for appellate practice, now thoroughly whetted, led Judge Badalamenti to take a post with the Appellate Division of the Federal Public Defender's Office in Tampa. His practice was not limited to appellate work, and he tried several cases in the federal courts of the Middle District. He observed that this firsthand experience taught him the challenges that trial lawyers face. And he saw that trial judges are called upon to make instant decisions and that they need

discretion to act. He recognized that this discretion must be respected, and that only unreasonable decisions should be reversed by an appellate court. Judge Badalamenti has now answered the governor's call to serve on the Second District Court of Appeal. Judge Badalamenti's varied professional background, and his long love and deep respect for the law, will serve the citizens of the state well for years to come. The Hillsborough County Bar Association heartily welcomes Judge Badalamenti to the court.



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