



### **Judge Meryl Allawas - Biography**

**Born:** Judge Allawas was born in Brooklyn, New York. Her family moved to Brevard County when she was 6 years old, making this her childhood home. She has been a Brevard County resident for more than 40 years.

**Family:** Judge Allawas has been married to husband David for almost 13 years, and has numerous family members who grew up and still live in Brevard County.

**Church:** Judge Allawas is a member of Divine Mercy Catholic Church, Merritt Island

#### ***Career***

Judge Allawas started her legal career right after law school in 1983 working for the U. S. Department of Energy in Washington, D.C. She returned home to Florida in 1984 as a lawyer for the Public Defender's Office in Seminole County. In 1985, she returned to Brevard County and joined a private law firm, handling commercial and business litigation as a trial lawyer. She returned to public service in 1986, joining the State Attorney's Office in Titusville as a felony prosecutor.

During her tenure at the State Attorney's Office, Judge Allawas served the office and community as the Division Chief of the Child Abuse and Sex Crimes Unit, where she earned a reputation as a tenacious prosecutor and skilled trial attorney. For 13 years, she successfully prosecuted some of the office's most serious and heart-wrenching cases. In 2001, Governor Jeb Bush appointed her to the circuit bench.

As Circuit Judge, she has served in the Civil/Family division, the Juvenile Delinquency Division, and the Felony Criminal Division where she now presides. As a criminal division judge, she brings years of experience and significant expertise to this important area of the law, striving to ensure equal justice for all who appear before her, whether they stand as the accused or the victimized.

### ***Education***

Judge Allawas grew up in Merritt Island, and graduated from Merritt Island High School and Brevard Community College as a dual enrollment student in 1976. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in History from the University of Miami, and went on to law school at the Columbus School of Law, Catholic University of America, in Washington, D.C., where she enjoyed exposure to the workings of our government and judiciary at the national level. She graduated and was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1983.

### ***Achievements and Recognition***

Judge Allawas was thrilled to initiate and preside over the first **Juvenile Drug Court** program in Brevard County in 2004 while serving in the Juvenile Delinquency Division. Through that program, many of our youth have been turned from drug use and abuse to productive, healthy lifestyles.

Judge Allawas was also proud to serve two terms of appointment by Governor Bush in 2003 and 2006 on the **Parole Qualifications Committee**, making recommendations to the Governor and Cabinet for appointment of members to the Parole Commission.

Prior to taking the bench, Judge Allawas was recognized by Brevard Community College with the **Distinguished Alumnus Award** in 1990, and by the Brevard County Child Abuse Prevention Task Force with the **Child Abuse Prevention Leader Award** in 1998. She also served on the inaugural Operations Board for the **Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard**.

### ***Community Service***

While somewhat limited by judicial rules, Judge Allawas continues to support and be involved with organizations dedicated to children's issues, health concerns, and those in need.

### ***Organizations***

- Hidden Potentials, Inc., - autism awareness and services for special needs children and adults
- Sheriff's Police Athletic League – serving at-risk youth
- St. Vincent de Paul Society – assistance to those in need
- Civilian Military Council – building relationships between community and military leaders