

9<sup>th</sup> UNPLUGGED

HONORABLE LETICIA MARQUES

CIRCUIT JUDGE

OCTOBER 6, 2021

HOSTED BY: HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Latimore.

JUDGE MARQUES: Hi, I'm Judge Marques.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And you're listening to 9<sup>th</sup> Unplugged.

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: So before we get started with getting unplugged, let's talk a little bit about what you do and where you're assigned, Judge Marques.

JUDGE MARQUES: I am currently assigned to the guardianship and mental health division. So I hear cases for folks who are incapacitated and need guardians, and baker acts, Marchman's. I'm also assigned to do the Jimmy Ryce cases, anyone who has been civilly committed as a sexual predator. It's an exciting division.

JUDGE LATIMORE: How long have you been assigned to the division?

JUDGE MARQUES: Since January.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And how long have you been on the bench?

JUDGE MARQUES: Eight years.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Prior to you getting on the bench, can you give us a little bit of background about what you did before becoming a judge?

JUDGE MARQUES: Before becoming a judge.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE MARQUES: I graduated from law school in 1983, went to the public defender's office here for two years and then I was in private practice doing mainly criminal law, a little

tiny bit of family law for twelve years. And then I spent 17 years doing plaintiff's personal injury work before I became a judge.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, I am so proud of you to be my colleague and now let's get unplugged. So where were you born and raised?

JUDGE MARQUES: I was born in Havana, Cuba. I spent two years in the Province of Las Villas before we came to the United States. I came here three days after my second birthday.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, and then where did you live primarily after coming to the States?

JUDGE MARQUES: First lived in Vicksburg, Mississippi, which is where I learned to speak English. Then we went to Virginia for five years and the rest of it, I have spent here in Orlando.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So tell me, what's Vicksburg, Mississippi all about?

JUDGE MARQUES: It was an odd place to arrive with three Spanish-speaking children, a Spanish speaking mom and my dad who was a doctor. He was the only one that spoke English. He had to redo his training when we arrived here in the U.S. and he was offered a job in Vicksburg, Mississippi so that's where we went.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you visit?

JUDGE MARQUES: I have not been back in years, but I still keep in touch with the lady who was one of the nurses at the hospital, Mrs. Balling who was beyond kind to my family.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What is your greatest memory of Vicksburg, Mississippi? What is your best memory of that place?

JUDGE MARQUES: It would be the park that's there. The civil war park and climbing on those cannons and things, and running around playing because we didn't have any money. So that's where we went almost every day.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. All right. So what are your favorite hobbies now?

JUDGE MARQUES: I like to read. I like to travel and I like to cook.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And what is your best meal that you cook?

JUDGE MARQUES: What I think is my best meal or what my husband thinks is my best meal?

JUDGE LATIMORE: Right, could be a difference, right. What do you think is your best and then tell me what your husband thinks is your best?

JUDGE MARQUES: I think my best meal is probably my roasted chicken because it's got lemon and herbs and all kinds of good stuff. My husband who was born and raised in Vero Beach, Florida thinks my best meal is picadillo, which is a Cuban dish.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes, yes.

JUDGE MARQUES: He loves that stuff.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, well, I'm going to go with him. I could have roasted chicken anytime and I think picadillo would be great.

JUDGE MARQUES: I'll put you down.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Thank you very much. Do you speak languages other than English and Spanish?

JUDGE MARQUES: No, just those two.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Is there a language that you would like to learn to speak?

JUDGE MARQUES: Italian.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And why Italian? Because it's sexy?

JUDGE MARQUES: Because I love Italy. It is a sexy language too.

JUDGE LATIMORE: It's a sexy language, isn't it?

JUDGE MARQUES: I love Italy so I want to be able to communicate when I go.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. And so you've been to Italy apparently.

JUDGE MARQUES: I have.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Is that one of your favorite spots?

JUDGE MARQUES: It is. Italy is one of my favorite countries. I like Spain and Portugal quite a bit. I loved Egypt. It's a wonderful country and the people there are wonderful.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Is there anywhere you'd like to go that you haven't been already?

JUDGE MARQUES: We only have a few minutes, right.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do we have time? We only have nine minutes for this.

JUDGE MARQUES: Yeah, right now on my – at the top of my bucket list is Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, wonderful. So what is something that you would never do again?

JUDGE MARQUES: That I would never do again.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Never do again. You tried that and not going to do that again.

JUDGE MARQUES: That's a – eat a peanut butter sandwich, never going to do that again.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And why not?

JUDGE MARQUES: I despise peanuts, and peanut butter.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You do not like the taste or the texture.

JUDGE MARQUES: I do not like the taste at all.

JUDGE LATIMORE: At all. That's interesting.

JUDGE MARQUES: I like other nuts but I cannot stand peanuts.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You like jelly.

JUDGE MARQUES: I like jelly, but there's no reason to ruin it by adding it to peanut butter.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I heard that. All right, when they say what's your back in the day, when we used to do these things, what's your back in the day? Back in the day, we used to...

JUDGE MARQUES: That's a tough question. You know back in the day was a long time ago for me.

JUDGE LATIMORE: No, it's not. Is there anything you miss about back in the day?

JUDGE MARQUES: I miss, bizarrely enough, I miss playing tennis. I used to play tennis all the time and I don't anymore.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You just don't take the time.

JUDGE MARQUES: I don't take the time and I'm really not in shape anymore. I'm pretty sure they would need to call the EMTs if I tried to play tennis.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What tests your patience? I know you're a judge and you're very patient, but is there anything that outside when you're unplugged, that might test your patience?

JUDGE MARQUES: Rudeness. That really annoys me whether it's people driving or just being around, that I have to hang on to my own manners and patience.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And what do you feel to be or believe to be your greatest attributes?

JUDGE MARQUES: My sense of humor probably.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE MARQUES: It's gotten me through a great deal in life and hopefully will get me through the rest of my life.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, did that come naturally to you or is that something that someone else in your family had and you kind of picked up on?

JUDGE MARQUES: I think I got that – I never really thought about it. I mean, pretty much everyone in my family has a sense of humor. My mom had a very keen sense of humor and sense of the absurd, and she went from living a very comfortable life in Cuba to you know

struggling when we first got here. But she never got upset. She was always laughing about something, so I think I probably got it from her.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And you enjoy having that –

JUDGE MARQUES: I do.

JUDGE LATIMORE: -- sense of humor.

JUDGE MARQUES: I do.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah, it can be fun I'm sure. What do you have doubts about?

JUDGE MARQUES: Professionally?

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah.

JUDGE MARQUES: There are times I worry about the decisions that I'm asked to make and whether or not I'm making the right one.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And how do you deal with that, when you walk away and you have those doubts, how do you deal with that?

JUDGE MARQUES: I talk to my colleagues, usually, you know, try and talk it through, not make the decision in a vacuum and sometimes you just – you do the best you can and you say a little prayer that you did the right thing and move on. There's nothing else you can do.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So I know that you are a master of all things, but is there a skill – is there a –

JUDGE MARQUES: Who have you been talking to because that is not correct.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Is there a skill that you would like to master?



JUDGE MARQUES: That I would like to master. I don't know if this is a skill or not, but I would love to learn more about gardening and planting and that sort of thing. And sort of putting together plants that look good together.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That live.

JUDGE MARQUES: That live.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Because in my house they don't tend to live.

JUDGE MARQUES: Well, there's that. Life would be good and just so that it just doesn't look quite as bad as it does when I put them all together. And I had one judge who shall go unnamed, walk through the front door of my house, look at my plants and say, well, this is just sad.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE MARQUES: She happens to be very good at this sort of thing.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, let me know who that is so they don't come to my home because my plants are pretty much needing respire right about now. But are you interested in gardening to grow food?

JUDGE MARQUES: Well, strangely enough, that I can do. I have an herb garden that is out of control and I can grow vegetables and things. It's just other plants where you know you put them in a planter, they're supposed to look good, or you put them in your yard, that's where things don't go well for me.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So tell me, what do you do for entertainment? When you want to – do you like to dance? Do you like music? What is it that you like to do?

JUDGE MARQUES: I love to dance.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What kind of dancing do you do?

JUDGE MARQUES: All kinds. I grew up dancing. My folks taught us all how to salsa and all that. So I love to dance. I like to listen to music. And I really do love to read. That's fun for me.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. You sound like a wonderfully, fun person like I know you are. Thank you so much for being unplugged with me today.

JUDGE MARQUES: It was my pleasure. I enjoyed it.

(Music)