

9TH UNPLUGGED

HONORABLE TOM YOUNG

CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

DECEMBER 8, 2022

HOSTED BY: HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Latimore.

JUDGE YOUNG: Hi, I'm Judge Tom Young.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And you're listening to 9th Unplugged.

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: So before we get started with being unplugged, would you please tell our audience your division assignment and a little bit about your judicial history or career.

JUDGE YOUNG: So I'm currently in Division 10A in Osceola County. That's a felony criminal division and I have been a judge since my election in 2018 so I took the bench in January 2019.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. And are you enjoying your assignment at this time?

JUDGE YOUNG: I love Osceola County –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE YOUNG: -- and being in Judge Morgan's former division.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, yes, you received a great division.

JUDGE YOUNG: I received a great office and a great division.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes. And a great person to follow behind, absolutely.

JUDGE YOUNG: Absolutely.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Absolutely, so let's go ahead and get unplugged. This is the fun part about it. So what do you do when you are away from work and trying to be unplugged?

JUDGE YOUNG: I like to run, and I also like to dabble in the garden.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, you've done marathons, correct.

JUDGE YOUNG: I have done 11 I believe over the course of my 20 some odd years running.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wow, and so which one is your most memorable experience as it relates to marathon running?

JUDGE YOUNG: So they're all fun. I've done the Oklahoma City marathon three times and it is done the week of the anniversary of the bombing, and so the city really pours out to support the participants. So that's a really fun one, but they all are fun in their own way.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And when do you plan to do your next marathon?

JUDGE YOUNG: Maybe when I'm turning 60.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE YOUNG: The last one when I was turning 50.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. All right, wonderful, and do you have any other plans, anything on your quote unquote bucket list that you plan to do in the future?

JUDGE YOUNG: So we're going to Vermont in October.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nice.

JUDGE YOUNG: I've always wanted to see the fall foliage.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE YOUNG: But that's really the most immediate plan for the future.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, you indicate that you are from Tahoka, Texas.

JUDGE YOUNG: Correct.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And can you tell our audience a little bit about Tahoka, Texas and how special that place might be?

JUDGE YOUNG: So Tahoka, Texas is on the south plains of west Texas. There are very few trees. Mesquite trees are the native trees in the area so they're short.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE YOUNG: I tell people who think it's brown and flat that it's an ancient seabed. They laugh and say that doesn't really help. But you literally can see the lights of Lubbock, Texas, which is about thirty miles away from Tahoka.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wow.

JUDGE YOUNG: It's that flat and that sparsely populated out west. But Lubbock was the closest city where Texas Tech is located. And so it's a small town, and my relatives settled in that area in the 1920s I believe.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. And how did you end up leaving there and coming to the good old state of Florida?

JUDGE YOUNG: Life is like a river, right, and so my river ran from Texas Tech Law School to a law firm in Wichita, Kansas and then I went to a branch office of that law firm in

Dodge City, Kansas. There I started doing some pro bono work for children and really enjoyed representing kids. And that led me to a grant project at Barry University Law School in Orlando.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wow.

JUDGE YOUNG: And so –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Your river is flowing.

JUDGE YOUNG: My river is flowing and so yeah, I say life works out really well if we stay out of the way.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's the truth. That is the quote of the century if we would just remember that one. And so I understand that you – you mentioned that you like gardening.

JUDGE YOUNG: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And you also are a plant-based eater, correct?

JUDGE YOUNG: For the most part. When I – when I ventured off into plant-based eating, I said I'm not giving up ice cream, all right.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE YOUNG: So that –

JUDGE LATIMORE: You would draw the line at some place. You know, there's just some –

JUDGE YOUNG: And I have – it's been over four years now. It was great for my blood work but I have been venturing a little bit more into cheeses and stuff.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE YOUNG: But I like to dabble with it – with recipes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE YOUNG: I make recipes and try new things, so that's been a lot of fun.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, are you growing food?

JUDGE YOUNG: No, no, so when I'm talking about a garden, I'm talking more about shrubs and flowers, and I'm a master weed picker. You can see –

JUDGE LATIMORE: We always need one of those, right.

JUDGE YOUNG: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So it keeps the garden beautiful though, I'm imagining.

JUDGE YOUNG: Well, it keeps it orderly. That's my goal.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, as you may know, children and families are a passion of mine and so to learn that you were a foster parent, it really caught my attention. Can you tell me about that experience?

JUDGE YOUNG: Yeah, I think I first met you actually in juvenile court when you were the judge and I was a pro bono lawyer for a child that –

JUDGE LATIMORE: I hope I did okay.

JUDGE YOUNG: It was great. I started in Dodge City is where I got into that and that experience came about because of a mission trip to Venezuela so again, river and experience and meeting people, and that's how I became a foster parent. I think I parented eight foster kids in total before I came to Florida, but I had one who really changed my life for more than a year.

And that experience is what really set me on the path of not only representing kids but advocating for policy changes that affected the system that affected kids.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes. Yes. And that you also indicated that you led the appellate division of the Statewide GAL office.

JUDGE YOUNG: Right, so I moved here at the end of 2002. My job started January 2nd, 2003 and that legislative session, the Florida Legislature created the statewide guardian ad litem office, which consolidated the offices, twenty different offices around the state in each circuit.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE YOUNG: And so the executive director who Governor Bush had appointed asked me to become Deputy General Counsel over appeals and created an appellate division that had never existed before.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You did a great job.

JUDGE YOUNG: Well, I guess that's in the eyes of the beholder but we got it off the ground. The kids had appellate lawyers for the first time in the history of Florida and that was a lot of fun.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah, that's a great job. I'm going to claim it. So that is a wonderful job for the children particularly, and for the entire system. I think that that is awesome that you were able to do that. All right, so tell me what your favorite food is and I know we are – ice cream is on the top of the list.

JUDGE YOUNG: Ice cream is near the top of the list. My favorite food, oh, my gosh. I love Thai food. I love Mexican food.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What's your favorite Thai dish?

JUDGE YOUNG: I love potato chips. I am addicted to potato chips.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Which ones? Jalapeno.

JUDGE YOUNG: I get them as COSTCO. Anything kettle fried but the Kirkland kettle brand, Himalayan sea salt, crack in a sack. That's all I'm saying. It's so good.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That is wonderful. That is absolutely great. So let me ask you, what do you think would be the most amazing adventure that you could have in life?

JUDGE YOUNG: The most amazing adventure I could have in life.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE YOUNG: My life has been a pretty good adventure –

JUDGE LATIMORE: I think so.

JUDGE YOUNG: But I love meeting people, so anywhere I could go on a trip and meet people and see things and be of service to people, that's really what drives me and so in my younger days I did mission trips and I always enjoyed that because I – you get to know a place by the people. It's not so much about site seeing. I really don't care about site seeing unless it's part of connecting with people.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE YOUNG: And so just send me off to a place I've never been and give me something to do and a deadline for doing it and I'm in good shape.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Is there a place that really comes to mind when you think of missions and that experience you've had in the past?

JUDGE YOUNG: No, not really.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, can you share with us some of those places that you like?

JUDGE YOUNG: So one was in Poland and it was there I became familiar with the Heifer International and we got to tour farms in Poland. In Venezuela, I went down as part of a multi-denominational mission trip and we worked on physic – I'm not Catholic but we were working on physically building a Catholic Church in a barrio outside of Barquisimeto.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wonderful.

JUDGE YOUNG: And so those are the kinds of things I've done.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, that sounds like a wonderful river trip that you've been having all your life. And so I thank you so much for joining me and becoming unplugged.

JUDGE YOUNG: Thank you for having me.

(Music)